

# Belgrade Theatre



COVENTRY SAVOY OPERA SOCIETY in

# The Yeoman of the Guard

## THE YEOMAN OF THE GUARD

Sir Richard Cholmondeley ..... ERIC WHYTE  
(Lieutenant of the Tower)  
Colonel Fairfax ..... DONALD AUSTIN  
(Under sentence of death)  
Sergeant Meryll ..... ANTHONY CRYER  
(of the Yeoman of the Guard)  
Leonard Meryll ..... COLIN TAMBLYN  
(his son)  
Jack Point ..... JOHN FENNER  
(a Strutting Jester)  
Wilfred Shadbolt ..... ERNEST CHARLTON  
(Head Jailer and Assistant Turncoat)  
Headsman ..... NICHOLAS LAWRANCE  
First Yeoman ..... GEORGE SUDDENS  
Second Yeoman ..... ADRIAN BRITTON  
Elsie Maynard ..... SYLVIA FREEDY  
(a Strutting Player)  
Pheobe Meryll ..... KATHLEEN GRIFFITHS  
(Sergeant Meryll's Daughters)  
Dame Carruthers ..... MARY GALLAGHER  
(Housekeeper of the Tower)  
Kafe ..... FAY TAYLOR  
(the Niece)

Chorus of Citizens, etc.:  
LADIES: E. Aves, S. Aves, J. Cox, A. Cooper, L. Fenner, H. Garner, C. Jennings, M. Laver, E. Lewis, C. McCannery, A. Sharley, P. Satchwell, A. Shynan, L. Spittle, J. Stewart, M. Thompson, A. Tiley, H. Water, S. Washbrook  
GENTLEMEN: E. Bonifant, T. Matthews, B. Stole, T. Whitaker, C. Tambllyn  
Chorus of Yeoman:  
A. Britten, J. Cox, M. Crowe, N. Davis, W. Fox, A. Gibbs, A. Laver, T. Lees, F. Phaeasy, G. Suddens, R. Washbrook, F. Stokes

ACT 1 — TOWER GREEN  
ACT 2 — TOWER GREEN (Two days later)  
Date: 16th Century

Producer: REX SATCHWELL  
Musical Director: PETER C. CARDER

# SAVOY IN FINE VOICE FOR HAPPY SHOW

GILBERT and Sullivan would have liked Coventry Savoy Opera Society's faithful "Yeoman of the Guard" at the Belgrade this week.

Rex Satchwell's inattention to lighting does little to mar the impact of the colourful costumes. Other-

wise, his gently "coasting" pace which never drags, is exactly right for this well-turned production.

Peter C. Carder is the giant. Despite conducting which is anything but fluid, he produces fine singing from principals and chorus. The orchestra could use more strings, but is surer in intonation than many "occasional" combinations.

### BRILLIANT

John Fenner's likeable Jack Point is a Shakespeare jester to the life. Sylvia Freedy's flexible acting as his partner, strutting player Elsie Maynard, makes them a well-matched pair.

Miss Freedy's voice has a diamond purity in its brilliant upper registers. She needs to temper her talents only when singing with others; she tends to overshadow a trio.

Best part singing is in the unaccompanied "Strange Adventure" beautifully balanced by Fay Taylor's warm soprano, Monica Tuckey's rich contralto (as an uncommonly likeable Dame Carruthers), Donald Austin and Anthony Cryer.

In the part of Leonard Meryll, Colin Tambllyn takes his one solo opportunity to display a fine lyrical tenor voice.

### WELL SUNG

Ernest Charlton's roguish Owen Brannigan-style grin, and a fine bass-baritone voice not so far below that star, combine to make the black-jowled jester-

wise, his gently "coasting" pace which never drags, is exactly right for this well-turned production.

Mr. Charlton's expressive comedy is delightful, whether (improbably) learning to be a jester or courting the reluctant Pheobe—an excellent acting and singing accomplishment by velvet-voiced Kathleen Griffiths.

Producer, musical director and Sullivan's magical music co-join to give a quality almost of Verdi's opera to the entrance of the executioner in the well-sung ensemble which ends act one.

The show's unhappy finale, with a rejected Jack Point falling prostrate, is beautifully handled to highlight the poignant rather than bleak despair.

I suppose finances govern the scenery, which is hired and unimaginatively literal. No matter. This is a very enjoyable production.

## 'Yeoman' effort at the Belgrade

A polished production of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera "The Yeoman of the Guard" opened at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, last night, for a week's run by the Coventry Savoy Opera Society. Their presentation of the piece—the famous partnership's work that came nearest to grand opera—will delight all G. and S. fans. Most of the

singing is delightful, particularly the chorus work. Occasionally the audience had to listen very attentively to catch lyrics, but on the whole voices were very clear. Producer Rex Satchwell deserves praise for his imaginative handling of the stage and cast to give the whole production movement and great vivacity. Delightful dance routines were devised by choreographer Mary Wilson

and the first-class orchestra was under the musical direction of Peter Carder. Scenery and costumes were lavish and for most of the time it was difficult to remember this was an amateur production. Outstanding members of the cast were Donald Austin playing the male lead, Sylvia Freedy as "Elsie Maynard" and Kathleen Griffiths as "Pheobe". M.L.



Of all the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, "The Yeoman of the Guard" is considered the most difficult to perform.

It is this year's choice of the Coventry Savoy Opera Society, who opened a week's run at the Belgrade Theatre last night.

It is said to be Sullivan's favourite opera of all those in which he collaborated with Gilbert, most probably because the music is the nearest he ever got to grand opera.

### Little comedy

Gilbert abandons the top-turkeydom of "The Gondoliers" and "The Mikado," and provides a straightforward plot set in the Tower of London in the 16th century. In it he does not "knock" any institution.

There is little comedy, and it is their only opera to end sadly.

The quality needed most in

## Yeomen need a smarter turnout

this opera is clear diction, and it was lacking in so many performers last night. The cast should follow the examples of Donald Austin as Colonel Fairfax and Kathleen Griffiths as Pheobe, for they were excellent.

Perhaps it was because of the complexity of the music, but the singing of the chorus was not as strong as it has been in recent years. The chorus of befeaters needed more strength in their sing-

ing, and a smartening-up in their actions.

Despite this, the company gave a credible performance, with some fine singing by the principals.

### Right touch

The few pieces of comedy come from the dolt of a head gaoler, Wilfred Shadbolt, and Ernest Charlton took the part admirably.

One of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan characters is Jack Point, the jester who is deserted by his partner and dies of a broken heart at the end. John Fenner gives the right touch of pathos to the part.

Sylvia Freedy is delightful as Elsie and has a fine singing voice, and there are splendid performances by Mary Gallagher, Anthony Cryer and Eric Whyte.

Musical Director Peter C. Carder, ably controls the well-balanced orchestra. The producer is Rex Satchwell. L.C.

