


## A Glyndebourne Summer Part 4



Glyndebourne Festival 2014. *Der Rosenkavalier*. Baron Ochs (Lars Woldt), Herr von Faninal (Michael Kraus) and Marianne Leitmetzerin (Miranda Keys). © Bill Cooper.

With the first night over, the cast of 'Der Rosenkavalier' can enjoy their days off between performances. While Christopher Gillett goes home and does the housework, some of his international colleagues use the time to explore the English countryside.

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We're into the run of *Der Rosenkavalier*, and, with the international media hullabaloo provoked by some of the reviews well behind us, it's down to business as usual. I gave up my local digs immediately after the first night and now, rather than a five-minute trip to Glyndebourne I have a three-hour drive or an even longer train journey. Between shows I go home and do what normal people do: wash the kitchen floor, sort the recycling, shout at the television. That sort of thing. Meanwhile the Europeans in the cast are ensconced in East Sussex, with swathes of time to kill. They are an interesting bunch.

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Lars Woldt (Baron Ochs) has his wife and young daughter in tow and takes his family for walks on the South Downs. He's a generous, bright man; a top musician who studied composition and who enjoys a quiet post-show pint of Harveys bitter. The veteran bass Gwynne Howell (Notary) is in the next dressing-room to mine. Before every show I hear Gwynne warming up by crooning the Matt Monro hit 'Born Free'. Then Lars pops into Gwynne's room and they run through their tricky little scene together. Michael Kraus (Faninal) is also an interesting man. He spends the days between shows either working on his book-length dissertation on the politics of opera production in postwar Germany, or on a trip to a church or country house clutching his newly-bought National Trust annual pass. As Lars has no car, Michael has fitted a child-seat into his and he often takes the Woldt family on days out.

Robert Wörle (Innkeeper) has visited every cathedral in the southeast, some of them twice. He's an ex-monk (he says he was too fond of women to stick at it) and we always have a good chat backstage before we start Act 3. Last week he went to see the HMS Victory, something he has wanted to do since

childhood. I asked him if he had ever made the Airfix model. 'But of course!' Tara Erraught (Octavian) is Irish but lives in Munich. She has spent the first fortnight keeping her head in the game with spectacular strength and cheerfulness while the world has gone bonkers around her. Her dad is a chef and she once brought to rehearsal some slow-cooked belly of pork that was nothing short of miraculous.

**Helene bakes decadent brownies and distributes them amongst the company.**

Helene Schneiderman (Annina) was born in New Jersey but has lived in Stuttgart for 30 years. Helene bakes decadent brownies and distributes them amongst the company. She lent me a fascinating and moving book, *I Sang To Survive*, written by her mother, Judith, which chronicles in searing detail her experience of the Holocaust. In between *Rosenkavaliers*, Helene has had to fly back to Stuttgart a couple of times, to sing in performances of *La sonnambula*.

During the long interval we all tend to convene in the green room where we flop on sofas, still in our make-up with dressing gowns over our costumes, and natter about anything and everything. The actors playing mute roles usually join us too, or the small children of Kate Royal (the Marschallin). Some of us eat – home-made snacks or ready-to-eat salads - and someone will always volunteer to run to the staff café for a Kit-Kat if somebody else is craving chocolate.

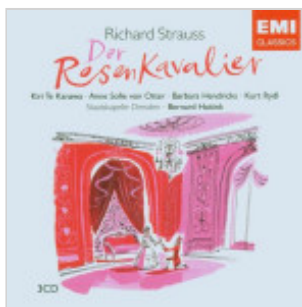
On Sunday 8 June the pressure will be back on when the HD cameras are in, but a more mutually-supportive, convivial company it would be hard to imagine. Sometimes it doesn't feel like work at all.

**[Der Rosenkavalier is on until 3 July \(http://glyndebourne.com/how-book\)](http://glyndebourne.com/how-book)**

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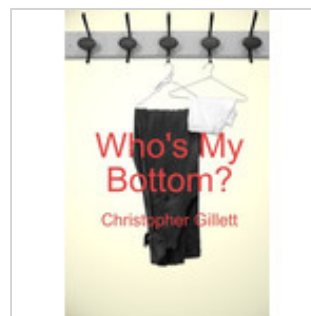
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