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## **Family Plays**

*Gilbert and Sullivan's*

# THE GONDOLERS

*Comedy adapted by*  
**J.E. CLARK**



# THE GONDOLIERS

*The Gondoliers* is a fast moving, colorful and funny nonmusical one-act play adapted from Gilbert's book for the operetta with the same name by Gilbert and Sullivan. Since Sullivan's music is so delightful, Gilbert's equally delightful plot and words are often overshadowed. This is a wonderful way to guide students into an appreciation of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan with the suggestion that Sullivan's score be used for background music.

**Comedy. Adapted by I.E. Clark. Based on the operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan.** *Cast: 5m., 5w., extras.* Two Venetian gondoliers, Giuseppe and Marco Palmieri, marry two pretty Venetian maidens, Tessa and Gianetta. And they live happily ever—whoa! This pleasant scene is suddenly interrupted when the grand inquisitor reveals that Giuseppe and Marco are not brothers after all ... one of them is the long-lost heir to the throne of Barataria. But no one knows whether Giuseppe or Marco is the king. No one, that is, except the prince's former nurse, Inez, who is now the wife of a pirate in a faraway land. There's also another complication. While Tessa and Gianetta are wondering which of them is now a queen, the Duke of Plaza-Toro reveals that his daughter was married to the young prince in infancy. This means that one of the gondoliers has two wives. Gilbert's lively dialogue, the lovable crazy characters, the hilarious plot complications—and the happy ending—all make for a happy, long-remembered play. With brightly hued Venetian costumes against a background of gondolas gliding by on a canal (they really do—right on your stage!), this can be the most colorful play you've ever mounted. *The Gondoliers* is a colorful, captivating contest play for high schools and colleges. *Costumes sketches, suggestions and drawings for creating the canal and gondolas, background and historical information about the story, and much more information to help you mount a superb production are included in the director's script for this play. Approximate running time: 35 minutes. Background music CD available. Code: GCI.*

## Family Plays

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The Gondoliers

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN'S

**THE  
GONDOLIERS**

A Non-Musical Version  
In One Act  
Adapted By

**I. E. Clark**

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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I.E. CLARK

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## THE GONDOLIERS

This adaptation of *The Gondoliers* was first presented at the 18th Annual Theatre Festival in Schulenburg, Texas, April 1 & 2, 1971, with the following cast:

GIUSEPPE PALMIERI, a Venetian gondolier . . . . Alfred Gabler  
TESSA, his wife . . . . . Candi Clark  
MARCO PALMIERI, also a Venetian gondolier . . . . Ronnie Holz  
GIANETTA, his wife . . . . . Barbara Staha  
THE DUKE OF PLAZA-TORO, a Spanish grandee . . Lonnie Pettit\*  
THE DUCHESS, his wife . . . . . Paula Schwartz/Kathy Kusy\*  
CASILDA, their daughter . . . . . Jan Pratkan<sup>o</sup>  
LUIZ, their suite . . . . . Tim Patrick\*  
DON ALHAMBRA DEL BOLERO,  
    the Grand Inquisitor . . . . . Donnie Heinrich\*  
INEZ, nurse of the missing king . . . . . Kathy Kusy/Paula Schwartz\*

\* These players doubled as gondoliers, Venetian maidens, and islanders (the cast may be increased to almost any size by giving these extra roles to other actors and actresses).

Scene 1—Beside the Grand Canal in Venice, about 1750

Scene 2—On the Isle of Barataria (three months later)

## NOTES ON THE PLAY

Two Venetian gondoliers, Giuseppe and Marco Palmieri, marry two pretty Venetian maidens, Tessa and Gianetta. And they live happily ever—whoa! This pleasant scene is suddenly interrupted when the Grand Inquisitor reveals that Giuseppe and Marco are not brothers after all . . . one of them is the long-lost heir to the throne of Baratara. But no one knows whether Giuseppe or Marco is the king. No one, that is, except the prince's former nurse Inez , who is now the wife of a pirate in a faraway land.

And there's a further complication. While Tessa and Gianetta are wondering which of them is now a queen, the Duke of Plaza-Toro reveals that his daughter was married to the young prince in infancy. This means that one of the gondoliers has two wives.

Music lovers will recognize this story as the plot of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta entitled "The Gondoliers." This play is an adaptation of Gilbert's lyrics. (Sullivan's music may be used as background for this play, and the dialog provides an opportunity to use two or three of the songs, if desired. An audio cassette tape of the music used in the premiere production of this adaptation is available for rent or purchase from the publisher, I. E. Clark, Inc., Box 246, Schulenburg, TX 78956 (phone 409-743-3232).

