

TOCCATA CLASSICS

Peter TRANCHELL

TWICE A KISS: COMIC OPERETTA IN ONE ACT
SEVEN PIECES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
NO MORE OF THEE AND ME
THE DOG THAT SAT
MAHO ISHIZAKA
TICKLE THE KEYS

Performers include
Piers Lane, piano
Sophie Bevan, soprano
Jennifer France, soprano
Henry Waddington, baritone
James Gilchrist, tenor
Christopher Purves, bass
Tom Winpenny, organ
Michael Papadopoulos

FIRST RECORDINGS, LIVE

PETER TRANCHELL *Twice a Kiss* and Other Works

Two Songs for Chamber Choir

1	***The Dog that Sat*** (1967, arr. 1967)*	**3:02**
2	***No More of THEE and ME*** (1978)	**3:59**

	Seven Pieces in Alphabetical Order (1947, rev. 1960)	**9:23**
3	C Peacock: *Lento*	1:58
4	D Rainy Season Bird: *Allegro brillante*	1:08
5	E Goat: *Allegretto*	1:10
6	F Crane: *Moderato*	1:35
7	G Cuckoo: *Allegro misterioso*	1:14
8	A Frog: *Andante*	0:37
9	B Elephant: *Pomposo*	1:41

Maho Ishizaka
b. 1993

10	***Tickle the Keys*** (2025)	**4:22**

	Twice a Kiss**: Comic Operetta in One Act** (1955)	**52:40**
11	*Allegro di molto*	2:33
12	'Another party, another suitor' –	2:08
13	'Seven weeks ago'	2:36
14	'Sir Robert!' 'Ah, Sarah!'	3:15
15	'Sir Peter has rank'	0:55
16	'If merry you'd be reckon'd'	1:44
17	'It's gone!'	2:25
18	'Sir Robert! This is singular behaviour!' –	0:57
19	'Affairs i' faith!'	2:23
20	'Sir Peter Parallel, ma'am'	4:58
21	'Lud, sir'	4:00

22 ‘Mr Honeywood is coming up’	2:00
23 ‘If you’re anxious for gains’	3:55
24 ‘How do I get away?’	2:05
25 ‘Your Majesty’	4:47
26 ‘Your pardon, madam’	4:10
27 ‘My play?’	2:34
28 ‘Good advice will suffice’	5:15
	TT **73:28**

Imperial College Chamber Choir 1 2
Jonathan Wikeley, conductor 1 2
Piers Lane, piano 2–9

Cast in order of appearance
Knipp: Daniel Gilchrist, tenor 11 20 22 24–26 28
Susan: Sophie Bevan, soprano 11 17 18 25 26
Sarah: Hilary Summers, contralto 11 14 21 24–28
Lady Asymptote: Jennifer France, soprano 18–28
Sir Robert Asymptote: Henry Waddington, baritone 14–18 21 22–28
Sir Peter Parallel: James Gilchrist, tenor 20 21 24 25 28
Mr Honeywood: Christopher Purves, bass 22 23 27 28
David Doidge, piano 10–28
Tom Winpenny, organ 10–28
Michael Papadopoulos, conductor 11–28

FIRST RECORDINGS EXCEPT
* FIRST DIGITAL RECORDING

‘ONE IS REWARDED WHEN PEOPLE SEE THE JOKES’

by Crispin Flower, John Gwinnell and Chris Henshall

Peter Andrew Tranchell was born at Cuddalore, in British India, in 1922. He was educated at the Dragon School, Oxford, Clifton College, Bristol (where he was Scholar in Classics), and at King’s College, Cambridge (where he was Exhibitioner in Classics and Scholar in Music). After a four-year break for war service, he went on to take a First Class degree in music in 1948 and was awarded a Mus.B (with Distinction) in 1949. He was appointed to a post teaching music at Eastbourne College but returned to Cambridge in 1950 as Assistant Lecturer in Music and was appointed Lecturer in 1953. He became Director of Studies in Music at Gonville and Caius College in 1959, Fellow and Director of College Music in 1960 and Precentor in 1962. He retired from his University and College positions in 1989 and lived in his parents’ old house in Curdridge, near Southampton, until his death in Southampton in 1993.

Tranchell demonstrated an outstandingly enquiring mind, musical talent and sense of fun from an early age. He also had a strong sense of commitment and loyalty to the organisations he was associated with, be they school, army or college. He started composing at school and produced a large output, including some ambitious scores, in the 1940s and 1950s, despite being busy with his studies, army service and teaching. From the 1960s onwards his time and energy were increasingly taken up with college duties and music, with composition focusing on pieces for performances by the Chapel Choir and college musicians, and so he composed much liturgical music. But he also produced a large number of stage-works, among them the operas *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1951) and *Zuleika* (1954); music for Cambridge University productions of Greek plays – *Bacchae of Euripides* (1956), *Troades of Seneca* (1957) and *Antigone of Sophocles* (1959); the ballets *Fate’s Revenge* (1951) and *Images of Love* (1964); and the concert entertainments *Daisy Simpkins* (1954), *Murder at the Towers* (1955), *Twice a Kiss* (1955), *Aye, aye Lucian!* (1960), *The Mating Season* (1962), *His First Mayweek* (1963), and *The Robot Emperor* (1965).

These concert entertainments demonstrate Tranchell's love and talent for the comic. In the same vein, he wrote cabaret-style solo and barbers'-shop-style songs for the Cambridge University Footlights Dramatic Club 'Smokers' and similar settings. Many of those who knew him will remember him at the piano, Noel Coward-like with a mischievous grin, singing songs (often with salacious lyrics).

But there was a serious side as well. Tranchell was invited to participate in a range of educational activities outside the University, foremost of which were several series of radio broadcasts by the BBC. He was a critic and reviewer for various journals and newspapers. His work here included a controversial review of the book *Benjamin Britten* edited by Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller,[1] published as 'Britten and Brittenites' in *Music and Letters*.[2] The forthright questioning of what he saw as a cult around Britten did not endear Tranchell to Britten's supporters, many of whom held positions of influence in the musical and cultural establishment. Like Britten, Tranchell was homosexual, but, unlike Britten, flamboyantly so, which earned him a certain notoriety in Cambridge in the 1950s and 1960s. His candour did not help his reputation with much of that still generally conservative establishment.

The Mayor of Casterbridge and *Zuleika* achieved the widest critical acclaim of Tranchell's works in his time. After a 1951 performance (in Cambridge) of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Eric Blom wrote in *The Observer* that it was 'an English stage work of exceptional quality' and commented that 'as a creative artist Mr Tranchell has decidedly leapt to fame at a single bound and almost recklessly high'.[3] *Zuleika*, first presented in 1954 by the Cambridge University Musical Comedy Club, attracted the interest of impresarios outside Cambridge, and later went on a provincial tour in 1957, followed by a short run at the Saville Theatre, London, with sets by Osbert Lancaster and Charles Mackerras as conductor. However, neither work achieved the lasting success that some critics anticipated. *Images of Love*, commissioned by the Royal Ballet in 1964 and

[1] *Benjamin Britten: A Commentary on His Works from a Group of Specialists*, Rockliff, London, 1952.

[2] 'Britten and Brittenites', *Music and Letters*, Vol. 34, No. 2, April 1953, pp. 124–32.

[3] Review published in the London edition on 5 August 1951. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was presented in the Cambridge Arts Theatre as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain.

choreographed by Kenneth Macmillan with a cast including Rudolph Nureyev, was apparently well received by the audiences but also fell from notice.

