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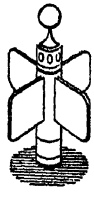
OPERA PRODUCTION FOR AMATEURS

by

HAROLD SMETHURST



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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is the result of enquiries from students and teachers who are interested in and enthusiastic about opera. "What can we produce? How shall we start?" The following pages have been written to help them and are the outcome of experience with boys and girls in secondary and grammar schools, with students in training colleges, with young people in youth clubs and with older and more experienced amateurs in operatic societies.

What follows is not intended for the experienced producer or conductor. It is for the enthusiast who is anxious to make perhaps his first attempt at operatic production or conducting and who has little to help him except his own somewhat confused aspirations.

An attempt has been made to be as practical as possible, bearing in mind the difficulties that have often to be overcome on small stages and in school and college halls.

The first three chapters are devoted to a discussion of problems which the beginner may encounter in dealing with the chorus and principals and include suggestions as to how he may set his own ideas in order and proceed with the difficult and complicated business of organising his society and putting the opera which has been chosen on the stage.

There has been no hesitation in suggesting minor alterations either to music or text where it is unsuitable or too difficult. What is important is to convey the spirit of the work that is being dealt with to those who are taking part in its re-creation. Only rarely does the professional production approach perfection. Even less often can the amateur hope to achieve all he would wish. But if the conductor knows that the spirit of the music has been

re-awakened in the performance of his singers and players, and if the producer feels that his company, at the end of the performance, has been able to realise something of what lay behind the original inspiration, a very great deal has been accomplished.

A chapter is devoted to a general survey of material which is available and suitable for amateur production and a group of contrasted and representative works follows, when each opera is discussed at some length from the producer's standpoint.

The place of opera and operatic production is too often under-estimated in the planning of the curricula of our schools and colleges. But there are signs that this country is becoming more "opera-minded". Perhaps it is not too much to hope that some of our teachers, lecturers and tutors will feel the effect of this interest and enthusiasm and, in their turn, communicate it to their pupils.

H.S.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHORUS

How to begin and how to deal with an ensemble.

The first and most obvious thing is to sort out the voices. This should be done by an audition, bearing in mind that it is always to be hoped that people who join the Society will remain for more than one production. Experience only too often shows that some members of the chorus who joined in the first place with little to help them but enthusiasm have become, in the course of time, "passengers". Opera is, after all, a singing business, and therefore, whatever else the prospective member does not have, he or she must have some vocal ability. He must at least be able to sing in tune! This may sound somewhat preposterous and unnecessary, but most conductors would agree that a re-testing amongst the older members of some operatic societies would produce surprising, alarming, and often positively terrifying results. Therefore, be cruel to be kind, and if someone comes along who is obviously unsuitable musically and vocally, it should be tactfully suggested that perhaps his place is in the dramatic society, or taking part as a stage-hand.

There are so many sides to the activities of an operatic society that it should not be difficult to direct the activities of keen and enthusiastic people of this kind into channels where the work they could do would be of great value—as, for example, a Box Office worker, a prompter, a helper on the stage, etc.

Sorting out the voices.

The auditions having been completed, the voices will have sorted themselves out automatically, particularly in a chorus composed of both sexes. The difficulty here will probably be the scarcity of tenors and, possibly, of contraltos. It is amazing to notice how frequently the female

members of the chorus will struggle to maintain a position amongst the sopranos, although, perhaps, it is not so very amazing after all, since the soprano line is the easiest. It requires the least musical ability. The sopranos nearly always have the tune! But if a successful balance is to be achieved, a firm hand must be taken and the contralto line must be watched. A good number of the voices will probably be of mezzo-soprano quality, and if they have not a bright and comfortable upper register, if there is any doubt at all as to where they should be, they should be given the contralto line. Another way out of this difficulty is to divide the contralto work between these ladies, so that sometimes one half of them sings with the contraltos, whilst the other has the soprano line, and then in other choruses, the situation is reversed.

Some male voices who find the bass line too low and the actual tenor too high may find an improvised inner part congenial. The tenor line can be easily amended when it goes above perhaps F or the bass altered if it is dropping too low. It is only necessary to consider the prevailing harmony and make the part as melodious and interesting as possible.

Learning the parts.

When the music is being learnt, *give a good deal of attention to the two inner parts.* Do not be afraid to *rehearse passages in three parts*, with *all* the female voices singing the alto line, and omitting the soprano altogether. Be generous in your praise and encouragement when a difficulty has been surmounted by the contraltos. They often have a dull enough time anyhow!

An "all boys" cast.

With a boys' cast, the difficulty in providing the correct balance with the two inner parts is likely to be greater. The time when it was considered a crime for a boy to sing when his voice "broke" has long since passed, and it is

generally agreed nowadays that, provided he does not strain his voice by trying to sing too high or too low, there is no harm in his continuing to sing during the period when his voice is becoming settled. Occasionally, one comes across a real tenor voice, which appears quite naturally and almost, as it were, before its time, but this is a rarity. For this reason, the conductor should have no hesitation whatever in amending the tenor line when it goes too high for the normal voice of the youth of 17 or 18. The ultimate aim—to engender familiarity and love for a great work by performing it—should be sufficient salve for any purist's conscience.

The alto line presents, with boys, a more subtle difficulty. The best part of a boy's voice is not in his lower register. He enjoys most its upper reaches and gets his most thrilling tone there. The twelve and thirteen-year-olds supply, on an average, the best trebles, and the altos will, for the most part, come from the slightly older boys, whose voices are just beginning to close in and to lose their brightness at the top. Above all, coarse, chesty tone—the newspaper boy's "Star, News and Standard" voice—must be looked out for and must be avoided at all costs. There must be no pushing on the tone for the sake of holding down the alto line.

Numbering the Chorus.

The voices having been sorted, and a proper balance having been obtained at music rehearsals, the actual floor work now begins.

First, number the chorus, starting with the sopranos. Line them up in order of height, beginning with the smallest, then "number off". If you are not sure of names, give out small numbered cards and safety pins which the singers will wear on the spot. In any case, this use of numbers instead of names is often very useful as rehearsals proceed and corrections have to be made. It avoids the calling out of individual names for censure.

Then do the same thing with the altos, tenors and basses. Numbers will not, of course, be duplicated. It is also a good idea to *leave a few numbers* after each group to be allocated to new members of the caste who may come along a little later; for example, if there are 34 girls in the chorus, start to number the men at 40, so that you have a few spares.

A written check will be made of these numbers, as they are given, by the secretary or whoever is appointed "clerical assistant" to the producer. This will be useful when costumes are being measured for and ordered, and the register for rehearsals is being called or checked.

The Producer and his prompt book.

The actual setting of the ensemble to be dealt with is then begun. The real work will have already been done by the producer at home. Except in very few instances, when it is found impossible to visualize the groupings without the presence of the caste, everything will have been worked out. It is a good plan, if possible, to complete the numbering of the chorus as soon as possible and well before floor-work begins. In working out the groupings, the producer will then have some idea as to the particular persons to whom the numbers refer. He will certainly be able to create his groupings with this guide, as far as height is concerned.

The working out of groupings is a fascinating business. Various devices have been resorted to. A miniature stage is, of course, an excellent plan, and much can be done by using such things as counters, chessmen or even matches for the players, but a pencil and paper and the numbers already allocated are actually quite satisfactory on their own.

In the case of some works, producer's "prompt books" are available, with movements of chorus and principals, entrances and exits, gesture, and details of expression and

interpretation suggested, very frequently bar by bar and verse by verse. But in the vast majority of operas which the enterprising producer will want to deal with, there is next to nothing to work on, apart from the suggestions, often vague and quite frequently impracticable, thrown out by the composer or librettist.

This is a very good thing, because the producer will be compelled to make use of his own imagination, and more than this, having obtained his original inspiration, to organise it so that he can direct the movements of sixty or seventy people to put it into effect.

Make your own prompt book.

Have your libretto, where there is one in the case of an opera with spoken dialogue, *interleaved*, and work out the movements and record them with each fresh change of position, on the pages opposite the dialogue. Write the details as fully as is necessary over the appropriate bars in the musical score.

If you have a good memory, the best thing is to know your movements "by heart" when you arrive for the first floor rehearsal—exactly *what* the chorus is going to do, *when* they are going to move, and *where* they are going to. But if, in producing a work for the first time, you find it hard to retain the details of a complicated finale, do not be afraid to work from your previously prepared prompt book and marked musical score. It is sometimes a good plan, as an aid to memory, to condense the written groupings and arrive at something which will act as a serviceable mnemonic. If you are asked to produce the same work on a future occasion, you will find that it is "all in your head", and "comes back" very readily without undue reference to the book.

The more works you are able to produce, the easier each one should become. You will get used to avoiding all the snags.

Remember you must be definite in your instructions,

Having fixed a position, stick to it. If you have to alter anything, only do so after great thought, and be careful to explain to your company why you have done it. It is essential that you retain their trust and confidence. They must feel from the start that you know exactly what you want. If you do know, you will get it. Nothing is more annoying and wasteful of more time than the situation which arises from the remark of some chorus girl that she was "told to go over here last week", or from the producer's having no clear recollection or check of where he told her to go.

Make a written plan.

As each "number" or section is set, make a written plan of the individual positions of the chorus members at the *beginning* of each section. It will usually be found that provided they know *where to start from*, most chorus members can go on as far as positioning is concerned. As each "floor plan" is arrived at, have it written out, using the numbers, and placed on a notice board in some prominent position where it can be referred to by anyone who is doubtful.

Furthermore, to avoid any confusion in the wings, do the same thing for the way in which the chorus are going to enter. Having placed them in position on the stage, take them off the stage in the reverse order from that in which they will enter. By this means, a correct and serviceable order in the wings will be arrived at. Line up the chorus, note their numbers, and affix a plan to the notice board in some such fashion as is suggested in Fig. 1.

In the plan, chorus ladies one to ten and chorus men twenty to twenty-nine, are used for a quick entry from the upper entrances on each side of the stage, when the producer has wanted to "dress" the down-stage corners first, then the centre back, and then fill in each side. The ladies enter on the down-stage side of their partners, so as not to be hidden from the audience when they enter.

When adjustment is necessary to move to positions, the men pass behind their partners.

This scheme is, of course, capable of infinite variety of treatment.

Fig. 1

Positions in wings.

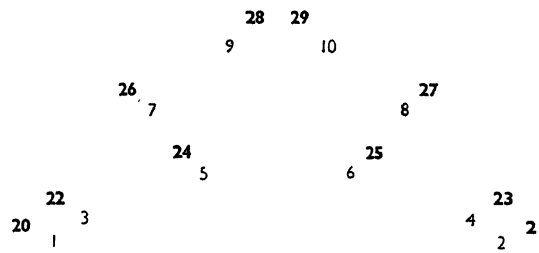
Right back.

24	26	22	28	20
5	7	3	9	1

Left back.

21	29	23	27	25
2	10	4	8	6

Positions on stage, after entrance.



Setting a Finale.

It may be useful here to examine an actual "finale", to see how it will be dealt with. The finale to Act II of "Iolanthe" is an excellent example of a highly formalised type.

The beginner can do no better than to study the producer's "prompt-books" which the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company provide in connection with the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas. Here we have a great tradition carefully and scrupulously maintained. There are those who are all for greater freedom in the handling of these masterpieces. Why? It is the business of the producer, as it is of the conductor or performer of any sort of music, in the first instance to do all he can to bring to life the

inspiration of the composer and librettist. It is *not* his business to use a stage work as a means of giving free flight to his own fancy and imagination when the authors have left very definite directions as to what they wanted. The revue is the place for this sort of improvisation on the producer's part. We have had of late only too much evidence of production gone mad in operatic affairs—back-cloths with staring eyes and swinging pendulums and palaces surmounted by gigantic spiders and peacocks' feathers and what-would-you.

In the case of the Savoy Operas, we have the benefit of first-hand directions from Gilbert who was at once librettist and producer. If we are not satisfied with his suggestions as to how his work should be re-created, the answer is obvious. Leave these operas alone. There are plenty of other works available, where composer and librettist have left the producer a free hand.

Principals first, then chorus.

To return then to "Iolanthe". What is the dramatic situation at this point? Strephon has just heard from the Lord Chancellor that he has no claim to the hand of Phyllis. He is left alone in despair. The scene is "an Arcadian landscape" with a rustic bridge crossing the river which "runs round the back of the stage". There are three entrances on each side.

The principals will have been rehearsed before the chorus appear on the floor. This is a long and fairly complicated finale, with plenty of movement and "business" for the principals. It is therefore essential that they know where they are going and what they are going to do before the chorus work is started.

The next step is to *rehearse the chorus separately* and then bring in the principals when both they and the chorus know their positions. If this is not done, unless the discipline in the society is unique in that it is of the first order, chaos can result.

A safe rule is therefore *principals first, then chorus alone, finally all together.*

Study the Score.

The building up of a finale must be done by a study of the indications for movement given in the libretto and of the musical structure of the section.

To take the libretto first. The directions in the "Iolanthe" finale are—"The peers appear at the back, advancing unseen and on tiptoe. Lord Mountararat and Lord Tolloller lead Phyllis between them. She listens in horror to what she hears". There are then various remarks to indicate the reactions of the various principals to the progress of the action, but the next definite direction as regards the chorus movement is summarised briefly into "Enter fairies, tripping, headed by Celia, Leila and Fleta, and followed by the Queen". There are no further directions as to grouping or movement. It is obvious, therefore, that a great deal has been left to the producer's imagination. This is the case in most operatic libretti. There are prompt books available in connection with spectacular American and West End successes, which come under the heading of musical plays, in which the action of principals and chorus is described with illustrative figuration in the greatest detail. For instance, in the case of "The Vagabond King", practically everything that is necessary is set down on paper, but in the case of genuine operatic works, the indications as to how to build up the movement are of the scantiest.

It may be helpful to examine how the finale of this typical Gilbert and Sullivan opera has been developed. Gilbert's directions and traditional movements have more or less consolidated themselves.

The directions given in the libretto having been considered and found to be very meagre, the producer should then turn to the musical score. Here it will be found that there are certain broad basic divisions when the character

of the music changes and when the chorus will therefore need to move and "change the picture". Within these broad changes for the chorus, there will be frequent alterations of position for the principals of a more subtle nature, but also arising out of the way the score is built up.

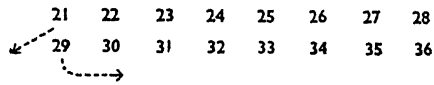
In their case, they will probably move "on the phrase". That is to say, they will be much more active as they have much more to say and sing in connection with the development of the action, and therefore will have much greater opportunity for detailed illustrative movement.

It is obvious that the reader will have to study what follows in close conjunction with the score. The following are the basic positions for the chorus. In the illustrative figures, heavy type is used to indicate a man and lighter type for a woman. For convenience here, let us imagine that 16 men and 16 women will make up the chorus. Sopranos and contraltos will be numbered 1 to 8 and 9 to 16 and tenors and basses, 21 to 28 and 29 to 36, according to height.

Position 1—Tenors enter on bridge, L.U.E., basses from L.2.E. They line up along the back (Fig. 2.)

Fig. 2

Tenors enter on Bridge, L.U.E. Basses from L.2.E. They line up along the back.

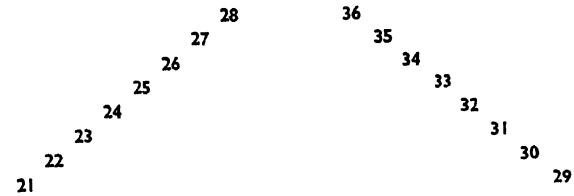


Their next move is to Position 2—Tenors move down right of stage, basses left, in two lines (Fig. 3.) (*Note:* The basses will turn left to reach their positions.)

Then to Position 3—This is a simple variant. They move into a semi-circle and Phyllis comes forward for her solo,

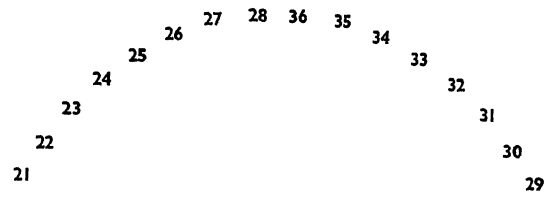
Fig. 3

Tenors move down R., basses L. in two lines.



"For riches and rank". This is to soften the arrangement of the straight lines and fill in the gap at the back, left vacant when Phyllis moves forward. (Fig. 4.)

Fig. 4



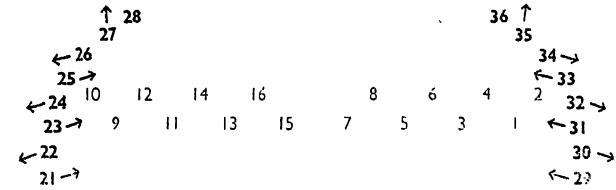
Position 4—The chorus of fairies enter here, R.2.E. They enter in twos, trip once round the stage, then take up their positions. The men break to let them through as they enter and then take up their new positions in two rows to right and left of the stage, with the fairies in two rows in the centre (Fig. 5.)

Fig. 5

Positions of fairies in wings before entrance (R.2) (N.B.—grouping of sopranos and contraltos for height).

10 12 14 16 8 6 4 2
9 11 13 15 7 5 3 1

Positions on stage, after entrance.



Position 5—The fairies move, end girls coming slightly forward, the men remain.

Position 6—The men break their rigid formation into informal groups of two. (Fig. 6.)

Fig. 6

Position 7—The peers move back into a semi-circle. This leads eventually into the last section, Allegro Marziale, "With Strephon for your foe"—what is known in musical comedy circles as a "marching number"—and a superb example this is.

It is not proposed to go into any further detail from this point. There are some six basic positions for this section of the finale, but the changes occur more quickly.

Drilling the Chorus.

Positions 1 to 7 having been set, they will then be drilled *without any music and in silence*, the producer directing "Male chorus, position 1. Now, position 2. Now 3. Fairies, line up for entrance on right. Now enter, tripping. Now, everybody into position 4"—and so on.

When everybody is quite sure where he is going to, the musical cues for the changes are given.

For instance, the peers will make their entrance for position 1. There is a slow "Moderato" introduction of ten bars. The peers creep in stealthily, treading a step on the first of each bar only. Even this needs drilling. The producer will find that even the smallest detail needs the closest attention, and he will be lucky if he is not reduced to some such formulated direction as—"Right foot, 2, 3, 4, left foot, 2, 3, 4", and so on. In anything of this highly formal and stylised nature, *everything* must be worked out; ultimate success all depends upon slickness in performance.

If necessary, the peers will take more than one step per bar for the last two or three bars, in order to be in position with hand to right ear in a listening attitude, for Strephon's "When darkly looms the day".

Position 2 occurs at the bottom of page 82, when peers have "He says she's his mother! Ha, ha, ha!"—and so on, giving cues for each change of position. A great deal of repetition with the chorus alone will probably be necessary before one new position merges naturally and smoothly into the next.

When this has been grasped, the principals will come on the floor. They will have been rehearsed in their placings and will (we hope!) know where they are going. This time, *the music is sung by the full company*, but there will be no gestures for expression from the chorus. They will continue to concentrate only on their movements to and from each position.

When these have been thoroughly assimilated, the producer will proceed to superimpose slowly and methodically whatever concerted gestures he wants from the chorus, and eventually, the whole scene will acquire shape, life and unanimity of purpose. By the time the actual date of performance is reached, all the preceding "drill" should have become quite natural to the chorus,

and they will unconsciously have begun to add something to it individually in their own particular ways.

In a finale such as this, the chorus is being used as a unit, and when it begins to exist as an entity, it serves as a brilliant and illuminating commentary on the main dramatic action which is in the hands of the principals. It is on what they are doing that the audience will be concentrating, and no slovenliness from the chorus must be allowed to provide a distraction.

It is essential that it should be impressed upon them that anything in the way of fidgeting or looking at the audience during solo work from the principals is fatal to the success of a production. They must be taught to watch and concentrate keenly on whichever principal has the solo music. In this way they can exert over the audience a kind of hypnotic suggestion—where the chorus look, the audience will look. If they have to stand still, they should stand *perfectly* still. A single movement of the hand, a turn of the head or any slight gesture of an extraneous and unnecessary character can distract the attention of a theatre full of people.

There are innumerable instances of the formal use of the chorus for purposes of spectacle. Wagner, Verdi, Puccini provide examples of all kinds—the final scene from "The Mastersingers", the Grand March in "Aida", the entrance of Turandot and many others are instances of this use of the chorus in its grandest and most spectacular form. The same sort of thing obtains even in the much humbler finales of the least pretentious ballad operas.

Background for a Marching Song.

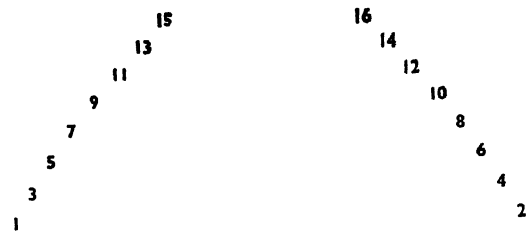
There is another kind of formal use of the chorus which is constantly cropping up, perhaps more frequently in musical comedy and light opera than in grand opera, and this is the kind of thing that happens when a soloist, usually the hero, has a solo with chorus of a military nature—the sort of marching song previously referred to.

For instance, let us imagine that the hero, whom we will call A, has returned from the wars, accompanied by his two friends, B and C. He is going to sing the song, which consists of an introduction of 4 bars, a chorus of 32 bars, an interlude of 8 bars, a verse of 16 bars, a chorus of 32 bars again, which is repeated, and then another verse of 8 bars, followed by a final chorus of 32 bars. It is obvious that musically this is going to be a section of considerable length. It is also most likely that all that the producer will get in the way of direction will be something of this nature—"Enter male chorus, followed by A, accompanied by B and C. At the reprise of the second chorus, after the first verse, enter the ladies' chorus". He may not even get as much as this. If a concerted item of this kind is to be successful, a great deal of ingenuity must go into the working out of what the chorus are going to do as they stand behind the soloists. It is obvious that if they are going to remain in a completely static position for the whole time, the audience are going to be unutterably bored.

As a guide to the inexperienced producer as to what is expected, something on the following lines is suggested.

Introductory four bars,—male chorus (numbered 1 to 16) enter from the back and line up in two lines (Fig. 7.) They remain in this position for the first unison chorus of 32 bars, marking time throughout.

Fig. 7

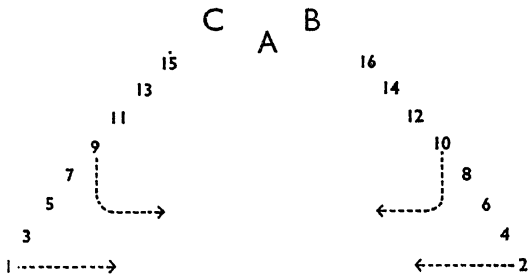


The interlude of eight bars—Enter A with B and C from back. They take up their position at the top, shall we say,

of three steps. For the first four bars, the chorus turn inwards and salute. On the second four bars, A, B and C move down to the front. Last two beats, chorus do a "front turn". (Fig. 8.)

Fig. 8

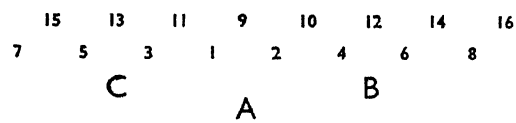
Principals enter on stage.



A has a chorus of 32 bars as a solo. The chorus here have four basic changes of position.

First eight bars, break into two lines and march facing inwards, (Fig. 9.)

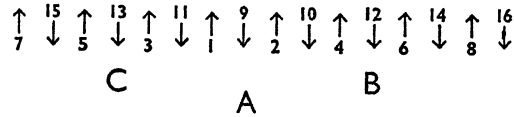
Fig. 9



Second eight bars—face front and mark time for eight bars.

Third eight bars—back row march forward four paces in between front row who step back four paces. Mark time two bars. Then reverse the movement back to places, four paces. Mark time two bars (Fig. 10.)

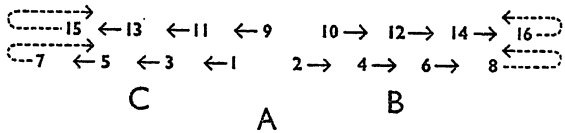
Fig. 10



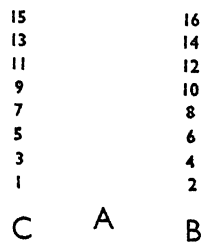
Fourth eight bars—both lines turn outwards from the middle and march to two rows facing upstage (Fig. 11.) On last two beats all turn about to face front.

Fig. 11

Turn outwards from middle and march to two rows. Break at 2 and 10, turning to left and at 1 and 9, turning to right. 15 and 7, and 16 and 8, lead the marching.



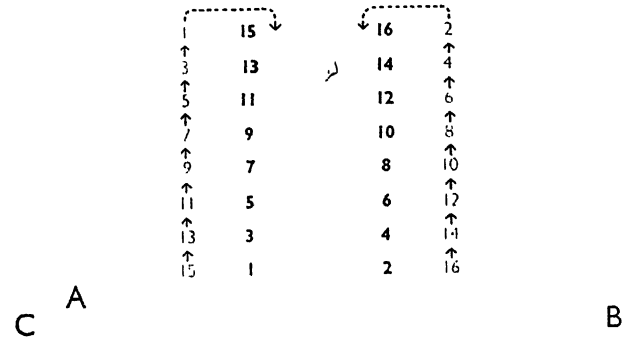
Going to :



The second chorus of 32 bars is sung by the full chorus, the women enter from right and left on first bar and go to positions outside the men (Fig. 12.) A, B and C move over to sides.

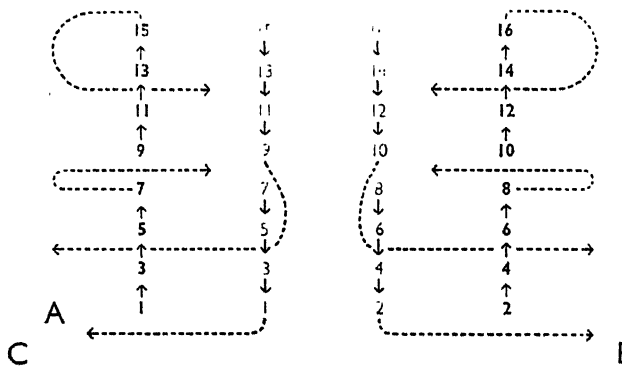
Fig. 12

Women partner men here and use the number of their escort.



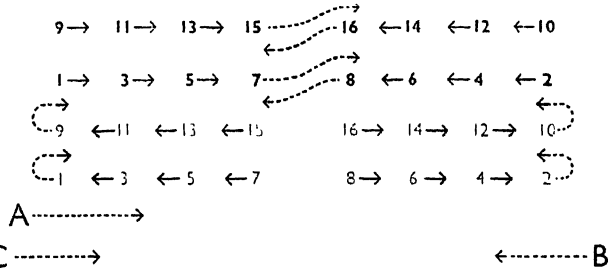
The second eight bars—women march down centre (Fig. 13.)

Fig. 13



Third eight bars—the chorus come forward into four lines, women moving down and out, men up and in. (Fig. 14.)

Fig. 14



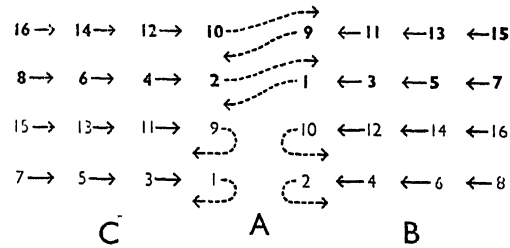
Fourth eight bars—mark time.

