Act I: A Stretch of Suburbia in Windsor, Ont.

An aging veteran of WWII, John Falstaff is at odds with the neighbours and the bustling 1960s that surround him. His army buddies Bardolfo and Pistola drain his finances and cause commotion with the like of Dr. Cajus, who accuses them of stealing his money. Falstaff has written identical letters to the wives of both of his middle class neighbours, Alice Ford and Meg Page, declaring his affections for them. In a sudden bout of feigned morality, Bardolfo and Pistola refuse to deliver the letters. Falstaff—explaining his take on honour and morality—kicks out his good-for-nothing band of brothers, arranging to have the letter delivered himself.

Meg and Alice meet across the fences of their perfect little houses, accompanied by Alice’s daughter Nannetta and the town gossip Mrs. Quickly. Alice and Meg realize they’ve both received the same letter from their neighbour. Horrified at the impropriety, they swear vengeance. Alice’s husband, Mr. Ford returns and is joined by Cajus. Bardolfo and Pistola are now hoping to enter now into Ford’s service. Joining all of them is the young Fenton, a university student who is in love with Ford’s daughter Nannetta. They tell Ford of Falstaff’s plans, both the men and the women of this little community pledge a separate reckoning on Falstaff before the day is up.

Intermission

Act II: Inside the Houses of Windsor

Bardolfo and Pistola, pretending to be penitent, announce that a lady has come to visit Falstaff. Quickly tells Falstaff of both Alice and Meg’s favorable reactions and says Alice’s husband, Mr. Ford returns and is joined by Cajus. Bardolfo and Pistola insist on paying a bawdy Quickly for her services, and then rejoices in his own virility. Another stranger arrives, an Argentine named Fontana (who is really Mr. Ford in disguise). He requests that Falstaff seduce Ford’s wife Alice, in that way making it possible for her, otherwise a paragon of virtue, to be available for others like himself. Falstaff, agrees, saying he already has plans to visit Alice while her husband is away. Now Ford is also hungry to seek revenge on both Falstaff and Alice.

At midnight, Falstaff, disguised as the BLACK HUNTER, arrives at the park. In the shadows Alice draws him out until suddenly strange lights appear all around him. Aliens, it seems, have landed. A terrified Falstaff cowers and suddenly, he is discovered. The extraterrestrial beings begin to attack him and in the chaos he recognizes Bardolfo. All is revealed to an embarrassed Falstaff. Ford, Bardolfo, Cajus, Pistola, Meg, Quickly, Alice, everyone is laughing at him. Ford indicates that now there is to be a wedding, and Alice shares two couples are to be wed. Falstaff performs the nuptial rites, and when the veils are removed it is revealed the Bardolfo has been wed to Dr. Cajus, and Fenton and Nannetta are in fact the other couple.

Falstaff turns to the audiences with a message to live by: those who laugh last, laugh best!
FALSTAFF
by Giuseppe Verdi, librettist Arrigo Boito

CAST
(in order of appearance)

March 4, 11

Dr. Cajus
Matthew Bermudez

Sir John Falstaff
Theodore Baer

Bardolfo
Cameron Mazzei

Pistola
Shantanu Thaivalappil

Robin (Falstaff Page)
Raymond Salgado-Tran

Mrs. Meg Page
Briana Sutherland

Mrs. Alice Ford
Emma Pennell

Mrs. Quickly
Dayesl Kim

Nannetta
Julia LoRusso

Fenton
Seokho Park

Ford
Anthony Rodrigues

Ned
Thomas Smithson

Will
Carter Keane

March 5, 12

Joseph Adams
Chad Louwerse

Joshua Sutherland
Nicholas Grynewski

Raymond Salgado-Tran
Kcenia Koutorjevski

Eliza Celis Correa
Anjelique Croteau

Madeleine David
Thiago Soares

Nathan Dyck
Thomas Smithson

Carter Keane

Understudies: Alice Ford - Amy Godin; Nannetta - Patricia Wrigglesworth

Chorus: Autumn Zhao, Patricia Wrigglesworth, Sarah Storms, Leah Bondy, Rachael Frankruyter, Hannah Cole, Anna O'Drowsky, Erin Johnston, Marcus Tranquilli, Raymond Salgado-Tran, Thomas Smithson, Carter Keane

ORCHESTRA

Flutes
Katie Kirkpatrick

Jazzmine Van Veld

Alexander Drozd

Katie Kirkpatrick*

Natastsa Stallatos

Percussions
Paul Schulz-Courtemanche

Trombones
Oboes

Margaret Hancox

Max Zhang

Margaret Hancox*

Jessica Arenas

Clarinets
Alice Campbell

Harry Zheng

Bass
Andrea Ferencova

Weiyi Han

Horns
Ryan Duffy

Eric Phong

First Violins
Menealso Menelaou

Jillian Yang

Chia-Hsuan Chen

Kevin Ye

Wagner and Wagnerism with a great wise belly laugh. Falstaff, when considered in total, was a great man of a great time that did great things. Making him one of what we now call “the greatest generation” seems appropriate. His roughness, his practicality in the face of idealism, his hunger for raw life, all of this was forged in a life experience that his younger contemporaries cannot even imagine. That a world vibrant with real labour and true risk becomes appropriate. His roughness, his practicality in the face of idealism, his hunger for raw life, all of this was forged in a life experience that his younger contemporaries cannot even imagine. That a world vibrant with real labour and true risk becomes codified in a slickly marketed suburbia is true to the experience of Falstaff and the retellings of his tale. This is the fate of all soldiers who live too long, and the response, the only answer that truly makes sense, is indeed that great wise belly laugh.

Timothy Nelson, director & Professor Theodore Baer, opera program director

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