In 1988, in a letter looking back on his career, Tranchell wrote:

> It would be otiose to plod through my academic career year by year itemising the various compositions. Everything I have written has been for an occasion and has been duly performed... Suffice it to say I was engaged on composition with an annual output till 1960, when one day in June that year I was rung up by the Secretary of Caius College Council to ask if I would accept a Fellowship. I did, and found myself embarked on a new phase of life even more time-consuming than before [here he lists college posts and compositional demands of the choir, finishing with] My Magnificats cum Nunc Dimittises in C, B, and B flat are quite good.[4]

He goes on to write that, although much of his work at the University will not be of wider interest:

> There are rewards. I was heartened when a group of undergraduates (not from Caius) asked to hear a rather poor tape I have of the revival of 'The Mayor of Casterbridge'. I sat them down with vocal scores apiece (& glasses of claret) and we proceeded – with proper intervals – through the work. At the end, one of the undergraduates dissolved into inconsolable tears and all the rest were speechless with emotion – as indeed the audience is intended to be, at the end of the tragedy. (I don't think it was the effect of the claret.) That was in June 1986, which means that the thing written in 1951 was still effective twenty-five [*sic*: actually 35] years later.
>
> Then one is rewarded when people see the jokes in one's lighter output. Recently I turned that odious tune which heralds and concludes the soap-opera 'Neighbours' into a psalm-chant. Two of the lads in the choir recognized it and gave me significant oeillades during practice. Nobody else noticed anything...

[4] Letter held in the Tranchell Archive in Cambridge University Library.

Two Songs for Chamber Choir

Tranchell wrote many choral works, most (but not all) for Gonville and Caius Chapel Choir or College Chorus. Like all his music, the choral works can be difficult to perform, but they are generally popular with choirs. Some of the sacred works are increasingly performed by cathedral and college choirs, but his secular works are less well known – which is a pity because they are full of humour, *joie de vivre* and pathos. The two contrasting examples here illustrate this aspect of his work nicely.

The Dog that Sat (1967, rev. 1976)

Tranchell was often stimulated by something he saw in a newspaper. He kept a selection of cuttings in his wallet and when called upon to sing and play at a party he would often choose one to improvise from. He also composed a number of written song-settings of newspaper articles, for solo voices and chorus. *The Dog that Sat* [1] is an example of the latter, which Tranchell imbues with a whimsical charm:

> The dog picked up at a roadside yesterday could hardly be called a stray. It had not moved for at least fifteen hours. It is thought by those who understand the canine mind that someone ordered the dog to sit and simply walked away. The nameless collarless black-and-white mongrel (terrier type) then sat by the side of the road at Wherstead in Suffolk through a cold and foggy night. It was noticed by a cyclist pedalling home at six p.m. the day before yesterday. He saw it again as he cycled to work at eight a.m. yesterday morning. He reported to the RSPCA's Inspector at Ipswich, 'The dog has not budged. I was so touched that I shared my sandwiches with it'. The Inspector found the dog still sitting there. At first it refused to move, so he slipped a collar on its neck and pulled it away. He said it had been a vile foggy night, and as the dog moved away, you could see the impression on the ground where it had been sitting all those hours. 'I could tell from its great reluctance to leave that the dog was obeying a command. We shall treat this as a case of a dog abandoned, since it is unlikely that the owner will come forward.'
>
> The dog picked up at a roadside yesterday could hardly be called a stray.

No more of THEE *and* ME **(1978)**

In 1978 Tranchell lost two people close to him. One was Malcom Burgess (aged 52), a lifelong friend and fellow of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge. The other was Geoffrey Thornton (aged 19), one of the two Organ Scholars at Caius, much loved by all in the Choir. Tranchell was affected by both deaths (each of which followed serious illness) and it seems likely that this setting of a text from Edward Fitzgerald's version of *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám of Naishápúr* in May 1978 was inspired by one or other, and possibly both, and conceived very much as an In Memoriam [2]. The manuscript is dated 26 May 1978, and the first performance was by Caius Chapel Choir on tour at Cley-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, on 23 June 1978. There was not a dry eye in the chapel when it was performed again by the same choir later that year at the commemoration service for Geoffrey Thornton.

There was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of ME and THEE
There seem'd – and then no more of THEE and ME.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and – sans End!

Why, all the Saints and Doctors who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch – for whom?

–…and then no more of THEE and ME.

Seven Pieces in Alphabetical Order **for piano (1947, rev. 1960)**

This set of pieces was originally composed in 1947. A note by Tranchell on the title-page of the 1960 revision reads:

These pieces are designed to be played in the order given, on a piano which has the top C.
It is said that in Hindu music certain notes are named after creatures.
C Peacock
D Rainy season bird
E Goat
F Crane
G Cuckoo
A Frog
B Elephant.
The music attempts to illustrate the animals and suggest the appropriate key.
This work, first written in July 1947, was re-written in September 1960.

None of the pieces has a key-signature, though each uses its designated note as a tonal centre. In the 1947 version, Tranchell included notes on each piece described as 'Some Nice Thoughts on Peter's Pieces' which he attributed to a Mrs Helen Dray. The same Mrs Dray is credited by Tranchell as the author of the lyrics for his substantial song-cycle *Cousin Cissie's Baby Book of Swans*. Scholars suspect that Mrs Dray is fictitious and that both texts were written by Tranchell himself. The 1960 version of the *Seven Pieces* omits the 'Thoughts', but they are included here because they may help listeners understand some of what the music is seeking to convey.

The pieces (which are not in the order of the English alphabet!) and 'Mrs Dray's Nice Thoughts' are:

Peacock 3

And so like a peacock! First we wander through a glade or snade, slightly jaded, and see the unveiling of the Oh so unlucky tailfeathers of this over-rated bird, and then while we are recovering from our daze, the piece is at an end.

Rainy Season Bird 4

Amongst the chatter of other birds, the Rainy Season Bird has a hard time to hold its own.... The rain starts, but the bird-talk goes on till a dinnergong calls the irate musician to a despondent delineation of his meal, and the birds have flown away.

Goat 5

Follow (not too closely, my dears) this goat, – munching, – trotting about, – and occasionally stopping to have beautiful thoughts, quite irrespective of the intrusive cuckoo. Let us leave the goat digesting an extra-exquisite conception.

Crane 6

Spindleshanks and some interesting feathers has this Crane, as it walks about the marshpools. – Have you ever imagined yourself entangled with countless legs of waterfowl? But this Crane is out in the clear now, twisting its fine neck this way and that, till hearing the sound of a cuckoo, realises that migrating time is still on, and with an initial bustle of wings, swings aloft and away.

Cuckoo 7

Probe the forest cautiously and strain your ears for the sound. Probe in vain. Come out into a welcome clearing, and in the sunlight hear a parting cry, which makes you say 'I don't believe it'.

Frog 8

This Frog is not alone, even if it is in front of an elephant. Then it suddenly realises, – a neighbour goes one way, but our Frog plops down into a pool, – and only a ripple remains.

Elephant 9

This Elephant has got into a procession, somehow, and is covered with all sorts of glory and paraphernalia. But then it seems to get a sentimental thought, is it vanity at its strings of pearls, is it the call of the home-jungle, or has it found a friend in the throng? But no, there is, after all, no distinguishing it from any of the other elephants. So why try?

Maho Ishizaka

Tickle the Keys (2025)

Maho Ishizaka's *Tickle the Keys* 10 was the winning entry in the 2025 Peter Tranchell Foundation Composition Prize. Tranchell clearly loved the combination of piano and organ, using it for *Twice a Kiss*, in one of his major sacred works (the Te Deum in E (1974)), and in a few other unpublished works. However, as far as is known, he never

wrote a duet for piano and organ, and so the prize gave contemporary composers the opportunity to use their own voice to do so. The rules were simple:

> The work may be a single piece or a suite, with total duration not more than 6 minutes.
>
> Composers should draw inspiration from the following:
>
> - The comic operetta *Twice a Kiss* (any aspect – musical/literary/theatrical; for example, the title 'Twice a Kiss' derives from the superstitious rhyme about sneezing – 'Once a miss, twice a kiss, three times a letter, four times something better…').
> - Any aspect of Peter Tranchell's life and work.

