

Peter in Blunderland

..... An Introduction to the Palmerston North Edition

The people of Wellington are by now quite accustomed to Victoria College Extravaganzas. They flock along every year in their thousands. Some come because they want a good laugh, some because they like the salacious bits, and some because they like hearing us say things about the Highest In The Land which they don't care to say themselves.

Yes, they've got used to us in Wellington, and there's no need to write an apologia such as this in our programmes. The people know what to expect, and they seem to like it. But I think it's only fair to warn you people of Palmerston North that the art-form we're inflicting upon you to-night is very, very different from the comfortable dramas presented to you by your local dramatic societies. So if you decide, after reading what follows, that you'd prefer not to see the show, you may leave the theatre and enquire at the Box Office for your price of admission. We're pretty certain that it won't be refunded.

"Peter in Blunderland," as you have been informed by our excellent publicity service, deals with the adventures of one Peter, who, like dear little Alice, goes through a looking-glass in search of a New World. In his travels he meets a number of interesting and vaguely familiar characters—for instance, the Harsh Hare, the Kidderminster Cat, the Dock Turtle, the Gryphon, Tweedlesid and Tweedlelee, the Duchess of Marlborough, and last—but assuredly not least—that incredible animal Gas Mainsford, Mare of Farmerston.

In the Wellington performance of "Peter," Gas Mainsford didn't appear. Her place was taken by an oddity called Holy Willie Appletree, and this change may, to the more discerning Palmerstonians, give a clue to the inner nature and significance of the Extravaganza. "Peter," like all our Extravaganzas, is essentially local and ephemeral. It is as up-to-date as the morning paper (in the morning), as adaptable as female fashions, and as devastating and impartial as a bomb. Its authors must possess the qualifications of a Swift, an Aristophanes, and a Rabelais rolled into one, and it is essential that they and the caste wear libel-proof vests.

From all of which you may or may not gather some of the essentials of the Extravaganza. Trying to describe the basic qualities of an Extravaganza is like trying to ascertain the essentials of a great poem—you run through a list of ingredients and find on examination that there isn't one which can't on occasion be dispensed with. You can call an Extravaganza a "lewd political farce," or a "libellous piece of pornography," or a "musical satire," but you can never capture the quintessence of the Extravaganza in bald words, however apt. As a cele-

brated Dodo once said (in another connection): "The best way to explain it is to do it."

And in doing it, we have a lot of fun. And you won't understand properly what an Extravaganza is unless you realise that the caste is having fun as well as the audience. It has been fun bribing fifth-columnists in your city to supply us with dope about your celebrities and controversies so that we can incorporate them in our show. It has been fun preparing and rehearsing this special Palmerston North edition of "Peter." It will be fun watching your reactions to the riot of bawdry, brilliance and Bolshevism which is "Peter in Blunderland."

We don't expect that you'll take much notice of the political moral which lurks in the background of the show. For many years now I have been writing Extravaganzas which subtly advocate various systems and creeds, ranging from Oxford Groupism to Communism, but as I have noticed no radical changes in the Ways of the World recently, I can only assume that the swine have merely sniffed at my pearls. The trouble is that people won't go to see a political drama unless you wrap it up in silver paper. It's a sad and depressing fact, but no one ever takes Extravaganzas seriously. People invariably laugh like hell. Perhaps Palmerstonians will be more intelligent.

There are one or two things we'd like to apologise for. In the first place, most of you won't have seen the Wellington Repertory Society's production of "Alice in Wonderland" which gave us a few ideas for "Peter"; nor will many of you have seen the Canterbury College production of "Hamlet" in modern dress, which we endeavour to reproduce in Act II of "Peter." We don't think this really matters, though: a nodding acquaintance with the original works is all that is required for a full appreciation of the finer points of "Peter." And perhaps your not having seen "Alice" and "Hamlet" is really an advantage. There are one or two shocking bad lines in "Peter"—and if you don't see anything funny in them, you may be prepared to blame it on your own obtuseness, rather than on the incompetence of the authors.

Secondly, we want to apologise for retaining the Karori Crematorium as the locale of the Marx Brothers Scene. The reason for this apparent parochialism is, of course, the fact that you haven't got a crematorium at Palmerston North. It's time your Civic Centre Association repaired this grave omission.

