

Fastnachts-Lust

Music theater after an Opera-Ballet
from the court of August the Strong

Libretto

Maria Aurora von Königsmarck

Music

Johann Christoph Schmidt

Spoken texts

Amal Reich

Text

CHARACTERS

Aurora

Aurora von Königsmarck (author of the piece she presents to us) /
mistress of August the Strong / Diana Morgenrot (director)

The Lover

Protagonist in Aurora von Königsmarck's piece, embodies her emotional world /
August the Strong / ensemble member

Hope

Allegory / part of Aurora von Königsmarck's emotional world /
mistress of August the Strong / ensemble member

Jealousy

Allegory / part of Aurora von Königsmarck's emotional world /
mistress of August the Strong / playmate of Joy / ensemble member

Joy

Allegory / mistress of ceremonies / mistress of August the Strong /
ensemble member

*The stage is open. No curtain. Rehearsal atmosphere.
The musicians chat as they take their places and warm up.
After a few minutes, the orchestra tunes and begins the overture.*

Overture

Johann Christoph Schmidt – Suite in G major “Ouverture”

Orchestra alone. No scene. The “Grand Air” begins immediately afterward.

Aurora enters

Johann Christoph Schmidt – Suite in G major “Grand Air”

Joy, Hope, Jealousy and Aurora enter in a processional dance.

Joy, Jealousy and Hope leave again during the dance.

Aurora remains on stage.

Prologue

Text: Amal Reich

Aurora von Königsmarck, as a historical figure, welcomes today’s audience.

AURORA

Illustrious! High- and well-born! Most mighty patrons!
You gracious friends of the Muses! Faithful subjects of radiant Apollo!
Do not be astonished by my appearance!
Yes, before you stands Countess Königsmarck.
Though I have long since been consigned to the dust of this world,
the power of art has brought me here today.
For where the Muses hold sway, time falls silent.

I look around this select company –
what splendor delights my eyes and my heart!
I see: even now there are people walking the earth
who value beauty more highly than the vain clamor of the world.
Yes, I recognize you at once:
In your eyes, intellect and artistic understanding sparkle like precious jewels.
Blessed is the one who carries such treasures within!
Fortune’s wheel cannot reach them.
And no thief can enter this inner vault
to steal them from there at night – the jewels.

But now to the reason for my return:
Once upon a time we dared
to devise, during Carnival at the Dresden court,
a little song-and-string play for the exalted.

It was to be a reflection of love,
of fidelity and sweet folly,
in which my young spirit once burned so ardently.
These songs were intended for the unyielding of heart,
for Cupid's arrows bring every suit of armor to its knees.

Today we wish to show you this Carnival piece.
The imperfect and all-too-weak text
– sprung from my fleeting pen –
seeks nothing but your gracious amusement.
For everything great has already been said,
and for thousands of years our kind have arrived too late!

Yet just as the flower stretches toward the warm sun,
so our little play thirsts for your gracious gaze.

Let others, in vain presumption,
lust after wealth and contracts,
only to end up as lonely shadows
wandering through the cold, wind-swept walls of Stolpen.
As for us – the golden radiance of the Muses is enough for us!
For while stone castles crumble
and recently built bridges, alas, sink so pitifully into the Elbe –
our verses defy time.

The magic of the old work makes its way twice over:
first it lives in the quiet contemplation of scholars,
and then continues in the colorful activity on the stage.
Art shines forth as ever-new hope,
Aurora's fame is renewed with every sweet note.

But consider this in good time:
Such a filigree structure of sound needs solid ground!
Only narrow-minded misers and despisers of Helicon
would apply their red pencil to Apollo's lyre.
Wise and exalted rulers know well
that true fame can only be secured through generosity!
Noblesse oblige!
For whoever economizes on beauty merely darkens the splendor
of their own age.
And a world without song is like a sky without stars.

Now then, gracious friends of the Muses, put on your masks!
Let us scatter the cares of the day to the winds
and surrender ourselves entirely to the intoxicating dance of allegories.

May the play of passions set your hearts aflame,
for your applause is the crown my spirit longs for!
Now experience the **Fastnachts-Lust!**

Aurora arranges the first scene.

AURORA

First scene: The Lover.

She positions the Lover.

The Lover holds a golden cloth belonging to his beloved in his hand.

With an entourage of musicians.

She positions the stage musicians.

