

Robin Hood and The Singing Nun

by
Stuart Arden

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Cast (5M, 5F, 16 either)

Robin Hood	M	190	Principal Boy
Will Scarlet	M/F	132	Merry troubadour
Friar Tuck	M	30	Merry cleric
Little John	M/F	26	Merry man
Big John	M/F	7	Young outlaw
Sparrow	M/F	16	Young outlaw
Finch	M/F	10	Young outlaw
Old Mother Wise	F	40	An old mother
Hazel	F	21	An old mother's daughter
Mother Mathilda	F	24	Superior nun
Sister Maria	M	15	Nun with a beard (King Richard in disguise)
Maid Marian	F	53	Heroine
Sheriff of Nottingham	M	160	Arch-villain
Prince John	M	71	Villain and usurper
Sheriff's Mother	M/F	46	Dame (male would be in drag)
Norman	M/F	60	Sheriff's gopher
Herald	M/F	13	Non-commissioned officer
Nelly	M/F	0	Horse (two performers or one with a stick horse)
Soldiers 1 to 4	M/F	28	The speaking parts of Sheriff's retinue (total lines)
Countess Belinda	F	46	High-spirited, frisky lady
Blondel	M/F	29	King Richard's minstrel
Prisoner	M/F	7	Doing a stretch in the dungeon
Choruses of nuns and soldiers			

Act 1

Scene 1: The Greenwood

(A sparse woodland scene, with a large bush at the back of the stage, suitable for hiding behind. There are a couple of trees (at one side or at the back) which must be easily moveable.)

Song 1: Robin Hood (Chorus, with solo lines)

Listen to our singing, Hear the echoes ringing
As we tell of England's glory
Championing the lesser, Fighting the oppressor
Who is the hero of our story?

Robin Hood – As the songs and stories told
Robin Hood – He is valiant and bold
Robin Hood – There are deeds astounding in the tales surrounding Robin Hood

Robin Hood – Greatest archer in the land
Robin Hood – When his foes are close at hand
Robin Hood – He will chill their marrows with a hail of arrows, Robin Hood

(The next section is sung as a series of solos, half a line or one line per person)

Throughout all the Middle Ages and the rest of history's pages
From the writing of the sages and the sorcerers and mages
As they listened to the rages of the men who paid their wages
Their opinion at this stage is that the hero who engages
With our idea of what's right is Robin Hood

Robin Hood – He will set the people free
Robin Hood – All the common folk agree
Robin Hood – To their humble station, bringing liberation, Robin Hood

Robin Hood

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

List - en to our sing - ing

6

hear the ech - oes ring - ing as we tell of Eng - land's glo - ry Cham - pion - ing the les - ser

10

Fight - ing the op - pres - sor, Who is the he - ro of our sto - ry? Rob - in Hood, Hood, Hood, As the Great - est He will

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songs and sto - ries told Rob - in Hood, He is val - i - ant and bold Rob - in Hood, There are arch - er in the land, Rob - in Hood, When his foes are close at hand, Rob - in Hood, He will set the peo - ple free, Rob - in Hood, All the com - mon folk a - gree, Rob - in Hood, To their

2 18

To Coda

deeds as-tound-ing in the tales sur-round-ing Rob-in Hood. Rob-in Hood. Through-out
 chill their mar-rows with a hail of ar-rows Rob-in Hood. Rob-in Hood. Through-out
 hum-ble sta-tion bring-ing lib-er-a-tion, Rob-in Hood. Rob-in Hood. Through-out

22

all the mid-dle ag-es and the rest of hist'-ry's pag-es From the writ-ings of the sag-es and the sor-cer-ers and mag-es as they

26

list-ened to the rag-es of the men who paid their wag-es their o-pin-ion at this stage is that the

29

D.S. al Coda CODA

he-ro who en-gag-es with our i-dea of what's right is Rob-in Hood! Rob-in Hood

(The Chorus departs, leaving Robin and Will.)

Robin Here we are Will, on the edge of old Sherwood Forest. You know, it feels really good to be back on the old home ground!

Will Well, actually, Robin, I've had enough of being on the ground – especially at night. There's always something sharp protruding into a sensitive area

Robin You should have unbuckled your sword

Will Well, now you tell me! Then there's the way the sand rubs the skin of your cheeks

Robin I told you, you ought to sleep with your cloak under your head

Will I did. That's how I managed to expose my cheeks. Anyway, all those months of camping made me sore all over.

Robin I thought you liked camping

Will Camping's all right – it's the ground I can't stand

Robin You're right. It will be wonderful to get back into a feather bed

Will Personally, I want to jump into a hot bath and rub ointment on my chaps

Robin Anyway, it's wonderful to be back in the woodlands. The gnarled old oaks, the majestic beeches,

Will The smouldering ashes

Robin What?

Will Someone's been burning the trees

Robin And the houses too – there used to be a cottage there – it looks like it's been burned to the ground

(Throughout the next section, the young outlaws (Big John, Sparrow, Finch) appear and disappear behind the bush towards the rear of the stage.)

Will Here, Robin, do you get the feeling we're being watched

Robin What, out there, you mean? No need to worry about them. Just a few creatures from Dartmouth Woods, Foulk Woods and the like.

Will No, I meant back there. I'm sure I saw something move

Robin Are you certain? I didn't see anything.

Will Did you see anything back there?

Audience Yes

Robin No, there's nothing there.

Will **(encouraging the audience to join in.)** Oh yes, there is

Robin Oh no, there isn't

Will Oh yes, there is

Robin Oh no, there isn't

Will I saw something move

Robin Back there? Behind the bacon tree?

Will Yes. You go that way, and I'll go this.

(Robin and Will approach the bush stealthily from either side; as they are about to go out of sight, they stop and retreat, raising their hands, at arrow/sword point as the young outlaws come out of hiding.)

Will That wasn't a bacon tree, that was a ham bush!

Robin Might we know who is holding us at sword point?

Sparrow We're outlaws!

Finch We're brave and bold and brash and brawny –

Will – And not very tall.

Big John Size doesn't matter

Will Ooh, I think we'd better put that to a vote. Those of you who think that size matters –

Finch Stop that! We're not going to be divided by diversionary distractions!

Will Well, that's a shame, I was just beginning to enjoy myself. Are you sure I can't distract you?

Finch No, we're dangerous desperadoes.

Sparrow And I'm the famous Robin Hood!

Finch That's not fair. You said I could be Robin Hood

Sparrow No that was earlier on. It's my turn now. You can be Nigel the Nasty

Finch Oh all right then. I'm Nigel the Nasty.

Sparrow (**Indicating the smallest of the Young Outlaws**) And this is Big John

Will Well ...

Big John And less of your sizeist nonsense

(The Outlaws swagger forward to face the audience, and launch into their song. During the song the Merry Men slowly drift onstage to watch. All should be onstage in time to sing the final refrain.)

Song 1A: *We are outlaws three (Outlaws, with Merry Men)*

(Music: "We are warriors three" from Princess Ida)

We are outlaws three,
brave and brash and bold,
Famous outlaws we, rich in plundered gold.

Yes, yes, yes, rich in plundered gold.

Politics we bar,
That is not our bent;
On the whole we are
Not intelligent.

No, no, no, not intelligent.

But with doughty heart,
And with trusty blade
We can play our part –
Fighting is our trade.

Yes, yes, yes, fighting is our trade.

Desperadoes tough, ha! ha!
For a brawl we burn,
Though the battle's tough, ha! ha!
We have no concern.
Order comes to fight, ha! ha!
Order is obeyed,
We are men of might, ha! ha!
Fighting is our trade.
Yes, yes, yes,
Fighting is our trade, ha! ha!

MERRY MEN:
Desperadoes tough, ha! ha!
Fighting is their trade.
Order comes to fight, ha! ha!
Order is obeyed!
Fighting is their trade.

(General reverie and waving around of weapons)

(Old Mother Wise enters, followed by Hazel)

Old Mother Wise Spare a crust for an old woman down on her luck?

Robin A crust? Good heavens, what is the world coming to when. ... Surely, don't I recognise you?
Will, this is Old Mother Wise!

Will Well, who'd have thought it?

Old Mother Wise Should I know you, good masters?

Robin Of course you should, Old Mother Wise, it's me, Robin, and this is Will Scarlet. I met him when I went crusading.

Old Mother Wise Robin Hood? They told me you were dead!

Robin Oh no, I've just been abroad.

Old Mother Wise Same thing, really.

Robin No it isn't. We've been to the crusades, fighting the Dervishes

Will Saracens

Robin Turks

Will Big men with long, hard, bent –

Robin Scimitars?

Will Those too. The Turkish dragoons were the worst, but I quite liked their baths

Hazel Are you Robin Hood?

Sparrow No, I'm Robin Hood!

Robin No that was earlier. It's my turn now.

Hazel Are you really Robin Hood? I've heard such a lot about you

Robin You have? Who are you?

Old Mother Wise This is my youngest daughter, Hazel

Robin Really? Good morning to you, Hazel Wise! Last time I saw you, you were this high! **(He indicates several inches above Hazel's current height.)**

Old Mother Wise Well, it's hardly surprising. We're close to starving. Since all the good men went away, the country's gone to rack and pinion.

Robin It will all be put to rights now that King Richard's back

Old Mother Wise Oh, has he come back then?

Robin Haven't you heard about him?. He set off for England months before we did.

Will We were expecting him to be here ahead of us – he said he was heading for Nottingham, that's why I came with Robin.

Robin Come to think of it, we haven't heard anything of him since we landed in England.

Old Mother Wise Well, it seems like he never made it. Things started to go bad when he left that brother of his on the, on the, ...

Robin John?

Old Mother Wise No, not on the John! On the throne

Will Same thing

Robin I meant Prince John

Old Mother Wise Yes, him – though he's prancing around like he was King John now. It's him that let the kingdom go down the hatch. It was him that made Gregory the Greedy Sheriff of Nottingham

Robin Gregory? Sheriff? But he's a megalomaniac!

Old Mother Wise Well who else was there after you all went off to fight the Turkish delight? You left him behind to be spoiled rotten by his mother.

Robin Oh well. I suppose I'll just have to march over to Nottingham Castle and throw him out. What do you say to that, my Merry Men?

(The Young Outlaws indicate amongst themselves that they are the sort of decent folk who throw sheriffs out. Such as: We'll help. Count on us. I can defeat someone half my size.)

Song 1B: *When evil takes the throne (Merry Men and Outlaws)*

(Music: "When anger spreads his wing" from Princess Ida)

When evil takes the throne,
And all seems dark as night for it,
There's nothing but to fight for it,
But ere you pitch your ring,
Select a pretty site for it,
(This spot is suited quite for it,)
And then you gaily sing,

"Oh I love the jolly rattle
Of an ordeal by battle,
There's an end of tittle-tattle,
When your enemy is dead.
It's an arrant molly-coddle
Fears a crack upon his noddle
And he's only fit to swaddle
In a downy feather-bed!

ENSEMBLE.

GIRLS.

For a fight's a kind of thing
That I love to look upon,
So let us sing,
Long live the King,
And Robin Hood, as well!

MEN.

Oh, I love the jolly rattle, etc.

(Old Mother Wise endeavors to get the attention of Robin and Will.)

Old Mother Wise You and whose army will be storming Nottingham Castle?

Robin Whatever do you mean? Why should I need an army?

Old Mother Wise He's got all the Normans on his side – all of them that were left behind when you went off on your crusade.

Robin But surely we can rouse a few decent folk and just throw them out.

Old Mother Wise All the decent folk have been driven away. It's all Gregory's doing. He sends those Normans round to gather taxes. Those that don't pay their share get dragged down to the stocks.

Will Well, there's always a risk with stocks and even bonds.

Old Mother Wise It's pay up or rough-up. My husband wouldn't pay and the sheriff's men beat him till he was black and Decker

Robin But I've got to get back to Nottingham to find Marian.

Old Mother Wise Marian?

Will Who is this Marian?

Robin The most beautiful girl in the whole of Nottingham!

Will Oh, is that all.

Robin Do you know what has become of her?

Old Mother Wise Of course! It was the scandal of Sherwood! The moment you left, Gregory was after her. Couldn't wait to get his hands on her enormous –

Will Her enormous what?

Robin She had an enormous fortune.

Will Oh, so he wanted to dip his digits in her dowry.

Old Mother Wise Of course she was having none of it. At first she gave him a regular ear bashing

Robin That sounds like Marian

Old Mother Wise But Gregory chased her all around the town. Wouldn't take no for an answer. And finally, she made up her mind

Robin She didn't – I mean, she couldn't have

Old Mother Wise Yes she did

Robin With Gregory?

