

Johann
STRAUSS II
Wiener Blut



Elisabeth Schwarzkopf • Nicolai Gedda • Erich Kunz
Emmy Loose • Erika Köth • Karl Dönch
Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus
Otto Ackermann

NAXOS

Great Operetta Recordings

Johann
STRAUSS II
(1825-1899)

Wiener Blut

Operetta in Three Acts

Arranged by Adolf Müller, Jr.

Libretto by Victor Léon and Leo Stein

Prince Ypsheim-Gindelbach (<i>Prime Minister</i>)	.....	Karl Dönch (baritone)
Balduin Count Zedlau (<i>Count</i>)	.....	Nicolai Gedda (tenor)
Gabriele (<i>Countess</i>)	.....	Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano)
Count Bitowski	.....	Karel Stepanek (speaking rôle)
Demoiselle Franziska Cagliari (<i>Franzi</i>)	.....	Erika Köth (soprano)
		& Hannah Norbert (speaking rôle)
Kagler	.....	Alois Pernerstorfer (speaking rôle)
Pepi Pleininger	.....	Emmy Loose (soprano)
Josef	.....	Erich Kunz (baritone)

Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus
Otto Ackermann

Recorded 21st-22nd, 26th-28th and 31st May, 1954 in Kingsway Hall, London
First issued on Columbia 33CX 1186 and 1187

Reissue Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Act I		32:25	16 <i>Nein, nein, daraus werd' ich nicht klug ...</i> 1:43 <i>Ja, ja, Gefahr ist im Verzug ... Der Graf der treibt ...</i> (Countess, Count, Prime Minister, Franzi)
1	<i>Anna, Anna, Anna!</i> (Josef)	2:41	
2	<i>Pepi! Er?</i> (Franzi, Josef)	0:52	
3	<i>Fünf volle Tag' ...</i> (Franzi, Josef)	1:33	
4	<i>Er hat mir also die Wahrheit gesagt?</i> (Dialogue)	1:05	
5	<i>Gruß Gott, mein liebes Kind!</i> (Count, Franzi)	3:43	
6	<i>Verzeihung, Exzellenz, die Akten ...</i> (Dialogue)	1:31	
7	<i>Na, also schreib' und du' nicht schmieren!</i> (Count, Josef)	3:50	
8	<i>Wenn mich die Demoiselle fragt</i> (Dialogue)	0:11	
9	<i>Wünsch' guten Morgen, Herr von Pepi!</i> (Pepi, Josef)	1:52	
10	<i>Endlich ist Sie da, Mamsell</i> (Dialogue)	1:36	
11	<i>Da ist sie ja!</i> (Kagler, Prime Minister, Josef, Franzi)	1:41	
12	<i>Ein sehr jovialer alter Herr</i> (Prime Minister, Franzi)	0:42	
13	<i>Ich kann mich nicht beklagen</i> (Prime Minister, Franzi)	3:41	
14	<i>Es hat dem Grafen nichts genützt ...</i> <i>Grüß dich Gott ...</i> (Countess)	3:37	
15	<i>Ich klopfte ganz vergebens</i> (Prime Minister, Countess, Count)	2:05	
			Act II 25:51
			17 <i>Mein lieber Graf ...</i> 0:30 (Dialogue)
			18 <i>Das eine kann ich nicht verzeih'n</i> 1:07 (Countess, Count)
			19 <i>Ich war ein echtes Wiener Blut ... Wiener Blut!</i> 4:24 (Countess/Count)
			20 <i>Ich fürchte, ich verlieb mich noch</i> <i>in meine eigene Frau</i> (Dialogue) 0:33
			21 <i>So nimm, mein süßer Schatz ...</i> <i>Die Schrift, die kenn' ich ...</i> (Count, Pepi, Josef) 3:24
			22 <i>Geh' schau, mein liebes Schatzerl</i> (Josef, Pepi) 1:35
			23 <i>Er ist fort? Wirklich fort?</i> (Pepi) 0:49
			24 <i>O der Herr Fürst!</i> (Dialogue) 2:02
			25 <i>Durchlaucht!</i> (Countess, Prime Minister) 3:01
			26 <i>Ich habe gewonnen, ich habe gesiegt</i> (Prime Minister, Franzi, Countess, Pepi, Josef, Count) 5:57
			27 <i>Das ist die Gräfin?</i> 0:49 (Prime Minister, Franzi, Countess, Pepi, Count, Chorus)
			28 <i>Die Wienerstadt, sie hat ein Symbol</i> (Count, Chorus, All) 1:39