The winning entry by Maho Ishizaka, *Tickle the Keys*, draws inspiration from Peter Tranchell's *Twice a Kiss*, as she explains:

> the piece centres on passages of semiquavers in which the organ and piano seem to playfully 'tickle' the keys (see Figure 1). These passages themselves are quotations from *Twice a Kiss*. Although they are not prominent in the original work, their delicate motion creates a distinctive sonic texture, which forms the foundation of this composition.
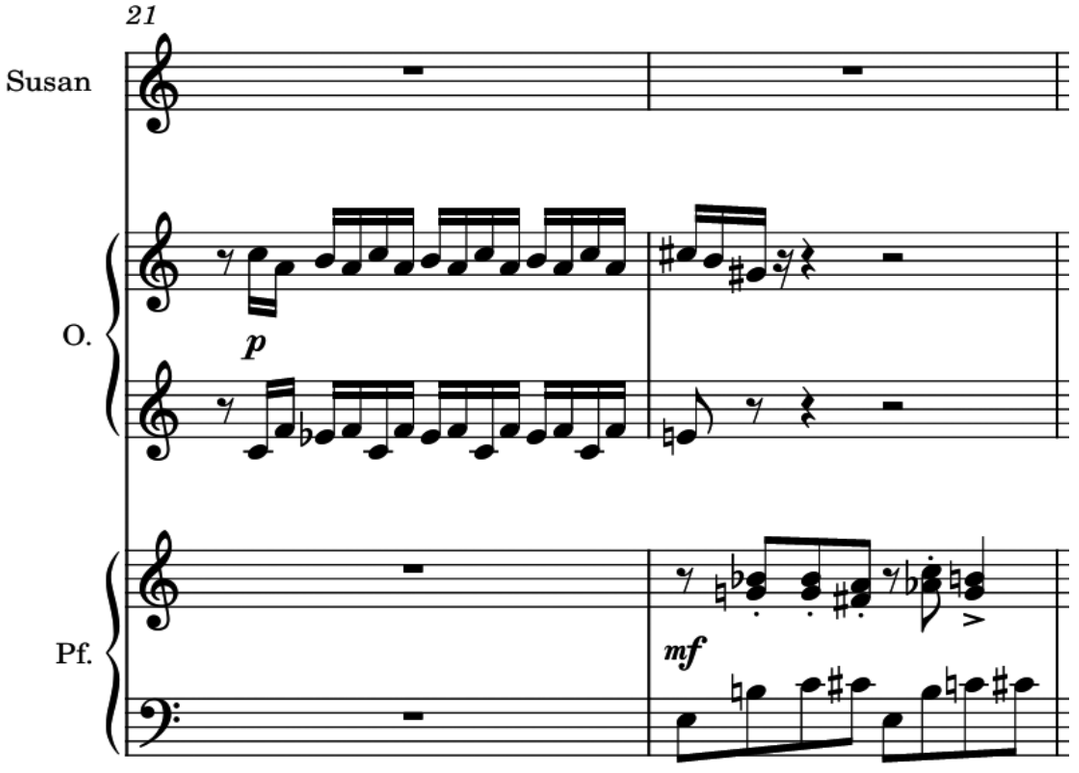


Figure 1: Semiquaver passage quoted from Twice a Kiss

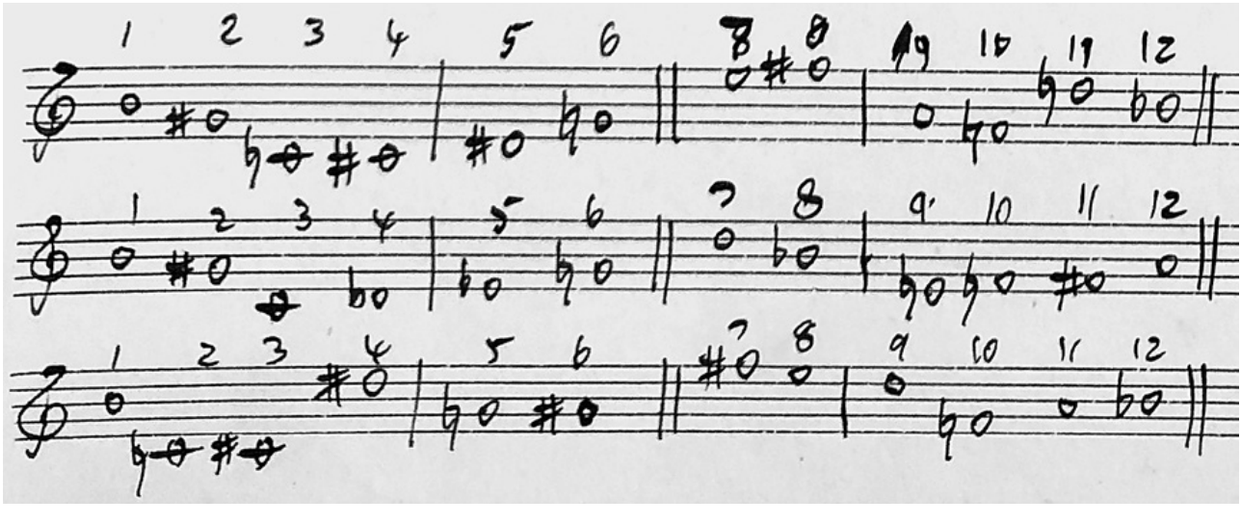


Figure 2: Twelve-tone rows from Tranchell's notes, 18 March 1955

In the middle section, three twelve-tone rows (as seen in Tranchell's autograph notes dated 18 March 1955, see Figure 2) are employed and harmonized with jazzy chords. At first, the piano freely presents the first tone row; next, the organ takes up and develops the second and third rows. And then, the piano performs diminutions of all three rows in an improvisatory manner, returning to the initial theme, with other fragments from *Twice a Kiss* acting as transitions. As the piece unfolds, the rows return in the organ part, accompanied by the piano's semiquaver passages, as the music builds towards its conclusion.

Tranchell's works are full of clever, witty, and distinctive uses of sound and rhythm, and it was this ingenuity and freedom of spirit that strongly inspired the creation of this piece.

Furthermore, the work is written for electronic organ and piano, a combination that emphasizes both contrast and fusion between the two instruments. The sustained and versatile timbres of the electronic organ intertwine with the vivid attacks and resonances of the piano, producing a light-hearted yet richly dimensional sonic world.

Maho Ishizaka is currently an instructor on the Creative Research Course at Yamaha Music School in Japan. In addition to composing and arranging, she also performs as a pianist and teaches music and sound production. Born in Osaka, in 1993 she began studying piano at the age of two. Between 2012 and 2016, she earned her Bachelor's degree in composition at the Faculty of Music, Tokyo University of the Arts (Tokyo Geidai). She completed her postgraduate studies in composition at the same university between 2016 and 2018. Between 2018 and 2021, she worked as a Teaching and Research Assistant in the Department of Composition at the same institution.



Twice a Kiss

Twice A Kiss, an operetta in one act for seven soloists, piano and electronic organ, with libretto by Maurice Holt, was written for St Catharine's College to perform in May Week in June 1955. Maurice Holt was a St Catharine's undergraduate at the time and went on to be one of Tranchell's favourite collaborators, contributing a lyric to the musical *Zuleika*.

The work was revived by the Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club in the Lent Term of 1982, conducted by Michael Law, a Choral Exhibitioner at Caius. Tranchell provided an introduction for the 1982 revival which ended:

> In the Prologue, Knipp, the house-boy, refers to the old rhyme: Once a miss, twice a kiss, three times a letter, four times something better; upon which the plot is loosely hung. Susan, the housemaid, finds an anonymous letter of assignation. Is it for her? Is it from Sir Robert? She hides it in a bowl of flowers – where Sarah promptly finds it.

