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Essex County Telegraph, Colchester

# The Caesar's Song

## 25th Jubilee Year Production



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## Colchester Operatic & Dramatic Society

1950



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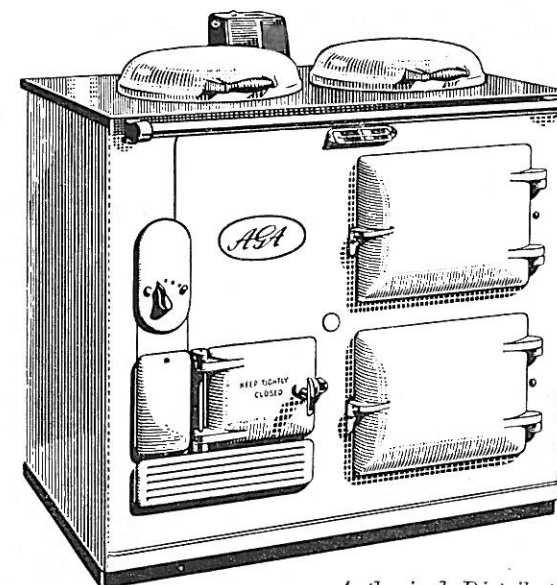
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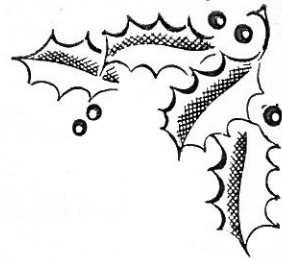
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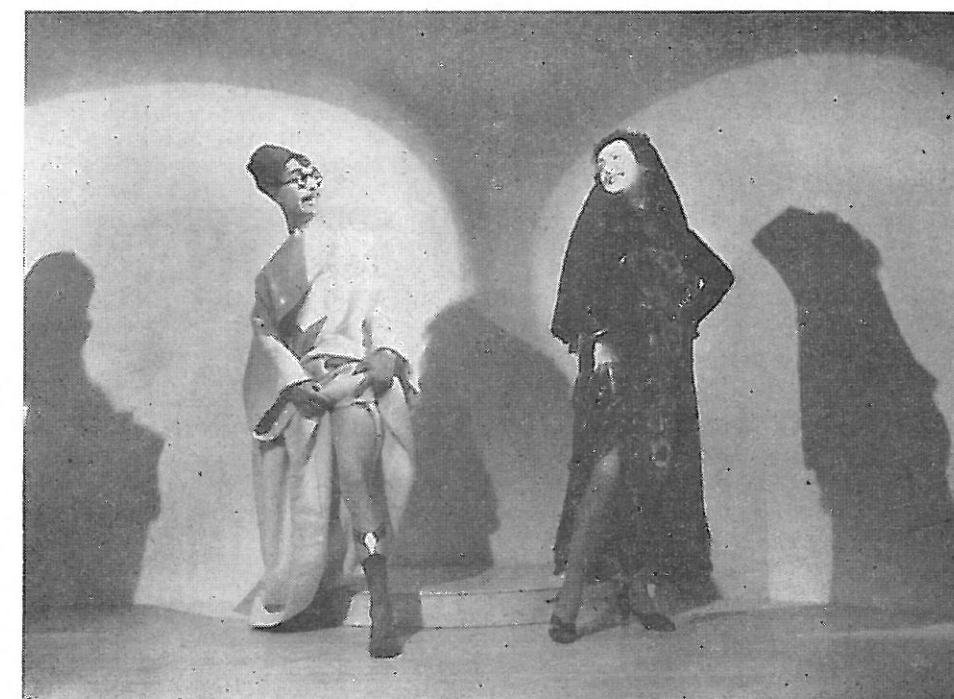
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## History of the Colchester Operatic and Dramatic Society 1925-1950

**T**HIS Society shall be called the Colchester Amateur Operatic Society." Thus it is recorded in 1925, that the above extract became Rule No. 1 to some 117 enthusiastic music and drama-loving Colcestrians and on December 8th of that year the Society's first production, "The Gondoliers," was staged at the Hippodrome in High Street. Fortune favoured this venture in its early years, by bringing the musical genius of the late Ernest H. Turner, J.P., as Hon. Musical Director into alliance with the experienced old Savoyard, C. Ashley Cooper, as producer.

