

WICKED WAXWORKS

OR

The Mischievous Magic of Mr. Wells

A Brand New and Original Magical Operetta
based on the works of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

by
Fraser Charlton

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

John Wellington Wells (*a Sorcerer*)..... BARITONE
Grimsby Grice (*a Waxworks proprietor*) BARITONE
Gertrude Grice (*Grimsby's sister*) CONTRALTO
Edwin Bigglesworth (*a Floor Sweeper*)..... BARITONE
Angelina Angelheart (*an Admirer of Mr Bigglesworth*).....SOPRANO
Myrtle Murgatroyd (*an Opportunistic Young Lady*).....SOPRANO
Rowena Rosebud (*a Melodramatic Young Lady*) MEZZO-SOPRANO
Rev Osbourne Road/Inspector Bouncer..... BARITONE
Dean StreetNON SINGING
Waxwork OneBASS
Waxwork Two.....NON SINGING

Chorus of WAXWORKS, VERGERS, POLICEMEN and YOUNG LADIES.

*The parts of Osbourne Road and Inspector Bouncer are to be taken by
the same person.*

ACT I. - March 22nd, 1875

Scene One - The Waxworks

Scene Two - Outside a church, the following morning

ACT II. - Later the same day

Scene One - The Waxworks

Scene Two - A square in London

Scene Three - The Waxworks

ACT I

OVERTURE

SCENE ONE - *Interior of the Grice's Waxworks. The WAXWORKS, dressed as characters from the Savoy Operas, are arranged at the back of the stage with a practicable curtain that conceals them when drawn. The YOUNG LADIES gaze adoringly on the WAXWORKS.*

Enter WELLS. The action freezes. Lights down, spot on WELLS.

WELLS

A very good evening to you all, ladies and gentlemen. Allow me to present myself - my name is John Wellington Wells, of J. W. Wells and Co., the old established family sorcerers in St. Mary Axe. Doubtless you will have seen our advertisement in the popular press: 'For blessings and curses, for magic and spells, Come to the shop of J. W. Wells!'. Perhaps not. Anyway, I have invited you here tonight to tell you of my very first engagement as a qualified sorcerer. I like to call it 'The Case of the Wicked Waxworks', although I am sure that you'll have more graphic descriptions of your own for it by the end of the evening! Permit me to introduce the leading characters in my tale... (*Spot on GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE*) These two twisted creatures are Grimsby and Gertrude Grice, the evil hearted brother and sister that had the good fortune to inherit this exquisite waxworks. They are well known numismatists - that is to say collectors of coins... from the Royal Mint! (*Spot on EDWIN*) The person engaged in the picturesque trade of sweeping the floor is Mr. Edwin Bigglesworth, a fine young gentleman of highly respectable lineage fallen on hard times after a stock market crash. His, I have been told, exceptional features ensure that he is much admired by the ladyfolk of the locality - a fact that he is not slow to take advantage of! (*Spot on ANGELINA*) And now, let me present Miss Angelina Angelheart, the most beautiful, and the most sought after, of all the waxwork's regular visitors. She is the daughter of a rich baronet and consequently has the most extraordinarily large... dowry. But what of the other young ladies? (*Lights up*) Well, as you can no doubt see, the Grice's premises is blessed with the most singularly handsome collection of waxworks in the Empire! Such is their reputation that the fairest maidens from miles around flock here to shower them with praise and gaze upon their beauty, filled with hopeless love... it really is a most affecting scene! But enough of my talk - on with the story! Let me take you back to 5 o'clock on the 22nd of March, 1875... (*WELLS snaps his fingers and exits. The scene comes to life*)

OPENING CHORUS

Music - "Welcome gentry", Ruddigore

GIRLS Handsome gentry,
Stand like sentry,
Set our tender hearts a-beating.
Waxwork's beauty
Makes our duty
To give unaffected greeting,
Hearty greeting offer we!

WAXWORKS (*Aside*) We'll never be tired
Of being admired
By ladies of gentle degree - degree!
With praises we're sated,
High flown and inflated,
Although we must say we agree - agree!
These charms intramural,
And compliments plural,
And flatteries frightful
Are simply delightful!
So come Angelina,
Myrtle and Rowena,
Your slaves, though immobile, are we!

GIRLS The men of the city
Aren't nearly so pretty -
Their defects are easy to see - to see.
Though honest and active
They're most unattractive,
And awkward as awkward can be - can be!
The blue collar worker
And stupid stockbroker
And butchers and baker
And administrators
And printer and hatter
And clergymen clatter
To be the new lover for me!

ENSEMBLE

GIRLS Handsome gentry, etc. **WAXWORKS** We'll never be tired, etc.

MYRTLE How handsome these waxworks are - and yet how deaf they are to our words of praise. If only we could care about real men as we do about these dreamy mannequins, but in comparison they seem so... fleshy!

ROWENA Yes, their wax complexions are so much more attractive than the stubble and acne of our usual suitors! (*The GIRLS chatter excitedly in agreement*)

ANGELINA (*Aside*) These waxworks are indeed fine, but not as fine as one who lives and breathes not two yards from my aching heart! (*Indicating EDWIN*) I can only pray that he feels the same! (*EDWIN looks longingly and exits*)

GRIMSBY Come, come, now ladies - it's closing time! Go on, off home with you! (*He draws the curtain and conceals the WAXWORKS. Exit GERTRUDE*) You've been here seven hours already - that's an extra sixpence each.

ROWENA Oh, Mr. Grice, you are the bucket of iced water that dulls our red hot passion! Can we not stay five more minutes?

GRIMSBY Charming though your pleas are, and much as I'd love to satisfy your desires, I'm afraid that my ear is deaf to your request. I can't have you pawing the waxworks all night as well as all day - I'd never have a chance to touch up their paintwork. You should see the damage you do. I'm not a charity you know - I've got a business to run.

ROWENA What is mere profit compared to the affairs of the heart? Oh, Mr. Grice, you are so selfish and mean and miserly and...

GRIMSBY Stop there! I can't take any more! People are always accusing me of being miserly. The problem is that you simply don't understand me. Allow me to explain...

SONG - GRIMSBY and CHORUS

Music - "Oh, why am I moody and sad?", Ruddigore

GRIMSBY Oh, why am I crabby and mean?

CHORUS Can't guess!

GRIMSBY And why am I often obscene?

CHORUS Confess!

GRIMSBY You think I'm a dirty has-been!

CHORUS Oh yes!

GRIMSBY I can tell you that that is a lie!

GRIMSBY Oh, why do I hoard all my cash?

CHORUS Ah why?

GRIMSBY And why do I rake through the trash?

CHORUS Oh my!

GRIMSBY And develop this horrible rash? (*Showing them*)

CHORUS Fie, fie!

GRIMSBY I'll give you the reasoning why...

SONG - GRIMSBY *and* CHORUS

Music - "If you give me your attention", Princess Ida

If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am:
Despite the way I'm acting, I am not a dreadful ham!
I'm a singular economist - ideas very prudent -
I spend my cash as freely as an overdrafted student!
I gather all my takings, keep them for a rainy day -
But it never does quite rain enough - so pocketed they stay!
Sufficient thrift and carefulness has always been my plan,
Yet everybody says I am a miserly old man!
And I can't think why!

To spend with gay abandon I have always thought is rash -
I won't enjoy myself until I've made my stash of cash.
On measures of economy my feelings are emphatic -
I cut up cake and quiche with a precision mathematic!
I never give two sugar lumps when only one will do,
And six cups to the teabag at the least before it's through!
But despite my best attempts to spend the very least I can,
I've got this reputation as a miserly old man!
And I can't think why!

CHORUS He can't think why!

GRIMSBY There! Now you know, be off with you! Go on, get! (*Exit* GIRLS) And don't forget to pay on your way out! (*Aside*) I hate being around pretty young women - they make me come over all unnecessary! Especially that Angelina Angelheart - by Swansea, she's an attractive girl! But what chance have I got with someone like her? (*Enter* EDWIN) Ah, here's my accursedly handsome employee. Perhaps he can help. (*Aloud*) Young Mr. Bigglesworth, I wonder if I could have a quiet word with you - man to man!

EDWIN (*Aside*) Coincidentally, I was intending to consult him about a rise in my meagre wages, but being a proud and honest type of hero, I could never consider doing so! (*Aloud*) Yes, my kind and good employer, in what capacity may I be of assistance?

GRIMSBY Tell me Edwin, old son, how come you always seem to have some attractive young lady 'in tow'?

EDWIN I have been led to believe that it is because of my exceptional looks, amiable, approachable and easy-going personality and general physical perfection. But then, I thought that was obvious.

GRIMSBY Ah yes... But that's not quite what I meant. What I wanted to know was, well, how do you actually manage to, you know, ask them out?

EDWIN It's quite simple: I just stride up to them and announce, in a deep, well modulated tone, that I...

GRIMSBY But that's my problem - I can't approach girls! I'm shy, nervous and retiring. When I'm with attractive women I just get flustered and become abusive!

EDWIN So I've noticed!

GRIMSBY But what can I do? It's a terrible handicap!

