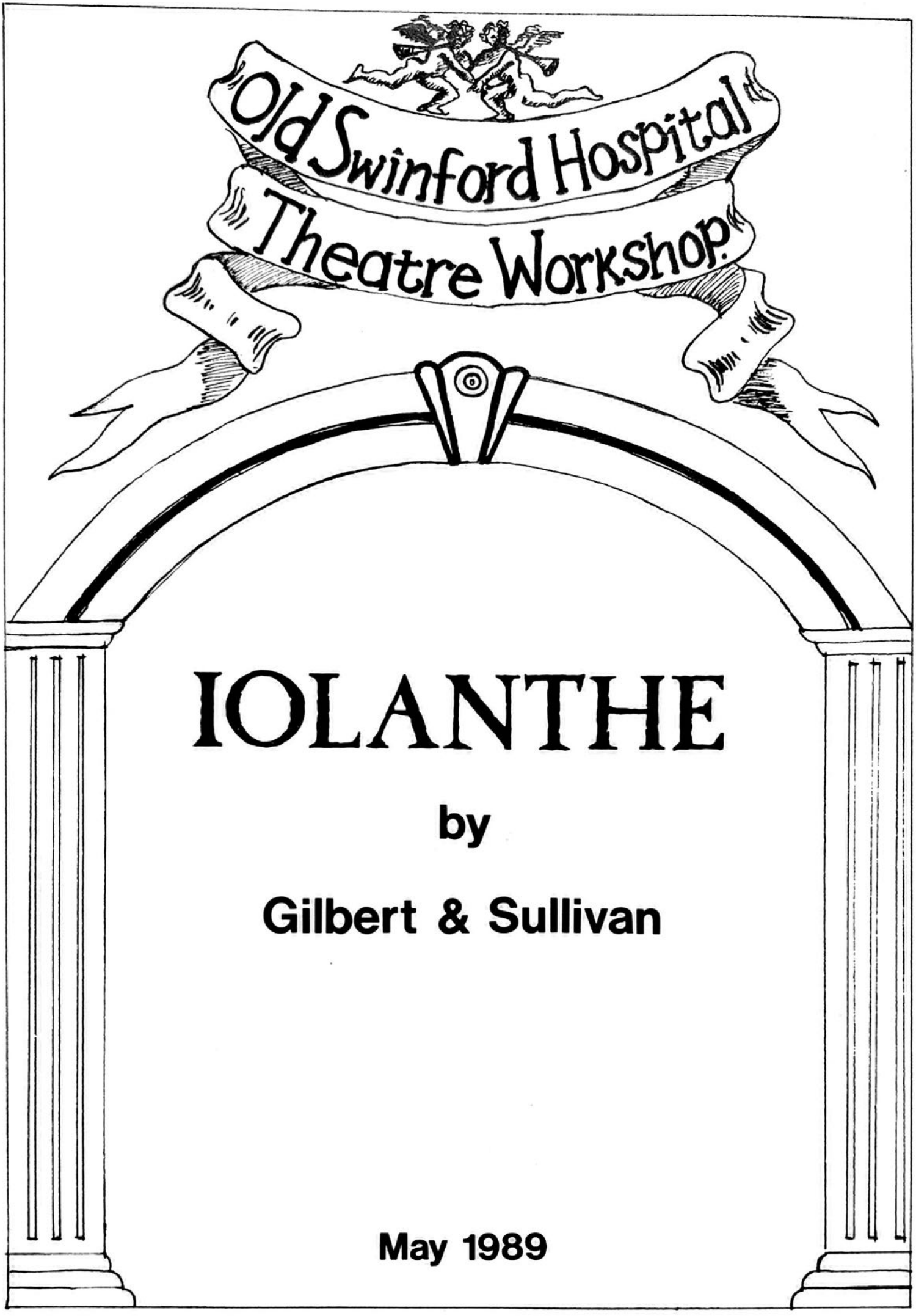


IOLANTHE

by

Gilbert & Sullivan

May 1989

IOLANTHE

OR

The Peer and The Peri

W.S. GILBERT **SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN**

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE LORD CHANCELLOR ..... Toby Platt

EARL OF MOUNTARARAT ..... Matthew Worsnop

EARL TOLLOLLER ..... Edward Bennion-Redley

PRIVATE WILLIS (of the Grenadier Guards) ..... Mark Ellis

STREPHON (an Arcadian Shepherd) ..... Richard Cooper

QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES ..... Alison Phillips

IOLANTHE (A fairy, Strephon's mother) ..... Rachel Millichip

PHYLLIS (an Arcadian Shepherdess and Ward in Chancery) ..... Esther Turberfield

CECILIA } Fairies ..... Richard Billingham

LEILA } Fairies ..... Peter Martin

FLETA } Fairies ..... Ian Galloway

PAGE ..... John Till

CHORUS OF FAIRIES

Timothy Astley, Christopher Billingham, Philip Clark, Timothy Fisher, Richard Franklin, Stephen Gardner, Andrew Greenfield, Nicholas Hall, Timothy Harris, Charlton Hurst, Stuart Milne, Alex Pemberthy, William Roper, Luke Sowerby, Adam Whiting.

