Iolanthe
HMV 1922 (acoustic) Recording
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“Collector’s Edition”
[In this edition, each side of the original set is presented as a single track of corresponding number.]

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Record Reference

ACT I.

1 Overture (embracing the principal melodies).

2 Opening Chorus of Fairies. Iolanthe has offended all fairy laws by marrying a mortal, and as a punishment has been banished to the bottom of a stream. Here she has dwelt for twenty-five years, and when the opera opens, her former friends succeed in persuading the Fairy Queen to forgive her, and bring her back.

3 They learn that Iolanthe has a son, who is by now a young man of twenty-four, and an Arcadian Shepherd. He is in love with Phyllis, a Shepherdess, who is a Ward in Chancery, and the Fairies are exceedingly curious to see this young man who is half fairy and half mortal.

4 Strephon enters and greets his mother, and is introduced to his fairy "aunts". After the fairies have left, Phyllis enters singing. She and Strephon have decided that, she being a Ward in Chancery, and the Lord Chancellor having withheld his consent they will get married forthwith, without it. They renew their vows in the duet "None shall part us," and leave the stage.

5 The Peers enter in full regalia, and in the song that
6 follows, the Lord Chancellor describes his feelings at having to give "agreeable girls away," always to some-one else! Their Lordships are all in love with Phyllis
7 and she being summoned to appear before them, refuses their advances, singing "Nay, tempt me not. To rank I'll not be bound: In lowly cot alone is virtue found," to which Lord Tolloller replies, "Spurn not the nobly born" and advances the claims of "Blue Blood."

8 Phyllis remains obdurate, and begs them not to waste their time, "For ah! my heart is given." Their Lordships are horror-struck, and at this moment Strephon appears to claim her hand "against the world." He refuses to be parted or to obey the ruling of the Lord Chancellor, The Rules of Evidence are mentioned and the Lord Chancellor sings his famous song "Said I to myself —said I!" Strephon is about to bow to the inevitable
9 when Iolanthe appears, and Strephon unburdens his woes. The Peers have re-entered unobserved with Phyllis, and from fragments of the conversation they overhear, mistake Iolanthe for another "affair" of Strephon's.
Phyllis reveals herself, and taxes him with faithlessness. He tries to explain "this lady's my mother!" It is too

Record Reference

much for them. A young man of 25 with a mother of 17!

10 Phyllis breaks off the engagement, and, just as things are at their blackest for Strephon, he bethinks himself of the Fairies (his aunts) and invokes their aid.

They take Strephon's part, and as the Peers will not take

11 them seriously they decide to send Strephon into Parliament where, backed by Fairy powers, he shall upset all

12 the time-honoured prerogatives enjoyed by their Lordships. The Peers at first defiant, succumb on realising what it all means to them, and the scene closes with the tables turned, the Peers begging for mercy, and Phyllis, now spurned by Strephon, fainting in the arms of Lord Mountararat and Lord Tolloller.

ACT II.

The Palace Yard, Westminster.

13 Private Willis, the sentry, is on duty, and soliloquises. Enter Fairies, exulting in the complete success of their plans,

14 and Lord Mountararat laments the new state of affairs, and recalls the "good old times." The Fairies meanwhile, having had leisure to observe the Peers, find them rather charming,

15 and their wrath begins to weaken. Which, being discovered

16 by the Queen, she chides them. Phyllis is now engaged to two noblemen at once, not being able to make up her mind whether she will bestow her hand on Lord Mountararat or Lord Tolloller. Neither will yield his claim, and matters

17 are further complicated by the Lord Chancellor, who, suffering from "love unrequited" determines to combine his official and private capacities, and grant his own application for the hand of his ward Phyllis. He asks their Lord-

18 ships' advice and they reply, "Faint heart never won fair lady!"

Phyllis and Strephon meet and finding that they cannot live apart ask Iolanthe to plead for them with the Lord Chancellor.

19 She does so, and as a last resource reveals her identity as his wife. This once more brings her beneath the ban of the fairy law, and the penalty is death. The Queen appears, and is about to execute sentence, when the other Fairies confess that they, too, have married mortals (the Peers). She cannot kill them all and the only way out is to change the fairy law and then to transform the mortals into fairies, which is done. The Queen being left in the cold, takes Private Willis, and the opera closes with the fairy Peers (who

20 have "sprouted" wings), preparing to depart for Fairyland.

Track 1
Cc766-1

Track 2
Cc772-2

Track 19
Cc864-4

Track 20
Cc1201-2

Track 17

Cc863-4

Track 18

Cc1196-2

Track 3

Cc773-4

Track 4

Cc771-1

Track 5

Cc776-1

Track 6

Cc774-2

Track 15

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Track 16

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Track 13

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Track 14

Cc898-2

Track 7

Cc775-1

Track 8

Cc1197-2

Track 9

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Track 10

Cc1198-3

Track 11

Cc1200-3

Track 12

Cc1199-2