*The (stage) musicians improvise on Johann Christoph Schmidt – Suite in G minor
“Chaconne”. But the beloved does not appear. The Lover is desperate.*

Aurora remains with him.

Opera-Ballet – First Scene “The Lover”

Libretto: Maria Aurora von Königsmarck

Music: Johann Christoph Schmidt

1 Recitativo

LOVER

Stop, stop! with the sound and play of strings,
You seek in vain to drive away my suffering.
Ever since my heart fell into Cupid’s net,
it has known no peace and must remain unhappy.

The stage musicians take their places in the orchestra during the recitative.

2 Aria

LOVER

You do not heal my pain,
let me weep here.

The lover gazes at Aurora. They come closer together.

Until after the night, the light of bright day
will shine upon the great world again.
Let me weep now!
Let me weep now.

3a Aria

Pantomime Aurora.

LOVER

Dark night, lead to the stars,
which are the source of suffering,
to tell from afar
what binds me to misfortune.
They who hurt me so deeply,
why do they not have the power
to place in the same condition
those who so mock my fidelity?

3b Ritornello

The Lover and Aurora perform the same pantomime synchronously once again.

4 Recitativo

LOVER

Is “loving faithfully” my crime?
Do you, stars, seek to avenge
that I love, and wish only
always to be loved in the same way.
You remain silent and let me lament,
and know nothing to say to comfort me.
Constancy, stand by me alone;
through you I hope to overcome the wrath of the stars,
and bring an ungrateful heart, however unjust it may be,
to understanding.

Aurora beckons Hope in.

Opera-Ballet – Second Scene “Hope and Jealousy”

Hope enters and comforts the Lover.

The Lover is fascinated by this beautiful woman.

5 Aria

HOPE

You stars, take heed,
spare faithful hearts.
You torments, abate,
let all pain cease.
Fate, where are you headed?
Change your treachery,
await your good fortune,
steadfast spirit.

Hope and the Lover move tenderly together like a couple in love.

Aurora watches, then beckons Jealousy over.

Jealousy enters. Hope sees Jealousy first.

Then the Lover sees Jealousy. He finds her attractive.

Hope tries to distract the Lover from Jealousy.

Hope wants the lover to stay focused on her.

6 Duettino

<i>Hope</i>	Only hope.
<i>Lover</i>	Yes, I will hope,
<i>Hope</i>	Love always, Be only faithful.
<i>Lover</i>	I am faithful.
<i>Both</i>	Thus your/my desire for love will finally be fulfilled, Such suffering brings no regret.

Jealousy attacks hope, pushes it aside, and targets the lover.

7 Recitativo

JEALOUSY

O false Hope, be silent.
Your joy is deception,
delay,
which only nourishes torment
and increases every affliction.
Cruelty alone is what your flattery is called.
I do not pretend when I show
that it is no time to hope
when the beloved withdraws her favor from us,
flees from us,
already burns with another love,
condemning us to perpetual pain.
The Lover is also fascinated by this beautiful woman. They draw closer.

8a Ritornello

Form: 8a – 8b 1 – 8a – 8b 2 – 8b 1 – 8a

Jealousy alternately draws the Lover toward her and pushes him away.

8b Aria

JEALOUSY

Forsaken love, hope no more.
You see your desire
embracing another,
nothing mocks, nothing wounds so deeply.
Forsaken love, hope no more.

*Jealousy also speaks to Aurora.
At the end of the aria, all the women (feelings) pull at the Lover.
The following lines by the Lover are an outburst!*

9 Recitativo

LOVER

Tyrannical love,
impulses of jealousy,
false appearance of hope,
you conspire
to be my death.

The Lover holds the cloth belonging to his beloved from the beginning and looks at it.

HOPE

She will turn back to you,
and your torments will end.

Hope and Jealousy fight over the Lover once more.

10 Aria

HOPE

As the rock in a raging flood
overcomes storm and waves,
so steadfast courage
finally finds its pleasure,
it must see much change,
yet remains what it was meanwhile,
until its misfortune passes,
all sorrow can be forgotten,
all suffering will be forgotten.

JEALOUSY

When the anchor rope breaks,
mast and sail must already break,
and the ship is declared lost,
what good is your promise of hope?
That is how it is in love:
when the change has been carried out,
a heart will never be happy again
that has been saddened by infidelity.

The Lover holds the cloth belonging to his beloved from the beginning and looks at it.

