

RUDDIGORE

OR THE WITCH'S CURSE



by
W.S. GILBERT
and
ARTHUR SULLIVAN

Fridays, March 4, 11, & 18, at 8:00 pm
Saturdays, March 5, 12, & 19, at 8:00 pm
Sundays, March 6, 13, & 20, at 3:00pm

Howard Conn Fine Arts Center

for information & reservations call 925-9159

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

HISTORY of **RUDDIGORE** OR THE WITCH'S CURSE

Ruddigore marked Gilbert and Sullivan's ninth collaboration. Opening in 1887, it closely followed *The Mikado*, their greatest theatrical success, thus making the pair their own worst competition. In fact, on opening night some of the more vocal members of the audience interrupted the performance by shouting "Take off this rot!" and "Give us back *The Mikado*." Part of the problem was that the show contained material which offended Victorian sensibilities. The worst complaint was that the original title *Ruddygore* suggested the word "bloody," and bloody was considered a very indelicate term. Eventually changes were made in the show itself, and the title was altered to *Ruddigore*. It had a moderately profitable initial run and continues to shine as a sparkling, though rarely seen, gem in the G & S jewel-box.

The plot is nothing more than a burlesque on the heavy-handed melodramatics that plagued mid-nineteenth century English theatre. Gilbert employs a couple of delightfully exaggerated characters to send his satiric barbs: "Mad Margaret" presents a caricature of theatrical madness straight out of too many operatic mad scenes, and Despard, the latest "bad baronet" of *Ruddigore*, shines as one who, underneath his evil exterior, is a paragon of virtue.

Like its twelve siblings, *Ruddigore* still delights us today, nearly a century after its debut, with the witty fruits of operetta's most tenuous partnership.

GLOSSARY

in order of appearance

bad bart: bad baronet

to tell taradiddles: to tell little white lies

valley-de-sham: an anglicized, rusticized version of valet-de-chambre, or manservant

"On Thursday I shot a fox": the only one of Robin's crimes which the ancestors judge sufficiently reprehensible; in upper-class British hunting circles, shooting the fox would be the height of bad form — something a gentleman would never do

Basingstoke: a very ordinary town about forty miles from London

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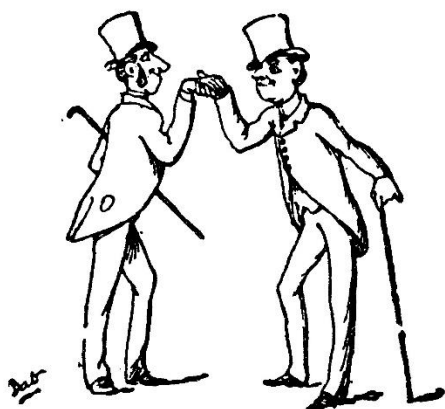
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*No smoking, drinking
or eating is allowed
in the theatre.*

*The use of flash cameras
is strictly forbidden,
as it is a hazard
to the performers.*



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PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director	Clare Lillis
Music Director	Timm Rolek
Scenery & Lighting Designer	Michael Hoover
Costume Designer	Brigitte Heaney
Choreographer	Madeline Dean
Producer	Dean Laurance
Rehearsal Pianist	Joanne Thrash
Stage Manager	Chris Rusin
Costume Mistress	Wendy Evans
Assistant Rehearsal Pianist	Jean Orbison
Properties Master	Stephen B. Sullivan
Lighting	Dan Lane
Make-up	Ann Schnitzen
House Staff	Barbara Webber, Sheila Palmer, Sandra Irwin, Joyce Fuhrman, Penelope Smith
Publicity	Gary Cooper, Peter Erickson, Richard Rames, Steve Rawlins, Rita Stough, Holly Windle
Costumes	Joan Guggemos, Betty Henrich, Nancy Lillis, Gayle Ober, Charlotte Overend, Barbara Webber
Scenery Construction	The Entire Company

ORCHESTRA

Flute	Julie Hinz	Horn	Mary Decheine
	Kathy Huber	Trumpet	Bob Hirte
Oboe ...	Lorelei Giddings	Trombone ...	Mike Kaye
Clarinet	Barb Hovey	Bass	Bob Salter
	Kyle Sidlo	Percussion	Dave Hamilton
Bassoon ...	Sarah Bloedel	Piano	Joanne Thrash

THE CAST

Rose Maybud (a Village Maiden) Gayle Ober
Mad Margaret Dede Hokanson
Dame Hannah (Rose's Aunt) Deedy Jensen
Zorah } (Professional Bridesmaids) Sarah Lesch
Ruth } Holly Windle

Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd (disguised as
 Robin Oakapple, a young farmer) Tim Dahl
Richard Dauntless (his foster brother,
 a Man-o'-war's-man) Kevin Gordon
Sir Despard Murgatroyd, of Ruddigore
 (a Wicked Baronet) Dick Fishel, Jr.
Old Adam Goodheart (Robin's
 faithful servant) Sid Konikoff
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd
 (the Twenty-first Baronet) Waldyn Benbenek

First Ghost David Jensen
Second Ghost Gary Cooper
Third Ghost Richard Rames
Fourth Ghost Roger Evans

CHORUS of OFFICERS, ANCESTORS, PROFESSIONAL BRIDESMAIDS and VILLAGERS:

David Black	Stephanie Brody
Ernest Brody	Camilla Stone Cane
Gary Cooper	Kathy Hering
Peter Erickson	Rhea Lee Kaner
Roger Evans	Sue Ann Loomis
Nils Halker	Holly MacDonald
Vern Harman	Carol Manning
David Jensen	Mary Mescher
Dean Laurance	Charlotte Overend
Warren Loud	Cynthia Spencer
Richard Rames	Rita Stough
Steve Rawlins	Barbara Webber
Stephen B. Sullivan	

SYNOPSIS

Ruddigore takes place many years ago in the tiny Cornish fishing village of Rederring. The plot concerns the curse on the baronets of Ruddigore—a curse which compels each heir to the title to commit a terrible crime every day or die in agony.

The present baronet is Sir Despard, a most unwilling villain. He holds the title only because the rightful heir, his eldest brother Ruthven, has run off to escape becoming a “bad bart,” leaving Despard and almost everyone else to think he is dead. However, Ruthven still lives in the village, disguised as the simple young farmer Robin Oakapple.

Robin loves Rose Maybud, and she loves him, but each is too shy to tell the other, to the exasperation of the professional bridesmaids whose services are not being used. After Robin asks Dick Dauntless to woo Rose for him, Dick woos Rose—but for himself. However, she decides to marry Robin anyhow, and to get even, Dick goes to Despard and reveals Robin’s true identity. Despard announces Robin’s secret to all, and Rose, horrified at the prospect of marrying a bad bart, declares she will marry Dick.

We next see Robin in the portrait gallery of Ruddigore Castle. Robin has been a bad baronet for a week, but his crimes are so trivial that his ancestors are furious with him and come to life to tell him so. Led by Sir Roderic, the most recently deceased ancestor, they order him to embark upon a course of evil or suffer terrible agonies. Robin reluctantly agrees. However, he finally finds a way out of his awkward situation. Using typical Gilbertian logic, the story culminates in the most absurd quasi-legalistic plot resolution known in the repertoire. Cumbersome details of logic fade away, however, when the patented G and S happy ending blithely pairs everyone off (presumably leaving the bridesmaids overbooked).

ACT I: The Fishing Village of Rederring, in Cornwall

ACT II: The Picture Gallery in Ruddigore Castle

TIME: Early in the 19th Century

There will be a fifteen-minute intermission between the acts.



BIOGRAPHIES

WALDYN BENBENEK (Sir Roderic):

Waldyn, the ghost in the frame,
Was used to a programmer's game.
When they said, "Write a bio,"
He said, "Me oh, My oh,
I barely can write my own name."

TIM DAHL (Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd/Robin): A graduate of the U of M, Tim has appeared in leading roles with the Stagecoach Players, Opera Workshop, Dudley Riggs ETC, MacPhail Theater, and Olympia Arts Theater, as well as minor roles with the Minnesota Opera. He has several TV and radio commercial credits and has appeared as a guest singer on the "The Prairie Home Companion Show."

MADELINE DEAN (Choreographer): A graduate of Skidmore College, she has been actively choreographing, performing, and teaching in the Twin Cities since 1979. *Ruddigore* is Madeline's first show with the GSVLOC. She is currently choreographing a solo dance concert to be presented April 15-17, at Ozone Dance Studio.

DICK FISHEL, JR. (Sir Despard): Dick made his G&S debut in a summer camp production of *The Mikado*—as Peep-Bo, one of the three little maids from school. In the forty-odd years since his voice changed, Dick has remained an incurable Savoyard. His repertoire includes most of the comic roles in the G&S canon. With GSVLOC, he has appeared as Bunthorne in *Patience*, the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, and King Gama in *Princess Ida*.

