

The
Madrigal Dinner

By Kevin Kelleher

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The author has written this show with versatility in mind. Every character can be played by either male or female actors and scenes are listed alphabetically to allow for easy manipulation and re-organization should the script be altered. Feel free to add or cut whatever is necessary in order to show off your theatrical group's strengths. For example, all of the sung musical selections can be cut or performed like a choral reading if musicality is not desired, or more songs could be added to create a themed choir concert. It is entirely up to you.

SCENE LIST:

A – WELCOME

SONG 1, "PRAISE BE TO GOD"

B – POEM READING

C – GRAND ENTRANCE OF NOBILITY

SONG 2, "ROYAL FANFARE AND PROCESSIONAL"

D – KING'S TOAST

SONG 3, "WASSAIL CAROL"

E – FRIAR'S BLESSING AND FIRST COURSE

SONG 4, "PRAISE BE TO GOD" FIRST REPRISE

F – DINING RULES

G – MAIN COURSE

SONG 5, "PRAISE BE TO GOD" SECOND REPRISE

SONG 6, "BOAR'S HEAD CAROL"

H – DINNER BANTER

I – DESSERT

SONG 7, "PRAISE BE TO GOD" THIRD REPRISE

J – MADRIGAL

SONG 8, "MAKE HASTE!"

K – THE STORYTELLING

L – ENTERTAINMENT

SONG 9, "MINE LOVE IS A SWEETLY MEDIOCRE MAIDEN"

M – FAREWELL

SONG 10, "PRAISE BE TO GOD" FOURTH REPRISE

SONG 11, "RECESSIONAL"

CHARACTER LIST:

JESTER.....Master of Ceremonies (27 lines, lead role)

KING HENRY/QUEEN ISABELLE.....Host of Dinner (47 lines, principle role)

THE BARD OF GALWAY.....Royal Storyteller (24 lines, principle role)

LORD FUMBLETON/

LADY FUMBLEMORE.....Royal Word-Smith (8 lines, supporting role)

FRIAR LAWRENCE XAVIER/

SISTER ROSEMARY ELIZABETH.....Monk or Nun (8 lines, supporting role)

LORD WILLIAM WILLIAMS/

LADY MARGARET PEGGY.....Redundant Royal Aid (6 lines, supporting role)

LORD/LADY CANTERBURY.....Noble (6 lines, supporting role)

QUEEN ISABELLE/KING HENRY.....Spouse of KING/QUEEN (3 lines)

PRINCE ARTEMIS.....Son of the King and Queen (1 line)

LADY FALLOWMORE.....Noble (No lines)

LORD/LADY HERRINGBONE.....Noble (No lines)

LADY PENNYWHISTLE.....Noble (No lines)

SIR GEORGE.....Noble (No lines)

LADY GRETCHEN.....Noble (No lines)

SIR EARL.....Baron of Duke (No lines)

LORD DUKE.....Earl of Barrin (No lines)

SIR BYRON.....Duke of Earl (No lines)

Extras to include:

Nobles to sit at head table

SATB Choir (if desired)

Stagehands (at least two)

Food Preparation/Serving Personnel

Two planted audience members, if desired

NOTE: Number of lines is only a guide; some lines are much longer than others. Additionally, the lead and principle roles should be prepared to improvise – especially when dealing with the audience.

A – WELCOME

Lights are dim, JESTER enters. He/she speaks with an unnecessarily-whimsical English accent.

JESTER:

Good eve to all and welcome! May the blessings of the Lord be with you all on this very hallowed night... and may the woes and pains, sorrows and grievances, anguishes and torments, despairs and miseries, wretches, cruelties and agonies.... and all those other general little nastinesses of life be parted from you this night. I am the jester of the court of King Henry* the nine-hundred and forty-secondthdt...

(JESTER accidentally spits on him/herself)

and tonight I shall be your master of ceremonies!