11a Recitativo

JEALOUSY

She sleeps, she does not hear you,
or she despises your songs,
the air merely brings back the empty sound to you,
she laughs at having caused the pain.
And wishes thereby to nurture the new love,
your sighing cannot move her,
another enjoys her favor.

11b Terzettino

<i>Jealousy</i>	Deceived one, awaken! To revenge!
<i>Hope</i>	Patience, patience.
<i>Lover</i>	To die, so I can recover, So I remain without (free of) guilt, So I have been faithful enough. To die.
<i>Jealousy</i>	To revenge.
<i>Hope</i>	Patience, patience.

Each character is here alone and isolated with their feelings. Aurora as well.

Opera-Ballet – Third Scene “Joy”

Joy enters the stage as a Baroque mistress of ceremonies. She wears a crinoline.

She drapes cheerfulness over the pain. She brings the masks.

The Lover is also fascinated by this beautiful woman.

He receives the sun mask and increasingly becomes August.

12 Recitativo

JOY

Who is making themselves heard here with so many laments?

Who seeks to disturb my pleasure?

Will my Carnival be celebrated in such a way
that people weep while she laughs?

Let sadness go,
follow my desire,
and whoever wishes to spare themselves the joys,
let them leave this place.

Joy threatens the characters with exclusion from the festivities if they are not cheerful.

The following aria is also addressed to the audience. Here Joy breaks the fourth wall.

13 Aria

JOY

For pleasure, for delight,
now is the time
to refresh oneself again,
after danger and strife.
You warriors,
you victors,
I offer you the dance,
Joy is well suited to the laurel crown.

BALLO OF THE CARNIVAL

14 ENTREE 1

Dressing dance: All characters receive crinolines.

The women dress first, powder their faces, and look at themselves in the mirror.

Then they all dress August.

15 ENTREE 2

Courtly dance: One man and four women, or rather August and his mistresses.

16 Aria

JOY

Masked faces, so disguised for pleasure,
you jest and deceive as you please.
Yet you cannot conceal your glorious deeds,
one can clearly see the hero's nature,
it seeks to reveal him, it must betray him,
the fist that defied a hundred thousand men.

Joy flirts intensely with August. The two draw closer.

ENTREE 2 is repeated.

Homage dance: Now all the other women crowd in between.

The women pay homage to August in a completely exaggerated manner. Each wants to be first with him. One of Joy's playmates (formerly Jealousy) prevails and sings:

17 Aria

JOY'S PLAYMATE

To him who wishes to grant us pleasure,
the dance shall be dedicated,
to celebrate this festival often,
to see as many victories
as the year has days of light,
fairest Joy, lead the ranks,
sweet Hope, join in as well.

18 ENTREE 3

Hope blindfolds August with the golden cloth.

Everyone plays blind man's buff.

Fourth Scene – Afterpiece

Texts: Amal Reich

Twist into the present day! A mobile phone rings.

Everyone is initially somewhat irritated, but ignores the sound.

Diana (Aurora) is annoyed because the ringing is disturbing her rehearsal.

The phone keeps ringing.

Then Diana notices that it is HER phone. She takes it and checks who is calling.

Then she interrupts Entree 3, or rather the rehearsal. General bewilderment.

The singers move into the background, the orchestra remains seated.

It now becomes clear that this piece has another layer.

Everything that has happened so far was a rehearsal!

Phone call with the lawyer

DIANA MORGENROT

Oh... I have to take this.

Stopstopstopstopstop. Everyone, please. Quiet for a moment. Stop for a second.

But don't run away.

We'll jump straight into the finale then. Thank you!

(Takes off the wig). To Hope:.

Connie – rehearse the last Entree once more. (Entree two.)

Whispers.

That's my lawyer.

Into the phone.

Diana Morgenrot.

Yes, Doctor Gütlich... yes, I'm listening.

... Mhm.

*The singers leave the platform, bewildered and embarrassed,
but remain in the background and whisper among themselves and with the musicians.*

No, please speak plainly. I'm a director.

... I see.

So he considers that "appropriate."

Louder.

Appropriate!!

She looks at the singers. They pretend they haven't heard anything.

No, I'm not getting upset. It's all right.

Yes...

Yes...

Doctor, please. Don't tell me anything about the legal situation.
Of course I know we weren't married.
Fritz doesn't marry women.
Fritz collects women.
Other people collect coins or records.
He collects singers, dancers, gallery owners,
yoga teachers, and me.
Although I'm the only one in his collection
who speaks in complete sentences.