Act III		11:27	32 <i>Stoß an, stoß an, du Liebchen mein</i>	1:29
			(Count, Pepi, Countess, Franzi, Prime Minister, Josef)	
29	<i>Geht's und verkauft's mei G'wand</i>	1:39	33 <i>Nein, nein, Herr Graf!</i>	2:48
	(Two Maidens, Host, Countess, Prime Minister)		(Dialogue)	
30	<i>So kommen Sie und zögern Sie nicht länger</i>	1:32	34 <i>Wiener Blut!</i>	0:51
	(Countess, Prime Minister)		(All)	
31	<i>Hier sind die Lauben</i>	3:08		
	(Count, Franzi, Josef, Pepi)			

Producer's Note

The present transfer was made from German LP pressings. A couple of instances of dropout appear to be inherent in the original master tape.

Mark Obert-Thorn

Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

Wiener Blut

The first performances of *Wiener Blut* took place on 26th October, 1899, at the Carl Theatre, Vienna, four months after the death of Johann Strauss II. The commission for the intended work had come from Franz Jauner, the manager of the Carl Theatre. The original idea for the operetta, the title of which was taken from one of Strauss's most popular waltzes, was for the creation of a stage work that made use of melodies from old and overlooked compositions by Strauss. With the composer's approval the task of selecting and arranging the music was carried out by Adolf Müller, Junior, the house conductor at the Theater an der Wien. The book was provided by Viktor Léon, Jauner's chief director at the Carl Theatre, and Leo Stein, who was to become one of the most experienced authors of operetta plots in Vienna. A later libretto for which Léon and Stein were responsible was that of Lehár's highly successful *The Merry Widow*, first performed in Vienna on 30th December 1905. Jauner had high hopes for *Wiener Blut* and staged a lavish production. The first night, however, was a fiasco, and after only thirty performances, it was taken off the Carl Theatre's programme, to make way for *The Geisha* by Sidney Jones. Bankrupted by the production's failure, Jauner shot himself on 23rd February 1900. Five years later, with a slightly adjusted book and score, *Wiener Blut* was revived at the Theater an der Wien, where it was an unexpected success. It entered the repertoire of the Vienna Volksoper in 1928, where it has remained ever since.

Léon and Stein's book is set at the time of the Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815, a major international conference that sought to settle Europe after the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars. This in reality has little to do with the traditional operetta plot of mistaken identities, richly larded with many recognisable Viennese characters in a setting that reflects the era of Biedermeier and bourgeois comfort, but which also pays clear homage to the later world of Strauss's greatest operetta *Die Fledermaus*. In brief the ambassador Count Zedlau, although married to Gabriele, is having affairs with both the ballerina Franzini and the model Pepi. Pepi in turn is engaged to his valet Josef. Zedlau's

attempts to keep all his relationships in balance at the same time results in a confusion not uncommon to the world of Viennese operetta, which is made even more chaotic through the involvement of the aged but amorous Prime Minister, Prince Ypsheim-Gindelbach. After much intrigue, many misunderstandings, and numerous false identities, Zedlau realises that his heart belongs to Gabriele, who generously forgives him for his numerous amatory indiscretions.