A number of the members of the 1982 cast were able to attend the 2026 performance at which this recording was made, including Christopher Purves singing the role of

My Honeywood, the part he played in the 1982 performance while a Choral Scholar at King's College.

Dramatis Personae
Sir Robert Asymptote, a pompous knight, a would-be playwright and a jealous husband, although secretly given to amours (baritone)
Sir Peter Parallel, a gallant, in debt to Sir Robert (tenor)
Mr. Honeywood, an actor and the proprietor of a playhouse (bass)
Knipp, house-boy to Sir Robert (baritone)
Lady Asymptote, suspicious of her husband's predilections (soprano)
Sarah, orphan ward to Sir Robert, who would wed her to Sir Peter so that the debt might be paid from her inheritance (contralto)
Susan, my Lady Asymptote's maid: a frolicsome piece (mezzo-soprano)

Scene: a chamber in Sir Robert's house; London, 1670

11 PROLOGUE
(There is a short musical introduction, during which Knipp enters with pen and ink. The music stops as he stands before the curtain and speaks the Prologue)
Knipp Whereas the art of opera can create
A work that's fit for any gourmet's plate,
The author and composer humbly wish
To offer you a much more trivial dish.
Theirs is a tale occasioned by a letter,
Proceeding, through a kiss, to something better.
The composer begs that you forgive it if
The music sounds a little bit derivative.
The author craves your pardon for a plot so thin;
And both now bid me leave you, that we may begin.
(Exit Knipp)
RECITATIVE
(The music begins again and the curtains part to reveal a chamber in Sir Robert Asymptote's London house. There are a table, some chairs and a screen at the back. There are doors at either side of the stage. After a few bars, Susan enters carrying a letter)
Susan *(reading)* 'My dearest S!' S! For Susan! 'Tis me: 'Tis for me i' faith! 'My dearest S! Meet me outside the Haymarket Playhouse at nine o' clock to-night, your own true love!' Now *who*? Who can it be? The paper! Gilt-edged! Why – 'tis from the master himself! From Sir Robert!

(Enter Sarah, carrying a musical box)
Sarah Susan! Susan, pray burn this musical box!
Susan But you had it only yesterday, ma'am, from Sir Timothy Tight!
Sarah It does not please me, and nor does he. In any case, I have broken it.
(Sarah holds out the musical box, but Susan has the letter in one hand behind her back. She contrives to drop the letter in the rose-bowl. She takes the box, and stops at the door to glance at the rose-bowl and shrug. Exit Susan)
12 Another party, another suitor; I am but a prize to be marketed; I am courted not for myself, but for the wealthy inheritance that awaits my coming-of-age. Ah, love! Roses for love! (All covered with bugs, I'll be bound!)
(Sarah smells the roses and finds the letter)
What is this!
(Sarah takes up the letter and begins to read)
'My dearest S'. What odious riddle is this? 'My dearest S'. Why not write 'Sarah' and be done with it? 'Meet me at the Haymarket Playhouse, at nine o' clock to-night, your own true love!' Whose hand is this? The M's are Sir Peter Parallel's. But the T's are Sir Anthony Angle's, yet, it has the negligence of Sir Jeremy Jowl! No! I wager Sir Peter wrote it in his cups! The dissolute rake! And yet they're all as bad; All men are rogues! The task is to find one who is not also a bore!
13 SONG
Seven weeks ago, while riding down the Row,
Sir Timothy Tight cast glances at me.
Then he came to call, and took me to a ball,
Where foolishly he made advances at me.
When he asked my hand, I didn't understand;
My guardian, Sir Robert, became quite annoyed at it.
Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!
That is what occurred, exactly word for word!
Sir Robert! He, of course, has embroidered it.
Two weeks after that a card fell on the mat.
Sir Anthony Angle had called on me.
Very soon we met, and tho' he seemed a pet,
Yet in one evening he had palled on me
Now Sir Peter P. sends little notes to me!
But letters in riddles will not change my mind at all.
Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!
No! I'll not be wed for sake of buttered bread.
There must be some affection behind it all.
Ah, love!
If love should come one day, then it must endure;
No pow'r shall destroy love!
Who knows, this letter may lead to something better?
Pray it be so, that I enjoy love!
14 RECITATIVE AND DUET
Sarah Sir Robert!
(She hides the letter. Enter Sir Robert)
Sir Robert Ah, Sarah! Are you ready for the party?
Sarah Must I come, sir?
Sir Robert Indeed you must. Mr Honeywood will be here.

Sarah Mr. Honeywood the actor?
Sir Robert Yes ma'am, the actor, and a great one, too. We shall perform my new play to him, and ev'ryone will have to act a part! Also, Sir Peter Parallel is invited, and will doubtless wish to indicate his affection for you.
Sarah Indicate it he may; but I shall not accept it!
Sir Robert Oons! He has a pleasing countenance and is wealthy. (*aside*) But for his debts! (*aloud*) What more is there to it?
Sarah That we should love each other.
Sir Robert Love?!
Sarah Yes! Love will come one day, then it must endure,
No pow'r can destroy love!
(*to herself*) (Who knows, this letter may lead to something better.)
Pray it be so, that I enjoy love!
Sir Robert Love's but a sorry word! An empty phrase! D'you hear me?
Love is just a word for an imaginary emotion!
A poet's notion, to say or sing!
It's quite absurd to look for such devotion.
I never heard of such folly, no! Not in all my life!
Love is but a word, Madam, pray you remember this!
Love is not a real thing!
Sarah Ah! You are wrong, Sir!
(Sarah and Sir Robert repeat the above two stanzas, singing together)
Sir Robert (*aside*) I shall persuade her!
Sarah (*aside*) I'll get my own way, whatever he says!
(Exit Sarah)
15 **Sir Robert** Sir Peter has rank, and his uncle is a privy councillor. If I can wed Sarah to Sir Peter, then Sarah's inheritance will enable him to clear his debt to me. Oh, the frustration of having an heiress as a ward! But if I can thus get back the money that Sir Peter owes me, that will give an added eloquence to my suggestion that Mr Honeywood should present my new play at his theatre! But as for love! Who will marry a girl for love? A man must go gambling and wenching! It's an open secret.
16 SONG
If merry you'd be reckon'd in the reign of Charles the Second,
You have to live a kind of double life.
It doesn't really matter if you're something of a satyr,
Provided that you conceal it from your wife.
Neither ever crows about the things the other knows about –
Pretended lack of knowledge is the thing!
It's a social convention, which, like others I could mention,
Was introduced from Paris by the King!
A man must go gambling and wenching,
For his nature he cannot oppose.
The thing is an open secret,
A secret that ev'ryone knows!
It's wisest to discover if your lady has a lover –
The knowledge gives you licence, so to speak.

Provided that your luck hold, you will not be made a cuckold,
Although, of course, there's one born ev'ry week!
Take a tip from Evelyn, don't publish what you revel in,
But hide it in your diary, free from glance.
It's a simple rule perhaps, but if it should collapse,
The King might have to flee again to France!
A man must go gambling and wenching,
For his nature he cannot oppose.
The thing is an open secret,
A secret that ev'ryone knows!

