THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN
VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY
20TH ANNIVERSARY

HOWARD CONN FINE ARTS CENTER
The Yeomen of the Guard
or, The Merryman and His Maid
Music by Arthur S. Sullivan, Libretto by William S. Gilbert
First performed October 3, 1888

THE CAST

Colonel Fairfax (under sentence of death) ........................................ Joseph Andrews
Sergeant Meryll (of the Yeomen of the Guard) .......................... Waldyn Benbenek
Phoebe Meryll (his Daughter) .................................................. Adena Bruemer
Leonard Meryll (his Son) ........................................................ Mathias Anderson
Jack Point (a Strolling Jester) .................................................. Matt Dolph
Elsie Maynard (a Strolling Singer) ............................................ Carissa Atinip
Wilfred Shadbolt (Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor) .......... Mikal J. Kraklo
Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Lieutenant of the Tower) .......... Donald Barbée
Dame Carruthers (Housekeeper to the Tower) ......................... Lynne Hicks
Kate (her Niece and Sir Richard's daughter) ......................... Alyssa K. Lingor
First Yeoman ............................................................................ Bruce Haasl
Second Yeoman ........................................................................ Jeremy Bierlein
First Citizen ............................................................................. Randy Lebsoc
The Headsman ........................................................................ David Morrison, Fred Morrison

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard:

Jeremy Bierlein ................................................................. Bruce Haasl
Jim Brooks ........................................................................... Stephen Hage
Ethan Edwards ................................................................. Dean Laurance
Roger Evans ............................................................................ Randy Lebsoc

Richard Rames ................................................................. Scott Sandberg

Daniel E. Szmyczak .......................................................... Craig Voegeli

Chorus of Citizens:

Ernest Brody ........................................................................ Stephen Hage
Stephanie Brody ................................................................. Kathy Hering
Jim Brooks ........................................................................... Marcia Hill
Melanie Cooperman ......................................................... Randy Lebsoc
Rob Davis ............................................................................... Warren Loud
Michele Enderle ................................................................. Kristefor Lysne
Peter Erickson ................................................................. Holly MacDonald
Mary Gregory ................................................................. Mary Mescher Benbenek
Judi Gronseth ................................................................. Ann Michels
Sara Gustafson ....................................................................... Charlotte Morrison

Tamara Norden ................................................................. Scott Sandberg
Richard Rames ................................................................. Julie Seykora
Gordon Staff ................................................................. Rhea Sullivan
Daniel E. Szmyczak .......................................................... Holly Windle

Craig Voegeli .................................................................

Understudies: Jeremy Bierlein, Melanie Cooperman, Ethan Edwards,
Judi Gronseth, Bruce Haasl, Ann Michels, Tamara Norden, Randy Lebsoc,
Richard Rames, Scott Sandberg, Daniel E. Szmyczak, Craig Voegeli

Act I: The Tower of London
Act II: The same, by moonlight, two days later
Time: The Early Sixteenth Century

A shot will be fired during the performance
~ No eating or drinking is allowed in the theatre ~
~ No smoking is permitted in the building ~
~ The use of flash cameras is strictly forbidden ~

The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company
Twentieth Anniversary Season
SYNOPSIS

The plot of The Yeomen of the Guard might better be called “plots,” because it consists of a series of interlocking conspiracies. Before the opera opens, there has already been a plot resulting in the gallant Colonel Fairfax’s being sentenced to death for sorcery. This false charge was brought by his cousin, who, after Fairfax’s imminent beheading, stands to inherit the victim’s sizable estate.

Act I: The opera opens on the day that Colonel Fairfax is to be executed. We first meet Phoebe Meryll (who thinks she is in love with Fairfax, although she has never spoken with him) and Phoebe’s jealous admirer, Wilfred Shadbolt (the head-jailer at the Tower). A desperate counter-conspiracy is undertaken by Sergeant Meryll, his son Leonard (both former comrades-at-arms of the condemned prisoner) and daughter Phoebe. The three Merylls devise a stratagem to rescue the Colonel by disguising him as Leonard – a hero in his own right who has just arrived to be made a Yeoman of the Guard.

Meanwhile, with the assistance of the Tower’s Lieutenant, Fairfax plots to forestall his dastardly cousin’s inheritance by a last-minute marriage of convenience to a blindfolded maiden, Elsie Maynard. This secret arrangement, for “an hundred crowns” (to help Elsie’s sick mother) is reluctantly endorsed by Elsie’s suitor, the jester Jack Point. Soon thereafter, Phoebe and Sergeant Meryll succeed in freeing Fairfax, by stealing the prison keys from Wilfred. Fairfax is given a warm welcome to the Tower Guard as Leonard Meryll. When it is discovered that Fairfax has “miraculously” disappeared, there is much disturbance at his escape from the impregnable fortress. There is, moreover, great private distress on the part of Elsie – whose unknown husband is now at large, and Jack Point – who cannot marry Elsie while her husband lives.

