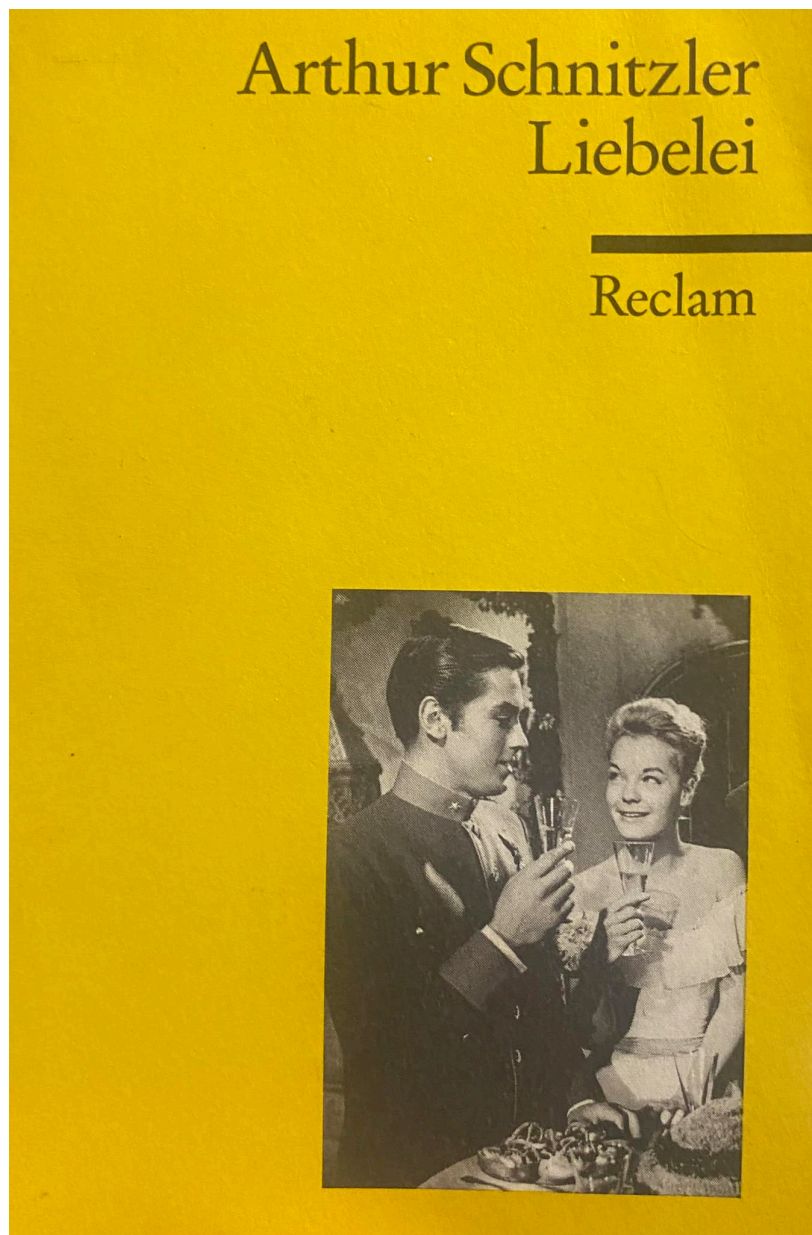


Deutsche Productions

Arthur Schnitzler's

Liebelei



Performing at the BT TT23 wk4 (early slot)

Break even percentage: 44.3%

OUDS request amount: £400

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Synopsis

Liebelei is set in 1890s Vienna. Aristocrat Theodor has organised a soiree in his friend Fritz's apartment, inviting two young middle-class women, Mizi and Christine, to have dinner with them. Though Christine is clearly in love with him, Fritz is preoccupied by his affair with a married woman, which he fears might have been discovered. Theodor and Mizi, on the other hand, are enjoying an unserious love affair, the transactional nature of which Mizi understands completely. The meal is interrupted by the arrival of an unnamed man, who reveals himself to be the husband of the woman with whom Fritz is having an affair. Entirely unbeknownst to Christine and Mizi, he challenges Fritz to a duel. Theodor comforts Fritz, telling him it is unlikely that the duel will end badly for him.