A, B and C come back to centre for second verse. During this verse, the chorus can perform what is known as the "box movement". They move in sets of four during the first eight bars, moving in a clockwise direction, and during the second eight bars, reversing the movement so that they end up in their original positions.

The second and final chorus of 32 bars—break at middle, two paces outwards two bars, mark time four bars, back to places two bars (here a set of eight speciality dancers could possibly march down the centre and take up their positions as an additional front row for a military dance to follow the chorus proper.) A, B and C have moved over to the sides again.

Second eight bars—chorus change sides, men on the right moving behind men on the left, women turning out

Fig. 15



and marching inwards. Face inwards for these eight bars and mark time (Fig. 15.)

Third eight bars—face the front and mark time eight bars.

Fourth eight bars—men march across again, and the women turn inwards at the middle and march outwards back to their original places; face the front on the last two chords at salute position (Fig. 16)

Fig. 16

The chorus are now in their original positions. The producer will enjoy himself trying out this sequence of routines !

As was mentioned, this kind of thing is probably commoner in musical comedy than in more serious opera, but it is what is often encountered and what has to be dealt with when it comes along. It is a considerable test of the producer's ingenuity. It is obvious also that examples of formalised treatment of the chorus could be multiplied indefinitely, but perhaps enough has been said to impress upon the producer the necessity for building up his ensembles from the point of view of movement as much as possible. The audience must never be allowed to become bored by a stage picture that is held too long.

The less formal type of finale.

There are also finales where a much less formal style of production is essential. For instance, quite frequently, an emotional climax has been reached and the full company

is brought on to the stage at this point. Very often here, the principals will have the bulk of the movement and the chief function of the chorus will be to sing. Here the music is of first importance, and from the producer's point of view, the situation is a comparatively easy one. All that is necessary are illustrative gestures which should only be used when they will emphasize *what the music is trying to say*.

There is another type of the use of the chorus which arises when "background movement" is necessary. For instance, it is by no means uncommon for a scene to be laid in the courtyard of an inn, where the chorus are grouped round tables and are not singing at all, the action being in the hands of the principals at the front of the stage. Or the scene may be in a street, as in "La Bohème", Act 2, or even in a café or nightclub, as occurs with too frequent regularity in musical comedy.

Wherever it is, this background movement is essential to provide atmosphere, and it must be worked out with no less care than in the case of a drilled ensemble. It is no use saying to the chorus, "You are in the courtyard of an inn. You are drinking. Enjoy yourselves. Get on with it". Everything must be planned beforehand. A short suggestion of what is needed might be helpful.

We can imagine that the scene is a beer-garden and there are four tables at the back of the stage, two to right and two to left. At the front of the stage, the principals are carrying on with the main action of the opera. At the back stands the innkeeper with four waiters. Some such directions as the following will probably occur in the libretto, "During the following pages, customers enter, greet their friends, seat themselves at tables, and are served with refreshment". We will again imagine that there are eight ladies and eight men who are going to be the customers. There are also some dozen others moving on and off the stage at the back.

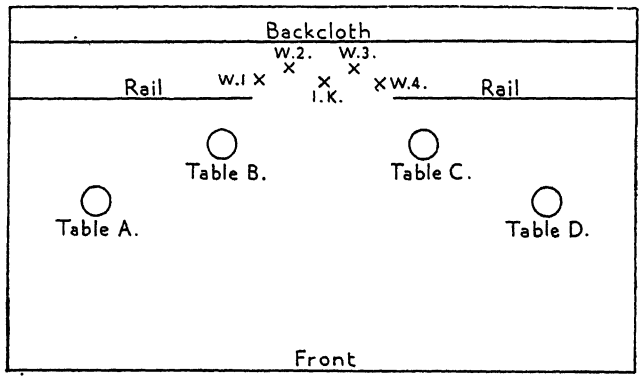
The set at the back of the stage will be as in Fig. 17 Couples are numbered in partners, the lady taking the number of her escort. The waiters are numbered one to

four. I.K. stands for Innkeeper. Tables are lettered A, B, C and D.

The dialogue or music as the case may be is taking place at the front of the stage during this background "business".

Couples 1 and 2 enter at back, greet the I.K., who beckons to Waiter No. 1, who conducts them to table A. Waiter goes through the business of taking an order.

Fig. 17



I.K. returns to back to meet couples 3 and 4. Waiter No. 4 conducts them to table D. Similar business. As this is taking place, Waiter No. 1 exits left back, presumably to give the order.

Couples 5 and 6 enter, greet I.K., and Waiter No. 2 leads them to table B. At the same time, Waiter No. 4 exits left.

Couples 7 and 8 enter and are conducted by Waiter No. 3 to table C. Waiter No. 2 exits and Waiter No. 1 now returns with the order.

It will be noticed that the corner tables on each side are "dressed" first. The producer should watch the way in which the balance is maintained, by attending to alternate sides of the stage.

Waiter No. 3 then exits and Waiter No. 4 returns. Waiter No. 1, who has now delivered his order goes up to

the back. I.K. moves to table A and goes through the business of seeing if the customers' wants have been attended to. Waiter No. 2 then returns to table B.

Waiter No. 4 goes up back. I.K. goes across to table D and goes through similar "business". Waiter No. 3 returns to table C, and Waiter No. 2 goes to back.

I.K. crosses to table B. Waiter No. 3 goes to back and I.K. then goes over to C.

The four waiters are then back in their positions, and the I.K. joins them.

With natural action and dumb show from the couples at the tables, this setting can last for some time. It is possible that there may be about here the entrance from the back of some principal character. In this case, the entry of the eight couples must be carefully timed to coincide with the libretto or music.

Eventually, the producer will feel that the moment has arrived for the continuation of a background movement. At this point a second set of couples begin to enter and something on the following lines must be worked out.

Couple 9 enter, greet I.K., cross over to table A, and talk with friends. Couple 1 rise and exit and couple 9 sit in their places. Waiter 1 then goes over to table A.

The interest must then move to the other side of the stage. Couples 3 and 4 rise and exit. Waiter 1, having taken his order, exits left.

Two new couples, 10 and 11, then enter, speak to I.K., who takes them over to table D. Waiter 4 joins them, removes empty glasses, takes their order and exits.

This sort of arrangement can obviously be continued as long as the action calls for it. At the same time, supernumerary couples can be moving across the back of the stage, on and off the set, according to the wishes of the producer.

Enough has been said to show the beginner how to set about this sort of thing.

In the case of a crowd scene, where excitement or

chaotic movement is to be suggested, as in the finale to Act I of "The Yeomen of the Guard", and where the chorus has to appear to move about all over the stage, it is a good plan to divide the chorus into small groups and work out their movement to and from various corners and position points on the stage. This can be safely left to the producer to work out for himself.

To summarise, it will be seen that as far as stage movement of the chorus is concerned, the important points are:—

(*a*) Sort out the voices and learn the music thoroughly first.
(*b*) Prepare a prompt book and work out all the movements thoroughly before coming on to the floor.
(*c*) Give all the movements without music first.
(*d*) Then add the music.
(*e*) Then build up gesture and expression.

REHEARSING THE PRINCIPALS

Casting the parts.

It is the practice with most operatic societies to hold auditions for the principal parts, although in some cases these are dispensed with and members of the society are invited to take various roles. The practice of a general audition is a good one in so far as it frequently brings to light unsuspected talent, and also gives members of the chorus a chance to try themselves out as soloists and to get over "nerves" and such things.

Sections of dialogue, if there is any, should be selected and passages of music which will test the singers as to range and powers of interpretation.

The selection of the music is usually comparatively simple, but if there are ensembles, such as trios or quartets, in which the singers have to take part, it is a good plan to select, in addition to the solo item, some short passage by which they can be tested for their ability to hold an inner part, for example, or in which their voices can be tried out for blend with other singers.

Whether it is necessary to ask for gesture and some indication of what they can do as actors in this vocal audition it is up to the producer to decide. It should not be forgotten that the opera singer is, or should be, a combination of the vocalist and the actor. Only too frequently the problem arises of a choice between the man who has the voice but cannot act and the man who can act but has a very limited vocal ability. It is for the musical director, producer and committee to decide what they are looking for—a singer, or someone who can give the best all-round performance.

The task of the audition committee is a most distasteful one and most people who have had anything to do with

this side of operatic production will admit that they are only too glad when the auditions are all over and the parts have been allocated. Tact in all directions has to be exercised.

In setting the dialogue for audition purposes, it is a good plan, if possible, to select passages in which two or three applicants for parts can be heard at the same time. That is to say, if there is a passage in which the hero, the heroine and perhaps another character can be heard, and which provides sufficient material for a test of what they can do, this passage should be chosen. Auditions are apt to become long and wearisome businesses, and time is saved in this way.

A Preliminary Rehearsal.

It is a good plan, before any actual floor work is started, to gather the principals together and to go through the whole work. If there is spoken dialogue, positions should be given to the principals who will make notes, and the same sort of thing should be done with the musical score. Wherever there is action or change of position, this should be written in at the preliminary rehearsal.

It is obvious, of course, that the producer will have prepared his prompt book beforehand. It cannot be stated too frequently that he must know exactly what he wants and that he must not change his mind unless an alteration is unavoidable.

The music and dialogue are then rehearsed "on the floor". At the first floor rehearsal, positioning should be the first thing to be concentrated on. It is a good plan, when a short scene has been gone through, for the principals to walk through their movements without any music or dialogue, so that they know exactly what they are doing. Each individual principal should go through his changes of position on the floor on his own, if the movement becomes at all complicated, that is to say, without any other principals taking part.

When this basic factor has been decided, gesture and interpretative movement can be superimposed. It should not be forgotten that music takes much longer to say a thing than actual speech and the technique of gesture for opera is a very different thing from that which pertains to purely dramatic work. It is often found that the singer who has had some experience of ballet or mime is very successful in this side of operatic interpretation. In the case of a soloist who has no experience at all, the producer will have no alternative but to go through the part with him line by line and phrase by phrase, and "set" his movements. This is best done at a private rehearsal. Opera is often artificial in this connection, and for some time the inexperienced soloist will feel embarrassed and self-conscious. It is by no means unusual for him to want to laugh, even at moments of great tension. The writer has vivid recollections of rehearsing "The Mikado" with a group of school boys and girls, when, for some reason, the Katisha found her entrance at the finale to Act One extremely funny. She could not sing her first phrase, "Your revels cease. Assist me all of you", without wanting to laugh. There is nothing to do here except to repeat the passage, until the music begins to be bigger than the soloist. The girl here obviously found herself in a situation which struck her as ludicrous, and she could not forget her own personality. Eventually, after much repetition, she found herself carried away by the emotional intensity of the musical situation, and she was able to forget herself as a schoolgirl, and become for the time being the thwarted and derided spinster. With young people in particular it is no use for the producer to simulate rage or even to go into an actual temper for that matter. Patience must be exercised until the soloist begins to feel that the music is the thing that matters.

Understudies.

The question of the understudy is a very difficult one. Some societies find it difficult enough to cast the parts

without providing understudies, but if it is at all possible, members should be allocated to these positions. They should attend the rehearsals of the principals, learn the movement and "business" as the production goes along, and, if possible, it is a good plan to arrange for one or two special understudy rehearsals. It is realised that this is very frequently difficult to do. The producer and musical director usually have their hands full in getting the work on the stage in the time available, without having to devote extra time to additional rehearsals of this kind, but they are a good thing if they can be arranged. The snag in the appointment of understudies is that whoever understudies the part will, of course, expect to perform it if the person actually cast is ill or unavailable, and therefore the allocation of people who act as understudies should be done with almost as much care and thought as the actual casting. This is what makes this aspect of production difficult and it is probably why some societies, in the case of the principal parts in particular, prefer in the case of illness or unavailability to bring in an outsider or a member of another society who has already done the part. It is a difficult situation altogether, and just "one of those things" with which a producer has always to contend in an amateur production. Usually he has to "keep his fingers crossed" and hope for the best.

When the principals have been rehearsed in their own movement, dialogue and music, they should then come together with the full company. It is a good plan to rehearse those sections which concern everybody first, and omit at full rehearsals those parts of the opera which concern principals only. When the concerted numbers are on their way, the whole scene or act can then be assembled in its proper sequence.

In drawing up a "rehearsal calls" timetable, it is suggested that it might be useful to leave the last two or three weeks without any definite arrangements being made. By this time, the producer will know what is

needed in the way of calls to bring the work properly into shape.

After floor work has been roughed out and the company begins to feel that it knows where it is going and what it has to do, it will generally be found that one or two "revision of music" rehearsals are very definitely necessary. It is amazing, even after several weeks hard and thorough work at the music alone, how quickly the score seems to evaporate from the comprehension of the chorus. For this reason, music rehearsals should be called, when the score is thoroughly revised. This practice of revision should also go on, if possible, after each section has been set. As far as the principals are concerned, they should be encouraged to arrange for rehearsals in their own homes with other members of the cast with whom they have to perform, or to co-operate with the accompanist in impromptu or private practices.

CHAPTER III

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONDUCTOR AND THE PRODUCER

The Music.

Consider carefully the vocal demands of the principal parts before choosing an opera. Cut your coat according to your cloth. If you have not got a really strong "tenor" lead, you will obviously want to avoid "Pirates of Penzance" or "The Barber of Seville", for instance.

Most societies like plenty of chorus work. The chorus does not like to spend too much time sitting about in the dressing-rooms. If a work is chosen in which the chorus has not much to do, see that the next choice of opera is one that will give them plenty of scope.

Watch the inner parts. See that the contraltos and tenors know their parts. Rehearse these thoroughly, frequently in three parts, omitting the top line altogether.

If any part divides, as for example, the soprano into first and second sopranos, be firm about the balance. Many girls go into the soprano section because the top line is easiest to learn. Have no nonsense here.

Do not be afraid to make slight alterations in the tenor line if it is too high and you are dealing with a society composed of young people.

At rehearsals, frequently transpose down, if the tenor line is high. The tenors will appreciate this when passages have to be repeated.

It is important to have a strong and competent leader in the orchestra. Before orchestral rehearsals begin, go through the score thoroughly with him.

Check over the orchestral parts thoroughly in advance; they are often in lamentable condition. See that previously inserted pencil markings are erased. Where there are to be "repeats" or "cuts", see that these are clearly marked and understood.

Attend to the inner parts of the orchestra. You need in particular good violas and good horns. It is very often worth-while, in a small combination of, say, twenty, to have a second horn. You do not want your orchestra to sound hollow.

It is more than likely that you will need professional help in the formation of your orchestra. These players have to be paid. So see that you make the best use of their services at the orchestral rehearsal (or rehearsals, if you are lucky enough to be able to afford more than one) by not wasting time. Cut out all libretto and get down to the music. The members of the orchestra do not like sitting about whilst points of production and dialogue are being discussed.

For ordinary purposes and where the principals' voices are of moderate strength, some such balance as the following works. In an orchestra of twenty, which is as much as most amateur solo voices can cope with, four first violins, two second violins, one viola (if he is very strong—two, if not) one, or two, cellos, one double-bass; one of each instrument in the woodwind quartet, with possibly, for some works, a second flute or a second clarinet; two horns, one or perhaps two trumpets according to the scoring, and one (or again perhaps two) trombones; percussion. Do not use the piano unless you cannot hold the group together without it, or unless it is scored for, which is not very usual.

The actual business of conducting does not come within the scope of this book. It is sufficient to emphasise that the beat must be clear and definite.

Recitative can often be slovenly and prove a pitfall when the orchestral accompaniment is added. Where there is anything at all substantial for the orchestra to do in the matter of accompanied recitative, do not allow too much freedom from the soloist in the matter of time. This is all very well when rehearsals are unlimited or if the orchestra knows the work inside out. If something not very well-known is being performed, it is best to play for safety. The soloist must keep to the beat as much as possible.

See that the chorus make a good "attack" on their opening phrases. Rehearse these openings, using only the first words or the phrase leading up to the first strong beat. For example, "If you want to know who we are", rehearse the phrase, "If you *want*", stressing the *last* word and taking care that every member of the chorus enters on the *first* word.

Insist on clear crisp diction. Look after the consonants. "Use the lips, tongue and teeth" cannot be repeated too often. The audience wants to know what the opera is about, so the words must get over.

You will require a number of "music" rehearsals before you "go on the floor". For some reason in some societies these rehearsals seem to be regarded as of minor importance. The attitude in these cases is apparently that the music can be "picked up" as actual floor-work begins. "If I don't know the words, I don't bother. I just sing 'rhubarb' " This is no doubt amusing but not very helpful from the audience's point of view! Insist on conscientious attendance at your music rehearsals.

Casting.

You will have considered the material that is available in the society before you choose the work. Most societies object, and quite rightly, to too much introduction of "outsiders" to fill the principal parts.

Fix the date of your "audition" well in advance and give plenty of notice of the music and dialogue that is to be heard, that is if you are going to allocate your parts in this way, which is the usual one in amateur societies.

The casting of parts is often the most difficult and most unpleasant part of the production of an opera or musical play, particularly if enthusiasm is high. Somebody's feelings are bound to be hurt and the greatest tact and diplomacy will be needed from both producer and musical director. But provided there is the right spirit—"the show's the thing"—this sometimes awkward stage of the proceedings will work itself out.

At the first rehearsal, a list of detailed "rehearsal calls" should be available, so that all members, particularly those who intend to apply for principal parts, will know when they are required. In school productions, most frequently rehearsed after school hours, working out this "time-table" will be a ticklish business: the better the school, the more "activities" there will be afoot. But here again a diplomatic approach will help in smoothing over difficulties.

Go through the music you have selected for the audition test with the full company and give them some indication of what you are looking for in the part.

If it is at all possible for a professional performance of the work in hand to be seen beforehand, take advantage of such an opportunity by organising a party to visit the theatre. This is particularly useful in school performances, where the young people have very little idea of the standard of performance that can be reached. I remember taking a party of boys to see "The Yeoman of the Guard", preparatory to a school performance of that opera. As an audience they were superb. They gave the performance their keenest attention and to see the concentration and appreciation (and sometimes condemnation!) expressed in their faces was a joy. Apart from anything else, this sort of thing is a good lesson in "theatre-going". To be able to give a fair appraisal of a work in performance is, after all, one of the reasons for the existence of operatic groups. The critical and appreciative faculties are cultivated.

Production.

Prepare your "prompt-book" carefully in advance. Know what you want, particularly in regard to movement and positioning, and stick to it. If you make an alteration, explain why.

The method of numbering and recording the positions of the chorus is explained fully in the chapter on Ensemble Work.

It is a good plan to go through the whole work with the principals before any floor work is begun and give them their basic positions, movements, entrances and exits. This saves time at rehearsal.

Do your work at home before you come to the rehearsal room. Be clear in your mind as to what you want, particularly where the chorus is concerned. Your company like you to be definite. They do not like fumbling.

You can allow your principals more latitude. You will want to see the parts grow and develop in their hands when once you have indicated the way you want things to go. But even here, such things as positioning and movement must be clear from the start. "Business" will then begin to develop almost on its own.

Gesture needs particular attention. In opera, it is chiefly on the "grand style" and considerable freedom in the use of hands and arms is necessary. Give some easy preliminary hand and arm exercises in this direction. Nothing looks worse than the singer whose arm movements all come from the elbow. In a big sweeping phrase, the arm movements must be of a corresponding breadth and freedom, so as to interpret the music in the movement. Children are better in this respect than adults and modern tendencies in infant and primary education are helpful.

Remember that music takes longer to say a thing than do words. Therefore, hold the gesture to the end of the musical or verbal phrase.

The Dress Rehearsal.

The dress rehearsal can be a trying experience for everybody concerned. Try and ease matters by having everything in hand before the rehearsal.

You need a competent stage manager. It is his business to attend as many preliminary rehearsals as possible. He should be as familiar with the opera as you or the members of the cast are.

Work out your lighting "plot" with the electricians in

advance. Do not have to waste time playing about with combinations of colours and effects.

Your prompter should also have been in attendance at most of the rehearsals. He should know the text and incidental "business" inside out. Do not drag somebody in at the last moment to do this most important job.

You need an efficient "call boy". See that he has a carefully marked script, giving ample time in the "warning" and "calling" of the players. He should know where the players are to enter from, *e.g.* "Call Lord Chancellor R.2". Some principals look after their own "calls", but in this way, the call-boy can see if they are already available before he goes to call them.

If you have a large company and are working in a hall specially hired for the performances and with hired scenery, you will probably have only one or two rehearsals on the stage. At the dress-rehearsal, you will want to go through the whole work with as few halts as possible. For this reason it is a good plan to check over all the groupings and positioning in sequence before the actual rehearsal begins.

Watch the corners of the stage downstage and see that they are properly "dressed". Chorus members have a tendency to close in on the action and unsightly gaps are left.

Be on the look-out in informal grouping by the full company for "straight lines" in the formation. Any amount of preliminary warning does not seem sufficient to prevent this constant relapse into rigid formation. The lines must be broken.

When the rehearsal has started it should proceed without break, if possible. Have a note-book with you and jot down anything that needs correction as the rehearsal proceeds. Then discuss these points with the company at the end of the act or scene.

Lighting and Scenery.

It is beyond the scope of this book to deal at length with such vast subjects as scenery and lighting.

In the first place, they depend very considerably on the conditions under which the producer has to work, and the requirements will obviously vary in innumerable points of detail, according to the size of the stage and hall.

As far as scenery is concerned, much can be done on the small stage with curtains, movable screens and easily carried pieces of "property" such as trees, shrubs, etc. The well-known firms who supply scenery have also "sets" available for the small stage. Companies such as Capes of Chiswick or Stage Scenery Limited can be consulted if hired scenery is required, but a great deal of fun can be had from the making of one's own scenic accessories, although this, at the present time, sometimes becomes rather difficult and expensive. Some suggestions have been given in discussing individual operas later on in the book, as to what is required in each case, but it is quite impossible here to give any general directions, for requirements obviously vary with what each opera needs.

The same can be said for lighting. This is a highly specialised and important part of production and the wise producer will see to it, before he sets out on even the initial stages of putting a work on the stage, that he has an experienced, capable and thoroughly reliable colleague who will look after the practical side of this aspect of the production for him. It is usually not difficult to find someone with enthusiasm in this direction. It is a very different matter to find someone with real knowledge and, possibly, experience. In the case of some operas and musical plays, "lighting plots" are supplied at the end of the libretto but in the majority of the works which the enterprising producer will want to attempt, there is very little of this material available. It is a great help if the company is able to rehearse on the stage on which the production is to take place, and lighting can then be worked out as the production goes along. But very often the amateur company has to be content with one or two rehearsals in the actual place of performance, and in this

case, it is essential that the "lighting plot" should be worked out beforehand. A firm such as Strand Electric Ltd. can supply all sorts of equipment.

Properties and Property Master are also an important item which should be looked into beforehand. Here again, some works supply a list of properties required, with details as to the Acts in which they are used, where they are to be placed on the stage or where they are to be available in the wings. If this list is not available, one should be compiled by the Property Master, who should work out the arrangement most carefully with his assistants.

As has been said before, the importance of having a thoroughly reliable and co-operative Stage Manager is too obvious to need emphasis. The stage manager is nearly as important as the producer. On the nights of the performance, he is probably the man who matters most.

Preliminary enquiries before rehearsals begin.

It should be hardly necessary to remind the producer that before setting out on the presentation of any work, enquiries should be made as to whether it is available for amateur performance. In some cases, particularly as regards the Gilbert & Sullivan operas, restrictions are laid down in this direction. For instance, if the D'Oyly Carte Company is appearing in a certain area, performances of "G. & S." cannot be given within a certain distance and period of time from the date and place of the professional performance. The score of an opera will inform the producer from whom enquiries are to be made. He should not delay in finding out business details as to availability and fees for performance. The percentage or performing fee varies very considerably according to the work and the conditions under which it is to be presented. Sometimes a fixed fee is charged, but more usually, a percentage of the takings is asked for, which may vary from 5 per cent to 12½ per cent or even more.

To end on a cheerful note, it has been known for

permission for the performance of a work to be given without any fee at all being charged! But a producer can expect this, alas, only very rarely.

N. O. D. A.

There is an excellent Association, the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, to which all operatic societies can affiliate themselves to their own great advantage. A great deal of information of value to both conductor and producer is available through this channel. Enquiries should be made to the Secretary, 8 Bernard St., W.C.1.

CHAPTER IV

A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE MATERIAL AVAILABLE

The amount of material available is enormous. The beginner, with little first-hand experience of opera-going to help him, may perhaps find the vast and infinitely varied choice overwhelming. This applies particularly to the large number of enthusiasts who live outside the London area, where there is now, as never before, the opportunity to become familiar with standard and sometimes lesser known works of all kinds. Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells, the English Opera Group, the London Opera Club and numerous smaller organisations provide a chance to acquire a very comprehensive familiarity.

Some survey of the field may, therefore, be useful. Anything very detailed is beyond the scope of this chapter, but the beginner may be helped by being given some indication of where to look and what to avoid. Standard works, such as Professor Dent's little book *Opera* (Penguin), Gustav Kobbé's *Complete Opera Book* and Ernest Newman's *Opera Nights* (both Putnam) are invaluable as sources of reference.

The producer and conductor must together consider an opera from three angles; firstly from the purely vocal point of view, bearing in mind the demands made upon the voices; secondly from the orchestral angle, with consideration of the part the orchestra plays and the presentation of the whole conception; and thirdly from the point of view of stage presentation and the amount of spectacle and scenic effect that is essential. Wagner, Verdi and Puccini, for example, make exceptional demands in all three directions so that for successful production by amateurs, they are exceedingly difficult problems to tackle, if not in most cases quite impossible.

It is fairly safe to say that up to the time of Gluck, there is not much that the amateur cannot attempt, but these earlier works are chiefly "collector's pieces". Whilst the chief requisite for their performance is musicianship, they make comparatively little appeal to audiences and this financial aspect must not be lost sight of. On the other hand, anyone with the initiative to revive any of them will have the satisfaction of knowing that his work will be at once unusual and of considerable value. It is not unheard of for the amateur to step in where the professional has feared to tread. There are Monteverdi, Lully, Rameau, Scarlatti and Jommeli waiting to be recreated. Possibly the degree of scholarship demanded here would be asking quite a great deal.

Purcell has much to offer. He had a real feeling for the stage and a keen sense of drama. His "Dido and Aeneas" is discussed elsewhere. There are also "The Faerie Queen" and "King Arthur", which, if not so dramatically convincing, offer considerable opportunity for dancing, mime and spectacle.

Early 18th Century.

Handel has fared better than most opera composers of this early period, and from time to time one of his operas crops up in a stage performance. The point to be remembered here is that, although many of the individual arias are of great beauty, the dramatic construction of the complete works is most often poor. One aria follows another with monotonous regularity, the intervening recitatives alone serving to provide movement and interest in the development of the narrative. The total effect is too static. It is very difficult for the producer to achieve anything that is dramatically convincing to a modern audience. But all the music is, above all else, singable, the orchestration is simple and staging is what the producer decides to make of it. A Handel opera can be very beautiful in a calm and classical way. The producer should

concentrate on the building up of a series of beautiful stage pictures. Lighting may help him and rhythmic movement or miming from a group of dancers should also be a means of enlivening the presentation. One remembers a revival of "Rodelinda" at the Old Vic before the war, which was very beautifully done. "Acis and Galatea" was originally a "masque" and would possibly be as good as any of the composer's works to begin with.

Bach has nothing of real value for the stage, although attempts have been made, but with little success, to infuse dramatic interest into his "Coffee Cantata" and "Phoebus and Pan". Pergolese, who wrote fifteen operas in his twenty-six years of life, has some graceful music to his credit. "La Serva Padrona" is probably his best known work.

The name of Buononcini is chiefly connected nowadays with scattered arias which occur occasionally in concert programmes. Historically he takes his place as Handel's rival in the operatic feuds of the London of the early 18th century. It would be fun to see one of his efforts revived.

