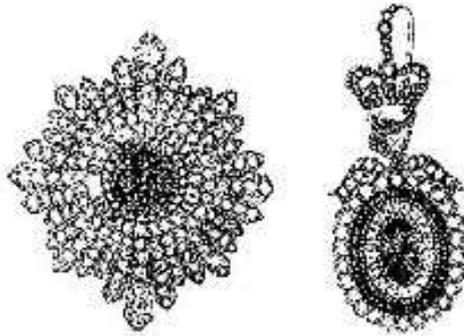


# A Gay Century



## **1907/9: The Jewels**

*A vaudeville of vengeance*

Libretto by Peter Scott-Presland

Music by Robert Ely

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## Cast

1. Sir Arthur Vicars 45 (Bass-Baritone)  
A silly, fussy, self-important queen with a liking for dressing up; [Top left] *doubles with* Edward VII 66, fat, bearded, booming but petulant. Accustomed to getting own way.
2. Lord Ronald Gower 64 (Mezzo Soprano)  
A dreamy, otherworldly but very rich queen; [Top right] *doubles with* Policeman – Servant – English Pawnbroker French Pawnbroker.  
*[The extent of his doubling is a running joke]*
3. Frank Shackleton 26 (Tenor)  
Very slim, suave and handsome. Unscrupulous exploiter of gay men and older women [Top middle]
4. Balladeer Any age. (Baritone)  
*doubles with* Robert Ross 39 Plump, balding, good dresser. Well organised. Iron will beneath campy manner.
5. Captain Gorges 33 (Bass)  
A wild flaming dangerous man with a quick temper and no scruples. Silent film villain, non-singing  
*doubles with* Inspector John Kane 40-ish. Evenin' all.

## Setting

Bare stage; multiple scenes. The opera incorporates elements of vaudeville/circus, and of silent movies. Strong parodic melodrama, with moments of seriousness. Silent movies created by revolving wheel in front of spotlight, for flicker effect.

A small table on which sit the 'jewels'<sup>1</sup> and a coupe of champagne covered by a dark cloth. To one side, on a stand, is a bottle of champagne in a wine cooler.

## Instrumentation

Piano, Violin

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<sup>1</sup> The Irish Crown Jewels should be represented by something grotesque, such as a string of pantomime sausages adorned with twinkling lights.

## **PART ONE**

### **PROLOGUE**

*Bare stage. A small table on which sit the 'jewels' and a coupe of champagne, covered with a dark cloth. To one side, on a stand, is a bottle of champagne in a wine cooler.*

*During a violin cadenza the BALLADEER enters and removes the dark cloth revealing the 'jewels' then turns to the audience:*

BALLADEER:       Gather round while I sing you a story that's old.  
                      Resolve you a mystery that's never been told  
                      How the Irish Crown Jewels were wafted away  
                      And no-one knows where they are to this day.

                      Some said they were stolen for personal gain.  
                      Others said 'No, it was men of Sinn Fein'  
                      To show up the British, the gov'nment and crown  
                      And the vice ring of nancies in old Dublin Town.

                      The Home Rulers said it was Carson to blame,  
                      Who'd led for the Crown as he wrecked Oscar's name.  
                      Now his Unionists plotted to scupper Home Rule  
                      With a drunken old Mary they'd use as a tool.

                      In nineteen-oh-seven the Medieval Tower  
                      Was home to some queers - such a terrible shower!  
                      They spent their time groping in each other's knickers.  
                      And Dublin's chief groper was Sir Arthur Vicars.

### **SCENE ONE**

*As the BALLADEER exits, VICARS enters wearing very silly finery, carrying a feather duster. He does a little skipping dance. [A kind of camp Morris.]*

VICARS:            I love my job, I'm the Ulster King of Arms.  
                      The Minister for Ireland saw my charms.  
                      I could fashion ceremonials,  
                      Impress these poor colonials  
                      And fill the Irish peasants with alarm.