In Act 2, the action moves to Christine's apartment and remains there for the rest of the play. Christine is preparing to go out and meet Fritz when her neighbour Katharina arrives, inviting Christine to a beer garden to meet her husband's cousin, who harbours romantic feelings for Christine. She declines, going out to her rendezvous with Fritz just as her father Weiring returns home. Weiring and Katharina discuss Christine's love life; Katharina thinks she is a fool to involve herself with an aristocratic man like Fritz, while Weiring thinks women are entitled to fun in their youth. Mizi enters and soon after Christine returns. Christine reveals to her that Fritz did not turn up at their meeting place but later he enters the apartment and the two exchange a brief tender moment before Fritz takes his leave to prepare for the duel, telling Christine he is going to his family estate in the country.

In Fritz's absence, Christine is deeply unhappy. She confides to her father that she has fallen in love with him. Soon after, Theodor arrives with Mizi to deliver the news that Fritz died in the duel. Christine is devastated by this and leaves the apartment, saying she must go to Fritz's grave, even though she does not know the way.

Our creative vision

There are three main aspects to our creative vision for this production:

- performance in the original German (with English subtitles for the purposes of accessibility)
- a cohesive production aesthetic that emulates the setting of 1890s Vienna
- affecting characterisation from our lead actors in their portrayal of their respective roles

Production team biographies

Director - Isobel Cooper

Isobel is a second year studying English and German at New College. Her previous experience in German theatre includes playing the lead role of Claire in a school production of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (2019) as well as directing and acting in a self-written play in English which borrowed from the style of Brecht. In addition, she was a member of the Birmingham Young Rep for seven consecutive seasons and has taken roles in various amateur productions of Shakespeare plays, ranging from Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar* and Celia in *As You Like It* to Nym in *Henry V*. In directing her first German language play, Isobel is excited to collaborate with a talented production team and bring a unique project to the Oxford theatre scene.

Producer - Rachel Williams

Rachel is a second-year German and Philosophy student at New College. Although her only experience of theatre was starring as Jasmine in a school production of *Aladdin*, she has undertaken many organisational and leadership roles which have given her the skills required to act as Producer. As part of the Young Enterprise Programme, Rachel was elected as the Projector Manager of a start-up company. She oversaw the finances, marketing and sales of the company in addition to delivering a pitch presenting the achievements and profits. She won two prizes as a result of the team's success. Furthermore, she is currently the New College Representative for the Oxford University Christian Union, which requires event planning and thorough organisation. She is also responsible for the College CU's finances, meaning she is accustomed to budgeting and ensuring money is distributed correctly. Rachel is therefore looking forward to producing *Liebelei* and combining her organisational and leadership skills with her love for German theatre.

Production Manager - Eliza Hogermeer

Eliza is a first-year German student at St Edmund Hall. She is an experienced performer previous to Oxford and has been involved in productions including BYMT's *Nightshade* (2021) as well as acting as assistant director, musical director and assistant choreographer for Dame Alice Owen's School's production of *Robin Hood* (2022). She is currently in the cast of *BARE The Musical* at the Keble O'Reilly (HT 2023). Eliza is keen to gain experience in the non-performing aspects of theatre at OUDS. Her role as Production Manager will involve coordinating the creative and commercial aspects of *Liebelei* and her responsibilities will primarily include assisting with directing, marketing and with the general creative process.

Marketing Manager - Georgina Baird

Georgina is a former German and Russian student at the University of Sheffield, now working in Oxford for the local charity Helen & Douglas House. She has experience in supporting school productions at international schools in Moscow, doing everything from set design and lighting to costumes. Her current position at Helen & Douglas involves working in Fundraising and Marketing on a regular basis, implementing marketing strategies for fundraising events. This includes, but is not limited to, creating a social media presence by producing and sharing effective organic content. She was an active member of the German society whilst at university, and now is excited to combine her love of German theatre and marketing experience to help make *Liebelei* a success.

