The Travelling Companion
Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)
(Live Recording)

After a story by Hans Christian Andersen
Henry Newbolt libretto

David Horton, tenor
Julien Van Mellaerts, baritone
Kate Valentine, soprano
Pauls Putnins, soprano
Ian Beadle, baritone
Felix Kemp, baritone
Tamzin Barnett, soprano
Lucy Urquhart, soprano

New Sussex Opera Orchestra and Chorus
NSO Artistic Director: David James


Recorded live at Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden on December 2, 2018
Producer: Siva Oke  Recording Engineer: Ben Connellan
Editors: Ben Knowles and Ben Connellan
Front cover: David James  Design: Andrew Giles

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**CD 1 Total duration = 66:47**  
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Stanford and Opera

Charles Villiers Stanford always retained a special place in his heart for the idiom of opera. As a teenager in Dublin during the 1860s, the visits of the Royal Italian Opera Company, Italian Opera Company and the Pyne Harrison Company (who sang in English) were high points in his musical calendar, whether it was sitting in the audience at the Theatre Royal, standing in the wings or obtaining the autographs of the great singers of the day.

After he became established as the organist of Trinity College, Cambridge (in 1877) and his musical education in Leipzig and Berlin, Stanford soon embarked on his first operatic project, *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan* (1878). Written originally in English, it was first staged in German in Hannover in 1881. A second opera, *Savonarola*, also written in English, received its first hearing in Hamburg in 1884 before it was disastrously staged in London. The 1880s witnessed a unique production of English operas under the aegis of Carl Rosa for whom Stanford produced *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, a more Mozartian style of work, in 1885. After abandoning an opera on Hoffmann's *The Miner of Falun* in 1888, he did not complete another work in the idiom until 1894 when he produced *Lorenza*, his one and only *dramma lirico*, which he hoped might be performed at La Scala and published by Ricordi. Neither hope materialised.

His greatest success was the *opéra comique*, *Shamus O'Brien* (1895), a brilliant two-act opera with spoken dialogue, based on a character from the Irish rebellion of 1798. It was hugely successful under Henry Wood in London in 1896, toured the whole of the United Kingdom, including Ireland, in 1896 and enjoyed a second season in London before moving to New York and Sydney, Australia. (It was later translated into German for performances in Breslau.) In 1901 he enjoyed modest success with a setting of Julian Sturgis’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing* at Covent Garden and in Leipzig the following year.

In the years leading up to the production of *Much Ado*, Stanford had campaigned tirelessly for the establishment of a national opera house in London. In part, his conviction was based on the notion that a national opera house was a symbol of prestige; however, he also believed that London, and Britain in general, required such a professional institution to strengthen the nation’s musical infrastructure for the musicians it was producing in its conservatories. At the Royal College of Music, where he taught composition, he promoted the Opera Class to such a degree of professionalism that its annual productions became a fixture of the London season.

What is more, classics of the repertoire, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Fidelio*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Der Freischütz*, *Falstaff* and *Hänsel und Gretel*, together with more unusual items such as Schumann’s *Genoveva*, Goetz’s *The Taming of the Shrew* and Cornelius’s *The Barber of Baghdad* were staged by the College in English, a vital component in Stanford’s campaign to bring opera before a new public. This combination of aims fuelled his ambition to attract municipal and state subvention, particularly after the London County Council was founded in 1898. In spite of broad artistic support, the LCC demurred, and while the debate about funding reached the House of Commons in 1902, the question of state subvention was shelved.

Stanford and *The Travelling Companion*
Nevertheless, Stanford was undeterred and continued to crusade for a national opera house until his death in 1924. He also continued to compose opera. His adaptation of Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s *The Critic* (1915), a wonderfully entertaining piece for singers and actors, was staged in London in 1916. That same year he completed his last opera, *The Travelling Companion*.

**The Travelling Companion – Stanford’s Operatic Masterpiece**

It was after reading Hans Christian Andersen’s tale sometime in 1911 that the Irish baritone Harry Plunket Greene telephoned Stanford to suggest that it might be the subject of a new opera. This resulted in a joint letter to Henry Newbolt, the poet Stanford had already set in his popular *Songs of the Sea* (1904) and its sequel *Songs of the Fleet* (1910). Newbolt took his time to finish the 600 lines of his libretto, but had evidently completed it by the beginning of 1916 since during the months of April, May and June of the year Stanford completed what was to be his last operatic score.

The following year it won a Carnegie Trust Award (having impressed the panel of Donald Francis Tovey, William Henry Hadow and Hugh Allen) but was not printed until after the war. The Trust did, however, sanction the copying of the orchestral parts so it could be tried out by the student orchestra at the RCM. The Prelude to the opera was performed once at the Royal Philharmonic Society under Albert Coates on November 4, 1920, but the entire opera was not given until after Stanford’s death in 1924. The first hearing was at the David Lewis Theatre in Liverpool on April 30, 1925. That same year Adrian Boult directed it at the Theatre Royal, Bristol and the young Michael Tippett, ever a great admirer of Stanford’s treatise, *Musical Composition* (1911), produced an adapted version of the work at Oxted in 1930.

The enterprising Falmouth Operatic Society also performed it in 1934, but it was with the innovative drive of the conductor Lawrence Collingwood at the Sadler’s Wells Theatre, recently opened in January 1931, that *The Travelling Companion* received its first London performances during the 1935 season (and for several seasons thereafter). The critic of *The Times* was incredulous that such lyrical and aptly conceived music could have been neglected for so long. William McNaught, of *The Musical Times*, commented “that no British opera of the 19th century [sic] is more musical”. Such comments should give us pause for thought. How often have we been asked to accept the maxim that no British opera of merit exists between *Dido and Aeneas* and *Peter Grimes*? If Stanford’s last opera was given time to establish itself in the repertoire, not only would it provide an entirely new perspective of this highly versatile and imaginative composer, but it might also change our view of our operatic history.

Andersen’s story, both touching and violent, had many possibilities. Its characters, John, the Travelling Companion and the Princess, were malleable archetypes. An Everyman figure, John, poor, innocent, yet unquenchable in aspiration, was an ideal character for the heroic tenor paradigm; sage-like, avuncular, the Travelling Companion has something of Humperdinck’s Sandman in his protective disposition, perfectly suited to the tessitura of the supporting baritone; while the turmoil of the anti-heroine of the Princess, unhappy, tortured by her spellbound predicament, and purveyor of impenetrable riddles (and in this Stanford foreshadowed Puccini’s posthumously performed *Turandot* of 1926), is perfectly portrayed by the higher range of soprano.

The four acts of the opera are presented as symphonic continuities yet they have a greater sense of simplicity and artlessness which, with their diaphanous texture
and economy of representative themes, seem like an antidote to the heavier Teutonic textures of Wagner and Richard Strauss and rival the fairy-tale operas of the Russians. Stanford heavily borrowed from the homophonic ‘In modo dorico’, the first of his Six Characteristic Pieces, Op.132, for piano which we hear in the orchestral prelude to Act I as the ‘death’ motive (he also adapted it as a prelude for organ). Evocative of the church where John commits his good deed, the modal idea pervades much of the opera as a whole (its Dorian colour giving it a particularly distinctive character), and its inextricable link with the enigmatic Companion is skilfully complemented by the nostalgic phrases of the Companion’s own music in C major which we hear towards the end of the prelude. This idea is closely bound up with the notion of ‘friendship’. These two thematic elements blend with the recurring ‘storm’ material, which underpins John’s first monologue (‘Ah! What a storm!’), and the infectious choral idea ‘All in a morning glory!’, a memorable melodic fragment akin to nursery rhyme, which also runs through the opera with subtle variations on its texts. Indeed, the chorus remains one of the most distinctive elements of the opera for it is the literal, uncomplicated responses of the turba (crowd) which accentuate the naïve ambience of the work’s fairy-tale character and serve both to punctuate, and give relief to, the more symphonic sections for the soloists.