CHORUS OF DUKES, MARQUISES, EARLS, VISCOUNTS AND BARONS

Adrian Ballard, Nicholas Barr-Hamilton, Jeremy Bretherton, Andrew Cooper, Jonathan Francis, Marcus Gibbs, Richard Gray, Edward Hewitt, Russell Morrison, Simon Parish, Andrew Petford, Martin Price, Matthew Tucker, Jonathan Turner, Simon Tyler, Stuart Whiting.

ACT ONE – An Arcadian Landscape

ACT TWO – Palace Yard, Westminister

DATE – Between 1700 and 1882

ORCHESTRA

VIOLINS	Mark Watson (leader), Adrian Plevin, Roland Hayter, Ian Davidson, Rachel Baldwin, Jane Bryan, Richard Wharton
VIOLA	Nicola Donahoe
CELLOS	Glyn Davies, Matthew Trow, Anthony Pardoe-Matthews, Stephen Tai
FLUTES	Tony Grant, Niel Shaw
OBOE	Robert Banham
CLARINETS	Matthew Gardner, Mark O'Connor
BASSOON	Paul Foxley (on Trombone)
TRUMPETS	Jeremy Gray, Neil Berry
TROMBONES	Stephen Banks, Lawrence Hopper
FRENCH HORNS	Julian Goodwin, Robin Hopper
TIMPANI/PERCUSSION	Molly Hunton, Alistair Cormell
PIANO	Robin Moody

PRODUCER
Mary Crosland

MUSICAL DIRECTOR
Philip Hildesley

CREDITS

SCENERY: CONSTRUCTION	Tim French, Alex Leary
PAINTING	Mark White, Tim Jarvis
LIGHTING AND SOUND	Christopher Ford, Tim French
COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES	Rosemary Milner, Pamela Round, Diane Perry and ladies of the Theatre Workshop
BOX OFFICE	John Robinson
MAKE-UP	Christine Hancock and ladies of the Theatre Workshop
REFRESHMENTS	Pauline Parsons and ladies of the Theatre Workshop
PROGRAMME: Cover Design	Tim Jarvis
Printing	Silk & Terry Ltd.

THE THEATRE WORKSHOP is a group of parents, staff and friends of Old Swinford Hospital who back and support musical/dramatic productions by the boys of the school. Many thanks to everyone who has helped in any way towards this production of "Iolanthe" and particularly to Rachel Millichip, Esther Turberfield and Alison Phillips for singing the leading female roles and Mrs Rosemary Gripton for her help and expertise with singing tuition.

THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR would like to express his sincere thanks to members of the orchestra for playing.

PAST PRODUCTIONS

1983 Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat
Toad of Toad Hall

1984 Oliver
Kidnapped at Christmas

1985 Trial by Jury
The Birds of Aristophanes

1986 Pirates of Penzance

1987 HMS Pinafore

1988 Macbeth
Ruddigore

1989 The Bacchae

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

An Arcadian landscape. A band of fairies enter singing a chorus of "Tripping Hither, Tripping Thither". They lament the absence of one of their number, Iolanthe, who was, many years ago, condemned to perpetual banishment for marrying a mortal. By fairy law the penalty for this is death, but so great was the Fairy Queen's love for Iolanthe that she commuted her sentence to one of banishment on condition that she never saw her husband again. When the Queen enters, the fairies beg her to forgive Iolanthe, which she eventually does and Iolanthe is summoned from the bottom of the stream where she has been living during her banishment and is welcomed by her sisters. On being asked why she chose to live in such an unpleasant place, she replies that she wanted to be near her son Strephon, who is an Arcadian shepherd. He presently enters and we learn that he is twenty-four years old and is finding life very difficult owing to the fact that he is half fairy and half mortal - a situation which is causing enormous problems. As an additional complication, Strephon tells us that he is in love with Phyllis, a ward in Chancery, and that the Lord Chancellor will not give his consent to their marriage. The fairies sympathise with him and leave. Phyllis enters and she and Strephon agree to get married as quickly as possible since half the House of Lords are sighing at her feet.