Under this combined leadership the Society progressively established a reputation with a succession of Gilbert and Sullivan Operas. "The Mikado," 1926; "Princess Ida," 1927; "Iolanthe," 1929; "Yeoman of the Guard," 1930; "Trial by Jury," "Pirates of Penzance" and "Les Cloches de Corneville," 1931.

Those who enjoyed the privilege of membership during those early productions will always recollect with a just pride, their contact with one of the last remaining links of the old Savoyard "trouper" spirit and tradition.

The Society's choice for 1932, was the "Quaker Girl," produced by B. Parker, who was also responsible for the 1933 production of "The Mikado," which marked the beginning of another happy association with the late H. E. Facer, as Hon. Musical Director, and continued throughout the five following productions.

Then followed the "Gondoliers" in 1934 and "Merrie England" in 1935, both produced by Arthur Lucas. In 1936, "The Duchess of Danzig"; 1937, "The Vagabond King"; 1938, "The Country Girl," all produced by Albert Farrant.

Continuity of the Society's musical production was then suspended throughout the war years until 1946, when a remarkably successful revival was staged at the Albert Hall, by another Albert Farrant production of "The Beggars' Opera," under the baton of Peter Burges.

This proved to be the beginning of another phase of musical success and was followed by "Tom Jones" in 1949, under the musical direction of Dr. W. H. Swinburne and again produced by Albert Farrant.

At the present time the Society is meeting the public demand for the better known musical comedies and have enjoyed success with "The Arcadians," 1947; "Waltz Dream," 1948; "The New Moon," 1949; all proving unfailing successes under the production of Frances Davis. Musical direction in 1947 and 1948 was in the hands of Peter Burges, and in 1949 by Charles MacKerras, by permission of the Governors of the Sadler's Wells Opera Co.

The standard of the present 1950 production, "The Desert Song," has yet to receive public assessment, but the Society is confident the producer, Frances Davis, and the Musical Director, Leo Quayle (appearing by permission of the Sadler's Wells Opera Co.), will present this show in a manner long to be remembered as the Twenty-fifth Jubilee Year production.

The foregoing resume of the Society's past achievements must be attributed to the services of all past and present officers of both Executive and Social Committees, to the orchestral co-operation, honorary accompanists and of course the loyalty of playing and non-playing members.

Assured of the public support now enjoyed, the Society may confidently look forward to its Fiftieth Jubilee Year in 1975.

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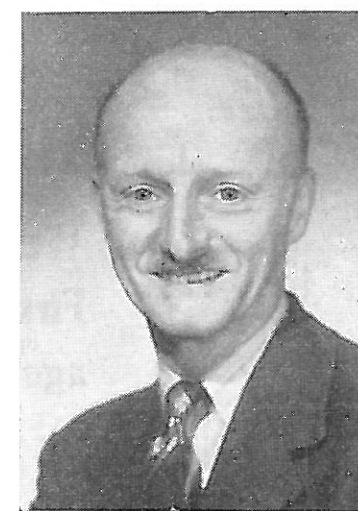
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*As Patron, and the Society's first President, I am privileged to write a brief foreword in connection with its Silver Jubilee, and it is a tribute to the loyalty of its members and to the people of Colchester and district that by their support and encouragement the Society is able to celebrate its twenty-fifth year of existence. In doing so it is fitting to remember those who have passed on—W. W. Townsend, F. J. Collinge, E. H. Turner and H. E. Facer—who made such valuable contributions in helping to lay its foundations. In conclusion, I am sure that all friends of the Society will wish in the words of W. S. Gilbert :*

*" May good fortune prosper you,  
May you succeed in all you do."*

A. W. PIPER



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## The Colchester Operatic and Dramatic Society

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## Synopsis

THE scene is set around a typical garrison outpost in French Morocco, under the command of General Birabeau, whose chief assignment is the suppression of the lawless activity of Riff tribesmen, led by an elusive character known as the Red Shadow, whose organised resistance against the savage tyranny imposed by the occupying forces inspires the fanatical devotion of his followers.

Captain Paul Fontaine, an officer attached to the garrison, finds campaigning in Morocco affords few opportunities for the social gaiety of his native France and readily falls victim to the alluring charms of a native girl, Azuri.