ACT II: Despite the days of searching, and to the chagrin of Dame Carruthers (managing Housekeeper of the Tower), the Yeomen have failed to find the missing Fairfax. (Fairfax, still disguised as Leonard Meryll, has also been diligently seeking himself!)

Jack Point, now serving as the Lieutenant’s jester, hatches a scheme with Wilfred to convince everyone that Wilfred has courageously slain the escaped Fairfax (thus, Elsie is now a widow and Jack Point can get her back). Fairfax upsets this plan, however, by wooing his own “widow” Elsie, who thinks he really is Leonard Meryll. Meanwhile, Wilfred and Dame Carruthers discover the Merylls’ complicity in freeing Fairfax (surely a capital offense in itself) and confront Phoebe and the Sergeant.

In the final scene, Elsie enters for her wedding to the supposed Leonard. But the delayed reprieve has arrived – Fairfax is alive, and free. Once more Elsie believes she is married to a complete stranger, but soon recognizes that the man she married, Fairfax, is in fact the man she cares for and knows as Leonard. All is set for a happy wedding when the disconsolate Jack Point arrives...

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY


In the Spring of 2000, we will present Offenbach’s Orpheus in the Underworld.

Tax deductible contributions to help support our season are always welcome.

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY
P.O. Box 580172, Minneapolis MN 55458
Telephone: (612) 925-9159

Visit the GSVLOC home page at: http://members.aol.com/gsvloc
PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director and Choreographer ........................................ Sari Ketter
Music Director ........................................................................ Steven Michael Utzigr
Artistic Director ..................................................................... Wendy Evans
Stage Manager ........................................................................ Lisa Horton
Assistant Stage Managers ............ Janice Barbee, Peggie Kennedy, Hellen Kriessel

Set Designer ................................................................. Wendy Waszut-Barrett
Set & Prop Construction and Painting ...................... Julie Defton, Mark Ellenberger
                      Adam Holzschuh, Christopher Holzschuh, Herb Holzschuh
                      Bob Hunter, Sari Ketter, Hellen Kriessel, Ross Matson, Larry Rostad
                      Christine Spiritwolf, Jack Stuckmayer, Stephen B. Sullivan
                      Mike Tennesen, Susan Volkmer, Wendy Waszut-Barrett
                      with Ernest Brody, Dean Laurance, and other cast members

Properties Manager ............................................................... Jen James

Costume Designer ............................................................. Owen Romo
Costume Design Assistant ................................................... Bil Ingram
Costume Coordinator ......................................................... Kate Wehr
Costume Workers ......................... Wendy Evans, Lesley Hendrickson, Ellen Holzschuh
                           Jan Juergens, Betty Kennedy, Ann Lewis
                           Diana Schwartz, Barb Voitech, and cast members

Makeup Advisor ................................................................. Carissa Atnip

Lighting Designer ............................................................. Marcus Dilliard
Lighting Crew ................................................................. Adam Holzschuh, Bob Hunter, Mike Tennesen
Audio-Visual Engineer ......................................................... Bob Johannson, Pat Johannson
Poster Graphic Design .......................................................... Leslie Hacking, Creative Resource Center
Poster Illustrator ................................................................. Tom Rosborough
Poster Printing ................................................................. Greg Burns, Westen Engraving
Lobby Display & Photography .............................................. Roger Evans, Stephen Hage
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House Staff Recruiter ......................................................... Gordon Staff
Ticket Sales ............................................................................ Katie Lowry
Ticket Assistants ................................................................. Janice Barbee, Ruth Erickson, Carol Kollander
                                             Ann Lewis, Dean Laurance, Fred Morrison, Chris Rusin

The Board:
Producer ................................................................................. Stephen Hage
Labour Pool Coordinator ........................................................ Ernest Brody
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Treasurer ............................................................................... Richard Rames
Secretary ............................................................................... Lesley Hendrickson
Chorus Representatives ....................................................... Gordon Staff, Charlotte Morrison
Orchestra Representative ...................................................... Barb Hovey

ORCHESTRA

Conductor ............................................................................... Steven Michael Utzigr
Violin .................................................................................... Milton Wright (Concertmaster), Michael Compton
                        Debbie Feinwachs, Kathleen Green, Gary Rank, Agnes Wolf, Eva Zorn
Viola ................................................................. Tom Rognsvoog, Aija Ronis
Cello ................................................................. Coral Bastien, Paul Jansen, John Litch
                                           Wendy Lukaszewski, Renee Merton
Bass ................................................................. Ron Rasmussen
Flute ............................................................................. Ruth Erickson, Julie Lindstrom, Katie Lowry
Clarinet ................................................................. Barb Hovey, Julie Piper
Oboe ................................................................. Jean Beyer
Bassoon ................................................................. Holly Leighton
Horn ................................................................. Mike Engh, Ellen Sorensen, Bob Spector
Trumpet ................. Mike Hillman, Bob Hite, Betty Mackay, Andrew Shellenberger
Trombone ................................................................. Greg Michnay, Larry Perry
Percussion ................................................................. Julie Schmid, Jim Strech
Rehearsal Pianists ................................................................. Sally Reynolds
                        Darin Tysdal, Jean Van Heel
GLOSSARY (in order of occurrence)

Act I:

Tower of London - or simply, The Tower - refers to the complex of about 20 towers covering 18 acres, a fortress which in its history has housed the Royal Court, a prison, a menagerie, the Royal Mint and the Crown Jewels.