Lighting Designer - Joshua Seed

Josh is a first engineering science student at Wadham. Whilst at Oxford, he has been Lighting Assistant for *Troy Story* (O'Reilly MT22) and Head of Flies for *An American in Paris* (Oxford Playhouse HT23). Next year, he will act as Secretary of OUTTS.

Costume Designer - Edith Petteford

Edith Petteford is a third-year History and Czech student at The Queen's College. Outside of Oxford, she has sound experience in both production and performance. As an actor, she took part in *Cuppers* (2020) and *Lockdown: Shakespeare Refreshed* (2020), an initiative for first-year undergraduates to produce unconventional settings of Shakespeare via Zoom, as well as a regional youth production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (2021). With regard to production, she has served in a variety of roles - Director, Lighting Director, and Costume Designer - for multiple concerts across her school career. As former Secretary, Membership Officer and Sponsorship Officer of the Oxford Opera Society, she has substantial experience in organising a production, particularly concerning financial oversight, GDPR and member welfare. In this production, she will act as Costume Designer, allowing her to synthesise her previous creative experience with her knowledge of managing production finances. She will work closely alongside the Set Designer to create a cohesive image and the Director/Producers in making their interpretation of the text visual.

Welfare Officer and Production Assistant - Edith Matthewson

Edith Matthewson is in her first year studying French and German at Lady Margaret Hall. Over the course of her school career, she acted in four amateur productions and regularly attended a Youth Drama Group at her local theatre. There, she helped to create and perform two collaborative theatre pieces which combined digital and real-life elements. In 2019, she was also one of two costume designers for her secondary school's Rock Challenge submission. Having studied *Liebelei* as a set text in Michaelmas term, Edith is keen to use her knowledge and enthusiasm for German to help bring this play to life in her role as Production Assistant and, as the Welfare Officer, is committed to ensuring everyone involved in the production remains safe and comfortable throughout.

Director's Statement

My wish to direct a production of Arthur Schnitzler's *Liebelei* is largely motivated by personal aspirations; I am really excited at the prospect of bringing my twin passions for theatre and for the German language together in a single project, alongside a production team who are equally enthusiastic about German drama. My motivations, however, do not end there; beyond this, I feel there is a real call for foreign language drama, especially given that, to my knowledge, there has not been a production of a German language play in Oxford for over five years. There is a large community of German speakers/enthusiasts in Oxford and this production will naturally cater primarily for them, but I think it is also a really exciting opportunity for those who are entirely unfamiliar with the German language and literary canon to have access to a dramatic work, and indeed a language, that they otherwise would not. In order to achieve this, we have resolved to subtitle our performances with a translated text, a decision which will have the welcome side effect of making our production accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people.

Liebelei is an exciting play for a number of reasons; it not only marries together naturalistic exposition of human emotion with impactful social commentary, but also possesses a compelling plot line in which audience members will hopefully find themselves completely invested. In our production, we aim to foreground the emotional complexities that Schnitzler presents in characters like Christine and Fritz and thus highlight the critique of fin-de-siècle Viennese gender roles and class structures that is inherent in the play. I hope to achieve this aim by collaborating with the rest of the production team to ensure our production of *Liebelei* is both technically flawless and visually cohesive, with costume, set, lighting and sound design successfully evoking our setting and the mood of the piece. To that end, we made sure to cast the play by the end of Hilary term, allowing our actors the vacation to study the play and come to our first rehearsals (scheduled for 0th week of Trinity) already familiar with their parts. We would then aim to have the show blocked in Weeks 1 and 2, leaving Week 3 for full runs and ensuring we are ready for performance in Week 4. Within rehearsal, I will take care to support actors in interpreting both the German on the page and the more nuanced, and often subtextual, meaning that is instilled in Schnitzler's work. I hope to make *Liebelei* a fun and inclusive project that both the cast and crew will enjoy collaborating on - as a state school student from an under-represented area of the UK, I understand the apprehension that some students might feel when involving themselves in the Oxford drama scene and would work to alleviate this where I can, ensuring that our production is accessible to all and our rehearsal spaces are comfortable for everyone involved. Our Welfare Officer Edith will be primary contact for anyone involved with the production who needs support. With its reputation for intimate productions, the BT is the perfect theatre in which to bring *Liebelei* to the stage and we would love to have the support of OUDS in doing so!