(Bows)

**[KING HENRY may be substituted with QUEEN ISABELLE, if female, or lines may be divided between the two.]*

It is whenceupon this very morrow's eve that your taste-buds shall be delighted and your ear-holes enchanted. Let it be known that a marvelous feast awaits prepared for you all, and its delicious succulence is so ridiculously magnificent it can be rivaled only by biblical manna delivered directly from the hand of our heavenly Father, God Almighty!! ...It is, of course, prepared by our most humble chefs with the utmost humility and reverence for the Lord.

SONG 1, "PRAISE BE TO GOD"

JESTER: PRAISE BE TO GOD,

CHOIR: FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW.

B – POEM READING

JESTER:

And now comes the much anticipated entrance into our night of frolic and fancy – it is time for a few verses of rhyming whimsy, as scribed by our very own poetic word-smith, Lord Fumbleton!*

**[Lord Fumbleton can be replaced with Lady Fumblemore, if female.]*

Lord Fumbleton/Lady Fumblemore stumbles onstage with a PIECE OF PARCHMENT PAPER. He/she is unkempt and dumpy and speaks with a whiny Cockney accent.

FUMBLETON/FUMBLEMORE:

'Ello, all. I wrote this me-self.

(Clears throat, reads from PARCHMENT:)

Welcome all ye who have come from afar,
braving highwaymen to dine with us.
Most of you probably came here in a car –
if not, maybe a train or plane or bus.

(Smiles dumbly with pride, chuckles a little)

It is my honor to read you this poem;
we plan on tickling your funny bone.
Tonight you won't soon forget, I do believe,
you're about to have a wonderful eve...ning.

(Furrows brow in confusion; looks more closely at parchment paper. Reads on:)

With song and verse, with rhyme and wit,
let us entertain you for a bit.

We'll try not to keep you past your curfews,
but we're eager to share our beautiful mus...ic.

(Shuffles uncomfortably; chuckles awkwardly at audience. Glares very closely at parchment and reads on:)

Um... I could rhyme all night if I wanted to be a prig,
because my vocabulary is extremely...

(smugly:)

...big.

But I would not be a servant who is loyal
if I didn't introduce our much-loved royal...ty.

(Becomes enraged with parchment and tears it up. Forces a big smile at audience.)

Lords and Ladies! May I introduce to you, the royal Court of King Henry!*

(Throws parchment bits into the air.)

**[This final line may be given to JESTER, in the event that B is omitted.]*

Lights come up.

C – GRAND ENTRANCE OF NOBILITY

SONG 2, “ROYAL FANFARE AND PROCESSIONAL”

NOBILITY enters during PROCESSIONAL. They process in couples, KING and QUEEN first.

As the NOBILITY arrives at the head table they remain standing. Other members of the CHOIR can file in with the procession or from any other location to take their places for the dinner.

JESTER:

(Introducing the NOBILITY as they become visible:)

King Henry the nine-hundred and forty-secondthdt and Queen Isabelle!*

**[If the larger role is to be female, substitute names thusly: “Queen Isabelle the nine-hundred and forty-secondthdt and King Henry!”]*

His Majesty’s son, Prince Artemis* and Lady Fallowmore!

**[PRINCE may be played by either a male or female actor.]*

PRINCE:

Please, just call me Artemis. I don’t need that title.

JESTER:

All right... the “Artemis” formerly known as “Prince,” and Lady Fallowmore!
Lord Canterbury and Lady Herringbone!*

**[If the speaking part is to be female, substitute names thusly: “Lord Herringbone and Lady Canterbury!”]*

Friar Lawrence Xavier and Lady Elizabeth Rosemary!*

**[If the speaking part is to be female, substitute names thusly: “Lord Lawrence Xavier and Sister Elizabeth Rosemary!”]*

The Bard of Galway and Lady Pennywhistle!
Sir George the Valiant and Lady Gretchen!
Lord William Williams the Redundant and Lady Margaret Peggy!*

**[If the speaking part is to be female, substitute names thusly: “Lord William Williams and Lady Margaret Peggy, the Redundant!”]*

Sir Earl, the Baron of Duke, Lord Duke, the Earl of Barrin and Sir Byron, the Duke of Earl! All rise and hear your lord, the gracious King Henry!

AUDIENCE rises.