DUET - GRIMSBY *and* EDWIN

Music - "My boy, you may take it from me", Ruddigore

GRIMSBY My boy, you may take it from me,
That of all the afflictions accurst
With which a man's saddled
And hampered and addled,
A diffident nature's the worst.
Though clever as clever can be -
My skills cannot be denied -
But, whatever I try, sir,
I fail at - and why sir?

EDWIN (*Spoken*)

I don't know!

GRIMSBY

I'm modesty personified!

EDWIN

If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Now take, for example, my case:

I've a bright intellectual brain -
In all London City

There's no one so witty -

I've thought so again and again.

I've a highly intelligent face -

My beauty cannot be denied -

So whatever I try, sir,

I triumph - and why, sir?

Haven't a clue, old boy!

GRIMSBY (*Spoken*)

EDWIN

I'm assertiveness personified!

GRIMSBY

So, if you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

BOTH

If you wish in the world to advance, etc.

GRIMSBY Why thank you, old chap - I'll remember that. Now, let me see, what are all my good points? There's... Er... What about... No, er... (*Exit GRIMSBY*)

EDWIN Poor old Grimsby - beneath that granite exterior beats a heart of stone! But soft - I can see the beautiful Angelina Angelheart approaching. Perhaps now might be an opportune moment to proposition her! (*Retires to back of stage*)

Enter ANGELINA.

ANGELINA Oh, I'm sure that I must have left my pocket handkerchief in the waxworks - I distinctly recall using it earlier to cover my mouth when addressing a working-class person in the Chamber of Horrors! (*Aside*) And perhaps, dare I hope, I might just happen to meet that magnificent pagan beast of a floor sweeper! Oh! Here he comes now! I'd better appear distracted - which I am!

DUET - EDWIN *and* ANGELINA

Music - "Prithee, pretty maiden", Patience

EDWIN Prithee, pretty maiden - prithee tell me true,
(Hey, but I'm doleful, willow willow waly!)
Have you e'er a lover a-dangling after you?
Hey willow waly O!
I would fain discover
If you have a lover?
Hey willow waly O!

ANGELINA Gentle sir, my heart is frolicsome and free -
(Hey, but he's doleful, willow willow waly!)
Nobody I care for comes a-courting me -
Hey willow waly O!
Nobody I care for
Comes a-courting - therefore,
Hey willow waly O!

EDWIN Prithee, pretty maiden, will you walk with me?

ANGELINA (Hey, but he's hopeful, willow willow waly!)

EDWIN We could go to Brighton, or Southend on the Sea

ANGELINA Hey willow waly O!

EDWIN But if that's a drag, dear,
We could have... some tea¹, dear,
Hey willow waly O!

ANGELINA To go out with you would very selfish be -
EDWIN (Hey, but I'm hopeful, Hey willow waly!)

ANGELINA Such considerations don't really bother me!

EDWIN Hey willow waly O!

BOTH Jealousy'd be rife, love,
If I was/you were my... friend, love!
Hey willow waly O!

EDWIN and ANGELINA kiss and exit. Enter GRIMSBY.

GRIMSBY Ah, Miss Angelheart, I wish to remark... Oh, she's gone. But what's that? (*Looking off*) She's with my floor sweeper! And they're kissing - with their mouths open! Oh curse that Edwin - he's taken the girl I love away from me! And I'm his employer - has he no respect for class? Still, I'll get even with him before the end of the show, see if I don't!

Enter GERTRUDE.

GERTRUDE Grimsby, there you are! Stop soliloquising and look at the latest accounts. Profits are down seventy five percent! If the takings don't improve we'll have to have another share issue. I don't understand it - the place always seems to be full of those horribly attractive young women draping themselves over the waxworks. Surely that must bring in a large income?

GRIMSBY True, Gertrude - it should. But the problem is that they stay in all day and only pay one admission fee. They've even started bringing packed lunches.

GERTRUDE Why not limit the admission to thirty minutes? We could have colour coded tickets, and every hour call out a new colour...

GRIMSBY No, too expensive to administrate. Anyway, I'm already charging them an extra penny an hour, and they don't like it. Any more and we'll drive them away completely - and then where'd we be?

GERTRUDE I suppose you're right. But, of course - I have it! Perhaps if we... Er... Loosened the clothing on some of the models...

GRIMSBY My dear sister, what a disgusting idea! I'm ashamed of you! (*Furtively*) Do you mean that they've got fully moulded... (*FX: Doorbell. GRIMSBY looks at his watch*) Right on time! Gertrude, I believe I have the solution to our problems - a rather subtle and cunning plan. And it'll all work out with the help of the gentleman outside the door... (*Flash of light, smoke etc. WELLS appears*) Well, he was outside the door!

WELLS Good day to you, sir and madam. I believe I am expected.

GRIMSBY This is the man I was speaking of...

GERTRUDE So I gathered. But who, or rather what, the deuce is he?

WELLS Allow me to present myself - my card.

SONG - WELLS

Music - "My name is John Wellington Wells", The Sorcerer

Oh! my name is John Wellington Wells,
I'm a dealer in magic and spells,
In blessings and curses
And ever-filled purses,
In prophecies, witches and knells.

If you want a proud foe to 'make tracks' -
If you'd melt a rich uncle in wax -
You've but to look in

¹ Hopefully, thanks to Austin Powers, the whole world knows what 'shag' means...

On our resident Djinn,
Number seventy, Simmery Axe!

We've a first-rate assortment of magic;
And for raising a posthumous shade
With effects that are comic or tragic,
There's no cheaper house in the trade.
Love-philtre - we've quantities of it;
And for knowledge if anyone burns,
We're keeping a very small prophet, a prophet
Who brings us unbounded returns:

For he can prophesy
With a wink of his eye,
Peep with security
Into futurity,
Sum up your history,
Clear up a mystery,
Humour proclivity
For a nativity - for a nativity;
He has answers oracular,
Bogies spectacular,
Tetrapods tragical,
Mirrors so magical,
Facts astronomical,
Solemn or comical,
And, if you want it, he
Makes a reduction on taking a quantity!

Oh!
If anyone anything lacks,
He'll find it all ready in stacks,
If he'll only look in
On the resident Djinn,
Number seventy, Simmery Axe!

He can raise you hosts
Of ghosts,
And that without reflectors;
And creepy things
With wings,
And gaunt and grisly spectres.
He can fill you crowds
Of shrouds,
And horrify you vastly;
He can rack your brains
With chains,
And gibberings grim and ghastly!

Then, if you plan it, he
Changes organity,
With an urbanity,
Full of Satanity,
Vexes humanity
With an inanity
Fatal to vanity -
Driving your foes to the verge of insanity!
Barring tautology,
In demonology,
'Lectro-biology,
Mystic nosology,
Spirit philology,
High-class astrology,
Such is his knowledge, he
Isn't the man to require an apology!
Oh!

My name is John Wellington Wells,
I'm a dealer in magic and spells,
In blessings and curses
And ever-filled purses,
In prophecies, witches and knells.

And if anyone anything lacks,
He'll find it all ready in stacks,
If he'll only look in
On the resident Djinn,
Number seventy, Simmery Axe!

GERTRUDE What an eccentric person!

GRIMSBY Mr. Wells, I am honoured by your presence! I've asked you here, in the strictest secrecy, to consult you about the performance of a rather select task. Have you seen our famous waxworks?

WELLS Most certainly - they are remarkably fine fellows!

GRIMSBY Remarkably fine fellows indeed, Mr. Wells. But they have a small *snagette*... They're too static, stationary, immobile... In short, a waste of space. If you could bring them to life... Now then they'd be a lot more useful. That is, if your sorcerous skills are capable of such a feat...

WELLS My dear sir, any employee of my company could perform the necessary rites over breakfast! Let me see... That would require a Life-Imbibe Mannequin Charm, combined with a Glyph of Will-Binding. Nothing could be easier. It won't be cheap, though.

GERTRUDE Exactly, Grimsby! We can barely afford to keep the waxworks open let alone spend our hard earned cash on this... Jiggery-pokery!

WELLS Madam! What a shocking accusation! I have never 'poked a jigger' in my life! (*Aside to GERTRUDE*) But I'm willing to try!

GRIMSBY Enough of your nonsense, Wells - it all sounds a bit suspect. Now, Gertrude dear, we shan't be wasting money. Think of the enormous commercial possibilities of having an army of waxworks to control! Think of the robberies they could commit!

GERTRUDE And how few fingerprints they'd leave! For once, brother, you are actually being intelligent. Let's get started at once - I can think of lots of people I'd be delighted to relieve of the burden of wealth!

WELLS Robberies? Look, Mr. Grice, I'm not sure if I want to be connected with such an enterprise...

GRIMSBY Don't worry, Mr. Wells, you'll be well paid for your trouble. We'll give you thirty percent...

GERTRUDE Twenty percent!

GRIMSBY Twenty percent of all we make.

WELLS Well, if money's involved, how can I refuse?

TRIO - WELLS, GERTRUDE and GRIMSBY

Music - "Let all your doubts take wing", Utopia Limited

WELLS Let all your doubts take wing -
My sorcery is great,
To help you with this thing
I do not hesitate.
I'll weave the spell
And potion make -
The spirits fell
Will make you quake -
So by your say
The waxworks grim

Will all obey
This evil whim.

ALL This evil whim - this evil whim,
It is as I/you say an evil whim.

GERTRUDE Observe this dance
Which I employ
When I, by chance,
Go mad with joy.
What sentiment
Does this express?

