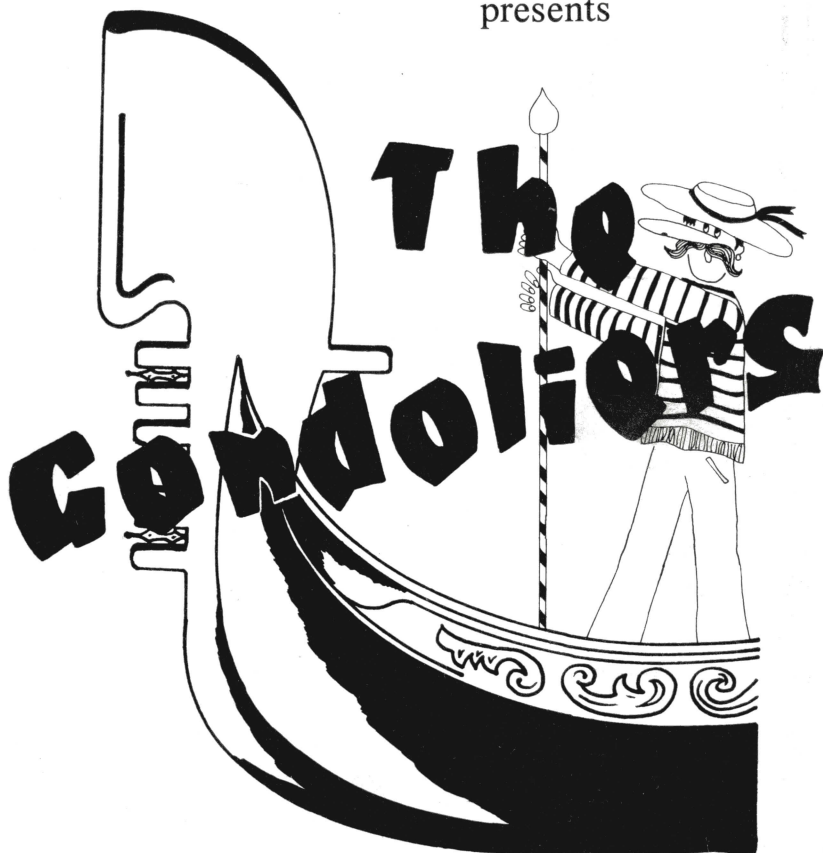


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presents

THE GONDOLIERS

or

The King of Barataria

by William S. Gilbert & Arthur S. Sullivan

at

DEWSBURY ARTS CENTRE

22nd to 27th April, 1991

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to "The Gondoliers" - our 42nd annual production.

"Gondoliers" was the twelfth of Gilbert and Sullivan's collaborations and the last of those regularly performed today.

This year we have been pleased to work with our new Producer, David Fletcher, and thank him for the work that he has put into tonight's offering, together with our Musical Director, David Wilkinson.

It is encouraging to see the level of interest shown by our younger members which emphasizes the 'timelessness' of G & S - we are always delighted to welcome new devotees both on stage and behind the scenes. So, if you enjoy our production tonight, why not come along and join us for future rehearsals every Wednesday at St. Andrews Parochial Hall in Batley.

As time goes by, it becomes more and more difficult to put on a show like ours as costs escalate and we must thank both the people on the stage for all their efforts and you, our audience, for your continued support.

So, sit back and enjoy our evening in Venice.

C. ROBERT THURMAN
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ACT I: The Piazzetta, Venice

ACT II: Beach on the island of Barataria

(An interval of three months is supposed to elapse between Acts I and II)



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- (a) The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and entrances and the door of such exits and entrances shall at that time be open.
- (b) All gangways, passages and staircases shall be kept entirely free from chairs or any other obstructions."

THE GONDOLIERS

The Story

The first act opens on the Piazzetta in Venice, with the contadine (Italian peasants) preparing bouquets for the gondoliers of their choice "List and learn, ye dainty roses". The gondoliers begin to arrive but the girls make it clear that the two to whom they have all given their hearts are the brothers Marco and Giuseppe Palmieri, who will soon be coming to choose their brides. Nevertheless, Antonio and the others sing a jolly chorus "For the merriest fellows are we". Marco and Giuseppe arrive to exchange greetings and are almost buried under the bouquets as they sing "We're called gondolieri". It is time for Marco and Giuseppe to select their brides. They are blindfolded and undertake to marry any two of the girls they catch. Although attempts are made to prevent them from cheating, they somehow manage to catch Gianetta and Tessa who express their thanks in song with "Thank you gallant gondolieri". They dance off together as a gondola arrives, bearing the Duke and Duchess of Plaza Toro, their daughter Casilda and their solitary attendant and one-man band Luiz "From the Sunny Spanish Shore".

