ACT I The Marschallin, Princess von Werdenberg, is having an affair with the young count Octavian. Baron Ochs, the Marschallin’s country cousin, is engaged to Sophie, the young daughter of a wealthy arms dealer. When Ochs meets Octavian, in disguise as a chambermaid to avoid discovery in the Marschallin’s bedroom, he makes advances toward “her.” The Marschallin is appalled at the thought of the rude Ochs marrying an innocent girl.

INTERMISSION

ACT II On behalf of Ochs, Octavian presents Sophie with the customary silver engagement rose. The two young people fall instantly in love. Sophie, who has never met the Baron before, is shocked by her fiancé’s crude manners and refuses to marry him. An argument erupts, and in the confusion, Octavian wounds Ochs. Determined to teach the Baron a lesson, Octavian has a letter sent to him, supposedly from the chambermaid, asking Ochs for a rendezvous.

INTERMISSION

ACT III Octavian, again in disguise as a chambermaid, meets Ochs for a private supper at a house of ill repute. Various prearranged “apparitions” increasingly frighten the Baron. Tumult ensues, and the police arrive to investigate. Finally, the Marschallin appears and explains to Ochs that it was all a farce. Octavian takes off his disguise; Ochs admits defeat and leaves. Octavian and Sophie are united, as the Marschallin, with quiet dignity, wonders how she lost her lover so suddenly.

A co-production of the Metropolitan Opera; Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London; Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires; and Teatro Regio di Torino

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