This adaptation is fast-moving, colorful, and funny. Gilbert's lively dialog, the lovable crazy characters, the hilarious plot complications—and the happy ending—all make for a happy, adorable play. And with brightly hued Venetian costumes against a background of gondolas gliding by on a canal (they really do—right on your stage!), this can be the most colorful play you've ever mounted.

And for many members of your audience it will probably be the first introduction to the delights of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.



Costumes sketches, suggestions and drawings for creating the canal and gondolas, background and historical information about the story, and much more information to help you mount a superb production are included in the Director's Production Script (prompt book) for this play. See page 23 for details.



Gilbert and Sullivan's  
**THE  
GONDOLIERS**

Adapted by I. E. Clark

*[The stage represents a gondola landing on the bank of the Grand Canal in Venice. The "canal" (hidden by a ground row of shrubs or stone curbing) runs across the upper length of the stage, from Up Right to Up Left. The landing may be a small platform at Up Center, with colorful canal poles at each edge of the platform. Downstage of the canal are two benches. As the curtain rises, several VENETIAN MAIDENS, seated on or near the benches, are singing gayly and tying colorful bouquets of flowers. A gondola enters carrying several GONDOLIERS. They stop at the landing and speak to the girls.]*

1st GONDOLIER. Good morrow, pretty maids; for whom prepare ye these floral tributes extraordinary?

1st GIRL. For Marco and Giuseppe Palmieri, the pink and flower of all the Gondolieri.

2nd GIRL. They're coming here, as we have heard but lately, to choose two brides from us who sit so sedately.

2nd GON. Do all you maidens love them?

GIRLS. Passionately!

2nd GON. These gondoliers are to be envied greatly!

2nd GIRL. *[looking off]* See, see, at last they come to make their choice—let us acclaim them with united voice.

*[MARCO and GIUSEPPE appear in gondola at back; pole to landing. The other GONDOLIERS shrug sadly and exit.]*

GIRLS. Hail, hail! gallant gondolieri, benvenuti! Accept our love, our homage, and our duty.

*[MARCO and GIUSEPPE jump ashore—the GIRLS surround them. All speak simultaneously.]*

MARCO and GIUSEPPE. Buon' giorno, signorine!

GIRLS. Gondolieri carissimi!

MARCO and GIUSEPPE. Servitori umilissimi! Perchi questi fiori—Questi fiori bellissimi?

GIRLS. Per voi, bei signori—O eccellentissimi!

*[The GIRLS present their bouquets to MARCO and GIUSEPPE, who are overwhelmed with them and carry them with difficulty.]*

MARCO. *[Peeping out through his load of flowers]*  
It's time to choose our brides!

GIUSEPPE. And we propose to let impartial Fate select for us a mate!

1st GIRL. *[To other Girls]* But how do they propose to let impartial Fate select for them a mate?

GIU. These handkerchiefs upon our eyes be good enough to bind,

MARCO. And take good care that both of us are absolutely blind;

GIU. Then turn us round—and we, with all convenient dispatch, will undertake to marry any two of you we catch!

ALL. Viva!

*[The GIRLS bind their eyes as directed and turn the men in circles as they recite or sing the following:]*

GIRLS. My Papa, he keeps three horses—

Black and white and dapple grey, sir;

Turn three times, then take your courses,

Catch whichever girl you may, sir!

*[MARCO and GIUSEPPE try to catch the giggling, screaming girls, as in blindman's buff. Eventually MARCO catches GIANETTA, and GIUSEPPE catches TESSA. The two girls pretend to try to escape, but in vain. The two men pass their hands over the girls' faces to discover their identity.]*

GIU. I've at length achieved a capture! *[Guessing]* This is Tessa! *[Removes bandage]*. Rapture, rapture!

MARCO. *[Guessing]* To me Gianetta fate has granted! *[Removes bandage]* Just the very girl I wanted!

GIANETTA. Fate in this has put his finger—let us bow to Fate's decree . . .

TESSA. Then no longer let us linger, to the altar hurry we!  
*[They dance off two and two—GIANETTA with MARCO, TESSA with GIUSEPPE.]*

*[Flourish. Enter the DUKE OF PLAZA-TORO, the DUCHESS, their daughter CASILDA, and their attendant LUIZ, who carries a drum. All are dressed in pompous but old and faded clothes.]*

DUKE. *[Bowling]* From the sunny Spanish shore, the Duke of Plaza-Toro—

DUCH. *[Curtsyng]* And his Grace's Duchess true—  
 CASILDA. *[Curtsyng]* And his Grace's daughter, too.