17 *(Enter Susan with tray of refreshments. Sir Robert meanwhile peruses a copy of his play. Susan looks for the letter in the rose-bowl)*

RECITATIVE AND DUET

Susan It's gone! He must have taken it back!
Sir Robert Make haste Susan! The party must soon begin. We have a busy evening ahead of us.
(Susan lays a cloth on the table, manoeuvring it under all the objects there)
Susan Busy indeed! *(aside)* He makes me coy already! *(aloud)* I hope what you have written, sir, will have a successful outcome!
Sir Robert Ev'ry word is well considered.
Susan And ev'ry letter, I hope!
Sir Robert 'Twill be a good play.
Susan What sort of play is it, sir?
Sir Robert Come closer, girl, I'll show you!
Susan Not now, sir, I've work to do.
Sir Robert No better time than now!
Susan La, sir – you're impatient!
Sir Robert *(aside)* She's a sprightly wench! There's game here!
(Susan proceeds to lay the table with glass-ware, etc. Sir Robert approaches Susan, still holding his play in one hand.)
Susan Now the flagons must go just there;
And the glasses – now, don't you dare!
Sir Robert I was merely trying to find my place.
Susan If you try again, I'll slap your face.
Sir Robert Susan, now don't be shy!
Susan Fie, Sir Robert, Fie! Sir Robert, Fie! Sir Robert, Fie, Fie, Fie!
(Sir Robert chases her, but she eludes him)
Susan Cordials on the tray;
And Sir Robert, please keep away.
Sir Robert I have only reached the second act.
Susan Well, it's very naughty, that's a fact!
Sir Robert Susan, now pray be still.
Susan I will scream! I will! I will scream! I will! I will scream! That I will!
(Sir Robert succeeds in catching Susan and kissing her. She does not scream. Enter Lady Asymptote)

18 RECITATIVE

Lady Asymptote Sir Robert! This is singular behaviour!
Sir Robert Madam, I assure you, we were but rehearsing a scene from the play I have written.
Susan *(aside: wiping her mouth gingerly)* So that's what it was!
Lady Asymptote This play will be a success! It has no want of indelicacy!

Sir Robert Mr Honeywood values it highly.
Lady Asymptote I shall wait to form my own opinion.
Sir Robert Madam, I intend to give ev'ryone satisfaction.
Lady Asymptote So I perceive! *(To Susan)* Go, wanton!
(Susan curtseys, and exit)
Sir Robert Madam: *(he bows low)* I have affairs to attend to.
Lady Asymptote Indeed you have!
(Exit Sir Robert)
19 Affairs, i' faith! Shameless rogue!
SONG
If your husband you detect
In a compromising scene,
You know what to expect,
And promptly intervene.
But if you find no clue,
No matter where you go,
It doesn't mean he's true;
It means that you are slow!
Should you find his conduct shameless,
Then give him all the blame,
Yes, give him all the blame;
But still, if it appears he's blameless,
Then blame him all the same!
Yes, blame him, blame him, yes, blame him!
Blame him all the same!
Tho' he'll wear a velvet glove,
And tiptoe 'cross the floor,
In the ardour of his love,
He'll forget to lock the door.
But if you somehow fail
To prove his morals lax,
It doesn't mean no trail –
It simply means no tracks!
Should you find his conduct shameless,
Then give him all the blame!
Yes, give him all the blame!
But still, if it appears he's blameless,
Then blame him all the same!
Yes, blame him, blame him, yes blame him!
Blame him all the same! Blame him! Blame him!
20 *(Enter Knipp)*
Knipp Sir Peter Parallel, ma'am.
Lady Asymptote Bid him enter! *(to herself)* Sir Peter Parallel!
A charming man! (*Exit Knipp*)
His punctuality is very fortunate! Tra-la!
(She preens herself. Enter Sir Peter Parallel)
RECITATIVE AND DUET
(Sir Peter minces and swaggers a little way. He bows, she curtseys. He approaches further, and they bow and curtsey again.)
Lady Asymptote You are come to our play-acting, Sir Peter?
Sir Peter Madam, I am!
Lady Asymptote And for the company of a demure and pretty lady?
Sir Peter *(bowing)* You are too modest, madam!
Lady Asymptote *(aside)* Here's a gallant indeed! *(aloud)* Faith, sir! After the wanton ladies of the court, our simple virtues tempt you to flattery!

Sir Peter Few men are tempted by virtue, madam; and flattery may be sincere!
Lady Asymptote You will find Sarah looking well to-night; and no doubt Sir Robert will expect you to ask for her hand!
Sir Peter *(archly)* My preference lies elsewhere!
Lady Asymptote Fie, Sir Peter! *(He bows, she curtseys)*
Sir Peter I am in a false position, madam, and I hope you will favour my escape from it.
(He bows, and takes her proffered hand) (aside) Sir Robert wishes to unite me to Sarah, so that her estate may pay off my debts to him. But if I can prevail on this good lady here, to sway her husband's feelings, I may avoid an alliance I do not wish to make, and the discharge of a debt I am in no hurry to pay: *(aloud)* Pray, madam, do not take me for a rake!
Lady Asymptote I take you, Sir, but for a gallant! I'm sure you'd play the cupid, sir, with any lady who showed willing!
Sir Peter 'Tis precarious business, a gallant's, ma'am: nothing but kiss and run!
DUET
Sir Peter The gallant will call at his lady's chambers,
Nicely perfumed and dressed.
Lady Asymptote If he's discreet and well rehearsed,
He'll sing of her grace and her virtue first,
Sir Peter Although for morals, she's quite the worst.
Lady Asymptote While for wantonness he is the best!
Sir Peter The gallant will call at his lady's chambers,
And notice a place to hide!
Lady Asymptote Then they'll exchange an amorous glance,
Sir Peter And think that it's safe to take a chance,
Lady Asymptote But just as he makes the first advance,
Both Her husband is heard outside!
There's nothing so gay! (**Sir Peter**) So dull!
Both Nothing so gay! (so dull!)
Nothing so gay! (so dull!) Beneath the sun,
As the game of kiss and run!
No wonder then – (**Sir Peter**) 'Tis odd!
Both No wonder then – ('Tis odd)
No wonder then – ('Tis odd) playwrights think it fun;
There's nothing so gay! (so dull!) Beneath the sun!
21 *(A voice is heard off-stage)*
Lady Asymptote Lud, sir – 'tis Sir Robert! He must not find us alone – his suspicion knows no bounds!
Sir Peter *(surprised)* Shall we be compromised?
Lady Asymptote Ay, I fear so! You must hide! Quick, behind the screen!
(Sir Peter hides behind the screen)
I will contrive your escape in a minute: have patience!
(Enter Sir Robert)

RECITATIVE AND QUARTET

Sir Robert What then? Have we no company? The parts are ready, the audience waits, but the actors remain hidden.

Lady Asymptote *(aside)* But only just! *(aloud)* Perhaps, Sir Robert, they are in their dressing rooms!

Sir Robert Wherever they are, I wish they would arrive!

(Enter Sarah)

Sir Robert Ah, Sarah! Sir Peter will be here soon, doubtless!

Sarah May he be delayed as long as possible!

Lady Asymptote Fie Sarah! Would you be so impatient to meet him again?

Sarah Pooh, madam!

Sir Robert Sarah!

Lady Asymptote Sir Peter is a man of consequence –

Sir Robert Ev'ry whit!

Lady Asymptote It's a pity he's so very dense –

Sir Robert Not a bit!

Lady Asymptote Tho' his sense of humour isn't bad –

Sir Robert It will do.

Lady Asymptote That's the only sense he's ever had –

Sir Robert Quite untrue!

Lady Asymptote And tho' he owns a dozen ships, he has very ugly lips –
Fortune cannot make up for his face!
Tho' I never would attack any man behind his back,
His private life's a disgrace!

Sarah My heart will never be won
By riches and worldly fame.
Fortunes in trade may quickly fade –
One thing remains the same,
A grace from above;
Its name is love!

Sir Robert Both of you quite forget, I'm worried about a debt –
It's all very well, carrying on like this!
Tho' I've heard tell before, he's rather a frightful bore,
That doesn't prevent you having connubial bliss!
Loving him doesn't count, the money is paramount!
And tho' he once had the pox, it left no trace!
So do what you can to-night! Each compliment requite –
Sir Peter is the man you've got to chase!