The setting of words to Strauss's orchestral compositions is not at all inappropriate: *The Blue Danube* itself started out as a work for chorus. Strauss himself admitted having composed the music for another of his finest operettas, *A Night in Venice*, having only seen the words of the vocal numbers, and not the substantial connecting dialogue. When he discovered what the plot was actually about, at the final rehearsals, he admitted to a friend that he was horrified. In *Wiener Blut* Adolf Müller's handling of his wide-ranging source material is free but effective. His skill can be seen for instance in the way that he links *Wine, Woman and Song* to *The Blue Danube* in the finale of Act II; and in the duet for Pepi and Josef in Act I, which makes use of the polka *Leichter Blut*, Müller introduces a sparkling key change that might well have been by Strauss. Other well-known compositions by Strauss that he used include the waltzes *Tales from the Vienna Woods* in the Introduction, and *Morning Papers* in Gabriele's entrance aria in Act I. Another effective arrangement of Strauss's melodies for the stage is *1,001 Night's*, a re-working of his first operetta *Indigo and the Forty Thieves*. *1,001 Nights* was first performed at the Volksoper in Vienna on 27th October 1907, with a new libretto by Leo Stein - one of the authors of the book for *Wiener Blut* - and Carl Lindau, and with musical rearrangements by Ernst Reiterer.

Walter Legge's production of *Wiener Blut*, recorded in London during May 1954, formed part of a set for the Columbia label conducted by the great Romanian maestro Otto Ackermann, a major figure in the post-war operatic world. Other operettas directed by

Ackermann for Legge in this series, all featuring Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Nicolai Gedda and Erich Kunz in the leading rôles, included *The Gypsy Baron* and *A Night in Venice*, both by Johann Strauss, and *The Merry Widow* and *The Land of Smiles*, both by Franz Lehár. Shortly before his death Ackermann also conducted a less well-known edition of *Die Fledermaus* for Legge, recorded in stereo.

Otto Ackermann (1909-1960) studied at the Royal Academy of Music in Bucharest and at the High School for Music in Berlin. A natural musician, by the age of fifteen he was conducting a tour of the Royal Romanian Opera. Three years later, in 1927, he was appointed to the post of conductor at the Opera House in Düsseldorf. He remained there until 1932, when he moved to Brno in Czechoslovakia to take up a similar position. From 1935 to 1947 he was the musical director at the municipal theatre of Berne in Switzerland. After World War II he held two significant appointments, partly in parallel: first that of conductor at the Vienna State Opera, from 1947 to 1952, and second, that of general music director at the Zürich Opera, from 1949 to 1955. This was followed by a return to Germany as general music director at the Cologne Opera, from 1955 to 1958. Subsequently he returned to his old post at Zürich. Throughout the post-war years he appeared in many of Europe's major opera houses as a distinguished guest.

The German soprano **Elisabeth Schwarzkopf** (1915-2006) studied at the Berlin High School for Music and with the soprano Maria Ivogün. She made her stage début in 1938 as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal* at the Städtische Oper, Berlin. She moved to the Vienna State Opera in 1943, then under the direction of Karl Böhm, where she sang light soprano rôles. Following her appearances with this company in London in 1947, she was engaged by the newly-formed Covent Garden Opera Company, where for five seasons she sang many different parts, mostly in English. Later she created there the character of Cressida in the first performances of Walton's opera *Troilus and Cressida*, given in 1954. During this period her international career developed, with appearances in Europe at La Scala, Milan, and the Salzburg Festival, and in America at the San Francisco

Opera and the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Towards the end of her operatic career she concentrated on a limited number of parts, notably the Marschallin, Fiordiligi, Donna Elvira, and the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*. She married Walter Legge in 1953.

The Swedish tenor **Nicolai Gedda** (b. 1925) was born in Stockholm to Russian and Swedish parents. Following a period of vocal study at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, he made his début in 1951. He soon caught the attention of Walter Legge, who did much to help develop his career through numerous recordings. Gedda quickly established a significant operatic career, making his début at La Scala, Milan, in 1953, followed by appearances in London, Paris, and New York. He created the part of Anatol in Samuel Barber's opera *Vanessa* in the first performances conducted by Dmitri Mitropoulos at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, in 1958. A singer of remarkable versatility, whose voice seemed unaffected by the passage of time, Gedda was still recording in 2002.

The Austrian baritone **Erich Kunz** (1909-1995) was born in Vienna, where he studied singing with Theo Lierhammer and Hans Duhan. He made his operatic début as Osmín in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Troppau in 1933. He was a member of the chorus of the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 1935. After spells with the opera companies of Plauen (1936-37) and Breslau (1937-41) he joined the Vienna State Opera in 1940, where he soon established himself as a firm favourite with local audiences, and appeared at the Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals in 1943. His first appearance in London, like that of Schwarzkopf, was as a member of the Vienna State Opera on its 1947 visit. He returned to Glyndebourne in 1950 to sing Guglielmo in *Costa fan tutte*. Between 1952 and 1954 he was a member of the company of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Possessed of a most 'gemütlich' personality, he was an ideal exponent of both Viennese operetta and popular songs.