D – KING’S TOAST

KING/QUEEN:

Lords and Ladies... serfs and nobles...

(To two nearby AUDIENCE MEMBERS:)

...And you two, whoever you are.

(To AUDIENCE:)

Welcome to my very big castle! In this hall tonight we shall make merry and feast together, but first, it is ceremonious and proper that I offer a toast.

[If the rest of this scene is omitted, the following may be substituted before SONG 3, “WASSAIL CAROL”:]

KING/QUEEN:

Please raise your goblets.

(AUDIENE does)

May you live long, may you be healthy, and may God smile upon your good fortune. Let us toast to one another!

ALL:

Wassail!

ALL extend GLASSES and drink.]

Since I am a man of very few words, I shall call upon the translational skills of one of my royal aids, Lord William Williams*, the Redundant. Lord William, are you here?

**[Lord William Williams can be substituted for Lady Margaret Peggy, if female.]*

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

Yes, milord, I am present and here.

KING/QUEEN:

Good. You will help me offer a toast to our esteemed guests.

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

I would be honored and venerated, sire.

(Bows.)

(To WILLIAM/MARGARET:)

If you please, Lord Williams....

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

(To AUDIENCE:)

His majesty hereby elevates his goblet, proffered in allegorical accolade, to those of you in receipt of the following well wishes, and bids you gesture similarly as insignia of your equal measure of faith....

(Looks to KING/QUEEN to continue)

KING/QUEEN opens his mouth to speak but pauses, dumbfounded by the translation. He turns to his spouse, QUEEN/KING for clarification.

QUEEN/KING:

(Explains to KING/QUEEN:)

‘Please raise your goblets.’

KING/QUEEN:

Ah!

(Raises goblet, to AUDIENCE:)

Please raise your goblets.

ALL raise goblets.

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

...may your karma include assurance endowing a lifespan of an unnaturally elongated nature,

KING/QUEEN is again baffled and, after a pause of thought, turns to QUEEN/KING for help.

QUEEN/KING:

(To KING/QUEEN:)

‘May you live long.’

KING/QUEEN:

(To AUDIENCE:)

May you live long!

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

...may your aforementioned fate also include an element of physical vigor and, aside from longevity, a general state of well-being perpetuating through the previously said (and correspondingly desired for) duration of survival,

KING/QUEEN is really confused after this one and looks right to his spouse for another translation.

QUEEN/KING:

(To KING/QUEEN, now unsure herself:)

‘May you be healthy...?’

KING/QUEEN:

(Mimicking his spouse’s uncertainty, to AUDIENCE:)

May you be healthy...!?

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

...may the precursory two entreaties be supplemented by a third and ultimate hope that your destiny will include any or all of the following facets: Article one-A, may you --

KING/QUEEN:

(Interrupting WILLIAM/MARGARET:)

-- Thank you very much, Lord William, your redundancy has been most appreciated.

WILLIAM/MARGARET:

Yes, of course, your highness.

(Bows)

KING/QUEEN:
(To AUDIENCE:)

Let us toast to one another!

ALL:

Wassail!

ALL raise GOBLETS and drink.

SONG 3, "WASSAIL CAROL"

CHOIR: WASSAIL, WASSAIL ALL OVER THE TOWN
OUR TOAST IT IS WHITE AND OUR ALE IS BROWN
OUR BOWL IT IS MADE OF THE WHITE MAPLE TREE
WITH THE WASSAIL BOWL WE'LL DRINK UNTO THEE

COME, BUTLER, COME FILL US A BOWL OF THE BEST
THEN WE HOPE THAT YOUR SOUL IN HEAVEN MAY REST
BUT IF YOU DO DRAW US A BOWL OF THE SMALL
THEN DOWN SHALL GO BUTLER, SMALL BOWL AND ALL

WASSAIL, WASSAIL ALL OVER THE TOWN
OUR TOAST IT IS WHITE AND OUR ALE IS BROWN
OUR BOWL IT IS MADE OF THE WHITE MAPLE TREE
WITH THE WASSAIL BOWL WE'LL DRINK UNTO THEE

[Optional extra verses can be found in Score.]