(Sir Peter, from behind the screen, has taken Lady Asymptote's wrap from her shoulders)

Sir Robert Madam, have you lost your wrap?

Lady Asymptote No, sir, I have but laid it aside.

(Sir Peter throws the wrap over the screen, just in time. Sir Robert turns and sees it)

Sir Robert Ah, there it is! Now Sarah, you must play your part!

Sarah Sir, let me say pooh to you!

(The above three stanzas are now repeated, all three being sung together, with Sir Peter, from behind the screen, making Sir Robert's interpolations in the first)

22 *(Enter Knipp)*
Knipp Mr Honeywood is coming up, sir. *(Knipp remains to serve drinks)*
Sir Robert Ah, Mr Honeywood at last! Now we shall have our play!
Lady Asymptote *(whispered to Sir Peter)* Have patience – bide your time!
(Mr Honeywood enters, an imposing figure, and he gradually divests himself of several theatrical costumes and adjuncts. He hands them to Knipp, who eventually puts them all down together. He takes off, in turn, a tall witch's hat and a black cloak, a turban and a Kimono, a red head-scarf, earrings, and a belt stuffed with pistols, a false beard, and finally a false nose. He now stands revealed as himself, and Sarah is evidently impressed. He bows deep. Knipp puts down the costumes, fills glasses with ale and hands them round on a tray)
Mr Honeywood Good-day, Sir.
Sir Robert Good-day, sir.
Mr Honeywood And a greeting, ladies.
Lady Asymptote Mr Honeywood, you would be more welcome if you did not encourage my husband's predilection for theatricals. He has time for nothing else.
Mr Honeywood Fie, ma'am, an actor's is an exacting profession. It requires an outlay not only of versatility, but of resources!
23 SONG
If you're anxious for gains but are lacking in brains,
The Army will answer your search;
While if you've a flair for subsisting on prayer,
You will naturally enter the Church.
But a man whose intellect's high,
(Albeit modest and shy)
Will wish, I venture to say,
To act! To act a part in a play!
(On the word 'act', Mr Honeywood strikes a pose)
Sir Robert What play was that, sir?
Mr Honeywood The Siege of Rhodes!
Sir Robert Ha! Very good, sir!
Mr Honeywood If your courage is strong, but your politics wrong,
Then the Navy holds treasures in store;
While men with an eye for a well-contrived lie
Will turn it, of course, on the Law.
But a man whose nature is sweet,
(And perfectly free from conceit)
Will wish, I venture to say,
To act! – To act a part in a play!
Sir Robert What play was that, sir?
Mr Honeywood The Fairy Queen!
Sir Robert Even better, sir!
Mr Honeywood An actor will pour out his heart for you,
Or shout at you till you're afraid;
An actor will play any part for you,
Provided, of course, he gets paid…
If you find, when you add, you have more than you had,
Then Accountancy beckons you on;
While if you've a quirk for avoiding all work,
Your career should be that of a don.
But a man of grit and resource,

(Tho' rather retiring, of course)
Will wish, I venture to say,
To act! – To act a part in a play!
Sir Robert What play was that, sir?
Mr Honeywood Let me finish, sir! A man may have the itch! –
To act a part in a play!
24 **Sir Peter** *(concealed: to Lady Asymptote)* How do I get away?
Sir Robert What was that?
Lady Asymptote I said, 'let us start with the play'!
Sir Robert Very well!

THE PLAY

(Sir Robert signals to Knipp to issue copies of the play. Everyone disposes of their glass of liquor. Mr Honeywood receives the first copy, which he peruses)

Sir Robert 'Tis called, 'The Tragedy of Sir Thomas Overbury'. I am the King (James the First). You, sir *(to Mr Honeywood)*, are Overbury.
Mr Honeywood But sir, I am poisoned after only two pages!
Sir Robert Ay, sir, but 'tis a very painful death, full of expression!
Sir Peter *(from behind screen)* I can think of an expression!
(Sir Robert turns his head suddenly)
Lady Asymptote It will make a fine impression!
Sir Robert *(to Sarah)* You, ma'am, are the Countess of Essex. Sir Peter, when he arrives, will be the Earl of Essex. You are both in love.
Sarah With whom am I in love, Sir?
Sir Robert With the Earl, madam! 'Tis a respectable play!
Sir Peter *(behind screen)* And a dull one, I'll warrant!
Lady Asymptote It would else be abhorrent! Who am I, sir?
Sir Robert You are the Queen.
Mr Honeywood Is this verse, or prose, sir?
Sir Robert Call it what you will, I don't know.
Mr Honeywood What is the scene, sir?
Sir Robert The scene is the Royal Palace. You are summoned to my private presence. Knipp! Did you fetch that cornett from Sir Timothy Tight, as I bade you?
Knipp Yes, sir. Here it is.
Sir Robert Oons! The fool has given you a fipple flute! Well, well. Sound a fanfare! Let the play begin!
(Knipp plays on the recorder) (Exit Knipp)
25 *(The characters read out their parts in the play, without the least show of enthusiasm)*
Mr Honeywood Your majesty, I beg you hear my suit.
These charges of my baseness are unfounded.
Sir Robert I fear my Lady Essex and the Queen Clamour to see you tortured unto death.
Flee from the court, I bid you, while 'tis safe!
Mr Honeywood I'll to the country, 'til this foul scourge be passed.
Lady Asymptote *(to Sir Robert, who looks daggers at her)* Am I the foul scourge, sir?

Mr Honeywood Here, sir, it says 'exit'. Where do I go?
Sir Robert Go behind that screen.
Lady Asymptote *(as Mr. Honeywood goes behind the screen)*. Screen! Oh, my gout!
Sir Robert Quiet, ma'am, this is not your scene.
Lady Asymptote *(aside)* 'Twas nearly so: *(relieved)* Ho, ho, ho, ho!
(There is a laugh from Mr Honeywood, behind the screen)
Sir Robert Be still behind that screen, Mr Honeywood! Enter the Countess of Essex, two days later.
Sarah I hope that Overbury's doom is nigh!
Sir Robert He left these chambers but a short while since.
Sarah He is in Worcester, hiding in disgrace.
Mr Honeywood But I am in London, sir!
Sir Robert How, sir?
Mr Honeywood This screen is in the palace.
Sir Robert Then it must be moved – to Worcester!
(Both Lady Asymptote and Sir Robert make to move the screen, but Sir Robert has put down his script and has both hands free)
Lady Asymptote *(pointing to a spot convenient)* Let it be here!
Sir Robert Let it be here!
(Sir Robert moves it in the direction opposite to that indicated by Lady Asymptote, and returns to his script)
Sir Robert *(to Sarah)* Continue, ma'am!
Sarah What will you do to rid us of this rogue?
Sir Robert He will be tried, and meanwhile, take your ease.
Sarah It says 'exit to Audley End'. Where is that?
Sir Robert It is your seat in Essex. Go behind the screen.
Sarah But that is in Worcester!
Sir Robert Then move it here first!
Lady Asymptote *(as Sarah, assisted by Mr Honeywood, moves screen)* Ah! Ah!
Sir Robert What's this?
Lady Asymptote Ah! My heart!
Sir Robert Madam, a plague on you!
(she falls into his arms, to create a diversion. Sir Peter slips out from behind the screen and thro' the door as Sarah passes behind the screen from the other side)
Lady Asymptote Sir, 'tis my heart!
Sir Robert *(unsympathetic)* 'Tis very painful, to judge by your caterwauls!
(Enter Sir Peter, as Lady Asymptote lies in Sir Robert's arms)
Sir Peter How now, domestic bliss?
Sir Robert Ah, Sir Peter at last!
(Sir Peter bows low. Sir Robert bows slightly, and hands a script to Sir Peter)
Sir Robert We are but play-acting. You are the Earl of Essex. There it is *(pointing the place)*. Enter now!
Sir Peter My liege, they find me guilty of this murder.
Sir Robert So be it, then: the punishment await Within the Tower of London. Now, farewell!
Lady Asymptote Farewell, my lord. Farewell!