A firm believer in the musical traditions of Berlin and Vienna, Legge surrounded his principal singers in this recording with a stellar cast of supporting artists. **Karl Dönch** (1915-1994) epitomizes the lecherous

Prime Minister Ypsheim-Gindelbach, while the two Viennese spitfires, Franzi and Pepi are admirably portrayed by **Erika Köth** (1927-1989) and **Emmy Loose** (1914-1987). Otto Ackermann persuades the **Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus** to rival their colleagues in Vienna, to create a recording that has well

stood the test of time, as well as enshrining the art of many of the finest post-war exponents of this elusive repertoire.

David Patmore

Synopsis

Act I

1 The scene is the villa of Count Zedlau, ambassador of Reuss-Schleiz-Greiz to Vienna. The period is that of the Congress of Vienna. Josef, the Count's manservant, is anxiously trying to find his master, for whom he has papers that require his immediate attention. He calls out for the maid, Anna, who is equally elusive. **2** The Count's mistress, the dancer Franziska Cagliari, appears, also seeking the Count. **3** She has not seen him for five whole days and is bound to wonder what he is up to, and suspects that he may be deceiving her.

4 They are interrupted by Franzi's father, Kagler, a circus manager, who wants to make certain that his daughter is ready to perform at a ball at Count Bitowski's that night. He leaves, as the Count appears.

5 The Count greets Franzi, who complains at being left alone for five days, wondering what new girl he may have found. He assures her that he has been with his wife, as he must, to keep up appearances, but remains devoted to the girl. She leaves, seemingly satisfied with this explanation. **6** The Count tells Josef that he was seen with the Countess by the Prime Minister of Reuss-Schleiz-Greiz, Prince Ypsheim-Gindelbach, who presumed she was his mistress, not his wife. He has, in any case, seen another girl, a mannequin, and wants to arrange a meeting with her. Josef suggests that something might be possible that evening at Hietzing.

7 The Count makes Josef sit down and write a letter to the girl, making his feelings very clear.

8 The Count leaves. At this point Pepi Pleininger, a mannequin and Josef's girl-friend, comes in. It is to her that, unwittingly, Josef has written the Count's letter.

9 She is going that evening to the celebration at

Hietzing, but Josef has to work and cannot go with her.

10 The two girls discuss the dress that Pepi is arranging for Franzi's appearance that evening. As they leave, the Prime Minister arrives, asking for the Count. Josef tells him that the Count and Countess are out, only to be contradicted by Kagler, who has returned and imagines that the reference is to his daughter Franzi, assuring the Prime Minister that she is there. **11** On Franzi's return she finds her father assuring the Prime Minister that she is in, to Josef's dismay. Franzi is flattered to receive a visit from the Prime Minister, while he cannot understand the Count's behaviour in neglecting her, his supposed wife. Matters are further complicated by Kagler's interventions, before he leaves, having offered the Prime Minister the use of his horses. **12** As the old man goes, the Prime Minister admits that he cannot understand Viennese dialect too well, but Franzi assures him that it becomes easier, as time goes on. He tells her that he is surprised that the Count has kept her hidden.

13 Franzi tells him that she cannot complain, but the Prime Minister offers his sympathy; he has heard talk of the Count's affair with a dancer, Cagliari. She tries to tell him who she is, but the Prime Minister will not hear her, having seen the Count with another woman that very day, driving with her in an open carriage; he tells her that these flirtations do not last and a man will in the end return to his wife. Franzi leaves him, angry at the suggestion, and he realises that he has not handled things diplomatically, as he goes.

14 To add further complication, at this point the Countess appears, pleased to see the familiar room as it always was, recalling happier days there, and going out.