At other times the chorus very effectively interacts with the soloists. Those with John for female and male chorus in Act I are splendid examples, but the ensemble for the Princess, John, the Companion and Chorus in Act II (‘He is too young, Send him away!’) is not only a contrapuntal tour de force but also a deeply affecting conglomeration of conflicting responses to John’s reckless desire to put himself forward to guess the riddle. In several instances the chorus can seem menacing. Their dispassionate encouragement of eligible young men to put themselves forward as possible suitors, in the knowledge that their failure to guess the riddle will end up in execution, seems disturbingly macabre, as is the ghoulish chorus ‘Bones, bones, bones, Once they were jolly young gentlemen, Now they are skeletons’. The chorus, moreover, adds much to the gruesome moment of consternation when John, in producing the head of the wizard in Act IV, guesses the riddle. In fact Stanford’s innovative use of the chorus as a lively, inventive and important protagonist in the opera seems to anticipate the importance Benjamin Britten gave to his own chorus in Peter Grimes over two decades later.

Stanford clearly felt at ease with the language and world of Newbolt’s libretto and this can be felt not only in the spontaneity of the vocal delivery but also in the deft harmonic and thematic language which he was moved to invent. This is particularly true of the magical harmony of the nocturnal scene at the beginning of Act III and the effortless manner in which the dialogue of John and the Companion yields to the Princess’s extended monologue (‘’Tis a still night’). Furthermore, Stanford’s incorporation of the ‘death’ motive and the storm music from Act I as the Companion and Companion are borne away to the Wizard’s cave in Act III is a most telling piece of musical recapitulation. Much of the vividness of these individual scenes lies in the adroit nature of Stanford’s musical ideas, but it should also be acknowledged that the orchestra’s part in the operatic fabric is masterly not only for its fluency but also for its variety of colour and transparency of timbres.

The opening Prelude to Act I and the nocturnal music of Act III have already been mentioned, but it is in the vibrant sweep of the ballet music in Act III, a colourful array of contrasting dances (including a stylish waltz for the Princess) where
Stanford’s brilliance as an orchestrator is most acutely revealed. He reserved, however, the closing bars of Act IV for his most articulate exploitation of the orchestra. Amid the sounds of celebration, John and the Companion encounter each other for the last time, only for our hero to learn that his friend cannot join him in the festivities. The invocation of the solemn ‘death’ music in the orchestra signals a marked contrast in mood as the Companion announces his departure, but his mysterious origin is finally made known in the orchestral postlude, hauntingly enshrouded in a luminous C major.

As Stanford instructed in the stage directions: “The Travelling Companion looks lovingly at them [John and the Princess], turns away and goes slowly through the gate into the distance. The stage darkens somewhat, and the Church Scene, as in Act I Scene I becomes visible at the back, with the bier and the dead man lying on it”. Not only does this magnificent moment of dramaturgical subtlety afford a threefold anagnorisis (in that the Companion’s true identity is revealed both to John, the Princess and the audience), but the searingly beautiful passages for orchestra, reiterating the motive of ‘friendship’, offer one of those truly romantic instances in opera where music alone is able to express more than words.

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Synopsis

ACT I

Following the death of his father, John sets off with his small inheritance to start a new life. Now orphaned, the pious John is alone in the world. As he embarks on his journey, a fierce storm forces him to take refuge in a village church, where he comes across a dead man lying in an open coffin. While John shelters from the storm, two robbers enter the church and start to defile the dead body for the unpaid debt he owes them. John protects the corpse and sees off the robbers by giving all his inheritance to pay off the dead man’s debt. Alone again, John prays that he might find a friend.

The next day, John comes across some villagers singing a song about a Princess and her search for a husband. A mysterious stranger calls out to John, who warns him of the dangers of this Princess and her search for a suitor. However, John is determined to take his chance and runs off to follow the villagers to the find the Princess. The mysterious stranger decides to offer himself as a friend and travelling companion to John, and heads off to follow the villagers and John.

ACT II

In the Palace, we find the Princess remembering a song which was sung to her when she was young. Her father, the King, comes to inform her that the day has come again to meet the latest suitor. The King is perplexed as to why his daughter finds it so hard to choose a husband.
As the villagers gather for the latest suitor ceremony, John is amongst the crowd and sees the Princess for the first time. She is more beautiful than he imagined and he falls head over heels in love with her. On discovering John amongst them, the crowd become impatient with him and warn him that any suitor that fails to answer the Princess's riddle correctly loses his life and joins the field of skeletons of previous failed suitors. At this moment the Travelling Companion arrives to accompany John.

As John steps forward to offer himself as suitor to the Princess, the King advises that John should return again in ten years' time, when he is older. However, John is determined to take his chance. When the Princess looks in John's eyes, she sees his courage and his love for her. She too tries to persuade John that he is too young, to forget about the riddle and go, but John insists on staying. Reluctantly, the Princess asks John to answer the seemingly impossible riddle "What is my thought?"

ACT III

Night-time in the Palace. John is restless. He can't sleep. He does not know how to answer the riddle set by the Princess and the next day he must face her again. If he fails, he loses his head. The Travelling Companion reassures John that he should rest and leave the riddle to him.

The Princess appears at her balcony. She too is restless following her encounter with John. She tries to ignore her feelings for John by summoning up her dark side, the powers which have been given to her by the Wizard. Unseen by the Princess and overhearing what she says, the Travelling Companion follows the Princess as she goes to the Wizard's cave.

In the Wizard's cave, the Wizard invites the Princess to dance, but her mind is still with John. She is unable to dance tonight. The Wizard realizes that something has changed for the Princess. She has found mortal love. The Princess asks the Wizard to give her courage and to come up with a really strong answer to the riddle. The Wizard tells her that the answer for the riddle this time is to “think of me”. The Wizard is sure that no-one could possibly come up with that answer. However, hidden in the cave watching and listening is the Travelling Companion. When the Princess leaves, the Travelling Companion kills the Wizard by cutting off his head, thus breaking the spell the Wizard has over the Princess.

ACT IV

The following day in the Palace. The crowd returns for the suitor ritual. The Princess tries to avoid asking John to answer the riddle. She doesn't want him to die. However, John claims his right to answer and so, fearing the worst, the Princess reluctantly puts John on the spot. John answers the riddle by showing the Princess the head of the Wizard, given to him by The Travelling Companion. The man has finally come who is the rightful suitor for the Princess. The King declares the marriage between John and his daughter and the crowd head into the Palace for the wedding celebrations.

John asks his friend the Travelling Companion to join him in his new kingdom. However, the Travelling Companion declines and returns whence he came.
CD 1

ACT I  Scene 1

[The interior of a church at night, very dimly lighted: before an altar, a dead man, lying on a bier, awaiting burial. A storm is raging outside. John enters.]

2 John

Ah! What a storm! That’s a storm! My luck goes all one way. Storm and disaster – what a life’s beginning! My father, my father dead, dead, dead! The little home that nursed me Shattered as if by lightning. And today, when I creep out To build the world anew, The very skies are black: My only shelter a village church, My only friend – My father, my father, gone! I have no friend.