Old Mother Wise Of course not with Gregory! He wasn't allowed in!

Robin Not allowed in? What are we talking about?

Old Mother Wise The Little Sisters of the Inquisitive!

Robin You can't possibly mean it?

Will Mean what? Who are these Little Sisters?

Robin She means that Marian's become a nun!

Will Well, who'd have thought it. Why are they called the Little Sisters of the Inquisitive? I've never heard of them before.

Robin Oh, they're a local order. I used to know Mother Mathilda Meddlesome, their Mother Superior. They have the option of taking a vow of silence or a vow of questioning.

Will A vow of questioning?

(During the latter part of Robin's next speech, there is a clip clop sound offstage, then Soldier 1 enters, making the noise on coconut shells. The moment he appears, the outlaws, Hazel and Old Mother Wise run off and hide.)

Robin Yes, if they take that vow, everything they say has to be a question. And now Marian has joined them. Oh why did I ever join the crusades, Will? This is terrible. There's trouble in Nottingham, Marian's become a nun and even this chap seems to have lost his horse!

Soldier 1 (looking around, puzzled) That's funny. I had it a moment ago.

Will Well, things do seem to get lost around here. A moment ago, we were surrounded by fierce outlaws.

Soldier 1 What? Here? Who were they?

Will Well, their leader called himself Robin Hood.

Soldier 1 Perhaps he took my horse.

Will I shouldn't think so for a minute.

Soldier 1 But if he didn't take it, where is it?

(A horse's head appears at the edge of the stage.)

Robin No idea. Perhaps you'd better ask the locals if they've seen it. Come on, Will.

(Robin and Will retire to the back of the stage and lean against the trees or sit on a stump. Meanwhile the Norman addresses the audience.)

Soldier 1 Have you seen my horse?

(The horse, with a pack on its back, enters.)

Soldier 1 Where is it?

(The horse exits, back the way it came.)

Soldier 1 Where?

Audience *(All manner of nonsense)*

Soldier 1 It's not there now. If you see it again, give me a shout. Perhaps it's gone over here.

(Whilst Soldier 1 crosses to the far side of the stage, the horse enters again and walks across at the back, watching Soldier 1/the audience. Robin steps forward and the horse walks into him. Startled, it takes a few steps back and walks into Will.)

Will **(Looking at the rear end of the horse)** You know, I'm sure this looks familiar.

Robin I take it this is your horse?

Soldier 1 You take it correctly.

Will Well it's your turn to take it now – and this time keep hold of the reins.

Soldier 1 Right, and I'll tell the Sheriff of Nottingham that an outlaw called Robin Hood is on the loose, stealing horses.

(Soldier 1 exits, playing the coconuts and leading the horse.)

Robin Will, I think you just got me into trouble.

Will Chance would be a fine thing.

(The young outlaws, Hazel and Old Mother Wise creep out.)

Hazel Has s/he gone?

Robin Yes, but why did you all run away?

Old Mother Wise That was one of them Normans!

Robin What, one of the Sheriff's forces?

Sparrow That's right. S/He burned our house down.

Finch S/He burned our house down too.

Sparrow My house burned faster than your house.

Finch No it didn't

Sparrow Yes it did

Finch Well mine burned first!

(Enter Tuck, looking agitated and breathing heavily.)

Robin Good morrow, good brother. What ails thee?

Tuck Woe and forsooth, for verily I am undone!

Will Well, do yourself up again before you catch a chill.

Tuck I have been stripped of all my worldly goods

Robin You've been robbed? Who by?

Tuck By the look of the villain, s/he was a Norman

Robin These worldly goods you were stripped of didn't by any chance include a horse did they?

Tuck Verily. A fine horse and matching coconuts.

Robin Will, pass me an arrow

Will Ooh, I'm all a quiver

Tuck Where are you going?

Will Robin's going to look for a stripper

(Robin & Will exit.)

Old Mother Wise Spare a crust for an old woman down on her luck?

Tuck Alas, Madam, I have not a single crust. As I said, all my worldly goods were stolen with my horse.

Old Mother Wise I know that. I was just practising. Do you have business in these parts

Tuck Verily, I was on a mission to Nottingham priory

Old Mother Wise Oh, so you had a prior engagement

(Enter Will, leading the horse.)

Will Well, that was easy, Robin just put a warning shot into his nuts

(Enter Robin, carrying two coconut halves, one of which has an arrow stuck in it)

Will Then asked the man and the horse if they still wanted to go to Nottingham, yay or nay. Of course the man said "yay."

Big John What did the horse say?

All Neigh!

(Robin pulls out the arrow and gives the coconut shells to Tuck.)

Robin There. I assume the rest of your worldly goods are in the saddle bag?

Tuck Blessings upon you kind sirs, for the return of this noble beast. **(Opening the saddle bag).** Verily, here we are. **(He pulls a clear baggie with one sandwich)**

Will That's all your worldly goods? A cheese sandwich with the crusts cut off?

Tuck Oh yes. I always cut the crusts off.

Will Whatever for?

Tuck To give to old women down on their luck. **(He picks a crust and hands it to Old Mother Wise.)**

Robin Where are you heading, good brother?

Tuck I was bound for Nottingham, but after this, I don't think I shall find a welcome there.

Robin You might as well stick with us. We're not welcome in Nottingham either.

Will That's right. Robin's thinking of setting up a camp in the forest

Robin We're going to rally the foresters to fight back

Tuck Verily, brethren, I should be happy to join thee, but how can I be of assistance?

Robin You can be our spiritual advisor.

(A sound of nuns chanting can be heard offstage, possibly "bibo ergo sum")

Will Sounds like someone else is coming.

Sparrow Should we get under cover? It might be more of the Sheriff's forces.

Robin No, I think it's a group of innocent women. Yes, here they come.

(A group of nuns enters, singing.)

Song 2: *Hearing the Heavenly Choir (Nuns)*

I'm on my way to heaven, I shall see my lord
 I'm on my way to heaven, Spread the news abroad
 And when I get to heaven I shall hear the angels sing
 And the music will sound like this

Seek information, open every door
We have to seek – our vocation is to find out more
We've heard the word on high which makes us wonder "why?"
We have to seek, join us and explore

Ask – Thirst for knowledge, question every word
We have to ask. Join our college, this we have averred
We all have made a vow to keep on asking "how?"
We have to ask, tell us what you've heard

Curiosity – nosiness to you and me,
Our philosophy: knowledge will inspire
Query everything – share the joy of questioning,
News is uplifting, hearing the heavenly choir (ooh!)

Search – look for learning, ignorance unmask
We have to search, keep on yearning, query is our task
We know there's truth out there: We need to question "where?"
We have to search, that is why we ask.

Hearing the Heavenly Choir

Music and Lyrics by Stuart Ardern

Vocal

I'm on my way to heav - en, I shall see my lord, I'm on my way to

Piano

10

heav - en, Spread the news a - broad, And when I get to heav en I shall hear the an - gels sing — And the

18

mus - ic will sound like this — Seek in - for - ma - tion Op - en ev' - ry
Ask, thirst for know - ledge, Ques - tion ev' - ry
Search, look for learn - ing, Ig - no - rance un -

25

door We have to seek, Our vo - ca - tion is to find out more We've heard the words on high Which
word, We have to ask, Join our col - lege, this we have av - erred We all have made a vow, To
mask, We have to search, Keep on yearn ing Quer - y is our task, We know there's truth out there, We

32 **To Coda** 1.

make us won - der why — We have to seek, Join us and ex - plore. —
 keep on ask - ing how — We have to ask, Tell us what you've
 need to ques - tion where — We have to search, That is why we

39 2.

heard Cur - i - ous - i - ty, Nos - i - ness to you and me, Our phi - lo - so - phy:

47

Know ledge will in - spire, Que - ry ev' - ry thing Share the joy of ques tion - ing

53 **D.S. al Coda CODA**

News is up - lift - ing Hear - ing the heav en - ly choir (Ooh!) ask —

Robin Good day to you, sisters, what brings you out on this dusty road?

Mathilda Have you not heard of our annual pilgrimage to the beaches called Bethany and Rehoboth?

Robin Oh yes, you go there each year as a penance! Friends, this is Mother Mathilda Meddlesome and the Little Sisters of the Inquisitive.

Will The ones with the vow of questioning?

Mathilda Robin Hood? Are you back from the crusades?

Robin I am indeed

Mathilda Have you met sister Maria? **(She points to a nun with a beard, with a different habit.)**

Robin No, I would have remembered.

Maria Hullo!

Will Maria?

Tuck Maria?

Will I just met a nun called Maria. And suddenly that name will never be the same ...

Mathilda Do you see that her appearance is different from ours?

Robin It's a bit hard to miss!

Mathilda So you can tell from her habit that she belongs to another order?

Robin Completely the wrong order, I should say

Maria I don't remember which order I belong to. I've lost my thingamajig.

Will Razor?

Maria No, I don't think so.

Tuck Memory?

Maria Yeah, that's the one.

Robin Well, she's definitely not one of your order.

Mathilda How can you tell?

Robin She hasn't taken the vow of silence or the vow of questioning. Did you find Sister Maria in this state?

Mathilda How did you guess?

Robin A strange intuition. What about the rest?

Mathilda Didn't I introduce you to ...

Marian (Dressed as a nun, coming forward through the group.) Why did you come back, Robin Hood?

Robin Marian!

Marian Or, rather, why didn't you come back earlier?

Robin But ...

Marian I mean, was there really any need to go away in the first place?

Robin Ah, I see you haven't chosen the vow of silence

Marian Robin Hood, have you any idea what it's like being a nun?

Robin No. But I have a feeling you're going to keep asking me until I have a pretty good idea

Song 3: Why Did You Do it, Robin Hood? (Marian & Nuns)

When I was just a foolish girl, I really fell for you
 You courted me and won my heart, but then what did you do?
 You went away crusading and you left me where I stood
 Why did you do it, Robin Hood?

Chorus Why did you do it? Why did you do it?
 Why did you do it Robin Hood?

“Just wait till I get back,” you said; why did you let me down?
For then the sheriff came for me, and chased me round the town
And how could I defend myself when you seemed gone for good
Why did you do it, Robin Hood?

To thwart the sheriff’s blandishments I had to take the veil
I had to save my virtue from that horrid rampant male
But when I’d joined the convent you came right back to Sherwood
Why did you do it, Robin Hood?

Why Did You Do It?

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

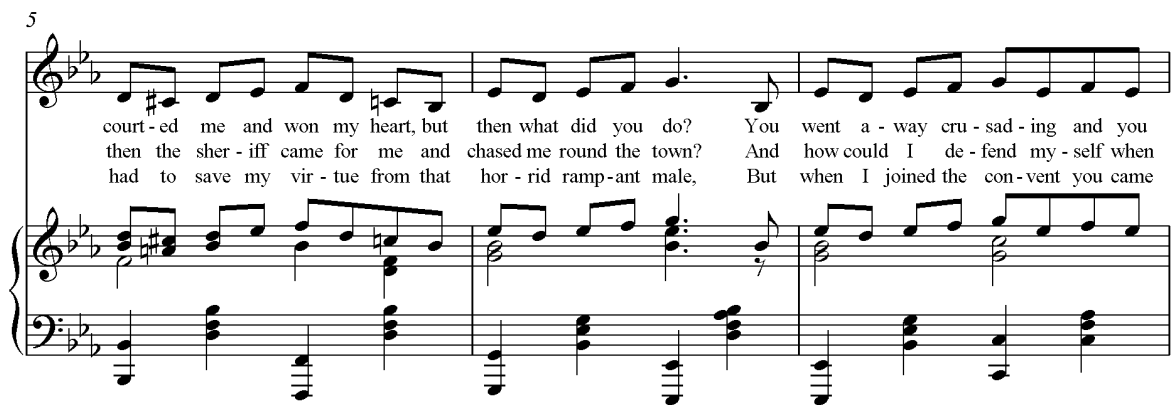
Vocal



When I was just a fool-ish girl, I real-ly fell for you, You wait till I get back, you said, Why did you let me donw? For thwart the sher-iff's bland-ish-ments I had to take the veil, I

Piano

5



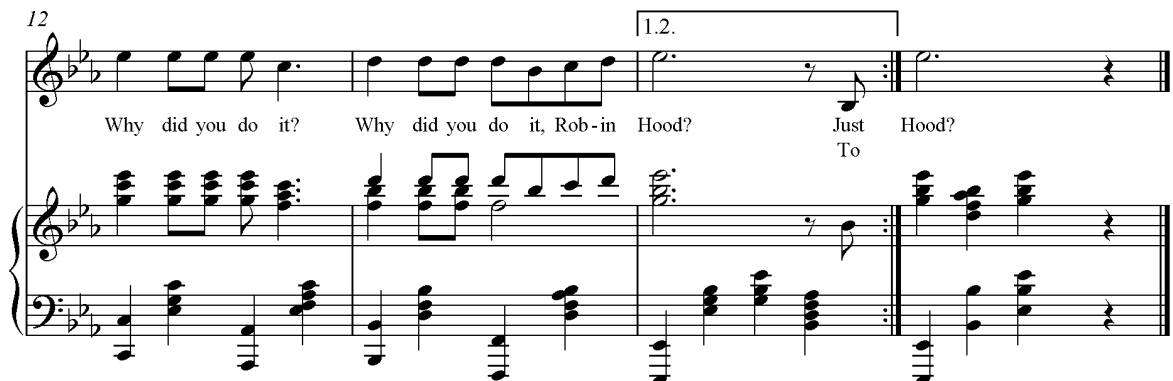
court-ed me and won my heart, but then what did you do? You went a - way cru - sad - ing and you then the sher - iff came for me and chased me round the town? And how could I de - fend my - self when had to save my vir - tue from that hor - rid ramp - ant male, But when I joined the con - vent you came

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left me where I stood Why did you do it Rob-in Hood? Why did you do it? you seemed gone for good? Why did you do it, Rob-in Hood? right back to Sher-wood, Why did you do it, Rob-in Hood?

