Iolanthe
or
The Peer and the Peri

The Cast
The Lord Chancellor .................................................. Robert Sherrane
Lord Mountararat ..................................................... Waldyn Benbenek
Lord Tolloller ............................................................ Joe Andrews
Private Willis, of the Grenadier Guards ......................... Scott Benson
Strephon, an Arcadian Shepherd ................................... John D. Giedlinski
Queen of the Fairies .................................................. Lisa T. Drew
Iolanthe, a Fairy, Strephon’s Mother ............................. Nancy McMurrin
Celia ................................................................. Laurie Dehmlow
Leila ................................................................. Anne Nonnemacher
Fleta ................................................................. Holly Windle
Phyllis, Arcadian Shepherdess, a Ward in Chancery ........... Julie Ann Greif

Chorus of Fairies:
Mary Mescher Benbenek ................................. Mary Gregory ............................. Cyndi Nelson
Stephanie Brody ......................................................... Kathy Hering ......................... Sue Ann Rawlins
Diane Dinndorf Friebe ........................... Holly MacDonald .............................. Margaret Sullivan
Susan Graves ....................................................... Charlotte Morrison ..................... Rhea Sullivan

Chorus of Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, and Barons:
Bob Alden .......................................................... Roger Evans .............................. Dean Laurance
Tom Barth .................................................. Andy Forgacs ............................. Warren Loud
Scott Benson ......................................................... Stephen Hage ....................... Richard Rames
Ernest Brody ...................................................... Rus Kierig .............................. Stephen B. Sullivan
Peter Erickson .............................................. Michael J. Kraklio

Understudies: Tom Barth, Scott Benson, Susan Graves, Mary Gregory,
Kathy Hering, Michael J. Kraklio, Sue Ann Rawlins, Rhea Sullivan, Holly
Windle, Michael Ziegahn

Act I: An Arcadian Landscape
Act II: Palace Yard, Westminster, moonlight
Date, between 1700 and 1882

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.
No eating or drinking is allowed in the theatre.
No smoking is permitted in the building.
The use of flash cameras is strictly forbidden.
DIRECTOR’S NOTE

*Iolanthe* is not one of the best known of the Savoy operas, but is generally acknowledged as the favorite of Gilbert & Sullivan aficionados, and rightly so. It boasts one of Sullivan’s most lushly tuneful scores, a compelling plot, delightful characters, and spot-on pacing that makes it a director’s joy. Chorus singers give an especially strong vote to *Iolanthe* in gratitude for rewarding roles as the fairies and peers, who serve as protagonists in their own right.

*Iolanthe* is a particularly rich example of Gilbert’s famed “topsy-turvydom” of misalliances and contradictions. Fairies trip the halls of Westminster while Peers in full regalia hike the countryside. Titled lords vie to marry a shepherdess while the Fairy Queen swoons for a grenadier guard. As legislators, the peers are proud to do “nothing in particular” (and do it very well!), while the “dainty little fairies” are keen for Parliamentary reform. Strephon, “a fairy to the waist, but whose legs are mortal,” is a mass of political and amatory complications. The Lord Chancellor may “embody the law” but admits his susceptibility to “pretty young wards in Chancery” and later reveals an even more deeply romantic side. Passions are quickly ignited, but can be just as quickly diverted. Lovers thwarted are reunited, and seemingly irreconcilable differences vanish with a pencil stroke—and, of course, a wave of the Fairy Queen’s magic wand.

— Lesley Hendrickson

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SYNOPSIS

Twenty-five years ago, the fairy Iolanthe was exiled by the Fairy Queen for the crime of marrying a human. She was spared the requisite death sentence on the condition that she leave her husband and never communicate with him again. The band of fairies misses her and so, in fact, does the Fairy Queen, who decides to pardon her. Iolanthe introduces her half-fairy son, Strephon, who plans to wed Phyllis, a minor under the guardianship of the Lord Chancellor. Unfortunately, the entire of House of Lords (also called the House of Peers) is courting Phyllis and the Lord Chancellor has his eye on her as well. The Lord Chancellor, not knowing that Strephon is the son of his (he thinks) long-dead wife, forbids his marriage to Phyllis. When Strephon, crushed by this refusal, is being comforted by his mother, Phyllis misconstrues their affection and spurns him. (She is ignorant of his unusual family connections.) Phyllis then offers herself to either of the two top-ranking lords, Lord Mountararat and Lord Tolleroller, who cannot decide which one is to have her. Strephon, meanwhile, summons fairy assistance. The Queen, indignant over the insult to Iolanthe and Strephon, makes Strephon a member of Parliament and proceeds to dismantle the House of Peers’ cherished privileges of rank. (A dukedom will be obtained through “competitive examination”!) The peers resort to foreign phrases to hide their discomfiture, as the fairies mock them.