15 The Prime Minister returns, regretting his clumsiness. When the Countess comes back, the Prime Minister berates her with her effrontery in coming there. The Count appears, to be accused by the Prime Minister

of bringing his mistress to the villa, where his wife is. The Count tries to urge his wife away. **16** She knows her husband is up to something, while the Count tries to find a way out of the situation and the Prime Minister continues to express his disapproval. Franzí's arrival does nothing to help matters, but the Count asks the Prime Minister to say the lady is his wife; he agrees, but presents the Countess as his wife, still believing that Franzí is the Countess.

Act II

17 At Count Bitowski's ball the Countess suggests to her husband that the woman at the villa must have been his mistress. The Count explains that Franzí was in fact a former mistress of the Prime Minister. **18** They discuss their marriage, her earlier life in her parents' mansion, and his good fortune in marrying her. **19** The Countess, though, is from Vienna, and the Count from Reuss-Greiz-Schleiz, lacking the spirit of Vienna; he had changed, however, from a solid man into a real Don Juan, forgetting his origins, and living, people say, with mistresses. **20** The Count feels that he is falling in love with his wife, while Franzí, who has appeared, thinks the woman at the villa must be the Count's mistress.

21 He sees Pepi and gives her the note that Josef had written for him. She recognises the writing, imagining it is Josef who is proposing a meeting at the Hietzing celebration that evening. Josef comes in, preoccupied with his duties, and telling her that he is too busy to meet her at Hietzing. **22** He tries to mollify her, but leaves. **23** She now realises that the note she has read was really from the Count, and she will accept the invitation. **24** The Prime Minister warns Kagler that his daughter is being deceived by the Count with another woman. The Countess sees Pepi and her husband, and thinks she must be Franzí. She asks the Count to take her to Hietzing, but he tells her he has work to do with the Prime Minister, using the same excuse to Franzí, when she asks the same thing. **25** The Prime Minister persuades the Countess to accompany him, still supposing that the real Countess is Franzí, the Count's

mistress. **26** He assures Franzí that he will prevent the Count taking his supposed mistress, his wife, to Hietzing; the Countess will go to Hietzing with him. He introduces the two women to each other, as the Countess joins them, presenting the Countess as Demoiselle Cagliari and Franzí as the Countess, to the amusement of both of them. The Countess, however, thinks that Pepi is her husband's mistress, Franzí Cagliari. Josef is called on to resolve the difficulty, but complicates matters by assuring them that none of the three is Franzí, telling Pepi to keep quiet, when she seems about to reveal something of the truth. It seems that the arrival of the Count may help, but he turns the whole thing into a joke. **27** When the majordomo calls for the ladies to assemble in order of rank, the Prime Minister and Franzí are amazed to find the identity of the real Countess. **28** The act ends in a song and dance, to familiar strains.

Act III

29 The third act is set at Hietzing, opening in general enjoyment. **30** The Countess and the Prime Minister are together, the latter uneasy at what is happening. **31** The Count appears, resolved to make the most of his assignation with Pepi, observed by Josef and Franzí.

32 The Count urges Pepi to drink champagne with him, as one only lives once. Franzí and the Countess discuss men's fidelity. **33** The Count and Pepi whisper together, but Josef is horrified to find that it is his Pepi that the Count has arranged to meet. The Count is confronted by his wife, and as all complexities are finally resolved, the Prime Minister puts the whole thing down to Wiener Blut, Viennese Spirit. **34** The act ends in praise of the spirit of Vienna.

Keith Anderson

Playing
Time
69:43

Johann
STRAUSS II
(1825–1899)
Wiener Blut

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Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus
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Recorded 21st-22nd, 26th-28th and 31st May, 1954
in Kingsway Hall, London

One of the legendary series of operetta recordings produced by Walter Legge with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the early 1950s, this classic account of *Wiener Blut* features the ideal vocal partnership of soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and tenor Nicolai Gedda, both at the height of their powers. Viennese charm is provided in abundance by Vienna State Opera stars Erich Kunz and Karl Dönch, with Erika Köth and Emmy Loose vividly portraying the two glamorous Viennese spitfires, Franzl and Pepi. The whole performance is masterfully led by Otto Ackermann, one of the greatest post-war conductors of this elusive repertoire.

1-16 Act I

32:25 29-34 Act III

11:27

17-28 Act II

25:51

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