Sir Peter And so, farewell!
(Sir Peter retreats bowing. There is a burst of laughter and sounds of a tussle behind the screen. The screen falls over on to Sir Peter, and Sarah and Mr Honeywood are discovered kissing)
Sir Robert What's this, sir!
Lady Asymptote Sarah, explain yourself!
(Sir Peter picks up screen and sets it aside, and Sarah and Mr Honeywood extricate themselves from each other)
Sir Robert Upon my soul!
Mr Honeywood It means, sir, just this: we have fallen in love –
Sarah We've fallen in love, and shall be wed!
Mr Honeywood As soon as we can, with your permission, sir!
Sir Robert I will not hear of it!
QUINTET
Lady Asymptote If they're both in love, they should marry straight away!
Sir Peter What a relief! Now there's nothing more to say!
Sir Robert Nothing to say, indeed! There's much that I'll say yet –
What sort of love is this, pray? why, you've only just this moment met!
Lady Asymptote Why, sir, will you not let them be wed?
Sir Robert Because, ma'am, I will not! Such a quick courtship is not proper!
(The following lines are now sung together)
Lady Asymptote If they're both in love, they should marry straight away!
That's the way, then there's nothing more to say!
Sarah Soon we shall be wed – give your blessing and be done!
Love has come at last, and soon we shall be married!
Sir Peter That would be a great relief!
Sir Robert Pray what kind of love is this one?
They have just this moment met!
Such a quick courtship is not proper!
Mr Honeywood Soon we shall be wed – give your blessing, pray you, condescend!
Love has come, sweet love! Soon we shall be married!
(A few bars before the end of this ensemble, Susan has entered. They turn and see her)
26 **Susan** Your pardon, madam: may I leave my work now?
Lady Asymptote What's this? Where are you going?
Susan To meet someone, madam.
Lady Asymptote Whom, pray?
Susan I'm not sure, madam.
Lady Asymptote Not sure?
Susan Well, I know, but if I tell you, madam, you'll be very angry.
Lady Asymptote Not as angry as I'll be if you do not tell me. Who is it?
Susan The master!
Lady Asymptote *(shocked)* Sir Robert!
Sir Robert Nonsense!
Susan Sir, you wrote me that letter!

All, save Susan Letter!
Sir Robert No, I wrote no letter!
Lady Asymptote Silence, sir, her tale rings true. (*to Susan*) Show me this letter!
Susan Madam, I have lost it, but the writing was Sir Robert's.
Sir Robert It was not.
Lady Asymptote *(to Sir Robert)* Sir! *(to Susan)* What did it say?
Susan 'Meet me outside the Haymarket Playhouse'; and signed 'Your own true love'!
Sir Robert *(to Susan)* Hussy!
Lady Asymptote *(to Sir Robert)* Deceiver!
Sir Robert *(to Lady Asymptote)* Madam, I protest, I am innocent. 'Tis but a story – the girl never had this letter!
Susan Oh, yes, sir, I did, and advances to go with it!
Lady Asymptote So I saw!
Sarah I, too, have an assignment outside the Haymarket Playhouse, with this same 'true love'! (*she shows letter*) Here it is!
Lady Asymptote *(to Sir Robert, outraged)* Your ward as well, sir!
Sir Robert *(taking the letter)* Madam!
Lady Asymptote Let's see the monster's writing!
Sir Robert 'Tis not my hand.
Lady Asymptote *(taking the letter from him)* You have but disguised it! I am not so easily duped!
Sir Robert I did not write it – unless I wrote it in my sleep.
Lady Asymptote You could write anything in your sleep: even your confounded play.
Sarah Sir! You are a hypocrite, and a humbug! All this pretence of propriety! You have no grounds to deny me a marriage!
Sir Robert I have, madam: and I shall!

SEXTET

(The following lines are sung together)

Lady Asymptote If they are both in love, they should marry straight away,
That's the way, then there's nothing more to say.
It's best if they are married right soon!
Susan Faithless lover, leads me up the garden path;
Then denies he ever sent the note – faithless man!
I'll be even with him yet!
Sarah Pooh, sir, soon we shall be wed!
Give your blessing, give it and be done!
Love has come at last, and soon we shall be married!
Sir Peter That would be a great relief!
Sir Robert Pray, what kind of love is this one?
They have just this moment met:
Such a short courtship is not proper!

(Enter Knipp)

Knipp If you please, sir, may I go out?
Sir Robert Be off, boy!
Sir Peter Stay – where are you going?
Knipp To meet someone, sir.
Sir Peter Whom, pray?
Knipp Susan!

Susan *(holding up letter)* Knipp! Is this your letter?
Knipp Yes, that's it!
All, save Knipp So that's it! That's it!
Susan Knipp, you're a naughty boy!
Lady Asymptote *(to Sir Robert)* Quite a narrow escape, sir!
Sir Robert *(to Knipp)* Young man, you have put me in a predicament, with your anonymous note!
Knipp *(still smiling)* Yes, sir!
Sir Robert In your future transactions, kindly leave your mark, as I now leave mine!
Knipp Oh, sir!
(Sir Robert seizes Knipp, and bends him across his knee, and proceeds to spank him rhythmically. Meanwhile, Sarah, Mr Honeywood, Lady Asymptote and Sir Peter have a quick whispered confabulation, and agree an some plan of action)
Sir Robert You, sir, are Knipp, and not 'my own true love'!
Lady Asymptote Beat the boy no more, sir, lest he acquire a taste for it!
Knipp *(getting up from Sir Robert's knee)* I have, madam!
(Mr Honeywood whispers in Sir Robert's ear)
27 **Sir Robert** My play? A guarantee, from Sarah?
(Mr Honeywood moves away. Sir Robert looks pleased, but only for a moment. Sir Peter whispers into his other ear)
Your uncle, the privy councillor? A place? Solvent? Your debt? Five per cent, sir – why, that's good news! Still, I'm not so soon persuaded!
(Lady Asymptote whispers in his ear. Sir Robert gets up)
Madam, I suspect you are right! Honeywood, I withdraw my objection.
Mr Honeywood Your humble servant, sir.
(they all bow or curtsey)
Sarah *(to Lady Asymptote)* What did you say to him, madam?
Lady Asymptote I reminded him that we had no courtship, I said: (*to Sarah's 'If love should come' tune*) – When he and I were married,
we knew no love, just pitchforked together;
our first encounter was in the church, when both our families had made their settlements, dowry'd been paid – 'twas just a bargain. But times will change. That's what I said to him.
28 ENSEMBLE
All Good advice will suffice, tho' stupidity
Often denies the fact, reason knows no defeat.
Reason may counter the complicated plans of men;
Timely persuasion may start to publish banns again.
Sarah, Mr Honeywood But love would never score in the war with cupidity
Did not a cupid's dart put the foe in retreat.
Sir Robert, Sir Peter Debt and ambition would with love have done away;
But it is plain that sweet persuasion's won the day!