Act II begins with more mocking on the part of the fairies, but clearly they are becoming interested in these haughty humans. The Fairy Queen, despite her own interest in the grenadier guard on duty, chides them for such weakness. Meanwhile, Lord Mountararat and Lord Tolleroller have an ultimately touching confrontation about the disposition of Phyllis. The Lord Chancellor, who has been tossing and turning over the legal points of his awarding Phyllis to himself, is reassured by Mountararat and Tolleroller. Iolanthe, unable to bear her son’s unhappiness, arrives to plead his case. Despite her veiled allusions to the Lord Chancellor’s love for his long-dead bride, she is unable to convince him to let Strephon and Phyllis marry. Desperate, she reveals herself as his wife. He is stunned by her revelation and horrified that her disclosure now ensures her death. When the Fairy Queen arrives to deal the death blow, the Lord Chancellor uses his legal expertise to resolve the crisis and pave the way for the “uplifting” happy ending.
PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director ................................................................. Lesley Hendrickson
Music Director ................................................................. Carolyn Davies
Artistic Director ............................................................... Wendy Evans
Costume Designer ............................................................. Chris Cook Johnson
Set and Lighting Designer .................................................. Michael Hoover
Assistant Music Director ..................................................... Kyle Nelson
Rehearsal Pianists ......................................................... Kris Henderson, Kyle Nelson, Steven Norquist
Stage Manager ................................................................. Peggy Kennedy
Lead Scenic Artist ............................................................. Carol Collins
Lighting Technicians ............... Floyd Swanson, Bob Hunter, Bob Johanneck
Follow-spot Operators ....................... Chris Rusin, Janna Kysilko, Ted Morrison
Properties Manager ....................................................... Cindy Edmon
Hand Prop Construction ............................................. Holly Windle, Dean Laurance
Crown Makers ........................................................... Joe Andrews, Amy Bevilacqua, Sandra Burch, Jenny
Gordhammer, Lora Gordhammer, Garin Ipsen, Michelle Jones, Sheila Kim
Set Construction Coordinators .................... Andy Forgacs, Dean Laurance
Set Construction and Painting ....... Amy Bevilacqua, Julie Delton, Lonny Flemmer,
Anne Forgacs, Robert Hunter, Dick Thomas
Floyd Swanson, Susan Vogel, and cast members
Costume Construction ..... Chris Cook Johnson, Bonnie Lamb, Holly MacDonald
Bodice Construction / Lead Sewer .............. Anne Forgacs
Sewers ............................................................... Marlene Doll, Kathryn Florhaug, Theresa Happ,
Dorothy Kuether, Jane Laurance, Carol Montonye, June Roloff,
Barbara Webber and cast members
Costume Rental / Alterations ................. Bonnie Lamb
Wardrobe Mistress ..................................................... Holly MacDonald
Poster Design ............................................................... Garin Ipsen
Typesetting ................................................................. Tess Kolney
Lobby Display ...................................................... Ernest Brody, Roger Evans, Stephen Hage
Photography ..................................................... Roger Evans, Stephen Hage
House Manager ........................................................ Mary Kuehborn
House Staff Recruitment ......................... Rhea Sullivan
Ticket Sales .............................................................. Katie Lowry
Producer ................................................................. Waldyn Benbenek
Chairman of the Board ............................. Stephen Hage
Volunteer Coordinator ......................... Andy Forgacs
Publicity ............................................................... Joe Andrews
Treasurer ............................................................. Richard Rames
Secretary .............................................................. Mary Mescher Benbenek
Chorus Representatives .................... Stephanie Brody, Dean Laurance