[He throws himself on a bench. The thunder becomes more distant. Moonlight begins: a ray moves slowly towards the bier. John raises his head and listens.]

Courage! There comes a change, The thunder mutters far off and far less fierce. The storm is passing: Moonlight returns, like sleep, when pain is over.

[The moonlight shines on the bier.]

Ah! What is this? Is death then everywhere? Why not? Another wanderer laid to rest! [He moves to the altar steps…]

Yes, like a sleep the moonlight touches him. O friend I never knew! O painless sleeper! You too are lonely, but your need is past!

[He goes slowly behind the pillar. Enter Two Ruffians. They peer round the church behind the opposite pillar.]

1st Ruffian

This is the place, but where’s the plunder? I'll not go before I find him.

2nd Ruffian

Sh – not so loud!

1st Ruffian

Why not so loud, man? Who’s to hear us?

2nd Ruffian

Can’t you see? There's the moonlight – That’s unlucky – And the shadows seem to move.

1st Ruffian

Curse your moonlight, and your shadows. Curse your silly trembling tongue! [Peering] What’s that yonder?

2nd Ruffian

'Tis a bier.

1st Ruffian

Ay! A bier, and what’s upon it? [He goes up to look at the face.] Come, man! Come, man! Come, man! Come! [John comes from behind the pillar.] He's ours at last!

John

Hold off! You there, hold off! What work is this you’re after?

1st Ruffian

No work of yours – Begone, and leave us to it!

John

What! Here for stealing? This poor worn-out garment Cast by a soul that’s gone beyond your reach!

1st & 2nd Ruffians

This man deceived us Died before he paid. We are asking him for what he owed us.

John

Who told you that the dead can pay the living?

1st & 2nd Ruffians

This way or that, he'll pay!

John

How can he pay? He is not here, you cannot even plunder This empty semblance of the man that’s gone!

2nd Ruffian

He may be gone, but not yet empty handed.

1st Ruffian

Rich men go richly even to their graves.

1st & 2nd Ruffians

Ay! And there’s the ransom. This same worn-out garment, We'll take in pawn.

John

I say you shall not touch him. I'll be his ransom!

1st & 2nd Ruffians

Why! He’s none of yours?

John

I am his friend, and I am friendless too!

[The Two Ruffians confer.]

1st & 2nd Ruffians

Well, if you like then, What’s your price?
John
[Draws a purse from his wallet and gives it to them.]
Take what I have, and leave the dead with me.
[They go to the altar steps, pour out the coins on them, and ring them.]

1st Ruffian
Twenty, thirty, see them leap,
Golden beauties clean and clinking.

2nd Ruffian
Thirty, forty, here's a heap,
Good for more than one day's drinking

1st & 2nd Ruffians
Good for more than one day's drinking!

1st Ruffian
[To the dead man.]
You that used to be so great,
See us pocket up the gold, you!

2nd Ruffian
Long enough you made us wait.

1st & 2nd Ruffians
Now at last we've bought and sold you!
[They rise to go. To John, with a scornful gesture towards the bier.]

There's your bargain, we'll obey you.
Ay! And welcome:
Take him, take him, take him!

Maybe someday he'll repay you,
When you find the way to wake him!
Take him, take him, take him.
[They go to the door.]

1st Ruffians
[Outside.] Good for more than one day's drinking!
[Both laugh.]

4 John
[Turning to the dead man.]
Goodnight Companion:
Our affair is done,
And I am more lonely. I will pray.

[He kneels down before the altar. The moonlight is on him.]

Brother of men, I ask of thee today
No easy fortune, no continuing city:
I am young and strong,
I chose the wandering way,
I kneel not yet for pity:
Only I pray, whether I halt or speed,
To tread the road of life without an end:
To help the helpless, and to find at need
Some stronger soul for friend!

[The moonlight falls strongly on the crucifix.]

ACT I Scene 2
[When the darkness passes away, the scene is changed to a winding road, with a church at back. John is sleeping on the steps.]

Chorus
[Behind the scenes...]
Who's for a kingdom, who's for a Queen?
And that's a very old story!
Who's for a kingdom, who's for a Queen?
And that's a very old story!
All in a morning glory!

[The chorus enter by the road.]

John
[Springs to his feet.]
Oh tell me, tell me,
What was the song you sang?

1st Girl
Stay, here's a young one.
Shall we try him, girls?

Chorus
Yes! Yes! Give him a chance!
Give him a chance! Give him a chance!

1st Girl
Who's for a kingdom, who's for a Queen?
Chorus
All in a morning glory.

1st Girl
Face more beautiful never was seen,
Heart more masterful never has been

1st Girl and Chorus
And that's a very old story!
That's a very old story!

1st Girl
Many a gay lad comes to town

Chorus
All in a morning glory!

1st Girl
His heart goes up, and his heart goes down
And the Princess strikes him dead with a frown,

1st Girl and Chorus
And that's the same old story!

1st Girl
But some fine day, as I've heard said,

Chorus
All in a morning glory

1st Girl
The lover will come that keeps his head,
And madam will lose her own instead,
1st Girl and Chorus
And that's the end of the story!

John
[As if possessed by the song.]
Face more beautiful never was seen,
Never was seen,
All in a morning glory.

Chorus
All in a morning glory!

[They gather round John, laughing.]

1st Girl
Now then, young man, you seem to like the music,
Why don't you come with us and try your luck?

Chorus
Come along! Come along!

2nd Girl
Yes, come along, you may be wanted yonder.

Chorus
You're wanted!

2nd Girl
You neck or nothing lads are getting scarce.

1st Girl
I'll promise you the game is worth the candle,
(Is it true?)
Yes, yes, yes, yes!
True enough! True enough!
Some day or other it must be true,
True for the one who wins!
All in a morning glory!

[The Girls begin to go off over the road.]

But some fine day, as I've heard said,
The lover will come that keeps his head,
And that's the end of the story.

[The Travelling Companion has appeared unnoticed, and stands behind John.]

6
John
[Looking after the crowd...]
What do they mean?
What shall I answer?

The Travelling Companion
No need to answer, John!

John
[Startled] Good Sir, forgive me,
You call me by my name
I think I know you –
[Peering at him]
But I'm a wanderer now,
I have forgotten

The Travelling Companion
No, John, you never looked into my eyes,
Nor ever heard my voice until this moment.

John
It must be so – and you – you are not strange,
Your eyes are like a memory out of childhood,
And my heart echoes when I hear you speak.
You knew my name?

The Travelling Companion
Ay, that was easy guessing!
John is a pilgrim's name,
And you're a pilgrim.

John
No, no, a pilgrim journeys to a shrine.
And when he finds it, turns again for home.
I have no home, no shrine, and no returning,
No life, no life, but what I find by the roadside.

The Travelling Companion
By the roadside are homes to sell in plenty:
Have you no gold? No small inheritance?

John
I had a purse – why should I tell you this?

The Travelling Companion
You had a purse, But yesterday you lost it,
Fell among thieves,
Or paid another’s debt.

**John**
Who told you?

**The Travelling Companion**
Nay! I have a gift of dreaming,
Last night in a deep sleep
I dreamed of you.

**John**
Last night, I too was dreaming.
That is past – today I tramp it.
I must find my fortune.

**The Travelling Companion**
Fortune?

[The men come along the road.]