KEVIN GORDON (Richard Dauntless): Kevin is a graduate of the Ohio State University School of Music where he performed as Jesus Christ in *Godspell*, Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado*, and Frederick in *Pirates of Penzance*. He has sung with the Cincinnati Opera Association and the Minnesota Opera. Kevin also studied at the Guthrie Theater and Children's Theater Company, where he appeared in *Treasure Island*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *Falling Moons*.

BRIGITTE HEANEY (Costume Designer): A native of Germany, she is a professional photographer and instructor of photography. As costume designer for Lakeshore Players in White Bear Lake, she did *Taming of the Shrew*, *The Student Prince*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, and *A Doll's House*, among others. She also translates from French and German.

DEDE HOKANSON (Mad Margaret): After music studies at St. Olaf College, Dede received her MFA in vocal performance and pedagogy from the U of M. She has performed in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Das Geheime Konigreich*, *Funny Girl*, and most recently in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the Minnesota Opera. She is active as a vocal soloist and instructor as well as working in private duty nursing for the elderly.

MIKE HOOVER (Scenery and Lighting Designer): Mike is a student at the U of M, majoring in Theatre Arts. He also serves as Technical Director for the Opera Theatre Department at the U. He plans to spend this coming summer in Los Angeles, and is hoping to do free-lancing and scene-painting there, as well as sleeping in the sun and "other things."

DEEDY JENSEN (Dame Hannah): Deedy is the mother of three children, and is the co-author of three historical novels to be released this summer under the pen name of Catherine Moorhouse. Her performance background includes summer stock, Carlton College musicals, and extensive experience as a principal with the Gilbert and Sullivan Players (Philadelphia). She studies voice with Millie Bullock.

SID KONIKOFF (Old Adam): This is Sid's first G&S production after moving to the Twin Cities from New York, where he frequently appeared in the title role in *The Mikado*. Actually, he has been in most of the shows in the G&S repertoire. This is his third time around with *Ruddigore* and his first time with the GSVLOC.

SARAH LESCH (Zorah): Having just returned from her final world tour, and having completed most of the major classical roles, Miss Lesch finds now that Zorah poses the culminating challenge of her career. From here, she expects either early retirement or Diet Coke commercials.

CLARE LILLIS (Stage Director): Clare's many-faceted career includes direction of more than twenty shows, among them *A Man For All Seasons*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Sound of Music*. Major roles he has played include Arthur in *Camelot*, Iago in *Othello*, and Captain Fontaine in *Desert Song*. Clare has vast experience in set design and lighting and was previously assistant business manager of the Chanhassen Dinner Theater's ticket office, and president of the Minnesota Association of Community Theaters.

GAYLE OBER (Rose Maybud): Gayle, who hails from Brainerd, received her Bachelor of Music from the U of M, where she performed in the Opera Workshop productions of *Mignon*, *The Gypsy Baron*, *The Elixir of Love*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Currently she is employed at Grey Advertising in Minneapolis, and is continuing her vocal studies with Dwayne Jorgenson.

TIMM ROLEK (Music Director): Twin Cities native Timm Rolek is in his second year as music director of the GSVLOC. He began his conducting studies with Herbert Blomstedt of the Staatskapelle Dresden, leading to his conducting debut at age 22 with the U of M Opera Theatre, with which he has conducted two American premieres. Timm has led several local ensembles, and his future plans include an internship with James Levine at the Metropolitan Opera.

JOANNE THRASH (Pianist/Rehearsal Accompanist): Joanne has been with the GSVLOC since its inception. She has a BFA in Piano Performance and has taught piano privately for seven years, as well as being an instructor in the U of M Mini Course Series. She has been a member of MMTA since 1978. She has accompanied Met auditions, recitals, College juries (both voice and instrumental).



Bab

CONTRIBUTORS

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Peter & Mary Jones
Barbara & Douglas Kilbourn
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THE COMPANY

Bemoaning the Twin Cities' lack of their favorite operettas, two area Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiasts formed The Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera Company in the fall of 1979. Since then we have staged the full-length operettas *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, and *Princess Ida*, as well as portable versions of the one-act gem *Trial by Jury* and "I Have a Song to Sing, O!"—our own revue of Gilbert and Sullivan highlights. The latter is available to schools, clubs, church groups—gatherings that wish to hire entertainment. Our ranks are composed of "G and S" enthusiasts from all parts of the metro area and all walks of life.

The Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera Company is a non-profit corporation, brimming with ideas but operating on a meager budget. We are appreciative of contributions to both the budget and the ideas.

Your financial contribution to the Company is tax deductible and very welcome.

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

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