



Great Operetta Recordings

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GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

The Yeomen of the Guard

Donald Harris
Leonard Osborn
Darrell Fancourt
Neville Griffiths
Martyn Green
Richard Watson

The D'Oyly Carte Opera
Chorus and Orchestra
Isidore Godfrey

(Recorded in London in 1950)

2 CDs

Gilbert & Sullivan: The Yeomen of the Guard, or The Merryman and His Bride

CD 1

51:29

❶	<i>Overture</i> (Orchestra)	4:55
	ACT 1	46:34
❷	<i>When maiden loves</i> (Phoebe)	3:39
❸	<i>Tower warders, under orders</i> (Chorus)	3:34
❹	<i>When our gallant Norman foes</i> (Dame Carruthers and Yeomen)	4:24
❺	<i>Alas! I waiver to and fro</i> (Phoebe, Leonard, Sgt. Meryll)	2:16
❻	<i>Is life a boon?</i> (Colonel Fairfax)	2:19
❼	<i>Here's a man of jollity</i> (Chorus)	1:11
❽	<i>I Have a song to sing, O</i> (Elsie, Jack Point)	3:31
❾	<i>How say you maiden</i> (Elsie, Jack Point, Sir Richard)	2:54
❿	<i>I've jibe and joke</i> (Jack Point)	1:48
⓫	<i>'Tis done! I am a bride</i> (Elsie)	3:07
⓬	<i>Were I thy bride</i> (Phoebe)	1:50
⓭	<i>Act I Finale</i> (Company)	16:01

CD 2

52:29

	ACT 2	32:23
❶	<i>Night has spread her pall once more</i> (Chorus, Dame Carruthers)	4:04
❷	<i>Oh! A private buffoon is a lighthearted loon</i> (Jack Point)	2:45
❸	<i>Hereupon we're both agreed</i> (Jack Point, Wilfred)	1:36
❹	<i>Free from his fetters grim</i> (Colonel Fairfax)	2:34
❺	<i>Stranger adventure</i> (Colonel Fairfax, Sergeant Meryll, Dame Carruthers, Kate)	2:34
❻	<i>Hark! What was that, sir?</i> (Leonard, Sergeant Fairfax, Chorus)	1:00
❼	<i>Like a ghost his vigil keeping</i> (Wilfred Shadbolt, Jack Point, Chorus, Sir Richard)	2:38
❽	<i>A man who would woo a fair maid</i> (Elsie, Phoebe, Colonel Fairfax)	2:47
❾	<i>When a wooer goes a-wooing</i> (Elsie, Phoebe, Colonel Fairfax, Jack Point)	3:36
❿	<i>Act II Finale</i> (All)	8:48

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD
or The Merryman and His Maid

Sir Richard Cholmondeley, Lieutenant of the Tower	Donald Harris
Colonel Fairfax, under sentence of death	Leonard Osborn
Sergeant Meryll, of the Yeomen of the Guard	Darrel Fancourt
Leonard Meryll, his son	Neville Griffiths
Jack Point, a Strolling Jester	Martyn Green
Wilfred Shadbolt, Head Jailor and Assistant Tormentor	Richard Watson
First Yeoman	Neville Griffiths
Second Yeoman	Geoffrey Sanders
Elsie Maynard, a Strolling Singer	Muriel Harding
Phoebe Meryll, Sergeant Meryll's Daughter	Ann Drummond -Grant
Dame Carruthers, Housekeeper to the Tower	Ella Halman
Kate, her Niece	Deidree Thurlow

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard, Gentlemen, Citizens, etc.