LUIZ. And his Grace's private drum to Venetia's shores have come. *[Rolls his drum.]*

DUKE. At last we have arrived at our destination. It is here that the Grand Inquisitor resides. As a Castilian hidalgo, I should have preferred to ride through the streets of Venice on a horse, but owing, I presume, to an unusually wet season, *[looks at canal]* the streets are in such a condition that equestrian exercise is impracticable. No matter. Where is our suite?

LUIZ. *[Coming forward]* Your Grace, I am here.

DUKE. Where is the band who were to have had the honour of escorting us, that our visit to the Grand Inquisitor might be made in becoming state? I see no band.

LUIZ. Your Grace, the band are sordid persons who required to be paid in advance.

DUCH. But surely they know his Grace?

LUIZ. Exactly—they know his Grace.

DUKE. Well . . . be so good as to ring the bell and inform the Grand Inquisitor that his Grace the Duke of Plaza-Toro, Count Matadoro, Baron Picadoro—

DUCH. And suite—

DUKE. And suite—have arrived at Venice, and seek—

CAS. Desire—

DUCH. Demand!

DUKE. And demand an audience.

LUIZ. Your Grace has but to command. *[Exit]*

DUKE. [*Much moved*] I felt sure of it. [*To Casilda*] And now my love— [*aside to Duchess*] shall we tell her? I think so— [*aloud to Casilda*] And now, my love, prepare for a magnificent surprise. It is my agreeable duty to reveal to you a secret which should make you the happiest young lady in Venice!

CAS. A secret?

DUCH. A secret which, for state reasons it has been necessary to preserve for twenty years.

DUKE. When you were a prattling babe of six months old you were married by proxy to no less a personage than the infant son and heir of His Majesty the immeasurably wealthy King of Barataria!

CAS. Married to the infant son of the King of Barataria? Was I consulted? [*DUKE shakes his head*] Then it was a most unpardonable liberty!

DUKE. Consider his extreme youth and forgive him. Shortly after the ceremony that misguided monarch abandoned the creed of his forefathers, and became a Wesleyan Methodist of the most bigoted and persecuting type. The Grand Inquisitor, determined that the innovation should not be perpetuated in Barataria, caused your smiling and unconscious husband to be stolen and conveyed to Venice. A fortnight ago the Methodist Monarch and all his Wesleyan Court were killed in an insurrection, and we are here to ascertain the whereabouts of your husband, and to hail you, our daughter, as Her Majesty, the reigning Queen of Barataria! [*Kneels*]

[*During this speech LUIZ re-enters*]

DUCH. Your majesty! [*Kneels*]

[*LUIZ gives a drum roll.*]

DUKE. [*Looking at the drum in disgust.*] It is at such moments as these that one feels how necessary it is to travel with a full band.

CAS. I, the Queen of Barataria! But I've nothing to wear!

DUKE. That point has not escaped me. Although I am unhappily in straitened circumstances at present, my social

influence is something enormous; and a Company, to be called the Duke of Plaza-Toro, Limited, is in course of formation.

CAS. But it's so undignified—it's so degrading! A Grandee of Spain turned into a public company? Such a thing was never heard of!

DUKE. My child, the Duke of Plaza-Toro does not follow fashions—he leads them. He always leads everybody. When he was in the army he led his regiment. He occasionally led them into action. He invariably led them out of it.

*[Exeunt DUKE and DUCHESS. (The song, "The Duke of Plaza-Toro" may be sung or played.) As soon as they have disappeared, LUIZ and CASILDA rush to each other's arms.]*

CAS. O, Luiz—Luiz—What have I done?

LUIZ. Nothing, I trust, that you will ever have reason to repent. *[Offering to embrace her]*

CAS. *[Withdrawing from him]* Nay, Luiz, it may not be. I have embraced you for the last time.

LUIZ. *[Amazed]* Casilda!

CAS. I have just learnt, to my surprise and indignation, that I was wed in babyhood to the infant son of the King of Barataria!

LUIZ. The son of the King of Barataria? The child who was stolen in infancy by the Inquisition?

CAS. The same. But of course, you know his story.

LUIZ. Know his story? Why, I have often told you that my mother was the nurse to whose charge he was entrusted!

CAS. True. I had forgotten. Well, he has been discovered, and my father has brought me here to claim his hand. *[Dramatically]* Henceforth my life is another's.

LUIZ. But stay—the present and the future—they are another's; but the past—that at least is ours, and none can take it from us.

CAS. I don't think I grasp your meaning.

LUIZ. There can be no harm in revelling in the past.

CAS. None whatever; we may recollect an embrace—I recollect many— *[he tries to embrace her; she rejects him]*