**Chorus**
[In the distance] La, la, la, la, la, la, la!

**The Travelling Companion**
Fortune or fate, be careful!

**John**
“And that’s the end of the story!”

**Chorus**
So ‘tis! So ‘tis!
Ay, that’s the end of the story!
Not yet a while, I hope!

Well you’re a hard one!
And you’re a soft,
To want your story ended.

**John**
[To the chorus:]
What do they mean?
Tell me the truth of the story!

**Chorus**
I say that he’s a hard one!
Those good lads that chuck their lives away
For the Princess yonder –

**John**
Ah! For the Princess yonder –

**Chorus**
Those good lads –
He hears their bare bones chattering,
And he likes it.
Ay! That I do, I’m not ashamed to say so.
I like to see a proper fine young woman
Holding her own a bit –

**John**
What do they mean?

**Chorus**
I like to see a proper young man standing up to her,
Staring his eyes out just to see her beauty,
Staking his life and losing every time.

**John**
Only to see her beauty –
Staking his life!

**Chorus**
Ay! That’s the joke!
Play acting’s nothing to it!
‘Tis life or death!
Mind you, he has his chance!

[The Travelling Companion, who has been watching John, takes him by the arm and leads him aside.]

**John**
[Looking over his shoulder at the peasants, who group together and talk.]
What do they mean?
What shall I answer?

**The Travelling Companion**
No need to answer, John.

**John**
Ah! But the Princess –

**The Travelling Companion**
She is a mortal danger.
They want a show to gape at: Let them go.

[altogether]
**Chorus**
Ay! Let us go!
Stay with the wise man, you!
Goodbye, Faint heart!

**John**
How could they sing of her,
If she were only a beautiful tale?

**Chorus**
You’ll never win fair lady!
You’ve had your chance,
You’ve had your chance!
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! You’ve had your chance!

[They go off down the road.]

**John**
I have my chance?
[Looking after the peasants] A Princess, and a kingdom!
That was no mockery of foolish girls,
That was a man’s word!
I must take my chance!

**The Travelling Companion**
Think twice of it –
The world has many kingdoms,
many Princesses!
John
I must take my chance!

The Travelling Companion
Think yet again –
This chance is life or death.

John
The best of all good reasons –
My Princess must be my life or death.
[He breaks away, and follows the crowd down the road]
Goodbye! Goodbye! Goodbye!

[The Travelling Companion looks gravely after him as he goes.]

The Travelling Companion
No gold! No guide! No swinging steel,
Only a dream and a song to win the world!
Go forth! Go forth!
O gallant heart!
O heart of youth that will not count the cost!
A flash of morning sunlight,
A call of the wandering wind,
And alone, alone,
Alone thou art gone,
Alone thou art gone to dare the death!
No! Not alone!
Dare what you will,
Dare what you will,
You still shall find a friend!

[The Travelling Companion, standing awhile as if transfigured, turns, and follows John down the road.]

ACT 2

The Travelling Companion
Looking at John;
John in the crowd.
[He breaks away, and follows John down the road.]

ACT 2

[The Palace Square. Enter the Princess on the Terrace.]

The Princess
How shall I understand?
How shall a maid unwind
With her own trembling hand
The tangled thread of her mind?
There was a song I laughed at long ago,
I heard my old nurse sing it, long ago.
"What makes your eyes so proud, daughter, my daughter?
What makes your eyes so proud,
Your heart so brave?
Little you care, daughter,
If those who dare, daughter,
Go to their grave."
So brave was I and proud?
Ah, long ago, long ago.
"Truly I cannot tell, mother, my mother,
Truly I cannot tell,
So was I born.
While life’s a game, mother,
And love’s a name, mother,
All men I scorn."
That too was long ago, long ago!
All’s tangled now, tangled.
"Some day, when love comes, daughter, my daughter,
Some day when love comes,
Scorn shall be dumb.
With a man’s right, daughter,
With a man’s right, daughter,
[Enter the King]
With a man’s might, daughter,
The man will come!"

The King
[Imitating] Pray Heaven, the man will come!

The Princess
My Father! Are you then so weary of me?

The King
No, no. I am not weary,
I am perplext! I am perplext!

The Princess
Oh, what perplexes you?

The King
The heart of woman is past finding out –
Too deep, too full of hard and crooked ways,
Too dark to see through –

The Princess
Father, I am sorry,
That is my trouble too!

The King
I know, I know, I know,
And here’s this folly, here’s the day again.

The Princess
My day.

The King
Yes, yes, yes, yes,
Your day and my day too, and all fool’s day!
We well may be perplext!
Folly of youth – wooing a phantom Princess –
Folly of woman – holding herself too high –
Folly of age, folly of age –
Trying to rule the wild.
What does it mean?
What shall I say?
What shall I do?
I am perplext, I am perplext, I am perplext!

The Princess
Spirit of Youth – wooing he knows not what –
Spirit of woman holding the truth so high.
Spirit of Love coming to rule his own –
What does it mean? What does it mean?
Peril of loss, peril of gain,
When is the hour? How shall I tell?

The King
Now is the hour!

The Princess
If but the man would come!

The King
Many have come, many have come.

The Princess
(Bitterly)
Many have come for a crown.
None of them loved, none of them loved,
None of them knew my thought.

The King
How could they know?

The Princess
Ah, there are ways!

The King
How could they know?

The Princess
Wonderful ways!
Love when he comes, when he comes,
Love guesses all!

The King
Why should a man, wooing as men will woo,
Pay such a price, win but the death of despair?

[altogether]

The Princess
That is the law, that is the law,
Life is the stake for us both!
Life is the stake! Peril of loss, peril of gain,
Love when he comes reconciles all.

The King
That is the law –
What is the sense of it all?
What does it mean? Woman’s a witch,
Woman’s a witch! Man is a fool!
Man is a fool!
I am perplexed, I am perplexed,
Perplexed, perplexed.

[Both exit. A crowd begins to gather.]

10 Chorus
Suitors? Suitors? Suitors? Any merry suitors?
Any merry suitors a-bidding for a bride?
A kingdom for the best of you,
A rope for all the rest of you.

[John has entered among the crowd, coming through the gate]
The lad that loves a lottery
Will never stand aside!

John
These folk are gay enough: but I am lonely.
Lonely and lost –
Not one among them all so much as sees me –
I am restless, restless.

[The King and The Princess re-enter behind the crowd, and pass towards the palace steps.]

A stir in the crowd.
I wonder who comes now,
Who passes yonder, towards the Palace steps,
A lady –

[She turns and waves her hand to the people. John sees her face.]
Ah! What is this? The word is changed,
The dawn has arisen,
The shadows are fleeing away,
All is a morning glory,

[The King and Princess go into the Palace.]

Oh! Can it be the Princess?
What care I? Peasant or Princess,
There’s my share of the sunlight,
Heart of me, life of me, death of me,
What care I?

[The King and Princess re-enter behind the crowd, and pass towards the palace steps.]

John
Mock if you must, but tell me
Who was this that went away –
The lady passing yonder?

Chorus
Hear him! Hear him!
Hear his question! Hear his question!
All our singing, all we told him,
All’s forgotten every word!
John
Why should you wonder?
All my life’s forgotten,
All I have thought or hoped or seen until this
hour – Until I saw her eyes!

Chorus
Ha! Ha! Ha!
Until he saw her eyes!
Ha! Ha! Ha!
Faint heart has seen the Princess!
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

John
When shall I see her again?
Will she return? Will she return?