The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and the New Promenade Orchestra conducted by Isidore Godfrey

ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FROM OPERETTAS

[11] THE MIKADO: <i>Three little maids from school</i>	1:37
[12] THE GONDOLIERS: <i>March - With ducal pomp</i>	1:46
[13] THE MIKADO: <i>Behold the Lord High Executioner</i>	2:34
[14] RUDDIGORE: <i>Hornpipe</i>	0:45
[15] THE GONDOLIERS: <i>Gavotte</i>	3:18
[16] UTOPIA, LIMITED: <i>Entrance of the Court</i>	1:27
[17] THE GONDOLIERS: <i>Dance a Cachucha</i>	1:51
[18] IOLANTHE: <i>March - Finale Act I</i>	2:05
[19] IOLANTHE: <i>Entrance & March of the Peers</i>	4:43

British Light Orchestra conducted by Stephen S. Moore

Recorded 4th January 1935, London

Columbia DB 1502/4, mx CA 14835-2, 14832-1, 14833-1, 14834-1, 14836-1, 14837-1

William Schwenk Gilbert (1836-1911) and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) The Yeomen of the Guard, or The Merryman and his Maid

Chronologically the eleventh Gilbert and Sullivan opera, if we number *Trial By Jury* as their first, and the sixth of the Savoy Opera productions, *The Yeomen of the Guard* was first given at the London Savoy on 3rd October, 1888. It ran there for 423 performances and during its first two years of life its name became established on a par with *The Mikado* and *The Gondoliers*. A success in the English provinces, it was welcomed overseas in productions by J.C. Williamson in Australia and a hundred-performance run on Broadway, not to mention in certain bowdlerised versions in Vienna and Budapest in 1890 which earned the composer's disapproval.

Having previously mocked time-honoured British institutions, the Navy in *HMS Pinafore* and the judicature in *Trial By Jury*, not to mention the newly-

ordained Aesthetic Movement in *Patience*, in *The Yeomen of the Guard* Gilbert poked gentle fun at the Sovereign's personal Guard. While *Yeomen* marked a sudden departure from the *opéra-bouffe* style most recently heard in their 1887 'melodrama burlesque' *Ruddigore*, towards the more dazzling operetta idiom of *The Gondoliers* (1889), in dramatic terms it was the team's furthest gravitation towards 'serious' opera. The work has since stayed the course as one of Sullivan's finest scores. A standard in the repertoire of the original D'Oyly Carte Company, it enjoyed frequent revivals during the first half of the last century and was restored to the repertoire by the new Company in 1989. On four separate occasions it was staged within the Tower of London itself, most recently during the Tower's Ninth Centenary celebrations in 1978.

Synopsis

CD 1

Act 1

The tuneful Overture [1] partly compensates for the lack of an opening chorus (this is the only G & S opera without one) and the curtain rises on Tower Green. Working at her spinnin-wheel, Phoebe, the daughter of Sergeant Meryll of the Yeomen of the Guard, sings a doleful lay. She is hopelessly in love with the dashing Colonel Fairfax, a man of science who was formerly a soldier of great bravery and who awaits execution in the Tower on a false charge of sorcery [2]. She weeps as Wilfred Shadbolt, Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor, enters. Phoebe berates him on the cruelty of his

profession and as he takes his exit, dejected (for he, too, loves Phoebe and is jealous of Fairfax) a crowd of villagers, followed by the yeomen on duty, enters [3]. Phoebe protests to Dame Carruthers, the Tower's 'dragonesque' housekeeper, that Fairfax, while admittedly a student of alchemy, is innocent of sorcery, but the Dame, who believes Fairfax guilty, hastens to defend the Tower's bloodthirsty practises [4]. Phoebe and Sergeant Meryll await the arrival of Meryll's son Leonard, whose gallant service has earned him an appointment as a yeoman. Phoebe hopes he will bring a reprieve for Fairfax, but he comes with only a routine dispatch to the Tower's Lieutenant. Meryll recounts that Fairfax has twice saved his life and proposes that, as no one knows Leonard, he should hide, while Fairfax, his beard removed, should take his son's place [5]. Under surveillance, Fairfax takes his exercise in the courtyard.