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Why did you do it? Why did you do it, Rob-in Hood? Just Hood? To

(Marian backs Robin off the stage)

Mathilda I don't believe I've had the pleasure?

Will That's because you're a nun. By the way, that Sister Maria ...

Mathilda Isn't she a sweet little thing?

Will Sweet? But she's got a beard

Mathilda What makes you think that's unusual in a convent?

Will None of the other nuns have beards

Mathilda Have you looked at them closely?

Will But sister Maria's not like them. I mean, she must have some funny habits

Mathilda Aren't nuns supposed to have habits?

Will I mean, does she have any odd behaviour patterns?

Mathilda Are you good at solving problems? Can you explain why she leaves the toilet seat upright?

Will I don't know. How do you solve a problem like Maria?

(Marian enters, followed by Robin.)

Marian Mother Superior, may I have a word with you?

Mathilda What troubles you, my child?

Marian Are you aware that there are orphans here?

Mathilda Why does that concern you?

Marian Did you know that they have nobody to look after them?

Mathilda Do you want to act as their surrogate mother?

Marian Don't you think that children need to be educated?

Mathilda Do you have a vocation to become a teacher?

Marian Would I be permitted to suspend the vow of questioning when dealing with the children?

Mathilda Will your conscience allow it?

Marian Would the order have me back when their education is complete?

Mathilda Would we be able to stop you?

Will Well, I think we'd better call that a yes, or we might be here all night.

Old Mother Wise Yes, I'm tired out. I really need my forty thieves.

Robin Right, it's time we set up our camp. Come on, let's get away from the road.

Blackout/curtain

Scene 2: Nottingham Castle

(A simple castle interior, hung with faded tapestries.)

(The Sheriff and Norman are on stage. The herald and other soldiers may be standing to the sides.)

Sheriff Have the peasants got any money?

Norman Yeah, I suppose so, m'lord. A little

Sheriff Then go round to their houses and take it off them!

Norman All of it, m'lord?

Sheriff All of it! What use is it if they've got it?

Norman They can spend it.

Sheriff Spend it! What good is that to me?

Norman Well, m'lord, have you heard of how the Laffer Curve will make Nottingham great again and how lower taxes have the indirect benefit of stimulating the local economy?

Sheriff Indirect benefit? I don't want indirect benefits. I want money. I want it now. What are you waiting for? Go and get it!

Norman What? Right away, like?

Sheriff Listen, Norman, if we don't have money, where is our next banquet going to come from?

Norman The soil?

Sheriff A few choice vegetables, perhaps, but there is not a lot of meat in the soil.

Norman I don't know. What about the worms?

Sheriff What about them?

Norman Worms are very nutritious

Sheriff Norman, any minute now, the most important person in the land is going to walk through that door. If I haven't got a sumptuous feast prepared, entirely devoid of worms, do you know what he'll say?

(The Dame enters behind the Sheriff.)

Dame How's mummy's little boy today?

Sheriff No. I wasn't thinking of that. My thoughts were more towards a slow process involving high temperatures, sharpened domestic implements and sensitive body parts. Normally, I'm inclined towards the more authoritarian forms of government, but when my death is in prospect, especially a slow death, I get much more democratic and I tend to spread it as widely as possible. Do I make myself clear? **(Shouting and stamping.)** Get me the peasants' money now!

Norman Yes m'lord.

(Norman exits.)

Dame Temper, temper

Sheriff Please don't interfere in the running of the castle, mother, or I shall be forced to put you in the stocks again, and you know how much you hate that.

Dame It's the cabbages. I'm always telling you to eat up your greens like a good little boy, and what do you do? You hide them in the nasty old dungeons and bring them out to throw at the poor people in the stocks. Such a waste of a nice cabbage – and they're so full of vitamins. The red ones are the worst when you're on the receiving end of a full toss. Savoy aren't so bad –

Sheriff – Mother! I am preoccupied with affairs of state. I do not have time for a lecture on the comparative merits of ballistic vegetables!

Dame Oh, now then, no need to get all in a tizzy. Is it time you had a little nap?

Sheriff Mother, I am the Lord High Sheriff of the county of Nottingham.

Dame Even big sheriffs need a nap now and again

Sheriff Mother, I am just about to receive a visit from the reigning monarch of this petty little kingdom. I do not need a nap!

Dame King Richard? King Richard's coming here? Mummy's little boy is going to meet King Richard! Isn't that a treat. But we must look tidy for meeting the king, mustn't we? **(She starts to straighten the sheriff's clothes)**

Sheriff Not Richard, John. John is the de facto ruler of England

Dame Oh no he isn't

Sheriff Oh yes he is

Dame **(Encouraging the audience to join in)** Oh no he isn't

Sheriff Oh yes he is

Dame Oh no he isn't

Sheriff Hold on a minute **(He counts the audience)**. Is there a greengrocer in the house?

Dame Why does mummy's little boy need a silly old greengrocer?

Sheriff When I put this lot in the stocks we're going to need an awful lot of cabbages. Now listen, mother, this is politics. King Richard has disappeared. Prince John is in an ideal position to usurp the throne, and I am his trusted counsellor. Do you know what that means?

Dame You're going to spend lots of happy play time with your big friend John!

Sheriff It means that I am going to become one of the most powerful people in the kingdom, which in turn means I'm going to become immensely rich.

Dame Oh what a clever boy he is.

Song 4: *G. O. L. D. Gold (Sheriff, Dame, Herald & Soldiers)*

Gold – Great big piles of it
Gold – Miles and miles of it
G. O. L. D. I adore
L. O. T. S. – get me more
Gold – it's my pleasure quest
Gold – fill my treasure chest
Bronze and silver leave me cold
All I want is gold

Gold – Shiny, never dull
Gold – Fill my coffers full
I'm the sheriff, I pull rank
Put it in my piggy bank
Gold – It's respectable
Gold – It's delectable
I need more to have and hold
All I want is gold

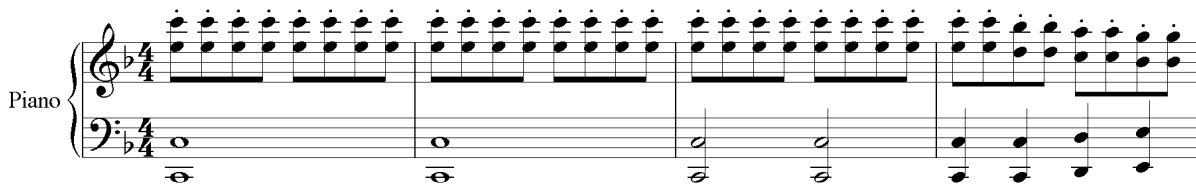
Soldiers gather tax on everything I see
Peasants cower
At my power
They all mean nothing to me

Gold – use technology
Gold – use psychology
Money makes my fingers itch
Bring it here and make me rich
Gold – Go out and proclaim
Gold – I shall stake my claim
Make it large and make it bold
All I want is gold
Fill my pockets with gold

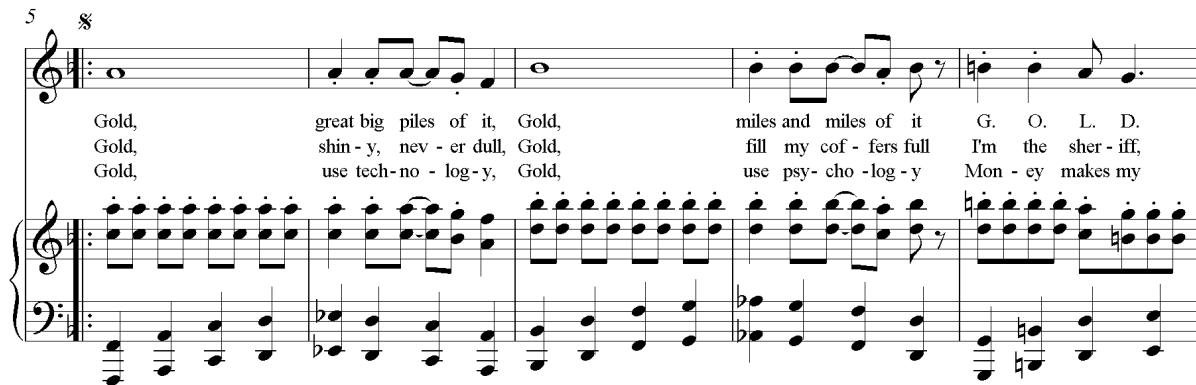
G. O. L. D. - Gold

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

Piano



5



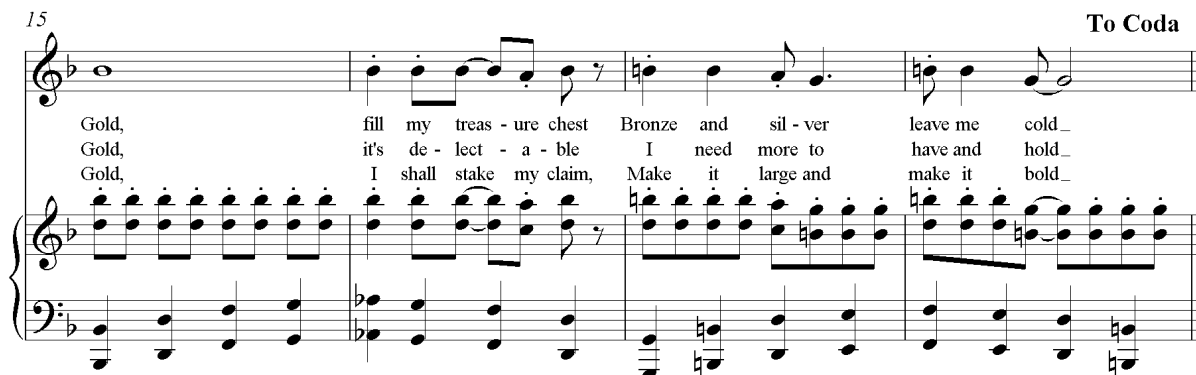
Gold, great big piles of it, Gold, miles and miles of it G. O. L. D.
Gold, shin - y, nev - er dull, Gold, fill my cof - fers full I'm the sher - iff,
Gold, use tech - no - log - y, Gold, use psy - cho - log - y Mon - ey makes my

10



I a - dore_ L. O. T. S. get me more! Gold, It's my plea - sure quest
I pull rank_ Put it in my pig - gy bank! Gold, it's res - pect - a - ble,
fin - gers itch_ Bring it here and make me rich! Gold, go out and_ pro - claim,

15



Gold, fill my treas - ure chest Bronze and sil - ver leave me cold_
Gold, it's de - lect - a - ble I need more to have and hold_
Gold, I shall stake my claim, Make it large and make it bold_

To Coda

2 19

1. 2.

All I want is gold gold Sold - iers gath - er tax on
All I want is

This system contains measures 19 through 23. It features a vocal line with a first and second ending, and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The lyrics are: "All I want is gold gold Sold - iers gath - er tax on" and "All I want is".

24

ev' - ry thing I see — Peas - ants cow - er At my pow - er They all mean noth - ing to

This system contains measures 24 through 28. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "ev' - ry thing I see — Peas - ants cow - er At my pow - er They all mean noth - ing to". The piano accompaniment features triplets in both hands.