The English Ballad Operas.

The English ballad operas begin with "The Beggar's Opera" (also discussed in a later chapter). There are many others, which if not so robust and full-blooded, are very suitable for revival by amateur groups. Arne, Dibden, Arnold, Hook and Shield are composers whose works could be looked into. Arne's "Love in a Village" is a charming little conception with many lovely melodies, but not much chorus work. "The Duenna" has a book by Sheridan, which is probably one of the best of its type ever written; and "Lionel and Clarrisa" is a highly stylised little work of much charm as a period piece, but with no chorus. The enthusiast could do much worse than to make investigations in this field. The music is easy to sing, the accompaniment straightforward and presentation ideal for a small stage.

Minor 18th Century Composers.

Amongst the Italian composers of the first half of the 18th century are to be found Paesiello (who has a hundred operas to his credit,) Cimarosa, called "the Italian Mozart", whose gay and frivolous "The Secret Marriage" would well repay attention, and Piccini (chiefly famous as Gluck's rival in the operatic contest in Parisian musical circles.) He is said to have written some 139 operas, "not one of which can now be heard"—surely there is a chance here!

In France there was Grétry, and in Germany, Dittersdorf, whose best known opera is "Doctor and Apothecary" and whose music is graceful and pleasant.

Gluck.

But the outstanding figure was Gluck, whose most famous opera is "Orpheus and Euridice". This is ideal material. There is ample work for a full chorus—shepherds, shepherdesses, demons and furies,—but all the solo parts are for female voices. Euridice, Amor and the Happy Shade are all sopranos. Orpheus in the original is a contralto. The part is sometimes sung by a tenor or high baritone, but this is inadvisable. The inspiration of the composer is best served by adhering to the original female voice. The work is easy to stage and production on the lines suggested later for "Dido and Aeneas" would do very well. In a performance at Covent Garden just before the war, the parts were mimed by members of the ballet and the actual soloists sang from the wings and were not seen. This arrangement had its points, but also its disadvantages. The intimate connection which exists between singer and audience was lost, although the standard of movement and gesture was incomparably finer and more beautiful than any opera-singer could hope to attain. There is also an arrangement of "Orpheus" for female voices. It would be a good work for school or college production. "Armide", "Alceste" and "Iphigénie en Tauride" make heavier

demands on the soloists, although none of these operas is beyond the reach of the really talented amateur.

Mozart.

Mozart should be approached with care and discrimination, but the fact that a sequence of his greatest operatic works has recently been performed by a group of amateurs —the City Opera Group—has proved that they do not lie outside the scope of a group of singers with musicianship and adequate vocal ability. "The Marriage of Figaro" has the advantage of requiring only one tenor in a comparatively small part, Don Basilio. The Count and Figaro are baritones and Doctor Bartolo is a bass. Don Curzio is a very small tenor part which an intelligent member of the chorus could cope with. The chief difficulty will be in finding a Countess, who must be at once a singer and actress of a high order. Susanna is a lovely part for a light soprano with vivacity and charm, and Marcellina (a character part for a contralto or mezzo-soprano), Cherubino and Barbarina (both light sopranos) should present no difficulties in casting. The staging, with some use of imagination in Act Four, should be possible. A recent Covent Garden production had a magnificent ballustraded flight of steps in the garden scene, behind which the singers were able to conceal themselves most realistically in this superb version of "hide and seek". Such a setting is out of the question on the amateur stage, and the ingenuity of the designer of the scenery will be taxed to provide a suitable and convincing set with the necessary alcoves and hiding places. The amount of chorus work is small.

"Don Giovanni" is a very different matter. Here, singers of the first rank must be available. Donna Anna, Donna Elvira and Don Ottavio are parts that it will be very difficult to fill satisfactorily. Unless the quality of voices is unusually high, the amateur company had better leave this work alone. The same applies to "Cosi fan Tutte" and for the same reasons.

"The Magic Flute" is very definitely a possibility. It has even been performed by boys. (As has been said before, provided the performers become inspired with the spirit of the work, this sort of adaptation has its justifications.) The most difficult role to cast will, no doubt, be that of the Queen of the Night. If there is no one available who can come near this music, the work should be ruled out. But if this part can be filled the rest of the casting should be possible.

"Idomeneo" and "La Clemenza di Tito" need careful examination in regard to the demands made on the soloists, as does "Il Seraglio". "The Impresario" is a very suitable work for two talented sopranos and a baritone. A detailed discussion appears later. "Bastien and Bastienne" is another short and graceful work for three players (soprano, tenor and bass) which does not make such demands on the vocalists as does "The Impresario."

Beethoven.

Beethoven's one opera "Fidelio" is out of the question unless a Leonora and a Florestan with voices of truly heroic proportions are available. It is encouraging to be able to recall a competitive festival at Blackpool, when "Fidelio" was used as the work from which the test pieces were drawn. There were some very creditable performances of duets, trios and quartets, and the sopranos (I think about a hundred of them competed) had "Ah! Perfidio" as *one* of their three test pieces. In all fairness, it must be said that some of them coped with this enormous aria very creditably. So that, given the voices, "Fidelio" can be approached, but voices there must be. There is superb choral writing, although dramatically the work is not always convincing on the stage. With plenty of hard work and rehearsal, the orchestra should be able to come somewhere near to coping with the score.

Rossini.

The first half of the 19th century gave us three Italians

of importance—Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. Of these Rossini is the greatest figure, and of his operas, "The Barber of Seville" is the best known and most frequently performed. It has a robust and lively plot with an abundance of comedy. For this reason, amateurs should be able to attempt the work—the appeal to the audience of the intriguing dramatic situation, and the great opportunity for comic business of all kinds, will help to overcome what vocal shortcomings there may be. Rosina, nowadays most frequently played by a soprano with a good command of coloratura, was originally intended for a *mezzo* voice, in which form the part is occasionally to be heard. Almaviva is a tenor who should have a truly lyrical quality and Figaro is one of the most famous baritone parts in the operatic repertoire. There are two magnificent bass roles, Doctor Bartolo and Don Basilio. The chorus work is slight and the staging straightforward.

If the company happens to possess a mezzo-soprano with any skill as a coloratura singer, "La Cenerentola" in which Conchita Supervia was such an enchanting Cinderella, could be looked at.

Donizetti has lovely and vivacious music to his credit and an amateur company with a feeling for style and some skill in putting over comedy should enjoy itself with "Don Pasquale". "La Favorita" and "Daughter of the Regiment" are also old favourites. The stress in the Bellini operas is on voice. To give convincing presentation, singing of a very high order is necessary. "I Puritani", "La Sonnambula" and "Norma" are his best known works.

In France, in the first half of the 19th century, we find Cherubini, whose "Water Carriers" has had a recent revival, Halévy, whose best known opera is "La Juive", and Méhul—"Joseph". Boildieu and Auber will be more useful sources to the enterprising amateur company. Their music is light and graceful and although their operas are now chiefly remembered by their overtures, the first composer's "Calife de Bagdad" and the second's "Masanielo"

or "The Dumb Girl of Portici" and "Fra Diavolo" would be worth reviving. There are also Hérold, Adam and Meyerbeer. The last named requires too much in the way of spectacle and trappings and the solo parts often call for voices of more than amateur dimensions and quality.

In Germany at this time, there is Weber. His full scale use of the orchestra rules him out. Soloists of outstanding ability are also called for. There is one short and youthful work, "Abu Hassan" that is possible for the amateur. It is lively and amusing.

Humperdinck wrote one masterpiece, "Hansel and Gretel". Vocally it is admirable material. There is a folksong element in the music that makes it very singable. There is one male part for the Father—a baritone—the rest are all female parts. The work is excellent material for a girls' school or college. The score has clear indications of what is expected by way of production, and scenically, with a little ingenuity, it is not impossible. The most spectacular scene occurs during the music for the Dream, but even here, clear indications are given in the score concerning the movements of the Angels. It should be remembered that Humperdinck was a master of the orchestra and the nearer the approach to the orchestration as it stands, the more fully will the composer's intentions be realised.

Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor" is a possibility. The work is gay and with an obvious melodic appeal. Flotow's "Martha" has an intriguing plot and abounds in light and graceful melody. There are six principal parts—soprano, contralto, tenor and three basses—and six smaller parts and ample chorus work. Everybody knows "The Last Rose of Summer" which the composer incorporated into the score.

In England there are Balfe and Wallace. It does not seem very long since one used to climb the steps to the Old Vic gallery and read chalked on the walls such exhortations as "Give us 'The Bohemian Girl'!" and "We want

'Maritana'!". Nowadays these two works seem to have become almost "museum pieces". But they abound in broad, healthy, singable melody, and an amateur company with not much experience, robust voices and a desire to let itself go, could perhaps do far worse than to have a look at the scores of these two composers. Wallace's "Lurline" was, during his lifetime, even more popular than his "Maritana".

The opening of the 19th century brought the beginnings of Russian opera, with Glinka—"A Life for the Czar". Russian opera is so very much a national product that it seems difficult for English singers to be able to cope with it. The particular quality which one associates with Russian singers and actors appears to be beyond the reach of even the best professional English singers. The amateur had better think twice before he attempts to cope with this music.

The middle of the 19th century brings a tremendous list of names. It must be borne in mind that from now onwards the part played by the orchestra in opera becomes more and more pronounced. The influence of Wagner was, of course, tremendous. The producer and conductor of an amateur group will have to examine the scenic and musical demands of any works in which they are interested with the greatest care and be quite sure that they are able to come somewhere near achieving what is required.

In Italy, the outstanding figure is Verdi. Verdi, although a master of the orchestra, is temperate in the demands he makes on his players. As in all Italian opera, the voice is of a paramount importance, but the early Verdi operas are not beyond the capabilities of a really gifted group of amateur singers. "Trovatore", "Traviata", "Simone Boccanegra" and even "Rigoletto", "Don Carlos" or "The Force of Destiny" are possibilities. The later Verdi works "Aida", "Othello" and "Falstaff"—are titanic masterpieces which should be left alone.

Boito, whose fame as a librettist overshadowed his gifts as a composer has "Mefistofele", but this is a difficult and

large-scale work. Giordano also asks too much of the amateur, but Mascagni and Leoncavallo are not so exhausting. "Cavalleria Rusticana" is easy musically, provided the voices are of ample proportions. The chorus work from a musical point of view is very straightforward. There is only one set and the work is popular. It needs, of course, a companion piece to make up a programme, and "Pagliacci" has become its almost inseparable partner. This is a more difficult work. It is musically more interesting and from the producer's angle, needs singers with real acting ability.

In France, the "Mignon" of Ambroise Thomas seems of late to have passed out of the repertoire, although not so very long ago it was a popular piece with touring companies. The music is attractive, the plot intriguing, and there are several good parts. Mignon is a mezzo-soprano. Her most famous aria, "Knowest thou the land" is well known to most singers. Philine is a coloratura role, and "I am Titania" has for years been a favourite show piece. Frederic, a young nobleman, is a part usually sung by a contralto, but which can be given to a tenor. He has the well known Gavotte, "Here I am in beauty's room". Wilhelm is a tenor, and there are three bass parts and another role, Laertes, for a tenor. The orchestration is not heavy but needs good players to ensure satisfactory performance.

"La Fille de Madame Angot" of Lecocq was a great favourite on its initial production in London. There are three sets and a good variety of male and female parts. The music is light and not too difficult, but the work needs to be performed with dash and a considerable feeling for a brisk tempo.

Gounod's "Faust" and also his "Romeo and Juliet" are both definite possibilities for an amateur company. They abound in appealing and well known melodies, there is excellent choral work, and musically they are straightforward. There is any amount of possibility for the producer to use his imagination here.

Bizet is more difficult. "Carmen" is not infrequently performed by amateurs, but the work is very difficult from vocal, instrumental and production angles. Even the best of professional companies come to grief here, but there is no doubt that the amateur can attempt the work and get a great deal of satisfaction from its performance. Whether the audience will enjoy it so much is another matter! Nothing more difficult to "put over" than the last scene can be imagined. Only too often does one recall the figure of Don José slinking about in the background during these last moments alone with Carmen. If the two chief singers in the drama can perform this death scene without introducing the element of burlesque, the producer should be able to feel that perhaps something can be done. He had better start the work backwards, and try out this scene first. Bizet's "Pearl Fishers" could also be looked at.

The "Samson and Delilah" of Saint Saens is difficult to make convincing. It was originally an oratorio and, from a dramatic point of view, makes considerable demands. None the less, if the company has a strong mezzo-soprano or contralto, the part of Delilah is a favourite one and her music is well known and popular with audiences.

Offenbach is admirable material. His best known work, "The Tales of Hoffman", is the sort of thing that a good amateur company should be able to manage. There are five scenes, including a prologue and epilogue which use the same set, and three main sets for the three stories. There are several good parts—Hoffman himself is a tenor and there are three heroines. The chorus work is ample and there is any amount of opportunity for the producer to show what he can do. Offenbach also has "The Grand Duchess" (this work requires a leading lady of outstanding vocal ability and capable of giving a performance of dash and brilliance) and "La Belle Hélène", a delightful and satirical work whose production by C. B. Cochran will long be remembered.

Massenet's "Manon" and "Thaïs" are both masterpieces.

For successful presentation they require singers of outstanding ability.

Wagner and Richard Strauss are both completely out of the question for the amateur. Their demands in all directions are titanic.

The "Barber of Bagdad" of Cornelius is a sound and amusing work. Musically it is straightforward. The part of the Barber is a fine opportunity for a bass with a gift for comedy, and there are two good parts for a tenor and a soprano. This work should definitely be looked at.

Johann Strauss is excellent from the amateur company's point of view. His masterpiece is "Die Fledermaus", recently revived under the title of "Gay Rosalinda", with an adapted and first class libretto. This arrangement does not seem, at the moment, to be available, but in its original form the work can be performed. Two good tenors are needed. Alfred in particular should have almost an Italian robustness. Eisenstein is also a tenor, but a high baritone could cope with the part. Rosalinda herself calls for a first class voice. In casting this part, the conductor should test the singer in the Czardas. Rosalinda must also be an actress capable of handling the comic situations successfully. There is a wonderful part for a light soprano, who is also a comedienne, in Adèle, the maid. Orlofsky was originally a contralto, but is sometimes sung by a baritone. There are also several other male parts, all of them good ones, and the choral work is superb. In light opera there is probably nothing finer than the finale to Act Two. There is also scope for the introduction of ballet. This occurs in the Second Act, and frequently the ballet music, as provided by the composer, is not used and his "Blue Danube" waltz substituted. The drawback to the work is that the chorus does not appear until Act Two and has not a great deal to do in Act Three, but as far as the audience is concerned, the opera is always a sure success. The producer should see that the dialogue moves at a spanking pace and there should be any amount of vivacity and movement.

"The Gipsy Baron" has an excellent score, but at the moment, although there is an English libretto available, the vocal score seems to be published with only German words. The English text would have to be written in, which would involve considerable effort on the part of the musical director. "A Night in Venice" has some delicious music, but the "book" is complicated and not very convincing.

In England, in the last half of the century, Benedict's "Lily of Killarney" had a great success. The duet for tenor and baritone, "The moon has raised her lamp above" is still sung, and the work deserves examination. Sullivan's one attempt at grand opera, "Ivanhoe" is never heard nowadays, perhaps because of the spectacular demands it makes in the way of presentation. Mackenzie and Stanford both did great work in preparing the ground for the rich harvest of British composers which followed them. Stanford's "Travelling Companion" which was revived at Sadler's Wells before the war, and his "Shamus O'Brien" are both excellent works for amateurs.

Amongst the Russian group are Rimski Korsakov, whose "Coq d'Or" has been performed by boys, and Moussorgsky, whose "Boris Godunov" has been done by amateurs.

From Bohemia, comes Dvorak, whose use of the orchestra makes him a difficult proposition for the amateur, and Smetana, whose "Bartered Bride" is discussed in detail later. This work is admirable for the amateur.

The 20th century.

Puccini is impossible for the amateur for the same reasons as rule out Wagner and Strauss, but Wolf-Ferrari is a different proposition. The recent revival, under a new title, of his "School for Fathers" has proved that his music is just the sort of thing in which the intelligent amateur singer should revel. The plot of this work is intriguing and the opera should certainly be amusing. There are also his "Susanna's Secret" (for two characters with the addition of

one speaking part) and "The Inquisitive Women", the plot of which deals with the secrets of a men's club.

Dame Ethel Smyth's largest work is "The Wreckers". This has a leading part, Thirza, for a mezzo-soprano. There is also "The Boatswain's Mate" with parts for a soprano, tenor and baritone, and two smaller roles for a policeman (bass) and a serving maid. The chorus consists of labourers and there are also parts for two cats behind the scenes! With another contrasted short work, this opera could make up a dual programme. The same composer's "Fête Galante" is an interesting short work with a more fanciful and faintly ghostly theme.

Nicholas Gatty has "Greysteel", "Prince Fenelon" and "The Tempest". The music is appealing in style and easy to approach.

Rutland Boughton's masterpiece is "The Immortal Hour", also discussed later in this volume. In addition, there are "Alcestis", "The Queen of Cornwall" (based on the Tristan and Isolde legend) and his oratorio "Bethlehem" which is often performed in stage form as a kind of nativity opera. It is good material for a school or college society.

Gustav Holst calls for musicianship of the first order in any approach to his operas. "Savitri" is a little masterpiece, and "The Perfect Fool" and "At the Boar's Head", though more difficult, would perhaps not be beyond the attainment of a very keen group of musicians.

Vaughan Williams has at least one opera which is ideal material for the amateur society—"Hugh the Drover" or "Love in the Stocks". The chief difficulty in casting this work would be to find a good Hugh, who is a tenor and should have a robust voice with a good range. He also has to take part in a wrestling match, so that he needs to be of sturdy build and with nothing anaemic in his make-up. Apart from this, the work should not be difficult to cast. Mary is a lovely part for a lyrical soprano; Aunt Jane is a contralto; John the Butcher is a hearty bass-baritone, and there are several other smaller parts. There is excellent

choral writing and the plot is intriguing and well constructed. There are two scenes only and the producer will find ample assistance in the directions given in the score. This is the sort of native product that the amateur operatic societies of this country should be looking for.

The same composer's "Sir John in Love", although not quite so well-knit dramatically, should be a possibility, and on a more sombre note is his "Riders to the Sea". There is also "The Poisoned Kiss" which caused a stir when produced by one of the older universities some years ago, after which it was given one London performance. For some reason it has been withheld from performance since then. It would be good to hear it again.

Probably the most interesting figure of recent times is Benjamin Britten. His one full scale opera "Peter Grimes" makes too great demands for the ordinary amateur society, but the works which have become associated with the English Opera Group are the sort of thing with which a really intelligent group of singers should be able to enjoy themselves. The number of instrumentalists is small, but the chamber orchestra for which Britten wrote these works needs to be composed of individual players who are all of first rate quality. The chief requisite from both singers and instrumentalists is musicianship of the highest possible order. In the case of the singers, it is not voice which is the chief consideration. Only too often, unfortunately, singers have proved themselves very limited in their ability to cope with anything at all subtle or unusual in the purely musical make-up of a work. If there is not a background of really sound musicianship, these works of Britten cannot be approached at all. "Albert Herring", by reason of the nature of its plot, would probably make the greatest appeal to both audience and singers. "The Rape of Lucretia" is a tragic work in direct contrast. The scores contain considerable detailed direction as to movement and interpretation, but the conductor should examine these works very closely before he decides to make an attempt at

production. From the musical point of view, for the amateur the idiom is most difficult. Britten has also arranged "The Beggar's Opera" in such a way that this commentary of his on the original tunes has become an entirely new work. From the singers' angle, this is not nearly so difficult a proposition as either "Albert Herring" or "The Rape of Lucretia". It is the orchestra, again, who are going to have to prove their worth as musicians.

A sensation of the last two or three years has been his "Let's Make an Opera", and already several schools have given performances of the work. This unusual conception divides into two parts, the first one of which is probably the more interesting. Here we see an impromptu opera being put together. The parts played by the conductor and the audience are too well known to need discussion here. The conductor here has an unusual task, and must have the gift of being able to put over his own personality to the audience when he is coaching them in their choruses. He must have the knack of being able to make them sing. The chief interest from the vocal point of view is in the music given to the adult characters in the opera. The children themselves seem to have perhaps too little to do.

Lighter Works.

There are innumerable works to the credit of composers of light opera. These include such things as Edward German's "Merrie England", "Tom Jones" and "A Princess of Kensington", Cellier's "Dorothy", Audran's "La Cigale" and "La Poupée", Planquette's "Les Cloches de Corneville", W. H. Bullock's "Dogs of Devon", Sullivan's "Emerald Isle", "Haddon Hall" and "The Rose of Persia", Lehar's "Gipsy Love", Messager's "Monsieur Beaucaire" and "Veronique", Sidney Jones' "My Lady Molly", Martin Shaw's "Mr. Pepys" (with an excellent book by Clifford Bax), Montague Phillip's "The Rebel Maid", and Thomas F. Dunhill's "Tantivy Towers". It is impossible to give a list here of works of this type.

There is an excellent publication by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, called "Operas Old and New", which is available to members of this Society (see p. 38).

Footnote to p. 47.

Since this chapter was written, Sir Thomas Beecham and Mr. Denis Arundel have mounted a full-scale production of "The Bohemian Girl" at Covent Garden.

CHAPTER V

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERAS

In any discussion on the choice of operas for amateurs, it is impossible to overlook the subject of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Every producer is bound, sooner or later, to be faced with the question, "What about doing Gilbert and Sullivan?" This is particularly the case in schools, and it is chiefly to the enthusiast in charge of the school operatic society that this chapter is addressed.

The Savoy operas make a tremendous appeal to young people—to boys, in particular. There are various reasons for their popularity. The music is tuneful; it is well-known, a part of our national life and traditions. The libretti are equally brilliant. They have passed into the language of our every-day life. The choral writing is superb and we are above all a country of choristers. The situations are freakish and amusing in the way that the schoolboy appreciates. The characters are family friends in many middle-class homes. There is just the right amount of romantic love interest. It never, or hardly ever, becomes really serious. The schoolboy, like the author, is always ready to put his tongue in his cheek and laugh at it. The settings are colourful and varied. There are enough operas to make up a cycle that can be gone through and repeated again and again. Furthermore, and this is important, they are still money-makers. More than one school has eked out its scholarship or sports club fund with profits from the annual Gilbert and Sullivan production. Parents dote on these operas and "old boys" flock back to renew a sentimental association with the efforts of their youth. "G. & S." is a national and social institution.

The drawbacks arise from the very virtues of the operas. They are so popular that to deviate from a choice of one of them for the annual production is often to run the risk of

losing public support. Constant performance lands both producer and performer in a rut. Gestures become over-mannered and over-stylised. In the matter of "business", so strong is the force of tradition that the imagination becomes stultified and restricted. Chorus work begins to lack spontaneity. The love-interest has been laughed at so often that when it has a serious place it is often difficult to avoid being self-conscious about it. The endless repetition of the words is dulling to the susceptibilities of both audience and actors.

But, for all that, they are ideal works for schools, particularly for "all boys" casts. The adult society has a much wider choice of repertoire anyway and is not being considered here.

What the person in charge must watch is that he does not become "Gilbert and Sullivan" bound! For his own good, he must see that variety in the choice of works is introduced somehow and from time to time, by bringing in operas by other composers and authors.

When Boys will be Girls.

One of the features of these productions that audiences of friends and relations dote on is the impersonation of the female chorus by small boys. By skilful make-up and carefully trained movement and gesture, it is truly possible to produce from the ranks of grimy second and third-formers a bevy of beauty that puts many an authentic female chorus to shame. What elegant "fairies" we have seen in "Iolanthe", how charming have been the "daughters" of Major-General Stanley, with what life and abandon have the "*contadine*" danced their *cachucha* and how delicious and amusing have been the trains of laughing Japanese "maidens"! The audience just waits for the "female" chorus to appear and what a gasp of delighted surprise goes up when they trip on in "Pirates" for instance, or when their long crocodile with its fluttering fans and shuffling sandals takes the stage in "The Mikado". The

producer has a great chance here. Young boys are wonderful actors. Let him not forget that the first Juliets and Cleopatras were not much older than these lads. But he must see to it that boys do really become girls temporarily. They must not just stand around like dummies. He must work on their hands to make them graceful and eloquent, on their feet to make them nimble and on their faces and eyes to make them expressive. A good deal of preliminary "drill" there will have to be, but the results can surpass all expectations. There is always such life, such vivacity and such enthusiasm. But it needs very hard preliminary work from the producer. He must not be afraid to let himself go before his boys. He must "do it for them". He must smile and curtsey and wheedle and charm and show them what he wants by doing it himself. I remember being told on more than one occasion, "Well, you must be keen to let yourself go like you do". I can honestly say that when I have been putting Yum-Yum through her paces or showing Casilda how to keep Luiz in his place, I have never been in the slightest degree conscious of what any onlookers at the rehearsals may have been thinking. I have frequently found it much harder to persuade a real young lady to re-act to a situation. There must be absolutely no self-consciousness on the producer's part when he is first demonstrating. How else can he expect boys to give him results!

I suppose it is the complete absence of the opposite sex which makes the boys "let themselves go" so naturally. I produced "The Mikado" once in a mixed senior (or, as it would now be called secondary modern) school. We had an entrancing little girl for Yum-Yum and a handsome young lad of thirteen for Nanki-Poo. But the scenes between the two would just not come to life. Nanki-Poo stood like a stick and glowered at these moments. We were all very worried. "Good heavens B——", I said, "you'll have to do better than that. You look as though you hate the girl". Came the reply, fortissimo and without any hesitation,

"And I do, sir, I do!" I should add that no amount of persuasion would make him change his mind and eventually a new Nanki-Poo, who had apparently different opinions on Yum-Yum, stepped into the breach.

But with an all-boys' cast, these moments of temporary embarrassment never seemed to arise.

Two Problems.

There are two problems which have to be faced in casting the principals. All the Gilbert and Sullivan operas have an important part for a solo tenor. Sometimes, in a grammar school society, for instance, there is a boy who has a natural tenor and who can sing the part. Provided he does not strain and that if the vocal line goes beyond his compass, slight alterations are made, no harm is done and one difficulty is solved. If there is no one available, alternatives are to transpose the solos down or to give the part to a treble, but this last expedient is not often popular with prefects and sixth-formers. Another way out is to bring in a member of the staff for the part, and this again should only be a last resort.

The other snag is in casting the contralto principal. No boy can possibly have the vocal ability to cope with these parts—that of Katisha, for example, with her tremendous music in the Finale to Act One of "The Mikado". The boy must just sing naturally. His acting, in nine cases out of ten, will carry him over the difficulties, and the audience must, and always will, use its imagination at these moments. Not so, on every occasion, the representative from the local press. "It was a pity Dame Carruthers had not a stronger voice". This of a boy of fourteen who had given a performance of great dignity and insight, and with full orchestral accompaniment, too! Fortunately, most local reporters are a little more intelligent than that.

If the actual solo numbers are too low, they must be transposed up.

The other solo parts should present little difficulty. It is

never hard to find a Pooh-Bah or a Pirate King and there are always plenty of aspirants for parts like the Lord Chancellor or Jack Point.

In the choruses, the tenor line must be watched and amended when it becomes too high and the alto chorus part must be well-rehearsed, as suggested in the chapter on Ensemble Work.

It is possible to perform these works without any male oices, and it is indeed often done by girls' schools and colleges and by secondary modern school age-ranges, where very often no tenors or even basses exist. There is an arrangement of "H.M.S. Pinafore" for unbroken voices, but several of the other operas are frequently adapted for two or three treble and alto parts. The great thing to remember is that fine music and words and a noble tradition are being passed on and a future love for one of our national heritages is being inculcated. If this is the case, who with any intelligence will cavil at a few alterations here and there?