He first greets Meryll, then philosophises on his impending doom [6]. Faced with a dilemma, Fairfax makes a final request of the Tower's Lieutenant. The sorcery charge, he explains, is the skulduggery of his cousin Sir Clarence Poltwhistle who, should Fairfax die unmarried, stands to inherit his estate. He asks the Lieutenant if a bride can be found for him at such short notice – the incentive being that in little more than an hour's time she would be a rich widow. As they go out, Jack Point, a strolling jester, bounds excitedly onto the scene with his street-singer companion, Elsie Maynard, pursued by a boisterous crowd [7]. They call for a song and the duo oblige with *'The Merryman and His Maid'* [8]. Hullabaloo ensues. A citizen tries to force his attentions on Elsie, who draws a dagger in self-defence. The Lieutenant enters. Ascertaining that Jack and Elsie are not a married couple, he offers Elsie a hundred crowns to marry Fairfax. On the assurance that Fairfax is soon to be executed, Jack and Elsie agree [9]. As Elsie is led, blindfolded, into the Tower, Jack swaps jokes with the Lieutenant and explains the jester's routine [10]. Elsie, who has just married a man she has never seen, is led in by Wilfred. Removing her blindfold, Elsie expresses her feelings [11]. Elsie goes out and Wilfred returns to ponder over the recent events in Fairfax's cell (he had hoped to eavesdrop through his spy-hole, but it had been filled in). Watched from afar by Meryll, Phoebe pretends to seduce Wilfred. Meanwhile surreptitiously, and while serenading her enraptured victim, she removes the keys to the jail from his belt and passes them to her father [12]. Having released the prisoner, Meryll returns with the keys, which Phoebe replaces on the unsuspecting Wilfred's belt. Meryll goes out again and Phoebe continues her mock seduction of Wilfred. As they leave together, Meryll returns, followed by a clean-shaven Fairfax clad in Yeoman's attire. The yeomen take Fairfax for Leonard Meryll and proudly welcome him to their ranks. Phoebe

embraces Fairfax, who realises she is his 'sister', while Wilfred jealously declares that he and Phoebe are now engaged to be married. Wilfred concedes that, as Phoebe and Fairfax are brother and sister, their embrace is permissible. Suddenly, a bell toll signals Fairfax's impending execution and as the crowd enters to a funeral march the headsmen prepare the chopping-block. The Lieutenant orders Fairfax (alias Leonard) and two other yeomen to bring the prisoner in but in a moment they return with news that the prisoner has escaped. As yeomen and citizens rush off to act upon the Lieutenant's 'dead or alive' reward offer, Elsie swoons in Fairfax's arms [13].

CD 2

Act 2

The same scene, at moonlight. Two days have passed and the prisoner is still at liberty. First the chorus, then Dame Carruthers and her niece Kate castigate the Tower's warders for their incompetence. The yeomen enter briefly before resuming their search [1]. Jack Point is in a quandary. He agreed to let Elsie wed the imprisoned Fairfax on the assurance that Fairfax would die within the hour, but now he has escaped, Elsie's marital status prevents Jack from marrying her himself. Wilfred Shadbolt is dejected, too. Having failed as a jailer, he thinks that he might now be better suited to the jesting profession. Jack agrees [2] and, in return for free schooling in the trade, Wilfred promises to assist Jack in his stratagem to secure Elsie's 'release': Wilfred is to swear that he shot Fairfax whilst trying to escape across the Thames and he (Jack) will corroborate the story [3]. As they move off conspiratorially, Fairfax enters and ponders his own 'situation' [4]. He is soon joined by Sergeant Meryll and Dame Carruthers, who has been

consoling Elsie. She reveals that Kate heard Elsie moans ‘How shall I marry one I have never seen?... I love him not, and yet I am his wife’ [5]. Fairfax now knows the name of the woman he has married and, disguised as Leonard Meryll, resolves to woo her and thus test her fidelity. However, she resists him and just as he is about to reveal his true identity, a shot from the Tower causes commotion [6]. At this Wilfred and Point take centre stage to unfurl their tale [7]. As Wilfred is hailed the hero of the moment, Jack reminds Elsie she may now choose to marry whomsoever she wishes while she, Fairfax and Phoebe discourse respectively on the art of wooing [8]. The supposed Leonard Meryll gives a practical demonstration of his own method and as Elsie admits that she loves him, the reality of the situation dawns on both Jack and Phoebe [9]. Left alone, Phoebe weeps. Unwittingly, she discloses to Wilfred that the supposed Leonard Meryll is not her brother.