29

D.S. al Coda CODA

me All I want is Gold

This system contains measures 29 through 33. It begins with the instruction "D.S. al Coda CODA". The vocal line has the lyrics: "me All I want is Gold". The piano accompaniment consists of chords and a bass line.

34

Fill my pock - ets with Gold

This system contains measures 34 through 38. The vocal line has the lyrics: "Fill my pock - ets with Gold". The piano accompaniment features triplets in the right hand and a bass line.

(A fanfare blows)

Herald Prince John approaches!

Dame **(Getting out a clean handkerchief to wipe a smudge off the sheriff's face)** Now just hold still, we wouldn't want the big prince to think you were a messy little boy, now would we?

Sheriff Mother, give me that handkerchief. **(He snatches the hanky and stuffs it in the Dame's mouth.)**

(Prince John enters.)

Prince Hullo Gregory! Bit of a gloomy old castle you've got here. High time you sent these tapestries to the dry cleaners!

Sheriff Ah, Your Royal Highness, or should I say, Your Majesty!

Prince Now, now, Gregory. You know I can't assume the title of king.

Sheriff Why not, sire? Your brother has disappeared. The field is open. All you have to do is walk in and declare yourself king, and every right-thinking nobleman will back you.

Prince You sure about that, Gregory? I thought kings declared themselves with proclamations in castles and anointment by archbishops, not by walking into open fields.

Sheriff I was being metaphorical, your Majesty.

Prince Really? How do you do that?

Sheriff I'll explain later. When we have a lot of time. Right now we have to work on the proclamation to make you king.

Prince I say, that's all very well, but what if Richard turns up? Can't have a country with two kings, y'know.

Sheriff Then you have two options. If you're competent, and choose your advisors well, you'll make a good job of being king and the nobles will like having you around and they'll back you against Richard, and he'll have to turn tail and run. On the other hand, if you've made a hash of it and embezzled all the treasury, then you can hand the kingdom back to him, in return for a generous pension. You're only taking it while he's missing.

Prince But what – who's this? **(refers to the Dame and her hanky)**

Sheriff Who, sire?

Prince This creature, making the strange gurgling noises!

Sheriff Ah. Well, you see, sire, I'm preparing a banquet in your honour, and naturally there will be entertainers. I make it my duty to check all the acts personally. This is the handkerchief swallower.

Prince Not a very common form of entertainment, Gregory.

Sheriff No sire. And she will not be appearing at the banquet. **(He waves the Dame away. She exits, crossly, confusing storming out with genuflecting to Prince John.)**

Prince Pity. I thought she was rather good. What other entertainment have you got lined up?

Sheriff Well, I suppose we'll have to make do with Norman's bird impressions.

Prince Oh, how jolly! He tweets like a nightingale does he?

Sheriff No. Apparently he eats worms. Now, sire, to return to the subject of your kingdom

Prince But it isn't jolly-well mine yet. And I'm not even sure I'd know what to do with it when I've got it.

Sheriff Well, I'm sure I can help you there, sire. If you agree to take over the kingdom, I'll put you in touch with Pimple, Growbag and Hamperwick.

Prince Who are they?

Sheriff A team of management consultants, sire. I got them to help me identify the strengths and weaknesses of my business approach. They were really helpful

Prince Why, what did they tell you?

Sheriff They said I was a really nasty piece of work

Prince Odd thing to say – I mean, absolutely right, of course, but why did you find that helpful?
Sheriff It helped me focus on the things I'm really good at – like terrorising the peasants and grabbing all their money. Will you usurp the kingdom?
Prince Oh all right then. Where do I find Pimple, Growbag and Hamperwick?
Sheriff They're here at the moment. You'll find them somewhere around the castle.
Prince How will I recognise these management consultants?
Sheriff They're the ones with the pinstriped armour.
(Blackout/Curtain)

Scene 3: The greenwood (Same set as scene 1)

(Hazel, Will, Marian and the young outlaws are on stage. Enter Robin and Little John.)

Hazel Good morning, Robin Hood!
Robin Good morning, Hazel Wise!
Will Ooh, is this another man come to join our band?
Robin That's right. We're assembling the pick of the manhood of Sherwood. We've already recruited Much the Miller
Will He didn't look like much!
Robin And Alan-a-Dale, and this gentleman is John.
Big John Wait a minute. You said I could be called John. We can't have two people called John in the same band of outlaws.
Robin But you're Big John, right?
Big John Right!
Robin So s/he can be Little John.
Little John Doh!
Hazel A deer?
Marian A female deer?
Robin I met Little John on a log bridge. It was too narrow for two to pass, and neither of us would give way
Little John So we had a staff fight to decide the issue.
Will Sounds just like my old school.
Robin In the end, my staff broke and we both fell in the river.
Will That's the trouble, nowadays. You just can't get the staff.
Marian When will you stop chattering and get on with something?
Robin All in good time, Marian. We're planning to hold up the coach to Oxford and relieve Gregory's friends of some of their surplus wealth.
Marian And what are you going to do with it?
Robin Friar Tuck is going to distribute it to the local needy – after all, most of it came from them
Will Yes, where is the fat Friar?
Sparrow In the buffet restaurant down the road.
(The chorus of nuns enters.)
Marian How can I teach the children about singing if you're hanging around?
Robin Well, start at the very beginning – that's a very good place to start.
Sparrow No it isn't. We're fed up with starting at the beginning.
Big John Yeah, the basics are boring
Marian Would you like to show Robin how we practice our scales?

Song 5: Practising our Scales (Marian, Nuns, Big John, Sparrow, Finch)

Nuns: We spend many happy hours
Picking dainty little flowers
Having lots of merry fun and
Skipping through the dales imparting
Basic English education
Teaching is our new vocation
Singing songs and practising our scales

Kids: Scales are boring exercises
We want games with lots of prizes
If we sing then songs about crusades are really cool
We hate sums and we hate writing
We like games with lots of fighting
We want to be outlaws we don't want to be in school

Nuns: Who would ever envy teachers
When you see such horrid creatures
Who will spend much of their future
Filling up the gaols instead of
In our happy little chorus
Stomping like a brontosaurus
Singing songs and practising our scales

Practising Our Scales

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

Flute

Piano

We spend ma-ny hap-py ho - urs
Who would ev - er en - vy teach - ers

4

pick - ing dain - ty lit - tle flow - ers, Hav - ing lots of mer - ry fun and skip - ping through the dales im - part - ing
When you see such hor - rid creat - ures Who will spend much of their fut - ure fil - ling up the goals in - stead of

7

To Coda

ba - sic Eng - lish ed - u - ca - tion, Teach - ing is our new vo - ca - tion Sing - ing songs and prac - tis - ing our
in our hap - py lit - tle chor - us Stomp - ing like a bron - to - saur - us Sing - ing songs and prac - tis - ing our

10

scales Scales are bor - ing ex - er - cis - es, We want games with lots of priz - es

13

1. 2. D.S. al Coda CODA

If we sing then songs a - bout cru - sades are real - ly cool want to be in school scales

(Blackout/Curtain)

Scene 4: In another part of the wood

(Which looks remarkably like the first, except where it's not.)

(Enter Robin, Will, Little John and Tuck.)

Robin Here we are, the Oxford road

Will Are you sure? All parts of this forest look the same to me

Robin No. This is different. The trees are further apart.

Will They look the same to me.

(Two stagehands come on and move the trees further apart, then exit.)

Will Oh, maybe they are further apart.

(Enter Old Mother Wise)

Old Mother Wise Spare a few coppers for an old woman down on her luck?

Robin I think we can manage a few coppers. How about it, lads?

Merry Men 'Ello, Ello, Ello, what's going on 'ere then?

Old Mother Wise Thank you very much, you're a gent **(She exits)**

(Sound of a coach offstage.)

Tuck Verily, here cometh the coach.

Robin Right, here we go. You all know what to do? I'll call you when I'm on the coach.

(Robin exits. Little John exits in the opposite direction. The other outlaws crouch down.)

(Sound of a popular cellphone ring tone as a horn call offstage.)

Will Well, that must be him. **(He raises a speaking trumpet to his mouth) Hello! (He puts the trumpet to his ear. There is a mumble from off the stage.)**

Tuck What sayeth he?

Will He said "I'm on the coach," then something about being on his way.

(Pause, while Will has the trumpet to his ear. Incoherent mumbling from offstage.)

Will I missed that bit **(Into the trumpet:)** I can't hear you, you're breaking up.

(Will pauses again with the trumpet to his ear. Incoherent mumbling from offstage.)

Will **(Shouting into the trumpet)** I said "I can't hear you, you're breaking up." **(Pause, with the trumpet to his ear.)** I've lost him.

(Sound of an arrow flying across the stage and striking a tree offstage at the opposite side to the coach.)

Tuck What madeth that noise?

(Enter Little John carrying an arrow, and unrolling a note from the shaft.)

Will Oh, that was the arrival of a text message.

Tuck What doth it say?

Will **(Holding it up for the audience to see)** It says "W. Eight. Four. M. Y. Sgnl."

Tuck It's gibberish!

Will Well, I think he's trying to say "wait for my signal"

Tuck Why doth he not write properly?

Will Come on, Tuck, you've got to move with the times.

Tuck Verily, if illuminated capitals and iambic pentameters were good enough for our fathers, they ought to be good enough for us

(Horn call offstage or from the band)

Will That's Robin's signal. Charge!

(Will, Tuck & Little John rush offstage. Brief noises of coach crash, horse whinny, etc.)

(Enter Robin, Will, Tuck, Little John, the countess and other prisoners.)

Countess What are you going to do with us?

Robin We're going to take your money, and your jewellery, and then we're going to let you go.

Little John What about their clothing? That looks valuable.

Robin I'd never thought of that. Should we take their clothing?

(Audience reaction)

Will Filthy lot.

Countess Who are you – you daring, dashing, debonair, desperado?

Robin Madam, I am Robin Hood, and these are my merry men.

Will Yes, ever so merry.

Robin And whom do I have the pleasure of robbing?

Countess I am Belinda, Countess of Worcestershire. (*pronounced Woo-ster-sheer*)

Robin Madam Countess, it is a privilege to have the opportunity of relieving you of your discretionary income.

Countess You seem to have the manners of a gentleman

Robin Indeed, madam, I am of noble birth

Countess Then why have you turned to robbery?

Robin In order to deliver the poor people of Sherwood from a cruel tyrant

Countess Oh, what an upstanding man you are! I like a man with firm principles. Are you against tyranny in general or is there a specific tyrant you are trying to overthrow?

Robin We're dealing with the Sheriff of Nottingham!

Countess Oh, marvellous. Such a trying man. Since his chosen concubine was cloistered in a convent, his interest in women has waned. Are you interested in women, Robin the ravishing robber?

Will He's just spent two years crusading, during which he talked and dreamed of little else.

Countess Excellent! Well, seeing as I am no longer travelling to Oxford, would you be willing to offer me lodging?

Robin Madam, our abode is humble, but such as we have, we will be happy to share with you!

(The countess takes Robin's arm and they walk off.)

(Blackout/curtain.)

Optional Song 5A: TBD (Merry Men)

(Music: TBD)

Scene 5: the castle

(Same set as scene 2.)

(Sheriff and Prince John are on stage, Norman is skulking in a corner. The Herald is lurking to one side.)

Sheriff Come here, Norman.

Norman It wasn't me. I didn't do it.

Sheriff And I suppose it wasn't your fault either?

Norman No, definitely not. You can't blame me for it.

Prince What's he talking about, Gregory?

Sheriff I haven't got that deep yet, sire, we're still wallowing in the shallows of unspecific guilt.

Norman I wasn't there!

Sheriff I suppose you were miles away minding –

Norman – minding my own business. Yes.

Sheriff And what would you have done if you had been there?

Norman I'd have stopped it

Sheriff All by yourself? How would you have done that?

Norman I'd have driven the coach the other way.

Sheriff I think we're getting somewhere, sire. We seem to have had a mishap involving a coach. What happened to this coach, Norman?

Norman **(mumbling)** Gt tkn b tlws

Sheriff Speak up, Norman, I seem to have gone a little deaf. What happened to the coach?

Norman It got taken by outlaws, m'lord

Sheriff This coach?

Norman Yes m'lord?

Sheriff It wasn't by any chance the 12:35 to Oxford was it?

Norman Yes m'lord.

Sheriff Which departed at 12:35 yesterday, bearing a large quantity of valuable goods?

Norman Yes m'lord.

