
:: INVERNESS ::
OPERA COMPANY



presents *Jim Solomon (Bates)*

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Merrie England

at the

EMPIRE THEATRE
INVERNESS

Tuesday, 10th March, 1953
to
Saturday, 14th March, 1953

Matinee : Saturday, 14th March, 1953
at 3-0 p.m.

Programme - Price 6d.



Synopsis of the Opera

ACT I.

Scene: Banks of the Thames, near Windsor Castle.

IT is May Day, and the revels of the rustics with their May Day mummeries are pictured. The opening chorus introduces the May Queen, her two chosen men—Long Tom and Big Ben—and four admirers, a butcher, baker, tinker, and tailor of Windsor Town. In a duet, the two big men relate their differences, and Jill-alone (a reputed witch) sings of her life in the forest. A skit on Court life by Jill precedes the advent of Walter Wilkins, a player in Will Shakespeare's company, and Silas Simkins, who predicts the future triumph of Shakespearian drama over musical comedy, and gives a lively song. Sir Walter Raleigh treats the company to mead and sack and sings a rollicking song. The May Queen demands the customary treatment for witches, and the crowd rush off to find Jill while the May Queen, Raleigh, Tom, and Wilkins, along with Kate, introduce a pretty quintet. Raleigh is joined by his lady-love—Bessie Throckmorton, a lady-in-waiting. Essex (Raleigh's enemy and rival for Queen Elizabeth's favour) discloses his wish to deprive Raleigh of the Queen's good graces. Boastful utterances by Wilkins are interrupted by Jill imploring his protection, but on being put to the test she finds his bragging ignominiously exposed. Essex eulogises the "Yeomen of England," and some diverting dialogue results in Ben throwing Wilkins into the river. Essex obtains from Jill a love letter written by Raleigh to Bessie, and he concocts a plan whereby the Queen shall know their infatuation. A flourish of trumpets and drums heralds the arrival of the Queen's barge. She disembarks and sings "O, peaceful England." The existing hatred between Raleigh and Essex is shown in dialogue. Bessie, to save her lover, tells the Queen Raleigh loves her and that Essex is jealous. Desirous of seeing the May games, the Queen asks who is to play Robin Hood. She is confronted with Wilkins—a pitiable object after his ducking—who in an amusing song, offers her the dignity and title of "Mistress of the Seas." Bessie's song of Robin Hood is followed by an accusation of witchcraft against Jill. Essex hands a letter to the Queen, which results in Jill being condemned to death, Sir Walter banished from the Court, and Bessie imprisoned.

ACT II. Windsor Forest.

JILL is discovered in the depths of the forest, near Herne's Oak, a secret exit from the Castle, by which means she has aided Bessie to escape. The passage is said to have been used by King Harry, and its praises are sung by Bessie, Jill, Tom and Ben. Upon the disappearance of these four the rustics (headed by Wilkins, Simkins and the four tradesmen of Windsor) arrive, and arrange their projects for bringing their mummeries before their Queen. Queen Elizabeth has arranged to meet an apothecary in the forest, to procure from him poisonous drugs to administer to Bessie Throckmorton. Their dialogue is interrupted by the mummeries, but the Queen declines to hear them and concludes the arrangements with the apothecary. Raleigh, disguised as a forester, overhears the dialogue, and forbids delivery of the drug. The apothecary is none other than the Queen's fool in disguise, and he assures Raleigh of his wish to befriend him and his ladylove. A duet by Raleigh and Jill is followed by the appearance of the rustics with their Queen. Raleigh, in order to get into the Castle and secure Bessie, is desirous of joining them. The beautiful song, the "English Rose," is here introduced, and Wilkins gives up the part of Robin Hood to Raleigh. When the rustics depart Jill and Bessie appear. Bessie believes she heard footsteps in the passage, but Jill says it was the echo, and proceeds to find Raleigh, whilst Bessie sings in praise of love. Essex, having followed Bessie's escape, emerges from the oak and professes himself a friend, realising if Raleigh is married to Bessie his own chances with Elizabeth will be all the greater, and after a dainty quartet he sets about to obtain a pardon for Bessie, Jill and Raleigh. He arranges for the rustics to produce their play before the Queen, Tom to be disguised as Herne the Hunter, all of them to say they cannot see him, and he will tell the Queen that such an apparition only appears when the Sovereign contemplates a crime, thereby exciting remorse in her breast. The plan succeeds admirably. The Queen watches the play, ludicrously presented by the May Queen, Wilkins and the four men of Windsor, and is at last interrupted by a ghostly horn. The apparition rises, the Queen is terror-stricken, she relents, pardons the condemned trio, and all ends happily with the play of Robin Hood's Wedding.