Producer's Statement

There is a gap in the current Oxford drama scene which could be filled perfectly by a production of Arthur Schnitzler's *Liebelei*. Not only is it a foreign language play, which is extremely unique in and of itself in Oxford, but it brings a refreshingly different take on the tragic comedy genre with its insight into the duel codes and social hierarchy of late 19th century Vienna.

As it is a set text for the German Preliminary course, all German undergraduates will have read the text of *Liebelei* and know it well. It is unlikely, however, that they will have ever seen it performed before, as it is rarely staged. Our production will therefore be a unique opportunity for them to see the play performed in its original German. Furthermore, it is a brilliant piece of tragic comedy involving love affairs, heartbreak, fatal duels and social commentary and it will be subtitled in English for everyone to enjoy. For these reasons, I am confident we will be able to sell tickets without any difficulty, whether audience members are simply excited by the prospect of a German language play, coming to watch it as a revision exercise, or eager to be immersed by a gripping storyline.

To address any problems that might arise as a result of the play's design or technical complexity, I think it is very unlikely that there will be any. There are only two settings, both of which require minimal props and practically no special lighting or effects. This means that our production will have limited expenditure, and we will only need to sell approximately fifteen tickets per night to break even. I believe this will be easily achievable, as we have such a strong audience consisting of German students, a lot of whom are currently studying or have studied the play in the past, native German speakers, who will likely be excited at the prospect of a rare German language production in Oxford, and, of course, the cast and crew's family and friends. With our break even at 44.3%, we feel confident that we can in fact make a decent profit on this production and return OUDS' investment with profit.

We plan on obtaining funding from various sources, primarily from OUDS and college JCRs - please see the attached budget for further detail on our projected finances. We have been careful to budget generously for all aspects of the production, ensuring that we will manage our finances effectively, and we have also been rigorous when obtaining quotes from companies (for example for insurance and potentially for the hire of an LED screen for subtitling).

Marketing Team's Statement

Liebelei is a classic play by the famous Austrian dramatist Arthur Schnitzler and is well known amongst German speakers, particularly Oxford German students as it is a mandatory study text in the first year of the undergraduate course. Our primary target audience will be students - a German language production will particularly attract those who are interested in, or currently studying, modern languages. Given that *Liebelei* is recognised as an important work within the German dramatic canon and studied in institutions worldwide, the play will likely have a nostalgic appeal to current or former students of German and native German speakers alike.

As Oxford students and members of the Oxford German Society, the marketing and creative team have access to much of the German speaking community in Oxford; these connections will be used extensively in our marketing strategy. We will also seek to advertise to the German departments at local schools and language colleges.

It is also our aim to use supertitling technology to provide English subtitles alongside the German dialogue, extending our marketing audience and allowing non-German speakers to attend and enjoy performances.

Our marketing methods will include the printing of flyers and posters to publicise *Liebelei*. These will be displayed in all Oxford colleges and university buildings where possible. The marketing team also plan on liaising with the German society, in order that flyers can be handed out at German society events as well as at faculty lectures.

Instagram and Facebook pages will also be made to ensure that *Liebelei* can reach a wider audience digitally and we will involve the cast in the creation of social media content, ensuring it is as engaging as possible. We will develop and follow a detailed marketing schedule to ensure that the timing of content release is appropriate and effective.