Sheriff Including Belinda, the Countess of "Wor-ces-ter-shire"?

Norman Yes, "Belinda, Countess of Woo-ster-sheer", m'lord.

Sheriff "Wor-ces-ter-sheer?", "Woo-ster-shire?", never mind. Now just remind me, Norman. Who did I send along as her body guard?

Norman Me, m'lord.

Sheriff And just where were you when the outlaws took the coach?

Norman Under the seat, m'lord.

Sheriff And I suppose you were still under the seat when the Countess was dragged from the coach by those desperate outlaws.

Sheriff What happened to the coach, Norman?

Norman First of all they dragged it to their camp, and then they towed it away again and gave it to one of the peasants.

Sheriff What would a peasant want with a gilded coach?

Norman He was going to use it as a chicken coop.

Sheriff Why would he want to use a gilded coach as a chicken coop?

Norman You burned his old one down, m'lord.

Prince Steady on, Gregory! That's taking the high spirits a bit far.

Sheriff You have to understand the peasants, sire. They have a tendency towards withholding taxes, which, as you are well aware, is criminal behaviour.

Prince Even so, you can't just go around burning down a chap's chicken coop.

Sheriff It was, I admit sire, a drastic measure.

Prince I hope you're not being too hard on the criminal classes, Gregory!

Sheriff Me sire? No, sire. I practice distraction therapy. You see in order to rehabilitate the criminal classes, you have to distract them from their offending behaviour. If you can take their mind off it, then they stop committing offences.

Prince That sounds very liberal of you, Gregory. What sort of thing do you use to distract them?

Sheriff Well sire, I've made a thorough study of the subject, and I've found that the most effective method of distraction is the administration of intense pain.

Prince Excellent, Gregory. It's good to hear you're taking a thorough approach

Sheriff How did you escape from the outlaws?

Norman I stayed in the coach until it got dark. Then I crawled out.

Sheriff Did anyone see you?

Norman Only the chickens. **(He takes off his helmet and a shower of chicken feathers fall out.)**
Then I walked home.

Sheriff So it happened locally?

Norman Yes, m'lord. In the middle of Sherwood Forest.

Sheriff These outlaws, Norman, are they local men?

Norman I think so, m'lord.

Sheriff Then someone must be organising them. Did they have a leader?

Norman It looks like it, m'lord. The attack on the coach was led by someone called Robin Hood.

Sheriff Robin?

Prince You know this outlaw, Gregory?

Sheriff Sire, he's a desperate vicious thug who will stop at nothing to get his hands on this castle

Prince Why should he particularly want this castle?

Sheriff He's the rightful owner!

Prince Oh dear. Could be a little awkward for you, Gregory, old chap.

Sheriff Not if we make the first move, sire. Norman, I want you to answer this next question very carefully. Think of it as if your life depended on it.

Norman Er, why, m'lord?

Sheriff Because it does. Would you be able to find your way back to the outlaws' camp?

Norman I don't want to go back!

Sheriff That was not the right answer. However, because I am such a generous man, I will give you a second try. Bear in mind this time that the answer is but a single word. The right answer begins with Y and ends with S. Can you find that camp again?

Norman Yes, m'lord.

Sheriff Sire, I think it's about time you reviewed the troops. **(He gestures to the herald.)**

Prince Jolly good, Gregory.

Herald Company, fall in.
(Soldiers march in, some carrying bows, some carrying swords, staffs or pikestaffs. One carries a feather duster. Another has a pair of knickers attached to his staff. The dame enters at the end of the line, dressed as before, but wearing a knight's helmet, with the visor closed.)

Prince Fine looking bunch of men, Gregory

Herald Atten-shun!

Prince What's your name, soldier?

Soldier 1 Norman, sir.

Prince Jolly good. And you, what's your name?

Soldier 2 Norman, sir.

Prince Really? Bit of a coincidence. Why are you carrying a feather duster?

Soldier 2 Regimental standard, sir.

Prince Oh, which regiment?

Soldier 2 The household cavalry.

Prince And what's your name, soldier? as if I didn't know.

Soldier 4 Dee, sir.

Prince Dee? What made you join the Norman army, Dee?

Soldier 4 To complete my destiny to be known as Norman Dee.

(Prince John reaches the end of the line and lifts the dame's visor. Sheriff sees this, rolls his eyes in frustration and exits.)

Prince Good heavens, it's the handkerchief swallower. Have you joined the army, too?

Dame Oh no, sire. I just like to tag along whenever there's a picnic or any other sort of outing to see that he doesn't come to any harm

Prince To see that who doesn't come to any harm?

Dame My little boy. I don't want him and Robin Hood getting into big fights again, the way they did before Robin went off crusading and left my little boy at home.

Prince Which little boy is that?

Dame Dear chubby little Gregory.

Sheriff (Entering carrying a large cabbage). Mother, do you know what this is?

Prince It's a cabbage, Gregory. You really should have known that. Man like you ought to keep in touch with modern agriculture.

Sheriff I was being rhetorical.

Prince You were? You were being metaphorical earlier. At this rate you'll soon be using litotes and hyperbole.

Sheriff Never in a million years, sire. **(Bowing to the dame and formally presenting her with the cabbage.)** Mother, receive this in earnest of other things that shall be given.

Dame But...

Sheriff Shut up, Mother.

(The Sheriff slams the dame's visor shut.)

Sheriff Men, we're going into the beech woods.

Soldier 1 I've been there already.

Sheriff Once more unto the beech, dear friends, once more.

Prince You make it sound like it's going to be a day at the seaside.

Sheriff Sire, I'm trying to make a rousing speech to these men about capturing the outlaws.

Prince Well you're not making a very good job of it, Gregory, getting confused about the rules. Let me have a go. Men, you're going to go into uncharted woods to look for a bunch of heavily armed cutthroats who will probably try to kill you. Now you jolly well go there and tell them what for. Can't have chaps like that hacking our honest soldiers to pieces with two-handed axes and putting their heads on spikes, and I want you to explain that to them in no uncertain terms. I want a full report from any survivors, and I'll make sure there's a hot kettle on for a cup of tea when you get back. Now, let's have a rousing cheer.

Soldier 4 **(spoken, timidly)** Hooray?

Sheriff I think, men, that our future monarch is underestimating your abilities. Let's give him a song to show him what we're made of.

Song 6: *The Sheriff's Guard (Sheriff, Prince & Soldiers)*

(The words in parentheses are sung by the chorus of soldiers.)

Sheriff: Who's tougher than steel (we are)
A manly ideal (we are)
Who's fighting with zeal to get the next meal
Who's making foes squeal (we are)

Sheriff: Who's ready to fight (we are)
Who's high as a kite (we are)
Who's seeing the light, who's getting it right
Who's really quite bright (we are)

Chorus: We're Norman soldiers, we're really hard, We are the nation's finest regiment
The way before us is never barred, We are the sheriff's guard

Prince: **(Spoken)** That's rather good. I think I'll have a go.

Prince: Who's tough as a boot (we are)
Who's ready to shoot (we are)
Who's bald as a coot, who's drunk as a newt
Who's in it for loot (we are)

Who's hard as a nail (we are)
Who's likely to fail (we are)
Who's run off the rail, who's going to jail
Who's looking quite pale (we are)

(Repeat chorus)

The Sheriff's Guard

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

§

Vocal

Wood/Brass

Percussion

Toms

5

Who's tough - er than steel? (We are!) A man - ly i - deal? (We
 fight? (We are!) Who's high as a kite? (We
 Who's tough as a boot? (We are!) Who's rea - dy to shoot? (We
 nail? (We are!) Who's like - ly to fail? (We

10

1.

are!) Who's fight - ing with zeal to get the next meal, Who's mak - ing foessqueal? (We are!) Who's read - y to
 are!) Who's see - ing the light, Who's get - ting it right? Who's real - ly quite bright? (We
 are!) Who's bald as a coot? Who's drunk as a newt? Who's in it for loot? (We are!) Who's hard as a
 are!) Who's run off the rail? Who's go - ing to jail? Who's look - ing quite pale? (We

15 2.

are!) We're Nor-man sol - diers We're real - ly hard We are the na - tion's fin - est

Snare

22

reg - i - ment The way be - fore us is nev - er barred

27 Fine D.S. al Fine

We are the sher - iff's guard

Sheriff Men, Robin Hood has formed a camp in the woods. We are going to ride in and visit him now with a small apocalypse. Saddle up!

Herald To the stables!

Sheriff I love the smell of cavalry in the morning. It smells of ... Victory

Prince I always thought that was horse manure

Scene 6: The greenwood

(Same set as scene 1.)

(Marian and Robin are on stage at one side. At the back, in low light, Tuck is standing facing the audience, with Will to one side. They are surrounded by a crowd of nuns and Young Outlaws, mostly seated, facing Tuck.)

Robin There's a funny stench around here.

Marian Oh, have you met the goatherd?

Robin Goatherd? Why did you bring the goatherd here?

Marian Didn't you know he was lonely?

Robin Look I've told you before. I am not having a goat in this camp.

Marian Didn't you say the children should have a nanny?

Robin Not that sort of nanny!

Marian Don't you like goats?

Robin Goats are fine. It's the yodelling I can't stand – so keep the old lady quiet.

Marian The old lady who?

Robin There you go again! Just one goat and everyone starts yodelling!

(Enter Hazel)

Hazel Good morning, Robin Hood!

Robin Good morning, Hazel Wise.... Hazel Wise, Hazel Wise, every morning you greet me....

(Enter the Countess)

Countess Ah, Robin, you handsome hunk, there you are!

Robin Oh, er, Belinda, erm, Countess, have you met Sister Marian? Marian, this is Belinda, Countess of "Wor-ces-ster-shire".

Countess Countess of "Woo-ster-she"! Oh, Marian, this is a pleasant surprise.

Marian What are you doing here?

Countess Robin captured my coach and then dragged me to his outlaw's hide-out.

Marian I suppose you resisted his blandishments?

Countess Why, of course! Robin was a perfect gentleman! So I'm back to find out more about him.

Marian You're busy now, aren't you, Robin? Why don't you take a long walk?

Robin She's right at the moment, Belinda – I've got to plan the next stage of the campaign. But I will see you later.

Countess That's fine, darling. I shall go for a walk in the woods. Forest air will stimulate my appetite.

(The Countess exits. Hazel follows her off.)

Marian What do you think you're doing, cavorting with that woman?

Robin I've spent two years crusading without a single cavort. Then I come back to find you've taken the veil. What do you expect me to do?

Marian Couldn't you at least show a little sympathy?

Robin I, I, I've got to find out what that crowd's doing around Tuck.

(As Robin moves across, the lights come up on Tuck.)

Tuck There will be plagues of boils! The heavens will turn black. Toads will rain down from the sky and the rivers will run with pestilence. Then on Monday it will be mild, with sunny periods and scattered showers. Now over to Will for the traffic news.

Will Well, there are terrible problems on the Oxford road on account of a great big tree having fallen down. It's such a shame, because it was a lovely tree and they take so long to grow.

Robin There's a tree down on the Oxford road? That will make it perfect for an ambush.

Little John But we've already ambushed the coach.

Robin That was the one going from Nottingham to Oxford. This time we'll ambush the return coach.

Little John But surely, they'll be expecting an ambush this time.

Robin No they won't. We hit it on the way out, they won't be expecting us to hit it again on the way back. Nobody's ever done that before. Come on, men.

(Exit Robin, Will, John and Tuck, humming "raindrops keep falling on my head." Hazel enters.)

Marian Where did you get too last night, Hazel?

Hazel I went off to see my boyfriend. He's lovely. He's called Norman.

Marian Aren't you a bit young to have a boyfriend?

Hazel Well, I am sixteen, going on seventeen.

Marian He's not one of the Sheriff's men, is he?

Hazel Well, what if he is? What's so bad about the Sheriff?

Song 7: Our good Sheriff likes (Marian)

Dewdrops on noses in cold early morning
Troops at the ready, attacks without warning
Enemies killed and their heads put on spikes
These are the things that our good sheriff likes

(The Countess enters, very agitated, interrupting the end of the song.)

Countess Where's Robin? The sheriff's men are heading this way – they're swarming all over the hills. **(She exits.)**

(Mother Mathilda rushes in and shouts the alarm before looking at the audience.)

Mathilda The hills are alive! **(Pauses to give a brief fixed grin to the audience. Departs.)**

(There are a few brief moments of chaos, during which nuns and children run on and off, leaving Sister Maria on stage as Soldiers 1, 2, 3 & 4 enter.)

Sister Maria Try it, if you think you're hard enough.

