

“Sailing South” is a tall tale of a tall ship, somewhere between farce and adult pantomime. The story is not meant to have any historical truth or significance so long as it fits the guidelines of the plausible impossible.

All the characters need to be played much larger than life and including the audience as part of the action is very important.

Act one takes place in a courtroom in old England and acts two and three on board the good ship Venus.



“Sailing South”

By Judith Prior

The sets need not be elaborate. If your cast are not strong singers the songs may be mimed or even left out altogether.

If you have strong singers extra songs may be added to suit your principals.

The costumes for the girls could be blouses and skirts, hats and gloves for act one, dark skirts white blouses, aprons and mob caps for act two and perhaps for act three the original costume with a shawl or sash. The male prisoners in knee breeches raggy shirts, waist coats etc for act one and striped tee shirts, raggy pants and sandals, perhaps sailor hats, or head scarves for acts two and three.

The officers on the ship need some sort of uniform preferably red with lots of gold braid and black and gold hats, lace cuffs and jabot. Francois may wear really outrageous modern gym wear with his uniform hat for the jazzercise class.

Above all have fun with the script.....we did!

SUGGESTED MUSIC

1. Rule Britannia, or There'll Always be an England,
2. Dead march.. or The Wiffenpoof Song.
3. Pick a pocket or Two, or Kids
4. It's the Sayme the Whole World Over,
5. Road to Gundagai. or The Dog sat on the Tuckerbox, any Australian Medley
6. Sailing South.
7. Ship Ahoy, or In the Navy or We Joined the Navy.
8. Sonny Boy or Mother.
9. Heaven Help us All, Music Men of Harleich.
10. William Tell Overture.
11. Boiled Beef and Carrots or any song about food.
12. Gentle Art of Seduction or any Girl Song.
13. My God How the Money Rolls In.
14. Fame or Give Me a Home Among the Gum Trees.

N.B. THIS SCRIPT IS TEXT ONLY. The play may be performed with or without music. The above songs are suggestions only as to the type of song suitable. Copyright permission if applicable should be sought from the appropriate publishers of any songs used.

Sailing South

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Act One.

The scene is set in a court-room in old England a rostrum upstage right with a high stool for the judge and a long bench for the prisoners. The audience become the public gallery.

MUSIC NO 1OVERTURE.....

SCENE ONE

(The clerk enters.. Ringing hand bell...)

CLERK: Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! *(Drops hand bell.)* Oh, No! *(Retrieves hand bell.)* Silence in the Court! Silence in the Court! It's not funny I think I've bent me donger! *(Rings bell tentatively.)* Testing, testing..... Right , now where was I?..Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!....All ye here present pay attention and give heed to..
(Reads aloud from official looking document)

The court of Her Majesty Queen Victoria The First; In this year of our Lord Eighteen Hundred and fifty-two.... His Worship The Right Honourable Judge Useless B. Macdonald, *(Peers myopically at document)*... Sorry make that Eustace B. Macdonald, now presiding. Pray all remain seated.....!

MUSIC.....*dead march, or there'll always be an England.*

THE PLAYERS:-

MABEL Poisoner/cook
CHARLOT Lady of the Night
DENISE Stuck-up would be Lady/prisoner
SALLY Young Tart/prisoner
POLLY Young naive prisoner
LAVINIA Could be a Dame...Mother of Eustace
EUSTACE Judge/Captain
FRANCOIS Lawyer/Purser
BOSUN Clerk/Bosun
TOBY Pickpocket/Prisoner
BEN Gullible Cabin Boy

CHORUS OF MALE AND FEMALE PRISONERS
OPTIONAL.

(Enter the judge perhaps through the audience, handkerchief to nose and casting disdainful looks at the audience as he approaches the bench)

JUDGE: *(Referring to the audience.)* Oh, My! What a dubious looking assortment we have here before us today. Scruffy unwashed illiterate looking lot,.... dirty fingernails, shifty beady little eyes, guilt written all over them.

CLERK: *(Stage whisper.)* 'Scuse me Your Worship.

JUDGE: *(Moves out into audience)* One really wonders what the world is coming to.....!

(Stops and singles out audience member)

Dear God! Just look at this one here! I'm sure I saw that face on (...*T. V. Most Wanted...*) On (...*Channel.....*) The dark brooding brow, the eyes set much too close together, the twisted cruel mouth the typical criminal sallow skin.....

CLERK: *(Louder stage whisper)* 'Scuse me Your Worship.