GERTRUDE dances. WELLS and GRIMSBY vainly endeavour to discover its meaning.

Supreme content
And happiness!

ALL Of course it does! Of course it does!
Supreme content and happiness!

GRIMSBY Your costly aid conferred,
I need no longer pine -
I've but to speak the word
And lo! An army's mine!
I do not choose
To live in debt,
Or wish to use
My savings yet,
This step I take
So magic may
The waxworks wake
And 'steal' away!

ALL And 'steal' away - and 'steal' away!
The waxworks then will 'steal' away!

WELLS This step I use,
Combined with mime,
Whene'er I choose
To help a crime.
What it implies
Now try to guess;

WELLS dances. GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE vainly endeavour to discover its meaning.

It typifies
My greediness!

ALL Of course it does! Of course it does!
It typifies his greediness!

GERTRUDE I am glad to find a young man who already has the correct moral outlook on life. Money first, humanity second - that's my motto!

WELLS Yes, there's nothing like a good Tory, is there?

GRIMSBY Excellent, Wells, I see you're a man after my own heart! Well, let's get started. I want the spell finished by nightfall. (*Draws curtain to reveal WAXWORKS*) Here's my future army of evil-doers!

WELLS Upon my word, they are an handsome crowd! Let me see... (*Looking in bag*) Yes, I have all the necessary ingredients with me. Now I feel I must warn you, madam, that strange, unearthly things are about to occur. I hope you are not easily frightened.

GERTRUDE My dear sir, when you have lived with my brother for forty years, you are hardened to anything!

WELLS Very well! I shall proceed at once to the incantation.

INCANTATION - WELLS *and* CHORUS

Music - "Sprites of earth and air", The Sorcerer

WELLS Sprites of earth and air -
Fiends of flame and fire -
Demon souls,
Come here in shoals,
This dreadful deed inspire!
Appear, appear, appear.

VOICES Good master, we are here!

WELLS Noisome hags of night -
Imps of deadly shade -
Pallid ghosts,
Arise in hosts,
And lend me all your aid.
Appear, appear, appear!

VOICES Good master, we are here!

WELLS Now, shrivelled hags, with poison bags,
Discharge your loathsome loads!
Spit flame and fire, unholy choir!
Belch forth your venom, toads!
Ye demons fell, with yelp and yell,
Shed curses far afield -
Ye fiends of night your filthy blight
In noisome plenty yield!

WELLS Number one! (FX)
CHORUS It is done!
WELLS Number two! (FX)
CHORUS One too few!
WELLS Number three! (FX)
CHORUS Set us free!
Set us free - our work is done!
Ha! ha! ha!

Then WAXWORKS slowly come to life.

CHORUS OF WAXWORKS

Music - "Painted emblems of a race", Ruddigore

Sculptures with a famous face,
Standing as in life before,
Each from his accustomed place
Steps into the world once more.

CHORUS OF WAXWORKS

Music - "If you want to know who we are", The Mikado

If you want to know who we are,
We are mannequins made of wax:
In many a spotlight's glare -
In many a tailor's racks.
We're coloured with lively paint,
Out attitude's queer and quaint -
You're wrong if you think it ain't, oh!

If you think we are worked by strings,
Like a commonplace marionette,
You don't understand these things:
It is simply wax etiquette.

Perhaps you suppose this throng
Can't keep it up all day long?
If that's your idea, you're wrong, oh!

- GRIMSBY** Magnificent, my dear Wells, quite magnificent!
- GERTRUDE** Amazing! They look almost alive! (*She pinches WAXWORK 1. He slaps her*)
- WELLS** Be gentle with them! They've only just woken up and they'll be a little bit irritable.
- GRIMSBY** Never mind that, I want to get started at once. (*Clears throat*) Er... How do I command them, Wells?
- WELLS** Just state your request clearly and slowly. And keep it simple - they're not very bright.
- WAXWORKS** We're not!
- GRIMSBY** Good. Right men, your first job is to burgle the enormously rich Angelheart Manor. Break in, get the silverware, smash the place up a bit, you know the sort of thing.
- WAXWORK 1** Where's Angelheart manor?
- WAXWORK 2** What's a burgle?
- WAXWORK 1** What does silver wear?
- GERTRUDE** Point taken, Mr. Wells. Look, this won't work, Grimsby - you'd better go with them. They're totally naïve - remember, they haven't left the waxworks since they were cast.
- GRIMSBY** Right you are, sister. Waxworks! By my command! Chest out! Stomach in! Shoulders back! Chin up! About turn! Quick march! (*GRIMSBY does all this and marches out alone leaving some very confused WAXWORKS. Enter GRIMSBY*) Er... Look. Wait there. I'll go and get the equipment. (*Exit GRIMSBY*)
- GERTRUDE** I must admit that I am impressed, Mr. Wells. Your magical powers have overcome my monetary doubts. The spell appears to be a complete success.
- WELLS** Of course - I'm a professional, ain't I? Still, I have grave misgivings about this - my conscience is bothering me.
- GERTRUDE** Think of the money! Think of what you'll be able to get with it!
- WELLS** Huh! Can't buy me love! (*Exeunt WELLS and GERTRUDE*)
- Enter GRIMSBY.*
- GRIMSBY** Very well, my rumbustious robbers! The burglary that we are undertaking tonight shall take place with consummate skill - and in total silence! Follow my lead...

SONG - GRIMSBY *and* WAXWORKS

Music - "With cat-like tread", The Pirates of Penzance

With cat-like tread,
Upon our prey we steal,
In silence dread
Our cautious way we feel.
No sound at all,
We never speak a word,
A fly's foot-fall
Would be distinctly heard -
So stealthily the burglar creeps,
While all the household soundly sleeps.

Come friends, as villains we
Plunder from the nation,
Sing in syncopation!

Let's use our sorcery
For a little burglary!

GRIMSBY (*distributing items to WAXWORKS*)
Here's your crowbar and your stocking mask,
Decoy for the dogs - that will be your task;
Your rubber gloves, your flashlight seize,
Take your stethoscope and your skeletal keys

ALL With cat-like tread, etc.

Exeunt and blackout. Enter WELLS (reading a newspaper) and GERTRUDE. Several hours have passed.

GERTRUDE They should be due back any minute. I do hope that they haven't damaged themselves. Good waxworks are so expensive these days. (*Shouting and singing heard offstage*) What is all that noise? Of course - it'll be Grimsby and his 'cat' burglars!

WELLS You're right - here they come. It looks like the trip was a success.

Enter GRIMSBY and WAXWORKS carrying loot.

GERTRUDE Well, how did you get on?

WAXWORK 1 Pretty well. We've got a good haul here.

GRIMSBY Let's see if our crime has made the morning paper yet (*grabbing it from WELLS*).

WAXWORK 2 It was a roaring success, really.

GRIMSBY Oh no! Look at this - a shock announcement in the paper! That damned Edwin is marrying Angelina this very morning! By the gods, I swear he'll not get away with this! Right men, come along with me - we have dark and evil deeds to discuss. Wells, you'd better come too...

WELLS But, Mr. Grice, I really don't want to be involved...

GRIMSBY Or you don't get your share.

WELLS Well that's different. Business is business! (*Exeunt*)

SCENE TWO - *Outside a church, that morning. Enter GIRLS followed by EDWIN and ANGELINA.*

SOLO and CHORUS - MYRTLE

Music - "Comes the broken flower", Trial By Jury

CHORUS Comes the maiden plighted -
Comes the handsome groom -
When the garden's blighted
May their love still bloom!
Keep them from temptation,
Never let them yield:
Pillars of the nation
Never 'play the field'!
Loving till your marriage ends:
Happy be thy life, my friends!

MYRTLE Darling Angelina
Likes to flirt and pout,
And we all have seen her
Put herself about.
Edwin's often spoken,
In an endless list,
Of the hearts he's broken
And the lips he's kissed.
But our bitching hearby ends:
Happy be thy life, my friends!

CHORUS But our bitching hearby ends:
Happy be thy life, my friends!

OSBOURNE ROAD and VERGERS enter unnoticed at the back.

EDWIN Oh Angie, this is too much happiness! That you should agree to marry me but twelve hours after our first date! Of course, I understand your haste - am I not the most handsome young man in the locality?

ANGELINA Yes, I'm sure that must be the reason. (*Aside*) Little does he realise that after the burglary of my parents' house last night my family is penniless! Consequently, if I don't marry today I'll be left on the shelf permanently! (*Aloud*) Darling, let's not delay any longer - I want to marry right away!

EDWIN Of course, dearest. But where can we find a man of the cloth to tie the eternal knot?

MYRTLE Edwin, I think that the gentleman over there is one of that description. (OSBOURNE and VERGERS come forward)

OSBOURNE Good day to you. I can tell by obvious affection, and even more obvious haste, that you are a young couple passionately in love and desperate to marry forthwith.

ANGELINA You are very astute, sir. But who may you be?

OSBOURNE I am the Reverend Osbourne Road², Doctor of Divinity and specialist in shotgun weddings!

EDWIN Then marry us without delay!

OSBOURNE Certainly, my son. I see that you have sufficient witnesses. Perhaps you'll permit my old professor of Theology, who's visiting me, to act as best man? Dean Street³, will you do the honours? (DEAN agrees) Excellent! Now if you could give Dean Street the ring...