ORCHESTRA

Violin ................................................................. Linda Werner (Concertmaster)
Stephen Helms-Tillery, Paula Larison, Gary Rauk
Mary Walker, Agnes Wolf, Milton Wright
Viola ................................................................. Gary Hanson, Anne Marie Hendrickson, Scott Olsen
Don Olson, Tom Rognsvog
Cello ................................................................. Coral Bastien, John Litch
Bass ................................................................. Bob Salter
Flute ................................................................. Holly Berry, Sari Fried, Katie Lowry
Clarinet ............................................................... Barb Hovey, Tom Legare
Oboe ................................................................. Linnea Schilling
Bassoon ............................................................... Debbie Johanneck
Horn ................................................................. Martha Bentley, Denny McGinn, Theresia Perry, Jim Streich
Trumpet ............................................................... Bob Hirte, Andrew Padula, Bob Zobal
Trombone ......................................................... Brad Etherington, Larry Perry, Greg Michnay, Tom Secor
Percussion ......................................................... Barbara Huestis, Julie Olson, Jim Streich
GLOSSARY

The Peer and the Peri — a Peer is a high-ranking nobleman, and a Peri is a fairy.

Arcadian Shepherd — an idealized rustic, the standard hero of the 18th-century genre of pastoral, mythological drama

A Ward in Chancery — a minor under the guardianship of the Courts of Chancery

I’ve a Borough or two at my disposal — analogous to a congressional district to sit upon a Woolack which is stuffed with such thorns... — the traditional seat of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords; an oversized hassock stuffed with wool

I’ll stick to my pipes and my tabors — pastoral musical instruments; flutes and drums

In lowly cot alone is virtue found — cottage

Belgrave Square... Seven Dials — examples of a fashionable area and a slum, respectively

neither throw dust in a juryman’s eyes — same as pulling the wool over his eyes

When tempests wreck thy bark — your ship, i.e. when you are in trouble

let us pipe our eye — cry

Tara diddle, Tol-lol-lay — Tara diddle is a fob. Tol-lol may mean languid or so-so (as in the name of the character Lord Tollloler), but may be just nonsense syllables here

Foreign Phrases — The Peers flaunt their linguistic learning in the following:

taking of his Dolce far Niente — Italian for blissful dalliance, “sweet nothing”
as the ancient Romans said “festina lente” — Latin for “hurry slowly”

Of a sudden, which is English for “Repente” — from either Italian or Latin

will be carried, nobody at all contradicente — Latin for “contradicting”

with base canaille — as the Fairies note, “That word is French” for low rabble

a herd of vulgar plebs — “a Latin word” for the common people

’Twould fill with joy... the Hoi Polloi — “a Greek remark” meaning common folk

Marriage with deceased wife’s sister — refers to a longstanding legislative feud between the two houses of Parliament. A bill permitting this was finally passed in 1907.

When all night long a chap remains on sentry-go — sentry duty

When in that House M.P.s divide — Members of Parliament, voting by physically going to one side of the House or the other

He’s a Parliamentary Pickford - he carries everything — Pickford’s was (and is) a hauling firm whose slogan was “we carry everything”

Yet Britain won her proudest boys — laurel wreaths, given to victorious heroes

Oh, foolish fax — yet another word for fairy

Oh, amorous dove, type of Ovidius Naso — the Fairy Queen is apostrophizing the dove as a symbol of love, and likening it to the Latin amatory poet, Ovid.

Lord Chancellor’s Nightmare Song:

nothing ‘twixt you and the ticking — material covering a mattress or pillow

a large bathing machine — wheeled changing-room used by modest beach-goers

the ship’s now a four-wheeler — a type of horse-drawn carriage

the black silk with gold clocks — decorative stitching on socks

he’s telling the tars all the particulars — sailors

Apple puddings, and three-corners, and Banbury — various pastries

shores... taken by Rothschild and Baring — two major banking establishments

Be your law the ancient saw — old saying. This song, like “Things are seldom what they seem” in H.M.S. Pinafore, strings together many ‘old saws.’

not worth a maravedi — a Spanish coin of very little value

As an old Equity draughtsman — a barrister who draws up complex legal documents

two strings go to every bow... grief ‘twill bring if you’ve two beaux to every string — a pun on the phrase ‘to have two strings to your bow,’ meaning to be prepared for emergencies (when you resort to your second string), and the French word ‘beaux,’ meaning boy-friends, whom one may have ‘on a string’
CONTRIBUTORS

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Our next production (Spring, 1993) will be Princess Ida, or Castle Adamant, which Gilbert described as 'a Respectful Operatic Per-Version of Tennyson's "Princess".' The story concerns the efforts of a Prince (betrayed in infancy) to bring to the altar his reluctant bride, who has forsworn men and founded a women's college. The work is unique among the G & S operettas in having three acts, and in having the dialogue in blank verse.

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