Chorus
Presently, presently, she’ll return,
She’ll return to meet her suitors –
Then the fun of the fair begins!

John
Suitors? Her suitors?
Who dares call himself her suitor?

Chorus
Who dares?
Any good lad whose heart is high,
Any good lad who runs his risk,
Any who’s ready to pay the price!

John
What may a man not risk –
What is the price that he must pay for failure?

2nd Girl
Only his bones!

Chorus
Bones! Bones! Bones!
(Pointing at the skeletons)
Look at them dancing there!
Once they were jolly young gentlemen,
Now they are skeletons bare!

John
Skeletons! But they had their chance!
They lost! But they had their chance!

Chorus
Let him alone – he’s caught!
(Moving to the gate)
But who comes next?
Who’s that upon the road?
How fast he travels!
He’s here in no time!
What a pair of legs!
And what a head-piece!
Where can he come from?
Out of the Seven Sleepers’ den, may be!
Or off a monument!
No, no, I tell you, he’s just got up
Out of a good green grave!

Chorus
What’s that to trouble you?
(The Travelling Companion enters by the gate.
John goes up to him and takes him by the hand.)

John
The man’s my friend!
(The Travelling Companion)
Say it is true, tell them,
We two are friends,
And one who tries one tries both!

The Travelling Companion
Yes! We are friends,
And who tries one tries both!

The Herald
O-yez! O-yez!
If any here desires to comes as a suitor
To our Lord the King
For the Princess
And half this royal kingdom,
Let him stand forth!

Chorus
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Holidays! Holidays!
Hurrah!
Who’s for a wedding? Who’s for a wedding?
Suitors? Suitors?
Suitors, any merry suitors?
(The crowd has made a wide circle before the steps.)

The Herald
Let him stand forth!

Chorus
Suitors? Suitors? Suitors, any merry suitors? Suitors?
(John enters)
Hurrah! Here’s one! Hurrah! Here’s one!
Oh what a scarecrow!
What a coat for a King!
Poor Johnny Scarecrow!
Jack o’ the Green!
(Altogether)

The King
He is too young, too young for this;
(The Princess)
Send him away with a laugh and a kiss,
Bid him return in ten years’ time!
Chorus
He is too young! Too sentimental!
Too sublime! Send him away!
Send him away!
With a laugh and a kiss,
Bid him return in ten years’ time!

[altogether]

John
[He holds out his hand to The Travelling Companion but always looks at The Princess.]

Of Kings and crowds I make but light;
I’ll keep my courage, and trust my friend.
My eyes are filled with heart’s delight;
I love, and I foresee the end.

The Travelling Companion
She scorns, but she admires him too.
He dares too much,
But yet he dares:
He is a man;
His face is true,
And finer than the coat he wears,
He is a man and I foresee the end.

The King
[To himself:]
I am perplexed!
[To the Princess:]
Send him away!
Send him away with a laugh and a kiss,
Bid him return in ten years’ time.
I am perplexed.
He is too young for this,
Send him away!
He is too young for this!

Chorus
Too sentimental! Too sublime!
He is too young for this!
Send him away with a laugh and a kiss,
Bid him return in ten years’ time.
I am perplexed!
[The Herald steps forward.]

The Herald
O-yez! O-yez!
[To John:] Sir, you that have desired
To come as suitor to our Lord the King
For the Princess and half this royal kingdom,
Mark you the terms.
If you accept them, well;
But if there be one article among them,
Whereof you do repent,
Then are you free without word spoken
To begone from hence.

[John does not move but gazes at The Princess.]

The Princess
Mark then, today Her Grace sets forth her riddle.
Tomorrow, at this self-same hour you answer
According to your skill.

[John does not move.]

Answer you right, the Princess crowns you here.
Answer you wrong, you take your place with
those
[Pointing at the skeletons] who failed before.

[John does not move. The Princess goes
forward upon the steps. She is grave and looks
straight at John.]

O-yez! O-yez! Her Grace will speak.

The Princess
Sir, you are young, too young to die.

John
[Bowing gravely] Yet, Madam, not so young
As you that sentence me.

The Princess
[Earnestly] I do not wish it –
You are not bound –
Take back your word and go.

John
What is your riddle Madam?

The Princess
[More earnestly] Go, I entreat you,
You vex my peace.

John
What is your riddle, Madam?

The Princess
I will not tell you.
Why have you no fear?
Why will you not obey me?

John
The riddle, Madam! The riddle, Madam!

Chorus
The riddle! The riddle! The riddle!
The riddle! The riddle!
John
The riddle!

Chorus
The riddle!

The Princess
Have your will!
A woman’s heart’s her own till it be known –
Tell me my thought!
Look deeply and declare
What’s hidden there –
Tell me my thought!
If you have true love’s sight,
Read me aright,
Tell me my thought!

Chorus
Riddle-me, Riddle-me-ree!
So she is the riddle herself!
Oh my heart! What a masterpiece!
It’s blind-man’s buff! That’s what it is for him!
Blind-man! Blind-man!
Catch her if you can! Catch her if you can!

The Herald
Sir, for the last time now you make your choice.
You have heard Her Grace's riddle,
Will you come and answer here tomorrow?

John
I will come and answer here tomorrow!

[The Herald and the Court go into the Palace. John stands in the middle, gazing after them.]

Chorus
Well said, young un.
Ay he faced her well!
Well said, young un, I like his courage!
What if he did? He’ll sing a different tune
This time tomorrow!

Tomorrow, tomorrow! A guess for tomorrow!
I hope it’s a wedding!
I fear it’s a funeral!
Bones! Bones!
Bones, bones, bones,
Look at them dancing there,
Once they were jolly young gentlemen,
Now they are skeletons bare!

[The men join the ring]
Bones, bones, bones, look at them dancing there!
Once they were jolly young gentlemen,
Now they are skeletons bare!

[They all dance round John who still gazes at the Castle.]

CD 2
Act 3 Scene 1

[The Palace Square. Night. John and The Travelling Companion are at the Inn. They watch while the lights go out one by one. At last, only the centre window – the Princess’s – remains lighted.]

John
’Tis a still night.

The Travelling Companion
Ay, if the stillness last.

John
I think it will not –
Even as you speak I feel a change, a warning:
Now the air is tense and full of fear –
What have I done?

The Travelling Companion
What have you done, John?

John
I have given my word to answer her –
To guess a woman’s thought –
That is to find my way in darkest night
Across an unknown country.
No, not unknown, not unknown,
Not unknown: half of her heart is mine.

The Travelling Companion
Go sleep, John!

John
I cannot sleep!
How can I pierce the dark, and fight with shadows?

The Travelling Companion
You too have a shadow that walks in darkness,
Like the powers of night!

John
A shadow?

The Travelling Companion
A, a shadow, once a man, now your Companion –
Sleep, my friend, go sleep, go sleep!
John
I cannot sleep tonight –
This way or that, tomorrow ends me.

The Travelling Companion
This way or that, tomorrow ends me too.

John
What are you saying?

The Travelling Companion
Tomorrow we must part.
You to your kingdom...

John
No! If I win my kingdom...

The Travelling Companion
Sleep in peace!
Dream of the woman, leave the riddle to me.

John
I dare not, I dare not.

The Travelling Companion
[Commanding]
Take my hand. You dare all that I dare for you.
Look in my eyes. All that I seek,
All that I find is yours tomorrow.
Now to sleep.