So we invite you to forget Tojo, the unpaid bills, and the fly menace, just for a couple of hours, and partake of the raw, red meat of "Peter in Blunderland." It may give you indigestion, but it tastes good while you're eating it.

RONALD L. MEEK.

Musical Programme



“ PETER IN BLUNDERLAND ”

ACT ONE

1. Chorus of Typists and Secretaries—‘We’re Peter’s Typists’ *Air—‘You are My Sunshine.’*
 2. Recitatives and Choruses—‘See, see he comes,’ ‘Hail, hail!’ and ‘Good Morning Secretaries.’
Airs—from ‘The Gondolier’s’ (Sullivan).
 3. Song—‘I’m Called Pious Peter’ *Air—‘We’re Called Gondolieri’ (Sullivan).*
 4. Chorus of Soldiers and Solo—‘Guard, oh Guard our Humpty Dumpty.’
Air—‘Pour, oh Pour the Pirate Sherry’ (Sullivan).
 5. Chorus of Soldiers and Solo—‘I Sit and Wobble on my Wall.’
Air—‘There’s a Bridle Hanging on the Wall.’
 6. Chorus of Pawns and Spectators—‘The Caucus Comes Rolling Along.’
Air—‘The Caissons Come Rolling Along.’
 7. Recitatives and Chorus—‘Silence in Court,’ ‘Oh Learned Friend,’ and ‘For These Kind Words.’
Airs—from ‘Trial By Jury’ (Sullivan).
 8. Chorus of ‘Veritas’ Reporters and Solo—‘Our Reputations Horrible.’ *Air—Original Music.*
 9. Chorus of Y.M.C.A. Maids—‘Full of Indignation.’
Air—‘Comes the Broken Flower’ (Sullivan).
 10. Solo—‘I am the Great O’Bluster.’ *Air—‘With a Sense of Deep Emotion’ (Sullivan).*
 11. Chorus of Y.M.C.A. Boarders—‘There’s Lice in the Washtub.’ *Air—Traditional.*
 12. Final Chorus—‘Well, Thank Jehovah.’ *Air—‘With Joy Unbounded’ (Sullivan).*
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ACT TWO

1. Chorus of Land Girls and Solo—‘The Cows are Coming Home.’
Air—‘Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree.’
2. Solo—‘I Couldn’t Sleep a Wink Last Night.’ *Air—‘I Couldn’t Sleep a Wink Last Night.’*
3. Trio—‘The Three Mighty Planners.’ *Air—‘Three Little Sisters.’*
4. Chorus of Bogie-Wogies—‘Bogie-Wogie Spectres.’
Air—‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ (Sullivan).
5. Solo—‘I Just Dropped in for a Minute.’ *Air—‘His Rocking Horse Ran Away.’*
6. Solo—‘I’m Nutty Over Hamlet.’ *Air—‘An Apple for the Teacher.’*
7. Chorus of Red Pawns—‘Then Fill up the Glasses.’ *Air—‘Tra la la.’*
8. Final Chorus— *Air—‘Lili Marlene.’*

"Peter in Blunderland"

A Dialectical Fantasy in Two Negations

Produced by RONALD L. MEEK.
Stage Management: H. WILLIAMSON.

Ballets by Miss MOIRA WICKS.
Musical Direction: D. COHEN.

SCENES

ACT ONE—

1. A room in Parliament Buildings.
2. A Tunnel.
3. Humpty-Dumpty's Wall.
4. An Orchard.
5. The Caucus Race-course.
6. The Tunnel.
7. A Court of Justice.

ACT TWO—

1. A Sea Shore.
2. A Forest.
3. The Duchess's Kitchen.
4. A Civic Theatre.
5. A Field.
6. Humpty Dumpty's Wall.
7. A Garden.

CASTE

(In Order of Appearance)

CHORUS OF TYPISTES JEAN PRIEST, JOAN TAYLOR, JEAN HAWTHORN, BEVERLEY MORRIS, MARGARET ECCLES, FREDA MOOR, JACKIE RICHARDS, JULIE FLETT, JOAN SIM, CECIL FOWLER, MARIE MARSHALL, CATHERINE CROSSE, JACKIE PATRICK, ELIZABETH DANIELL.