A fanfare is heard and the peers enter singing a splendid aristocratic chorus. They are followed by the Lord Chancellor himself who complains of the irksomeness of his position as guardian of wards in chancery in having to sit in his court "all day giving agreeable girls away". He explains that Phyllis has so powerfully affected the peers that they have appealed to him to give her to whichever one of them she may think proper to select. The Chancellor would, of course, very much like to allot her to himself, but he feels that such an award might be open to misconstruction and therefore waives his claim. Phyllis then presents herself at the bar of the House and the two leading peers, the Earl of Mountararat and Earl Tolloller put forward their claims to her. She is unmoved by their entreaties and announces that her heart is given. Strephon then enters and claims her as his own and the peers march off in disgust. The Lord Chancellor asks Strephon why he disobeyed an order of the Court of Chancery and Strephon replies that chorused Nature bade him take his love. The Lord Chancellor is dubious about this as a legal defence and, in the famous patter song "When I went to the bar as a very young man", dilates upon the strict regard for duty which has brought him to his present distinguished position.

Strephon is broken hearted that the Chancellor still refuses to allow his marriage with Phyllis, but Iolanthe, reminds him that he is half a fairy and, that the Chancellor has no power over him. During this conversation the peers enter, unobserved, with Phyllis who is horrified to see her Strephon talking confidentially to what appears to be a strange woman. Some of their remarks, skilfully misinterpreted to her by the Lords Mountararat and Tolloller, confirm her suspicions and she rushes forward furiously and accuses Strephon of faithlessness. He protests that he is only talking to his mother, but as Iolanthe looks about seventeen (fairies are immortal!) this statement is received with general ridicule. Phyllis does not know of Strephon's mixed parentage and impulsively offers herself to the lords. Strephon is annoyed and perplexed and calls upon the fairies for assistance. The peers can not take the fairies seriously and the Lord Chancellor, after having made fun at their expense, tells the Queen and her brazen-faced brood to go away. The Queen is furious and tells the Chancellor who she is, and to punish the peers for their rudeness, she intends to send Strephon into Parliament. Once there, he will pass every bill which pleases him, including a bill to throw the peerage open to competitive examination. The peers plead for mercy, the Chancellor is carried unconscious from the stage. Phyllis implores Strephon to relent, but he casts her away from him and she collapses into the arms of Mountararat and Tolloller.

ACT TWO

The Palace Yard at Westminster. Private Willis, of 'D' Company, 1st Grenadier Guards, is found on duty. The fairies enter and are delighted that Strephon is now a Member of Parliament and they are followed by the peers who have very different feelings on this subject. It is the night of the second reading of the bill to throw the peerage open to competitive examination. Mountararat asserts that tha House of Peers is not susceptible of any improvement at all and sings his satirical song "When Britain really ruled the waves". The fairies have become fascinated by the peers and though pretending to be angry with them are reluctant to let them depart. The Queen is horrified at this exhibition of weakness and reminds them that it is death to marry a mortal, but they reply that it is not death to <u>wish</u> to marry one. The Queen admits that she herself greatly admires Private Willis but she has quenched the fire by turning on the "hose of common sense".

Phyllis is miserable, despite being engaged to two noblemen at once, and her spirits are not raised when the two gentlemen concerned come near to fighting a duel. The Chancellor is preoccupied with Phyllis's charms to such an extent that his sleep is disturbed and he tells us of his troubled rest in the "Nightmare Song". Mountararat and Tolloller try to comfort him and urge him to nerve himself to speak to Phyllis again. Strephon then enters in low spirits and is approached by Phyllis. As they are no longer engaged to each other, he sees no reason why he should not tell her that he is half a fairy. She realises that she has been most unjust to him in refusing to believe that Iolanthe is his mother and begs him to forgive her. Iolanthe enters and Strephon asks her to plead their cause with the Lord Chancellor. She is reluctant to do so and eventually tells them that the Lord Chancellor is her husband and she is Strephon's father. He believes her to have died long ago and she is bound not to undeceive him. The Lord Chancellor enters, announcing triumphantly that he has at last persuaded himself to consent to his engagement with Phyllis. Iolanthe comes forward, veiled, and appeals to him on Strephon's behalf. He remains adamant and she is forced to reveal himself as his wife. Instantly the Fairy Queen enters and pronounces sentence of death upon Iolanthe. She raises her spear to carry it out, but is stopped by the fairies who say that if Iolanthe must die so must they all, since all of them have married peers. The Queen is now in a dilemma as she can not slaughter the whole company. The Chancellor, though, manages to solve the problem for her by suggesting that she change the fairy law to read that every fairy who <u>doesn't</u> marry a mortal shall die. The Queen agrees and in order to save her life takes Private Willis as her husband. The whole company take their departure for fairyland.