Ruddigore
HMV 1924 (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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Track/Side 17

Cc4749-3

Track/Side 18

Cc4697-1

Record Reference

ACT I.

1 Overture (embracing the principal melodies).

The scene opens in the pretty little Cornish fishing village of Rederring, showing the harbour and Rose Maybud's cottage. The village possesses an endowed corps
2 of professional bridesmaids, who are languishing in idleness, there having been no weddings for at least six months. The village beauty, Rose, will have none of her many suitors, and, in desperation, the bridesmaids, fearful of losing their endowment, endeavour to persuade Dame Hannah, Rose's Aunt, to marry old Adam, Robin Oakapple's faithful servant.

Hannah is, however, pledged to eternal maidenhood. Years ago, she was betrothed to a youth who woo'd her under an assumed name, but on the day when they should have been married, she discovered that he was no other than Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, one of an accursed race She tells the girls how his ancestor, Sir Rupert Murgatroyd, employed his time in persecuting witches, and that one of his victims, in mortal agony at the stake, laid this curse on him: "Each lord of Ruddigore, despite his best endeavour, shall do one crime, or more, once every day, for ever." The penalty for defying the curse is death by torture on the day the crimes cease, and each lord of Ruddigore has so died.

Hannah chides Rose for not returning the love of "some gallant youth," and
3 Rose explains that her difficulty is that the youths of the village are bashful, and it would not be becoming for her to make advances. Rose is a foundling, and bases her ideals on a book of etiquette which, with a change of baby-linen, were her only possessions when she was discovered in a plated dish-cover suspended to the knocker of the workhouse door.

Robin enters and would fain consult Rose on the predicament of a friend who is in love with a maid, but is too diffident to tell her. Rose similarly wishes to
4 ask his advice as to *her* friend, and they "consult" accordingly in a charming duet, without, however, mending matters.

Robin Oakapple is really Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, but in horror at the prospect of inheriting the title and the curse, he had fled his home and taken an assumed name. His younger brother Despard, believing him to be dead, had succeeded to the title. Old Adam enters and informs Robin that his foster-brother Richard is home from sea. This news is quickly followed by the entry of Richard himself.
5a 5b He kisses all the girls, spins them the yarn of the "Bold Mounseer," and dances a
5c Hornpipe as an appropriate climax.

Dick and Robin exchange greetings, and Robin, on being upbraided for being sad, tells his foster-brother of his love for Rose, and of the shyness that prevents him from declaring it. Richard consults "the dictates of his heart," and his heart tells him to speak up for his friend. Robin is overjoyed and sings a song, the burden of which is that, "If you wish in the world to advance . . . You must
6 stir it and stump it, and blow your own trumpet."

Record Reference

Dick goes off on his self-imposed mission, but no sooner does he see Rose than his heart "dictates" once again, and says : "This is the very lass for *you*, Dick."

6b So he forgets Robin, and makes love, very successfully, on his own account.

7a Robin enters with the Bridesmaids, and is astounded at the unexpected turn events have taken. Still, he has sworn to stand up for Dick through thick and thin. Therefore, while pretending to agree, he "gets his own back" by making many disquieting insinuations regarding the less respectable aspects of a sailor's

7b life. This clever move turns the tables on Richard, and Rose forsakes him for Robin.

8 A new character is introduced—Mad Margaret—whose wits have been crazed by the cruel treatment of Sir Despard Murgatroyd—the "Bad Baronet." She is actually trying to find Rose Maybud, of whom she is jealous, having heard that Sir Despard intends to carry her off as one of his daily "crimes." Rose tells her, however, that she need not fear, as she (Rose) is pledged to another.

Despard Murgatroyd and his following of "Bucks" and "Blades" now appear.

9a They are welcomed by the Bridesmaids, who are tired of village swains, and are delighted with the swaggering newcomers in their gorgeous military uniforms.

9b Despard bewails his lot, as one who, being really thoroughly good, is condemned to be thoroughly bad. He tries to balance his account of evil and good by getting his crime over the first thing in the morning, and then being good for the rest of the day. For example, in the morning he steals a child, and then builds an orphan asylum. Richard enters, and to pay off his score against Robin, he reveals his secret to Despard, who is overjoyed to learn that he is not the real heir, but that his elder brother is still living.