The Operas Themselves.

Some slight discussion of the various operas may be useful. In them all, the solo tenor and contralto parts and the possibility of casting them must be carefully considered before a start is made.

"The Mikado" is perhaps most popular. The costumes are striking. A good hand at "make-up" is required here. The Mikado and Katisha should have special attention. There is very little dancing for the girls, but fan manipulation is most important. All the company should rehearse with fans as soon as they "go on the floor". Poses and groupings should be carefully worked out. There is a good deal of static formation for the chorus. Many of their concerted movements should have a mechanical precision, which needs much drill. Pooh-Bah is a superb part and the "three little maids" have some delightful moments.

"The Gondoliers" from the point of view of production,

is perhaps as difficult as any of the operas. There is more dancing here than anywhere. It is a tremendous favourite, but is a difficult work to begin with. It would perhaps be safer for the cast to try its hand at one of the operas with less movement first. There must be a good Marco. Everybody will be waiting for "Take a pair of sparkling eyes". There is a bagful of juicy parts here—the Duke of Plaza-Toro and his Duchess, the quartet of lovers, Casilda and her drummer-boy and, of course, Don Alhambra!

"Iolanthe" is a masterpiece. The solo tenor has not quite so heavy a part as usual. In a boys' cast, a good Fairy Queen must be available. She has a great deal to carry in the Finale of Act One. There is no dancing to speak of, but a good deal of "marching movement" by the Peers in the closing section of Act One. There are some marvellous choral passages and Iolanthe has some lovely music. Gilbert surpassed himself here in the libretto. Strephon should be a capable and graceful actor. This is a difficult part to perform really well. He should be neat and nimble on his feet, too. The Lord Chancellor has the "Nightmare Scene" so he should have a good memory and crisp and fluent delivery.

"The Yeomen of the Guard" contains some of Sullivan's finest music. The orchestration is sensitive and subtle and as full a team as possible of wind players should be employed. The "book" too, departs from the usual Gilbertian tradition and is an excellent and very well-knit little play. All the parts are superb. Jack Point needs, above all, to be an actor of great sensitiveness. He needs to be able to use his face, and in particular his eyes. There is the moving scene between Fairfax and Elsie to be considered, when Fairfax is supposed to be pleading Point's cause with Elsie. At the end of this short scene Point is broken and rejected. This and the Finale call for acting ability of no mean order. Wilfred is a real "plum". The thing to be watched is that the character is not overdrawn. It is very near to burlesque sometimes. I can recollect a Phoebe by a boy of thirteen

that was sheer delight from beginning to end and a performance of Elsie's "Tis done! I am a bride" by a boy of the same age that in sheer vocal exuberance was amazing. This boy had a phenomenal voice. He could ride over the orchestra like any prima donna. Phoebe, Elsie and Dame Carruthers offer great scope to boy actors and, properly produced, the boys will seize the opportunities with both hands. The chorus here are for once a natural "crowd". There is no drilled movement. They must take part in and re-act to all the situations as naturally as possible. My experience is that there will be no difficulty in persuading them to do this. In fact, if they are not watched, they will act the principals off the stage!

The difficulty in "The Pirates of Penzance" is to find a Frederick who can cope with the music. The tenor soloist in this opera has a great deal to carry and if a suitable voice is not available, it is better not to attempt the work. Above all, the temptation to exploit a promising young voice must be guarded against. The "daughters of Major-General Stanley" are very important. They have a magnificent entrance in Act One, in their crinolines and bonnets. They must be dainty and nimble and able to perform their "gavotte" steps neatly and with grace. There are some fine choral passages in this opera and three parts—the Major-General, the Sergeant and the Pirate King—that all sixth-formers dote on.

"H.M.S. Pinafore" presents a similar difficulty in the casting of the tenor part of Ralph Rackstraw. If Josephine has not a powerful enough voice to cope with her aria and recitative, it will be wiser to omit them. This is a magnificent little opera, in which every tune is a gem. It is usually preceded by one of the short one-act operas—"Cox and Box" or "Trial by Jury". One or other of these is also frequently used as a curtain-raiser to "Pirates of Penzance".

"Ruddigore" seems to be gaining in popularity. The fact that it is not so popular with some people as it might be is perhaps due to the fact that it is not sufficiently

appreciated that here Gilbert is poking fun—and poking it in no uncertain fashion—at his own medium—the stage. The "plot", if there is one, is just about as crazy as it could be. It is essential that all the performers should know what they are up to. The virtuous Rose, with her book of etiquette, the dashing Richard, the reluctant Robin, Mad Margaret with her straw and poppies, Sir Despard, the bold bad villain, and old Adam, the faithful retainer—all are travesties of the "penny-plain, tuppence-coloured" variety that belong to a past age. They should be played as such, with the tongue in the cheek throughout. The paradox comes with the music, as is so frequently the case in the Savoy operas, where satire finds itself marching hand in hand with sincerity. There are some first-rate opportunities for choral singing, notably in the Madrigal and the Chorus of Ancestors. Richard should be able to dance his hornpipe properly.

"Patience" is a great favourite. There is not the difficulty of the tenor lead here, as the tenor soloist is not so important a figure in this opera. The "love-sick maidens" are a great opportunity for the "female" chorus and Patience should be graceful and charming. Above all, do not deprive Lady Jane of her double-bass in Act Two!

"Princess Ida" is more difficult to perform. It is unusual in that it has three scenes, instead of the usual two; the call on costumes is heavier; and there is much in the way of concerted items in the music. The libretto is in blank verse, although one does not always recognize it as such, as it is sometimes presented. Ida herself needs to have a voice with the heroic ring. There is some fine music here.

"The Sorcerer", "Utopia Limited", and "The Grand Duke" are only infrequently performed, possibly because they have not the same interest of music or libretto as the rest. But there is a great chance for the enthusiast here to revive them.

The two short operas "Trial by Jury" and "Cox and Box" are little masterpieces in their own way. It should not be

forgotten that the first has no spoken dialogue. It is, for this reason, perhaps not the best to start on. "Cox and Box" is an excellent burlesque for three male voices and never fails as a curtain raiser or in a programme of short one-act works.

A word to the conductor in regard to tempo. Remember that Sullivan was very fond of "patter" for the full company as well as for his "funny men". "Vivace" is "vivace", whoever is performing the music. So see that the tempo is brisk and lively. "Use the lips, the tongue and the teeth and get the words over" cannot be reiterated too often. It is all excellent practice for the singers and exhilarating and exciting for the audience—or it should be.

There are also many unaccompanied quartets and ensembles. Avoid being overcome by the sentiment of the text and keep the music moving. This is the best way to avoid a drop in pitch at the end of the section.

And a word in the ear of the producer. Gilbert produced these works himself. The D'Oyly Carte Company have kept his traditions alive with scrupulous fidelity. Producer's prompt books are obtainable that are at once an excellent guide to what is wanted and a valuable way for the inexperienced producer to learn how to handle a comic opera. The business of the producer is to bring to life the intentions of the author. He has every help here. The temptation to fool about with these works should be avoided at all costs. If, as a producer, you feel an urge to try out all sorts of stunting and "business", leave "Gilbert and Sullivan" alone. There are plenty of other directions in which you can let yourself go!

CHAPTER VI

SOME REPRESENTATIVE OPERAS

The following pages are intended as a guide to the beginner in his approach to contrasted works which an intelligent amateur company should be able to attempt.

The suggestions made are purely personal ones and the producer and the conductor do not need, of course, to abide by them. It is hoped that they will approximate to some extent to what the creators of the work had in mind. Every producer worth his salt will have his own ideas as to what his line of approach should be. Maybe these ideas will be of some help to him.

1. *DIDO AND AENEAS:* Purcell

The Music.

This is admirable material for the school society and for older amateurs. The finer the voices the better, but the chief requisite is musicianship. In no part, either solo or chorus, is a range beyond the normal required.

The Characters.

Dido or Elissa, Queen of Carthage (soprano).
Belinda, her attendant (soprano).
Aeneas, A Trojan prince (tenor)—The part does not lie above F; a baritone with the right quality of voice could sing the part.
A Sorceress (contralto or mezzo-soprano).
A Spirit (mezzo-soprano).
Two women, two witches and a sailor have also solos and duets. Chorus of courtiers, warriors, hunters, sailors and witches.

The chorus writing is excellent, the tenor line only occasionally touching F and once or twice G. This is

important for a boys' performance. If the part is too high it can easily be amended here and there, with very little detriment to the ensemble. There are passages of exquisite beauty, particularly in the closing chorus, "With drooping wings", as well as others that have great breadth and warmth. The witches have some magnificent moments. The original orchestration is for strings and harpsichord.

Production.

Dido has music of great dramatic intensity. The part does not lie above G. She should have a rich upper register. She should be able to look and act the part.

The Sorceress should have as dark a quality as possible. She should be the type that can give the music its demonic ring.

The opera should be performed without any break. It lasts little over an hour and a break between its two short acts destroys the continuity and the atmosphere. The settings should be simple and so devised that the scenes can follow as quickly as possible. Curtains and imaginative lighting can do a great deal.

In the scenes where Dido and Aeneas are present, the actual choruses themselves are somewhat static. But there must be movement. For this reason there could be two bodies of players—one which would carry the actual singing of the choruses and have comparatively little movement and another which would maintain a continuous flow of movement in the style of modern ballet.

Act 1.

Scene One is the Royal Palace in Carthage. The directions are—"Enter Dido, Belinda and train". There is not time for this. Dido must be discovered on her couch. This must be on a dais raised well up, with at least three wide steps on which figures can be grouped. It must be imposing in appearance. Dido is to dominate the stage from this in the last scene when she sings her great lament and dies. If the

dais is built on rollers it can be moved quickly for the second scene and twisted round. The design of its back should be of such a nature that, if placed on the right of the stage, it can become a crag on which the Sorceress can lie, and if used on the left it can become a rostrum from which the Spirit can sing in Act 2.

Dido is discovered overwhelmed with melancholy. Belinda's first solo implores her to "shake the cloud from off her brow". The chorus of men and women will be grouped, with the dancers or mimers (possibly all girls) chiefly on the steps. There will be no movement from the chorus here, but as they take up the appeal on "Banish sorrow", the dancers will express the lovely classical calm dignity of this C minor passage that forestalled Gluck by at least half a century. Dido follows at once with "Ah Belinda, I am prest with torment". There will be no movement from the dancers during the opening of the song. They will have assumed new groupings, but as the movement grows in intensity an imaginative producer will feel where it is necessary for them to express by change of posture the feeling behind the music. It is essential in this work that, if the producer has no choreographic aptitude himself, he should work in the closest collaboration with someone with considerable knowledge of ballet or eurythmics and who is capable of being completely in tune with his own artistic and emotional reactions. The solo has a closing symphony of some twelve bars where Dido's mood should be epitomised in movement by the dancers.

Belinda's recitative "Grief increases by concealing" is followed by a more vigorous chorus, "When monarchs unite", and in a remarkably eloquent passage of recitative for Dido and Belinda, the way is paved for the entry of Aeneas by a sudden burst into the major key. Belinda and the Second Woman (mezzo-soprano) have a duet, "Fear no danger to ensue", which is then taken up by the whole chorus. At this point all the chorus will move over to the left of the stage and as the women's voices have the lovely

"Cupids strew your path with flowers", Dido will descend from the dais assisted by Belinda, the dancers scattering petals before her. The chorus reaches a triumphant cadence and immediately, from the right, Aeneas and his retinue of warriors appear. They group on the right. There are some short recitatives between Dido and Aeneas and then to the chorus "Cupid only throws the dart", the pair ascend the dais to the couch.

From the steps of the dais, Belinda has a florid aria, "Pursue thy conquest, love, her eyes confess the flame", which offers considerable opportunities for interpretative treatment from the dancers. This leads immediately to a joyful chorus, "To the hills and the vales", followed immediately by the Triumphing Dance in triple time. The whole company will take part in this, Dido and the Prince descending from the dais at the closing bars in preparation for their departure for the Hunt.

Scene Two—The Cave.

At the end of the Dance, the somewhat naive stage directions are "thunder and lightning". The producer will perhaps feel that these phenomena will be better reserved until the curtains open again on a completely darkened stage. There are sixteen bars of a Lento in F minor. The curtains open slowly about Bar 13 and gradually the Sorceress will be picked out crouching on top of the rostrum, which has been pushed over right and set across up stage diagonally. In a remarkably vivid recitative, she summons her horde of familiars, "Wayward sisters, appear". (She should be placed as high up as possible so as to dominate the scene).

The witches creep on, all from the right, and there is great scope for grouping and much fun to be had from working out lighting effects. The effect to be aimed at is one of terrifying freakishness. The actual lighting "plot" will obviously depend on what is available. The witches begin to appear in ones and twos at the Sorceress's first

"Appear", and by the end of her recitative, they should all be in position. The stage should be sufficiently darkened for them to be only partially discernible.

The first witch should be picked out on her short phrase, and at the bold chorus "Harm's our delight", the lighting should become stronger so that the witches are visible. Costuming here is simple and easily improvised. The key-note for the whole scene is horror. The witches in "Macbeth" are just "not in it" and boys producing this opera should get a tremendous "kick" out of these scenes.

All the recitatives and short choruses follow without any break. There are two magnificent "laughing" choruses, "Ho, ho, ho!", and a most effective moment where the hunting party are heard in the distance.

The duet, "But, ere we this perform" for First and Second Witches could easily stand performance by all the female voices on the stage. For the full chorus "In our deep-vaulted cell" the echoes must be sung off-stage. The hunting party stationed off-stage right can provide these.

The scene concludes with an "Echo Dance of Furies" by all the witches. At the end of the dance the directions ask for "thunder and lightning, horrid music. The Furies sink down in the Cave, the rest fly up". The easiest solution will probably be a black-out on the final chord, followed by subterranean rumbles gradually dying away and leading at once to the Ritornelle for the opening of Act 2.

Act 2.

Scene—The Grove. The same set as for the Witches' Scene can stand but with different lighting. On the rise of the curtain, Aeneas, Dido and Belinda and their train are discovered grouped, resting after the hunt. This scene lacks movement and dramatic interest, until the appearance of the Spirit. For this reason the song of the Second Woman (which could quite well be given to Belinda, if necessary) lends itself well to a display of miming from the dancers, based on the story of Diana and Acteon.

"Oft she visits this lov'd mountain,
Oft she bathes her in this fountain,
Here Acteon met his fate".

"Acteon, a famous huntsman, saw Diana and her attendant bathing near Gargaphia, for which he was changed into a stag and devoured by his own dogs" (Lemprière.).

It is suggested that during the song two female dancers interpret in mime the bath of Diana and her attendant. Another small group could represent the waters in which she bathes. Acteon will be mimed by a male dancer. Whether other men complete the story by becoming hounds it is up to the producer to decide! To avoid any possible laughter in the wrong place, it might be safer for Acteon to be killed by a spear launched by Diana herself or by one of her attendants.

The actual solo has twenty bars of instrumental closing symphony which obviously requires interpretation in this way.

The stage darkens, thunder is heard, the storm approaches. To the vigorous chorus "Haste to Town" the company prepare to depart. To allow the full power of this chorus to reach the audience, the chorus can remain on the stage and the last eleven bars can be repeated by the orchestra alone to allow the players to make their exits.

The necessity to make use of "exit music" frequently arises where the chorus is actually singing until the final cadence. In some cases it is possible to take the chorus off whilst still singing. This, of course, involves a gradual diminuendo and loss of power. Where it is felt that to achieve a full climax the chorus must remain on stage, the final section of the music can often be repeated instrumentally whilst they make their exit. To take them off the stage in complete silence would quite frequently be catastrophic, although in certain dramatic situations, this will work.

Aeneas and possibly two or three attendants are left on the stage. As they prepare to leave, the Spirit (a witch in the guise of Mercury) appears on the top of the rostrum (right). The attendants remain completely motionless during this scene, turned towards the left. Aeneas alone hears the Spirit's "Stay, prince", and turns back.

On the C sharp minor chord "But ah! What language can I try", the spot picking out the spirit will fade and Aeneas has his wonderfully eloquent recitative. The light fades entirely on the last chord.

Act 3.

The act embraces three sections—the Sailor's solo and chorus; the Witches' Scene and Dance; and the final scene between Dido and Aeneas.

The first two could well be grouped together. The same set as for Act 2 will remain, but the curtains at the back open to reveal a representation of a quayside with the sea and ships behind. The Sorceress and two witches are perched high upon the rostrum, which has been pulled down-stage right. They should seem to be watching the first scene as the sailors prepare to depart. This is hearty music and the whole chorus which is employed on the stage should take part in the dance. This should be arranged so that all are off by the final bar.

The curtains at the back are closed, lighting changes and the witches are picked out where they are watching from the rostrum.

"Our plot is took,
The Queen's forsook,
Ho, ho!"

The witches all enter from the left during this duet, creeping on in ones and twos so as to be in position for the next recitative, "Our next motion must be storm". This is marked to be sung by "Sorceress (soprano)". If the original Sorceress can take it in her range, she should sing it. If not

it should be given to the First Witch. The chorus "Destruction's our delight" and another Witches' Dance close this section.

Close the curtains on the last chord and repeat the Allegro of the Dance twice as an orchestral interlude whilst the rostrum is being pushed back as in Scene 1 for the Finale.

The curtains open and Dido is seen seated on her couch. She must remain the dominating figure from this point to the end. She has some astonishing and superb music. Belinda is on the steps to her left and the court is grouped on both sides of the dais. When Aeneas enters from the right, he ascends the steps on that side and Belinda comes down to the foot of the dais. A passionate interchange between the lovers follows and on Dido's final "Away, Away!" he rushes down the steps and off right.

The lighting mellows and deepens during the chorus "Great minds against themselves conspire" and Belinda ascends the steps to her mistress. Dido remains seated and Belinda kneels facing her, on her left. The lighting should now be concentrated on the Queen for her great recitative, "Thy hand, Belinda; darkness shades me" and the wonderful lament which follows, "When I am laid in earth". On "But ah! forget my fate", Dido rises slowly so as to dominate the scene entirely for the climax of the song, "Remember me, but ah! forget my fate". During the closing bars of the passacaglia she sinks down on to her couch and dies.

The exquisite chorus "With drooping wings" is sung whilst the dancers deck the couch with roses and finally group themselves on and round the steps. The final chord is sustained as the curtains close.

Three outstanding productions of "Dido and Aeneas" have taken place since this section was written: Mr. Geoffrey Dunn's production at Sadler's Wells; Miss Joan Cross's presentation for the English Opera Group; and the highly original version given on Mr. Bernard Miles' Elizabethan stage at St. John's Wood.

2. *THE IMPRESARIO* (*Der Schauspieldirektor*): Mozart

This little masterpiece was written for festivities in honour of the governors of the Netherlands in 1786. It appeared just before "Figaro". Its sub-titles give a clear indication of its character—"An Operatick Squabble or The Impresario Perplext". Mr. Eric Blom in his book on Mozart in Dent's "Master Musicians" series of biographies has commented on the stupidity of the original libretto. To remedy this, and because the score has in it something of Mozart at his most sparkling, he has re-written and adapted the spoken dialogue. Application for performance should be made to him, care of the publishers.

As it stands now, there are three characters only and no chorus:—

Mr. Buskin, manager of the Opera.
Mrs. Heartfelt, Miss Silvertone } Opera singers.

The one scene is the manager's office. In performance, the work takes some forty minutes. To complete a programme consisting chiefly of a somewhat longer work, such as "Dido and Aeneas" for example, and where something frivolous and light-hearted is wanted to act as a foil, "The Impresario" is admirable.

It depends chiefly on the vocal and histrionic skill of the two ladies. Given two boys with definitely more than average musical and vocal ability it is a first-rate piece for a boys' school. Some slight adaptation will be necessary—in the cadenzas for example and in occasional passages where the range is too high—but boys enjoy the spirit of it and much of the music is in the best parts of their voices. I have produced the work with three boys of twelve (Buskin, too, was sung by a treble) when most of the learning was done in odd quarters of an hour in lunch-time breaks. The actual performance was astonishing to look back on and I can truthfully say, the audience fairly lapped it up!

The work has an overture (sometimes heard in the concert hall and the best-known part of the opera), two solos

(one for each prima donna) and two trios. Both ladies are sopranos—to quote Mr. Blom, "one a Lydia Languish, the other a Petruchio's Kate". The first, Mrs. Heartfelt, should perhaps have the warmer quality of voice, whilst the other should be more brittle and scintillating. The first trio is Mozart in his most lively mood. Students of form will find it an intriguing essay in "a perfect kind of free sonata form." *Plot.*

The set is simple. Curtains can be used; "a table, with a litter of papers, quill pen, ink-pot and sandbox. Three or four chairs". Playbills, costume sketches, etc., can be displayed to give atmosphere. There is no reason why a "dummy" harpsichord should not be used, on which Buskin can accompany the solos. The table is over left and the harpsichord over right, with the keyboard away from the audience, facing up stage.

Buskin is discovered seated at the table. He is overjoyed to have had two applications for the same parts from "two of the most delectable singers in Vienna". A noise and a gentle knock are heard. Eventually, enter Mrs. Heartfelt, "theatrically melancholy", and after some persuasion, she gives the manager "a sample of her superb art."

This first aria begins with a beautiful Larghetto melody, "Farewell, mine own beloved", which leads to a lively Allegro moderato section in the major key, "Must I forever fear defection".

Buskin is entranced. "Passing sweet and exquisitely melancholy". Suddenly there is pandemonium off stage, and Miss Silvertone bursts in. A brisk exchange of sallies now occurs between the ladies. There must be considerable movement here, with Silvertone dominating the scene.

She is persuaded to sing, too. "During her song Mrs. Heartfelt, who has taken a chair and picked up a book, affects the most unconcerned detachment, except at the florid passage towards the end, where she becomes critically interested."

Silvertone's aria is in the same mould as the first one, but

in brighter mood—an Andante in E. flat, "Dearest shepherd, with what rapture", leading to an Allegretto, "All the same, I love thee dearly". She, too, ends with a brilliant cadenza.

Buskin will sit at the harpsichord right, for this. Silvertone will start her Andante right centre, and then move down-stage centre for the Allegretto. Heartfelt sits, back left, with her back three-quarters to the audience, until the cadenza, when she gradually turns round.

Buskin rises at the end of the song. He is again entranced. If Heartfelt is the ideal heroine for the first act, Silvertone is just what he is looking for in the lady in the second. War is instantly declared. Heartfelt sails round back stage and comes to rest down right for the opening of the Trio, "I am the foremost singer here". Silvertone flings herself over left for the opening phrase. Buskin is slightly upstage centre.

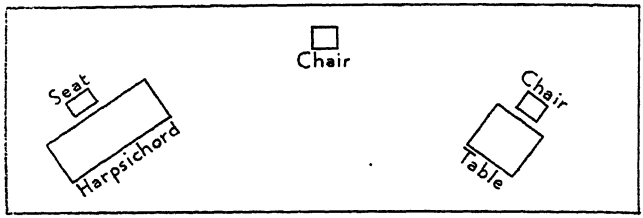
This Trio is a brilliant piece of writing. There must be constant movement, which must be very carefully worked out. Suggestions for what is needed follow. The bar numbers are according to the Peters edition beginning on page 17. H—Heartfelt; S—Silvertone; B—Buskin.

The small letters refer to groupings on the next page and arrows indicate the direction in which the character is going to move next.

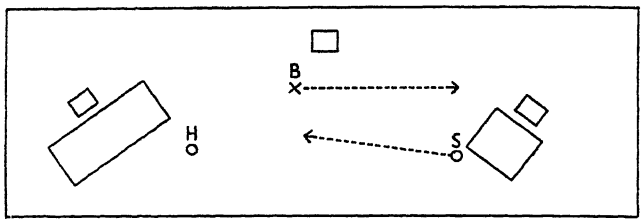
Bar	*Text*	*Movement*
1.	—	(*a*) H is RC, S moves LC, B moves upstage C.
2.	S "I am the foremost singer here".	S sings over to L, back to H, who has her back to her.
3.		(*b*) S moves C, B goes over back RC.
4.	S "I am the foremost singer here".	S repeats phrase, turning to H.
5.	H "That may be so—"	H sings to R, back to S
6.	H „ „ „	H turns to S.

Fig. 18

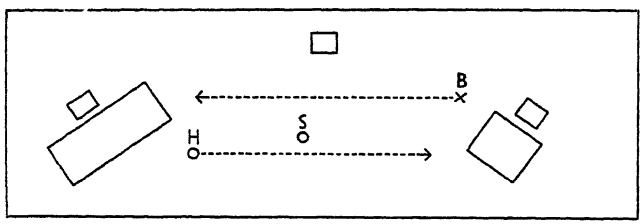
The set is arranged as follows :



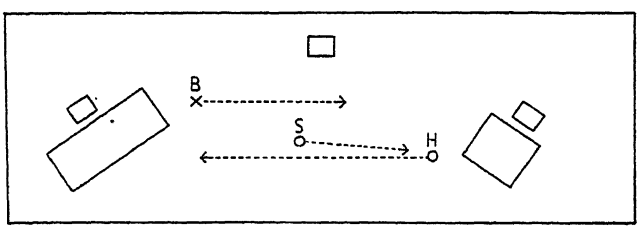
(*a*)



(*b*)

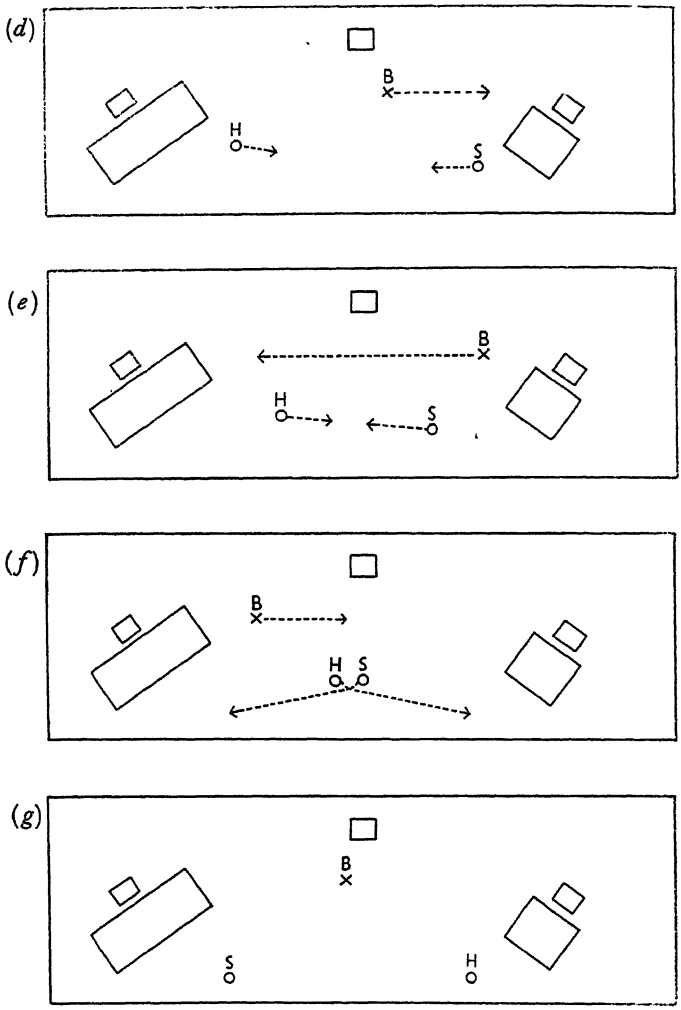


(*c*)



Bar	*Text*	*Movement*
7.	—	(*c*) H crosses to LC in front of S. who steps back in astonishment. B runs over back to RC.
8.	H "And yet I fear—	
9, 10.	S "Admit that this is undisputed—	S advances threateningly towards H.
11, 12.	H "To me it has never yet been mooted—	(*d*) H gives S a push with right hand and sails over to RC again. B gets C slightly upstage.
13, 14, 15, 16,	B "Well let this hatred be uprooted—	B sings to each in turn, turning from one to the other.
17.	S "I am the foremost singer here". H "That may be so, etc.	H & S turn their backs three-quarters to him, flinging an occasional glance over their shoulders.
18, 19, 20, 21,	B "Well let this hatred —	(*e*) S and H turn to each other and draw in C,
22.	S "No other singer can approach me—	taking a couple of steps on first beat of bars 19 and 21 (S) 20, 22 (H). B. leaps over L and then runs over R at Bar 21.
	H "To me it has never yet been mooted—	(*f*) Runs across back R.
23, 24, 25.	„ „	(*g*) H crosses L in front of S. S flounces over R. B hurries centre. Both ladies have backs three-quarters to B.

