

SCHUBERT

THE WEDDING ROAST

(for three singers and piano)

English Version by Donald Pippin

It is the night before the wedding -- a time of great excitement, when joy and apprehension co-mingle, a time when a young man might be expected to have much on his mind. And so he does: roast rabbit. What is a wedding table without it? And surely in the nearby forest there is many a plump rabbit waiting for the honor. What matter that the woods are private property?

His bride is dead set against the idea. Far too risky. Poachers can be hanged And after all, a roast is not required to make a marriage legal. And what about her? Left alone in the house at night, a dark, secluded area frequented by ruffians and thieves? We are not the first to live in a dangerous society.

A compromise is soon reached: they both go. After a dazzlingly swift change of scene -- a Pocket Opera specialty -- the couple are in the woods, hot on the trail. The night is clear, the fresh air invigorating, the rabbit close at hand -- all is going delightfully well. But bear in mind, this is a trio, not a duet. The third voice is not that of the rabbit.

The game keeper is also on the prowl -- a man dedicated to his work. He hears the fatal shot. The couple are caught redhanded, the incriminating rabbit lying at their feet. The game is up; all is lost. A jail cell is waiting, followed by heaven knows what. They plead to no avail. Bribery is equally ineffective. Their remorse is complete, poured out in lines of heartrending lyricism: "Oh, why did we not settle for dumplings from the kettle?"

Barring a miraculous change of heart, it looks as if our trio should be entitled: *THE RABBIT'S REVENGE*.

THERESA

My Theodore, so kind and good,
I pray you, go not to the wood;
No roast is necessary.
As you're the one I love the most.
You'll heed my word of warning.
I pray you, I pray you, never mind the roast.
Stay safe inside till morning.

THEODORE, *her husband*

The stone is sharp, my aim secure,
My hand is strong and able.
Tomorrow noon we'll have for sure
A rabbit on the table.
I must, I must
Have a rabbit on the table.

THERESA

Take heed, my dear.

THEODORE

Prepare the spit.

THERESA

You'll hang for it.

THEODORE

No need to fear.

THERESA

Take heed, take heed, take heed my dear.

THEODORE

At night there's none about.

THERESA

Then count me out.
You're on your own.

THEODORE

No need, no need to fear;
I'll go alone, the coast is clear.

THERESA

Alone??? And leave me unprotected?
No, I cannot stay alone here, no!
Where rogues and thieves inhabit.

THEODORE

Then come! You, too, shall hunt the rabbit.

THERESA, *in the woods*

So dark the spot!

THEODORE

Hot on the trail ...

THERESA

grch grch prr prr

THEODORE

Search in the brush.

THERESA

grch grch prr prr

THEODORE

The word is hush;
We're nearly there.

BOTH

So fresh the air
So cool, so clear.

THERESA grch grch prr prr

THEODORE Go slow! Go slow!

GAME KEEPER, *sneaking up*
(Hell's bells! What have we here?
Ho ho! Hark hark! That's no bloody lark!
Hell's bells! Two poachers,
And here to hunt the hare.
A pair of poachers,
And here to hunt the hare.)

THEODORE The word is hush;
We're nearly there.
Be still!

THERESA Don't make a sound.

THEODORE Did someone speak?

THERESA No soul around. Oh, joy!
The hunter's life for me!

THEODORE No soul around that I can see.

GAME KEEPER (I'll put them under lock and key.
Inside a cell and under lock and key.)

THERESA The happy hunter's life for me!
Right there, right there!

A SHOT!

THEODORE And on the mark!
A perfect shot despite the dark.
No roast so rare!
And now it's homeward with the hare!

THERESA No roast so rare, no rabbit fatter
Has place upon a platter.
No roast so rare!
Now homeward with the hare!

GAME KEEPER (These two are not just out for air;
I'll pounce upon the thieving pair.)

(he pounces)

**You pack of thieves! Stay where you are!
Stop! Lay down the gun!
I'm on to you.**

THEODORE & THERESA

Caught in the act! No place to run.

THEODORE

Of course ...

THERESA

Oh, say no more!

GAME KEEPER

**In jail I've room enough for two.
Who deals in crime must pay the cost.**

THEODORE & THERESA

**Our game is up. All, all is lost.
Oivey! Oivey! All, all is lost.**

THERESA

**Kind sir, for clemency we pray!
Tomorrow is our wedding day.**

GAME KEEPER

Then call it off!

THEODORE & THERESA

**Kind sir, for clemency we pray!
Tomorrow is our wedding day.**

GAME KEEPER

No fault of mine.

THEODORE & THERESA

**We plead, implore ...
Our game is up. All, all is lost.**

GAME KEEPER

**I've room for two.
Who deals in crime must pay the cost.**

THEODORE

Your cellar I'll provide with wine.

THERESA

**I'll bake you pies and apple strudel.
Oh, please! Oh, please!**

GAME KEEPER

**(A girl so fair one seldom sees.)
No, no! To plead is futile.**

THERESA

Here's gold and silver, not a lot.

**Oh, let us go! It's all we've got.
We plead, implore.
It's all we've got, we have no more.**

GAME KEEPER (So fair a face one can't ignore.)

THEODORE & THERESA

**Oh, why did we not settle
For dumplings from the kettle?**

GAME KEEPER (To beauty I'm not blinded;
I'll have to be broadminded.
Not I! Not I!)
**Because you both repent the crime.
I'll overlook it this one time.
Be off with just a warning,
And marry in the morning!**

THEODORE A thousand thanks!

THERESA And one request:

BOTH Attend the wedding as our guest.

GAME KEEPER Go wed, and while we're at it,
I'll come and bring the rabbit.

ALL THREE Let off with just a warning.
Farewell until tomorrow morning.

THEODORE & THERESA

**Light of heart, no more oppressed,
We've both a wedding and a guest.
Though we deplore the habit,
We'll serve for once a roasted rabbit.**

GAME KEEPER (I must confess 'twould suit me best
To come as groom instead of guest.
The roast is tasty, but so is the bride.
Given half a chance, I would grab it.)

THEODORE & THERESA

**Light of heart, no more oppressed,
We've both a wedding and a guest.
And though a costly habit.
We're serving roasted rabbit!**

**Though groom would suit be better,
At least I'm not the rabbit!**

ALL THREE

La la la la la la

THE END