THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD
OR THE MERRYMAN AND HIS MAID

Fridays, March 13, 20, 27 at 8:00 pm
Saturdays, March 14, 21, 28 at 8:00 pm
Sundays, March 15, 22, 29 at 3:00 pm

Howard Conne Fine Arts Center
1900 Nicollet Avenue South Minneapolis

Adults $6.50 Children $4.50

for information call 925-9159
for reservations call 333-0059
THE CAST

Sir Richard Cholmondeley
(Lieutenant of the Tower).............Waldyn Benbenek
Colonel Fairfax (under sentence of death)........Pete Pellinen
Sergeant Meryll (of the Yeomen of the Guard)........Bryan Janssen
Leonard Meryll (his son)........................Michael Ziegahn
Jack Point (a Strolling Jester)..................Bob Lundegaard
Wilfred Shadbolt (Head Jailer and
Assistant Tormentor)............................Sid Konikoff
The Headsman..................................Charles Smith
First Yeoman..................................Mark Samuel
Second Yeoman.................................Glenn Payton
First Citizen..................................Peter Erickson
Second Citizen................................Steve Rawlins

Elsie Maynard (a strolling singer).............Donna Carroll
Phoebe Meryll (Sgt. Meryll's daughter)........Dorthea Jensen
Dame Carruthers (Housekeeper to the Tower).....Gretchen Collins
Kate (her niece)................................Emily Foreman

Commedia Troupe................................Ernest Brody
..............................................Raina Brody
..............................................Stephanie Brody
..............................................C. Amanda Maud

YEOMEN OF THE GUARD:

Tom Betting ........................................Glenn Payton
Roger Evans .......................................Richard Rames
Stephen Hague ......................................Mark Samuel
David Jensen ......................................Gary Siemers
Dean Laurance ....................................Stephan B. Sullivan

CHORUS OF TOWNSPEOPLE:

Elizabeth Almlof ...................Warren S. Loud ...........Steve Rawlins
Peter Erickson .................Holly MacDonald ............Sue Ann Rawlins
Marylou Gibson .................Carol Manning ...............Margaret Sullivan
Phil Grant .....................Mary Mescher .................Rhea Lee Sullivan
Vern Harman ..................Charlotte Morrison ............Jennifer Trueman
Kathy Hering ..................Cyndi Nelson ................Barbara Webber
Kirsten Lenius ..............Charlotte Overend ..........Holly Windle

UNDERSTUDIES:

Lieutenant...Richard Rames  Elsie.................Emily Foreman
Fairfax.......Waldyn Benbenek Phoebe.............Cyndi Nelson
Jack Point...Mark Samuel  Dame Carruthers..Marylou Gibson
Shadbolt.....Michael Ziegahn  Kate..................Kathy Hering
Sgt. Meryll..Warren Loud  1st Yeoman.......Tom Betting

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Act I - Tower Green
Act II - The same - Moonlight
Time - Sixteenth century

A shot will be fired during this performance.

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

No smoking, eating, or drinking is allowed in the theatre.

The use of flash cameras is strictly forbidden.
The Yeomen of the Guard stands apart from the G&S repertoire for several reasons. It is a much more serious work than most - a period piece with neither political nor social topical satire - and is more tragic than comic. Its characters are more human than the usual G&S stereotypes, and demand sympathy from the audience. The dialogue contains little of the usual delicious Gilbertian laugh-a-minute.

Perhaps for these reasons Yeomen is not as popular in America as it is in England. I approached it with some reservations, but during the rehearsal period these wonderful characters came to life, and I fell completely in love. I trust you will, too.

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: A desperate counter-conspiracy is undertaken by Sergeant Meryll, his son Leonard (both former comrades-at-arms of the condemned prisoner) and daughter Phoebe (who is in love with Fairfax, although she's never spoken with him). The three Merylls devise a stratagem to rescue the Colonel by disguising him as Leonard -- a hero in his own right who has just been made a Yeoman of the Guard. Meanwhile, with the assistance of the Tower's Lieutenant, Fairfax plots to forestall his distant cousin's inheritance by a last-minute marriage of convenience to a blindfolded maiden, Elsie Maynard. This secret arrangement, for "an hundred crowns," is greedily endorsed by Elsie's suitor, the Jester Jack Point. Soon thereafter, Phoebe and Sergeant Meryll succeed in freeing Fairfax and give him a warm welcome to the Tower as Leonard Meryll. When it is discovered that Fairfax has "miraculously" disappeared, there is general consternation 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 whilst her husband lives.