EDWIN The ring! I had quite forgotten about that! My love, I must leave you for the briefest delay possible. I must sally forth to obtain that band of gold to seal our covenant of joy! Wait here, everyone - I shall return presently.

ANGELINA Farewell, darling! Hurry back! (*They kiss. Exit EDWIN*)

OSBOURNE Ah me, it is hard being a single man constantly engaged in the process of producing married ones! And the problem is compounded by the fact that I am such a susceptible clergyman! (*The GIRLS flock around him in sympathy*) Stop it, stop it! It is simply torture! The time for such pleasures has long passed. But once, ah once, I had beautiful maidens queuing up to win my affection.

MYRTLE Do tell us about it, handsome vicar!

OSBOURNE Very well - but it is far too affecting a tale to tell in mere prose. Music please!

BALLAD - OSBOURNE

Music - "Time was when love and I were well acquainted", The Sorcerer

Time was when love and I were well acquainted.

Time was when we walked ever hand in hand.

A saintly youth, with worldly thought untainted,

None better loved than I in all the land!

Time was, when maidens of the noblest station,

Forsaking even military men,

Would gaze upon me, rapt in adoration -

Ah me, I was a fair young curate then!

Had I a headache? sighed the maids assembled;

Had I a cold? welled forth the silent tear;

Did I look pale? then half a parish trembled;

And when I coughed all thought the end was near!

² A well-known street in Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne.

³ Another familiar, and remarkably beautiful, road in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne.

I had no care - no jealous doubts hung o'er me -
For I was loved beyond all other men.
Fled gilded dukes and belted earls before me -
Ah me, I was a pale young curate then!

Enter EDWIN carrying a can of drink. He pulls the ring off and discards the rest⁴.

EDWIN Angelina! I have found a ring!

ANGELINA Oh Edwin! Let me see it! (*He shows her. She's a little disappointed*) It's not quite what I expected. It looks a little, well, cheap.

EDWIN I don't know, it has a certain robust, spartan charm about it.

ANGELINA Never mind, it will do. Here you are, Dean. (*Gives ring to DEAN*) Well, what are we waiting for? Let the wedding commence!

FINALE ACT ONE

CHORUS OF GIRLS *and* VERGERS

Music - "Won't it be a pretty wedding?", The Grand Duke

Won't it be a pretty wedding?
Will not Angie look delightful?
Smiles and tears in plenty shedding -
Which in brides of course is rightful.
One could say, if one were spiteful,
Contradiction little dreading,
Her bouquet is simply frightful -
Still, 'twill be a pretty wedding!
Such a pretty, pretty wedding!
Such a charming, charming wedding!

MYRTLE If her dress is badly fitting,
Theirs the fault who made the trousseau.

ROWENA If her gloves are always splitting,
Cheap kid gloves we know will do so.

MYRTLE If upon her train she stumbled,
On one's train one's always treading.

ROWENA If her hair is rather tumbled,
Still 'twill be a pretty wedding!

CHORUS Such a pretty, pretty wedding!
Here they come, the couple plighted -
On life's journey gaily start them.
Man and maid for aye united,
Till divorce or death shall part them.

DUET - EDWIN *and* ANGELINA

EDWIN Pretty Angie, fair and tasty,
Tell me now, and tell me truly,
Haven't you been rather hasty?
Haven't you been rash unduly?
Am I quite the dashing *sposo*
That your fancy could depict you?
Perhaps you think me only so-so?
(She expresses admiration)
Well, I will not contradict you!

CHORUS No, he will not contradict you!

⁴ In 1988, ring pulls from cans came off and could fit on your finger. You could, perhaps, use a ring from a cracker instead?

ANGELINA Who am I to raise objection?
I'm a child, untaught and homely -
When you tell me you're perfection,
Tender, truthful, true and comely -
That in quarrel no one's bolder,
Though dissensions always grieve you -
Why, my love, you're so much older
That, of course, I must believe you!

CHORUS Yes, of course, she must believe you!

If he ever acts unkindly,
Shut your eyes and love him blindly -
Should he call you names uncomely,
Shut your mouth and love him dumbly -
Should he rate you, rightly - leftly -
Shut your ears and love him deafly.
Ha! ha! ha!
Thus and thus and thus alone
Edwin's wife may hold her own!

SOLOS *and* CHORUS - MYRTLE *and* ANGELINA
Music - "Madam, without the castle walls", Princess Ida

MYRTLE Angie, without the chapel walls
An armed band
Demands admittance to our halls
To claim your hand!

CHORUS Oh, horror!

ANGELINA Deny them!
We will defy them!

CHORUS Too late - too late!
The chapel gate
Is battered by them!

The WAXWORKS rush in and surround EDWIN and the GIRLS.

WAXWORKS Walls and fences scaling,
Promptly we appear;
Walls are unavailing,
We have entered here.
Female execration
Stifle if you're wise,
Stop your lamentation,
Dry your pretty eyes!

GIRLS Rend the air with wailing,
Shed the shameful tear!
Evil's entered here,
Walls are unavailing!

ENSEMBLE

WAXWORKS Walls and fences, etc. **GIRLS** Rend the air with wailing, etc.

RECIT. - WAXWORK 1

Music - "Hold, bride and bridegroom", Ruddigore

WAXWORK 1 Hold, bride and bridegroom, ere you wed each other,
We claim Angelina as the bride of another!
We come to stop you read the marriage ban
And take her hence to wed another man!

CHORUS Oh horror!

*Over melodramatic music⁵ the WAXWORKS grab ANGELINA,
fighting off EDWIN and the GIRLS.*

SONG - WAXWORK 1 and CHORUS

Music - "For a month to dwell", Princess Ida

WAXWORK 1 We will make her dwell
In a dungeon cell;
Growing thin and wizen
In a solitary prison.
Though it's cold and bare,
She will not leave there
Until she agrees to marry
Our commander without tarry,
Yes, 'til she agrees to marry
Our commander without tarry.
She may scream and shout,
But we'll never let her out -
She will never leave that room!

CHORUS She may scream and shout,
But we'll never let her out!
She'll be screaming - she'll be shouting -
She'll be pleading - she'll be pouting -
But she'll never leave that room,
She will never, never, never leave that room!

WAXWORK 1 When your Angie's pride
Has at length complied
With the marital condition
Of our eminent patrician,
She will sign a deed
And proceed with speed
To the vicar quickly treading
For a pretty little wedding,
To the vicar quickly treading
For a pretty little wedding.
But should she say 'nay'
She will pass without delay
From the altar to the tomb!

CHORUS Should she say 'nay'
She will die without delay!
If their wishes she's denying
She will find that she is flying
To the deep and darkest tomb,
To the tomb, tomb, tomb, to the tomb!
Until that time we'll/they'll lock the gate -
And rescue do/we'll not contemplate -
Should you our/we their wishes disobey,
Her life the penalty will pay!

WAXWORKS exit triumphantly with ANGELINA.

END OF ACT I

⁵ We originally used part of the 'Melodrame' from 'Ruddigore' for this music.

ACT II

SCENE ONE - *The waxworks, later the same day. Enter WELLS.*

WELLS Well, what a terrible situation! Grimsby Grice has activated his waxworks and commanded them to burgle the Angelheart's residence! Not content with that, he also ordered them to snatch away Angelina, just as she was about to marry Edwin, desiring her for himself! No wonder half the audience fell asleep and I'm having to explain the story to them! But soft - my evil employers approach. Back to the acting...

Enter GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE.

GRIMSBY Ah, Wells, everything is going splendidly - we're filthy rich and I've got Angelina in my clutches! However, she does not love me - she somehow manages to be able to resist my considerable charms. I've tried everything - the red gas mantle, a really smoochy wax cylinder... but to no avail. I don't suppose that you could *make* her love me using your cunning sorcery, could you Wells?

WELLS But of course - surely you've heard of our famous Patent Oxy-Hydrogen Love-at-first-sight Philtre? It'll serve the purpose admirably.

GRIMSBY Excellent! Give her a good dose right away!

WELLS It takes some time to prepare - I'll start the rites presently. Now, more importantly, will you be paying by cash or cheque?

GERTRUDE After all we've given you, you still want more?

WELLS Business is business, madam.

GERTRUDE And a very lucrative business too! This is what comes of having a high demand with such a low supply of sorcerers. No wonder you charge the earth!

WELLS You're quite wrong, madam. There are many more wizards walking the streets than you might believe - if you can identify them.

GRIMSBY And how exactly do you identify them?

WELLS You expect me to reveal our secret sign, passed down from father to son only by word of mouth ever since it was revealed by the great wizard Merlin in the Darkest of Dark Ages... for nothing?

GRIMSBY I thought it would come to this. How much?

WELLS Well, normally two pounds - but to you, five guineas!

GRIMSBY Do you want to be thumped?

WELLS Sixpence?

GERTRUDE That's more like it. Here you are. Now get on with it.

WELLS Very good! Listen well - but reveal it naught or you'll suffer hideous harm at the hands of horrible, nasty, icky, smelly little goblins with big pointy ears and big teeth and...

GRIMSBY Get on with it!