Realising the truth Wilfred swears revenge, but Phoebe reminds him that he has already publicly admitted to having shot Fairfax. Next, the real Leonard Meryll enters with news that Fairfax has been pardoned and is returning to claim his bride. At this, Elsie is distraught that she must follow Fairfax though her affections lie elsewhere, but when Fairfax arrives she realises that the man she loves is the man she has married and, amid general rejoicing, she falls into his arms. Dame Carruthers, meanwhile, has coaxed a proposal from Sergeant Meryll, while the reluctant Phoebe is betrothed to the uncouth Wilfred. At the opera’s end, rather like Bunthorne in *Patience*, the greedy Jack is left ‘...all for the love of a lady!’ without a partner. Insensible, he falls at the feet of Fairfax and Elsie [10].

Peter Dempsey

Martyn Green

Born William Martyn-Green in London on 22nd April 1899, Martyn Green studied first with his father, the distinguished English tenor William Green, and later with Gustave García (1837-1925) at the Royal College of Music. After active service during World War I, he gained stage experience from 1919 onwards on tour with Daly’s Theatre companies in musical comedy productions including *A Southern Maid*, *The Maid of the Mountains* and *Sybil*. He joined D’Oyly Carte as a chorister and understudy in 1922 and his solo début as Luiz in *The Gondoliers* was followed by other comic leads, including John Wellington Wells in *The Sorcerer*, Major Murgatroyd in *Patience*, Major-General Stanley in *Pirates*, The Associate in *Trial By Jury*, and Reginald Bunthorne in *Patience*. His masterly portrayal of Ko-Ko the Lord High Executioner in *Mikado* is preserved in the 1939 Technicolor screen adaptation by Geoffrey Toye and in the 1950 Decca complete audio recording. He served in the RAF during the Second World War, but returned in 1946 to D’Oyly Carte, where he played leading comic rôles until 1951. Subsequently, he toured the United States, performing and directing as well as lecturing on the Savoy operas. He appeared on American television (his was the voice of the fox in the cartoon *Pinocchio*) and on Broadway as Chaucer in the musical *The Canterbury Tales*. He died in Hollywood, California, on 8th February, 1975.

Darrell Fancourt

Most closely identified with the Mikado, a rôle he played over 3,000 times and twice recorded, in his day Darrell Fancourt was also rated, on account of his commanding stage-presence, breath control and clear diction, an ideal Sir Roderick Murgatroyd in *Ruddigore*, Dick Deadeye in *HMS Pinafore*, Pirate King in *Pirates*, and Colonel Calverly. Born in London in 1888 and educated at Bedford School, he trained at the London Royal Academy with Alberto Randegger (1832-1911) and Sir Henry J. Wood (1869-1944) and also in Germany with Lilli Lehmann (1848-1929). Already an experienced concert recitalist before he sang Galitzky in Borodin's *Prince Igor* under Albert Coates at Covent Garden during the 1919 Beecham opera season, he joined D'Oyly Carte in 1920. His other G & S rôles included Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre in *The Sorcerer* and Sgt. Meryll in *Yeomen of the Guard*. Awarded an OBE in the 1953 Coronation honours list, Darrell Fancourt was due to give a farewell performance (as the Mikado) at Sadler's Wells when his final illness overtook him.

Leonard Osborn

At first an amateur singer in his native London, Leonard Osborn worked as a chemist in a silk-printing mill before joining the professional chorus of D'Oyly Carte in the mid-1930s. After his début with the company in a small part in *Yeomen of the Guard* in 1937, he had by 1939 sung The Defendant in *Trial By Jury*, Francesco in *The Gondoliers*, and Leonard Meryll in *Yeomen*. An RAF flight-lieutenant during the Second World War, in 1946 Osborn returned to D'Oyly Carte where, until his retirement in 1959, his many rôles included Tolloller in *Iolanthe*, Fairfax in *Yeomen*, Marco in *The Gondoliers*, Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore*, Nanki-Poo in *Mikado*, Frederic in *Pirates*, and the Duke of Dunstable in *Patience*.

Neville Griffiths

Now probably better remembered for his subsequent work with Sadler's Wells Opera, Neville Griffiths joined D'Oyly Carte as a chorister in 1948. A regular member of the Company until 1958, he was heard in various tenor leads, including Ralph in *HMS Pinafore*, Nanki-Poo in *Mikado*, Marco in *Gondoliers*, and the First Yeoman.