ACT II: Despite the townspeople's taunts, the Yeomen have failed to find the missing Fairfax (who, as Leonard Meryll, presumably has been diligently seeking himself). Jack Point hatches a scheme with Phoebe's jealous admirer, Wilfred Shadbolt, to convince everyone that Wilfred has courageously slain the escaped Fairfax. Fairfax upsets the others' plans, however, by wooing his own "widow" Elsie, who thinks he really is Leonard Meryll. Meanwhile, Wilfred Shadbolt and Dame Carruthers discover the Merylls' complicity in freeing Fairfax (surely a capital offense in itself) and use this knowledge to further their own aims. Despite the fact that Fairfax cannot resist teasing Elsie by a final intrigue at his own wedding, they are united in a traditional happy ending. Sergeant Meryll, Phoebe, and the disconsolate Jack Point, however, are left to the bitter consequences of their own, and everyone else's, conspiracies.
PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director..........................Judith Foreman
Music Director..........................Carolyn Davies
Artistic Director........................Wendy Evans
Technical Director......................Stephen B. Sullivan
Rehearsal Pianist.........................Joanne Thrash Phelan
Choreographer............................C. Amanda Maud
Production Manager......................Holly Windle
Stage Manager............................Chris Rusin
Costume Designer.........................James Middleton
Journeyman Set Designer...............Stephen B. Sullivan
Lighting Design.........................Peter Leonard
Lighting.................................Floyd Swanson
Properties...............................Cheryl Nelson
Volunteer Coordinator..................Phil Grant
Makeup...................................Kirsten Lenius
Stonemason................................Peter Erickson
Set Construction Workers...............Mary Kuehnborn, Ginger Petry, Lesley Risberg, Cheryl Voss, and company members

Costume Construction...................Gretchen Collins, Wendy Evans, Judith Foreman, Patsy Herbert, Jane Laurance, Kirsten Lenius, Holly MacDonald, Cyndi Nelson, Barbara Webber

Graphic Design..........................Peter Erickson
Photography................................Robert M. Evans
Props construction.....................Stephen B. Sullivan, Barbara Webber

House Manager...........................Mary Kuehnborn
House Staff Recruitment...............Marylou Gibson, Jennifer Trueman

Ticket Sales Manager...................Stephanie Brody
Publicity..................................Stephen Hage
Treasurer..................................Charlotte Morrison
Secretary.................................Dorothea Jensen
Chorus Representatives...............Stephanie Brody, Dean Laurance

ORCHESTRA

Violin I.................................Laura Henningson
(Concertmistress)
Dan Folland
Marta Stahl
Linda Werner

Violin II................................Kathleen Wilcox
Gary Rauk

Viola.....................................Suzanne Little
Scott Olson

Cello......................................Coral Bastien
Marlys Lund

Bass.......................................Bob Salter

Flute......................................Katharine Lowry
Carolyn Boxmeyer

Clarinet..................................Barb Hovey

Oboe......................................Linnea Schilling

Bassoon.................................Kate Saumur
Doreen Gunderson

Horn......................................Lisa Worcester
Martha Bentley

Trumpet.................................Bob Hirte

Trombone...............................Paul Hillmer
Eric Roeder

Percussion..............................Julie Olson
Jim Strike
GLOSSARY

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 uses these terms interchangeably. The Yeomen of the Guard were established by Henry VII in 1485 to serve as the Sovereign's personal bodyguard. The Yeoman Warders were set up in 1546 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 "beechem") - often used as a lodging for prisoners of rank

Cold Harbour Tower - no longer standing

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

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

an hundred crowns... a thousand marks - old coins worth a quarter of a pound and two-thirds of a pound, respectively

give us quip and quiddity - witty remark and trifling point

love-lorn loon - man of low birth

peacock popinjay - an overly proud person

buy an electuary for her - a medicinal preparation made with sugar or honey

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

standard lost - flag or banner

consider each person's auricular - sense of hearing

solemn D.D. - Doctor of Divinity

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

gyves - leg-irons, fetters

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

an arquebus - early portable firearm

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

kissing, clinging cockatrice - mythical serpent with a deadly glance

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SPECIAL THANKS

Special Thanks to devoted Savoyard John Toy for providing us with Sergeant Meryll's "Lost Song" in Act I. Tradition says that this was cut on the morning of opening night because Gilbert felt there were too many serious numbers at the beginning of Act I. We liked it well enough to restore it for our Sergeant Meryll, and are grateful to Edward Foreman who did the orchestration.

Further Thanks to: Minneapolis Park Department, the staff of Whittier Park Center, the staff of Kenwood Park Center, Faith United Methodist Church, Concentus Musicus, The Guthrie Theatre, The Loft Antiques, Mary Lou Loomis, Hirschfeld's Paints and Wallcoverings, Turnquist Paper Company, Child's Play Theatre Company, College of St. Catherine, Ex Machina, St. Clement's Episcopal Church (St. Paul), St. Annes Episcopal Church (Sunfish Lake), Gail Bakkom, Minnesota Opera, Dick Sorensen, and Williams Sound.

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Our next season's schedule will include a Fall 1987 revival of Trial by Jury, paired with a concert version of selections from Gilbert and Sullivan's last work, The Grand Duke. Our Spring 1988 show will be HMS Pinafore. Tax deductible contributions to help support our season are always welcome.

The company is in need of space to rehearse and build sets. If you know of a place where we could do either or both (at low cost), please let us know.

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