Soldier 2 I don't like the odds lads – a highly trained, heavily armed fighting force against a single weaponless nun

Soldier 3 Sort of thing that only happens in stories

Soldier 1 Yeah, and the nun always wins.

(The Sheriff enters behind Sister Maria. When he starts speaking, Sister Maria spins around, allowing the soldiers to creep behind her and surround her in a net of swords.)

Sheriff I don't think fighting will be necessary. It would seem to break all the rules of chivalry and common sense. Besides, you'll have great problems fighting with that many swords stuck in you. I hope you'll agree to stop, though I recommend that in doing so, you don't nod your head too vigorously.

Marian **(Entering at the back of the stage.)** Won't you leave Sister Maria alone? Don't you realise it isn't customary to use nuns for kebabs?

Sheriff Well, Marian! What a pleasant surprise. I wasn't expecting to find you in an outlaws' camp!

Marian What were you expecting to find?

Sheriff Well, since you ask, outlaws. We were reliably informed that there were outlaws in this camp.

Sparrow **(Offstage)** We're here!

(Enter Norman and the Herald with Sparrow, Finch and Big John.)

Sheriff Norman, why have you captured a bunch of grubby urchins?

Sparrow What's an urchin?

Finch Fing that hangs about on sea beds. Hard shell.

Sparrow I thought that was crabs.

Finch Nah. More bits sticking out than crabs.

Big John Like lobsters?

Sparrow Here, mister. I ain't a lobster.

Sheriff No? We can test that by putting you in a pan of water and bringing it to the boil.

Sparrow You can't do –

Sheriff Shut up! Norman?

Norman They're vicious killers, m'lord.

Sheriff What makes you think that?

Norman He bit me!

Sheriff We go out on a hunt for outlaws and all you catch is a dose of urchins!

Hazel Norman!

Norman Hazel?

Sheriff Who's this?

Norman It's, it's –

Marian Hazel, is this your boyfriend?

Sheriff Oh, how touching. Right, Marian, it's time I took you back to Nottingham.

Marian How are you going to do that?

Sheriff At sword point if necessary.

Marian Would you hit a nun with a sword?

Sheriff Certainly not – but a nun without a sword is fair game. Take them away. We don't have Robin Hood, but we do have some very fine prizes – and not just the ones in the raffle.
(Exeunt)

End of act

Act 2

Scene 1 The Greenwood

(Same set as Act 1, Scene 3, give or take.)

(Robin and Will are strolling in the woods. Enter Old Mother Wise, looking decidedly better dressed than previously.)

Old Mother Wise Spare a tiara for an old woman down on her luck?

Will Robin? You know this robbing from the rich and giving to the poor?

Robin Yes?

Will Well, I think we may have taken it a bit far.

(The horse rushes in.)

Robin Nelly, whatever's the matter.?

(The horse tosses its head in the direction from which it came.)

Robin You want us to come back with you?

(The horse nods.)

Robin Why? What's happened?

(The horse jumps around in an agitated way, and neighs.)

Robin The children? Have they fallen down a mine?

(The horse shakes its head.)

Robin Then what happened?

(The horse puts its head on Robin's shoulder and snores.)

Robin Sleepy? Sleep? Nighttime? Night? Night? Oh, Knight – with a K.

(The horse stamps its foot a few times.)

Robin Lots of knights. What about them?

(The horse minces around.)

Robin Walking. Walking funnily. Mincing. Mincing? Camp?

(The horse nods.)

Robin Camp Knights? Will, what have you been up to?

(The horse shakes its head, then turns its back to Robin.)

Robin What? The other way round? Knights camp? Knights in the camp?

Will Knights in our camp? Has the camp been raided?

Robin How many of them?

(The horse stamps its foot. Robin and Will count.)

Robin & Will One, two, three ...

(The horse stamps faster and faster with all of its feet.)

Will Okay, lots.

Robin We'd better get back there at once. I'll summon the men.

(Robin, Will and the horse exit, with Robin blowing his horn.)

Scene 2: Robin Hood's camp

(Same set as Act 1, Scene 1)

(Mother Mathilda and Countess are on stage. Robin and Will rush in, followed by Tuck, Little John and Old Mother Wise.)

Robin Belinda, you're safe!

Mathilda You know about the raid?

Will Yes, we had it straight from the horse's mouth.

Robin Did they take much?
Countess Yes, he was tied to a horse.
Robin I mean did they take much from the camp?
Countess Oh yes, they led the horse away.
Robin I don't mean Much the Miller. What else did they take from the camp?
Countess Everything of any value – and all the people who couldn't get away.
Robin All of them? Who got away?
Countess Well, I think it was just us two.
Robin Which way did they go?
Countess Straight back to Nottingham. Mother Mathilda and I followed them for a short way up toward the mountains. But we couldn't climb every mountain.
Robin Come on men, we've got to search high and low.
Mathilda Follow every byway, every path you know.
Robin But I can't leave Marian in the Sheriff's hand.
Countess Why not? She'll be fine if he warms them first.
Robin I travelled thousands of miles back from the crusades just to come back to Marian.
Countess Well now you've seen her, and she's gone. Big deal.
Robin Belinda, she's been captured. Dragged away against her will. I've got to rescue her.
Countess Robin Hood, it's her or me.
Robin Belinda, I've got to go to Nottingham.
Will Ooh. Looks like it's her.
Countess I'm not going to wait around for you to come back. I'll continue on my way, then. Apparently, daring, dashing, debonair desperadoes aren't what they used to be.
Robin But you can't go to Oxford on your own – it wouldn't be safe.
Countess It's a bit late to be thinking of my welfare!
Tuck Thou couldst take my horse to lend speed to thine journey.
Countess That would be very kind of you, Friar.
Tuck Nelly!
Robin Goodbye, Belinda. Nelly, keep her safe.
Will And no horseplay!
Robin This is disastrous, Will. She's gone off to be a nun and she still holds the keys to my heart.

Song 8: ***Why did you do it Marian? (Robin, Merry Men and Outlaws, Old Mother Wise and Mother Mathilda)***

I courted you a while ago, but then my ardour flagged
I really was quite happy till I found out that you nagged
King Richard went crusading so I took my chance and ran
Why did you do it Marian?

Chorus Why did you do it?
 Why did you do it?
 Why did you do it Marian?

I battled with the Saracens, it really was no fun
When I came home triumphantly I found you were a nun
And now you need a rescuer, I'll free you if I can
Why did you do it Marian?

Repeat Chorus

Why did you do it? / Robin Hood

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

These are the wrong words!

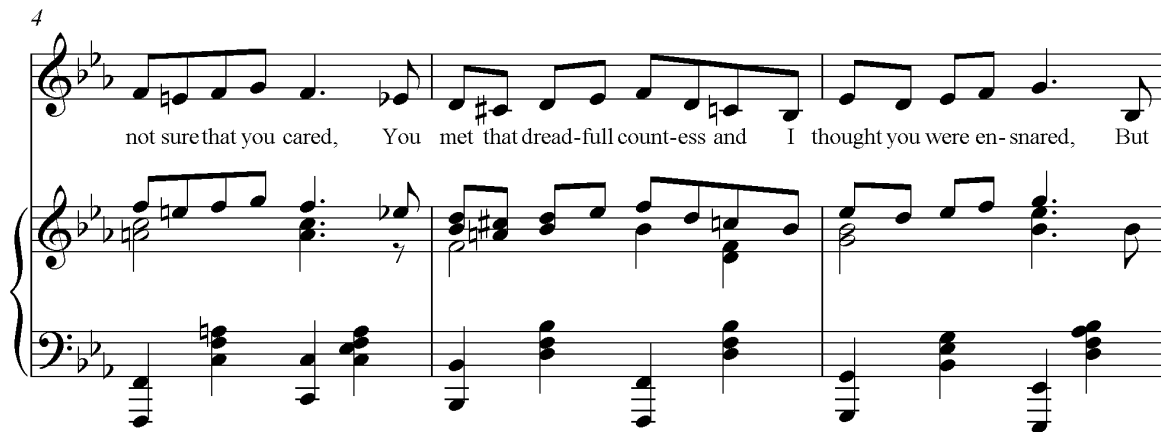
Vocal



When you came back to Sher-wood, I was

Piano

4



not sure that you cared, You met that dread-full count-ess and I thought you were en-snared, But

7



you came back and res-cued me, just like a he-ro should, Why did you do it, Rob-in

10

Hood? Rob-in Hood, The great he-ro of our play Rob-in Hood Has re-

14

turned to save the day, Rob - in Hood, Now the end is near-ing with the

17

peo - ple cheer-ing Rob - in Hood

Little John Robin, there's someone coming
Blondel Good morrow, gentles.
Will Who are you, and where are you from?
Blondel From is a preposition. I'm from a place which taught me that English sentences do not end with prepositions.
Will Really? Where are you from, idiot?
Blondel I am a wandering minstrel. Can I give you a tune?
Will No thanks, I've already got one.
Robin Will Scarlet is our minstrel.
Blondel Really? But who is the best?
Robin Oh no, we really haven't got time for a duel
Blondel We do have time for a one-song throwdown.

Song 9A: *Nottingham Ale (Will & Blondel, with Chorus)*

(Music: Nottingham Ale, traditional folk tune)

Blondel:

When Venus, the goddess of beauty and love
Arose from the froth that swam on the sea
Minerva sprang out of the cranium of Jove
A coy, sullen dame as most mortals agree

Will:

But Bacchus, they tell us, that prince of good fellows
Was Jupiter's son, pray attend my tale
They who thus chatter mistake quite the matter
He sprang from a barrel of Nottingham Ale

Blondel:

Nottingham Ale, me boys, Nottingham Ale
No liquor on earth is like Nottingham Ale

Will:

Nottingham Ale, me boys, Nottingham Ale
No liquor on earth is like Nottingham Ale

You bishops and curates, priests, deacons and vicars
When once you have tasted, you all must agree
That Nottingham Ale is the best of all liquors
And none understands a good creature like thee.

Blondel:

It dispels every vapor, saves pen, ink and paper
For when you've a mind in your pulpit to rail
It'll open your throats, you may preach without notes
When inspired with a bumper of Nottingham Ale.

Merry Men, with Blondel and Will:

Nottingham Ale, me boys, Nottingham Ale
No liquor on earth is like Nottingham Ale
Nottingham Ale, me boys, Nottingham Ale
No liquor on earth is like Nottingham Ale

Blondel:

Ye poets who pray on the Hellican brooke
The nectar of Gods and the juice of the vine,...

Liliburlero Nottingham Ale

Rousing 18th Century
Drinking Song Tempo
Faster for dancing

From Henry Playford
The Dancing Master
8th Edition, 1690

When Ve - nus, the god - dess of beau - tyan love, a - rose from the broth that swam on the sea, Mi -
nerv asprang out from the cran - ium of Jove. A coy, sul - len lass, as most auth - ers a - gree.
But Bacch - us they tell us, that prince of good fel - las, was Ju - pit - er - sson. Pray at - tend to my tale.
Those who thus chat - ter mis - take quite the mat - ter! He sprang from a bar - rel of Not - ting - ham Ale!
Chorus
Not - ting - ham Ale, Boys, Not - ting - ham Ale, No li - quor on earth is like Not - ting - ham Ale.

Ye Bishops and deacons, priests, curates and vicars, when once you have tasted you'll own it is true.
That Nottingham Ale is the best of all liquors. And none understand what is good as do you.
It dispels every vapour, saves pen, ink and paper, when you're of a mind from your pulpits to rail.
It'll open your throats. You can speak without notes! When inspired by a bottle of Nottingham Ale
Chorus

Ye surgeons who more executions have done, with powders and potion and bolus and pill,
Than hangman with noose, or soldier with gun, or miser with famine, or lawyer with quill,
To despatch us the quicker, forbid us malt liquor, 'til our bodies grow weak and our faces grow pale.
But mind who he pleases, what cures all diseases, is a comforting bottle of Nottingham Ale.

Liliburlero was used for a bitter satirical ballad against Papists and the Jacobite cause. As Liliburlero, it was circulated secretly and became a powerful propaganda piece. The tune was used for other songs, including Nottingham Ale, a broadside mocking journalists, and a song in the 1728 Beggar's Opera, as well as a popular dance. As Liliburlero the dance, the tune is somewhat different.

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(Robin interrupts)

Robin Well, you certainly know your Roman gods. Who are you, good sir minstrel?

Blondel I am Blondel, the minstrel of King Richard, Lionheart

Robin You are? Where is the king?

Blondel I don't know. I've lost him.

Will How careless.

