



NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY: **Live**



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New England Conservatory
Undergraduate Opera Studio
proudly presents

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Così fan tutte
(Act 1)

Libretto by
Lorenzo Da Ponte

Steven Goldstein, *stage director*
Justin Williams, *music director*
Elizabeth Camele, *stage manager*
Kiara Escalera, *costumes*
Sujin Choi, *rehearsal pianist*

Michael Meraw, UGOS artistic director

Friday, March 31, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.
Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

CAST

Edward Ferran	FERRANDO
Nicholas Ottersberg Enriquez	GUGLIELMO
Wenxin Sha	DON ALFONSO
Sophia Donelan	FIORDILIGI
Madeleine Wiegers	DORABELLA
Cori Beth Luebke-Brown	DESPINA

Yechan Min, Don Alfonso understudy

Director's note

What are we to do with *Così fan tutte*? The music is sublime, the way it works into and out of the story is fantastic, but in the end we're left with a story where two women who are completely attached to their boyfriends are shown to be fickle in the face of two "new" men (in reality their boyfriends in disguise) to prove an older embittered man right. There are many apologetics for the story, and some of them seem true, and they all boil down to "mess around and find out." And in the end we're all not so satisfied with that. The question is, do we present it just as it is and laugh at the ridiculous of the situation, or do we try to bring something else into it. We chose the latter.

What you'll read below is the regular synopsis of *Così*. Just add to the mix that the women see the original wager being made, and even though they recognize that their boyfriends are betting on their fidelity to them, the fact that they gamble anything doesn't make them happy. The men should have simply told Alfonso that they don't need to prove anything to them, and that they trust their girlfriends. But then we wouldn't have this amazing piece of music theater.

Synopsis

Act I

Scene 1: A coffeehouse

In a cafe, Ferrando and Guglielmo (two officers) express certainty that their fiancées (Dorabella and Fiordiligi, respectively) will be eternally faithful. Don Alfonso expresses skepticism and claims that there is no such thing as a faithful woman. He lays a wager with the two officers, claiming he can prove in a day's time that those

two, like all women, are fickle. The wager is accepted: the two officers will pretend to have been called off to war; soon thereafter they will return in disguise and each attempt to seduce the other's lover. The scene shifts to the two women, who are praising their men (duet: "Ah guarda sorella" — "Ah look sister"). Alfonso arrives to announce the bad news: the officers have been called off to war. Ferrando and Guglielmo arrive, brokenhearted, and bid farewell (quintet: "Sento, o Dio, che questo piede è restio" — "I feel, oh God, that my foot is reluctant"). As the boat with the men sails off to sea, Alfonso and the sisters wish them safe travel (trio: "Soave sia il vento" — "May the wind be gentle"). Alfonso, left alone, gloatingly predicts that the women (like all women) will prove unfaithful (arioso: "Oh, poverini, per femmina giocare cento zecchini?" — "Oh, poor little ones, to wager 100 sequins on a woman").

Scene 2: A room in the sisters' home

Despina, the maid, arrives and asks what is wrong. Dorabella bemoans the torment of having been left alone (aria: "Smanie implacabili" — "Torments implacable"). Despina mocks the sisters, advising them to take new lovers while their betrotheds are away (aria: "In uomini, in soldati, sperare fedeltà?" — "In men, in soldiers, you hope for faithfulness?"). After they leave, Alfonso arrives. He fears Despina will recognize the men through their disguises, so he bribes her into helping him to win the bet. The two men then arrive, dressed as mustachioed Albanians (sextet: "Alla bella Despinetta" — "Meet the pretty Despinetta"). The sisters enter and are alarmed by the presence of strange men in their home. The "Albanians" tell the sisters that they were led by love to them (the sisters). However, the sisters refuse to give in. Fiordiligi asks the "Albanians" to leave and pledges to remain faithful (aria: "Come scoglio" — "Like a rock"). The "Albanians" continue the attempt to win over the sisters' hearts, Guglielmo going so far as to point out all of his manly attributes (aria: "Non siate ritrosi" — "Don't be shy"), but to no avail. Ferrando, left alone and sensing victory, praises his love (aria: "Un'aura amorosa" — "A loving breath").

Scene 3: A garden

The sisters are still pining. Despina has asked Don Alfonso to let her take over the seduction plan. Suddenly, the "Albanians" burst in the scene and threaten to poison themselves if they are not allowed the chance to woo the sisters. As Alfonso tries to calm them, they drink the "poison" and pretend to pass out. Soon thereafter, a "doctor" (Despina in disguise) arrives on the scene and, using magnet therapy, is able to revive the "Albanians". The men, pretending to hallucinate, demand a kiss from Dorabella and Fiordiligi (whom the "Albanians" call goddesses) who stand before them. The sisters refuse, even as Alfonso and the doctor (Despina) urge them to acquiesce.

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