The Duke and his party are depressed at the absence of pomp and ceremony on their arrival, but as Luiz departs to announce that they are there, the Duke lets his daughter into a secret. When she was six months old she was married by proxy to the infant son and heir to the wealthy King of Barataria. He further explains that shortly after the ceremony the misguided monarch abandoned the creed of his forefathers and became a Wesleyan Methodist of the most bigoted and persecuting type. The Grand Inquisitor, determined that history should not repeat itself, had the baby prince kidnapped and brought to Venice. Two weeks ago the Monarch and his Wesleyan court were killed in an insurrection and the Duke has now brought his daughter to Venice to ascertain the whereabouts of her husband and to hail her as Her Majesty, the reigning Queen of Barataria.

Casilda rightly points out that she has nothing to wear, for they are penniless and expresses her disgust at the prospect of her father turning himself into a limited company. The Duke points out that he does not follow fashions - he leads them "In Enterprise of Martial Kind".

To complicate matters further, when the Duke and Duchess have departed, Luiz and Casilda rush into each other's arms. She tells him of her previous marriage and Luiz reveals that his mother was the nurse to whom the Royal baby was entrusted. They sing of their lost happiness "There was a time". The Duke and Duchess return accompanied by Don Alhambra, the Grand Inquisitor, who tells them that the King is in Venice working as a gondolier. "I stole the Prince, and I brought him here". Don Alhambra assures them that Luiz's mother will no doubt be able to identify which of the Palmieri brothers is Casilda's husband. They go off and the gondoliers arrive with their new brides.

The entry of Don Alhambra casts a damper on their high spirits. He is particularly disconcerted to learn that the two couples are now married. He explains that one of the brothers is King of Barataria and that, until it is ascertained which one it is, both shall reign jointly. Overcoming their Republican scruples Marco and

Giuseppe agree, though the girls are distressed to be told that for the time being they will not be allowed to accompany them to Barataria. They brighten up when Don Alhambra assures them that in due course they will be reunited and they realize that "Then one of us will be a Queen". Marco and Giuseppe also promise that though they are to be Kings, they will respect everyone's 'Republican fallacies'. The gondoliers say goodbye to their wives each of whom has a request to make. The girls wave farewell as the curtain falls.

Act Two opens on a beach on the island of Barataria where everyone seems at ease with their duties of state. Giuseppe reviews their democratic approach in detail "Rising early in the morning". Everything is most amiable, but they do miss the wives they left behind three months ago. There is only one recipe for perfect happiness as Marco points out in "Take a pair of sparkling eyes". They do not have to wait long for feminine society as the chorus of contadine come rushing in. Gianetta and Tessa rush into their husbands' arms and breathlessly ply them with questions about the state of affairs. The question of who is King cannot yet be answered, but they all settle for a lively dance.

Don Alhambra arrives on the scene and is perturbed to learn from Giuseppe that the Monarchy has been re-modelled on republican principles and that all departments rank equally. Don Alhambra describes a similar experiment "There lived a King, as I've been told". Marco and Giuseppe are unimpressed at the news of the arrival of the Duke, Duchess and their beautiful daughter Casilda. They take note however when Don Alhambra explains that one of them was married when a baby to Casilda. Tessa and Gianetta have meanwhile entered unobserved and are understandably distressed to learn that one of their husbands was already married when a baby. Don Alhambra discloses that he has the baby's nursemaid in a torture chamber waiting to be interviewed. The two couples try to disentangle the situation "In a contemplative fashion". They depart with their problem far from being solved.

With choral ceremony, the Duke and Duchess enter with Casilda and the Duchess outlines the progress of her own married life. The Duke - with the Duchess, of course, determined, not to be ignored - outlines some of the advantages to be derived from imaginative use of a position such as his in "Small Titles and Orders".

On the arrival of Marco and Giuseppe, the Duke suggests to them that, as one of them is King, they ought to be rather more dignified in the presence of the Court. He offers them a lesson in deportment as they dance the Gavotte. The Duke and Duchess leave the young people alone and they are joined by Tessa and Gianetta. Casilda tells them that she was married as a baby - and is in love with someone else. The other couples, on their part, confide that they too are married. They express their bewilderment in the quintet "Here is a case unprecedented". The quandary is soon resolved. The stage fills up as Don Alhambra brings forward Inez, the foster-mother, who gives them the truth and solves all their problems. The rightful King takes his place on the throne joined by Casilda as Queen and they all join in the final chorus "Once more gondolieri!"