The Princess
‘Tis a still night.

The Travelling Companion
Ay, if the stillness last.

The Princess
I seem to hear an echo, like a doubt –
Changing my thought within me.
Now I think the silence will not last:
The thing I do will bring the storm:
Almost, I dread to do it.
Yet many a time before I have found joy
In the very darkness and the danger of it –
Joy in my secret power, joy in the wings
That save me from the bonds of man.
Tomorrow I shall be sad,
But I shall still be free.

The Travelling Companion
Tomorrow, I shall be glad, but I shall not be free.

The Princess
Once more that mocking echo, like a doubt
Far down within me.
I will not hear it, I will not hear it.
[She makes gestures of incantation]
Wind of the night, be thou my soul’s companion!
Bring cloudy darkness,
Muffle up the moon,
Blot the bright stars and blind the watching earth!
Let no eye see me!

The Travelling Companion
Blind the watching earth!
Let no eye see me!

The Princess
Again that voice!
Who is it echoes me?
Who is it brings a magic stronger than mine?
I will escape him yet!
Wind of the night! Spread out thy whirling wings,
And fill the region of the wide wild dark
With power untamed and irresistible
As woman’s will!
Bear me away!

The Travelling Companion
Bear me away!

The Princess
Bear me away!
High above all the little homes of men
Whither thou only knowest, away! Away!

The Travelling Companion
Whither thou only knowest, away!
[In a gust of wind, she rides away in the air, followed by The Travelling Companion.]
ACT 3  Scene 2

[Scene 2]

[The Wizard’s Cave, empty save for one or two Goblin guards at back. A flight of rough steps leads to an entrance at the back. A procession of Goblins enter. The Wizard enters. He takes his seat and makes a signal for the dance to begin. One by one, the Goblins join the dance.]

Goblins’ Dance – Allegro Moderato

The Wizard
Stay your dancing, Goblins, stay your dancing!
[The dancing suddenly stops.]

Gather round –
Attend my high commandment.
[They gather round the Wizard.]

The Goblins
Master! We attend your high commandment!

The Wizard
Hearken! Hearken!
Hear ye not the storm-wind
Howling loud above our goblin mountain?
How it seems to spurn the earth beneath it
Fiercely free, rejoicing in confusion,
Triumphing in wanton wild defiance!

The Goblins
Wild and wilful, strong and stormy hearted,
Hither on the wind unaided riding.

The Wizard
Now to greet her, now to do her honour!
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[They rush up the steps. Enter the Princess at the top of the steps. She is followed by The Travelling Companion, who remains above hidden by a rock. The Wizard advances to meet her.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy of revel, joy of pride and passion!

The Goblins
Welcome, goblin, welcome joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
I pray you let me rest,
I cannot revel, my heart is sad,
My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Wizard
What are wind and hail to you, my daughter?
Something yet more sharp has touched your spirit.

The Princess
I cannot.

The Wizard
What are wind and hail to you, my daughter?
Something yet more sharp has touched your spirit.

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy of revel, joy of pride and passion!

The Goblins
Welcome, goblin, welcome joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

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My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
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The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
I pray you let me rest,
I cannot revel, my heart is sad,
My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
I pray you let me rest,
I cannot revel, my heart is sad,
My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

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The Wizard
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The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
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I cannot revel, my heart is sad,
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The Wizard
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The Wizard
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The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
I pray you let me rest,
I cannot revel, my heart is sad,
My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
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The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
I pray you let me rest,
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My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
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The Wizard
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The Princess
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The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Goblins
Haste, haste to give her entrance to our mountain!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Wizard
Welcome, daughter, welcome! Joy be with you!
Joy of freedom, masterless and timeless,
Joy be with all wild and wilful, wilful goblins!

[The Goblins rush down, leaving a few to escort The Princess. The Princess descends the steps slowly.]

The Princess
I pray you let me rest,
I cannot revel, my heart is sad,
My feet are faint and weary.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.

The Wizard
Tell me, daughter, what has made you weary?

The Princess
I cannot tell;
The storm-wind broke my spirit,
The hail was sharp – like many rods it lashed me.
The Wizard
Courage, daughter, courage!
I will give you thoughts
Beyond the reach of all men living,
One dark thought that you alone could summon.
Now forget and join our goblin revel!

[One dancer comes to The Princess and draws her into the centre. A second dancer joins. General slow dance. The Princess wanders wearily among the dancers.

Goblins’ Dance – Andante moderato e grazioso

[The Princess returns to her throne.]

The Princess
I cannot dance tonight;
[The dance ceases]
I cannot make my heart forget my danger.
Let me go! Let me go!

The Wizard
Go then, go! But not without my counsel!

The Princess
No! Not without your counsel!
That dark thought that I alone can summon.

The Wizard
Come away then. None must overhear it, Man nor goblin!

[He takes her hand and leads her up the steps to the entrance. She turns on the threshold. The wind begins to whistle.]

The Princess
Here then.

The Travelling Companion
In a morning glory!

[The Travelling Companion comes out behind him with a drawn sword and the sword descends. The Wizard’s head rolls on the ground. The Travelling Companion seizes it, wraps it in his cloak, comes to the top of the steps and stretches out his sword over the cave.]

The Travelling Companion
God save us all from goblins!

[The cave falls in with a crash.]

ACT 4

[The Scene and Palace as before, in broad daylight. The Princess is on her balcony. The Travelling Companion below with The Wizard’s head wrapped in his cloak. The Princess does not see him.]

The Princess
Sunlight at last!
And all the sky washed clean
Of last night’s madness.
How I shudder now at what I’ve dared!
I think I always feared some sudden overthrow,
Some chance disaster.
O fair fresh light of day,
I have escaped for the last time!

The Travelling Companion
All, all in a morning glory!

The Princess
What voice is that?
The voice of someone singing
A snatch of the old song they made to mock me.
Well they may sing –
I am not mastered yet!

The Travelling Companion
But one fine day as I heard said,
All in a morning glory!

The Princess
I too have heard that saying,
But the day is long in coming;
No! He will not guess it.
He cannot guess that one dark thought of mine!

The Travelling Companion
But one fine day as I’ve heard said –
All in a morning glory,
The lover will come that keeps his head,
And Madam will lose her own instead.

The Princess
It cannot be! I have my one dark thought.
It is not I must lose my head.
And yet – one of us two – today...
I hate myself.
I hate that song!

[She goes into the Palace.]
The Travelling Companion
And that’s the end of the story.

[He crosses over to the Inn, carrying the head in his cloak. A crowd begins to gather.]

9 Chorus
Suitor, suitor, where’s the merry, merry suitor?
Suitor, suitor, where’s the merry, merry suitor?
Where’s the merry suitor a-bidding for a bride?
A kingdom if he kisses her,
A halter if he misses her,
The lad that loves a lottery
Will never stand aside.

The Princess! The Princess!
Is the Princess coming?
I wonder what she’ll say,
I wonder what she’ll do?
How will she be dressed?
Let’s give her a tune! Let’s give her a tune!
Mary, Mary quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With true-love sighs and pretty maid’s eyes,
And skeletons, skeletons, skeletons!
Skeletons all in a row.

[Enter Herald with Trumpeters on the Terrace.]

The Herald
Silence! Silence!

[Enter The King, The Princess and Court on the Terrace. At the same moment, John and The Travelling Companion cross the square from the Inn and pass through the crowd to the bottom of the steps. The Princess and John look at each other and no-one else: she moves down one step as if to meet him unconsciously. The Travelling Companion stands close by John with The Wizard’s head wrapped in his cloak.]