JUDGE: Look at that shirt, probably stolen *(Examines shirt closely)*Yes, definitely stolen!..... From (.....*Cheap Chain Store.....*) By the look of it..... And that phoney disguise.... The fake moustache..etc, etc, moth eaten wig, .. etc. etc.

CLERK: *(Stage whisper.)* 'Scuse me Your Worship.....

These here ain't the accused Your Worship.

JUDGE: Oh?

CLERK: *(Stage whisper)* These here lot is the public spectators your worship.

JUDGE: Oh?...Oh! The public spectators? Of course, of course. The public spectators....! As I was saying er, er, Fine upstanding looking lot of Citizens.....

(Judge hastily returns to stage)

CLERK: If it please your worship....Shall I present the first defendant?

JUDGE: Very well....If you must...! Oh, Just a minute Clerk.

(produces mirror from desk, checks wig adjusts robe dusts chair and sits at rostrum.)

CLERK: Shall I present the defendant now Your Worship?

JUDGE: Is this to be a jury trial?

CLERK: No, Your worship, just your usual petty crimes today.

JUDGE: Oh! *(Disappointed.)* I do so enjoy the jury selection. All those handsome men parading before the bench.... I say did you notice that gorgeous hunk of a foreman on the Murder jury last week? Actually they were all pretty spiffing. Talk about a hung jury!

CLERK: *(Has coughing fit.)* The prisoners await your Worship!

JUDGE: *(Sigh)* Very well, don't rush me. I hope there's not too many of them today , I have an appointment with my hairdresser at three. *(Produces mirror, mouth spray or nail file, toothpick or other ridiculous item.)*

CLERK: Steffan?

JUDGE: No actually I think I'll have it softened this time for a change.*(Admires hair style in mirror)*

CLERK: *(Aside to audience)* Cor Blimey! Don't half fancy his-self this one, No wonder they calls him Your Worship, he certainly does, not half!

JUDGE: *(Checks reflection in hand mirror)* I do so hate wearing black, not my colour at all, doesn't do a thing for me. *(Finishes primping, puts tools away)* So very unflattering! *(Sigh)..*Summon the prisoners.

CLERK: *(Ringing handbell)* Bring in the Prisoners! *(Enter Toby, Ben, , Denise , Charlot, Polly and Sally)*

MUSIC No.2.....

(Forward Denise and Charlot, others sit on bench)

JUDGE: And what are the charges?

CHARLOT: Well, Judgie Wudgie what I charges usually depends on what you wants!

CLERK: This lot here is charged with prostitution Your Worship.

CHARLOT: Well, I could have told him that!

(Sally wails Loudly)

CLERK: Silence in the court.*(Sally cries quietly)*

DENISE: I'm not a prostitute Your Worship. I was raped!

JUDGE: This is a very serious accusation. When did the alleged rape take place?

DENISE: Last Tuesday week your Worship.

JUDGE: Good grief woman! Why haven't you reported the matter sooner?

DENISE: *(Confidingly)* Well I didn't know it was rape until his cheque bounced, did I!

CHARLOT: *(To audience)* She's always puttin' on airs and graces that one. Tryin' to pretend she's better than the rest of us.

DENISE: That's not true! I'm a Lady I am!

CHARLOT: Wouldn't know the meaning of the word.

DENISE: You take that back you Hussy!

(Charlot and Denise push each Other and a scuffle develops, Sally wails loudly)

CLERK: Order! Order in the court!

CHARLOT: Hussy, is it!

DENISE: That's putting it politely!

(Sally cries noisily Polly comforts her, Toby and Ben applaud, Judge bangs gavel on bench, Clerk rings handbell)

CLERK: Order! Order in the...*(Drops hand bell)*...Oh Drat!
(All stop to watch clerk retrieve and examine bell)

JUDGE: How many times do I have to tell you Clerk! Don't let your dingle dongle dangle in the dirt!

CLERK: Sorry! *(Examines bell)* I think I've cracked me clacker! *(All laugh)*

JUDGE: Order! Order! *(Bangs gavel on bench and hits clerks fingers)* Order in the court! The next person to disrupt these proceedings will be thrown out of this courtroom!

TOBY: Doo, Dah Doo Dah! etc.....

(Starts tap-dancing towards the door singing loudly)

CLERK: *(Forcing Toby back to his place)* Nice try! But you're not going any-where!

(Denise and Charlot laugh, Judge bangs gavel on rostrum)

JUDGE: As for you lot.... This is no laughing matter... Guilty as charged! Sentenced to transportation to the colonies, fourteen years! Each! Next Prisoner!

(Bangs Gavel on rostrum as Clerk ushers Charlot and Denise back to bench)