SONG - WELLS, GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE

Music - "By the mystic regulation", The Grand Duke

WELLS By the mystic regulation
Of our dark association,
Ere you open conversation
When another wizard begs,
You must lift one of your legs!

ALL You must lift one of your legs!

WELLS If in turn he lifts another
That's a sign that he's a brother -
Each may fully trust the other,

So then to your magic peer
Put your finger in your ear!

ALL Put your finger in your ear!

WELLS If he's in the sorcerous line,
You must do the final sign,
Your intentions you define
When you shout aloud with glee
'I am the letter 'P'!

ALL 'I am the letter 'P'!

WELLS But when all this you've been doing
To all strangers that you're viewing,
You will find some of them suing
When you use the secret sign -
So it's use is in decline!

ALL Well if that's the secret sign
We see why it's in decline!

WELLS But...

ALL By the mystic regulation
Of our dark association,
Ere you open conversation
When another speaks to thee
You must be the letter 'P'!

GERTRUDE What a lot of nonsense! That's not even worth sixpence!

WELLS It's not my fault - I didn't think of it! You think it's bad? You don't have to keep doing it in public! I keep getting beaten up!

GRIMSBY I think I can hear the waxworks approaching. Good - I have some new orders for them. Gertrude dear, would you go and get Angelina so Mr. Wells can give her the love philtre? I've locked her up in the dark with the rats and the spiders.

GERTRUDE What, in your bedroom or in the cellar?

GRIMSBY In the cellar!

GERTRUDE You're more merciful than I thought! (*Exit GERTRUDE*)

WELLS Here's your army, Mr. Grice. They do seem in a boisterous mood!

Enter the WAXWORKS in high spirits.

CHORUS OF WAXWORKS

Music - "Loudly let the trumpets bray!", Iolanthe

Loudly let the trumpet bray!
Tantantara!
Proudly bang the sounding brasses!
Tzing! Boom!

As upon its shady way
This unique procession passes,
Tantantara! Tzing! Boom!
We rob the lower middle classes!
We rob the rich and affluent masses!
Blow the trumpets, bang the brasses!
Tantantara! Tzing! Boom!
Treasures of the British nation
Now in wicked animation,
Burglars of the highest station,
Tantantara! Tzing! Boom!

The WAXWORKS start pushing WELLS about.

WELLS Get off, or I'll turn you all into crayons! (*WAXWORKS back off, terrified*)

GRIMSBY I'm glad that you're here men, as I have had a brilliant idea for a new crime. Tonight we're going to steal London Bridge and sell it to the Americans. Come along, I'll explain the plan to you. Wells! Get that potion made or you won't get your cut.

WELLS All right, all right, I'll do it now. Have you got a teapot? (*Exeunt*)

Enter GERTRUDE dragging ANGELINA.

GERTRUDE So you're the little lady we've risked so much for! Strange, Grimsby said you were beautiful! Why, underneath all that makeup you're as plain as I am!

ANGELINA Your words cannot hurt me, you twisted old crone!

GERTRUDE How dare you insult me, you little minx! You forget that with an order from me a whole army of waxworks will come forth and crush you as easily as this! (*Snaps fingers*) Pop!

ANGELINA Hah! You wouldn't dare! You live too much in the shadow of your brother. If you destroyed me, your own death would swiftly follow. (*GERTRUDE turns away. Aside*) I've struck a chord! (*Aloud*) Personally, I don't know why you put up with it - you're much more clever than he is. You're a born leader. If you were in charge, just think how much richer you'd be.

GERTRUDE Your words have a certain ring of truth to them, Miss Angelheart. I am indeed much more intelligent than Grimsby. But he's far stronger than I am - he'd never relinquish command.

ANGELINA Is that what *you* think? Well *I* think that your brother is just a great big bully - and every bully is a coward at heart. You must simply stand up to him...

DUET - ANGELINA and GERTRUDE

Music - "Now wouldn't you like to rule the roast", Princess Ida

ANGELINA Now wouldn't you like to rule the roost,
And triumph o'er adversity?

GERTRUDE I must agree
'Twould pleasant be.
(Sing hey, a Proper Pride!)

ANGELINA And wouldn't you like to give a boost
To malice and perversity?

GERTRUDE Without a doubt
I'd trundle 'em out,
Sing hey, when I preside!

BOTH Sing, hoity, toity! Sorry for some!
Sing, marry come up and her/my day will come!
Sing, Proper Pride
Is the horse to ride,
And Happy-go-lucky, my Lady, O!

GERTRUDE For years I've writhed beneath his sneers,
Although I've beauty, charm and wit.

ANGELINA You're much too meek
Or you would speak.
(Sing hey, I'll say no more!)

GERTRUDE His elder I, by several years,
Although you n'er imagine it.

ANGELINA Sing, so I've heard
But never a word
Have I e'er believed before!

BOTH Sing, hoity, toity! Sorry for some!
Sing, marry come up and her/my day will come!

Sing, he shall learn
That a worm may turn.
Sing Happy-go-lucky, my Lady, O!

Exit GERTRUDE, pulling ANGELINA.

SCENE TWO - *A square in London. Enter the girls in a combative mood.*

SOLO and CHORUS - MYRTLE

Music - "Death to the invader", Princess Ida

Death to the abductors!
Strike a deadly blow!
We'll be the destructors
Of our fearsome foe!
Let our martial thunder
Fill their souls with wonder,
Tear their ranks asunder,
Lay the tyrant low!

MYRTLE Thus our courage, all untarnished,
We're expected to display:
But to tell the truth unvarnished,
We are more inclined to say,
'Please you, do not hurt us.'

CHORUS 'Do not hurt us, if it please you!'

MYRTLE 'Please you let us be.'

CHORUS 'Let us be - let us be!'

MYRTLE 'Fighting disconcerts us.'

CHORUS 'Disconcerts us, if it please you!'

MYRTLE 'Frightened maids are we.'

CHORUS 'Maids are we - maids are we!'

MYRTLE But 'twould be an error
To confess our terror,
So, in Angie's name,
Boldly we exclaim:

CHORUS Death to the abductors!
Strike a deadly blow!
We'll be the destructors
Of our fearsome foe!

Enter EDWIN.

MYRTLE Oh Edwin, thank goodness you're here! What are we to do? Poor Angelina, carried off by those horrible men! What shall we do? What shall we do?

EDWIN (*Offhand*) I suppose you've called the police...

MYRTLE The police - of course! Oh Edwin, you're so wise, so sensible, so clever (*Aside*) and so dishy! (*Aloud*) Quick, someone call a policeman!

A whistle is blown offstage. Enter INSPECTOR BOUNCER with his POLICEMEN.

BOUNCER Hello, hello, hello. What's going on here then?

MYRTLE Gosh! So fast, so efficient! Thank goodness for Neighbourhood Watch!

BOUNCER Evening all. I am Inspector Bouncer and these are my constables. How may we be of assistance, my charming damsels in distress?

ROWENA Oh Inspector Bouncer, these terrifying villains have carried off our friend Angelina, so Edwin can't marry her, and...

BOUNCER Yes, I know all that... I heard the introduction. Now, can you give me a description of the villains...

- EDWIN** Sir, a thought strikes me - when you stand like that you look uncannily like the vicar who was to have married Angelina and myself.
- BOUNCER** Ah, yes... My, er, father!
- EDWIN** Oh dear, you must have been a great disappointment to him.
- MYRTLE** Oh what shall we do, kind and, considering you're a policeman, quite attractive Inspector Bouncer?
- GIRLS** Yes, what, etc.
- BOUNCER** Ladies, ladies! You must stay calm in times of danger! Keep your head when all about you lose theirs! That's the first thing they teach you in the army...
- MYRTLE** Oh, you were in the army? Do tell us about it, please. (*The GIRLS agree*)
- POLICEMEN** Oh no!
- BOUNCER** Oh yes! I had a glorious career in the army, you know. I was in the cavalry. (*Over music*) We were mounted on chargers, I recall...

SONG - INSPECTOR BOUNCER

Music - "We sounded the trumpet", Cox and Box

Yes! Yes! In those merry days!
Yes! Yes! In those brilliant days!
We gathered the laurels and rode on our bays.
I mounted a horse in Her Majesty's force,
As one of the yeomen to meet with the foeman;
For then an invasion threatened the nation
And every man in the rear or the van
Found an occasion to sing rataplan!

We sounded the trumpet!
We beat the drum!
But somehow the enemy didn't come.
So I gave up my horse in Her Majesty's force,
For there wasn't a foeman to meet with the yeoman
And so no invasion threatened the nation.
There wasn't a man in the rear or the van
Who found an occasion to sing rataplan!

- EDWIN** This reminiscing is all very fine, but it won't find my darling Angie. What are you actually going to do?
- BOUNCER** Do? Do? We'll catch the villains of course! No matter what the odds, a British Bobby fears nothing! Come along, young Edwin, you're a strapping type of lad. You can help the noble cause of crimefighting with us. (*BOUNCER removes his helmet to reveal a tiny one underneath. He gives this to EDWIN, along with a tiny truncheon*) We'll stamp on these upstarts and put them behind bars where they belong! Er... When we've got reinforcements. (*Backing out*) Be prepared! That's the first thing they teach you in the army...
- MYRTLE** Inspector Bouncer, you don't mean to say that you're afraid of a small army of psychopaths, are you?
- BOUNCER** Afraid? A policeman is never afraid!
- MYRTLE** What never?
- BOUNCER** No, never.
- GIRLS** What *never*?
- BOUNCER** Well, hardly ever!