Robin Where was he last seen? We were crusaders too. We heard he arrived in England before us.

Blondel Yes, he definitely reached England. The last I heard of him he was at a big fancy dress party, celebrating his return. Nobody's seen him since.

Robin You don't think he's been killed?

Blondel No, I think he's been kidnapped. I suspect he is being held somewhere against his will. I'm touring all the castles in England to try to find him. That is why I am bound for Nottingham.

Mathilda Are you aware that Prince John is at Nottingham Castle?

Robin And from what we hear, he's about to declare himself king.

Blondel John? He wouldn't have the guts.

Robin No, but with Gregory behind him, he just might be persuaded to usurp the throne.

Will You don't think that the Sheriff's got the king in his dungeons, do you?

Blondel If he has, I'll soon find out.

Robin Really? Well, we also have good reason to investigate the castle dungeons. Perhaps we can pool our resources. Will, you stay here with the local lads and reorganise the camp. Tuck, Blondel, perhaps you would like to come with me to Nottingham?

Old Mother Wise We await your return with baited hooks.

(Exeunt, deep in conversation.)

Scene 3: The Castle

(See the notes for Act 2 Scene 5.)

(The Sheriff is apparently staring out of a window. Marian seated upstage.)

Sheriff Don't you love the English summer? The warm breeze wafting the smell of the ripening corn, the lazy bee droning around the garden, and the sound of the gentle thwack of leather on buttocks.

(Sound effects: whack; "aargh!")

Marian What was that noise?

Sheriff I need to find out what the outlaws are up to. I'm just trying to loosen the tongues of some of the people we captured. And if I can't loosen their tongues, then I might have to loosen their heads.

Marian Are you torturing people again, Gregory?

Sheriff I'm sorry, my darling, you know how I hate doing it.

Marian Then why don't you give it up?

Sheriff I shall, my sweet, just as soon as you consent to marry me.

Marian May I remind you that nuns do not marry?

Sheriff But you're not a nun, my dear Marian, you're only a novice – though I must say, for a novice, you're very good at it.

Marian Good at what?

Sheriff This vow of nagging that you've taken.

Marian It wasn't a vow of nagging! You know that, don't you?

Sheriff Aha! That wasn't really a question. You see, the habit isn't fully established.

Marian Even if I gave up the veil, why should I marry you?

Sheriff But who would suit you better?

Marian Did you know that Robin was still carrying a torch for me?

Sheriff Oh, he's carrying a torch? I thought he was just pleased to see you.

Marian Don't you think that if he hears you're planning to marry me, he'll mount a rescue?

Sheriff A rescue? Here? Marian, this is one of the strongest castles in England, and we are protected by the forces of law and order.

(Sound effects: Theme from "Law & Order")

Sheriff Most sensible people will run a mile when they hear that.

Marian Isn't Robin the greatest archer in Nottinghamshire?

Sheriff You know, I do believe he is. How delightful. Thank you my dear, that is an excellent suggestion.

Marian What suggestion?

Sheriff Why the entertainment you've just proposed for our wedding day. Guards, escort Lady Marian back to her chamber.

(Two soldiers enter and, with Marian, exit.)

(Prince John enters.)

Sheriff Oh, there you are, sire. I'd been looking for you.

Prince Been having my constitutional down below.

Sheriff In the square?

Prince Hardly a square, Gregory. The north wall is 72 paces long, but did you know that the west wall is a mere 68 paces?

Sheriff How interesting. You know, I'd never measured it.

Prince Good heavens, Gregory. You need to sharpen up – get your mind focused on these things.

Sheriff Yes sire. And whilst you were pacing in the square ...

Prince Ah-ah!

Sheriff Er, the rectangle.

Prince Not even a rectangle, Gregory – the south wall is but 71 paces.

Sheriff You amaze me, sire. Well then, whilst you were pacing in the quadrilateral, did you, by any chance, bend your huge intellect towards the matter of your coronation?

Prince Good heavens no. Far too busy for that.

Sheriff Then might I suggest this coming Saturday? We could have a multiple celebration – your coronation, my wedding and the capture of Robin Hood!

Prince Congratulations, Gregory.

Sheriff Thank you sire, I'm sure we'll be very happy together

Prince You and Robin Hood?

Sheriff I was thinking of the nuptial part of the arrangement, sire.

Prince You were? Which part is that?

(The Dame enters.)

Dame Isn't it time mummy's little boy had a nap?

Sheriff Actually, mother, I think it's probably Prince – soon to be king – John who needs a rest. He's been dealing with some very taxing problems of proportionality – where as I merely have disproportionate problems with taxation.

Dame Oh, doesn't he use some funny old words?

Sheriff Mother, I have a very important role for you concerning the forthcoming feast.

Dame Oh, does he want Chex party mix?

Sheriff Meat, ma'am, meat. I want you to procure some large herbivores for us to roast at the wedding breakfast. If you don't manage to find fare fit for feasting, I shall be resigned to roasting *you*.

Dame Oh, there's going to be a lovely, lovely wedding! Who's getting married?

Sheriff Me, mother. To the lady Marian.

Dame But little boys like you don't get married. You're far too young to be a bridegroom.

Sheriff Mother, I'm thirty-two.

Prince Are you really, Gregory? High time you became a bit more independent. Shouldn't still be living with your mother at your age, you know.
Sheriff When did you stop living with *your* mother, sire?
Prince Shortly after the old king died. Richard locked her up in the tower for being a daft old bat.
Sheriff How splendid. It's always good to have a royal precedent. Now, Mother, you have a vital part in my plans. Here's what I want you to do

Scene 4: The greenwood

(Same set as Act 1, Scene 1)

(Will is alone. There is an arrow noise. Enter Little John unrolling a message from the arrow shaft.)

Will Well, what's the latest news?

Little John The lookouts caught a prisoner on the Nottingham road. They're bringing her here.

Little John Oh yes, here they come.

(Enter the dame.)

Dame Deary me. I do find these forest tracks terribly muddy.

Little John Hello, madam, who might you be?

Dame I'm an ambassador for the great big sheriff of Nottingham. He says he wants a funny old priest, and he thinks you've got one. Have you got Tuck, the friar?

Little John No. Have you got Much the Miller?

Will What is this? A game of Go Fish?

Dame Ooh no, I don't think I've got time for playing funny little games today. Who are you?

Will I am Will Scarlet, minstrel, crusader and companion of Robin Hood.

Dame Have you got Robin Hood?

Will Sorry, not at home.

Little John He's gone for a tramp in the woods.

Will I always said he had funny tastes.

Dame Well, the great big sheriff has given me a message and wants me to bring a response back from Robin Hood and his nasty outlaws. Is that you?

Will Yes, ever so nasty!

Little John What happens if we take you prisoner instead?

Dame If I'm not back by sundown, the great big sheriff says he's going to set fire to the nuns.

Little John He can't do that! That's arson!

Will That's the way things are around the sheriff. There's a lot of arson about.

Little John Well? What's the message?

Dame This coming Saturday, the sheriff's special friend, Prince John is going to be crowned King of all England, and my little boy, the sheriff of Nottingham is going to be married to the Lady Marian. To celebrate the glorious day, the sheriff has declared a public holiday in Nottingham, with a great big party at the castle. I'm going to make him crisp apple strudel. And schnitzel with noodles. Because these are a few of his favourite things. There's going to be sack races and floggings for the children, an archery tournament and a yard of ale competition for the young men and a Chippendale exhibition for the women – though why young ladies should want to look at boring old furniture is beyond me. Anyway, to show what a good little boy he is, the sheriff has said that he's willing to declare an amnesty to all the outlaws in the forest. All the outlaws have to do to show good faith is for each one to bring him a gift of a deer. What do you say to that, Scarlet?

Will Frankly, madam, I don't give a deer!

Little John Is that the whole message?

Dame Yes, dear. I think I remembered everything.

Little John Then it's time you were getting back to Nottingham.

Will Yes, you can tell the sheriff to get going, too.

Dame Well really, that's not very nice.

Will Little John, can you get the lookouts to escort her back to the edge of the forest?

(Little John conducts the dame off stage.)

(Enter Blondel and Tuck.)

Blondel Will, is Robin back yet?

Will No, I thought he was with you.

Tuck Verily we considered it was better if we went singly. A crowd arouseth suspicion. Robin did wend about the town disguised as a beggar, whilst Blondel and I did explore the castle.

(Little John returns.)

Little John Any news?

Blondel He's there!

Will Who?

Blondel King Richard. He's being held at the castle.

Will Are you sure?

Blondel I did what I've been doing at all the castles. I gave a public recitation of songs and verse. I performed some of the King's favourites, and in the distance I heard his voice joining in.

Will What did you perform?

Blondel Just a poem. It goes:

There was a man named McTeer
Went singing and drinking some beer
Amongst the carousers
He busted his trousers

Little John And?

Blondel Then I waited, and I could hear him saying the last line.

Will Well, I can't imagine how anyone could guess the ending of that one. **(the last word is "rear.")**

Blondel King Richard knew it. Always one of his favourites.

Will Clearly a monarch of taste and discernment.

Robin What news, men?

Will Blondel discovered King Richard is held in Nottingham castle, and we found out that John is going to be crowned King on Saturday – and at the same time, the sheriff is getting married to Marian.

Old Mother Wise The sheriff is marryin' Marian?

Will No, I think he's only doing it once.

Robin So that's why there's a feast day being planned. The town was full of the preparations.

Little John Yes, they're even planning an archery tournament.

Robin That's perfect. That means we can get into the town with our weapons.

Blondel But Robin, it's bound to be a trap.

Robin Maybe, but it's our only chance to get in. If we're careful, we can all get inside in disguise.

Scene 5: The Castle.

(This scene and all the following scenes are played on the same set, with distinctions made by lighting and by hanging different flags/pennants/tapestries on the wall. The central feature of the set is a panel set slightly forward from the back of the stage, affording entrances/hiding places at the back, as well as the joke with the prisoner in scene 7.)

(The Sheriff and Prince are on stage; enter Norman.)

Sheriff Well, Norman? How's the archery tournament going?

Norman A blind beggar came up for a turn, Sheriff.

Sheriff A blind man?

Norman That's right, m'lord. Soon as I saw him I thought – that's it. It's bound to be Robin Hood in disguise. We'll point him in the direction of the target, and that will be it. He'll hit the gold straight away. In no time at all, he'll be shooting apples off young lads' heads and shouting "Hiyo Silver!"

Sheriff So what happened? Did he hit the target?

Norman He was hopeless. We led him to the spot all right, but he fired all over the place. Arrows everywhere. He'd shot four of the guards before we managed to restrain him.

Prince Couldn't possibly have been Robin Hood, then?

Norman Nah, not a chance, with shooting as bad as that.

Sheriff What did you do with him?

Norman We threw him in the moat.

Scene 6: Elsewhere in the castle

(Robin, Will, Little John, Blondel and Tuck are at one side of the stage. A group of soldiers at the other side of the stage ignores them.)

Robin Old Mother Wise brought a change of clothes for me.

Old Mother Wise He asked me for camouflage clothes, but I couldn't see any.

Robin I'll be fine as soon as I get the duckweed out of my hair. How did you get on?

Blondel I got this old book of maps of Nottingham Castle. It shows how it developed from the time it was built.

Robin Let me have a look. Where on earth did you get a book like this?

Blondel The Odditorium. *(if it's still open.)*

Robin I'd no idea Nottingham Castle looked like this. **(He shows the audience a map of something recognisably not a castle – Italy, for example.)** There are some passages here that I'd no idea existed – and I'm willing to bet that John doesn't know about them either. Look, you can get to the dungeons through the chapel.

Will Yes, but how do we get to the chapel?

Robin Looks like we can get in through a passage in the castle walls. Starting from over there.

Will By those guards, do you mean?

Robin Well, yes. Blondel, you and Old Mother Wise start a diversion. The rest of you, follow me!

Old Mother Wise Spare a Chippendale for an old woman down on her luck?

(While this is going on, Robin, Will, Tuck and Little John creep behind the soldiers and exit.)

Soldier 3 Aren't you a bit old for that sort of thing?

Old Mother Wise You're never too old for a bit of hanky-panky.

(Either Blondel, or sound effects playing "the Stripper." Old Mother Wise begins to unravel a few layers, dropping them on the ground as she exits on the opposite side of the stage to the soldiers, who follow, awe-struck, picking up her garments.)

Scene 7: The dungeons

(A prisoner lies behind the panel at the back of the stage such that his head pokes out at one end of the panel; a pair of feet poke out at the other end, an unnaturally long distance from the head.)

(Enter Will, Robin, Little John and Tuck.)

