

# Trial By Jury

A Novel and Entirely Original Dramatic Cantata, in One Act

Synopsis by Fredric Woodbridge Wilson

First produced at the Royalty Theatre, London, under the management of R. D'Oyly Carte (acting for Selina Dolaro), on March 25, 1875 through June 11, 1875, and from October 11, 1875 through December 18, 1875, for 131 performances as an after-piece to Offenbach's opera *La Périchole*, and later to *La Fille de Madame Angot*. Sullivan conducted the first performance.

THE LEARNED JUDGE	<i>Baritone</i>	Frederic Sullivan
THE COUNSEL FOR THE PLAINTIFF	<i>Baritone</i>	J. Hollingsworth
THE DEFENDANT (EDWIN)	<i>Tenor</i>	Walter H. Fisher
THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY	<i>Baritone</i>	Charles Kelleher
THE USHER	<i>Bass-Baritone</i>	B. R. Pepper
THE ASSOCIATE	<i>Non-singing</i>	(Not recorded)
THE PLAINTIFF (ANGELINA)	<i>Soprano</i>	Nelly Bromley
FIRST BRIDESMAID	<i>Chorus</i>	Linda Verner

BRIDESMAIDS, GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, BARRISTERS, ATTORNEYS, and PUBLIC

Transferred to the Opera Comique Theatre, under the management of Charles Morton, on January 14, 1876, for 96 performances through May 5, 1876. First revived (with Tom Taylor's comedy *Babes and Beetles*) at the Royal Strand Theatre, under the management of Mrs. Ada Swanborough, on March 3, 1877, for 73 performances through May 26, 1877. Revived (with *The Sorcerer*) at the Opera Comique Theatre, London, under the management of the Comedy-Opera Company, on March 23, 1878, for 56 performances. Revived (with *The Sorcerer*) at the Savoy Theatre on October 11, 1884, for 150 performances through March 12, 1885. Thereafter revived several times (with *The Sorcerer* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*) at the Savoy Theatre, and also frequently performed at charity matinee performances, often with Gilbert appearing as the Associate.

SCENE — THE COURT OF THE EXCHEQUER

The Jury and members of the public assemble for the court session (Chorus, *Hark, the hour of ten is sounding*), in which Angelina is suing her fiancé, Edwin, for Breach of Promise. The Jurymen are admonished by the Usher to be unbiased (Solo, *Now, Jurymen, hear my advice*) — himself showing, however, a marked partiality for the Plaintiff. The defendant

enters (Recitative, *Is this the court of the Exchequer?*), and, accompanying himself on a guitar, explains (Song and Chorus, *When first my old, old love I knew*) that it is only natural that he should have grown tired of Angelina and fallen in love with another girl. The Jurymen, who accompany the Defendant in a minstrel-style refrain, confess in an aside that they have had similar feelings (Chorus, *Oh, I was like that when a lad!*), but that they now “haven’t a rap of sympathy with the Defendant.”

The Usher announces the entrance of the Judge (Recitative, *Silence in Court!*) and in a Handelian chorus the assembled crowd give him an enthusiastic welcome (Chorus, *All hail, great Judge!*). The Judge acknowledges their greeting (Recitative, *For these kind words accept my thanks, I pray*), and he relates “how I came to be a Judge” (Patter-Song, *When I, good friends, was called to the bar*) — a sordid story of influence, insincerity, venality, deception — and breach of promise — told, and received, with good-natured relish.

At the Counsel’s bidding (Recitative, *Swear thou the Jury!*) the Usher admonishes the Jurymen to “well and truly try” (*Oh, will you swear by yonder skies*), to which they affirm “We’ll try!” Then, again at the Counsel’s direction (*Where is the Plaintiff?*), the Usher bids Angelina to enter the Court. She is preceded by a train of sympathetic Bridesmaids (Chorus, *Comes the broken flower — Comes the cheated maid*), and on her entrance she wins the hearts of all the men in the assembly, not the least the Judge, who, via the Usher, sends her a *billet-doux*. Angelina sings of her grievance (Solo, *O’er the season vernal, Time may cast a shade*); but, she confesses, “I am no unhappy maid.” Angelina collects the Bridesmaids’ flowers and gives them to the members of the Jury.

The Judge avows his infatuation with Angelina (*Oh, never, never, never, since I joined the human race*), a sentiment which the Jury acknowledge (*Ah, sly dog!*) and to which they concur (*We love you fondly, and would make you ours!*). They take the opportunity to heap a measure of pre-judicial abuse (*Monster! Monster! dread our fury!*) on the Defendant — who is comforted by none other than the his ex-fiance’s own Bridesmaids. The Counsel presents a moving appeal for his “interesting client” (Song and Chorus, *With a sense of deep emotion*), during which the Plaintiff is overcome with emotion. She is comforted first by the Jurors (*That she is reeling Is plain to me*), and finally by the Judge himself (*Or if you’d rather, Recline on me!*). Again the Defendant feels the wrath of the crowd.

The Defendant represents himself (Song, *Oh, gentlemen, listen, I pray*) with the support of the Bridesmaids. He offers a compromise: “I’ll marry this lady to-day, And I’ll marry the other to-morrow!” The Judge is open to the suggestion (Recitative, *That seems a reasonable proposition*), but Angelina’s Counsel objects because “To marry two at once is Burglaree!” In an elaborate parody of a *bel canto* ensemble (Sestet and Chorus, *A nice dilemma we have here*), the entire company consider the problem.

Angelina deposes that her affection is undiminished (Duet, *I love him — I love him*), and she prays that the Jury will bear that in mind when they are “assessing the damages Edwin

must pay.” Edwin protests that he would make an unsuitable husband, “a ruffian, a bully, a sot.” The Judge suggests (Recitative, *The question, gentlemen, is one of liquor*) that they might “make him tipsy” in order to determine Edwin’s behavior while under the influence. To this proposal all (except the Defendant himself) object vigorously. The Judge, impatient with their obstruction (*All the legal furies seize you!*), and eager to get away, gives his decree: “Put your briefs upon the shelf, I will marry her myself!” The decision is met with by universal approbation (Finale, *Oh, joy unbounded*), and the opera ends with a burlesque of a pantomime transformation scene and breakdown-dance.

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