

# LAKME

Composer: Léo Delibes  
Libretto: Edmont Godinet and Philippe Gille  
Stage director: Laurent Pelly

Category: Opera in three acts  
Language: French  
Running times: 3h (including interval)  
Premiered: 1883, Opéra Comique |  
New production: 28 September 2022, Opéra Comique

Set designer: Camille Dugas  
Costume designer: Laurent Pelly  
Lighting designer: Joël Adam  
Dialogue adaptation: Agathe Mélinand

Cast  
Number of Principals: 9 + 3 members of the choir  
Chorus / parts (S/A/T/B): 27 (9/5/6/7)  
Extras: 8

Instrumentation  
57  
10.8.6.7.3 / 2.2.2.2 / 4.2.3.0 / 1 timp + 3 perc + 1 ophicleid + 1 harp

Volume of the production  
Set and props 2 containers

Other info  
Last performed : Opéra Comique, 2022  
Coproduction : Opéra National du Rhin, Opéra Nice Côte d'Azur  
Revivals in 2023-2024 at Opera du Rhin and Opéra Nice

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## In a few words

In newly colonised India, a British officer's crush on a Brahmin's daughter stirs up communal tensions, against a backdrop of folk festivals and wilderness.

Inspired by Pierre Loti, Léo Delibes used the resources of orientalist opera in a boldly contemporary plot: an impossible passion, the musical evocation of a distant civilisation, the confrontation of religious fanaticism and sensuality.

### Concept

“The exoticism of *Lakmé* seems to me mostly a mask. I want to stage the drama of love, the clash of cultures... I think of *Romeo and Juliet*, a love story between two opposing camps. To strip the subject like a stone that is being polished. The exoticism of *Lakmé* is above all a pretext for a grand spectacle, that of an India dreamed of and fantasised about by the Europeans. Moreover, opera in France in the second half of the 19th century could not be compared to anything but American blockbusters.”

Laurent Pelly, director

### Press review

“Laurent Pelly's new production on the stage where *Lakmé* was born turns its back on tradition. Here, there are no colourful costumes, no Hindu thrills, no devouring forests [...]. An attractive option, with superb images [...], one that disembodies the story, sometimes creating a distance from the characters and the plot itself.”

*Transfuge*, 05 octobre 2022, Nicolas d'Estienne d'Orves

“Laurent Pelly's staging is stripped down and at the service of the score to shake off the work's kitschy reputation.”

*RTS.ch - Espace 2*, 05 octobre 2022, David Christoffel

“With Laurent Pelly at the helm, the new *Lakmé* is presented as universal, without Hindu references but with the pure and tribal dimension that sees the Brahmin's daughter locked in a cage. The ballets have been cut, the kitsch is seriously reduced and the emotional dimension of the work predominates.”

*RTBF.be - Musiq 3*, 04 octobre 2022, François Jongen









