

# An analysis of Der Rosenkavalier

By Mikaela Arnold

This essay will look at the 1960 opera version that took place in Salzburg at the Vienna state Opera house. The conductor is Herbert von Karajan and the director is Paul Czinner. In this version, the lover is played by a woman named Sena Jurinac. Princess Werdenberg is played by Elisabeth Schwarkopf. The stage looks amazing. It fits the whole scene. In the first scene, doors act as pathways to the different rooms of the house. The sound is clearer than one can imagine on a VHS tape.

Der Rosenkavalier is a German comedy Opera written during the early 1900's. It was created by Richard Strass who is known for other operas such as Salome. The opera was written by Hugo von Hofmannsthal at the request of Strass. In the past, Hofmannsthal's work was banned in England. (opera\_intro)The opera is about a young princess named Princess Werdenberg falling in love with Count Octaviang Rofrano. The young princess was already married to the Field Marshal Prince Werdenberg. She is a cousin to Baron Ochs von Verchenau who sounds to be a not nice person. The Opera takes place in Feudal Vienna which may have took place in the Middle Ages based on the word "Feudal".

According to Google Maps, the current location of Vienna is in the country of Austria. It is about a seven-hour drive to Germany. (Google Maps) The possible location that the opera becomes a mystery when one looks at the princess and prince's name. They are given the name "Seidenberg". Royalty usually are given the name of the place where they live in addition to their given name at birth. Werdenberg is not a place in Germany or Austria but is in Switzerland. Given the era that the opera takes place, in they could be a part of the German Empire. The German Empire included Austria-Hungary and Germany.

When this Opera was written, Europe just got out of World War I. The German Empire ended in 1914 (Germany-from-1871-to-1918#ref297552), and Monarchy in Europe decreased. The monarchy had survived World War I but it is thought that, "not a few of the countries which have contributed most to human culture" (Loewenstein). Loewenstein stated that before the war there were kings, dukes, and princes. Afterwards, they left the country. Germany was trying to get Austria to join their union but they refused in fear that Germany would take over (Foerster). I believe that this opera was written to ease the tension of the citizens of Germany. It was important to remember the past of Germany and Austria but in a fun comedic way. It is important now because of the history of opera. The maker of this opera was a huge part of opera.

The opera starts with the lovers embracing on the bed. The princess wants to announce their relationship but the Count wants their relationship to stay a secret. This is probably because the Princess is already married and there might be a scandal. I feel bad for the young African slave serving the princess in a ridiculous outfit and had to walk backwards when he was done with his/her work. It made me smile and laugh when the Count was trying to find a hiding place when the guests came. He ended up crossdressing in a maid's outfit. This is what confused me. The princess has maids but also slaves working at the castle. Not sure why she needs both. I noticed in operas that when there is panic, the characters voice becomes high pitched and they repeat words.

I do not like the Baron that much. He is set to marry a Nobel woman who was accepted by the Empress, but he is flirting at the Count who is pretending to be a maid. The Nobel woman, Sophia, was forced into the marriage by her father. She is frightened by the man, afraid of standing up for herself, and dependent on the Count to fight for her. He seems to want to take the maid to his house to make her/him his chamber maid. I don't think he is serious about the marriage at all except that he is looking for someone to deliver the silver rose to his Fiancé. This is what drives the plot along. The Baron is the type of man that has multiple women at his side. He mistreats his bride to be, Sophia causing the Count to come to defend her honor.

According to the Baron, a silver rose is given to a wife before marriage. The rose seems to be one of the main symbols. According to rkd.org (roses/colors), white roses mean "I am worthy of you." and secrecy. A single rose means "utmost devotion." This is the opposite of what the Barron is to his bride to be. The rose is more symbolic of the Count who works to fight the Barron. He deals with the Barron's advances to catch him in the act and bring him to justice. It was a very funny part of the opera. It reminds me of people not recognizing Superman as Clark Kent. The Barron cannot recognize the maid as the Count. The complex plan is discussed in the next paragraph

There is a love triangle between Sophia, the princess, and the Count. Despite the love triangle the Count works to take down the sleazy Baron in a complex plot. The Count dresses up as the maid that the Baron fell in love with. This was after the Count injured the Baron with a sword. In my opinion, the Baron overacted. Only his arm was injured and he was not dying. The Count flirts with the Baron and lures him to a Travin in Act 3. This is when my favorite moment of the opera happened. The Baron gets caught having more than one girl. I believed that the police arrested the Baron for this. The Count untimely chooses Sophia as his forever lover. There were no harsh feelings.