*[He dusts the 'jewels' on the table]*

These are my pretty, oh so very pretty jewels.  
Nothing but em'ralds on the Star;  
And sparklers – they're Brazilian -  
Together worth a million.  
They'd buy an awful lot of caviar.

Here is the badge of the Head of the Order,  
More lovely em'ralds set round the border  
And rubies in the centre.  
Locked in here where none can enter  
Safe from any murderous marauder.

*[He plays with the 'jewels']*

See how they glow  
Laid in a row.  
See how they shine  
They're mine, all mine

*[He takes a coupe of champagne from the table and drinks.]*

## **SCENE TWO**

*FRANK enters – he addresses the audience:*

FRANK: Not so fast my fine feathered fairy,  
Your pride is coming before a fall.  
When I'm through with you  
They'll make a splendid haul.  
Payment for the years  
At your beck and call.  
As Dublin Herald, junior,  
My status so much punier.

VICARS: A Royal visit!  
The king is coming,  
His gracious Maj.  
I'll parade in my finery,

Wear my badge.  
I'll have a pretty ritual,  
Sure to astound,  
Devised to make it fit you all  
And boss you all around.

FRANK: All these years you made me strip you.  
Forced me – oh the shame! – to whip you.  
I didn't enjoy it at all.

VICARS: The jewels, my jewels  
All there to see  
Though everyone's really  
Looking at me.

*[He continues drinking and caressing the 'jewels', dancing and becoming more and more unsteady.]*

FRANK: Now these years will pay off.  
Flattering the fairies in Dublin Castle.  
There are so many  
Dancing in a daisy chain.

VICARS: I love my work,  
My heraldry,  
My pretty jewels  
My lovely castle  
With its lovely walls

FRANK: Tied up in the cellars,  
The dungeons finally have a use again.

VICARS: And lovely – ooh! – dungeons.  
*[He giggles at the idea of the dungeons]*

FRANK: Hail, Sodom and Begorrah!  
  
I have wormed my way in  
With fresh-faced country boys.  
Pure and new in town  
Dazzled by the spectacle;

And by the odd half crown.  
I have sounded out the police,  
A fine upstanding body.  
Upstanding in every way  
And very obliging with their favours.  
The best of boys and men I can reward  
By taking them across the sea  
To Lord Ronald Gower, in London.

*[Gower pops round the corner (stage right) – to audience, very camp]*

GOWER: That's me in a beard!

*[He disappears as the BALLADEER pops round the opposite corner}*

BALLADEER: Gower, son of the Duke of Sutherland,  
His sisters married Dukes and Royalty. Ah..

*[He exits]*

FRANK: I move in the highest circles  
In that other land.  
Gower's such a generous man  
To me and to them.  
And thus I shall advance  
Through homosexual vice rings  
Which form concentric circles.

*[He slinks up behind VICARS and clutches him seductively]*

You look ravishing in your uniform.  
I never could resist a uniform.  
Come have another,  
Drink deep, drink deep

*[VICARS, now quite drunk, drinks deeply]*

*[Aside to audience]*

Soon I'll have him fast asleep

*[To VICARS]*

My dear, you're looking quite worn out,

You're working far too hard,  
You'll wear yourself to pieces  
If you're not on your guard.  
Won't you have a little lie down?

VICARS: *[Drunk]* I want to dance! I want to dance! Ah!

*[FRANK, suggestive, slaps VICAR's bottom]:*

VICARS: Ow-ow!

FRANK: Later I'll give you a little tie-down!

*[VICARS attempts to dance with FRANK]*

VICARS: Ooh!

*[VICARS collapses in a drunken sleep into FRANK's arms. FRANK gently lays him down on the floor.]*

FRANK: Sleep you well, my pretty.  
Now I can rob you.

*[He reaches into VICAR's pockets... VICARS responds in his sleep to the groping.]*

Rob you of your most precious burden.