SOLOS and CHORUS - BOUNCER, MYRTLE and ROWENA

Music - "When the foeman bares his steel", The Pirates of Penzance

BOUNCER When the foeman bares his steel,
 Tarantara! tarantara!
We uncomfortable feel,
 Tarantara!
And we find the wisest thing,
 Tarantara! tarantara!
Is to slap our chests and sing
 Tarantara!
For when threatened with emeutes,
 Tarantara! tarantara!
And your heart is in your boots,
 Tarantara!
There is nothing brings it round,
Like the trumpet's martial sound,
 Tarantara! tarantara!

MYRTLE Go, ye heroes, go to glory,
Though you die in combat gory,
Ye shall live in song and story.
 Go to immortality!
Go to death and go to slaughter;
Die, and every well-bred daughter
With her tears your grave shall water.
 Go ye heroes, go and die!

GIRLS Go ye heroes, go and die!

POLICE Though to us it's evident,
 Tarantara! tarantara!
These attentions are well meant,
 Tarantara!
Such expressions don't appear,
 Tarantara! tarantara!
Calculated men to cheer,
 Tarantara!
Who are going to meet their fate
In an highly nervous state,
 Tarantara!
Still to us it's evident
These attentions are well meant.
 Tarantara!

ROWENA Go and do your best endeavour,
And before all links we sever,
We will say farewell for ever.
 Go to glory and the grave!

GIRLS For your foes are fierce and ruthless,
False unmerciful, and truthless.
Young and tender, old and toothless,
All in vain their mercy crave.

BOUNCER We observe too great a stress,
On the risks that on us press,
And of reference a lack
To our chance of coming back.
Still, perhaps it would be wise
Not to carp or criticise,
For it's very evident
These attentions are well meant.

POLICE Yes, it's very evident
These attentions are well meant.

ENSEMBLE

GIRLS Go ye heroes, etc. **POLICE** When the foeman bares, etc.

MYRTLE Away, away!

POLICE Yes, yes we go.

MYRTLE These villains slay.

POLICE Tarantara!

MYRTLE Then do not stay.

POLICE Tarantara!

MYRTLE Then why this delay?

POLICE All right - we go.

 Yes, forward on the foe!

MYRTLE Yes, but you *don't* go!

POLICE We go, we go!

 Yes, forward on the foe!

MYRTLE *Damme*, you don't go!

ALL At last they really go!

Exeunt.

SCENE THREE - *The waxworks.*

Enter ANGELINA, her hands tied behind her back.

ANGELINA This is perfectly frightful! I've been kidnapped from my wedding, locked in a simply horribly damp cellar and now I'm going to fall in love with that repulsive Grimsby! He's so terribly common! Gertrude's plan must have failed, and I don't see any sign of my so-called fiancé. He's probably found out about my family's poverty and run off with Myrtle... Or Rowena... Or somebody! And now that daddy's so poor, I'll never be rescued! I'm going to become working class! (*Bursts into tears*)

EDWIN is heard singing 'Angelina' offstage. His voice is echoed, as in 'Trial By Jury'.

ANGELINA That voice! Can it be Edwin? No, that would be too much to hope for. (*Enter EDWIN*) It is! Oh Edwin, darling, what a relief to see you again! My saviour! (*He unties her*)

EDWIN Angie, my love! I knew I'd find you here - I felt sure I'd seen some of those kidnappers before. Surely they are the waxworks that used to stand in this very room!

ANGELINA The same! You see, the Grice's have got a horrid little wizard to bring their waxworks to life, and if we don't flee, they're going to give me an awful love potion so that I'll marry Grimsby!

EDWIN Come, my love, you're safe in my arms. Let us go far from here and live a simple and rustic existence in a place beyond the reach of civilisation - Middlesborough!

ANGELINA Oh goody! We'd better get out that way... (*Noise offstage*) Too late! The evil sorcerer is coming! Quick, hide, or he'll turn you into a newt, or something equally yukky, as quick as blinking!

Enter WELLS.

WELLS Ah, Angelina, I've made the love philtre. Now, what flavouring do you want added: I've got vanilla, raspberry, butter pecan, cheese and onion, hedgehog...

EDWIN creeps behind WELLS and, with his hand in his jacket pocket, presses his index finger into WELLS' back.

EDWIN Hah! Stick 'em up! (*WELLS obliges*)

WELLS Yes, yes, I give up, I give up! I'll do anything, just don't shoot me!

EDWIN Very well, I want you to help Angelina and me to escape, and to stop the Grice's committing any more crimes with the waxworks.

WELLS I'll do it!

EDWIN Good. Now turn around slowly - and don't forget that I retain the gun in my pocket.

WELLS You know, you don't really need firearms to convert me to your cause - I feel absolutely wretched about it all. ⁶I've hardly slept a wink since the thing began - I'm so wracked with guilt and conscience. I always awaken with a bad back, an headache, indigestion, nausea... I admit that it does sound rather like a hangover - but it is conscience! You know, I haven't felt healthy since the whole wicked business began.

SONG - WELLS

Music - "When you find you're a broken-down critter", The Grand Duke

When you find you're a broken-down critter,
Who is all of a trimmle and twitter,
With your palate unpleasantly bitter,
As if you'd just eaten a pill -
When your legs are as thin as dividers,
And you're plagued with unruly insiders,
And your spine is all creepy with spiders,
And you're highly gamboge in the gill -
When you've got a beehive in your head,
And a sewing machine in each ear,
And you feel like you've eaten your bed,
And you've got a bad headache *down here* -
When such facts are about,
And these symptoms you find
In your body or crown -
Well, you'd better look out,
You may make up your mind
You had better lie down!

When your lips are all smeary - like tallow,
And your tongue is decidedly yallow,
With a pint of warm oil in your swallow,
And a pound of tin-tacks in your chest -
When you're down in the mouth with the vapours,
And all over your Morris wall-papers
Black beetles are cutting their capers,
And crawly things never at rest -
When you doubt if your head is your own,
And you jump when an open door slams -
Then you've got to a state which is known
To the medical world as 'jim-jams'.
If such symptoms you find
In your body or head,
They're not easy to quell -
You may make up your mind
You are better in bed,
For you're not at all well!

WELLS You see, I'm happy to help you - anything to make me feel better! Ah, if only I'd had an elder brother who could've provided me with a firm moral background as a youth. I did have a brother once, but he ran away shortly after my birth. I was not an attractive child.

ANGELINA You're not an attractive man!

WELLS Oh, thank you! Anyway, I have always felt the loss of his support - I'm sure he would have kept me away from this sort of thing. Yes, I yield! Your wish is my command!

⁶ If you decide to omit the following song, cut straight to the dialogue after it, beginning 'You see, I'm happy to help you...'

- EDWIN** Excellent fellow. Go at once to your evil employers and inform them that you'll no longer prostitute your powers in the pursuit of their purulent purposes!
- WELLS** I can't do that! They'll order the waxworks to kill me!
- ANGELINA** But can't you deactivate them? After all, you brought them to life in the first place.
- WELLS** True - I had quite forgotten that! Very well - my mind is resolved!

PATTER TRIO - WELLS, ANGELINA and EDWIN

Music - "My eyes are fully open", Ruddigore

EDWIN Your eyes at last are open to the awful situation -
You must go at once to Grimsby Grice and make him an oration.
You must tell him you've recovered your forgotten moral senses,
And you don't care twopence-halfpenny for any consequences.
Now you may not wish to perish by the sword or by the dagger,
But a martyr may indulge a little pardonable swagger,
And a word or two of compliment your vanity would flatter,
But I guess he'll prob'ly kill you, so it really doesn't matter!

WELLS So it really doesn't matter -

ANGELINA So it really doesn't matter -

ALL So it really doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter!

ANGELINA If I were not a bit petite and generally girly
I should give you my opinion on the subject hurly-burly;
I should show you in a moment how to grapple with the question,
And you'd really be astonished at the force of my suggestion.
On the subject I shall write you a most valuable letter,
Full of excellent suggestions when you loose me from my fetter.
But at present I must say that I am too afraid to natter,
So I'll keep 'em to myself, for my opinion doesn't matter!

WELLS Her opinion doesn't matter -

EDWIN Her opinion doesn't matter -

ALL Her opinion doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter!

WELLS If I had been so lucky as to have a steady brother
Who could talk to me as we are talking now to one another -
Who could give me good advice when he discovered I was erring
(Which is just the very favour which on you I am conferring),
My existence might have made a rather interesting idyll,
And I might have lived and died a very decent indiwiddle. This
particularly rapid, unintelligible patter
Isn't generally heard, and if it is it doesn't matter!

EDWIN If it is it doesn't matter -

ANGELINA If it is it doesn't matter -

ALL If it is it doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter!

Enter GRIMSBY, GERTRUDE and WAXWORKS.

