

The dazzling little barber



INGER-HAUSER-OGG

VIVACIOUS LATIN ABANDON: A first-class Spanish cast delights in the Kammeroper's production of *El Barberillo de Lavapiés*

A brilliant production of Francisco Barbieri's Spanish zarzuela *El Barberillo de Lavapiés* (The Little Barber of Lavapiés) premiered on 13 De-

The premiere of Francisco Barbieri's zarzuela sparkles at the Kammeroper

ember at Vienna's Kammeroper. All elements of this rare jewel of a production, from José Fabra's vibrant conducting of Barbieri's musically effervescent score to Lutz E. Seelig's clever directing and Ferdinando Chefalo's charming choreography, along with the attractive set and beautiful costumes and lighting, combine to create a winner.

The wonderfully cast Spanish singers, led by baritone Alfredo Garcia as the picaresque, busybody barber Lamparilla and soprano Silvia Vasquez as his seamstress innamorata Paloma, romp vocally and dramatically throughout with vivacious Latin abandon.

Zarzuelas, which originated in the 17th century and surged in popularity in the 19th, are to the Spanish-speaking world what operettas by Gilbert & Sullivan or Johann Strauss to English and German speakers, respectively. Hundreds of the thousands of zarzuelas that have been com-

posed over the years still remain in the repertoire and have recently had more exposure outside Spain and Latin America. Themes are typically inspired by bourgeois life, romance, and politics, liberally laced with popular Spanish humor and vitality.

El Barberillo de Lavapiés, written about the same time as Bizet's *Carmen*, is a story of love and political intrigue, and the happy ending makes it a perfect choice for

this holiday season's entertainment. (EPG)

Performances continue until 26 January. Tickets online: ticket@wienerkammeroper.at; or phone 01/512 01 00 77

A Celt in Vienna

Van Morrison's prolific music career spans more than 4 decades, during which he has experimented with a range of styles and produced such classics as "Bright Side of the Road" and "Wonderful Remark."

and produced a string of albums. He returned to Ireland in 1974 to explore his Celtic roots. In the 80's, Morrison's spiritual quest was increasingly reflected in his work.

In 1998, Morrison won a Grammy for his collaboration with John Lee Hooker on "Don't Look Now." Morrison's 1999 album "Back On Top" was widely heralded as his most accomplished in years, spawning his first Top

Heather Whitehall

Born in Belfast in 1945, Morrison grew up listening to music by artists such as Muddy Waters