*[FRANK pulls out a set of keys which he holds up in triumph.]*

*[To audience – whispered in a loud growl]*

Your keys!

I will not steal the jewels now.  
I need an alibi.  
I will have them copied  
For my croney, Richard Gorges

I knew him in the Boer War,  
We were both cashiered  
From the Army.

But Gorges is far worse than me,  
He raped a little drummer boy  
Where I only seduced one.

When I have the jewels  
I will pawn them.  
Pay off all my debts  
And give my brother,  
Ernest Shackleton  
Hero and explorer,  
Enough to fund his dream;  
His latest expedition

*[He prepares to leave]*

To the frozen far Antarctic.

*[Exits. A brief blackout in which VICARS gets up, places the 'jewels' on the table, and lies down again.]*

## **INTERLUDE**

*BALLADEER enters:*

BALLADEER:       So Shackleton fled back to old London Town.  
                          He left Richard Gorges to shake Vicars down.  
                          Who crept to the Tower under cover of night,  
                          While the PO-lis who guard it kept well out of sight.

*[He exits]*

## **Silent film - Pantomime**

*[Flickering projector.*

*GORGES creeps in with the keys, which he jangles. He mimes a strong room door, jangles the keys and selects one turning it elaborately in the strong room door, which he mimes opening. He slaps his hands and encourages 'Boos' from the audience.*

*About to step into the strong room he sees the dormant VICARS and puts his fingers to his lips for silence. Exaggerating caution, he steps over VICARS. Eelaborately, he looks left, then right... another key to open the safe. Gingerly, he reaches across the table to take the 'jewels' and snatches them triumphantly. He steps back over VICARS making to*

*leave. A Dublin POLICEMAN pokes his head around the corner. GORGES kisses him passionately, drops him and exits with the 'jewels'. The POLICEMAN disappears as VICARS awakens and struggles to stand. He has a terrible hangover.]*

### **SCENE THREE**

VICARS: Oh... Oh... my head, my head!  
I wish I were dead.  
So low have I sunk -  
I must stop getting drunk.  
*[Sudden realisation]*  
The King! The King arrives today  
On the Royal visit.

*[A comedy servant comes in and notices the bare table. Total shock. Mimes to VICARS that the jewels are missing. VICARS ignores him.]*

I must rehearse the Irish peers  
To greet him properly.

All their robes and finery  
Must be totally correct.  
His Majesty King Edward  
Is a stickler for protocol,  
Worse even than his mother.  
It comes from living in her shadow.

*[The servant's mime gets more desperate and hysterical.]*

What is it? Not now.  
I have affairs of state to think of.  
I trust Lord Aberdeen has learnt his lines.  
Tradition is so important  
That's why I invented this one

*[The Servant tugs at his sleeve]*

I said not now.

I've a stomach coming on  
This worry feeds my ulcer

*[The Servant tugs more aggressively.]*

What!?

*[Servant points at the empty table. VICARS does a double take]*

VICARS: My jewels! My jewels!

*[He faints.]*

## **BLACKOUT**

### **PART TWO**

#### **PROLOGUE**

*[The actions during the prologue are mimed to more silent film. EDWARD is a cartoon figure – pillow under shirt for stomach, obvious false beard, cardboard crown.]*

*[Silent film (over the BALLADEER). EDWARD mimes instructions to JOHN KANE, of Scotland Yard. (Keystone cop.) KANE looks everywhere in speeded up motion. Searches the audience. Stops someone crossing the stage, makes him turn out his pockets, drop his trousers, cavity search etc – but comic.]*

BALLADEER: So Edward arrived, and he raged and he roared  
When he found that a burglar had stolen his hoard.  
He ordered the jewels be found, come what may,  
And given back quickly – he'd brook no delay.

*He leaves as FRANK and LORD GOWER enter.*

#### **SCENE ONE**

FRANK: *[spiv-like]* Want to buy some nice crown jewels?