Life in the garrison centres around General Birabeau's house, where a normal social atmosphere exists between the wives of officers and men. At the time of our story the attractive and vivacious Margot Bonvalet becomes a guest at the General's house and her future is understood to be linked with that of Capt. Fontaine.

The General's son, Pierre, a likeable but seemingly simple fellow, shows little interest in service life and is consequently regarded with small consideration among his fellow countrymen and real embarrassment to his father.

This attitude arouses Margot's sympathy and she unsuccessfully attempts to persuade Pierre to seek the chivalrous honours of a military career. Upon realising the failure of her efforts to change Pierre's apparent pacifist outlook, Margot effects an admiration for the daring displayed by that elusive character the Red Shadow.

Meanwhile, Azuri discovers the identity of that picturesque leader of the Riffs and sees in this information an opportunity to prevent Capt. Fontaine's approaching marriage with Margot.

At this stage a successful surprise attack is made on the garrison and Margot is carried off to the Harem of Ali Ben Ali. Here she is courted by the Red Shadow, whose persistence, although not outwardly encouraged, has completely won her affection.

The Riffs resent their leader's interest in Margot and this resentment reaches its climax when their leader refuses to accept General Birabeau's challenge to single combat. The Red Shadow is outlawed by his men and driven into the desert unarmed.

Azuri, now thrust aside by Fontaine, maliciously seeks revenge on both Paul and General Birabeau, whom she believes to be responsible for the break in her association with Paul. She offers to reveal the identity of the Red Shadow upon payment of a considerable bribe, which the General hands over, and thus learns that Pierre, his own son, is masquerading as the leader of the Riff tribesmen. Unfortunately he has already set a trap for the notorious raiders and Azuri's motive is now painfully obvious to the General.

Pierre, however, successfully evades the ambush and abandons his leadership to receive his father's blessing upon his betrothal to Margot.

Throughout the story, Benjamin Kidd, a war correspondent and Susan, his self appointed assistant, experience a series of trying adventures which provide some comic relief to their audience.



# The Colchester Operatic and Dramatic Society

25th YEAR JUBILEE PRODUCTION

## "The Desert Song"

(By arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.)

Book and Lyrics by OTTO HARBACH, OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II AND FRANK MANDEL

Music by SIGMUND ROMBERG

### ACT ONE

#### SCENE ONE. Retreat of the Red Shadow in the Riff Mountains (Evening)

- |                                     |                       |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Prelude and Opening Chorus       | .. .. .               | High on the hill is our stronghold  |
| 2. Song (RED SHADOW, SID) and Riffs | .. "The Riff Song" .. | Over the ground there comes a sound |
| 2a. Reprise .. .. .                 | .. .. .               | Ho! Bold men of Morocco             |
| 3. Finaletto                        |                       |                                     |
| 4. Song (PAUL) and Soldiers         | .. .. "Margot" ..     | Oh! pretty maid of France           |

#### SCENE TWO. Outside General Birabeau's House (the same evening)

- |                 |                                   |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5. Song (SUSAN) | .. .. "I'll be a buoyant girl" .. | Has anybody seen my Bennie? |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|

#### SCENE THREE. A Room in General Birabeau's House (a few minutes later)

- |   |                      |                                       |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 6. Opening Chorus                                   | .. .. .              | Why did we marry soldiers?            |
| 7. French Military Marching Song (MARGOT) and Girls | .. ..                | Oh! Girls, Girls, here are Cavaliers! |
| 8. Song (MARGOT) and Girls                          | .. .. "Romance" ..   | Romance—a playboy                     |
| 9. Duet (MARGOT, PIERRE) and Chorus                 | "Then you will know" | My passion is not to crash on and woo |
| 10. Trio (MARGOT, PAUL, PIERRE) and Chorus          | "I want a kiss" ..   | What's the noise?                     |
| 11. Duet (SUSAN, BENNIE) and Girls                  | .. .. "It" ..        | There was a time                      |
| 12. Duet (MARGOT and RED SHADOW)                    | .. "The Desert Song" | I open my arms                        |
| 13. Finale .. .. .                                  | .. .. .              | Won't you wish us luck?               |