Fig. 18—continued



In these twenty-five bars, there have been some seven changes of basic position. This, at the tempo Allegro assai and with the necessary excitement of gesture, should be sufficient to settle the atmosphere of antagonism and rising temper and yet give the scene the feeling of underlying fun and light-heartedness.

It is, of course, impossible to provide a complete producer's prompt-book. These indications should be sufficient to show the producer new to the job how to set about it. Obviously they must be studied closely in conjunction with the score. It is obvious that to avoid confusion and argument at later rehearsals, everything must be worked out and written down first, before floor-work begins. From the producer's and conductor's points of view, this is the most difficult part of the opera.

The trio works up with increasing tension and excitement until Buskin implores them to let him "try their voices once again. A squabble no advantage brings". There follow the delicious satirical cadenza-like passages. Buskin moves to the harpsichord.

"Adagio, adagio" sings Heartfelt with mock pathos. (There is one bar with a top E flat that may need slight alteration.)

"Allegro, allegrissimo", cuts in Silvertone with considerable dash and vigour, but "Piano, pianissimo", concludes Buskin. The ladies agree to behave themselves. (There is a passage on page 26 demanding an exceptionally high range—top F from Heartfelt. This can be omitted. Cut this page entirely and go from the B flat chord, last bar page 25 to the first beat of bar 1, line 2, page 27. The continuity is not upset.)

The climax is reached in fine style on page 27, with both ladies asserting their claims fortissimo. Then a delightfully humorous slackening off, with Buskin exhorting them "Piano, calando, mancando, diminuendo, decrescendo, piano, pianissimo". It is all very amusing.

The Finale.

The dialogue is resumed. Buskin has an inspiration. There shall be two heroines, not one—"one all water, the other all fire", and eventually after much fun in drawing up the contract, everything is settled. The final trio is sung whilst the agreement is being signed. There are solo verses for each singer with a recurring refrain in which they all join.

"Artists, it is true, must ever
Hold in high esteem their fame;
But that each alone is clever
Is a thought that must forever
*Be redounding to the shame
Of an artist with a name".

The dramatic situation being now of milder character, much less movement and bustle is necessary. The opera ends on a note of complete agreement all round.

It remains to note that the spoken dialogue must be as brisk as possible, cues must be taken up with the utmost speed and the tempo very lively throughout.

3. *THE BEGGAR'S OPERA: John Gay*

"The Beggar's Opera" was produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1729—"It ran through the whole season—sixty-two nights—it has run ever since."

In our time there have been at least three outstanding revivals—the famous production at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith in 1920; John Gielgud's version at the Haymarket some twenty years later; and of more recent date the "commentary" of Benjamin Britten with Tyrone Guthrie's terrifyingly realistic production. There was also

* The translator has improved the last two lines, which now differ as follows from those printed in early editions of his book on Mozart:

"Fill with horror and with shame
Any artist with a name."

a revival during the war years by the Sadler's Wells Company at the New Theatre, remarkable amongst other things for the Mrs. Peachum of Miss Joan Cross. In addition there have been numerous amateur productions of all sorts.

The Lyric production which ran for so long was highly stylised. It is impossible to avoid comparison with the Britten-Guthrie version, so horribly and frighteningly true to what commonsense tells us seventeenth-century beggars were like. Gay set out to write "a Newgate pastoral, among the whores and thieves there"—dirty, unscrupulous, cunning, avaricious, vice-sodden. Was the realism too much glossed over at Hammersmith and the production over-prettified?

Mr. Gielgud's version probably occupies a halfway position. He brought the work a century nearer our times by giving it a setting in the London of Dickens and Cruikshank. One felt Fagin, Bill Sykes and the Artful Dodger were only round the corner in the wings. The production was vivid and colourful and there were some lovely stage-pictures—the motionless framed tableau, for instance, that ushered in the "Lillibulero" tune. The orchestral accompaniment was lush. But in spite of the bold realism—Lucy in her stays singing "I'm like a ship on the ocean tossed" as she rocked to and fro on a bench in the middle of the stage was the sort of thing that stuck in the memory—this was almost respectablilty itself when compared with Guthrie, who gave us Macheath on his first entrance crawling out of the sheets of Polly's bed.

In this latest production "the great room at St. Giles", haunt and doss-house of the riff-raff of the town, became a laundry, with screens and clothes-horses draped with hideous rags, and beggars and tramps peeping out from every corner. This was an inspired idea, at once startling and brilliantly practical, since the beggars were their own scene-shifters and moved and manipulated their screens as occasion required. Through it all the original tunes shone

like jewels, perhaps a trifle dimly at times when Mr. Britten's devilishly clever orchestral commentary became a screen of such density that we in the audience were hard put to it to hear and almost to see what was going on on the stage. But the horror was always there and the bitter taste in the mouth.

Professor Dent wrote with much wisdom, when he said, "Perhaps 'The Beggar's Opera' had better wait for a few more years until the production of 1920 has been forgotten; then it can 'have its face washed'; that is, the producer and conductor must start from the original score, and prepare it for the stage from that, without regard to later arrangements." This, written in 1940, seems to hit off with singular aptness what Britten and Guthrie were to do a few years later. The results of their "face-washing" of the original have produced something that is very startlingly removed from the version with which we have been familiar for so long. The one is all charm, the other stark horror.

So that it is obvious that the first thing the producer has to do here is to decide on his line of approach. What is it to be—stylisation or realism?

If he is dealing with an adult society, he will probably want to be as realistic as possible. The original text is first-rate material for anyone who knows that a spade is a spade and doesn't mind saying so. Here is a superb slice of eighteenth century life in the raw. To re-create this as nearly as possible should be the producer's aim. But the music, as arranged by Frederic Austin, is also well within the scope of adolescents and young people. They should know these tunes. For this purpose, a compromise must be arrived at; the production must be stylised, and the more lurid details—Lucy's pregnancy, for instance—glossed over. And there will perhaps have to be some slight "blue-pencilling" of the dialogue. But even when this is done, there is still plenty left to give a very full-blooded and bitingly satirical realisation.

I produced this work during the war years with a Youth

Club Musical Society. I think a section of the adult population of the district made up their minds that if this was the sort of thing I was interested in, I was a dangerous type to be in charge of youthful activities. They liked the music, but the play—well! And this although the production was made as light-hearted as possible. I remember suggesting to four or five of the Ladies (not women—please note!) of the Town, that when they made their final appearance in the Gallows Scene, they should do so with "babies" in their arms, the infants having been brought to see their father die. When Macheath was reprieved, there were to be cheers and hurrahs and the babies were to be tossed over the heads of their mothers into the wings. The Ladies aforementioned (average age, I suppose, about sixteen) went into solemn conclave about this—wasn't it going a bit too far? I agreed not to press the point and left it to them. It was not mentioned again but at the dress-rehearsal, the "babies" were there and into the wings they went! At the performances, the audiences roared with laughter—or, at least, most of them did!

These young people were a bright crowd. I remember the Polly as a capable but temperamental young lady who kept us all on our toes. Two or three years later she was broadcasting as "Cherubino" in a Forces' performance of "Figaro". The Macheath went on to win a composition scholarship to the Royal College and is now making his mark as a composer and the Beggar also went on to the Guildhall School as a composition scholar. I do not know what value these young people attach to these operatic and musical activities of their adolescence. I am sure they played a large part in the establishment of their standard of taste and judgment.

The Problem of the Libretto.

The line of approach having been decided on, the next thing for the producer to tackle is the shaping of the libretto, so as to make it practicable on the modern stage.

The text referred to will be that of the Oxford University Press edition, as it appears in the "World's Classics" volume, "Eighteenth Century Comedy". For the time being, the Britten version, which in the composer's hands has become almost a new work, will not be alluded to.

There is a prologue for the Beggar and a Player, which leads to Act One. This is given as being divided into thirteen scenes, but these are merely sub-sections. The whole act is played in the same set, Peachum's house. It is well-constructed dramatically. The Peachum family are introduced, Polly's marriage to Macheath is revealed, and a love scene between the two brings it to a close. This Act should be regarded as the first scene and followed by the first "five scenes" (or sub-sections) of Act Two in the original text—that is, the scenes in the Tavern in Newgate. (Scene six on page 226 should be omitted.) This involves Macheath's meeting with his gang, their departure, the arrival of the Women of the Town, their scene with Macheath, his betrayal by Jenny Diver and his arrest. The short scene referred to is anti-climax and should be cut. The first interval will come at this point. What the producer decides to do with some of the dialogue between the women will depend on the nature of the cast he is working with. With young people, some of it can be omitted.

Act Two will open with Scene Seven—Newgate Prison—and continue in sequence to the end of Scene Fourteen on page 238. That is, Macheath is locked up by Lockit, Lucy appears and agrees to help her lover on promise of marriage, Peachum visits Lockit to strike a bargain over Macheath, Lucy has her scene with her father, after which Polly enters and the quintet "No power on earth" can bring the scene to a close. This is effective musically, and if two intervals are wanted, this will be as good a place as any to have the second.

A better plan is to have one interval only and make this sequence of scenes the first scene of Act Two. The curtains

are closed. There is a short interlude and Scene Fifteen follows—the escape of Macheath (page 239).

Act Three of the original text begins on page 240 and it is from here that some ingenuity must be used to adapt and reshape the script. Proceed at once to Scene Four—the Gaming House. This can be played as an inset scene. The whole of the text should be omitted and the scene made purely musical, using the "Lillibulero" chorus. Mrs. Trapes should be very much in evidence as she is to betray Macheath very soon afterwards.

Scene Five follows. Peachum and Lockit are discovered. The text may be cut slightly here (page 246). Mrs. Trapes enters and reveals where Macheath is to be found. The scene should end with her song "In the days of my youth".

Then back to Newgate. Scene Seven (page 250). Lucy prepares to deal with Polly who arrives and Scenes Eight, Nine and Ten follow. Cuts should be made in the dialogue here; it is too long. The airs to be sung should be taken into account. At Scene Eleven (page 254) Macheath, re-arrested, is led in by Peachum and Lockit.

The last scene will consist of Scenes Thirteen to Seventeen in sequence, the Condemned Hold. The Dance brings the work to an end.

A summary may be helpful.

Act One.	Scene 1.	Peachum's house.
	Scene 2.	A Tavern.
Act Two.	Scene 1.	Newgate Prison. (Possible break or short musical interlude, which is preferable.)
	Scene 2.	The same.
	Scene 3.	The Gaming House.
	Scene 4.	A room at Peachum's house.
	Scene 5.	Newgate Prison.
	Scene 6.	The Condemned Hold.

The Scenery.

Something simple is essential, so that when there are scene changes they can be quick. The continuity and flow of the action must be interfered with as little as possible. For most amateur stages, something in the nature of an adaptation and combination of the Lyric and Guthrie settings would be useful. It should be remembered that the chorus work is scanty. To make use of the beggars and women as scene-shifters and onlookers was a good idea. One had the impression of looking on at an impromptu performance in "the great room at St. Giles". The chorus pulled the screens about as required and at other times were grouped about in odd corners and generally helped to build up an atmosphere of the macabre.

A permanent set of three arches at the back is useful (Fig. 1). By the addition and variation of "flats" behind the openings, much can be suggested. For example, for Peachum's house in Scene One, the middle aperture, B, is draped with curtains and becomes an entrance. The smaller arches A and C are fitted with flats behind, and painted to suggest shelves or cupboards. For Scene Two, the Tavern, B becomes a door and A and C two dirty windows. For the Newgate Scene, A and C could be doors, to provide two means of entrance and exit, and B could be fitted with bars to suggest a cell window. (See Figs. 19, 20, 21, 22.)

Fig. 19

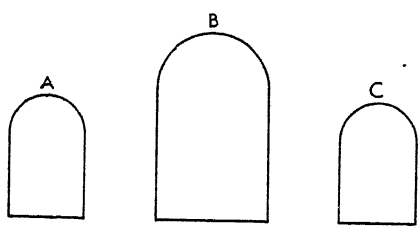
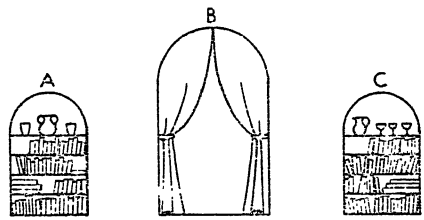
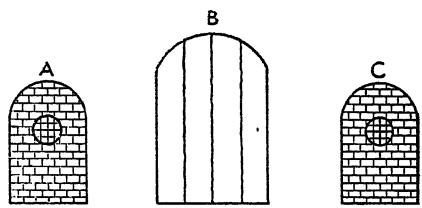


Fig. 20



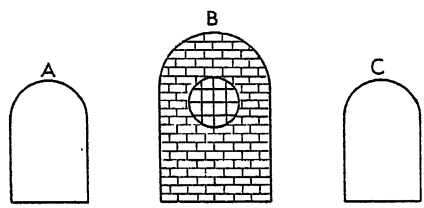
"Flats" to represent book case, with flagons, etc., and curtained entrance.

Fig. 21



Windows with stone-work and Door.

Fig. 22



Doors and cell window with stone work.

The short scenes in the Gaming House and Peachum's house in Act Two can be played as inset scenes, by making use of screens quickly pulled round. The basic scene for the whole of Act Two is Newgate.

For the final scene, the Condemned Hold, it should be

remembered that as the play reaches its climax, the Player onlooker intervenes (page 261).

Player. But, honest friend, I hope you don't intend that Macheath shall be really executed.

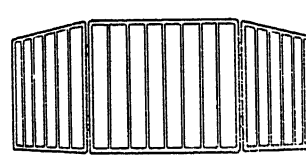
Beggar. Most certainly, sir. To make the piece perfect, I was for doing strict poetical justice. Macheath is to be hanged; and for the other personages of the Drama, the Audience must have supposed they were all either hanged or transported.

Player. Why, then friend, this is a downright deep Tragedy. The catastrophe is manifestly wrong, for an Opera must end happily.

Beggar. Your objection, sir, is very just and is easily removed. For you must allow, that in this kind of Drama, 'tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about. So—you rabble there—run and cry a Reprieve—let the Prisoner be brought back to his wives in triumph.

If Macheath is discovered on the opening of the curtains enclosed in a cage, consisting of three hinged sections (Fig. 23), this can easily be whipped away for the concluding Dance.

Fig. 23
Macheath's cage.



Laths painted to represent bars on light but strong frame-work. Something on the lines of a strong clothes-horse is suggested.

The producer will no doubt have plenty of ideas for various additional properties and accessories, to give colour to his sets and, of course, an imaginative lighting plot can work wonders. The thing to be borne in mind is that the play must move, and therefore, whatever sets are decided

upon, they must be capable of very easy manipulation. On most amateur stages, space is a great consideration, very frequently in the wings and back-stage in general. In working out quick changes of scene, everything should be as uncumbersome as possible.

The Music.

Frederic Austin's arrangement is very beautiful in its own way. It has the advantage of making the voices the priority consideration. It is scored for small orchestra—strings, flute, oboe and harpsichord. The last can be dispensed with if unobtainable and a piano used.

I have vivid recollections of the orchestral rehearsal in connection with the Youth Club production I have mentioned earlier. The band parts were in an appalling state. Alterations, over-writing and blue-pencilling were everywhere. The simplest way out would have been to re-write them. If their condition was anything to go by, "The Beggar's Opera" must have been the most popular piece in the amateur repertoire just then. We set to work to sort out the tangle and when the black-out descended upon us, and a general packing up to catch trains and buses began, we were about a third of the way from the end. We played from the Gaming House scene onwards without rehearsal at the first performance.

There was a hair-raising moment in this scene. Macheath had to appear masked. As it happened, the mask was just one of those little things that did not happen to be in the hamper at the dress rehearsal. It arrived in time for "the night", of course, and Macheath had it on firmly. As part of her "business" Mrs. Trapes had to unmask Macheath during the "Lillibulero" chorus. She made a dive for the mask and pulled it off, wig and all! Poor Macheath made a hurried exit into the wings to put matters right. Unfortunately, this episode occurred just before he was due to sing. I looked up from the conductor's desk to "bring him in". No Macheath! We floundered about for a bar or two

that seemed an eternity until he came back again with his wig over one ear and eye and somehow we picked up the thread again. It was just one of those moments! The sort of thing I have heard described by the supercilious as "a typical amateur mishap"—good to look back on and laugh over, anyway.

None of the parts is extravagant in range or in the demands made on vocal ability. Taste and musicianship are the chief requisites.

The Characters.

Macheath is a baritone. This is one of the loveliest parts in the whole range of opera. He must be an actor of the first order as well as a musician, and the handsomer and more dashing he is, the better.

Polly is a soprano. She has some lovely airs and should have a real feeling for style and phrasing in her singing. She is "a dear slut".

Lucy is her foil—a mezzo-soprano, a brooding termagant. Her voice should be rich and warm in quality. Peachum and Lockit are also foils.

(Britten made Macheath a tenor as in the original score and Polly a mezzo-soprano.)

Lockit should be a real bass. He is an unwashed scoundrel. Peachum has not much singing. A light, slightly nasal baritone would do. He is crafty, avaricious and thoroughly unscrupulous. A successful man of the world.

Mrs. Peachum must be essentially an actress. Unfortunately, she has not much to do after the opening scene. But what she has is glorious material. The voice matters least of all here. She can be played variously. She is a toper who can either totter or tantalize, nag or nod. Her bottle is her chief pre-occupation.

Filch is a small part—a light tenor, if one is available. He should be youngish, with a touch of Uriah Heap about him. Mrs. Peachum pursues him and he loathes it. Like all the gang, he is sly and scheming.

Mrs. Trapes is a bouncing bawd with unlimited vigour and gusto. She has one short but telling scene.

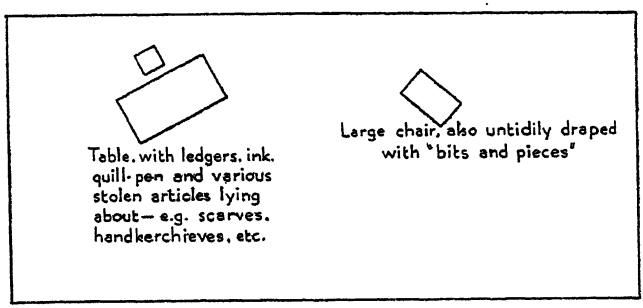
There is no real chorus, in so far as that every member of it should be an individual character study. The men are perhaps more uniform than the women. They are all gangsters. It is up to each man to build up his own part. The women are better treated by the script. There are eight of them, each of which has a separate entrance when they arrive to visit Macheath. They are eight marvellously vivid vignettes—the amorous Doll, the spirited Vixen, hard-drinking Betty Doxy and so on. Jenny Driver, prim and demure but deep and scheming beneath it all, is the most important of them. They have a chorus and dance, "Youth's the season made for joys", so that there should be a balance between the voices if possible, but above all else, they must be able to act. In addition there is a lovely little part for a Drawer.

The Production.

The musical references here are to Frederic Austin's version, published by Boosey and Hawkes.

Fig. 24

Act I, Scene I.



There is an excellent little overture in the style of Handel. At the end of the "Grave", which should be played with

much dignity and solemnity, the Beggar and the Player burst through the curtains. They speak the Prologue. At "Mr. Conductor, play away the overture", the orchestra resume the Allegro and at its close go at once into No. 2, "Through all the employments of life". The curtain rises immediately. Peachum is discovered sitting at a table, right. (Fig. 24).

During the closing symphony, Filch enters up left. There must be no waiting or playing for applause at the end of these songs. They are all very short and slight. Filch's song "Tis woman that seduces all mankind" follows the dialogue and on his exit Mrs. Peachum enters as Peachum is perusing his register of the Gang, in time for "Robin of Bagshot—alias Bob Booty". She comes in from back centre and is already half-tipsy. If she sings No. 4, "If any Wench", No. 5 will be omitted. A clever actress will make a great deal of this scene.

Filch re-enters at the end of her next song, No. 6, "A maid is like a golden ore". He is obviously afraid of the doubtful advances of Mrs. Peachum and tries to creep away but she catches him. When she begins to question him as to Polly's movements, she should catch him by the ear and her tone change from wheedling to a grating harshness. She drags him away as Polly enters, speaking to her father.

Her opening speech must not be too tart; she has to go at once into the lovely Purcell melody, "Virgins are like the fair flower", (No. 7). There must be a melting coyness in her hard-headedness. She sings standing centre to Peachum, who has seated himself right. But Mrs. Peachum has been successful with Filch and has discovered Polly's secret. She bursts in on No. 8 "Our Polly is a sad slut", which Peachum takes up as a duet. There must be plenty of violence and movement here on the mother's part. Before the concluding bars are over, she has thrown herself on the retreating Polly: "You baggage! You hussy! You inconsiderate Jade"!

There is tremendous excitement when Polly's marriage

to Macheath is out at last. A great deal of movement and interchange of positions must be worked out. Until Polly's "Can love be controlled by advice", nobody must be still, Eventually, Mrs. Peachum stages a collapse in the chair, left. "Strong waters" are brought and she recovers in time for the duet "O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed", with Polly kneeling at her feet. No. 11 can be cut, and Polly is dismissed.

The parents discuss the situation very coolly and Peachum has his "A fox may steal your hens" (No. 12). Polly returns and is abjured to sell her husband by having him "peached". Follows the beautiful "O ponder well". Peachum is touched, his wife unmoved, and vowing vengeance on Macheath, both depart.

Polly now delivers herself of a short soliloquy in which she sees Macheath in the hangman's hands. She becomes very distraught over this and the emotional display should be somewhat exaggerated. The last lines when she goes to let out Macheath from her room should be cut. The effect will be heightened and point given to his entrance if he creeps in from the right as she reaches her climax, "What then will become of Polly?" He goes at once into the duet, "Pretty Polly, say".

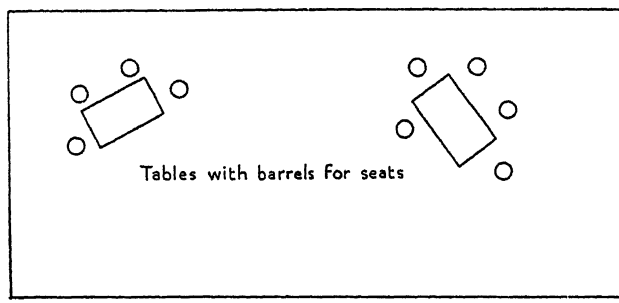
The love scene that follows should be made as romantic and sincere as possible. As we are to learn at the final curtain, the couple are truly married. There is the lively "Were I laid on Greenland's shore" which needs some slight dance movements from both singers, and the scene ends with their farewell, "Oh what pain it is to part", (No. 17). The parting must be prolonged by appropriate "business" to coincide with the very expressive ten bars which conclude the duet. The curtain falls on the last bar.

The second scene, the Tavern near Newgate, should follow as soon as possible. Filch should be included in this scene. He is obviously, from what has transpired in Scene One, in Macheath's confidence. He can be given the opening solo in the chorus "Fill every glass". The gang are

grouped round two tables or barrels. (Fig. 25.) Filch is behind the one left centre. During the interludes, tankards are replenished by the drawer. There should be plenty of tap-room "business" here. The more is improvised in this direction the better. Drinks should be slyly tipped from one mug to another and pockets picked during the dialogue. For example, A will display a pocket-handkerchief he has filched. B later on will help himself slyly to this. C notices what B has done. He will make his way over and in turn take the handkerchief from B. Eventually C finds himself next to A, who does not know he has the handkerchief. A picks C's pocket. He moves over to the opposite side of the stage and quietly examines the handkerchief to find it is his own. If this and similar "business" goes on unobtrusively

Fig. 25

Act I, Scene II.



during unimportant dialogue, such as that on page 216, background and atmosphere are built up. But this sort of by-play must not take place if there is an important dialogue taking place. The whole attention of the audience must then be directed towards the speaker of the moment. This can best be furthered by all the people present on the stage concentrating on what is being done and said by this character to the exclusion of everything else.

The chorus "Fill every glass" is repeated. At the close,

horses' hoofs are heard. The gang become alert and defensive and Macheath enters. The gang group round him for instructions and depart to the stirring Handel tune, "Let us take the road".

Macheath is left alone. There is a soliloquy, during which the Drawer unobtrusively collects most of the tankards. He removes himself before the opening bars of Macheath's "If the heart of a man" (No. 22). The previous music to dialogue should be timed with Macheath's remarks so that it will lead if possible without break into No. 22.

There is a bell and laughter off-stage and the women are announced. These entrances are very important. If a musical background is thought useful, No. 22 can be repeated very softly. The women enter singly. Their characters are clearly suggested by Macheath's greeting to each one and the manner in which each entrance is to be made must be carefully discussed with each character. They group round the stage, some sitting. As each new character enters there will be approrpiate re-actions from those already on the stage. They are all rivals in more things than Macheath's affections. They go into their chorus and dance. The producer must decide on what character this is to take. It can be more abandoned and have more character when adults are taking part.

Before long Molly Brazen and Mrs. Vixen are at it hammer and tongs. Their duet, "Why, how now Madam Flirt?" will be found as No. 38. It should be sung now and not left for Polly and Lucy. Jenny Diver's "Before the barnyard crowing" is repeated by the whole chorus and is followed by a short "cock and hens" dance—mime for Macheath and all the ladies. The scene which follows leads to the entry of Peachum and the constables and the arrest of Macheath. This is largely Jenny Diver's scene. She has betrayed him. One suggestion is that Macheath and the ladies indulge in a game of blind man's buff and that whilst he is blindfolded Peachum and the constables enter. This is childish and out of character. It is better to keeep to the

original text with some abbreviation. Jenny takes one pistol, Tawdry the other.

Macheath. Wanton hussies!
Jenny. I must and will have a kiss to give my wine a zest.

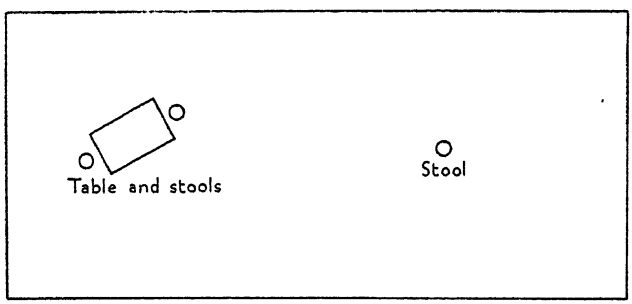
He embraces her and Peachum enters. Macheath's "At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure" is sung with great bitterness. He is led off immediately after the final phrase of his song. There are various reactions from the women to accord with their characters. Betty Doxy shrugs and has another drink. Tawdry examines her pistol and wraps it in a scarf to take away. Coaxer preens herself and so on. Only Jenny stands motionless, gazing after Macheath. On the final chords she flings the pistol away and falls sobbing over the table.