All Happily now instead, they'll be wed with rapidity –
There is a final thought; their acquaintance has been so short,
May their love be as sweet!
Sir Robert *(still a bit disgruntled)* But 'tis an affair of exceeding quick flowering!
Sir Peter May it bear the sweetest fruit!
Sir Robert So be it!
Mr Honeywood Sirs, ladies, come: I bid you all to my playhouse; the one in the Haymarket.
Lady Asymptote 'Tis well, then, let's end our playing with play.
(Lady Asymptote nods to Knipp and Susan, who go out and re-enter presently with hats and sticks for the gentlemen and cloaks for the ladies, which they duly give to them)

FINALE

Mr Honeywood When talking's been done and love has been won,
And all is forgiven once more;
Don't pause in your tracks, but away! And relax
To the shouts of encore and encore.
So all you men of affairs
Abandon your troubles and cares,
Go off without delay,
And take! – And take your seat at a play.
(Knipp offers a pile of discarded effects to Mr Honeywood, who accepts them)
All But love would never score, in the war with cupidity,
Did not a cupid's dart put the foe in retreat!
Debt and ambition would with love have done away,
But it is plain that sweet persuasion's won the day;
Happily now instead, they'll be wed with rapidity -
There is a final thought: their acquaintance has been so short,
May their love be as sweet!
For love must come, one day, then it must endure,
No power can destroy love!
Three times a letter, but four is something better:
Pray it be so, that love enjoy love!
(Exeunt all, save Susan and Knipp. Susan hits Knipp on the head with the letter, and puts the letter back in the rose-bowl)
(Exit Susan)
Knipp *(spoken)* I told you so! *(During pause in the music)*
(Exit Knipp)

CURTAIN

Crispin Flower, John Gwinnell and Chris Henshall are Trustees of the Peter Tranchell Foundation.

Daniel Gilchrist (Knipp) is a young British tenor at the start of his solo career. A first-study cellist as a teenager, his focus shifted to singing while studying at Cambridge, where he sang in the choir of Gonville and Caius College under various directors, and later for a year in that of King's College under Daniel Hyde. Recent highlights include the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, and the rather different title role in Offenbach's version of the same tale, and a series of appearances with Incantanti in their programme *Counting the Hours*.

One of the leading lyric sopranos of her generation, **Sophie Bevan** (Susan) studied at the Royal College of Music where she was awarded the Queen Mother Rose bowl for excellence in performance. She was the recipient of the 2010 Critics' Circle award for Exceptional Young Talent, The Times Breakthrough Award at the 2012 South Bank Sky Arts Awards, and Young Singer award at the 2013 inaugural International Opera Awards, and she was made an MBE for services to music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2019.

Born in South Wales, **Hilary Summers** (Sarah), one of the world's few genuine contraltos, has made over forty albums, spanning works from the early Baroque to the present day. She has sung in most of the major concert-halls and opera-houses of the world. After school in Newport, she went on to study music at the University of Reading in the glory days of Peter Wishart, and under his tutelage and that of his wife Maureen Lehane she discovered a profound love of Baroque music, especially Handel. She then spent three years of postgraduate study at the Royal Academy of Music studying with Patricia Clark, and a further year at the National Opera Studio in London.

Once an 'Emerging Artist' at Scottish Opera, the British soprano **Jennifer France** (Lady Asymptote) was winner of the 2018 Critics' Circle Emerging Talent Award. She recently sang Tytania in Peter Hall's production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Glyndebourne; other operatic engagements include First Niece in Deborah Warner's production of *Peter Grimes* at the Royal Opera House and Cecily Cardew in Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Garsington. Concert highlights include Hans Abrahamsen's *Let me tell you* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Edward Gardner and the Ligeti *Requiem* under Esa Pekka Salonen, first with the Orchestre de Paris and then in the Berwaldhallen with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Kent, **Henry Waddington** (Sir Robert Asymptote) studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Barbara Robotham, and he made his operatic debut there as Bottom in Britten's

A Midsummer Night's Dream, a role he reprised for Opera North in the 2013–14 season. He joined Glyndebourne Touring Opera in 1992, singing the role of The Madhouse Keeper in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. He works often with all of the UK opera companies and has a busy schedule of concert performances.

James Gilchrist (Sir Peter Parallel) began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. His musical interest was fired at a young age, singing first as a chorister in the choir of New College, Oxford, and later as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge. His extensive concert repertoire has seen him perform in major concert-halls throughout the world. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and the *St John* and *St Matthew Passions* feature prominently in his schedule.

Christopher Purves (Mr Honeywood) started his musical life as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, and went on to become a member of the experimental rock group Harvey and the Wallbangers. Through his celebrated interpretations of a diverse and eclectic range of roles and repertoire, he is in demand with many prestigious theatres around the world, working with orchestras, conductors and directors of the highest calibre. He recently returned to the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma as Tsagro in Saariaho's *Adriana Mater*, the recording of which won a Grammy in 2025 for Best Opera Recording, the title role in Handel's *Saul* for Cologne Opera and Alberich in Wagner's *Siegfried* at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. On the concert platform, he has sung the title role in *Saul* with Arcangelo and performed in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with The Bach Choir.

David Doidge is Chorus Master at Welsh National Opera. His UK appearances as a pianist include performances at the Wigmore Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, St Martin- in-the-Fields, Leeds Lieder Festival and the Edinburgh International Festival, and he is often heard in Wales. He is a visiting coach for the Opera School and Vocal Performance department at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, coach for the National Youth Choir of Wales and is a Music Advisor to Decca Records.

Tom Winpenny is a freelance organist and choral director. For sixteen years he worked as Assistant Master of the Music and Director of the Cathedral Girls Choir at St Albans Cathedral. Previously he was Sub-Organist at St Paul's Cathedral. He began organ lessons under John Scott Whiteley while a chorister at York Minster and continued as a Music Scholar at Eton College under Alastair Sampson. After holding the post of Organ Scholar at Worcester Cathedral and

then St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, he was for three years Organ Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a degree in music. He has made many recordings for Toccata Classics.

The British-Cypriot conductor **Michael Papadopoulos** is an alumnus of the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme of the Royal Ballet and Opera and a former *BBC Music Magazine* 'Rising Star'. He read music at Trinity College, Oxford, before continuing his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio. Currently Kapellmeister at the Volksoper in Vienna, he has recently conducted performances of *West Side Story* and *Orpheus in der Unterwelt***,** as well as the Austrian premiere of *Follies*. In summer 2024, he made his Opera Holland Park debut with *Acis and Galatea*, leading to an invitation to return in 2025 to conduct a new production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Jonathan Wikeley studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and at Exeter College, Oxford, and was a choral scholar at Truro Cathedral. He is Director of Music at All Saints Church, Fulham, which has one of London's foremost church choirs. When not playing or conducting, he works as a freelance journalist, music-arranger and editor. He is an advisor and choral editor for Hal Leonard Publishing, where he oversees the publishing of choral music throughout Europe. He is a Trustee of the Peter Tranchell Foundation.

Founded in 1997, the **Imperial College Chamber Choir** is one of the leading student choirs in London. An auditioned ensemble of undergraduate and postgraduate singers, the choir often sings for concerts, services, broadcasts and recordings. Its chief conductor is Patrick Allies, appointed in 2023.

Sopranos
Iona Biggart
Anika Bisaria
Clara Bollen Gandolfo
Raquel Fernandes da Silva
Olivia Priestland

Altos
Vasilisa Iumatova
Maria Portela
Sebastian Tsang

Tenors
Tomas Bezkorowajnyj
Robin Flower
Winston Hsu
George Raynor
Luca White

Basses
Pallav Bagchi
Owen Brook
George Bindloss
Ben Connolly
Kiyan Eddaoudi
Artie Hair
Daniel Kaupa

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Recorded live on 18 April 2026 in St Paul's, Knightsbridge, London
Recording engineer: Ben Connellan, Giraffe Productions
Producer: Annabel Connellan, Giraffe Productions

Recording sponsored by The Peter Tranchell Foundation, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered on 17 March 2021; charity number 1193849. Full details of its aims, and how it spends the money raised through donations, can be found at https://peter-tranchell.uk.

Booklet text: Crispin Flower, John Gwinnell and Chris Henshall
Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)
Typesetting and lay-out: ALN Design, St Albans

Executive Producer: Martin Anderson

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