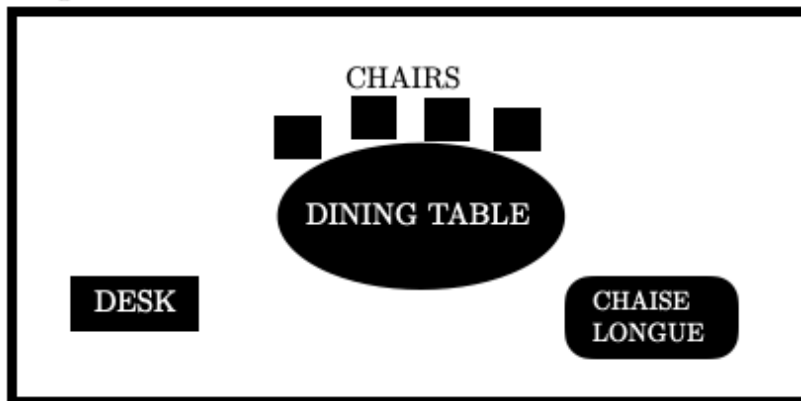
Diversity and Inclusion

Ensuring that our production of *Liebelei* is as inclusive as possible is hugely important to us and at every stage of the project thus far we have carefully considered how best to go about things in order to ensure that involvement in the production feels accessible and welcoming to all, especially those who belong to groups which are underrepresented in Oxford drama. Within our production team, we have developed roles for everyone who replied to our advertisements and ensured that everyone is equally involved in the collaborative process of developing our creative vision for the play. When advertising our auditions, we were careful that our adverts would reach as wide an audience as possible and that the language of our adverts was always friendly and approachable, making clear that anyone with some proficiency in German was welcome to audition. Then, when casting the show, we decided to make adaptations to the play to ensure that everybody who auditioned for us could be offered a role; it was especially important to us that none of our auditionees should be turned away from taking part in the production unless it was entirely necessary. Consequently, we undertook to split Katharina's dialogue into two parts, creating a new character and meaning another actor would be able to take part in the play. We also changed the gender of the character of Weiring, originally Christine's father, from male to female, in order to accommodate for the fact that we had more female-identifying auditionees. As a result, we now have a diverse and inclusive cast for our production and have also made several exciting creative decisions that will not only make our production of *Liebelei* more unique, but also support our aim to make our rehearsal spaces comfortable for everyone involved in the production. Any intimacy involved in the production will only be included if the actors concerned are entirely comfortable with it and the contact details of Edith, our Welfare Officer, will be circulated amongst the cast and crew at regular intervals so that, should any issues arise, she can act as a support and intermediary where needed.

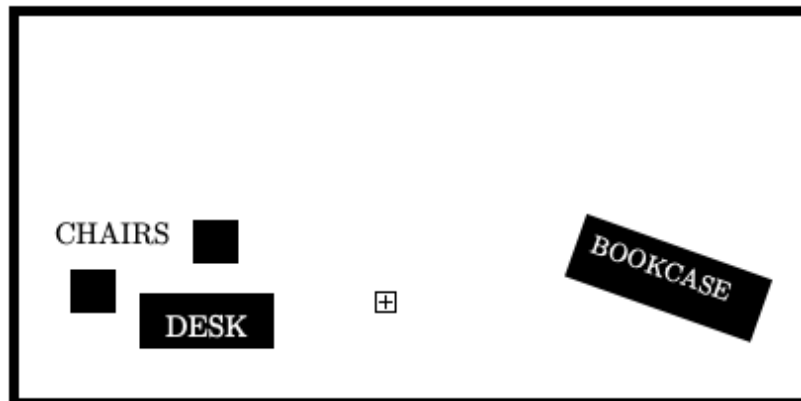
Preliminary Design Ideas

Proposed set design:

Fritz's apartment



Christine's apartment



Note on lighting and sound:

- Given that *Liebelei* is so naturalistic in style, the lighting and sound design should be relatively simplistic; our lighting designer, Joshua Seed, has only recently joined our team and so we are in the early stages of developing our creative vision with regards to lighting. We have, however, already decided that, to help differentiate between aristocrat Fritz's comfortable apartment and the more modest home of middle class Christine, we will transition from warmer lighting in scenes set in the former space to slightly harsher lighting in the latter
- The most important technical aspect of our production will be the provision of subtitles and we are currently exploring a number of options for this, including projecting captions onto a drop curtain or the hire of an LED display.