The Second Act.

A small table and two stools are down-stage right. Another stool is over left. The lighting should be suggestive of a prison's gloom. (Fig. 26.)

Fig. 26

Act 2, Scene I.



Lockit's speeches should have a sardonic geniality. The wonderfully expressive song for Macheath that follows, "Man may escape from rope and gun" (No. 28), should be

sung seated. Lucy then makes her entrance from the left. after "a crash and voices off". She is greatly perturbed. There is a choice of two songs, "How cruel are the traitors", which is the more expressive, and "Thus when a good housewife sees a rat", which is more vigorous and perhaps nearer the mood of the moment. To sing both holds up the action. The following dialogue will also stand some cutting. Macheath's "The first time at the looking-glass" is followed by the exit of both characters.

Lockit and Peachum then enter, "with an account book". The quarrel should be worked up to a final frenzy, with Peachum on his knees as Lockit has him by the throat. The reconciliation leads into "Thus gamesters united in friendship are found". The scene between Lucy and her father follows, played with a grim sarcasm by Lockit. He has a short but telling solo, "You'll thrive ere many days ensue" (No. 33).

Macheath re-enters and soon Polly is announced. No. 34 can be omitted and the whimsical "How happy could I be with either" substituted, with suitable by-play from Macheath to each girl alternately. The duet, "I'm bubbled, I'm troubled" needs great vivacity of movement and gesture. The exquisite "Cease your funning" from Polly is in great contrast. She is quietly confident and Lucy momentarily subdued. The dialogue after this song should be cut and Peachum and Lockit enter at once. In the concluding quintet, the last phrases are worked up to a hullabaloo of shouts and wails, and the girls are dragged off the stage on opposite sides, leaving Macheath alone chuckling silently on the curtain. This is the best place for a second interval, if one is needed. Better still is to proceed to the next scene after a short interlude. One of the previous songs could be repeated, No. 35, for example, or a choice made from the short interludes which occur later.

The escape of Macheath in the next scene should be done to the music of the Melodrama (No. 40), and the "business" must be carefully timed, so that Lucy strikes Macheath's

chains and eventually has the door unlocked at the final fortissimo chords.

Play now No. 41 as an Interlude and proceed at once to "The Gaming House" with lighting at full strength. The beggars, women, Filch and Mrs. Trapes should be suitably grouped in a sort of *tableau vivant*, with Macheath as the central figure embracing Mrs. Coxer, and the people behind raised up on benches. The effect should be one of a sort of pyramid of faces and figures. "The modes of the court" is sung to "Lillibulero" as a chorus with solos. Omit all dialogue. Macheath is shown to be back with his doxies and Mrs. Trapes' betrayal of his hiding-place will now follow logically. At the end of the music there will be a sudden blackout with a quick curtain.

Repeat this music whilst the next inset scene at Peachum's house is being erected. Begin on page 246 at "To-day shall be for pleasure". There is a small table, three chairs, a decanter and glasses. Omit the air on page 247 and go straight on to the entry of Trapes. The text can be slightly cut here, if desired. At the end of the scene, the trio, "In the days of my youth". Repeat one verse and chorus for a short dance for all three characters.

The scene between Polly and Lucy follows. Raise the curtain at once on "I'm like a skiff on the ocean toss'd" with Lucy seated down stage centre. There is a table and two stools. Polly enters. Make a cut on page 252 from "But since his career" to "The conquest of both sexes" (page 253) and then go at once to "Come, sweet lass". Lucy must play this "rat's bane" scene rather heavily, with plenty of devilish cunning and sly wheedling. Polly must remain calm and superciliously unmoved throughout. At page 254, "I vow, Polly, I shall take it monstrously ill if you refuse me", make another short cut to the sudden entrance of Peachum and Lockit, thrusting Macheath forward. The duet, No. 46 follows, and Macheath's solo "Which way shall I turn me?" (No. 47). The airs on page 255 and 256 will be omitted and the scene ends with Macheath's "The

charge is prepared". He is led away and the women are left weeping on each other's shoulders. The hornpipe strikes up, the noise of rattling chains and shouting is heard off-stage and the women hurry off as the chorus of beggars in chains dances clumsily on. This dance should have a semi-humorous character, with plenty of loud laughter and druken hiccupping from the participants. Nothing elaborate is needed. The curtains will close as they are still dancing.

The Hornpipe's music can continue until the curtains are ready to open on the final scene, the Condemned Hold. The suggested set has already been discussed. Macheath is discovered in the cage. He sings No. 50 "O cruel, cruel case". Some of the beggars then enter, followed later by Lucy and Polly. The lovely little trio "Would I might be hanged" follows. Then the women enter and the "business" of the "babies" can be introduced.

During this scene, the Beggar and the Player should enter unobtrusively, possibly when the women's chorus appears, and should stand down stage on opposite sides, looking on. With the company grouped round the stage in attitudes of tragedy, the Player comes forward and makes his protest. The following dialogue can be conducted before the curtains, whilst the "cage" on the stage is removed. On the cries of "Reprieve, reprieve!" the curtains open again and the full company are lined up. Or if preferred, the curtains can remain open and the "cage" be removed by the beggars in sight of the audience.

The company should be in three lines, principals at the front, then the women, and lastly the men.

For the dance, played twice, the front row comes forward, breaks at the middle and moves round on each side to form the back row. The second row repeats this. Then the back row. The original front row will now be in front again, but their positions upset. They therefore break at the middle and move outwards and then round and inwards but without going to the back. They are then in their original positions for the final chorus, which is sung by everybody fortissimo.

4. *THE BARTERED BRIDE:* Smetana

Vocally, this work is well within the limits of an intelligent operatic society. Good, straight-forward singing is the chief requisite. There is plenty of first-rate choral material. The costumes are colourful and the atmosphere of the whole work is vigorous and stimulating.

The difficulty lies with the orchestra and the ballet. Both are very important here. The Overture and Furiant are well-known and typical of the scoring. The conductor should try these out with his orchestra, before embarking on the work. If the players can cope with these examples, there is no reason why the work should not be attempted. The dancing is definitely an integral part of the opera. Without it, the work would come to life only half-heartedly. The services of a first-class ballet-mistress are essential and there should be a good team of about twelve capable and enthusiastic male and female dancers.

It is possible to perform the work in a modified form. I have seen it done by a girls' school with piano accompaniment. There was an alfresco atmosphere about the whole that was unusual, but definitely enjoyable. When they were not on the stage, the chorus lined the hall on both sides, and in the case of some of the duets and trios, they sang the music with the principals. The programme informed the audience that the aim was not a performance of high polish, but a sort of communal participation in a great work. In this, the production was certainly successful. The great thing was that all the girls had these gay tunes in their heads and they would probably stay there for the rest of their lives.

The Parts.

Marenka, the heroine, is a lyrical soprano. She should be pretty and vivacious. She has a very playful scene with Vasek. She should have a good range and a flexible voice with a good "top" to it. Ludmila, her mother, is a mezzo-

soprano or mezzo-contralto. Hata, Vasek's mother, is a similar part. Esmeralda, a member of the troupe of players, is a small part. She appears in Act Three. She is a kind of operatic "soubrette". She should be attractive in appearance and have a bright colour to her voice.

Jenik is the hero. He is a tenor of lyric quality. He should be as handsome and dashing as possible, but one cannot be too particular as far as the amateur tenor is concerned! One must look for the voice first. Vasek is a lovely part for a tenor or high baritone who has a feeling for comedy and who can act. He stutters, even when he sings, which, as Mr. Denis Arundel has recently pointed out, is unusual, since stammerers are not supposed to be troubled with this affliction when they sing. Kecal is the village marriage-broker. He is a bass, with some lovely music and a magnificent part to build up. A scheming but amusing rogue, he is the kind of character Rossini would have delighted in. The two fathers, Krusina and Micha are baritone and bass. They have not much solo work, but plenty to do in the ensembles. The Manager of the strolling players should be nimble and alive. He is a tenor or high baritone.

The recitative which connects the various solos and concerted items can be, and often is, spoken. It is recommended that this course be followed.

The First Act.

The music is divided into five sections, called "scenes", but which follow one another without break. This is useful from the point of view of the producer. The dramatic structure is made quite obvious for him and rehearsal of the various sections is simplified.

The set is the village green. A fair is being held. On the right is an inn, with possibly a raised verandah or a rostrum. There is a door making R.2 exit. At the back there is a sloping rise, going off right. At Sadler's Wells, a balancing

"blind slope" was used to the left, which improved the set. There are some ninety bars of music on the rise of the curtain before the first musical entry of the chorus. There must be plenty of natural movement here—villagers greeting each other, sly flirtations and any other "business" the producer likes to introduce. The dancers can make their first appearance here. Nothing very elaborate is required. The atmosphere of gaiety and good humour is needed. The dancers can be effectively brought in down the slope, R.U.E., in two groups—a boy, carrying a maypole, followed by the female dancers, and a girl with another maypole followed by the men, as was done at the Wells. This was effective and colourful. At the Allegro molto on page 16*, the dancers leave the stage and the first chorus begins. The chorus subdivides itself into five sections. The main theme appears as introductory to three vivid choral sections. The first goes to the "Heigho" section on page 18. Natural expressive gestures here, between men and women—a sort of good-humoured wrangling and badinage. On the fourth line on page 20, the way is paved for the re-appearance of the main theme and the dancers re-appear, without maypoles, and take up their positions for a dance to accompany the re-statement of the theme on page 21.

At the cadence on page 23, the dance breaks up temporarily, the dancers mingle with the crowd and Marenka and Jenik enter arm in arm down the slope. They come down stage and their short exchange of phrases follows. They are admonished by the crowd and eventually on page 27, the chorus is taken up again, with the dancers in full swing in the centre of the stage. At the bottom of page 30, on the beginning of the diminuendo, there is a gradual emptying of the stage in couples, which must be timed so that the last couple do not make their exit till the final bars. Marenka and Jenik are left alone. This is an excellent opening chorus, of which much can be made.

* The edition of Messrs. Boosey and Hawkes is referred to throughout

The spoken dialogue which follows must be brisk and at a good pace. During the following aria for Marenka, there must be changes of "picture". The basic re-positionings should occur during the intervening instrumental passages. Further spoken dialogue follows and for the opening of Jenik's solo on page 40, Marenka can be seated on the bench over left. The position and "business", if any, of the non-singing character should be carefully studied in a prolonged duet such as this. It is often difficult for the amateur to feel at ease in these passages. He should be told carefully how and where to stand and as little gesture and movement as possible should be employed. What there is should always arise out of his reactions to the music of the soloist and should be devised to emphasize the salient features of the words and music, so as to make them clearer for the audience to grasp. The duet has a closing section of six pages, beginning on page 44. The grouping of the two characters throughout this scene must be carefully studied. There must be constant variety, without restlessness. The lovers go out up the slope during the final bars and Kecal enters at once, in a hurry, followed by Krusina and Ludmilla.

The scene opens with a solo from the marriage-broker. He is the central figure throughout the scene. His one thought is to bring about the completion of Marenka's marriage contract. The parents are in a state of agitated indecision, particularly the mother. There are several short instrumental interludes. During each of these there is a rapid change of grouping, with Kecal refusing to allow any interruption. He is full of humbug. On page 56, Ludmilla tries to nail him down, "Come to the point, what like is this husband?" which leads eventually to a concluding trio. After some spoken dialogue, a further trio follows on page 63, "Such a nice lad". The parents sit on the bench for Kecal's solo. They rise on page 67, "We think highly of your praises and we do believe your words". During the concluding symphony, Kecal expresses the utmost gratification, when Marenka enters.

There is immediate re-grouping—Marenka and her parents over left, and Kecal well over right. He joins them on page 72, "You'll rejoice to hear of what we're speaking". For the passage beginning "That's done", on page 74, Marenka should be isolated over left, with the elders on the right. She is about to take her stand against the three of them and the grouping should suggest this. Kecal crosses to her on "Hindrance here, hindrance there", with much fussiness of gesture. On page 76, at Marenka's "I have a lover", she has come centre, the parents are right centre, and Kecal has moved over left, These basic positions can be maintained during the quartet.

For the dialogue, Marenka is over right, facing the three of them, "I'll not part from my man". Kecal becomes the central figure again on "Here it is set forth in black and white". There is much movement of an agitated nature from now until the end of the scene. The grouping must be carefully worked out. All exit right and left downstage, on the entry of the chorus and dancers for the final scene of the act.

This scene should be full of life and vivacity, with a spirited polka performed by the dancers. The singing should be gay and vigorous and a final note of great boisterousness must be struck for the final bars. The finale should be one of swirling colour and vivacity.

The Second Act.

The scene is given as the "interior of the inn". This is not absolutely necessary, and on a small stage, an enclosed set would probably diminish the feeling of spaciousness that is required. One set could do for the whole opera, but if the verandah could be pushed round to a more central position and the slope removed, variety could be achieved. Some such device is used effectively at Sadler's Wells.

The men are grouped on the verandah, Jenik among them, and others are seated round a table over right, drinking. Kecal is seated on a bench on the left. A rousing

male voice chorus opens the act, with solos for Kecal and Jenik forming a middle section. At the conclusion, the women enter, the grouping is changed, the men mingle with the women, and the girl dancers join the boys, who have been on the stage during the drinking chorus. A vigorous national dance follows, with the chorus as onlookers—the famous Furiant. On the concluding bars, the stage empties and Vasek enters slowly and shyly from the inn.

This is the stuttering song. According to the directions, he is "stammering wildly" which is an inappropriate wording, as the solo is marked "moderato". "Shyly" or "nervously" would be nearer the mark. This is a lovely part for a singer with a sense of comedy. There must be plenty of quiet, but not overdone, "business"—shy rubbing of one foot on the other calf, nervous twiddling with the ribbons of the hat and awkward scratchings of the head and rubbings of the chin. The solo is a delight.

On the closing bars, Marenka peeps round the corner of the inn, back centre, and overhears some of his predicament. She enters for the dialogue. This scene must be played by the soprano with great coquetry. She becomes almost a soubrette here. The duet which follows offers great opportunity to both singers for clever interpretation. It has much in common with Wilfred's scene with Phoebe in "The Yeoman of the Guard" and should be played in the same fashion, with plenty of sly and flirtatious "business" from Marenka as she wheedles the simple Vasek to her purpose. They go off, Vasek into the inn, Marenka down left, as Jenik and Kecal enter at the back.

Kecal sees in Jenik another victim for another contract. He knows a girl, "pretty, well-off, suitable, and her name is Lily". Above all, he must break up Jenik's attachment to Marenka. The opening music is conversational in style—Kecal on the right, Jenik on his left. Kecal crosses over for the duet on page 124. Jenik is making for the inn during this, with the broker plucking him by the sleeve and

strenuously trying to attract his attention in various ways. At the Meno Allegro, page 127, Jenik crosses over left and sings his reminiscence of his native country, downstage, with his back to Kecal, who is centre upstage, watching him. Jenik again crosses right at page 127, "True, may be, of all the rest", so that Kecal is well to the centre and can sing downstage for his aria, "Every lover's girl is to him a plant". Jenik, during this lively and somewhat cynical disquisition, should be facing Kecal, with his back three-quarters to the audience.

This device of arranging for the soloist to be so placed that he can sing downstage to the person he is addressing should be carefully watched. Otherwise the singer is faced with the choice of singing to the audience and away from the person he is addressing, which is unconvincing, or of looking at his companion and singing upstage or into the wings, by which his tone is wasted and his delivery impeded.

At page 131, on his "Did you mention an heiress?" Jenik is struck with an idea and strides over left. The "picture" has been held long enough. This leads to the vigorous and lively "I know a maiden" duet. Plenty of spontaneous movement and gesture is needed here, with crisp and well-articulated diction. The duet comes to a joyous conclusion on page 138 and in the following conversation, the point round which the rest of the story revolves should be made very clear when it is arrived at—that Marenka is only to marry Micha's *eldest* son. Kecal departs to see to the drawing up of the agreement and Jenik is left alone for his aria, "How could he ever dream that I would barter you."

For this lovely song, he will need to assume a convenient and easy position—to sit on the table or across the bench is as good as anything. The song needs to float naturally into the action. and anything of a stylised operatic posture should be avoided. He will probably feel the need to rise for the final bars, after the short interlude on page 146, to give point and urgency to his climax.

Kecal, Krusina and the villagers then enter at all entrances. The table is brought to the centre and a chair placed behind it. Kecal seats himself, with Jenik on the right and the father over left. Eventually the document is signed, amidst the agitated outcry from the villagers on which the curtain descends.

The Third Act.

In Act Three, we are back on the Village Green. Vasek is discovered, "alone and miserable". He is dreading the approach of the marriage that has been arranged for him. The stammering so cunningly suggested in the vocal line must not be overdone here, nor must the singer's interpretation allow burlesque to step in. It is very easy to overstep the borderline here, and the poor youth's hesitancy and reluctance must be subtly suggested.

There is a roll of drums and from the left appear a band of strolling players, followed by villagers from all entrances. The Manager, in red coat and top hat, is a jaunty little figure. There are also Esmeralda, a black man and various circus figures—ballet dancers, clowns and so on. The Manager's recitative should be delivered prestissimo—a startling catalogue of all that is to be seen. It should be intoned as written.

The Vivace on page 164 is performed by the dancers, in the costumes of strolling players of various sorts. The choreography here is entirely at the discretion of the ballet mistress. Sadler's Wells make great and effective use of one character dressed as a horse, with a huge, nodding head. The scene should be gay, lively and amusing. The weight-lifter should not be overlooked, with his dummy bar, which is afterwards carried jauntily away by a ballerina in one hand.

The music divides into clearly marked sections, so that the allocation of sections to movement by various solo dancers and groups of dancers should be easy to devise.

The crowd disperses and the dialogue follows, in which

Vasek is persuaded to take the part of the Bear in the entertainment to be presented. In this scene between the Manager, the Indian, Esmeralda and Vasek, there must be plenty of movement and life.

For the imitative duet that follows, Vasek has the centre of the stage, with the Manager and Esmeralda on either side, so that he is in a state of bewilderment by the time they have finished with him. They exit left and Hata, Micha and Kecal enter down the slope from the right.

Vasek refuses to marry Marenka. The grouping here should be different from that arranged earlier when Marenka put her foot down in a similar situation. Vasek should be centre, with the three adults round him, in constantly varied arrangement. At the top of page 184, he makes his escape and runs off after Esmeralda, left. A trio follows, delivered by the singers half between themselves and half in the manner of an aside to the audience.

They are joined by Marenka and her parents and later by Vasek. The grouping here needs careful planning. The scene ends with a very effective sextet. Marenka is then left alone for her aria, "Our dream of love, how fair it was". This is the most sustained passage of singing she has. It is at once a test of her ability and an opportunity to score a great success.

Jenik re-appears and a spirited dialogue between the lovers occurs. Marenka thinks she is jilted and Jenik cannot reveal his subterfuge. Marenka is in a flurry of despair and resentment here, and there should be much movement for her, as she attempts to elude Jenik's pleadings. The closing duet is full of fire and vivacity.

The broker re-appears and, with tears from Marenka, he prepares to wind up "the cruel tragedy". The full company, apart from the strolling players and Vasek, now re-assemble, and Jenik shows how he has outwitted the broker. There is a magnificent piece of choral writing to wind up the scene.

On the final cadence, there is a cry from one of the

players, who rushes on from the left—"Save yourselves! The bear's broke loose!", and Vasek appears dressed as a bear. His mother puts a speedy end to this impersonation, which is just as well—"Come along, you silly clown, pull off that mask!", and she drags Vasek away with her.

The opera ends with a final chorus, "Happy pair, at last we're mated".

5. *THE IMMORTAL HOUR:* Rutland Boughton

The score of this work is published by Messrs. Stainer and Bell and references made are to their edition. For conditions of performance, application should be made to the composer, care of the publishers.

"The Immortal Hour" was first performed in 1914 at the Glastonbury Festival. It is one of the loveliest musical works for the stage that this country has produced.

The staging is simple, the production straightforward, the choral writing superb and the solo parts unique in character. All the vocal writing is above all else singable and falls gratefully on the ear of the listener, which is more than can be said of some recent operatic works. The writing for the orchestra is exquisite. It is here that the amateur society will find the chief difficulty. First class players are needed to perform the music even adequately, and much time must be given to the rehearsal and preparation of the orchestral score. Good wind players with a sensitive appreciation of line and phrasing are needed particularly.

The staging, although simple, depends considerably on effective lighting, particularly in the first act. The point should not be forgotten and an imaginative lighting plot should be carefully rehearsed and worked out.

The work was recently revived at the People's Palace, and the performance from all points of view was most beautiful.

The characters.

The text is adapted "from the drama and poems of Fiona Macleod". It has that Celtic element of the supernatural and the unreal that one would expect.

The thing to be avoided in building up the parts is over-accentuation of this motive. The characters must not be allowed to become so ephemeral that the audience loses grip on them. One can recall an interpretation of Etain that was so precious that it became irritating. There is something of "Pelléas and Melisande" in this music, but there is also lovely stuff to be sung and the voices must give the music sufficient body of tone to make it credible to the listener. Familiarity with the score and the action will, I hope, make this point very clear.

Etain is a soprano. She must be slight in build. There is nothing of Brunhilde or Isolde here! She is a creature of two worlds—a Mary Rose, in fact. The voice must be beautiful and without any trace of unpleasant vibrato.

Eochaidh is a baritone, the bewildered mortal in love with his fairy-wife. Of the three principal parts, his is the most human in its appeal. He should have a warm and sympathetic quality.

Midir is a tenor. His voice should match that of Etain in quality. He is the spirit lover, who comes to call her back to her own world. There is nothing wilting about him. He should be able to suggest brightness and happiness.

> "How beautiful they are, the lordly ones
> Who dwell in the hills, in the hollow hills,
> They have faces like flowers
> And their breath is a wind
> That blows over sunny meadows
> Filled with dewy clover."

Manus and Maive are the two characters that bring the story back to reality in the opening of the second scene—a peasant and his wife. The man is a bass-baritone and his wife a mezzo-soprano. They are small parts but good ones.

Dalua is a bass-baritone, "the Son of Shadow". The voice should have richness and dignity.

There are also solos for a female spirit voice and for an old Bard, a bass, who has a lovely song in the second act.

There is a chorus of ladies of the court, druids and warriors and a small group of dancers should be available for the opening of the opera.

Act One.

This divides into two scenes—a forest and the hut of Manus.

The directions for the first scene are "a forest; a pool in the background". Mr. John Russell's designs in the recent revival were admirable. Lighting plays a great part in the creation of the right atmosphere here. The scene should be drenched in a greenish twilight, with spots to pick out the principal characters when necessary. There should be nothing harsh about the lighting arrangements, and the spots, when needed, should be only the palest beams of diffused moonlight.

The pool should be suggested on the backcloth, with tall and gaunt trees for the wings. At the back, a rocky slope inclines upwards to the left.

The curtains open on a darkened stage and Dalua is gradually revealed standing over right. To the left of the stage are the dancers—about six of them. "As far as page 38, there is a continuous ballet of tree-spirits". This "ballet" is really a succession of groupings, which should change according to the mood of the various musical sections. There is not a great deal of movement. For the greater part of the time, the tree-spirits are listening to the conversation between Dalua and the chorus of unseen spirits, offstage. The purpose of the ballet is to vary the stage-picture during the opening scene, which would otherwise be too static for too long a time, and to give a sort of subdued intensification by the significance of their movements and groupings to the dialogue between Dalua and the chorus. The dancers

should wear wispy and trailing garments of indeterminate colour, to match the dark grey-greens of the tree trunks.

The chorus should sing off-stage to the right. At page 25, a remarkable laughing chorus begins—there is an echo of Purcell here. This is one of the moments when more movement is called for from the dancers—a suggestion of a sort of fearful and tremulous agitation. Then, on page 32, there is a pause, "Laugh not, ye outcasts of the invisible world". On page 37, the mocking laughter is taken up again, the chorus gradually fades away and the dancers disappear into the wings, left.

At the top of page 39, Etain enters slowly down the slope. There are copious stage directions throughout the score. She is bewildered—"Why did I leave it, the beautiful country?—I will go back to the country of the Young". An eerie cry is heard and Dalua "steps forward, with a courtly bow, faintly touched with mockery". He greets her. Has she forgotten her "delicate, smiling land?" She remembers nothing, save that she is "Etain, White o' the Wave". Dalua tells her that she has been drawn here because "a King of Men has wooed the Immortal Hour. He seeks to know the joy that is more great, that joy the beauty of the old green earth can give—He has sought and found and called upon the Shee to lead his love to One more beautiful than any mortal maid". But he does not know the outcome.

"There is but one way—it is not Love aflame with all Desire, but Love at Peace".

He tells her the "Poet-king, led here by dreams" is approaching. The King shall love but already he is doomed. Upon him already is "the touch of him men dread and call Amadau Dhu—he shall have madness—and think it wisdom—a dream within a dream—that shall rise and die".

A hunting horn is heard. Etain goes out, right. The horn is heard nearer and Eochaidh enters from the left, down the slope, "in a leathern hunting dress". Dalua welcomes him.

"Now I am come upon my long desire—I am weary of

all things, save the stars, the wind, shadow and moonrise and strange dreams".

The directions then indicate that "suddenly a fountain rises high in the mere, the spray shines brightly in the moon-rays". This device of stagecraft will probably baffle most amateur stage-managers! It can be omitted and the King can see the fountain off left, and sing the solo that follows down stage, over in this direction.

From the wings, left, comes a mezzo-soprano voice, "Return, O Eochaidh, wandering King". But for the King, there is to be no backward way. "By the sun and moon, I swear I will not turn my feet". Then he is shaken by indecision and Dalua's mocking laughter is heard, bidding him follow. "I follow", replies the King and he goes slowly off-stage on the right. The hollow echo of Dalua's voice is heard, as the King, moving in Etain's steps, goes on to his doom.

Page 76 is sung unaccompanied off-stage, and the curtains slowly close.

Apart from the movements of the dancers, there is very little movement in this scene. The characters are all moving in a dream world and the producer should find that what is chiefly needed is sparing but significant gesture at moments of climax. The score itself is very well marked and will give him all he needs.

The Second Scene.

There is a page of "transformation music", to be played "in steady time, rather rough tone", which can be played twice if necessary.

The set for the hut of Manus can be an inset. Screens can be used, or flats, set diagonally, with a door upstage, (Fig. 27).

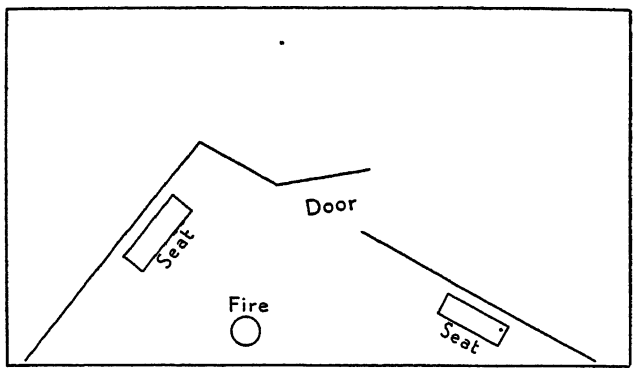
"Manus sits before the pine-log fire. His wife stands at the back, plucking feathers from a dead cockerel. In a sheltered recess sits Etain".

The business with the cockerel is left to the discretion of

the producer. One remembers the antics of the hostess with her duckling in a recent production of "Boris Godunov". The episode was more amusing than convincing. Maive could easily do something less likely to be mirth-provoking at this juncture, but this minor detail is up to the producer—and the maker of properties! If they think they can produce something that will really look like a cockerel and sufficient feathers for Maive to make some sort of a show with, well and good!