10a They determine to act without delay, for Rose and Robin, with the Bridesmaids,
10b have entered for the wedding ceremony. A lovely Madrigal is sung, followed by a
11 Gavotte, and the procession is about to start for the church, when Despard enters,
12 and challenges Robin, claiming him as his elder brother Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, rightful heir to the Baronetcy of Ruddigore. He cannot deny the fact, and Rose, in
13 spite of Richard's renewed blandishments, forsakes him, and offers herself to Despard. This offer is refused, for Despard, once again virtuous, keeps his vow to Margaret. Rose returns to Richard, and Robin, now the "Bad Baronet," falls senseless to the ground.

ACT II.

The scene changes to the Picture Gallery in Ruddigore Castle. Round the walls are full-length portraits of the Baronets of Ruddigore from the times of James I—the first being that of Sir Rupert, alluded to in the legend ; the last, that of the latest deceased Baronet, Sir Roderic.

Sir Ruthven and Adam enter melodramatically. They are greatly altered, Sir
14a Ruthven looking haggard and guilty, and Adam filling the part of steward to such a wicked man. They hate the life, but there is no help for it, and they are trying to think of new crimes to commit. Adam suggests that as Richard has come to the Castle with Rose Maybud to ask for Sir Ruthven's consent to their marriage, a really excellent crime would be to "poison their beer !" This is too much for Sir Ruthven, who has not yet reached the requisite state of "badness."

Track/Side 15

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Track/Side 16

Cc4699-2

Track/Side 13

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Track/Side 14

Cc4746-2

Record Reference

14b Rose and Richard enter happily, and Sir Ruthven, thinking he has her in his power, threatens to immune her in a dungeon, and calls for assistance. He is foiled by Richard, who produces a small Union Jack, which even a "Bad Baronet"

15a cannot defy. Rose pleads with Sir Ruthven, who yields to her entreaties, gives his consent and allows them to leave unmolested.

The scene darkens, and when it becomes lighter, the Pictures are seen to have

15b become animated. A soft chorus of men's voices is heard, and the ghosts of the ancestors step from their frames and march round, the last to descend being Sir Roderic.

They reproach Sir Ruthven for having failed to fulfil the curse, and Sir Roderic

16a sings an eerie song, "The Ghosts' High-noon." Sir Ruthven realises who they are and makes many weak excuses. For instance, he committed no crime on Monday, because it was a Bank Holiday. On Tuesday, he made a false Income Tax return, on Wednesday he forged his own Will, and so on. These do not satisfy the ghosts, who after giving him a taste of the torture which will follow if he fail to commit some real crimes, allow him one more chance, and command him to carry off a

16b lady at once.

Sir Ruthven yields, and the ghosts, having made him pardon them ("for having agonized him so"), return to their frames. The low, soft chorus is heard again, and the Gallery assumes its normal aspect.

Adam enters, and Sir Ruthven bids him go to the village and carry off a maiden.

17a Despard and Margaret now appear. They, too, are changed, both being dressed in sober garments of a formal cut. They run a National School, and Margaret is a District Visitor. They have come to urge Sir Ruthven to abandon his wild courses. Despard points out that although Sir Ruthven has only been a Bad Baronet for a week, he is responsible, in the eyes of the law, for all the crimes

17b committed by him, Despard, during the past ten years. This so appals Sir Ruthven that he determines to reform and take the consequences.

Meanwhile Adam has returned, bringing with him Dame Hannah, who seizes the sword from a suit of armour on the wall, and makes for Sir Ruthven. He, in an agony of terror, invokes the aid of his uncle, Sir Roderic, who once again steps from his picture.

He and Hannah, who it will be remembered were lovers before his death, ten years

18a before, recognise each other. Sir Ruthven is ordered by his uncle to leave them together. Hannah sings of her old love for him and bursts into tears, but at this moment Sir Ruthven rushes in excitedly, followed by all the other characters and the chorus of Bridesmaids. An idea has occurred to him. Since a Baronet of Ruddigore can only die through refusing to commit a daily crime, the refusal is tantamount to suicide. But suicide being itself a crime, Sir Roderic ought never to have died.

18b This is all very satisfactory; Rose returns to her first love, Sir Ruthven, and Richard has to take Zorah, the chief Bridesmaid, and the opera ends with a joyful chorus.

V. S. H.

Track/Side 1

Cc4624-2

Track/Side 2

Cc4627-4

Track/Side 11

Cc4625-3

Track/Side 12

Cc4695-1

Track/Side 9

Cc4748-3

Track/Side 10

Cc4628-2

Track/Side 3

Cc4626-2

Track/Side 4

Cc4744-1

Track/Side 5

Cc4629-1

Track/Side 6

Cc4745-2

Track/Side 7

Cc4747-2

Track/Side 8

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