I am viewing this on a VHS recording of the opera thanks to YouTube. (playlist?list=PLCFABA7AF2136992A) The way that this opera is filmed, it is hard to discover all the technical elements that went into the opera. The camera centers us to view the important parts of the scene. In some scenes, we are treated to a full view of the stage mostly to set the setting of the scene. Most of the time, the camera tracks the most important character of the scene. We do not get to see the audience except for

the very beginning of the opera. Sometimes I can see some video distortions that are common for a VHS tape. As for the technical elements of the opera, we can really get a sense of it in Act III.

In Act III, when the count is catching the Barron in the act, there are many hiding places. On a single square in the floor, there is a secret room that opens. A man hides in that secret room and can pop up to surprise the Barron. Along the walls there are mirrors that open into a secret room to hide in. The citizens of the town enter the mirrors to hide and wait for the Barron. At a certain time, they pop out of the mirrors to scare the Barron. This was to make the count nervous and gave enough time for the maid to turn back in to the Count's real identity.

After the citizens went into their hiding spots, a person lights the lamp. During this time, they did not have light switches like we have today. The person lights up each lamp with a long stick with a fire end to it. They had to do this to each of the three points of a lamp before moving to the next lamp. Later, the Barron turns the lamp off by tapping the points with his hand with the help of a piece of cloth in order not to get burned. The Barron turned the light off so he could have privacy with his new lover. At the end of the opera, the princess's servant comes in to find her cloth. He/she does this by holding a candle in front of him/her much like a flashlight. I believe that the person controlling the light of the opera imitated the light of the candle by tracking it.

This Opera would be fun to turn into a modern game. I would have the game made in the Unreal engine. I would have the environment created in the Autodesk Maya program. The game assets would be made in either Blender or Maya. I would hire German voice actors to play the parts of the characters. In exchange, there would be an option to turn on English subtitles. Unlike the original opera, there will be no singing in the game except for birds in the forest area. I will divide the game up into four chapters.

The game's main playable character will be the Count with Sophia and the princess as the main characters. The Barron will be a supporting character member along with Sophia's father. The citizens of the town will be just npc characters that will help the Count with his quest. The Count will have combat skills, Stealth skills, a hunger bar, and a love meter with a symbol of Sophia and the Princess. The more you talk with Sophia or the Princess by person or by snail mail, the more the love meter rises with that person. This will affect the end of the game. The one with the highest love meter level is the one that you make your forever lover.

Let's talk about the levels. In Chapter 0 the player plays as the Barron traveling to Sophia's house at night. This is the tutorial level in which trains you how to fight with a sword using the "CTRL" key to attack. The arrow keys move the character around. The Barrons must fight the creatures of the forest who try to get into the [carriage](#). Use the "SPACE" key to command the horse to jump. Use the "SHIFT" key to command the horse to go faster. Unfortunately, the player has to pay attention to how tired or hungry the horse is. This is shown by a hunger and exhaustion bar at the bottom of the screen.

In Chapters 1 on, you play as the Count. In Chapter 1 the players must hide two times in the Princess's room. There will be a time limit for each which is shown on top of the screen. The player has a choice as where to hide the first time. The second time the only thing the player can do is to put on the maid outfit like in the original opera. If you are caught, it is game over.

In Chapter 2 you must travel by carriage to Sophia's house to deliver the Silver Rose. This part plays out like Chapter 0 but the Count has a more powerful sword than the Barron. Next, you must fight Sophia's Father and the Barron to save her from the arranged marriage. Before that you must fight the citizens of the town that try to apprehend you. Both Sophia's father and the Barron will have a health bar on them. They are the chapter's final bosses. Fight them with your sword until they reach 0%. They won't die but they will give up fighting you. The weak Barron will be injured until the end of Chapter 4.

In Chapter 4 you must direct everyone to hide. In the forced romance scene, you can choose different dialogue options to heighten the Barron's love for you. The Barron will have a love meter shown on the side of the screen. The higher the meter is the more chance that he will suspect you. If the love meter gets below 0% you get caught and it is game over. If you successfully woo him, you can give him to the morality police. From there the game chooses which girl to be your forever lover based on the levels of the love meter on each game.

In the last scene, you will see your character get married in an olden church. The whole town comes. You are congratulated by the Empress for your efforts to bring down the Barron. The Barron is sent to jail and is banned from the kingdom. Your character will get a nasty letter from the Barron blaming you for his misfortune. The game ends and goes to the menu. From there, you can view and play a chapter again. There is a button that will direct you a biography of each of the characters you met along your adventures.

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