Fig. 27

The Hut of Manus.



Set built as inset with flats.

Manus is a garrulous type. He is discussing the strange visitor, Dalua, who has brought Etain to them for shelter and left not only enough gold pieces to provide for her lodging, but also "for any other who might come asking for bite or sup". The rain is heard, suggested by demisemi-quaver passages for solo violin, and later the sound of Eochaidh's horn outside. "Open, good folk", he calls. Manus rises in agitation and taking his spear rushes to the door, poising it in defence. Maive, frightened, runs over left. Only Etain remains still, strangely unmoved. The

King enters, he sees Etain and "from that moment, he keeps his eyes on her".

He moves over to the fire, centre, and as he crosses, Manus touches him. "He is not wet; the driving rains have left no single drop". The good old couple are terrified. Is he one of the fearful "nameless ones?" But Eochaidh quietens them and they retire into the shadow at the back of the hut.

The fire dies down, the logs give less flame. A slow and tender melody on the cellos leads into a beautiful duet, "At last I know why dreams have led me hither". Passionately Etain is wooed, and a climax is reached on page 103, when there is sudden and vehement reference in the orchestra to the mocking laughing chorus of the spirits, heard at the beginning of the act. "Who laughed?", cries the King. "No one laughed", replies Manus, sullenly, but Maive knows intuitively that something more than natural is happening.

"Dear Lord, sit here", says Etain, and draws him to her. The old couple sleep, and as the King rests, with his head in the lap of his beloved, Etain "strains into the darkness as though to hear a far-away sound".

Very softly, in the distance, off-stage, a small chorus is heard singing the Fairy Song.

"How beautiful they are the lordly ones."

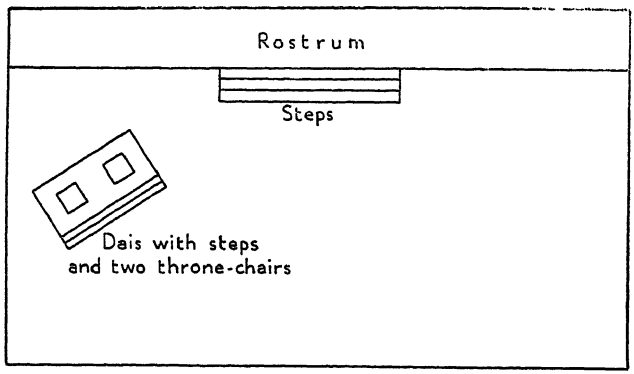
The composer has asked for "not more than five or six sopranos, four contraltos, four tenors and six bass", a balance of voices that is worth noting. This is an exquisite arrangement. The sopranos have the words, whilst the other voices have the lilting "la la la", accompaniment. It is practically without orchestral accompaniment. As it dies away on the softest of pianissimos, the curtain falls. The effect is magical and musically it is all so simple—a tune with a shifting background of three simple chords and occasional interpolations from solo harp and woodwind.

The Second Act.

The scene is the Hall of the Dun of Eochaidh the King. At the back, centre, is an arch with a flight of three or four stairs, and over left a dais, on which are two thrones (Fig. 28). The set should be suggestive of spaciousness and whatever Celtic figuration or ornamentation is used on the stone coloured walls should not be overdone.

Fig. 28

The Hall of the Dun.



The setting of the opening section of this Act will of necessity be on formal lines. The score here gives little indication of what was in the composer's mind as far as grouping and movement are concerned; the producer must use his own imagination.

The section divides in the first place into four clearly defined sections :—the entry of the Druids, the dance of the women; the entry of the warriors; the full chorus for all these groups.

The opening has the sub-title, "Processional March of the Druids". It will be logical to suppose that the women are awaiting their coming. They will therefore be grouped on the left of the stage, roughly in semi-circular fashion, or in

two or three irregular lines. The Druids make their entrance to a chorus of a very free rhythmic nature—the time signature varies from time to time. (In learning this passage the singers should keep a steady crotchet beat throughout). They will assemble in the centre of the stage. There is nothing to prevent the introduction into the group of a Chief Druid and probably two of higher rank than the majority. This may be a help in building up various groupings. Provided that the atmosphere of dignity is preserved, some variety of grouping is allowable at the beginnings of each of the main divisions of the chorus. At the section marked "Ritual", the Druids will be impressively arranged in the centre of the stage, and the women will participate in the movements of worship suggested by the words :—

> "Sky-set Lu, who leads the host of stars,
> And Dana, ancient Mother of the Gods."

On the final bar, the Druids will arrange themselves on each side of the thrones, to leave the stage vacant for the Dance of the Women.

This is in bright $\frac{6}{8}$ rhythm. The actual dance, of a free rhythmic nature, can be performed by the members of the ballet who appeared in the first scene. A free interpretation by means of rhythmic gesture is all that is needed from the female chorus. The music is in four parts, so that they will be better employed giving their attention to their singing and leaving the more liberal interpretation of it to the dancers. At the end of the chorus, Etain appears at the top of the steps. She is greeted "Hail, Etain the Beautiful" and she moves to the throne. There is a short passage where the melody of the Druids' greetings is combined with the music of the women's chorus.

Three bars of music for horns bring in the Warriors, who enter also from the centre. They group diagonally, half-facing the thrones. Their chorus is in the form of a snatch

of an old ballad, "But this was in the old, old, far-off days". They sing their song to the Queen.

During the final bars, the Druids move over left behind the women and in the two bars at the bottom of page 125, the warriors line up on each side of the throne. The King enters and seats himself beside Etain. "Hail, Eochaidh, High King of Eire, Hail".

The King has been married a year and bids the company drink from the great horns in celebration. During the snatches of chorus in the next four pages, these are passed round. At the passage beginning "Green fire of Joy", a procession of homage to the King and his Queen can begin. The chorus move slowly up in twos and bend the knee. There is plenty of time for this routine movement during this chorus. At its end, all the chorus are grouped diagonally on the left of the stage, with the King and Queen alone on the thrones. "They all look expectantly towards Etain". "Speak, my Queen", says the King, and Etain "rises abstractedly".

The next pages are devoted to passages of solo writing for Etain and the King. Etain thanks the people for their greetings, but asks to be allowed to leave. She is "tired with strange perplexing dreams". The King, too, has been troubled in his mind and describes how he has "heard the Hidden People like the hum of swarming bees . . . Seen the Green Host marching in laughing disarray". He begs Etain not to leave him alone, but she rises and steps down from the throne.

All that is necessary during this scene in the way of gesture is suggested with considerable detail in the score. The movements of the Queen as she makes her exit are noted also.

The court is then dismissed. The score is somewhat vague as to when the women of the chorus leave the stage, but, as they have no further singing after page 149, it would seem to be fitting for them to leave in attendance on Etain as she passes out.

After the line of dismissal by the King, the warriors are the first to leave. They are lined on each side of the throne on the right. They will need to come forward into possibly two rows to make their obeisance to the King before they turn upstage and leave by the centre door. Their exit can be made to the 14 bars of interlude which the composer has provided, but marked as a "possible cut".

The Druids are standing over left. Their exit will be made processionally. They turn outwards to the left and then move across the stage over to the right, passing in slow greeting in front of the King. Their movement should be so timed that they are all over on the right of the stage, with some ascending the lower steps when Midir makes his entrance. The steps must not be allowed to become too crowded as Midir enters, otherwise his entrance, which is important, will be ineffective. When he has descended the steps, he should move over left centre and more Druids will then ascend the steps and group so as to make an effective "picture". The Old Man and the Boy should be the last of the procession, and at this point should be on the extreme right of the stage, below the throne.

Midir greets the King and asks a boon. He is "a King's first son" but his name and lineage he cannot disclose.

The King signals to the Bards and they pass out singing. The Old Man and the Boy remain and seat themselves on the steps of the dais over extreme right.

The next pages are devoted to passages between the King and Midir. The King tells Midir of the longing he has for peace "and his heart's desire". He is already preoccupied with the foreboding that his life with Etain is drawing to an end.

Midir flings off his green cloak and stands revealed in "a glittering tunic of ruddy gold". The next passage is marked "bold and quick". He tells the King of the birth of the Lord of Love.

The King implores the Lord of Love to give him the

secret which will keep Etain by his side and asks Midir to tell him the boon he craves.

Midir asks to be allowed to kiss "the white hand of the Queen" and to sing to her "a little echoing song" that he has made. The King sends the Boy to call the Queen and sinks wearily upon his throne.

An interlude is then provided by the beautiful song of the old minstrel, "I have seen all things pass and all things go". At the end of this song, the Old Man rises and goes slowly out centre, and Etain appears at the top of the steps, clad as in Act One.

During the following pages, when she eventually recognises Midir, full directions as to gesture and movement are given in the score. Eventually, after a solo of some length from Midir, the Queen and Midir leave the stage. There is a chorus, accompanied by flute and harp, sung offstage and based on the Fairy Song. This music reaches its climax and on page 205 directions for the exit of the Queen and Midir are given.

When they have left, "a sudden darkness falls". If it can be arranged for the backcloth at the back of the steps to be raised and something suggestive of the scene for Act One to be gradually illuminated, a very moving and effective picture can be achieved. Dalua can then be discovered when the lights are brought partially up again, standing in silhouette at the top of the steps. If the lighting is so managed that only the back of the stage is revealed, the actual setting of the Hall will be almost obliterated.

The King cries, "My dreams, my dreams. Give me my dreams!" and falls on the steps. Dalua draws himself up and far away, very quick and gay, the last phrase of the Fairy Song is heard from the chorus. There is "a pause, then a slow curtain".

6. *LOVE AT THE INN:* Roger Quilter

"Love at the Inn" has music by Roger Quilter, lyrics by

Rodney Bennett, and libretto by Jeffrey Lambourne. The work was given its first London performance by Barclays Operatic Society in November 1950, and was followed shortly afterwards by the present writer's production of the work for the Lyric Players, Wimbledon.

The plot is based on an episode in the life of George Morland, the artist. A quotation from the librettist's introduction may be helpful here :—

"Morland was a singer and fiddler of no mean ability, and according to his biographer, could have earned a living at either. There is nothing false in his suddenly bursting into song. In his early days he must have been very good company. His life was cut short by excessive drinking, which, combined with a taste for horseracing, accounted for the alternation of extreme poverty and comparative affluence. An inn is quite a natural setting for Morland, and conveniently affords a "chorus" for the librettist. A further reason for the choice of Morland forms the essence of the climax of the play. During his period of lucrative portrait painting, he made the strange condition in his contract that he should be housed in the servants' quarters. His dislike of the aristocracy was intense and sincere, although his own grandfather was a baronet. The "Reynolds" circle was anathema to him, and it might have been Sir Joshua's inability to forgive poverty in an artist that made Morland give this practical form to his dislikes".

The story is based on his encounter with Anne Ward, a lady of high birth, with whom he falls in love, and the way in which his social prejudices are eventually overcome. Musically, this is excellent material. There is ample chorus work, a variety of duets, trios and quartets, a very beautiful quintet, and any number of solo items which live up to Quilter's reputation as one of the outstanding songwriters of this century. Most of the choral writing is in four parts, and for this reason it will be advisable to reduce the chorus movement to a minimum. Whilst all the music

is melodic, the typical member of an Operatic Society will find that he has quite enough to do to stick to his part and get the words over, without being worried by too much unnecessary movement. Therefore, the producer would be well advised to confine the chorus action to gestures and illustrative "actions".

Characters.

George Morland is a tenor. The part lies fairly high, but on only one or two occasions does it touch A. The singer who plays this part should, however, be very comfortable from E to G sharp. A high baritone could sing the part, provided that he has the necessary power in his upper register, but if a tenor with sufficient acting ability is available, he is obviously the man to cast for the part. He must be able to suggest at once the Morland who is capable of handling the romantic interludes with tenderness and sincerity, and the Morland who preferred to spend his time in inns and taverns in the society of servant girls and countrymen. In his dialogue, in these scenes, he must be able to suggest the "good mixer" and the man who likes to look upon the wine when it is red. The more attractive in appearance he can be, the better.

Robert is the nearest the opera comes to providing a comedian, although the comic element here is by no means of the type usually found in light opera. This is a difficult part to cast, as in addition to having a feeling for comedy, the actor must also be able to sing. He has an important part, for instance, in the quintet, and in the "Kissing Duet" with Jenny. He should be neat and nimble and have some ability as a dancer.

John, the Innkeeper, is an excellent part, somewhat in the Gilbert and Sullivan tradition, for a bass-baritone. Most of his dialogue is in dialect, although there is not much of this. He has one excellent song, "The Jolly Blue Boar".

Sir William Longton is a bass. He has one short solo

and the bass part in the quintet, therefore vocal ability is the first requisite here, although he must be capable of giving distinction and poise to his dialogue as the chief representative of "the Quality up at the Hall".

James Ward is a non-singing part. He appears in Act 3, by which time the dramatic situation has become somewhat tense and complicated. He must, therefore, be capable of letting in a breath of fresh air. He should deal with the dialogue in a direct and breezy manner, so as to reintroduce the feeling of normality in the somewhat unusual situation which has developed.

There is a small part for the Bartender, a half-wit. This part, in the hands of a good actor, can be made a comic miniature of the first order.

Anne Ward is the heroine. She must be a lyric soprano of outstanding ability, a convincing actress and able to cope with the emotional intensity which develops at the climaxes.

Jenny is a mezzo-soprano, whose range must include a good lower register, as she has the contralto line in some of the ensembles. The part is somewhat complex. She is the jilted maiden who follows Morland in an effort to regain his affections. In the first scene, she must, therefore, be able to deliver her dialogue with sincerity and conviction. She has, however, later on, moments of a much lighter nature, and two duets in particular, one with Lucy and one with Robert, where she must be able to show considerable aptitude for comedy. If she can dance, this will also be an additional asset.

Emma is the hostess of the Inn, a contralto part with the dialogue again in dialect. The better the voice, the better for the performance of the music, but she must also be an actress of no mean ability. She has several solos and ensemble numbers, and in particular, one, "Emma, oh Emma", which can be treated as a musical monologue and can become one of the highlights of the performance.

Lucy is the nearest the work comes to providing a "soubrette" role. She must be able to sing and hold a part,

but, above all, she must have pertness, liveliness and a very keen sense of pointing the comedy.

Sophie Longton is the daughter of Sir William. She has a considerable amount of dialogue in Act 2 which she must be able to deliver with poise and distinction. She is Anne's friend and should be able to partner her well, both in appearance and delivery. She is a mezzo-soprano and must be capable of holding an inner part in the ensembles.

Lady Longton appears in Act 2. She should have a rich contralto voice and considerable distinction of bearing.

There is also a small character part, Lizzie, a serving maid at the Inn. This, like the Bartender, in the hands of the right player can be a very amusing miniature.

Two smaller parts are for the Soldier and the Sailor, who appear in the third Act. The Sailor should be a dancer, as he has a solo hornpipe.

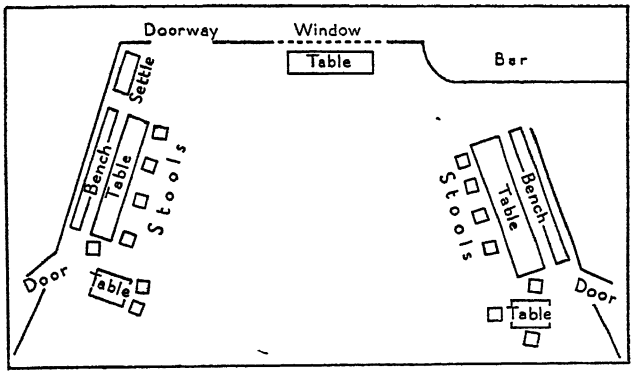
There is much scope in the part for the introduction of dancing and ballet. This will need to be handled by an expert in these subjects, as a great deal of the movement in the production must necessarily be left to the dancers, because, as stated before, the chorus have sufficient to do to look after their music.

Act One.

The first Act, which divides into two scenes, the curtain being lowered between them to denote the lapse of one day, is set in the Inn of the "Blue Boar". The setting (Fig. 29) must include a door down Right to a private room, and a similar one down Left. The main entrance is from a door into the road, back Right. Next to this is a window looking on to the Inn garden, and a good part of the left half of the back setting is taken up by the bar, behind which the Innkeeper and Bartender must be able to move. There is a table back Centre, under the window, two long trestle tables Right and Left at each side, with benches behind them and stools in front. In addition, there are two smaller tables with benches and chairs down Right and Left. There

Fig. 29

The Inn of the "Blue Boar"



can be a settle up Right on the downstage side of the door. The important thing to be watched in the first scene is that the opera should be given a good send-off to a very brisk, lively tempo. The chorus are seated when the curtain rises, clamouring for drinks and service from the Landlord. The atmosphere will be better set if, on the rise of the curtain and during the short interludes between the singing, movement is maintained by the entry of some members of the chorus, as late-comers, for example. Perhaps some indication of what is meant might be helpful.

As the curtain rises, there is much laughter from all those sitting on the stage. Two girls and a man enter; one girl comes down stage right and greets her friends at the end of the trestle table, where she sits. The two others proceed to vacant stools at the front of the trestle table left. Behind them, two or three men enter and go to places left and right. Two girls enter—one is greeted by a girl sitting down right, who runs up to her and brings her down to the table right. The other girl goes over to a seat at the small table down left. They are followed by two or three men, who enter and greet companions, going left and right.

Immediately after their entrance, a man standing back right will cross over to left behind them and a girl standing back left will run across to the right. This should fill in the six bars beginning at B and slightly overlapping the musical entry of the chorus at C (the references throughout are to the musical score, published by Ascherberg, Hopwood & Crew Ltd., and in the libretto, to the book published by the same firm). At the bottom of page 13, at the end of the first section of the chorus, there should be a further entry of two girls and a man, who are immediately joined by three girls from the trestle table right and two from the trestle table left. They form a gossiping group in the centre of the stage.

There is a little piece of "business' with tankards which can be repeated throughout this chorus. It will appear for the first time in the second bar of the last line on page 13. On the final word "John", the orchestra has the principal motive of this chorus, two minim chords followed by a crochet chord, all marked with accents. Each time this motive appears, there should be three smart raps with the tankards on the tables. Following this, at the bottom of page 13, there are four bars of interlude during which the shouts of the men rise to a crescendo. The women throw up their hands in horror and the noise gradually subsides as the group of women in the centre of the stage rush up to their tables and try to quieten the men at "Hush, hush", (letter F, page 14). After their reproof there are mocking retorts from the men at letter G, followed by four bars of interlude during which the laughter again rises on a crescendo, the women eventually joining in at letter H, by which time all the chorus are in their positions, seated and standing in convivial attitudes at the tables. There should be another smart rap with tankards on the first word "John". The singing then proceeds with growing vigour and volume to the final chord at letter I, where the motive again appears in the orchestra accompanied by three smart tankard raps. From then during the concluding ten bars of

symphony, there must be much laughter and shouting from everybody.

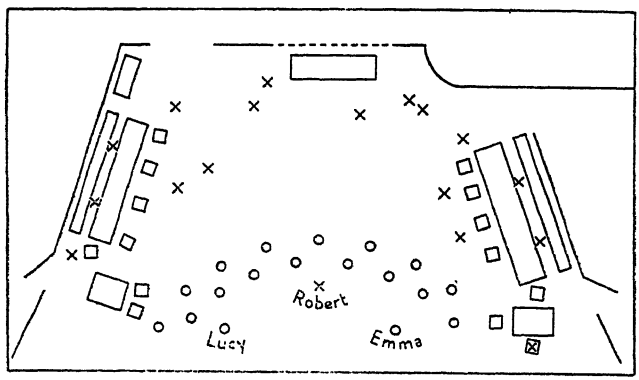
Lizzie enters during the last four bars of the concluding symphony and runs over right and then across left for her opening line. She is followed by Emma, who enters left back. The men's line, "We wanted John", is then spoken by all the men, who have suddenly become very meek and subdued. Emma then moves down right centre as John enters left and comes centre. At the top of page 7, before the entry of Lucy and Robert, she crosses left centre and John comes over right. During Emma's speech at the top of page 7, Robert and Lucy, talking offstage, cross behind the window at the back, so as to be visible to the audience. Robert and Lucy enter from the main door, Robert first, and Lucy crosses over left to Emma. It is impossible here to give all the changes of positioning during this opening scene, but all the dialogue must be taken at a very brisk pace, the chorus reacting in a very lively manner whenever possible to any joke or remark from the principals.

The next musical number is a trio by Robert, Lucy and Emma, "Mademoiselles and English Maids". At Robert's lines, "That's what I think when I'm there, but when I come back and look at you, *pour example*, and you—and you—and you—and you, Lucy", the chorus ladies gradually and as unobtrusively as possible gather round him so as to form a double circle (Fig. 30)*. Robert is centre with Lucy on his right and Emma on his left. The opening six bars should have slight dancing movements of a very simple nature for all the women, Robert, Lucy and Emma. "Actions", illustrative gestures and slight dance steps must be evolved for the chorus ladies so that the atmosphere of liveliness and movement is maintained behind the principals. The lyrics in most of the musical numbers are very good and adapt themselves easily to illustrative treatment. During the short interlude of four bars between the verses

* In the following illustrative diagrams, a cross is used to represent a male member of the chorus and a circle a female.

on page 18, the chorus ladies change sides, as do Lucy and Emma. During the second verse, which is sung alternatively by Lucy and Emma, Robert and the eight ladies in the first circle of the chorus, have a movement in which each couple of ladies advance to Robert, one on each side, coming up to him and doing a slight step and turn for four bars, their places being taken by the next couple until at the end of 16 bars, they are back in their original positions.

Fig. 30
"Mademoiselles".



Robert joins in again at "My dear, you seem offended", on page 19. On page 20, it is suggested that, at the reprise of the chorus, instead of Robert singing this alone, the whole chorus, who have hitherto had no singing in this number, should take up the melody for the first eight bars, men and women singing in unison. The second half of the chorus will be sung as marked for Robert, Lucy and Emma, until letter K, when the chorus will sing the last five bars in unison.

To the writer it appears that there is here perhaps not enough for the chorus to do in consideration of the length of time that they are sitting at the tables, and if the producer does not devise something in the way of movement,

so that the chorus is constantly part of the action, the total effect tends to be slow and deadening. On page 21, at the dance, letter L, all the principals and chorus ladies can do a slight dance step for eight bars and at letter M all the chorus, male and female, can again take up the melody, adapting the words previously sung. This is the only "set" number which appears in Act 1. It may appear, in the light of these suggestions, to smack slightly of musical comedy traditions, but if put over slickly, an atmosphere of gaiety and *joie de vivre* should be established. It is most essential that the work should get off to as lively a start as possible.

During the next pages of libretto (pages 9 and 10) which introduce Jenny, there is again much movement from principals. Jenny enters from the main door right. The business of taking her bag, and her exit at the top of page 10 by the door into the private room down left, must be managed very skilfully. The producer must work out the movements of the principals, having Jenny as the focal point. She must eventually be well over left against the door for her exit line, "My modesty, sir, bids me retire".

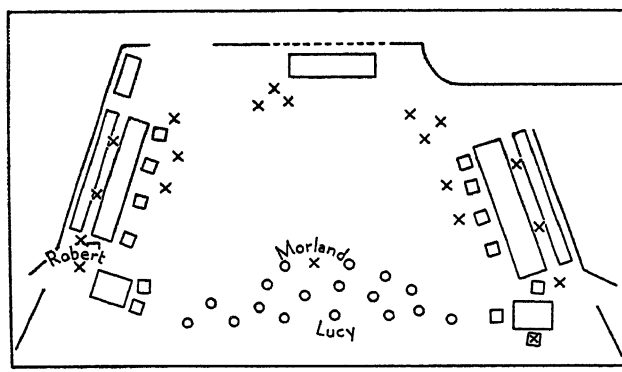
The entrance of Morland follows. According to the script, he is heard playing a fiddle, and if he is introduced in this way, he can cross the window at the back, followed by some of the dancing girls, but unless he is already a capable violinist, or can learn to manipulate the bow in a manner which will be convincing to the audience, it would seem advisable to bring him in without his fiddle. It should be borne in mind that later on during the country dance, if he uses his violin, he has to play it, or pretend to play it, during the whole of this somewhat lengthy movement, and unless he can handle the bow in a convincing manner, the affect on any instrumentalists in the audience is likely to be somewhat ludicrous. There seems to be no objection to altering Emma's lines on page 10, beginning "Aye! Thur's yer Mr. George, playing the fiddle to a score of dancing kids", to something of this nature—"Aye! Here be yer Mr.

George. We'll see what he has to say about that". He can then come in without his violin.

The entrance of Morland, which should be greeted with cries of "Master George", "Good-evening, sir", "Mr. Morland", etc., from the chorus, should be as lively as possible. His opening lines should be very brisk. As he tosses the golden guinea, another slight addition is suggested. He should hold up the guinea, Emma and the chorus give gasps of astonishment to the words, "A golden guinea!" He then tosses it in the air, repeating "A golden guinea", after which the introductory symphony to No. 3 "Here's to the Ladies" should begin with his line "A toast! To the ladies!" spoken through the music. He takes a tankard from Lizzie, who has got to his right, and the ladies gradually begin to group themselves round him. This grouping should occupy the whole of the first verse. Morland is centre-stage and by the time he reaches letter C and during the following two bars of interlude on page 23, all the ladies should be grouped round in front of him, some with backs to the audience, all kneeling with upstage hands outstretched (Fig. 31). The male chorus enter on page 24

Fig. 31

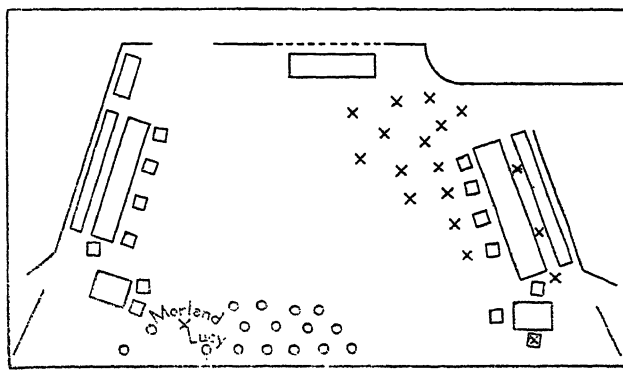
"Here's to the Ladies". (a)



at letter E. There can be slight swaying arm movements during the first eight bars of this refrain. At the end of the chorus, the ladies rise, Morland, for the opening of his second verse, moves over left and the ladies gradually, during the first four bars, get themselves over right. The men on the right side of the stage move over left, so that at letter H on page 25, Morland and all the men are over left and all the women over right. During the interlude at letter I, page 26, Morland gets over extreme right with one or two girls on his right hand, and the rest all grouped round him, again kneeling (Fig. 32) and all the male chorus take up the refrain with him. At the end of the song the chorus return to the tables.

Fig. 32

"Here's to the Ladies". (b)



The libretto is then resumed, Jenny re-enters, and eventually, on page 12, there is an exeunt for everybody except Morland and Jenny. A passage of a romantic nature now follows, when Jenny makes plain the reason for her having followed him, and she tries to win back his affection. There is a slight stiffness about George's line as in the text, which introduces the duet:—

Morland. Yes. And there's nothing to be done about it but to weep a little for the love that's gone.

There seems no reason why these lines should not be altered and given to Jenny, so that the introductory lines would read :—

Jenny. My simplicity has gone, and your love has gone with it. Oh George, is there nothing to be done about it?

This, spoken against the introductory music, leads very naturally immediately into Morland's verse, "When love is ended".