INTERVAL (Fifteen minutes)

### ACT TWO

#### SCENE ONE. The Harem of Ali Ben Ali (Afternoon of the following day)

- |  |                                 |                              |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Opening Chorus                                  | .. .. .                         | My little castagnette        |
| 2. Song (CLEMENTINA) and Girls                     | .. "Song of the Brass Key" ..   | On the streets of Spain      |
| 3. Reprise .. .. .                                 | .. .. .                         | Give him the key             |
| 4. Duet (CLEMENTINA and BENNIE)                    | "One good boy gone wrong"       | Bold woman, please unhand me |
| 5. Concerted number (RED SHADOW, SID, ALI) and men | "Eastern and Western Love"      |                              |
|  | (a) "Let love go" .. ..         | Let love come as some rare   |
|  | (b) "One flower in your garden" | treasure                     |
|  | (c) "One alone" .. ..           |                              |

#### SCENE TWO. A corridor (a few minutes later)

#### SCENE THREE. The Room of the Silken Couch

- |                                     |                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6. Duet (MARGOT and THE RED SHADOW) | "The Sabre Song" .. | I find the simple life entrancing |
| 7. Finaletto (PIERRE and MARGOT)    | .. .. .             | You love me                       |

#### SCENE FOUR. The edge of the desert (the following morning, half an hour before dawn)

- |                                 |                     |                              |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 8. Song (RED SHADOW) and Chorus | .. .. "Farewell" .. | So! it means the Riffs . . . |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|

#### SCENE FIVE. Courtyard of General Birabeau's House (two days later)

- |                                       |               |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9. Opening Chorus                     |               |                                   |
| 10. Reprise (SUSAN, BENNIE) and Girls | .. .. "It" .. | Bennie—I didn't know              |
| 11. Dance of Triumph (AZURI)          | .. .. .       | As we are drinking                |
| 12. Finale                            | .. .. .       | Soldiers, when the battle is over |

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# THE DESERT SONG

## Cast

(In order of appearance)

FRANCES DAVIS					
SID EL KAR ..	..	..	..	..	.. BOB GRAY
MINDAR ..	..	..	..	..	.. ALBERT MORISON
HADJI ..	..	..	..	..	.. HAROLD FIELDEN
NERI ..	..	..	..	..	.. ISABELLA MELVILLE
HASSI ..	..	..	..	..	.. RAY DYKE
BENJAMIN KIDD ..	..	..	..	..	.. EDGAR FITT
CAPTAIN PAUL FONTAINE ..	..	..	..	..	.. JOHN JENKINS
LIEUTENANT LA VERGNE ..	..	..	..	..	.. JACK FIELDEN
SERGEANT DE BOUSSAC ..	..	..	..	..	.. GORDON LUMB
AZURI ..	..	..	..	..	.. MARGO PEARCE
SUSAN ..	..	..	..	..	.. PHYLLIS GANT
EDITH ..	..	..	..	..	.. CHRISTINE MARSHALL
MARGOT BONVALET ..	..	..	..	..	.. SONIA LOWE
GENERAL BIRABEAU ..	..	..	..	..	.. GEORGE FLINT
PIERRE BIRABEAU ..	..	..	..	..	.. MAURICE BOND
ALI BEN ALI ..	..	..	..	..	.. ERIC STANNARD
CLEMENTINA ..	..	..	..	..	.. JOAN BLYTH

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Hon. Wardrobe Mistresses : Mrs. M. BOND and Miss O. BOND

Hon. Ballet Mistress : Mrs. FIONA CAMERON

Hon. Prompter : Mrs. D. ALDOUS

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Make-up by JULES MARTEN and DULCIS TODD

Photographs by WEST END STUDIOS

## Musical direction

by

## Leo Quayle

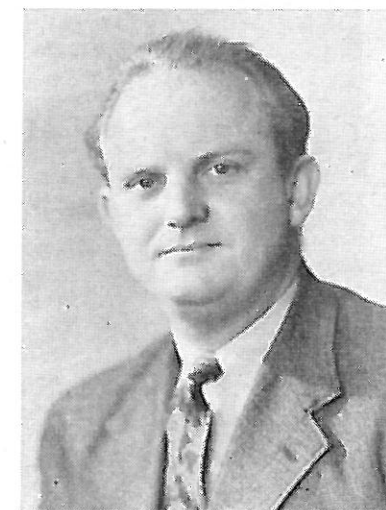
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Chorus Mistress : GRACE BALL