Richard Watson

Despite his close links with Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the career of the bass Richard Charles Watson was more far-reaching. Born in 1903 (some sources incorrectly give 1906) in Adelaide, Southern Australia, where he studied initially at the Elder Conservatory, he was from 1926 until 1929 a vocal student at the London Royal College of Music. A principal bass at Covent Garden from 1929 (by 1933 appearing in both the English and International Seasons) he first sang with D'Oyly Carte in 1932 and by 1934 had quit Covent Garden to become a Savoyard. Between 1935 and 1937 he toured Australia and New Zealand with J.C. Williamson G & S ensembles before resuming his career at Covent Garden, until 1939. In 1940 he returned to Australia for recitals (for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation) and further tours for J.C. Williamson. From 1944 to 1947 he taught singing at the Elder (Adelaide University Conservatorium) and produced operas at the Adelaide Tivoli for the ABC. From 1946 until 1951 Watson was again principal bass with D'Oyly Carte both in London and the United States (notably in New York) and was a featured soloist in various G & S recordings, including *The Mikado* (Pooh-Bah), *Pirates* (Sergeant

of Police) and *Yeomen* (Wilfred Shadbolt), for English Decca. From 1951 to 1955 he was Director of the Regina Conservatory of Music in the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, before returning to Southern Australia for further Williamson Company G & S tours.

Ann Drummond-Grant

Although later a noted principal contralto and the wife of D'Oyly Carte conductor Isidore Godfrey, Ann Drummond-Grant began as a soprano in opera and musical comedy. She first sang with the D'Oyly Carte from 1933 until 1938, her rôles including the Plaintiff in *Trial By Jury*, Celia and Phyllis in *Iolanthe*, Fiametta in *Gondoliers*, Josephine in *HMS Pinafore*, Lady Saphir in *Patience*, and Phoebe Meryll. Her later career was devoted largely to annual summer seasons and non-G&S operetta, but in 1950 she returned to D'Oyly Carte where, a year later, she took over the repertoire vacated by Ella Halman. She died in 1959.

Muriel Harding

A D'Oyly Carte chorus-member from 1945, before she left the Company in 1954 her bright, evenly produced high soprano voice was heard in a variety of rôles, including The Plaintiff in *Trial By Jury*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Kate in *Yeomen*, Zorah in *Ruddigore*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*, Princess Ida and Lady Ella in *Patience*, and Elsie Maynard. She was married to the noted Savoyard bass-baritone Donald Adams (1928-1996).

Ella Halman

Ella Halman joined the D'Oyly Carte Chorus in 1937. She remained with the Company until 1951 and sang a variety of rôles, including Katisha in *The Mikado*, the Duchess of Plaza-Toro in *The Gondoliers*, Ruth in *Pirates*, Lady Jane in *Patience*, and Dame Caruthers. She was married to the Savoyard baritone Radley Flynn.

ADD

Playing
Time
1:43:58

GILBERT and SULLIVAN

The Yeomen of the Guard



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Second Yeoman Geoffrey Sanders
Elsie Maynard Muriel Harding
Phoebe Meryll Ann Drummond-Grant
Dame Carruthers Ella Halman
Kate Deidree Thurlow

Recorded 18th July 1950, London

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The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company
and the New Promenade Orchestra
conducted by Isidore Godfrey

Having already mocked the time-honoured institutions, the Navy (*HMS Pinafore*), the judicature (*Trial By Jury*) and the archetypal English 'flower power' group known as the Aesthetic Movement (*Patience*), in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Gilbert poked gentle fun at the Sovereign's personal Guard. A standard of the original D'Oyly Carte Company, frequently revived, and even staged within the Tower of London itself, *Yeomen* is one of Sullivan's finest scores and the closest the team came, in dramatic terms, to 'serious' opera.

CD 1	51:29	CD 2	52:29
1 Overture	4:55	1-10 Act II	32:23
2-13 Act I	46:34	11-19 Orchestral excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas	20:06

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A complete track list can be found in the booklet
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