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MERRIE ENGLAND

Written by Basil Hood.

Composed by Edward German

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The Earl of Essex	.....	HECTOR McNEILL
Sir Walter Raleigh	.....	JACK COOKE
Walter Wilkins (<i>a Player in Shakespeare's Company</i>)	.....	ROBERT CATHCART
Silas Simkins (<i>another Player</i>)	.....	JAMES MacDONALD
Long Tom	} Royal Foresters {	DAVID HOOD
Big Ben		PETER LACY
The Queen's Fool	.....	RONALD MacDONALD
A Butcher	} <i>Men of Windsor</i> {	FRED MacKENZIE
A Baker		ARCHD. SOLOMON
A Tinker		IAN MacAULAY
A Tailor		GORDON TAYLOR
A Lord	.....	ALASTAIR MacINNES
A Soldier	.....	HECTOR MacVINISH
First Royal Page	.....	HEATHER WALKER
Second Royal Page	.....	DONALD CALLUM
Queen Elizabeth	.....	Miss EDITH MacPHERSON
Miss Bessie Throckmorton	.....	Miss DOROTHY MORTON
"Jill-All-Along"	.....	Miss THORA YOUNIE
The May Queen	.....	Miss OLIVE M. GROAT
Marjory	} <i>Girls of Windsor</i> {	Miss RUTH MacPHERSON
Kate		Mrs. JOAN B. MacINNES
Ladies-in-Waiting	{	Miss ENA MUNRO
		Miss JOY FRASER

Chorus of Lords, Ladies, Townsfolk, Soldiers, etc.

<i>Ladies :</i>	Elizabeth Walker, Ryner A. Hendry, Mary Tocher, Joan B. Roberts, Rena Cooke, Nettie Nugent, June Gollan, Dorothy McHardy, Nesta Lindsay, Rena MacBean, Marion Munro, June Lawler, Eleanor M. K. MacDonald, Rose M. F. Fraser, Catherine Sweeney.
<i>Dancers :</i>	Maratina Dallas, Melody Penny, Jean Robertson, Rose MacKintosh, Nessie Ayton, Phyllis Kennedy.
<i>Gentlemen :</i>	William R. Keir, Ian Grant, Scott Don, John Bloczynski, Roderick MacRae, Leslie Munro, Derek Ross, John Walker, W. Fraser, G. Cross, Wm. MacKintosh.

ACT I BANK OF THE THAMES AT WINDSOR

ACT II WINDSOR FOREST, HERNE'S OAK

Inverness Opera Company

<i>Hon. President</i>	Mrs. James M. Grigor	
<i>Hon. Vice-Presidents</i>	{ Mrs. Douglas Hunter Provost James Grigor Mr. Robert Wotherspoon	
		Mr. Archibald Hooper, C.A.
		Mr. Jack Cooke
<i>Chairman</i>	Mr. Charles Rose	
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	Mr. William Birnie, C.A.	
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	Miss Joy Hay	
<i>Hon. Auditor</i>	{ Miss Moira Johnstone	

Production, Stage Direction and Dances :
Miss MAY RAINFORD (N.O.D.A. Ltd., London)

Hon. Musical Director :
Mr. D. E. ROBERTS, A.R.C.O., M.R.S.T.

ORCHESTRA

<i>1st Violins :</i>	<i>2nd Violins :</i>	<i>Celli :</i>
Miss Kim-Murray, L.R.A.M. (Leader)	Mr. I. Sieczkarek	Miss Ella Taylor
Mrs. M. R. Tuddenham	Mr. Geo. Innes	Mr. C. V. Turner
Mr. J. Stuart	<i>Oboe :</i>	<i>Clarinet</i>
	Mr. J. Currie	Mr. J. Jackman
<i>Cornet :</i>	<i>Bass Trombone :</i>	<i>Tenor Trombone :</i>
Mr. J. Petrie	Mr. T. Christie	Mr. J. Brough
<i>Double Bass :</i>		<i>Drums :</i>
Mr. George Ralph		Mr. Alex. Davis

<i>Hon. Stage Manager</i>	Mr. Leonard P. Murray
<i>Wardrobe Mistress</i>	Miss Flora MacPherson
<i>Ticket Manager</i>	Mr. Charles Rose
<i>Scenery, Wigs and Costumes by</i>	R. Sheldon Bamber, Ltd., Glasgow

Empire Theatre, Inverness

<i>Chairman :</i>	<i>Resident Manager :</i>
Mr. Robert Wotherspoon	Mr. John Worth