Yeomen of the Guard (Tower Warders) - Gilbert is guilty of some inaccuracies when he used these terms interchangeably. The Yeomen of the Guard were established by Henry VII in 1485 to serve as the Sovereign's personal bodyguard. The Yeomen Warders were set up in 1548 as guards (and now also serve as tour guides) of the tower. Popularly known as "beefeaters," they are selected from non-commissioned officers and warrant officers on the basis of merit.

The Little Ease - a Tower dungeon cell wherein one could not stand or lie in comfort (a cube about 4 feet per side)

Tower Green - A grassy space within the Tower, site of special executions

Beauchamp Tower - (pronounced "beecham") - often used as a lodging for prisoners of rank

Cold Harbor Tower - no longer standing

Old Blunderbore - the giant in the fairy story "Jack and the Giant Killer" who grinds men's bones to make his bread

I was born in the old keep - the strong, innermost structure in a fort or castle

the screw may twist and the rack may turn - refers to tortures

Is life a boon? ... I have a boon to beg - a favor

a hundred crowns - about £25 - more than a laborer might earn in a year

give us quip and quiddity - witty remark and trifling point

love-lorn loon - man of low birth

peacock popinjay, bravely born - an overly proud person

buy an elective for her - a medicinal preparation made with sugar and honey

like some of my jests, out of place - second meaning is "unemployed"

He who'd make his fellow creatures wise should always give the philosophic pill - same sentiment as "a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down"

Were as a carrion's cry to lullaby such as I'd sing to thee - short for carrion crow

halbert or halberd - a 15th or 16th century weapon - pike or battle axe mounted on a long staff

standard lost in last campaign - battle flag or banner

The consequences fell no mortal can foretell - dire, evil

a thousand marks - about £666 (more than 6 years' salary for the well-paid Lieutenant!)

Act II:

is not the world a big butt of humor, into which all who will may drive a gimlet - a butt is a barrel; a gimlet is a tool to bore holes

consider each person's auricular - sense of hearing

solemn D.D. - Doctor of Divinity

tail of cock and bull - an extravagant tale presented as if true

gives that no smith can weld - leg-irons, fetters, or handcuffs

or I'll swallow my kirtle - woman's gown, shirt, or outer petticoat

an arquebus - early portable firearm

consumed with a parulous jealousy - extremely bad

that none may gainsay - contradict

his twig he'll so carefully lime - refers to a method of catching birds by smearing twigs with a sticky substance (bird-time)

Odes bodikins ... Odes Bobs - two versions of an oath meaning, literally, "Gods little body"

sweets that never cloy - become sickeningly sweet

'tis but mickle sister reaps - old Scottish word, here meaning "little"

kissing, clinging cockatrice - mythical serpent with a deadly glance

I'll cleave thee to the chine - backbone; he means he'll split his head, down to the body

When love's vorticry seeks the notary - devotee or worshiper

Court ing privity, down declivity, seeks captivity - perhaps Gilbert dredged this word up from his legal background; it means a legal connection or interest (here, marriage)
“TO THE STORY OF OUR GLORY, EACH A BOLD CONTRIBUTORY”

Peacock Popinjays ($100 and over)

Anonymous ◊ Patricia & Mark Bauer ◊ Gretchen & Jim Fogo ◊ Priscilla Paine Fuller ◊ Donald & Marion Hall ◊ Donald F. Johnson ◊ Thor Lyford ◊ Jack & Vivian Mason ◊ Shirley Moore ◊ Garry & Mary Ann Peterson ◊ R. N. Quiche ◊ Marvin & Martha Rogers ◊ Tom & Beverly Rogers ◊ Richard Evan Stone ◊ Connie Waterous ◊

Tower Warders ($50 - $99)


Merrymen and Maids (up to $50)


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hobart United Methodist Church, Plymouth Congregational Church, The Guthrie Theatre, Child Garden Montessori School, Minnetonka Symphony (orchestra lights), Mary Lou Loomis (yarn and fleece), Larry Byler (music arrangement), Stephanie Lindorf, Tanya Brody (spinning wheel), Golden Valley Police Department (archebus), Leslie Hacking at Creative Resource Center and Greg Burns at Weston Engraving (poster design and printing), and our gallant company of ushers, ticket sellers, and concessionaires, who all do Yeoman service.