10 John! By permission of our Lord the King,
And by your own act a suitor bound
To read her Grace’s riddle –
And abide the event –
John
I am here!

1st Girl
Where is John?

Chorus
O where? O where?
O where and O where is little John the Great,
Little John the bold and bonny?
The King is come in state
And we dare not make him wait,
Has anybody here seen Johnny?

The Herald
Silence! Silence!

[Enter The King, The Princess and Court on the Terrace. At the same moment, John and The Travelling Companion cross the square from the Inn and pass through the crowd to the bottom of the steps. The Princess and John look at each other and no-one else: she moves down one step as if to meet him unconsciously. The Travelling Companion stands close by John with The Wizard’s head wrapped in his cloak.]

The Prisoner
My father! My father!
Let me be heard a moment!
I have seen too many suitors by their rashness Bound to answer me, I have seen too many pay their fortune With their lives; My mood is changed: I have grown to hate this pageant – I am weary of jesting with the dreams Of gallant men.

The King
What is your wish, my daughter?

The Princess
I entreat you, take back your word, Ordain for him who fails some slighter penalty.

The King
We are glad to hear you Pleading so good a cause – We will consider – we will take counsel presently, Meanwhile today remains, Your suitor stands before you, To hear and answer.

The Prisoner
[To John] Oh Sir!
Will not you join your request to mine – Ask to adventure with a less danger – Claim your right!

John
Ah! Lady, what is my right? I know, by lovers’ law Failure is always death. You are my danger – I claim to dare my danger, Not to shun it.

Chorus
Well said John! Grapple her! The riddle! The riddle! The riddle! The riddle!

The Princess
The riddle!

Chorus
The riddle!

The Princess
The riddle!

Chorus
The riddle! The riddle! The riddle!

The Princess
How then if I will not ask it?

Chorus
The riddle! The riddle! The riddle!

The Prisoner
Then you wrong me. The riddle is my right – I claim my right!
Chorus
The riddle! The riddle! The riddle!
The riddle! The riddle!

18 The Princess
Now I am most unhappy.
Now I come to the cross-parting
Of two hateful ways:
Hateful it is that I should lose my freedom –
That he should lose his life!

[To John, earnestly.]
Oh you, my lover,
You with clear eyes and undivided will,
Can you not save me? Can you not save me?
If you have in truth a stronger magic,
Now put forth thy power,
If you have true love’s sight, read me aright,
Tell me my thought!

John
Your secret thought is dead,
It died last night.

[John, who is standing next to The Travelling Companion, puts his hand to the cloak, takes out the head and throws it on the steps at The Princess’ feet.]
Bid it farewell!

Chorus
Ah!

[The Princess comes slowly down, looking at the head with horror.]

The Princess
O monstrous! Horrible!
Cover my eyes!

[She falls into John’s arms.]

The King
Thank heaven! The man has come!

The Travelling Companion
The man has come!

Chorus
The man has come!

The man has come that keeps his head –
And madam has lost her own instead!
And that’s the end of the story!
A wedding! A wedding!
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

[The Princess and John are alone on the steps. The Travelling Companion alone in the centre.]

12 John
[To The Travelling Companion:]
Come in with us!

The Princess
Will you not come with us?

[The Travelling Companion does not move. Festive noises, clinking of glasses are heard within the palace.]

Chorus
[Within]
Oh where and oh where is little John the Great?
Little John the bold and bonny?
Oh where and oh where is little John the Great?
Has anybody here seen Johnny?

John
Oh come! This feast, this palace,
All this kingdom is yours no less than mine.

You are my friend, my Travelling Companion,
The true winner of all my fortune.
Come! Come!

The Travelling Companion
I cannot come!

John
You cannot?

The Travelling Companion
I must leave you!

The Princess
[Clinging to John]
Oh his voice is strange
With hidden meaning!

The Travelling Companion
Whence I came,
Thither I must return.

Chorus
[Within]
Oh where and oh where is little John the Great?
Little John the bold and bonny?
Oh where and oh where is little John the Great?
Has anybody here seen Johnny?

John
Oh come! This feast, this palace,
All this kingdom is yours no less than mine.

You are my friend, my Travelling Companion,
The true winner of all my fortune.
Come! Come!

The Travelling Companion
I cannot come!

John
You cannot?

The Travelling Companion
I must leave you!

The Princess
[Clinging to John]
Oh his voice is strange
With hidden meaning!

The Travelling Companion
Whence I came,
Thither I must return.

John
Return? Oh whither?

[The Travelling Companion looks lovingly at them, turns away and goes slowly through the gate into the distance. The stage darkens somewhat, and the Church Scene, as in Act 1 Scene 1, becomes visible at the back, with the bier and the dead man lying on it.]
David Horton

David hails from Devon and is a graduate of the Alexander Gibson Opera School at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He studied with Scott Johnson with a scholarship from the RCS Trust. Previous training includes a BMus Hons from the RNCM and a year spent in Sydney studying under Dr Rowena Cowley.

In 2018, David received critical acclaim for his portrayal of the title role in Candide with Iford Arts/Opera della Luna. Other recent roles include Vanderdendur/King Theodore (Candide, West Green House), Moon/King of the East (The Enchanted Pig, Hampstead Garden Opera), The Lover/The Friend/The Preacher (The Vanishing Bridegroom, BYO), Eisenstein (Die Fledermaus, RCS Opera), Tristan (Le Vin Herbe, RCS Opera), a number of roles in English (Eccentrics, BYO) and Henry Crawford in Dove’s Mansfield Park (Waterperry Opera).

David has performed in a number of British and world premières, most notably of Kurt Schwertzik’s Shal-i-mar with the RNCM Symphony Orchestra. He also played Magician 1 in Henry McPherson’s Ühle, recorded and filmed in conjunction with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Martyn Brabbins and premiered at the 2016 RCS Plug Festival.

Julien Van Mellaerts

The Travelling Companion

Awarded the Maureen Forrester Prize and German Lied Award at the 2018 Concours musical international de Montréal and Winner of the 2017 Wigmore Hall/Kohn Foundation International Song Competition and 2017 Kathleen Ferrier Awards, British-New Zealand baritone Julien Van Mellaerts was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal on graduation from the Royal College of Music.

Highlights of his 2017-18 season included performances with Julius Drake for the BBC Lunchtime Series at the Wigmore Hall, the Enniskillen International Beckett Festival and the Juan March Foundation, The Referee (Mozart vs Machine, Mahogany Opera Group), Harlequin (Ariadne auf Naxos, Longborough Festival Opera), the title role in Eugene Onegin (Cambridge Philharmonic Society), Mr Fezziwig in the premiere of Will Todd’s A Christmas Carol (Opera Holland Park), and Elizabeth with the Royal Ballet at the Barbican Hall.


Earlier this year, Julien represented New Zealand in the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, and will make his debuts at the Salzburg MozartWoche and Concertgebouw, Amsterdam in 2020.
Kate Valentine  The Princess

Trained at the RSAMD and National Opera Studio and a Samling Foundation alumna, her many awards include the Glyndebourne Anne Wood/Joanna Peters Award, Sybil Tutton Award, Susan Chilcott Scholarship, and Scottish Opera’s John Scott Award.