- GRIMSBY** Ah hah! Edwin, you were foolish to return! At last you are both in my clutches! Seize them, men! (*The WAXWORKS grab EDWIN and ANGELINA*) Now, what revolting death shall I inflict upon you, you infuriating little goody-goody!
- GERTRUDE** No, wait - stay your wrath! I have another destiny planned. Angelina, you were quite right - I shall assert my authority. Brother dear, don't kill Edwin. I rather like him, despite his unattractive moral streak. Mr. Wells, would that love potion you've prepared extend to two doses?
- WELLS** Oh yes, there's plenty.
- GERTRUDE** Good! Well give Edwin some too! I want him to fall madly, passionately and irreversibly in love with my unique features!

- EDWIN** Never, oh fiendish hag! My heart is forever another's!
- GERTRUDE** Just wait! You'll soon be singing a different tune - darling!
- GRIMSBY** Hold them still. Wells, give me the potion!
- ANGELINA** No, Mr. Wells! What about our agreement?
- WELLS** Sorry, love, but business is business! (*Gives bottle*)
- EDWIN** Why, you double-crossing, double-dealing...
- EDWIN and ANGELINA are forced to drink the potion. They pass out and are placed upstage by the WAXWORKS.*
- WELLS** Right, make sure you separate them. Don't forget that when they awake from their magical slumber they'll fall madly in love with the first person of the opposite sex they see - providing, of course, that they're not married!
- GRIMSBY** Excellent, Mr. Wells, excellent! Well, Gertrude, it looks like our days on the shelf will soon be at an end - by fair means or foul! What do you say to a double wedding?
- GERTRUDE** I say that it sounds perfect! Come on, let us discuss the arrangements over a good strong cup of tea.
- GRIMSBY** With biscuits?
- GERTRUDE** Why not - we're celebrating!
- GRIMSBY** Now, where's that teabag we had at Christmas... (*Exit GRIMSBY*)⁷
- GERTRUDE** Enjoy your cup of tea, brother - it could well be your last! Grimsby's pathetic love for Angelina makes him weak - so once they're married, he'll be powerless to stop me taking control. Too many years I have been dominated by him... But now, at last, my time has come. Do you hear me, waxworks? Grimsby's days are numbered! From now on you will take your orders from Gertrude Grice!

SONG - GERTRUDE *and* CHORUS

Music - "Oh fool, that fleest", The Mikado

- GERTRUDE** No more I'll cower,
No more I'll serve -
I have the power,
I have the nerve.
No more the feeble one
Who lives in fear,
All weakness now I shun -
Smile becomes sneer!
My time has come,
Oh fool, oh dumb!
Give me my place,
Oh crass, oh base!
- CHORUS** Her time has come, give her her place,
Oh fool, oh dumb, oh crass, oh base!
- GERTRUDE** In adulthood,
Or infancy,
'Twas understood
He'd govern me.
He'd get it all -
I'd get nothing, not I,
Now he must fall -
Brother's doom is nigh!

⁷ The following song is optional. If you decide not to use it, Gertrude and the Waxworks should leave with Grimsby at this point.

And so beware!
You'd best take care!
I'm in control,
You ugly troll!

CHORUS So now beware, she's in control,
You'd best take care you ugly troll!

Exeunt.

Enter the GIRLS and POLICE stealthily from the opposite entrance.

BOUNCER Well, ladies, all evidence seems to point to these waxworks as being the home of those villains.

MYRTLE What a pity Edwin wandered off and won't be able to share in the glory.

ROWENA But tell us, Inspector Bouncer, how do you know that they're here?

BOUNCER Elementary, my dear Rowena - I just looked ahead in the script. *(Noises off)* Look out lads, here they come! Prepare yourself for battle! I'll just go and check that the entrance is secure. That's the first thing they teach you in the Army... *(He tries to leave but is stopped by ROWENA)* Oh well, here goes!

Enter WAXWORKS. The two sides confront each other.

CHORUS OF WAXWORKS, POLICE and GIRLS

Music - "When anger spreads his wing", Princess Ida

When anger spreads his wing,
And all seems dark as night for it,
There's nothing but to fight for it,
But ere you pitch your ring,
Select a pretty site for it,
(This spot is suited quite for it),
And then you gaily sing,

'Oh, I love the jolly rattle
Of an ordeal by battle,
There's an end of tittle-tattle,
When your enemy is dead.
It's an arrant molly-coddle
Fears a crack upon his noddle
And he's only fit to swaddle
In a downy feather bed!' -

For a fight's a kind of thing
That I love to look upon,
So let us sing,
For Queen and King,
Until the battle's won!

Over suitable music the POLICE and WAXWORKS battle. The WAXWORKS are the better fighters and surround the POLICE - but just about as they are to be overcome...

BOUNCER Right lads, lighters on!

The POLICE proceed to ignite cigarette lighters. They proceed to surround and subdue the terrified WAXWORKS.

BOUNCER Lighters... Off! There you go, ladies, no problem! Remember, the one thing that terrifies a waxwork is fire. That's the first thing they teach you in the army! *(Enter WELLS distractedly. He sees the situation and tries to escape. BOUNCER grabs him)* All right, sunshine, the game's up - you're nicked!

WELLS No, it wasn't me! I... Er... Oh, help... *(He reflexly lifts one leg. BOUNCER does likewise. They both execute the secret sign)*

WELLS & BOUNCER I'm the letter 'P'!

- WELLS** My long-lost brother!
- BOUNCER** Little Johnnie! (*WELLS and BOUNCER embrace*) Now, what are you doing here? Don't say that you're behind all this. I knew you'd fall into bad company when I left you!
- WELLS** But I haven't, brother - I was forced to do it! Now, take your constables away from the waxworks - they're not really bad, just innocents corrupted by their evil masters.
- BOUNCER** Very well, that sounds fair enough. All right, men, set 'em loose - they're all free to go. Now, John, where are the miscreants behind all this? They're not *dangerous* are they?
- WELLS** Oh, you needn't worry about them - I laced their tea with a good dose of Patent GaolQuick Tell-it-all Repentance Potion! I think you'll find the results rather interesting...
- BOUNCER** Well, we'll soon see. Here they come now.

Enter GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE looking very staid and controlled.

DUET - GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE

Music - "I once was a very abandoned person", Ruddigore

- GRIMSBY** I once was a very abandoned person -
GERTRUDE Making the most of evil chances.
GRIMSBY Nobody could conceive a worse 'un -
GERTRUDE Even in all the old romances.
GRIMSBY I blush for my wild extravagances,
But be so kind
To bear in mind,
GERTRUDE We were the victims of circumstances!
(Dance)
That is one of our blameless dances.
- GERTRUDE** I was once an exceedingly odd old lady -
GRIMSBY Suffering much from spleen and vapours.
GERTRUDE Clergymen thought my conduct shady -
GRIMSBY She didn't spend much on linen-drapers.
GERTRUDE It certainly entertained the gapers.
My ways were strange
Beyond all range -
GRIMSBY Paragraphs got into all the papers.
(Dance)
We only cut respectable capers.
- GRIMSBY** I've given up all my wild proceedings.
GERTRUDE My taste for an evil life is waning.
GRIMSBY The call to confess is one we're heeding -
GERTRUDE Our will to do wrong is rapidly draining.
GRIMSBY Soon the handcuffs they will be chaining,
And then we'll dwell
In a dungeon cell.
GERTRUDE The thought of our dismal past is paining.
(Dance)
Gaol will be dull, but we're not complaining!

GRIMSBY and GERTRUDE are handcuffed and guarded by the POLICE.

- WELLS** Well, it looks like everything has been wrapped up. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have urgent business to attend to...
- ROWENA** Stop! Mr. Wells, where are Edwin and Angelina?
- MYRTLE** Look everybody - here's Edwin! He's fast asleep, the little darling. Come, wake up sleepyhead. (*She shakes EDWIN*)

- EDWIN** (*Waking from his magical trance*) What's happening? Where am I? Oh! (*He sees MYRTLE and, under the influence of the love philtre, falls in love with her*) Oh, Myrtle, Myrtle! Have I been blind all my life? Have I been mad? Why have I not noticed that it is you, not Angelina, that I love! I worship you madly! Will you marry me?
- MYRTLE** Oh, Edwin, after all this time! Of course I'll marry you! My love!
- EDWIN** My own! (*They embrace*)
- ROWENA** Mr. Wells, what are you going to do about these poor, handsome waxworks? You're not going to freeze them again, are you?
- WELLS** Oh, they can stay alive - they've become far too human to ever be mannequins again. Do what you will with them - marry them if you wish - but keep a firm hand upon them. They tend to be a bit wayward.
- BOUNCER** Oh, and a word of advice - don't keep an open fire!
The GIRLS and WAXWORKS pair up. EDWIN and MYRTLE come forward.
- EDWIN** Oh Myrtle, I am so happy! I just hope that Angelina understands my change of heart. Angelina! Of course, I had forgotten - she's still sleeping.
EDWIN rushes back and wakes ANGELINA.
- ANGELINA** Oh dear, I'm afraid I must have fainted. (*She sees EDWIN and instantly falls in love with him*) Oh Edwin, darling, you save me again! Now I realise how much I've loved you all along. Come, money or not, let's get married at once!
- EDWIN** My dear Angelina, delighted as I am to see you, and although I would be the first to admit that you are the sweetest, prettiest and most vivacious young lady in London, alas, we cannot wed. You see, I've just fallen in love with Myrtle, and we're going to marry as soon as we can.
- ANGELINA** Oh, Edwin, you are so cruel, heartless and unfeeling! I shan't be cast off like this. I am no helpless woman - I'm going to see my solicitor at once. I am going to sue you for breach of promise. Edwin, prepare yourself to undergo Trial By Jury!