GOWER: What would I do with crown jewels?

FRANK: They're going cheap. Worth eighty grand  
But to you – forty.  
You've got the money, you know you have.  
Look at that. Look at them shine  
Gleam and glitter. Glitter.

GOWER: *[Tempted]* They could be mine.

FRANK: Think of the revenge.  
All your life he has tormented you -  
Bertie, that pot-bellied profligate pig,  
Despised you, accused you,  
Roundly abused you.  
Said you misused  
And perverted his son

GOWER: He did! He was very rude.  
I had to slap his wrist.

FRANK: Banished you from court.

GOWER: His mama would not have done that.  
She called me 'Her dear Ronald'.

FRANK: So get your own back.  
Have the Irish jewels....

*[He dangles them before GOWER, who, mesmerised, reaches out his hand towards them. A whistle offstage makes them freeze.]*

***Silent film***

*Enter KANE, who initiates comic chase after FRANK in circles round a bemused GOWER. Eventually, FRANK flees off stage, so KANE turns on GOWER, who puts up his hands in horror and flees with KANE in hot pursuit. Re-enter FRANK.]*

FRANK: Gower will not have the jewels  
He says they are too hot.  
I must have cash, by hook or crook –  
What choices have I got?

## **SCENE TWO**

*[English PAWNBROKER enters.]*

FRANK:            Ah! A pawnbroker, by his balls...  
                      Tell me, good man,  
                      What will you give for these?  
                      Highly desirable,  
                      Highly collectable.

*[PAWNBROKER starts to examine them suspiciously]*

Totally legal and  
Quite undetectable .  
Leaving the deal  
Quite unsuspectable  
For any connoisseur

*[The PAWNBROKER examines them with his eye-glass]*

Wholly delectable -

*[The whistle goes off again. Silent film. Enter KANE as before – same chase rigmarole. PAWNBROKER makes a discreet exit. FRANK flees off stage eagerly pursued by KANE. Lights fade.]*

## **INTERLUDE**

*[Lights up on BALLADEER as he enters]*

BALLADEER:    Wherever he goes, Frank is feeling the squeeze  
                      With Kane on his heels, every pawnbroker flees.  
                      As every day passes his deficit's mounting  
                      Despite all his twisting and shady accounting.

His numerous lovers conspiring to shun him.  
His numerous creditors eager to dun him  
Now the trap's closing, Frank hasn't a chance  
Unless he can cash in the jewels in France.

*[BALLADEER leaves as a French PAWNBROKER enters, carrying a three balls sign and something of like a baguette. He hangs the sign.]*

### **SCENE THREE**

PAWNBROKER: *[To Audience]*

C'est moi, c'est moi! Dans un beret.  
Je suis un autre – er – pawnbroker.  
Je prend cette baguette  
pour indiquer que je suis Français.  
Vive le France. Hurrah!

*[turning to FRANK]*

Zut alors! Que voulez-vous ?

FRANK:

Ah ! Bonjour.  
J'ai ici dans mes actuel – er - hands  
Les plus beaux - jewels - du monde.  
Ils sont si – er - pretty que vous ne pouvez pas  
Les refuser, je suis sur

PAWNBROKER:

Mon Dieu !  
Mais, these sont les plus rares specimens  
Des – emeralds - braziliennes  
Si je ne suis pas – Er - mistaken -  
Voila les célèbres – Irish - Crown Jewels  
Irlandais...  
Que tu as – Er - stolen - du château de Dublin?

FRANK:

Merde!

PAWNBROKER :

Je vous donnerai pour ces – jewels -  
- Er – Mille francs !

FRANK :

*[He looks in a little phrase book]*

A thousand?!  
Je ne peux pas – er – buy  
- E-even un petit déjeuner

Avec Mille Francs!

Cinq million francs

PAWNBROKER : Deux milles francs

FRANK : