

RUDDIGORE

or

The Witch's Curse

THE CAST

Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd
(disguised as *Robin Oakapple*, a Young Farmer) Matt Dolph
Richard Dauntless
(his Foster-Brother, a Man-o'-War's man) Michael J. Kraklio
Sir Despard Murgatroyd, of Ruddigore
(a Wicked Baronet) Waldyn Benbenek
Old Adam Goodheart (*Robin's Faithful Servant*) David Hanken
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd Kenton Holden
Rose Maybud (*a Village Maiden*) Mary Gregory
Mad Margaret Marta Burton
Dame Hannah (*Rose's Aunt*) Deborah Haas
Zorah (*Professional Bridesmaid*) Jennifer Cooper
Ruth (*Professional Bridesmaid*) Mary Beth Ward

Chorus of Professional Bridesmaids and Townswomen:

Lori K. Allaman	Diane Dinndorf Friebe	Lizz Just
Stephanie Brody	Angie Gislason	Charlotte Morrison
Tanya Brody	Amy Gunderson	Lisa Rock
Molly Callinan	Kathy Hering	Cyndi Sturtz
Kathryn Florhaug	Marcia Hill	Mary Beth Ward

Chorus of Bucks & Blades, Townsmen, and Ancestors:

Tom Barth	Peter Erickson	Kristefor Lysne
Shawn Behrens	Roger Evans	Tom Melander
Brent Berheim	Stephen Hage	John Arthur Murray
Erin Bernier	Randall Karels	Richard Rames
Ernest Brody	Dean Laurance	Gordon Staff
James Brooks	Warren Loud	

Understudies: Tom Barth, Shawn Behrens, Erin Bernier, Tanya Brody
James Brooks, Jennifer Cooper, Angie Gislason, Randall Karels

Time: Early in the 19th Century

Act I: The Fishing Village of Rederring, in Cornwall

Act II: The Picture Gallery in Ruddigore Castle

There will be one 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

When this opera opened at the Savoy Theatre on January 22, 1887, it was called *Ruddygore*. However, "ruddy" was apparently too close to "bloody" for Victorian tastes, and Gilbert and Sullivan were convinced to use a less offensive spelling. It was probably a better world that could be offended by such a mild expletive.

The rewrites did not end with the title. The unfamiliar sound of hisses and boos in the midst of the opening night cheers persuaded Gilbert & Sullivan that their latest work needed extensive revision. They quickly cut substantial portions of the second act, and within days their reworked *Ruddigore* was on the boards at the Savoy.

Out of such feverish play-doctoring, however, has grown the legend of "Gilbert and Sullivan's big flop." Ruddigore came to be thought of as a lesser effort, a mistake, a lapse in taste, a failure.

We at the Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera Company think this is nonsense, of course. Ruddigore features some of Sullivan's best music, and the parody melodrama concocted by Gilbert sparkles with wit. By the time the curtain comes down, we think you'll see why the original production played 288 performances, and prompted Mr. Gilbert to remark, "I could do with a few more such failures."

– Barry Hamill



SYNOPSIS

Act I – The corps of Professional Bridesmaids of the village of Rederring bemoans the fact that no one requires their services, since all the eligible men are waiting until pretty Rose Maybud makes up her mind whom to marry. When the bridesmaids, in desperation, urge Rose's old aunt Hannah to think of marrying, she explains her unhappy romantic history with Roderic Murgatroyd, Baronet of Ruddigore. A witch had cursed the family, so that each inheritor of the title became a Bad Baronet, compelled to commit one crime per day or die in agony. Hannah renounced Roderic, who died ten years ago.

Rose's most likely suitor, Robin Oakapple, is too shy to propose, and Rose herself is inhibited by her adherence to the teachings of an etiquette book. Robin's old servant, Adam Goodheart, regrets that Robin cannot claim his true rank as Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, rightful heir to the Baronetcy of Ruddigore. Rather than succeed to the title and its curse, he has run away and left his younger brother, Despard, to inherit.

Richard Dauntless, a sailor who is a foster-brother of Robin, arrives and demonstrates that he, at least, is not shy. He offers to help Robin by speaking to Rose on his behalf. When Richard sees her, he decides to woo her for himself, and succeeds. The disappointed Robin reveals his feelings for her, so Rose changes her mind and engages herself to him instead. We then meet Mad Margaret, yet another victim of the curse, unhinged by the loss of her love, Despard, when he became a Bad Baronet. A chorus of "Bucks and Blades" (dandies from the city) charm the local women. Despard breaks in upon their flirtation, scaring them away. The rejected Richard, seeking a way to regain Rose, decides to reveal Robin's secret identity to Despard (who had thought his older brother dead). After everyone sings a madrigal on the seasons, Robin is publicly exposed as the true Bad Baronet, whereupon Rose renounces him and reluctantly resumes her engagement to Richard. Despard, freed from the curse, returns to Mad Margaret.

Act II – After a week, Robin is finding it hard to fulfill his crime quotient. Rose and Richard, attended by the Bridesmaids, come to his castle to ask his consent for their marriage. He grudgingly gives it. Alone in the family portrait gallery, he appeals to the images of all the past Bad Baronets for mercy in his predicament. They come to life and insist he fulfill the terms of the curse. Roderic, as the most recent of the ghosts, acts as spokesman and chief enforcer. Robin is forced to agree to "carry off a lady" before nightfall, so he sends Old Adam to do it. Despard and Margaret, in their reformed character of district visitors (church social workers), come to urge Robin to give up his evil ways. He agrees, but is dismayed to find that Adam has already carried off the maiden, who turns out to be Dame Hannah. Robin calls on the portrait of Roderic for aid. He steps out of his picture frame and into the arms of his old love, Hannah. Robin has an inspiration, and calls everyone in for the revelation of the solution to the curse.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director	Barry Hamill
Music Director	Carolyn Davies
Artistic Director	Wendy Evans
Stage Manager	Karen McNenny
Choreographer	Karen McNenny
Chorus Master	Elizabeth Swanson
Set Designer and Builder	Joseph Stanley
Set Construction and Painting	Beth Brooks, Laurie Brooks Terry Brooks, Rick Churchill, Julie Delton Rebecca Fuller, Louise Guenther, Bob Hunter Bob Johanneck, John Vojtech, and cast members
Set Construction Labor Coordinator	Ernest Brody
Properties Manager	Cindy Edmon
Assistant Stage Manager	Peggie Kennedy
Costume Designer and Builder	Jeannie Bautz
Costume Construction	Marlene Doll, Anne Forgacs Lesley Hendrickson, Holly MacDonald, Kathy Swenson Barb Vojtech, Barb Webber, and cast members
Wardrobe Mistress	Anne Forgacs
Lighting Designer	Bill Devins
Lighting Technicians	Brenda Armeson, Tim Harwig Robert Hunter, Christine Wagner
Audio-Visual Technician	Bob Johanneck
Additional Orchestrations	Jim Streich
Catering Assistants	Donna & Hilmar Wagner, Dorothe Kuether
Poster Design	Mueller Mack
Poster Printing	Weston Engraving
Lobby Display & Photography	Roger Evans, Stephen Hage
House Managers	Polly Peterson, Kathy Rausch, Mary Kay Murray
Ticket Sales	Katie Lowry
Ticket Assistants	Barb Hovey, Holly MacDonald Mary Kay Murray, Margaret Sullivan, Holly Windle

The Board:

Producer	Margaret Sullivan
Vice Producer	Stephen Hage
Labour Pool Coordinator	Lesley Hendrickson
Publicity	Joe Andrews
Treasurer	Richard Rames
Secretary	Tom Barth
Chorus Representatives	Gordon Staff, Stephanie Brody

ORCHESTRA

Violin	Milton Wright (Concertmaster), Dorothy Boen Phil Bremmer, Anne Duff, Elaine Evans, Paula Larson Joni MacDonald, Gary Rauk, Linda Werner, Agnes Wolf
Viola	Debbie Bloom, Gary Hanson, Gretchen Hinkie Erasmus Meinerts, Scott Olsen, Don Olson, Tom Rognsvoog
Cello	Coral Bastien, Tom Just, John Litch
Bass	Bob Salter
Harp	Katie Lowry
Flute	Sari Fried, Julie Lindstrom Parnell
Clarinet	Barb Hovey, Tom Legare
Oboe	Helen Scharber
Bassoon	Stewart Schroeder
Horn	Martha Bentley, Barbara Schroeder Jim Streich, Lisa Worcester
Trumpet	Bob Hirte, Bob Zobal
Trombone	Brad Etherington, Greg Michnay John Nielsen, Larry Perry
Percussion	Julie Schmid, Jim Streich
Rehearsal Pianists	Sarah Burk, Jocelyn Dueck Florian Keller, Jean Van Heel

GLOSSARY (in order of occurrence)

Act I:

what took place, I ween, shook his composure boasted– believe

and thus with sinning cloyed – fed up; usually with something sweet (but not here)

I shipped... in a revenue sloop – I sailed ... in a medium-sized Customs patrol boat

she proved to be a frigate and she up with her ports, and fires with a thirty-two – the well-armed fighting ship opened her gun-ports (shutters) & fired a 32-lb. cannon shot

which paralyzed the Parley-voo ... only a darned Mounseer ... Froggee answers with a shout ... to fight a French fal-lal – slang terms for a Frenchman, or in this case, a French ship. Fal-lal suggests foppery.

she is sartin for to strike – certain to strike her colors, i.e. lower her flag in surrender

we up with our helm and we scuds before the breeze – turned, to sail with the wind

belay ... 'Vast heavin' – stop ... Stop sighing

and a Barrowknight to boot, if all had their rights – slang for Baronet

A Crichton of early romance – James Crichton (1560-1583) brilliant Scottish adventurer
stir it and stump it – boast, as in making stump speeches (campaign speeches)

From Ovid and Horace to Swinburne and Morris – Ovid and Horace are famous classical Roman poets; Swinburne a Victorian aesthetic poet; William Morris was a poet as well as a designer of wallpaper and household furnishings, of the Pre-Raphaelite school.

Is is meet that a stranger should so express himself? – proper

...be permitted to salute the flag I'm a-goin' to sail under? – salute also means kiss

a better hand at turning-in a dead-eye don't walk a deck – applying tension to a kind of crude block-and-tackle apparatus for tightening the shrouds of a mast

Hearts often tack – change direction

Cheerily carols the lark over the cot – cottage

Cytherean posies – lovers' bouquets (the island of Cythera is associated with Aphrodite)

With flattery sated, high-flown and inflated – filled to capacity

from charms intramural to prettiness rural – literally, between (city) walls

the sudden transition is simply Elysian – the heaven-like part of the Greek underworld

Come Amaryllis, come Chloe and Phyllis – poetic names of rustic Arcadian maidens

... stone from a strong catapult (a trice) – rope-and-pulley arrangement (for a catapult?)

ought you to stand off-and-on – nautical for tack in and out along a shore; hence, to dither

His rightful title I have long enjoyed – in the sense of "had the use of"

but when completely rated Bad Baronet am I – established

When I'm a bad Bar I will tell taradiddles – short for Baronet; taradiddles are fibs

adieu with good grace to my morals sententious – expressed as maxims or clichés

Act II:

without the elision – without skipping anything (e.g. his first name), and pronounced fully

Valley-de-sham – valet-de-chambre, or personal servant (gentleman's gentleman)

When the night-wind howls in the chimney cowls – hooded chimney-tops

when the footpads quail – robber or highwayman (to quail is to recoil in fear)

away they go with a mop and a mow – gestures and grimaces

with his ladye-toast – lady to whom toasts are drunk

With a kiss, perhaps, on her lantern chaps – long thin jaws, looking hollow-cheeked

On Thursday I shot a fox – Fox-hunting country gentlemen protected foxes assiduously so their sport would be better. Shooting one was considered outrageous.

suffering much from spleen and vapours – melancholy and nervous weakness

Now I'm a dab at penny readings – an expert at a wholesome kind of "improving" entertainment with music, recitations, and readings

In fact we rule a National School – church-connected school for the poor

a gentle district visitor – church worker who helps clergymen in pastoral visits

Eschew melodrama – abstain from

give them tea and barley-water – thin barley broth used medicinally

Basingstoke – a prosaic town southwest of London (on the rail line to Cornwall)

pure and blameless ratepayer – taxpayer

When the tempest 'gan to lower – (rhymes with sour) threaten

help him... like the mousie in the fable – a mouse helped a lion in one of Aesop's

why I do not pipe my eye – cry

CONTRIBUTORS

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THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

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), and *The Gondoliers* (1994).

Next year's production will be *The Mikado*, probably the most popular of all Gilbert and Sullivan's operas.

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

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

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March 24 - April 9, 1995