FINALE ACT II

Music - "Young Strephon is the kind of lout", Iolanthe

Young Edwin is the kind of lout
We do not care a fig about!
We cannot say
What evil may
Result in consequence.

But legal vengeance will pursue
All kinds of common people who
Their vows pooh-pooh
To those they woo
And wed - in future tense.

GIRLS But we are spotless, free from blame,
And now our waxworks we will claim
In marriage true -
So why don't you
Please try and do the same?

WAXWORKS Oh ring ye forth ye marriage bells!
Our joy is thanks to Mr. Wells -
He made us live
And so we give
All praises to his name!

GIRLS All praises to his name!
ALL So ring ye forth ye marriage bells,
Our joy is thanks to Mr. Wells!

But Edwin is the kind of lout
We do not care a fig about!
We cannot say
What evil may
Result in consequence.

WAXWORKS Our mobile style
You shall not quench
With base *canaille!*

GIRLS (That word is French.)

WAXWORKS Our shyness ebbs
Before a gang
Of gorgeous debbs!

GIRLS (That's English slang.)

WAXWORKS 'Twould fill with joy,
And madness stark
The *oy polloy!*

GIRLS (A Greek remark.)

WAXWORKS Some English slang, one Greek remark,
And one that's French.

GIRLS Your mobile style
We shall not quench
With base *canaille!*

WAXWORKS (That word is French.)

GIRLS Their shyness ebbs
Before a gang
Of gorgeous debbs!

WAXWORKS (That's English slang.)

GIRLS 'Twould fill with joy,
And madness stark
The *oy polloy!*

WAXWORKS (A Greek remark.)

GIRLS Some English slang, one Greek remark,
And one that's French.

ALL But Edwin is the kind of lout
We do not care a fig about!
We cannot say
What evil may
Result in consequence.

But legal vengeance will pursue
All kinds of common people who
Their vows pooh-pooh
To those they woo
And wed - in future tense.

We will not wait:
Away we fly!
Our joyous fate
We won't defy!

The GIRLS and WAXWORKS dance off to be married. In a central spotlight EDWIN and ANGELINA come down and face one another, followed by WELLS. ANGELINA slaps EDWIN's face and they both storm off, leaving WELLS standing in the spot alone. He throws up his hands in despair.

CURTAIN

ORDER OF MUSIC

ACT ONE

- OVERTURE - Drawing Room music from *Utopia Limited*
1. OPENING CHORUS - "Handsome gentry" (*Ruddigore*)
 2. a. SONG - "Oh, why am I crabby and mean?" (*Ruddigore*)GRIMSBY
 - b. SONG - "If you give me your attention" (*Princess Ida*)GRIMSBY
 3. DUET - "My boy, you may take it from me" (*Ruddigore*)..... GRIMSBY & EDWIN
 4. DUET - "Prithee, pretty maiden" (*Patience*)EDWIN & ANGELINA
 5. SONG - "My name is John Wellington Wells" (*The Sorcerer*) WELLS
 6. TRIO - "Let all your doubts take wing" (*Utopia Limited*)..... WELLS, GERTRUDE & GRIMSBY
 7. a. INCANTATION - "Sprites of earth and air" (*The Sorcerer*) WELLS & CHORUS
 - b. CHORUS OF WAXWORKS - "Sculptures with a famous face" (*Ruddigore*)
 - c. CHORUS OF WAXWORKS - "If you want to know who we are" (*The Mikado*)
 8. SONG - "With cat-like tread" (*The Pirates of Penzance*)..... GRIMSBY & WAXWORKS
 9. SOLO & CHORUS - "Comes the maiden plighted" (*Trial By Jury*) MYRTLE
 10. BALLAD - "Time was when love and I were well acquainted" (*The Sorcerer*)
- OSBOURNE
11. FINALE ACT ONE
 - a. CHORUS OF GIRLS & VERGERS "Won't it be a pretty wedding?" (*The Gr& Duke*)
 - b. DUET - "Pretty Angie, fair and tasty"EDWIN & ANGELINA
 - c. SOLOS and CHORUS - "Madam, without the castle walls" (*Princess Ida*)...MYRTLE & ANGELINA
 - d. DOUBLE CHORUS - "Walls and fences scaling"
 - e. RECIT. - "Hold, bride and bridegroom" (*Ruddigore*) WAXWORK ONE
 - f. SONG - "We will make her dwell in a dungeon cell" (*Princess Ida*) WAXWORK ONE & CHORUS

ACT TWO

1. SONG - "By the mystic regulation" (*The Grand Duke*).....WELLS, GRIMSBY & GERTRUDE
2. CHORUS - "Loudly let the trumpets bray" (*Iolanthe*) WAXWORKS
3. DUET - "Now wouldn't you like to rule the roost" (*Princess Ida*)ANGELINA & GERTRUDE
4. SOLO & CHORUS - "Death to the abductors" (*Princess Ida*) MYRTLE
5. SONG - "Yes! Yes! In those merry days!" (*Cox & Box*)..... BOUNCER
6. SOLOS & CHORUS - "When the foeman bares his steel" (*The Pirates of Penzance*) BOUNCER, MYRTLE & ROWENA
7. SONG - "When you find you're a broken-down critter" (*The Grand Duke*)..... WELLS
8. PATTER TRIO - "My eyes are fully open" (*Ruddigore*) EDWIN, ANGELINA & WELLS
9. SONG - "No more I'll cower" (*The Mikado*) GERTRUDE & CHORUS
10. CHORUS - "When anger spreads his wing" (*Princess Ida*)
11. DUET - "I once was a very abandoned person" (*Ruddigore*) .GRIMSBY & GERTRUDE
12. FINALE - "Young Edwin is the kind of lout" (*Iolanthe*)

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Newcastle University Gilbert and Sullivan Society had a history of producing shows of new stories with Gilbert and Sullivan songs (sometimes with new words), including 'Humbugg', 'Father Christmas', 'The Phantom of the Operetta' and 'The Demon Alcohol'. These were done at summer or Christmas, as a change from the main show. When I first joined in 1985, I fancied doing something of the same myself, as it seemed a great way to hear lots of good songs from many operas in a more satisfying way than a concert. The shows were done on a shoestring with limited rehearsal time, giving a 'looser', fun atmosphere.

My initial idea was to do an updated version of 'Patience' (my latest discovery), setting it in the early 1980s, having the aesthetes being New Romantics, verses Rockers instead of Dragoons. I didn't make much progress, the only really good idea being re-named Reginald Bunthorne 'Simon LeBonthorne'...

After reading 'The Demon Alcohol', I realised that it would be possible to do a show without too much re-writing of lyrics, and so started to construct a story around my favourite songs (as will be obvious, I particularly like double choruses). The breakthrough was to have the male chorus being waxworks, as this would provide an easy way to provide colour (and magic!), without needing scenery! 'The Sorcerer' wasn't often performed in those days, since this was an opportunity to showcase some of its best songs in a new story, which eventually became a prequel to both this show and 'Trial by Jury', with plenty of action and fairly minimal dialogue to hold it together. I tried to mix well and lesser known songs (particularly 'The Grand Duke', which I had recently fallen in love with), and only re-wrote the words significantly in handful of songs: this made the score easier to produce, as I only had Tippex and a black pen in those days! I borrowed the idea of having a narrator from 'Father Christmas', as this would save exposition in the opening scenes, so I could 'hit the ground running' with the action.

With help from my friend Phil Wood as musical director, lots of computer-aided lighting effects and some self-assembled costumes, 'Wicked Waxworks' was first performed by Newcastle University Gilbert & Sullivan Society in 1988, and went down very well, leading to a revival in 1994. The Waxworks were costumed to look like characters from the Savoy Operas (Waxwork One was the Pirate King, for example, another was a gondolier). I played Mr Wells both times, and had a great time, managing to sing my verse of 'My eyes are fully open' in one breath (albeit very, very fast!)

After the first production, I made a few minor changes:

- Wells' song "When you find your a broken-down critter" (p25) became optional, which requires the dialogue between "I've hardly slept a wink..." and "...anything to make me feel better!" to be cut.
- Gertrude's song "No more I'll cower" was added later, as she didn't have a solo.

Some other notes:

- In the first production, there was an overture to Act I which was the opening of 'Sprites of earth and air', segueing into the reprise of 'Let all your doubts take wing' (first line 'If you think that when banded in unity') from Act II of Utopia, and finishing with 'For a month to dwell' from 'Ida', arranged by Phil Wood. For Act II, we used the Drawing Room music from 'Utopia Ltd.' They can be omitted or you are free to write your own.
- The line 'No wonder half the audience fell asleep and I'm having to explain the story to them!' is, frankly, stolen from 'Father Christmas', by Bill Tarpy and Paul Clarke!
- The original Rowena spoke in a Southern American accent, and it worked very well!
- Textual note: 'Osborne Road' and 'Dean Street' are well-known streets in Newcastle upon Tyne. Middlesborough is a decidedly unromantic place in the region. Please substitute appropriately!

28th May 2022