Operatic roles include Ortlinde (Die Walküre) as part of Opera North’s award-winning Ring Cycle, Marenka (The Bartered Bride, Opera North), Female Chorus (The Rape of Lucretia, Glyndebourne on Tour), Musetta (La bohème, Welsh National Opera), Countess Almaviva (The Marriage of Figaro), Rosalinde (Die Fledermaus) and Karolina (The Two Widows) for Scottish Opera, Donna Anna (Samling Opera) Armgad (Offenbach’s The Rhine Fairies, NSO) and Tatyana (Eugene Onegin, Blackheath Opera).

As one of English National Opera’s first ‘Harewood Artists’, she sang Fiordiligi, Countess Almaviva, Mimi, Cathleen (Riders to the Sea), First Lady (The Magic Flute), Elisabeth Zimmer (Henze’s Elegy for Young Lovers, co-produced with the Young Vic), and Helena (A Midsummer Night’s Dream).

Recent concert platform highlights include a Radio 3 broadcast of Villa Lobos’ Bachianas Brasileiras No.5 as part of Glasgow’s Cottiers Festival, a concert performance of Cosí fan tutte (Chopin Festival, Warsaw), Brahms Requiem with the RSNO under Lawrence Renes, Britten’s War Requiem in The Sage, Gateshead, and Britten’s Spring Symphony under Garry Walker. In music-theatre and cabaret Kate has performed Mrs Nordstrom (A Little Night Music) at the Théâtre du Châtelet, recorded BBC Radio’s Friday Night is Music Night and appeared at the BBC Proms in the Park, Glasgow Green.

Pauls Putnins  The King

Latvian-born Pauls was a member of Riga Dom Cathedral Boys Choir. He studied conducting in Riga and Jerusalem, and singing at TCM. Appearances in operas include La bohème (ENO and Opéra de Nancy), Lucia di Lammermoor (Opera Colorado, Denver and Moscow), Carmen (New Zealand Opera), Don Giovanni (Latvian National Opera), Boulevard Solitude (Genoa and Barcelona), The Rape of Lucretia (St Petersburg and Riga), Tannhäuser (Barcelona), I Capuleti e i Montecchi (Moscow).

UK opera engagements have included Le nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni, Fidelio, Peter Grimes, Idomeneo, Pelléas et Mélisande, Otello, Die Zauberflöte and Flight (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), Fidelio (Garsington), Madama Butterfly and Aida (Raymond Gubbay/RAH), Flavio (Early Opera Company) and La traviata (Birmingham).

Pauls regularly appears in Latvia and the Baltic States as an oratorio soloist. He sang Gloucester in the premiere recording of Meyerbeer’s Margherita d’Anjou, Ferron in Mercadante’s Maria Stuarda for Opera Rara and Walford Davies’ Everyman for Dutton. Other engagements include Petite Messe Solennelle (Germany, France, Bregenz Festival), Angelotti Tosca (ENO), Frank Puccini’s Edgar (NSO), the title role in excerpts from Eugene Onegin (Barbican) and Die Schöpfung in Kanazawa, Japan.

2017 saw him sing an acclaimed Arthur in Peter Maxwell Davies’ The Lighthouse (Shadwell Opera) and in 2018 he sang Colline (La bohème, Dorset Opera). 2019 sees his debut at Longborough Opera with Fasolt (Das Rheingold) where he will also return for their full Ring Cycle.
Ian Beadle The Wizard/Ruffian

Born in Hertfordshire, he obtained a BMus (Hons) degree at the GSMD. In 2012-13, he took part in ENO’s Opera Works programme, a highlight of which was The Big Barber Bash (London Coliseum). At GSMD he was part of Lads in their Hundreds, performed in London and Ludlow. This led to his singing on BBC Radio 3’s In Tune. Ian also performed with Graham Johnson in an evening Lecture Recital of Winterreise as part of his Series Cycles in Tandem at the Guildhall School.

Operatic experience includes Des Grieux (Le portrait de Manon), Belcore and William Dale (Silent Night, Wexford), Marco (Gianni Schicchi), Quinault (Adriana Lecouvreur), Jake Wallace (La fanciulla del West) for Opera Holland Park, as well as Imperial Commissioner (Madama Butterfly) and Guccio (Gianni Schicchi, Young Artist Programme at Holland Park), title role (Le nozze di Figaro, Opera Brava), Valentin (Winterbourne Opera), Crébillon (La rondine, Go Opera), Leporello (Sinfonia D’amici), Morales (Co-Opera), Pish-Tush (Charles Court Opera) and Aminta (Euridice) for British Youth Opera. He performed the title role of Billy Budd, Publio (La clemenza di Tito) and Monsieur de Brétigny (Manon) (GSMD opera associate scenes). He sang Dark Fiddler for NSO in 2017.

Engagements in 2018 have included Pinellino (Gianni Schicchi) and Shackleton (Shackleton’s Cat, ETO), Cecil (Maria Stuarda, OperaUpClose) and Lawrence (Evelyn Smyth’s The Wreckers, Arcadian Opera Group).

Felix Kemp The Herald/Ruffian

A Britten-Pears Young Artist praised by The Guardian for his “appealing baritone” and awarded an Audition Oracle Singers’ Preparation Scholarship, Felix Kemp’s recent engagements included St Matthew Passion (New London Orchestra, Southwark Cathedral), A Bernstein Celebration (London Song Festival), Vaughan Williams’ Dona nobis pacem (Truro Cathedral) and a recording with Odaline de la Martinez and the Lontano ensemble as Pierrot in Ethel Smyth’s Fête Galante (Retrospect Opera).

Engagements in 2018 have included Pinellino (Gianni Schicchi) and Shackleton (Shackleton’s Cat, ETO), Cecil (Maria Stuarda, OperaUpClose) and Lawrence (Evelyn Smyth’s The Wreckers, Arcadian Opera Group).
Toby Purser conductor
Founder and Principal Conductor of the ground-breaking Orion Orchestra, his inspirational music-making has prompted guest invitations from ENO (where he just completed two seasons as ENO Mackerras Conducting Fellow conducting The Turn of the Screw, The Marriage of Figaro and La traviata), Bampton Classical Opera, Chelsea Opera Group, Grange Park Opera, Iford Arts and Pimlico Opera, as well as many leading British orchestras including the RPO and RLPO, which he conducted in Jesús León’s debut CD Bel Canto for Opus Arte CD.

NSO Orchestra

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SOMM Recordings wishes to thank the Stanford Society, John Covell and Constance Frydenlund, Dr. David Frankel, Charles Covell and Professor and Mrs. Jeremy Dibble for their generous support, which has made this recording possible.

New Sussex Opera acknowledges the support of The Behrens Foundation and John Lewis & Partners for the stage production of The Travelling Companion.

THE STANFORD SOCIETY

The Stanford Society was formed in 2007 to promote greater interest in Stanford’s life and music and to encourage and support performances and recordings of his music. The Society holds an annual Stanford Festival Weekend in a Cathedral City in the UK or Ireland. These Weekends have included performances of music by Stanford (including premieres of the Second Violin Concerto and Variations for Violin and Orchestra in orchestrations by Jeremy Dibble) and his students and contemporaries as well as talks, social events and Cathedral services.

Society members also receive regular newsletters with news and information about performances of Stanford’s music and new recordings.

Further information about the Stanford Society may be found at the Society’s website at www.thestanfordssociety.org or by contacting Daniel Wilkinson, the Society’s Honorary Secretary. His email address is wilkinsondb@hotmail.co.uk.

Acknowledgements

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