CHORUS OF SECRETARIES ALISTER HALL, TED JONES, DICK WARNER, LESTER PAUL, DAVE HEMPLEMAN, REG. BERNEY, JOHN ZIMAN, CHUM PATERSON,, KERRY JORDAN, FANNY WALKER, ALEX. WILLIAMS.

PETER DENNIS HARTLEY

*" Oh, teach the natives of this land
(Who are not quick to understand)
How to work off their social and
Political arrears!"*

—W. S. Gilbert.

BALDER DASH—THE KIDDERMINSTER CAT PIX HURRELL

*" A complicated gentleman allow me to present,
Of all the arts and faculties the terse embodiment."*

—W. S. Gilbert.

THE WHITE RABBIT W. EASTERBROOK-SMITH

*" He bought white ties, and the bought dress suits,
He crammed his fet into bright tight boots—"*

—W. S. Gilbert.

HUMPTY-DUMPTY K. T. FOWLER

*" Utopia's much too big for one small head—
I'll float it as a Company Limited !"*

—W. S. Gilbert.

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS JEFF STEWART, BILL CAMERON, ROY DICKSON,
TREVOR LEVY, BARRY PERHAM, BRUCE McSWEENEY, ERIC HALL, PAUL
VELLA, ERROL JONES, ALAN THOMSEN, TED BRADSTOCK, H. B. BAKER,
KNEALE MARK, PETER JENKINS, JOHN ECCLES, CHRIS. SMALL.

GAS MAINSFORD, MARE OF FARMERSTON ALAN MARTIN

" Widen your thoroughfares and flush your drains !"

—W. S. Gilbert.

THE HARSH HARE BRIAN J. DUFFY

*" Did you hear him—did you hear him ?
Oh, the monster overbearing !
Don't go near him—don't go near him—
He is swearing—he is swearing !"*

—W. S. Gilbert.

THE MAD HATTER GORDON STUCKEY

*" The expression 'If you please'
A particularly gentlemanly tone implants."*

—W. S. Gilbert.

THE DORMOUSE BRUCE MILBURN

*" He never should bow down to a domineering frown
Or the tang of a tyrant tongue." —W. S. Gilbert.*

CHORUS OF SPECTATORS RITA RUBEN, JACKIE RICHARDS, ELIZABETH
DANIELL, PEGGY MARTIN, VICKY FUSSELL, DICK WARNER, MARIE MAR-
SHALL, JEAN PRIEST, BARBARA CORKILL, LORNA PYE, JOLENE PARK,
JEAN HAWTHORN, REG. BERNEY, LESTER PAUL, DAVE HEMPLEMAN,
MARGARET ECCLES, EVAN WATTS, JACKIE PATRICK.

CHORUS OF WHITE PAWNS JOY BARTLEY, JOHN RICHARDSON, DENZIL
BROWN, BRYAN STANLEY, J. P. COUTTS, GERALDINE PLAYER, JOAN
CLARKE, S. LEONARD-TAYLOR, T. McKENZIE, BOB HOPKIRK, G. EVERN-
DEN, L. MURPHY, CECIL SAKER.

RED KING STAN. CAMPBELL

*" The Lord High Bishop orthodox—
The Lord High Coachman on the box—
The Lord High Vagabond in the stocks—
They all shall equal be !"* —W. S. Gilbert.

CHORUS OF JURYMEN JOHN RICHARDSON, S. LEONARD-TAYLOR,
L. MURPHY, G. EVERNDEN, T. MCKENZIE, BOB HOPKIRK, BRYAN STAN-
LEY, EVAN WATTS, J. P. COUTTS.

SIR CYCLE TYRES TED JONES

*"The Law is the true embodiment
Of everything that's excellent.
It has no kind of fault or flaw,
And I, my Lords, embody the Law."*
—W. S. Gilbert.

THE CLERK OF COURT ALISTER HALL

A CHORUS OF BARRISTERS REG. BERNEY, KERRY JORDAN, JOHN ZIMAN

HUMPHREY O'BLUSTER, K.C. FANNY WALKER

CLEVER BANE BARRY PERHAM

CHORUS OF VERITAS REPORTERS BILL CAMERON, BRUCE McSWEENEY,
ERIC HALL, H. B. BAKER, JOHN ECCLES, PAUL VELLA, KNEALE MARK.

