

Billy Budd



'BILLY BUDD'

by Louis O. Cox and Robert Chapman

BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY

This play was written by Louis O' Cox and Robert Chapman this century and was first performed in 1949. But the story is based on Herman Melville's sea tale of 'Billy Budd'. According to Melville, absolute good and absolute evil cannot live in this world together, for human life is a compromise that follows the middle way. Cox and Chapman found this theme ideal for a morality play.

The play's action takes place on a British warship in 1798. History tells us that one year earlier in Britain, 1797, there were mutinies where sailors refused to put to sea until they obtained fair wages, sufficient food or decent quality and better medical service. Although Cabinet had granted these demands, when our play opens conditions were little improved.

PLAY SYNOPSIS

It is a morality play centering on the conflict between impressed man Billy Budd, who is the personification of good and innocence, and John Claggart, the Master at Arms, a cruel, vicious man bent on breaking Billy.

Although the main conflict is between good and evil, there is also tension between officer and men—a result of unrest in the British navy at this time.

The First Act introduces Billy to life on board H.M.S. 'Indomitable' and shows the stirrings of antagonism between Billy and Claggart, and officers and crew.

In Act Two Billy has settled into ship life and is highly regarded by both the captain and the shipmates. Although Billy thwarts an attempt on Claggart's life, he is later severely provoked into killing the Master at Arms.

Act Three revolves around the courtmarshal and punishment of Billy.

CAST

Edward Fairfax Vere; Captain Royal Navy	....	....	ROBERT LANGTON
Philip Michael Semour; First Officer	....	....	GARRY BRIAN
John Ratcliffe; First Lieutenant	....	....	PHILIP SHOEMACK
Bordman Wyatt; Sailing Master	....	....	MICHAEL KINGSFORD
Gardiner; Midshipman	....	....	MURRAY WIGGINS
Surgeon:	....	....	DAVID CARR
John Claggart; Master at Arms	....	....	CHRIS HYLAND
Squeak; Master at Arms' Man	....	....	GORDON HODGES
The Dansker; Mainmast Man	....	....	FRANZ-MIKAEL JANSEN
Jenkins; Captain of the Maintop	....	....	IAN BAKER
Payne; Maintopman	....	....	MATTHEW McLEAN
Kinkaid; Maintopman	....	....	DAVID SETON
O'Daniel; Maintopman	....	....	ALAN CLAYTON
Butler; Maintopman	....	....	GEOFFREY GREEN
Talbot; Mizzentopman	....	....	DAVID RITCHIE
Jackson; Maintopman	....	....	MARK CHAMPION
Billy Budd; Foretopman	....	....	GARY TOMS
Hallam; A Marine	....	....	ANDREW JENKS
Messboy	....	....	JEFF BRAID
Stoll	....	....	CRAIG MARTIN
Duncan	....	....	RODNEY CORLETT
Drummer	....	....	ARAPATA MEHA
Marine	....	....	JOHN McHARDY
Sailor	....	....	CRAIG McCRACKEN

THE PRODUCTION

Producer	.....	Mr. J. CHAPLIN
Properties	.....	Mr. T. REID, PETER WEBBY.
Stage Manager	.....	KENNETH MAYS.
Set Design and Construction, and Stage Crew	.....	Mr. R. DUNNINGHAM, Mr. K. TRIMBLE, Mr. D. HIGGINS, KENNETH MAYS, BRUCE GADD, GARRY SPENCE, TIM GRINDELL, BILL SHIRRAS, ROSS DYSART, GREG IRELAND, PETER WEBBY, ROBERT LANGTON, IAN HILL, PAUL DOWNER, MURRAY WIGGINS, STEPHEN LOGAN, JOHN McHARDY, ALAN KALE, DERECK McCARTHY, JOHN CRERAR, PATRICK PORTAS, DEREK McKILLOP.
Lighting	.....	GRAEME BEATTIE, PETER HENDERSON, DEREK WILLIS, ALAN McCracken, MICHAEL DANIELL, JOHN DENT, ROSS BELL.
Prompt	.....	CHRISTOPHER MUCALO
Costumes	.....	Mrs. E. ANDERSON, Mrs. T. BRAID
Make-up	.....	Mr. W. CLARKE, Mrs. P. WADDELL, Mrs. L. PHILLIPS, Mrs. M. STAYT.
Call Boy	.....	IAN MOSLEY
Posters	.....	MARK HOUGH
Programme Design	.....	MATTHEW McLEAN
Programme	.....	GARY TOMS, DAVID SETON
Front of House	.....	Mr. G. HEATON
Sound	.....	DAVID ROWELL, MALCOLM ABERNETHY, TIM OAKS.
Special Effects	.....	RODNEY DANN, HUGH MONTEITH, VAUGHAN HICKSON.
Acknowledgements	.....	TOMOANA PLAYERS — LIGHTS. LOVELL-SMITH'S — PHOTOGRAPHS.