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HISTORICAL NOTES

The Gondoliers was first performed at the Savoy Theatre, London, on 7th December, 1889 and had an initial run of 554 performances.

Gilbert apparently got the initial idea for **The Gondoliers** from a book on Venice in the fifteenth century which made much of the city's strong republicanism. Gilbert saw that a satire on republican ideas would have an appeal to a contemporary audience. More than fifty Republican Clubs had been established in Britain in the 1870's and anti-monarchical and pro-egalitarian principles were also being vociferously championed by the various groups which grew up in the 1880's to propagate the new creed of socialism.

Dolce far niente: The first of several genuine Italian expressions introduced into **The Gondoliers**. Its literal meaning is 'sweet doing nothing', i.e. delightful idleness.

Contradicente: From the Italian (and Latin) word **contradico**, meaning to contradict, gainsay or deny.

Ben' venuti: Welcome.

Buon' giorno, Signorine: The exchange in Italian between Marco and Guiseppe and the chorus of girls translates as follows:

MAR & GIU: Good morning, young ladies !
GIRLS: Dearest gondoliers ! We are country maidens !
MAR & GIU: Your humble servants !
For whom are these flowers -
These most beautiful flowers ?
GIRLS: For you, good gentlemen, O most excellent !
MAR & GIU: O heaven ! O heaven !
GIRLS: Good morning cavaliers !
MAR & GIU: We are gondoliers. Young lady, I love you !
GIRLS: We are country maidens !
MAR & GIU: Young ladies !
GIRLS: Country maidens ! Cavaliers !
MAR & GIU: Gondoliers ! Poor gondoliers !
CHORUS: Good morning, young ladies etc.

Grandee from the Spanish Shore: Grandee was the term used in Spain or Portugal for a nobleman of the highest rank, one of whose privileges was to be able to wear his hat in the presence of royalty. The Duke later contradicts his exalted description of his position by referring to himself as a **hidalgo**, i.e. a member of the lowest order of Spanish nobility - perhaps a more truthful description of his status.

The licence copy of "The Gondoliers" sent to the Lord Chamberlain for vetting, contained a song for the Duchess which has never been performed. (First verse of three)

Duchess: The Duke of Plaza-Toro though poor in purse and land,
He owns a goodly store of condescension bland;
And that, when it comes from a Ducal chair,
Is a coin that's current everywhere.
All: Yes everywhere ! Yes everywhere !
It's a coin that's current everywhere.

It would have appeared after the first quartet sung by the Ducal party which ends "Cross the sea again".

Barataria: Gilbert takes the name of his imaginary island "that lies in Southern sea" from Miguel de Cervantes famous story **Don Quixote**.

In Enterprise of Martial Kind: There is no proper patter song in **The Gondoliers**. This is the nearest equivalent. The apparent reason for the omission was that George Grossmith was not available to play the comic lead. The role of the Duke was given to Frank Wyatt, a straight actor who had no experience as a singer and both Gilbert and Sullivan may have felt it would be very risky and very unkind to subject an untried newcomer to the rigours of a patter song.

O rapture, when alone together: In early performances, Casilda and Luiz sang both verses of this recitative as an ensemble rather than as two solos. It was then followed by a ballad for Luiz which was replaced early on in the original run by the duet. **Ah, well-beloved.**

Casilda: Until shortly before the opening night, the Duke's daughter was known as "**Carlotta**". It is not clear why this was changed to Casilda at the last moment.

Jim: A word of Scandinavian origin meaning slender, slim, graceful or neat.

I stole the Prince, and I brought him here: Gilbert almost certainly took the idea for this song from an experience which had befallen him as a child. At the age of two, while on holiday with his parents in Naples, he was out for a pram ride with his nurse when he was kidnapped by two Italians. His father received a ransom note for £25 which he paid and happily recovered his son.

I am a courtier give and serious: This celebrated song involving Marco and Giuseppe was originally written for Don Alhambra. It was then transferred to the Duke of Plaza-Toro and subsequently changed from a trio to a quintet by bringing in Casilda and the Duchess.

The Royal Prince was by the King entrusted: Gilbert had originally written a song for Inez. He later reduced it to 8 lines of recitative firstly, because he thought the audience would not care for a set ballad from a stranger at the end of the piece and secondly, because it resembled the situation at the end of "HMS Pinafore", where little Buttercup explains that he has changed the children at birth.

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