CHORUS OF Y.M.C.A. MAIDS JEFF STEWART, ERROL JONES, ROY
DICKSON, PETER JENKINS, ALAN THOMSEN, TED BRADSTOCK, TREVOR
LEVY, CHRIS. SMALL.

CHORUS OF Y.M.C.A. BOARDERS LESTER PAUL, NOEL BROWN, ALEX
WILLIAMS, BRUCE MILBURN, HENK SCHWIMMER, ALBERT MOORE.

FOREMAN OF THE JURY DENZIL BROWN

HAYBELL COWYARD MARGARET ECCLES

*"Mighty maiden with a mission,
Paragon of common sense,
Running fount of erudition,
Miracle of eloquence."* —W. S. Gilbert.

A CHORUS OF LAND GIRLS RITA RUBEN, CECIL FOWLER, LORNA PYE,
JEAN PRIEST, PEGGY MARTIN, JOLENE PARK, JEAN HAWTHORN, VICKY
FUSSELL, JOY BARTLEY, BEVERLEY MORRIS, FREDA MOOR, AILEEN
CASEY, JUNE FLETT, GERALDINE PLAYER, ELIZABETH DANIELL, JOAN
SIM, JACKIE RICHARDS, MARIE MARSHALL, BARBARA CORKILL, JOAN
CLARKE, JACKIE PATRICK, CECIL SAKER.

THE DOCK TURTLE GIB BOGLE

*"Why linger here
Where all is drear?"* —W. S. Gilbert.

THE GRYPHON PIX HURRELL

*" 'Tis then this warrior's eyes and sabre gleam
For our protection—
He represents a military scheme
In all its proud perfection!"—W. S. Gilbert.*

TWEEDLESID D. SAKER

TWEEDLELEE CHUM PATERSON

THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH KERRY JORDAN

*" My face is unattractive . . . but I have a left shoulder-blade
That is a miracle of loveliness." —W. S. Gilbert.*

THE SPECTRE DE L'ONCLE SAM JOHN ZIMAN

BLOWEY SPOUTJOY—THE WHITE KNIGHT REG. BERNEY

*" New plays I read with jealous eyes
And purify the stage." —W. S. Gilbert.*

HIGH HORSE TOM MCKENZIE, LARRY MURPHY

HAMLET W. EASTERBROOK-SMITH

MARCELLUS BRUCE MILBURN

HORATIO LESTER PAUL

HAMLET'S FATHER'S GHOST JEFF STEWART

A CHORUS OF BOGIE-WOGIES JEFF. STEWART, PETER F. JENKINS,
CHRIS. SMALL, ALAN THOMSEN, TED BRADSTOCK, TREVOR LEVY, ROY
DICKSON.

FIRST GHOST JEFF. STEWART

OPHELIA JOAN EASTERBROOK-SMITH

CLAUDIUS ALEX WILLIAMS

GERTRUDE JOAN TAYLOR

MARX BROS.—

HARPO HENK SCHWIMMER CHICO NOEL BROWN
GROUCHO ALBERT MOORE

KARL MARX DICK WARNER

RED KNIGHT ALAN MARTIN

CHORUS OF RED PAWNS ALISTER HALL, TED JONES, JEAN PRIEST,
GORDON STUCKEY, DICK WARNER, BEVERLEY MORRIS, FRED A MOOR,
JACKIE RICHARDS, AILEEN CASEY, JULIE FLETT, JOAN SIM, BARBARA
CORKILL, FANNY WALKER, CECIL FOWLER, JACKIE PATRICK.

WHITE QUEEN CATHERINE CROSSE

*"I vow my complexion
Derives its perfection
From somebody's soap—which it doesn't!"*

Prompter: MISS V. RICH.

ODDS AND SODS, FLOTSAM AND JETSAM, COURTIERS, ETC.

INTERVAL ENTERTAINERS

INTERVAL ORGANISER R. F. H. HANNAN

MINISTER FOR TIERRA DEL FUEGO J. W. WINCHESTER

LADY BLASTOR R. F. H. HANNAN

CHAPERONE N. TAYLOR

ATTACHE G. EDGAR

HUNTSMAN K. HEDIFEN

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The authors wish to acknowledge with thanks the suggestions contributed by the caste and others, by virtue of whose good offices the play as presented bears little if any resemblance to the original script. We wish to apologise to those whose suggested crudities and lewdities were not included, and to emphasise that **this was not our fault.**