For the duet, Jenny and Morland are seated on the bench in front of the small table down right, Jenny downstage. At the end of the first chorus on page 29, Jenny rises, and during the interlude, moves over left. Morland will rise and follow her, slightly over left, two bars before the beginning of the refrain. Morland, here, must handle the situation carefully. He must not suggest by his gestures anything which will make this duet too suggestive of the love duet with Anne which is to follow. It must be remembered that his affection for Jenny is at an end. Jenny exits, door left 1, at the last chord.

In the dialogue which follows between Morland and Emma, Morland will cross left on his lines "Perhaps, one day, who knows?" and sit at the table down left. Emma, during her lines, will move about unobtrusively tidying the tables, except when she has something of significance to say to Morland. Some of the lines on page 15 with reference to Sir Joshua Reynolds seem superfluous, and do not help in maintaining the atmosphere, so as to lead to a good curtain. For that reason, beginning "Kind and generous as he can be", a cut can be made, if desired, so that Emma can take up the dialogue on "None the same, lad". The interlude on page 13 should begin at about Morland's lines "Because I don't like them, Emma".

The curtains close during the interlude on Morland's last line and open again without any break in the music, to

disclose John and Emma in positions for their duet, No. 6 "The same in the end". Emma can be seated, polishing tankards, at the small table down right. and John standing, somewhat similarly employed, slightly up left. John and Emma are a knowing old pair and have a keen knowledge of the ways and behaviour of their various customers. There should be some movement during the progress of the duet, to give variety to the positioning, and the second and third verses, in particular, offer opportunity for carefully manipulated illustrative gesture, accompanied by a slight sense of amusement on the parts of both Emma and John on the situations they are describing. The dialogue which follows on page 17 is of a rich and juicy nature and should be delivered by both the Host and Hostess with much feeling for the humour of what they are talking about.

The dialogue between Emma and the Bartender on page 17 and 18 can be quite amusing. The Bartender's "Wash 'em all" should be varied in intonation when it is repeated, to suit Emma's remarks. After her lines "The lazy forward wenches" she moves up to the window and looks off left. She sees Sophie and Anne approaching. When she runs over left, calling "Lizzie! See that the kettle be boiling", Sophie and Anne should cross the window. Emma gets herself downstage left so as to be able to greet Sophie conveniently when she enters. Anne eventually appears, coming in front of Sophie, so that she in centre-stage.

On page 19, the portrait of Sally the cow is brought before the audience. It is suggested that this will be more effectively presented as being hung on the wall, right. If this is done, the lines, "May I see it closer?" "Why, yes", should be omitted. Anne, Emma and Sophie can stand looking at the picture. Sophie exits eventually, to private room right 1, and Anne is left alone, centre-stage, for her song "If love should pass me by". Only slight movement and some natural gesture will be required here. This is a most beautiful little song, with Quilter at his best.

At the end of this song, Lizzie enters with a tray of muffins, followed by Emma. Sophie re-enters from the door right 1. An additional line for Emma is suggested here, as follows :—

Emma. Now you take them in to Miss Sophie, and be careful.

Lizzie crosses the stage from left 2 and goes into the door right 1 in front of Sophie, who runs up to Emma. Otherwise, Sophie has an awkward entrance through the door through which Anne has just made her exit.

Noises are now heard offstage to indicate the approach of the crowd. The chorus re-enter, followed by John, from left 2. Robert and Jenny lead the entry of the servants. The bartender is behind the bar. During the ensuing dialogue on page 21, the voice of Morland is heard singing the refrain of the love duet. He crosses the window backstage, so as to be at the doorway at the conclusion of the chorus. The dialogue between Anne and Emma must be taken at a fairly brisk pace, and Lizzie must gradually make her way down right so as to be at hand on Anne's left for the line, "A pint of ale quickly, Mistress Emma". During the dialogue between Morland and Anne, there must be plenty of quiet unobtrusive activity for the chorus. Drinks are served and Emma and John move about on the right and left amongst the company, so as to find their way downstage on right and left respectively for the quartet "Clink, clink".

This quartet can be adapted to bring in the chorus, who otherwise will have rather a long time to sit at the tables inventing "business". They can enter at the "refrain" of each verse, "Then clink, clink before they decline" at letter B on page 41, and at letter F on page 44.

This is a very beautiful and effective piece of writing and must be performed quietly with a subdued sense of enjoyment, the whole performance never rising much above a mezzo forte. In the bars of interlude between the verses, there may be a slight dancing movement for Emma and

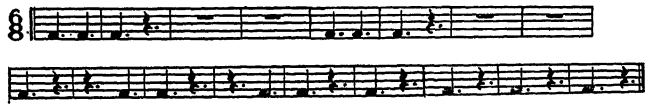
Anne, who eventually change sides, finishing in the following positions, reading from left to right :—

Anne, Morland, Emma, John.

If it is thought that a better "picture" and a touch of variety will be obtained, three or four couples from the chorus can rise and fill in the centre of the stage behind the principals, gently imitating their gestures.

The dialogue on page 23 then follows at a good pace and leads into the country dance.

This number introduces the dancers for the first time. During the first 16 bars, the chorus are grouped on each side of the stage to make more room for the dance; possibly, to provide a touch of realism, the trestle tables, during the introduction, can be pulled back towards the walls, and some of the chorus grouped standing and sitting on the benches and tables. During these 16 bars, the chorus clap to the following rhythm :—



For the first eight bars, Jenny and Robert dance round the stage in a circle, going up right and getting down into the centre at the end of the eighth bar. The dancers then enter, in single file, from the door at the back, tripping round the stage so as to be in a complete circle, with Jenny and Robert in the centre for the entry of the chorus on the words, "Oh, come and dance your cares away". The actual form of this dance can be left to the ballet mistress. The Chorus will have enough to do to sing it and supply a few natural gestures. On page 49, at the change of key, "Come and tread a lusty round", Jenny and Robert move out of the circle and stand at the back of the stage, centre. The dancers, during the following section can then perform something more elaborate, but still in the nature of a country dance. At letter H, when the chorus re-enter with

"Hi, hi", Jenny and Robert dance back to the centre of the circle, and on each "Hi", the chorus clap, ending with a final clap on the word, "Come". The dance continues to the end, ending on a note of great jubilation with the final "Hi ya". There should be a burst of noisy laughter here and Sophie then re-enters.

The exit of the chorus and dancers is made to the music of No. 10A. The dancers trip off, the chorus following them in a natural saunter, but they must all be off the stage as quickly as possible, without any suggestion of undue hurry. Robert and Jenny are the last to leave, and they are seen crossing the stage at the back of the window.

Dialogue then follows between Morland and Anne. The fact that Morland kept a pet pig is in keeping with what the historians have to say about his love of animals. The producer may get some inspiration from a study of one or two of his pictures, for example, "Dancing Dogs", "Guinea Pigs", "Horses in a Stable", etc. Morland should suggest here, the romantic lover, always interested in making a contact with any attractive young female who crosses his path. His sincerity towards Anne should develop gradually. Until the bottom of page 25, at the lines :—

Anne. Did Rupert join you in your music?

Morland. Why, yes. It was horrible when he provided the treble, but not so bad when he developed into a bass.

Morland should speak his lines ingenuously and quite sincerely. Anne's amazement and amusement develop during the course of the dialogue until, by the time these lines are reached, she cannot contain her amusement and bursts into laughter. Morland then sees the funny side and laughs with her.

The serious note is resumed at the top of page 26, "But surely you love music?", and the romantic atmosphere must be re-introduced by Morland during his lines, which should be spoken with as much warmth as possible and lead into

the refrain of the love duet. Both are seated downstage right for the opening of this. Anne rises about the fourth bar after letter C, Morland does the same about letter D, and at letter E, Anne crosses over left. Natural movement and gestures to suggest their growing interest in each other must be worked out to the end of the number.

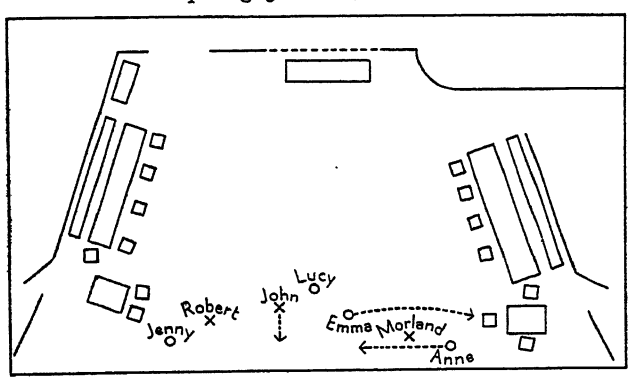
Robert then makes a brisk entry, followed by Jenny, bringing the invitation from Sir William Longton, to paint the portraits of his family. The chorus begin to enter quietly, but as quickly as possible, at the line "Mr. George, what is the news?" This line would be better given to Emma, who enters left 2, followed by John. Lucy leads in the chorus.

For the finale, the following positions are suggested, which must be led up to as naturally and easily as possible—

Jenny, extreme right, Robert on her left, Lucy, upstage centre with John on her right and Emma on her left, Morland and Anne over on the left. (Fig. 33.)

Fig. 33

Opening of Finale, Act One.



The changes during this finale are very slight. Anne moves centre at letter A, page 58, and Morland joins her at letter B, page 59. Tankards are brought round or filled up at the bottom of page 59. If it is felt necessary to bring

in the dancing girls here, so that all the company are on the stage for the finale, they could act as serving maids at this point. Anne crosses Morland and gets to his left on page 60, "Now 'tis the time to say good-bye", and at letter H on page 62, John comes downstage centre on his recitative, "So now a toast. May thy picture long recall the face of the quality up at the Hall".

At letter J on page 63, Emma takes the glasses away from Anne, Jenny and Lucy, who are going to leave, and after a vigorous and rousing cadence, the final picture is achieved by Anne moving upstage to the door, followed by Jenny and Lucy, with Morland and Robert bowing to them downstage. The chorus on the right of the stage must be so arranged that the departing ladies can be clearly seen by the audience.

Act Two.

The Second Act divides into two scenes. The librettist has been somewhat vague in his directions. The scene is given as Longton Hall, and the time, the next day. For Scene Two, the directions are the same, and the time, evening of the same day. A footnote adds, "If a variation of scene is wanted by the producer, scene one can be played ¾-stage, with enormous french windows centre-back, which can be thrown open to reveal the garden". It may be of interest to record what was done at the first West End production of the opera, when considerable variation was introduced on these suggestions, with very good effect. The first scene was played in the garden of Longton Hall, with a drop cloth at the back suggesting the grounds of the mansion, and woodland wings on each side. After the gipsy dance, a drop cloth downstage was used, and to fill in the time occupied by the change of scenery, the gipsies repeated a variant of the gipsy dance, entering right, in front of the drop cloth, dancing across the stage, and eventually making their exit left.

All that was necessary for the change of scene was for the

backcloth to be raised, behind which the setting for Scene Two, inside the Hall, was revealed. The woodland wings had merely to be changed for something suggesting pillars or interior decoration. This variation from the author's suggestions was of considerable value, because it added variety and brightness to the Act. A front drop cloth is not necessary if "tabs" or curtains are available downstage to be drawn. The main thing is to keep the movement going. A change of scene from the garden to indoors also gives heightened effect to the appearance of the servants in their white wigs and Georgian costumes for the painting. There is interlude music supplied on page 109. This is based on the music for the Gavotte which is to follow and if this is used, the Gipsy Dance before the "tabs" or drop cloth will not be introduced.

There is a chorus to open Act 2, "All is bustle, all is haste", which was also dispensed with at the Scala Theatre. The Act was introduced by a ballet in the classical tradition, and the music for "All is bustle, all is haste" was used effectively for this. There is a broad, melodious waltz tune on page 69 which lends itself well to dancing.

The actual directions for the opening chorus are, however, as follows:—

"The Servants are erecting a banner "Happy Birthday". The Principal Dancers are supplied with the daisy chains which adorn this device and the ballet consists of the movement of placing the finishing touches to the banner. This gives an opportunity for the Principal Danseuse to be hoisted on the shoulders of the Principal Dancer."

On the conclusion of the opening number, Robert enters from the right. If a ballet has been used, the chorus will follow him on. If the chorus has been sung, they will already be onstage. Lucy enters from the left, suggesting that she has come from the house. All principals who are returning to the house or coming from it should, therefore, make their entrances on this side. Those who are coming from outside the grounds should enter from the right.

Unless Robert can make his conducting effective and amusing, he should omit it. This chorus, "Hail, happy birthday", is a very beautiful and singable piece of writing and it seems a pity to burlesque it. It can be treated as a sort of birthday "cantata" to Anne. She enters on the opening bars, followed by Sophie, from the left, gets downstage during the first four bars, and then the chorus during the next six bars move slightly over left so that they are grouped in four curved rows facing downstage, with Anne and Sophie standing over extreme left. Lucy and Robert are standing in front of them. Very little movement is necessary, a few natural gestures will do. During the section for male voices on page 77 a girl comes forward with the bouquet, "Miss Anne's bowpot", and gives it to Lucy. All the ladies take two steps forward and curtsey, whilst Lucy presents the flowers to Anne. The ladies rise and step back for letter D on page 78. This is a most enjoyable piece of vocal writing and should be sung with zest and appreciation. At the end of the chorus, all the girls curtsey and the men bow.

After brief lines of appreciation from Anne and Sophie, the chorus leave, to the exit music on page 82. They go off right. Dialogue between Anne and Sophie follows. Anne is worried over the fact that she has deceived Morland in pretending to be a farmer's daughter and she is anxious as to what the effect on him will be when he discovers that she belongs to the social class which he despises. Lady Longton enters, followed by Jenny, from left 2. She quickly makes her exit and will be obliged to do this on the other side of the stage. When she returns later on for the quintet, she will re-enter with Sir William, from right 2. Sufficient movement must be worked out to give life and variety of grouping during this dialogue. Anne is eventually left alone for her song, "Little moth". Here again, natural gestures suggestive of the words and a free movement about the stage are all that is necessary.

The producer will have to decide here who is to sing the

contralto part in the quintet. The author has left an alternative choice to be decided. There is an entrance for Lucy, and presumably, if Lady Longton does not sing the part, Lucy will do so. There are, however, lines and an entrance for Lady Longton provided, and she would seem to be the more suitable character to maintain the graciousness of the scene, provided a singer with a voice of sufficiently beautiful quality has been cast for the part. In this case, there is not much point in Lucy's accompanying Sophie on her entrance as indicated. Lucy will not take part in the quintet and, if she is brought on, will have to stand and do nothing during the whole of it.

Sophie will therefore re-enter left 2, alone. Lucy's line, "And the hat", can be given to Sophie. Sir William Longton, accompanied by Lady Longton, re-enters right 2. At the bottom of page 33, Robert and Jenny are said to enter, but, once again, there is no point in bringing on Jenny merely to carry a box, as she exits after two or three lines. Robert can quite easily carry the two boxes of dresses, which are going to be examined later, by himself.

Natural and smooth movement for the principals should be arranged for the dialogue on page 34, so that for the introduction to the quintet on page 86, Sir William should approach Lady Longton, who is sitting on a stone seat over right, bow over her hand and make his way over left. Anne is kneeling downstage at Lady Longton's feet and Sophie is standing behind the seat on Lady Longton's left. Robert is slightly backstage, centre.

This quintet is an exquisite piece of writing in the direct tradition of Sullivan and Edward German and is quite up to the standard of anything that can be found in the Savoy operas. The conductor must watch the blend of the voices. During the interlude between the verses, Lady Longton rises, as do the girls, and comes centre, Sir William joins her and Robert moves over left, so that the positioning for the second verse is, Anne and Sophie over right, Lady Longton and Sir William, centre, and Robert over left,

slightly backstage. A note in italics on page 90, for the second chorus "One tress of hair", indicates that this chorus can be sung unaccompanied. This is most effective, and should certainly be taken advantage of. The orchestra re-enter at letter E on page 91. All the principals end with bows and low curtseys on the final chord, except Robert, who is at attention.

Sir William and Lady Longton, followed by Robert, make their exits and almost immediately, Jenny and Lucy rush on with more boxes and the very charming and vivacious quartet, "Hurry, scurry" begins. The following positions are suggested:—

Sophie and Jenny over right, examining the contents of one set of boxes, Lucy and Anne over left, doing the same.

For her solo on page 93, Anne comes centre with a dress, and is joined by Sophie. At the reprise of the refrain, Sophie and Anne change sides so that Jenny and Anne are now over right, and Sophie and Lucy over left. For Jenny's solo on page 95, she comes centre. During this piece of somewhat conceited display on her part, Lucy is highly amused and gets over right, behind her, giggling and mimicking her. As Jenny, to her own great satisfaction, on the line, "The loveliest lady of the age", reaches her top note, Lucy should burst into loud and derisive laughter, treading on the train which Jenny is dragging round behind her, snatching it from her. She then runs over to Anne, right, and Jenny goes left to Sophie, so that all the ladies are in their original positions. During the concluding bars on page 97, some "business" can be devised. Lucy can snatch up a frock from Jenny and be chased round the stage in a circle, so that she puts the dress into her own box at the end of the "picture", and on the final crochet, a little tableau, according to the producer's inclinations, can be devised.

Lines follow the re-entry of Robert, who takes off the boxes, and is eventually followed by the ladies.

There are ample directions here for the gipsy dance

which follows. The author and composer had here definitely only two dancers in mind, but it is possible that the producer may be faced with the problem of having to make use of the "dancing troupe" which is usually associated with most established operatic societies, and which the society—and quite rightly, too—are always anxious to make use of. In this case, the music for the gipsy ballet can be used for a choreography for a full ballet and in this case, the lines on page 17 will not be applicable and Lucy must make her exit with Sophie and Anne.

Morland will then make his entry from the right during the introduction of No. 18, "Dance, dance, Gipsies", accompanied by all the dancers in gipsy costumes, and break at once into the gipsy solo. The librettist's suggestion that the housekeeper and butler should be introduced as comic figures, is a very good one. Something very like the finale of "Carnival" could be aimed at here, if a full ballet "corps" is used, the gipsies making fun of Mrs. Dymchurch and Mr. Pennycrust, just as the two representatives of the Davidsbündler are derided in the ballet on Schumann's music. At the end of this ballet and solo, a black-out is suggested on the final chord, with Morland in the centre of a grouping of the gipsies. There is some choral accompaniment from pages 105 onwards, marked optional. As the chorus will be changing into their Georgian costumes preparatory to this ballet, it is suggested that it would be safer to dispense with this. It should be emphasised, however, that this use of all the dancers is not what the author and composer had in mind.

The "tabs" are now brought together, or the front drop cloth lowered, as suggested in the remarks earlier.

When the curtains open on Scene Two, a setting in the Hall should be disclosed. There should be a centre entrance at the back, with two or three steps, and two entrances in the wings, right and left. There need be no furniture, except a period settee which is up right. Morland is discovered arranging his easel down right. Robert enters in

a Roman toga, with "a wreath of some kind of vegetation rather low on his forehead. He carries a trident". During the dialogue the settee is moved down left. Anne enters after Robert's exit, and dialogue of a romantic nature follows, which slightly overlaps, according to the directions in the libertto, the opening music of the love duet, No. 20. This needs very little in the way of movement, apart from careful and unobtrusive changes of position to prevent monotony during the two verses and two choruses. The duet ends with an embrace, with Anne and Morland in the centre of the stage, Anne on the right, and Morland on the left.

It is immediately followed by a lively and scintillating duet for Jenny and Lucy. Lucy enters first, left 1, and is being chased by Jenny. Almost immediately they go into "You cat". This duet must be performed with great spirit. The words are what matter and it must not be over-sung. The gestures and movement should be of a comic and pert nature, and it is up to the ingenuity of the producer and performers to make this number as amusing as possible. There is a dance to follow which should have a strong comic element.

Robert re-enters left 2, at the conclusion, and after brief dialogue with the girls and with Morland, who re-enters right 2, the music for the choral minuet, "What can compare", is heard.

This is a superb piece of choral writing; the music is what matters, again, and for this reason movement should be reduced to a minimum. It would be silly to allow the chorus to attempt to dance a minuet during its performance. They enter in couples from the back entrances, right and left. They make their way in, meeting centre-stage at the back and moving down the middle of the stage, one couple from the left followed by one from the right, then one from the left, etc., until they come to the front. They then break, right and left, and go to their positions, so that a triangular space is left in the centre of the stage, with its apex towards the

steps. They should endeavour to be in position in eight bars. At letter A, the dancers, wearing male and female costumes of the 18th Century period, come down the steps and group themselves there. On the first chord of the vocal chorus, Sir William and Lady Longton appear at the top of the steps, come down and stand upstage centre. All the chorus are attired in Georgian costumes and white wigs, which should be as splendid as possible. An effect of great dignity should be aimed at, to afford contrast with the abandon of the gipsy ballet, which has just taken place. The words should be studied and slight illustrative gestures introduced. For example:

> "What can compare for dignity
> With a family
> Led by baronet or knight?"

(On "knight", slight inward bow and curtsey).

All the ladies at the back move slightly into the centre at letter B and the gentlemen at the front step back slightly, so that all the ladies are grouped together at each side, with the men behind them. On "Or that a painter should be proud", a gesture with the right hand would indicate Morland, who is standing down extreme right. On the sustained "Ah", the men and women move back to partners and Sir William and Lady Longton come down centre so as to be downstage for the return of the principal melody, "Come, then, bid truth with art combine". During the final bars, there will be a slight dance movement between the couples, suggestive of the minuet, ending with a bow and deep curtsey. (Fig. 34.)

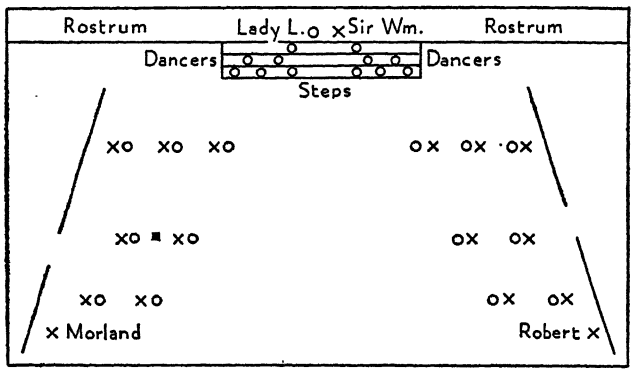
For the gavotte which follows, the chorus should move unobtrusively to the sides, so as to leave as much of the stage free as possible, and the dancers come forward and group themselves for the gavotte. Here again, it is entirely up to the ballet mistress to make this as effective as possible.

At the conclusion of the gavotte, Sophie, Anne, Jenny and Lucy enter in their costumes for the tableau. They enter at

the back, down the steps, and group themselves, Lucy on steps right, Jenny on steps left, with Anne and Sophie on the top step, right and left respectively. Morland's dramatic outburst, when he discovers Anne's true identity, follows, and it is suggested that the finale could follow more effectively Sir William's line "Damn you, sir! Get out!"

Fig. 34

"What can Compare?"



The positions for the finale to Act 2 can be, Morland, downstage extreme right, Jenny, who has run down to him, on his left, Robert and Lucy upstage right centre, Anne downstage centre, Sophie a little up on her left, Longton left centre, with Lady Longton downstage on his left.

The great thing in this finale is to get the music over. There will be some slight change of position between Anne and Morland, but for the rest, the placing will remain until the final cadence at letter O, page 144. During the final bars, Morland strides up centre and makes his exit up the steps and off right, followed by Jenny. Anne follows him for a few steps, then runs back and falls, sobbing, on Sir William's shoulder. This forms the final "picture".

Act Three.

For Act 3, "we return to the more human atmosphere of the Inn. The Scene opens with a small chorus of men. They are rolling barrels of beer." When the curtain rises on this chorus, "Bread, Cheese and Beer", the men should be working slowly over from the door up right, across the stage, so that when they enter with the words, "Roll in the barrel", they are grouped effectively over the stage. (There is a striking similarity between the opening phrase of this chorus and that of a comic song from a well-known musical comedy of Edwardian days. This would almost seem to be an intentional sly joke on the part of the librettist and composer.)

The second section of the chorus, at letter B, "Next comes cheese from Stilton", could be enlivened if some of the dancing girls, who are now back in their village costumes, come in, carrying cheeses, with some appropriate movement amongst the barrels; otherwise this chorus seems to become a trifle monotonous. Emma, John, Lizzie and the Bartender can also be introduced, to provide appropriate background "business".

The men exeunt and Emma greets Jenny and Morland, who are on their way to London. Nerves are somewhat stretched and a row seems likely to develop, when James Ward enters from the door up right. He should be bright, direct and slightly cynical in outlook. He introduces an atmosphere of normality into the situation. He has come to look for Morland. He greets him and during the ensuing dialogue when Morland tells him that he has fallen in love with a lady whom he thinks is of high rank, there is not much difficulty for the producer. Their dialogue is followed by the re-entry of Emma, who has her solo, "Emma, oh Emma".

In the hands of a clever actress, this song can become one of the highlights of the opera. Two verses and the encore verse will be sufficient. The first verse should be sung "straight". Afterwards, according to the skill and ability

of the singer, the solo can be made into a kind of monologue, and some of it almost spoken. The second verse in particular offers much opportunity for comedy and the last verse can be made extremely moving and touching, provided that the sentimental element is not overdone. There is a slight dance step between each verse.

John and the chorus, which includes a soldier and a sailor, then re-enter. John has a rousing solo, "The Jolly Blue Boar". The chorus to this song is one of the most catching melodies in the work. John is centre, and for the chorus "Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor", illustrative actions should be devised for the chorus.

This is followed almost at once by No. 28, a chorus with dance, "Sailor man, Soldier man". The actual dance is performed by the sailor, and the dancing girls. The soldier sits on a table over right. There is no reason why the first verse and chorus should not be given to the soldier as a solo, providing he can cope with it, otherwise he becomes a somewhat inactive figure during this section. There is great scope here for whoever is working out the choreography.

Almost immediately, comes Morland's cynical song "Laugh at Love". At the end of the song, Morland exits right back, leaving the chorus amazed and dumbfounded. Lucy enters, followed by Robert. She at once joins the sailor. After a few lines of dialogue, there is exit music for the chorus, No. 29A.

Robert and Jenny, on page 57, have some effective dialogue which leads to their very clever duet, "What's a kiss". There should be slight dancing movement during the opening four bars, suggestive, one might say, of Robert attempting to steal a kiss from Jenny, whilst she evades him. This leads at once to the song, "What's a kiss that so much bliss should seem to be discovered in it?" The middle section of the duet can be made extremely amusing. It is devoted to a discussion of the various kinds of kisses and after the mention of each variety, music is allowed for

illustrative mime. This must be worked out, bearing in mind all the time what the instrumental interludes suggest. The melody is taken up again on page 174, and is followed by a dance which can again suggest flirtation. This duet is a clever effort on the part of the composer and the writer of the lyrics and should be made the most of.

Anne enters after the exit of Robert and Jenny, and has a moving song, "Farewell", after which Ward re-enters left 1, and Anne explains to him her predicament. This is followed by a short scene between Anne and Jenny, in which Jenny realises that she has lost Morland, and decides to take Robert as second best. Emma joins the two girls and there is an amusing and slightly sardonic trio, "Are men so simple?" This is a catchy little tune and there should be slight dance movement of a prim nature between the verses.

On page 62, the whole company re-assemble, the "tangled skein" is unravelled, and Morland finds he has got his Anne after all. For the finale, Ward gets over right, Jenny and Robert are on his left, Anne and Morland are centre, Emma and John left centre, and Lucy and the sailor over extreme left. Lizzie and the Bartender stand behind Emma and John, and Sir William and Lady Longton, with Sophie are right centre, between Robert and Anne.

This work is an outstanding addition to the list of light operas. The quality of the music is first rate, and it can be unreservedly recommended to any operatic society which wishes to tackle music which is not too difficult, but worth performing.