What? No. I'm not interested in the new one.
Not at all.
Not in the slightest.
Ah, an actress. What else...
How young? ... Thirty-three?
Then at least she's old enough
to sign her own contracts. How reassuring.

She looks at the singers again. They whisper and giggle. Diana draws their attention and indicates that they should repeat the Baroque dance movements.

... Please? Yes, I'm listening to you.
She looks at the singers. They begin trying the movements.

Wait... What?
I have "lived luxuriously"?
That's not an argument.
Of course I've lived luxuriously!
What do you imagine?
The impresario travels in the luxury car and I come on a folding bicycle?

She listens. Her voice gets louder.
Doctor Gütlich, I was his constant!
Who was the one who had his back?
Who was the woman he always asked for advice?
Her voice gets even louder.
I know which ministers he addresses by their first names!
I know his passwords!

*The singers prick up their ears. Diana looks at them. They continue rehearsing.
Diana lowers her voice again.*
No, I'm not threatening him.
I'm merely reminding you of the facts.

She listens for a long time. Regains her composure.

Doctor Gütlich... Now listen to me carefully.

I don't want a campaign of revenge.

That would be too banal.

I merely want a financial settlement that corresponds to my standard of living.

And to my emotional wear and tear.

And then there is our son Max.

Perhaps we shouldn't lose sight of him entirely in all this.

After all, he is the only joint creation
that Fritz cannot simply recast.

She listens.

Yes ... he was generous.

Diamonds ... yes.

Those were gifts ... tokens of attention ... as one does.

In return, he got a woman who at every business dinner was cleverer
than all the guests put together. Absolutely at home in high society!

Add that up against each other!

Brief pause.

Excuse me?

What he made possible for me?

Yes ...

Yes ... my greatest productions ... yes ...

... with budgets other directors can only dream of, yes, yes,
but that isn't the point here.

Besides, HE got the credit for it in the end.

What, what else? ...

Yes, the position at Quälenburg Theater. (Knackstede, Spießbürgel)

As director, mind you.

Not as artistic director. And despite the fact that he spoke to the supervisory
board.

That isn't support –
that's an accelerator for a descent!

The singers giggle, whisper, and make funny dance movements.

Yes ...

And what?

She listens intently.

A settlement...

Because of Max.

Good.

Yes, do that.

And when?

Oh, he's not there right now?

... in Venice with the new one ...

Sarcastically.

"La Venezia" ... what else ...

Yes, yes, our Fritz...

First he treats women like opening nights.

And in the end they are merely repertoire!

No, you don't have to pass that on to him.

Yes ...

Yes ...

No, begin immediately.

Absolutely!

I want us to fight.

And if necessary...

with everything that law and decency have to offer.

Yes. That is my final word.

Goodbye, Doctor Gütlich.

Diana is very agitated.

She looks toward the orchestra and the singers. She knows what is being said about her.

Then she dials a number.

Phone call with her sister

DIANA MORGENROT

Isabell? ... Isabell?

Finally.

No, no panic attack.

I just wanted to hear your voice.

I was just talking to the lawyer.

Yes, about Fritz.

He's in Venice.

Well, Fritz.

With her.

And maybe even in the same hotel ...

Sorry. I really don't know right now...

Can we see each other later?

Yes?

Thank you, sister. Thank you!

She calms down somewhat.

You're my only friend, you know that?

Yes, that's sad.

Ever since I've known Fritz,

I can't stand other women.

Especially not when they're pretty.

I can't walk past one

without calculating the probability:

Age.

Humor.

Legs.

Availability.

As if I were from Human Resources.

I know it sounds paranoid.

It probably is.

And so stupid!

I knew from the beginning who he was.

A womanizer, a pickup artist. A ...

What?

She has to smile. Isabell's insults do her good.

"Relationship junkyard"? Sure, why not.

"Fritz, the loser" ... also very good!

Well, "emotional dyslexic" is perhaps a little ...

Isabell, Isabell, now that's vulgar ...

Laughs.

No, "bastard" is quite enough.

What I was going to say:

I should have known what I was getting myself into.

And yet I thought:

It will be different with me. This is where it stops.

I am the exception.

I AM THE ONLY ONE.

More quietly. Sadly.

And do you know what I still have to think about?

His arms.

... those terrible, wonderful arms.

When he holds me really tightly...

Oh, Isabell...

To be desired like that...

... is intoxicating.

... so completely irrational.

... chemical.

... powerful.

