

The Yeomen of the Guard

or, The Merryman and His Maid

THE CAST

Colonel Fairfax (*under sentence of death*) Josh Kowitz
Sergeant Meryll (*of the Yeomen of the Guard*)..... Waldyn Benbenek
Phoebe Meryll (*his daughter*) Lara Trujillo
Leonard Meryll (*his son*) Michael Burton
Jack Point (*a strolling jester*)..... Jacob Wellington
Elsie Maynard (*a strolling singer*)..... Quinn Shadko
Wilfred Shadbolt (*Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor*) Stephen Mumbert
Sir Richard Cholmondeley (*Lieutenant of the Tower*)..... Jim Ahrens
Dame Carruthers (*Housekeeper to the Tower*) Deb Haas
Kate (*her niece*) Missy Griffin
First Yeoman..... Tom Berg
Second Yeoman Wric Larsen
First Citizen..... Anthony Rohr
The Headsman / Second Citizen Christopher Michela

Chorus of Citizens:

Jonathan Flory	Holly MacDonald
Noelle French	Mary Mescher Benbenek
Zach Garcia	Christopher Michela
Mary Gregory	Johna Miller
Missy Griffin	Charlotte Morrison
Shawn Holt	Anthony Rohr
Kelly Houlehan	Rhea Sullivan
Julia Knoll	Holly Windle

Children:

Amanda Holt	Isaac Sommerfeldt
Noah Ross	Sierra Sommerfeldt

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard:

Tom Berg	Keith Liuzzi
Jim Brooks	John Orbison
L. Peter Erickson	Eric Pasternack
Stephen Hage	Wendell Peck
Wric Larsen	Richard Rames
Dean Laurance	

Understudies: Johna Miller, Kelly Houlehan, Julia Knoll, Noelle French, Anthony Rohr, Wendell Peck, Stephen Hage, Zach Garcia, L Peter Erickson, Michael Burton, Richard Rames, John Orbison, Dean Laurance, Eric Pasternack

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* ~
~ *Turn off all cell phones & pagers* ~
~ *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

GSVLOC audiences love to laugh, and a common lobby comment after a show is that the cast looks as if they are “having such a good time!” It wasn’t too far into the rehearsal process for *The Yeomen of the Guard* that company members began making wan jokes about how likely that comment was to be made this year. Yes, in *Yeomen* Gilbert takes us into far darker territory than in the other Savoy operas, but have no fear: there is plenty of opportunity for laughter.

The French classic dramatists thought Shakespeare barbaric for (among other things) mixing comedy and tragedy. That could be part of the reason why today audiences worldwide are more likely to flock to *Hamlet* than to *Ernani*, but a more immediate example might be nightly network television. Your basic police procedural may offer goofy office banter one moment and a grisly forensic report the next. Life itself brings both comedy and tragedy, and rarely has the courtesy to warn us ahead of time which is which. Jack Point says he has no choice but to “laugh at myself till I ache for it.” Whether you are moved to laughter, to tears, or to both, we hope you enjoy *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

—Lesley Hendrickson

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 a 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 making Elsie a widow so that 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...

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director Lesley Hendrickson
Music Director Marina Liadova
Stage Manager Laura Bidgood
Set Designer & Scenic Painter Larry Rostad
Costume Designer Amanda McGee
Lighting Designer Andrew Kedl
Assistant Stage Manager Trina Morrison
Crew Malka Key, Jack Kravik, Brianna Sullivan
Wardrobe Mistress Jo Pasternack
Set & Prop Construction Julie Delton, Andy Dizon, Irene Duong, Bob Hunter
Malka Key, Jack Kravik, Trina Morrison, Larry Rostad, Brianna Sullivan
Jon Wallace, Dean Laurance, and other cast members
Props Laura Bidgood
Follow Spot Operator Jack Kravik
Audio-Visual Engineer Bob Johanneck
Audio-Describer Judy Baldwin
Poster/Program Graphic Design Mary Olson
Lobby Display & Photography Stephen Hage
Group Photos Daniels Studio
House Managers David Morrison, Fred Morrison, Irene Duong
Ticket Sales Charlotte Morrison
Ticket Helpers Deb Haas, Holly MacDonald, Fred Morrison, Eric Pasternack
House Staff Recruitment Shawn Holt

The Board:

Producer Stephen Hage
Labour Pool Coordinator Eric Pasternack
Publicity Waldyn Benbenek
Treasurer Malka Key
Secretary Shawn Holt
Female Chorus Representative Mary Gregory
Male Chorus Representative John Orbison
Orchestra Representative Barb Hovey

ORCHESTRA (Includes Substitutes)

Conductor Marina Liadova
Orchestra Manager Ann Marie McIntire
Violin I David Kozamchak (*Concert Master*)
Eva Zorn, Derick Rehurek, Mark Wamma
Kate Kelly, Emmalee Johnson, Miyuki Onishi
Violin II Theodora Wynhoff, Lorine Menzhuber
Beth Henningsen, Karen Neinstadt, Nancy Birth
Viola Ann Marie Bur, Aija Ronis, Teresa Mager
Antigone Delton, Chris Chelgren
Cello John Dunham, Karin Holmberg Kimble
Jesse Berndt, Amy Samelian
String Bass Ann Marie McIntire, Benjamin Kitt
Flute Kristen Kinnear-Ohlmann, Joseph Wypych
Anne Cheney, Kathleen Spehar
Clarinet Barb Hovey, Dave Clark
Oboe Steve Schellenberg, Kristen Cooper, Elizabeth Berry
Bassoon Steve Cronk, Elizabeth Brandt, Charlotte Tuomaala
French Horn Jeff Ohlmann, Michael Engh, Chris Hahn, Karen Holmes
Trumpet Andy Padula, Robert Zobal, Betty MacKay
Trombone Greg Michnay, Tim Jung, Scott Soltis, Benjamin Bussey
Percussion John Litch, Charley Rich
Rehearsal Pianists: Lawrence Henry, Jean Orbison Van Heel
also: Carolyn Davies, Steven Norquist, Jan Scovill

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 body-guard. 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 "bee-cham") - often used as a lodging for prisoners of rank

Cold Harbour 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

an 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

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

He who'd make his fellow creatures wise should always gild 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

debarred from all escape – prevented from escaping

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 :

Night has spread her pall once more – a dark shroud

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

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

gyves that no smith can weld - leg-irons, fetters, or hand-cuffs

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

an arquebus - early portable firearm

consumed with a parlous 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-lime)

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

sweets that never cloy - become sickeningly sweet

Oh, the sighing and the suing! – wooing, courting

'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 volary seeks the notary - devotee or worshiper

Courting privity, down declivity, seeks captivity - perhaps Gilbert dredged this word up from his legal background; it means a legal connection or interest (here, marriage)

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Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, Plymouth Congregational Church, St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Tanya Brody (spinning wheel), and our gallant company of ushers, ticket sellers, and concessionaires, who all do Yeoman service.

Since its founding in 1979 by Dick Fishel and Jim Hart, the company has produced all the Gilbert and Sullivan shows: *Trial By Jury* (1979), *Patience* (1980), *Iolanthe* (1981), *Princess Ida* (1982), *Ruddigore* (1983), *The Gondoliers* (1984), *The Mikado* (Spring 1985), *The Sorcerer* (Fall 1985), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1986), *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1987), *Utopia, Ltd.* (1988), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1989), *Patience* (1990), *The Grand Duke* (1991), *Iolanthe* (1992), *Princess Ida* (1993), *The Gondoliers* (1994), *Ruddigore* (1995), *The Mikado* (Spring 1996), *The Zoo and Trial By Jury* (Fall 1996), *The Sorcerer* (1997), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1998), *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1999), *Offenbach's Orpheus in the Underworld* (2000), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (2001), *Patience* (2002), *The Grand Duke* (2003), *Iolanthe* (2004), *The Gondoliers* (2005), *Princess Ida* (2006), *The Mikado* (2007), *Utopia, Limited* (2008), *Ruddigore* (2009), *The Sorcerer* (2010), *The Pirates of Penzance* (2011), and *Patience* (2012)

In the Spring of 2014, we will present *The Grand Duke*

Our next Lake Harriet Bandshell performance will be *The Mikado*,
on July 13 (7:30) & 14 (5:30) of 2013



Presents

The Yeomen of the Guard

or, The Merryman and His Maid



March 1 – March 24, 2013

Howard Conn Fine Arts Center
1900 Nicollet Avenue South
Minneapolis

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