Hon. Accompanist : DOUGLAS MERSON



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EDITH BARRETT	HILDA COWLEY	DAPHNE LAWRENCE	BERYL PRESTIDGE
BARBARA BATES	EDWINA DOMINY	CHRISTINE MARSHALL	GLADYS ROGERS
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THE SOCIETY expresses grateful thanks to all who have helped in this production, and particularly acknowledges the co-operation and assistance of the undermentioned:

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Mr. and Mrs. MOON and the Staff of the RED LION HOTEL, for co-operation during rehearsals.

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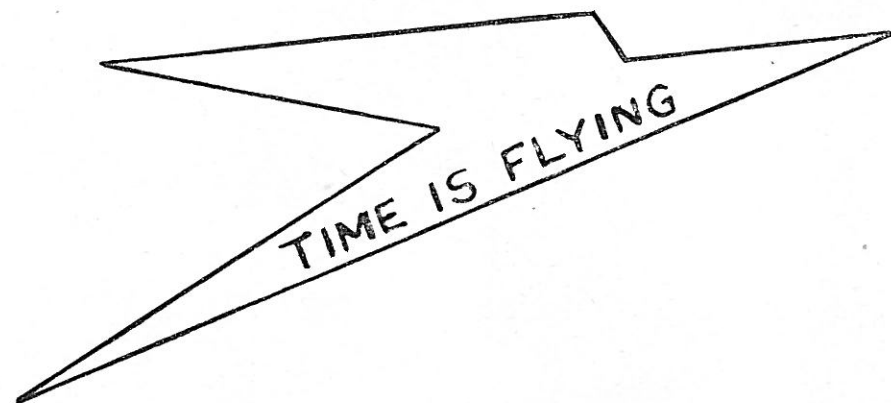
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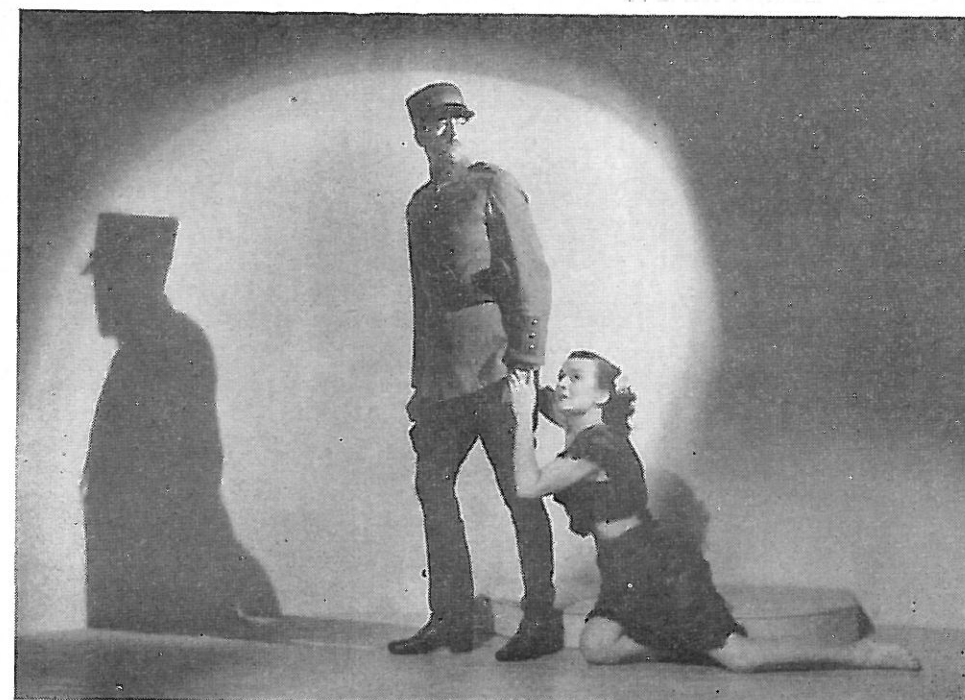
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