The feeling of being irresistible.

... is perhaps the most beautiful thing in the world.

And sometimes I still hope

This is grotesque!

Me of all people.

I am a mature, educated, emancipated woman.

And I waste my life on a man

who breaks up with every woman –

except his mother.

How pathetic.

How pathetically female.

No! Strike that.

Not female. Human.
But pathetic nonetheless.

What?
Teach him a lesson?
How?
Well, you're funny...
And what good would that do?
Then I'd only lose the last bit of ...
Besides, that's a criminal offense ...
She has to smile again. Isabell does her good – as she has so often ...

What? You have the solution? Well, let's hear it.
... "international women's strike"?...
"sexual embargo"? ... Aha ...
Not against everyone ... just against Fritz.
That sounds good!
Yes, imagine: Nobody sleeps with him.
Nobody flirts.
Nobody answers his messages.
Dead calm. Low tide. Nothing at all. Game over!
Very nice!!!

She works herself up. Laughs. She gets more and more carried away. Everyone else stands still and listens ever more attentively. Only she laughs.

You know, I can see it right in front of me:
On the first day he's still completely composed
and "enjoys" his freedom.
On the third day he posts a photo with the caption:
"Healing begins in silence."
Of course in black and white!
And then, after two weeks ...
What? Yes ... exactly.
He signs up for Tinder!
Casanova on the dating app – the downfall of Western civilization.
She laughs loudly.
Or ... You, listen, I've got it:

He moves in with his mother ...
She laughs loudly and exuberantly. Laughs her troubles away.
Everyone stands frozen and looks at her.
Then she slowly stops laughing and looks around. She sees the actors. Silence.
Then the singers begin the Baroque dance movements again.

Oh, you know what, sis?
I'll do it my way:
I mean, if Fritz Kraft thinks
he can dispose of me like a discarded theater set...
...then the artistic director is mistaken.
The director still gets to tell the ending.
And I have never let a comedy end without a punchline.
I'm going to write a play. Nothing big.
A small, refined comedy of manners –
about lavish budgets and poor manners ...
Any resemblance to living persons is, of course, purely coincidental!
And if this musclemán recognizes himself in it,
so much the better!

She looks toward the orchestra and singers again.
You know, I'm going back to the rehearsal. They're waiting.

Ah, this crazy life –
it constantly gives you stage directions
that you yourself would never have approved.

She smiles.
Yes.
I'll come by later.
Then we'll celebrate.
Oh, just because...
See you then.

She slowly hangs up.
Takes a deep breath. Goes to the rehearsal with renewed composure.

All right, kids, I'm back.
Come on, let's do the finale now.
(Puts the wig back on).
The musicians tune up once more.
The singers take their positions on stage for the ribbon dance.

Grand-Ballet

20

Johann Christoph Schmidt – Suite in G minor “Intrade”

Ribbon dance

August gives each woman a small golden box. Inside the boxes are red ribbons. August holds the ribbons firmly. As soon as the women move away from him, the ribbons become longer. August has the women in his hand like marionettes. The women dance around him, and in this way he becomes increasingly entangled in the ribbons. In the end he stands there as if bound – fully wrapped. Silence. Aurora approaches him and gently strokes his cheek. A touching moment. Then, as the historical figure Aurora von Königsmarck, she turns to the audience.

Epilogue

AURORA

Illustrious friends of our play, gracious festive company,
you highly esteemed guests of Apollo!
Carnival is a wonderful gift:
for only in Carnival does what otherwise the seriousness of life denies us
become possible.
Oh, what pleasure, oh, what comfort,
to shed one's own skin for a while and be someone completely different.
And is it not so that at precisely the moment
when we forget ourselves, we are closest to ourselves?
For behind masks, dreams become bold, wishes become light –
and strangers find one another as merry companions.
But now words shall no longer rule,
for the cheerful ballet begins at the end.
If our Carnival Revelry has been a pleasant spectacle for you,
take a smile with you as you leave.
The fireworks of the stars are already sparkling.
And if you have the courage, join this colorful company of dreamers
and float with us into a wonderful night.

21

Johann Christoph Schmidt – Suite in D major “Ritornello”

The women help August untangle the ribbons. Everyone enjoys it.

Everyone removes their crinolines.

The movements become contemporary.

The singers take party pictures with their phones for social media.

22

Johann Christoph Schmidt – Suite in D major “Passepied I & II”

Carnival choreography with a polonaise at the end.