Will Well, I'm lost. Where are we?

Little John It seems like a colossal cave. As far as I can see, we're in a twisty maze of passages, all alike.

Robin No, no, it's quite simple. You can tell where you are by the tapestries. We're near the dungeons.

Prisoner Yes, that's right. They're just along here.

Robin Oh, thanks. Er, do you know where the nuns are being held?

Prisoner Yes, they're down that way, past my feet.

(Robin, Tuck and Little John investigate around the back of the stage and offstage.)

Will Those are *your* feet?

Prisoner Oh yes.

Will They seem a long way off. You must of been in for a long stretch. Are you in pain?

Prisoner Not at the moment. They've left the chains quite slack, so I've still got a bit of movement.

(The feet move up and down)

Prisoner In fact, I've got so much slack, I can almost touch my toes.

(The prisoner bends up at the head end and a pair of hands appear near the feet.)

Tuck Verily Robin, I have discovered a bunch of keys.

Robin They must be for the cells. Come on.

(Robin, Tuck and Little John exit.)

Will Who are you?

Prisoner The name's Brown, Dan Brown.

Will Why is the sheriff keeping you here, Mr. Brown?

Prisoner He said it was a form of literary criticism.

(Robin, John and Tuck return, followed by the nuns and the children, but not Marian.)

Robin Where's Marian?

Hazel I think she was being held separately.

Robin Oh no. The sheriff has probably locked her in one of the guest chambers. Is everyone else here? Then we should lead the main party out, and a few of us will come back to rescue Marian. This way.

(They exit, leaving the unfortunate prisoner to his fate.)

Optional Song 9B: TBD (Nuns Chorus)
(Music: TBD)

Scene 8: *The chapel*

(Enter Robin, Will, Little John, Tuck, nuns and children)

Little John Where are we now?

Tuck Verily, brothers and sisters, we are in the chapel.

Will Shh! There's someone coming!

Robin Hide in the alcoves.

(All hide. Enter Herald, soldiers, and Norman as a column.)

Norman The sheriff's going to be livid

Soldier 1 He's going to move beyond the realms of sarcasm. It'll be the stocks for us.

Norman He'll move beyond cabbages as well. He's got some of those hard things. You know the ones. Come with horses.

Soldier 1 Coconuts?

Norman Yeah, those.

Herald He doesn't need to know they got out. Not if we find them first. They must be round here somewhere. We'll block the entrance to the chapel, and you keep searching.

(Soldiers move forward, looking this way and that. As the column passes, Hazel pokes her head out.

Norman, at the back of the line, spots her, does a double take and spins around. Other soldiers exit.)

Hazel Norman!

Norman Hazel!

Hazel Where's Marian?

Norman She's locked in one of the sheriff's guest rooms. What are you doing here?

Hazel We're trying to escape.

Norman You can't get out this way. There are soldiers blocking the chapel doors.

Hazel Right, then we'll go the other way.

Norman But what will I tell the sheriff?

Hazel Don't tell him anything.

Norman But I've got to tell him the nuns have escaped.

Hazel Did you see any nuns?

Norman Good point.

Hazel Now turn that way and put your hands over your ears.

(Norman faces the audience with his hands over his ears. Robin etc. tiptoe behind him and exit.

Herald returns and taps Norman on the shoulder, causing him to jump.)

Herald Why have you got your fingers in your ears?

Norman I keep hearing voices.

Herald You're supposed to hear voices. That tells you there are people around. Did you find any nuns?

Norman No. I didn't see a single nun. I didn't see any outlaws either.

Herald No? Well which way did the voices go?

Norman Er, that way.

Herald Right, come on men.

(They exit.)

Scene 9: *The Sheriff's Suite*

(Shouts and sword fights offstage. Tuck bursts onto the stage and runs off, with soldiers in pursuit.)

Herald Where are the rest?

Norman Dunno, but the friar went that way.

Soldier 2 We'll catch him by the balustrades.
(The herald and soldiers exit. Robin, Will, Little John, the nuns and children emerge from various hiding places. Sister Maria is carrying a two-handed sword.)

Little John What does this tapestry mean?
Robin The sheriff's suite.
Will No he isn't. I heard he was rather sour.
Robin No, I mean this is where the sheriff lives.
Hazel Could we hide here and sneak out later?
Robin No, as soon as anyone finds the bodies in the corridor, they'll go for the guards.
Will Yes, I could quite go for one myself.
Little John Could we make a stand here?
Robin I doubt it. We broke most of our weapons in that last skirmish. There's only the sword Sister Maria picked up from the guards in the corridor.
Little John Yeah that was a really great punch.
Hazel Someone's coming.
Robin Quick, this way.
Maria I'll stay as the rear guard.
(The sheriff bursts in, with a drawn sword.)
Sheriff Out of my way! I want those outlaws.
Maria (To the outlaws) Fly, you fools. **(To the sheriff, bringing the sword down vertically.)** You shall not pass.
Sheriff What did you say?
Maria I'm sorry, I don't know what came over me. Anyway, you're not going any further.
Sheriff And you're going to stop me?
(Sister Maria whirls her sword around her head.)
Sheriff Oh you *are* going to stop me.
(There is a series of muffled thumps from offstage.)
Sheriff What was that noise?
Maria Someone's just fallen over the guards.
(During the Sheriff's speech, Maria darts out of the room.)
Sheriff That would be my reinforcements. I'm expecting a dozen heavily armed men to rush to my aid.
Dame (Offstage) Where's mummy's little boy got to?
Sheriff On the other hand, it could just be my mother, facing a strange nun with a gladiatorial fixation.
 Nun, sword. Sword, nun.
(There is a loud clang offstage.)
Sheriff Frying pan.
(The Dame enters)
Dame Ooh, dear. I seem to have brained that nice gentle Sister Maria.
Sheriff You mean the nice, sweet gentle nun with the two-handed sword?
Dame What a clever boy, he knew just who I meant.
(The heads of Robin and Will appear from behind the central screen.)
Sheriff Mother, what are you doing here with a frying pan?
Dame I've been in the kitchen, preparing your lovely Chex party mix.
(Robin and Will look at each other and nod.)
Sheriff With a frying pan?
Dame No, no, you silly little boy. I just wondered if you wanted me to do anything for Prince John.
Sheriff With a frying pan? I must say, it's tempting, but not just now. Right now, I have a bunch of outlaws running riot in my castle, not to mention the Little Sisters of the Samurai.

Dame Are those some of your little playmates?

Sheriff Mother, I do not play with sword-wielding maniacs. Apart from dear sweet Sister Maria, did you see any nuns or any outlaws on your way up from the kitchen?

Dame Not that I can remember, but I'm far too busy for that sort of thing.

Sheriff If they didn't go past you, then they must still be around here somewhere.

Robin (enters with Will, with pies) Sheriff! You're surrounded. Throw down your sword and surrender.

Sheriff You don't scare me. I heard you say you'd run out of arrows.

Robin We've been down to the kitchens and rearmed. We're going to put you in custody.

Sheriff Come out and give yourselves up. I am warning you, I will not be trifled with!

Robin + Will Oh yes, you will

Sheriff Oh no, I won't

Robin + Will Oh yes, you will

Sheriff Oh no, I won't

Robin + Will Oh yes, you will

Sheriff (To the audience) I'm warning you: I'll get the cabbages out

Robin Should we trifle with him?

Audience Yes!

(Will and Robin attack the Sheriff with a custard pie each. He collapses to his knees.)

Dame Robin, I thought it was your voice.

Robin Hello, Mother!

Will Mother? Then you're the Sheriff's brother!

Robin I'm afraid so. In fact, I used to be the Sheriff. He must have taken over when I went on the crusade.

Dame Now Robin, you naughty boy, I've told you before, you must stop fighting with your little brother.

Robin You're right, mother. Will, take his sword.

(Enter Blondel and Old Mother Wise)

Blondel Robin! Have you freed the prisoners?

Robin Most of them.

Blondel Have you found King Richard?

Robin Not yet. Nor Marian. What have you done with the guards?

Old Mother Wise They're sleeping it off. I took them for a session.

Blondel A drinking session.

Old Mother Wise Why? What did you think I meant?

(Enter Prince John, wearing a crown)

Prince Hullo, Gregory. I think you've been overdoing the shaving cream a bit there. Who are your friends?

(Enter Maria.)

Maria That must have been an amazing party. I've got a tremendous headache.

Blondel My liege.

Robin Your liege? Whatever do you mean?

Blondel It's King Richard!

Prince Oh, so it is. Jolly good disguise, Richard. Wouldn't have recognised you at all in that outfit!

Maria John? What are you doing here? I thought you were in Nottingham!

Will This *is* Nottingham

Maria It is? What are you doing with my crown?

Prince Oh, er, sorry, er just had it for safekeeping, don't you know?

Dame No you didn't, my little boy told me ...

(The Sheriff stuffs the handkerchief into her mouth.)

Maria Blondel, what on earth is going on?

Blondel Well, Your Highness, I rather think that you went to a party and got a bump on your head and lost your memory.

Maria So it seems. Who's the chap with the creamy complexion?

Robin Oh, that's Gregory. He got so excited about your arrival that he got drunk.

Maria And the woman making the funny noises?

Prince Oh she's the handkerchief swallower – a novelty act for Gregory's banquets.

Blondel You've found your way to Nottingham, and we can have a big party to celebrate your return.

(Tuck and soldiers enter. The soldiers size up the situation and lower their weapons.)

Blondel Here's Friar Tuck who's come to preside over the marriage of Robin Hood to Lady Marian.

Prince But I thought she was going to marry Gregory.

(Enter Marian in bridal gown.)

Marian Not out of choice! I really wanted to marry Robin.

Robin You did?

Marian Of course I did.

Robin Oh Marian! Wait a minute. You didn't ask a question.

Marian No. I've given up trying to be a nun and I've renounced the vow of questioning. I never want to ask a single question again.

Robin Never?

Marian Well, maybe one or two.

Robin Oh yes, like what?

Marian Like: What kept you?

Song 10: Reprise: Why did You Do it/Robin Hood (Marian & Chorus)

When you came back to Sherwood I was not sure that you cared
You met that dreadful countess and I thought you were ensnared
But you came here and rescued me, just like a hero should
Why did you do it, Robin Hood?
Robin Hood – The great hero of our play
Robin Hood – Has returned to save the day
Robin Hood – Now the end is nearing with the people cheering Robin Hood

Curtain

Why did you do it? / Robin Hood

Words and Music by Stuart Ardern

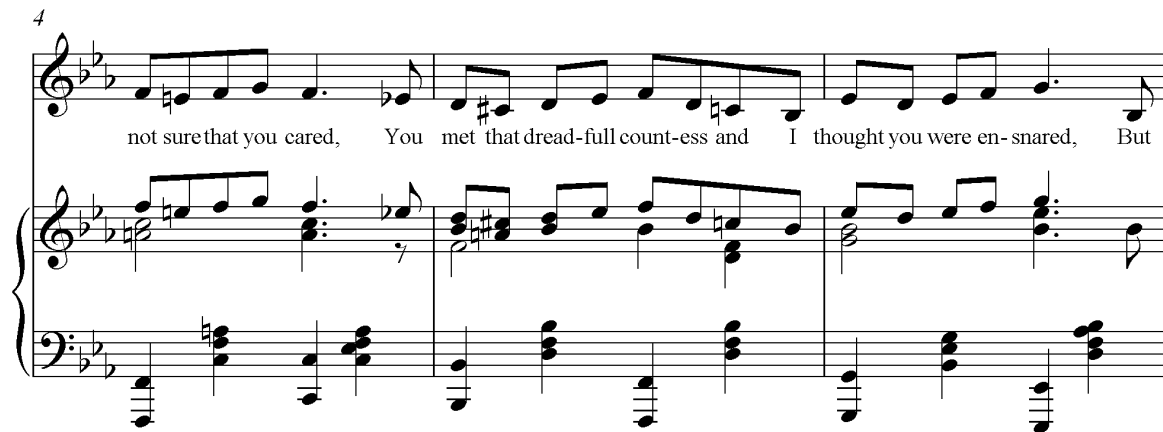
Vocal



When you came back to Sher-wood, I was

Piano

4



not sure that you cared, You met that dread-ful count-ess and I thought you were en-snared, But

7



you came back and res-cued me, just like a he-ro should, Why did you do it, Rob-in

10

Hood? Rob-in Hood, The great he-ro of our play Rob-in Hood Has re-

14

turned to save the day, Rob - in Hood, Now the end is near-ing with the

17

peo - ple cheer-ing Rob - in Hood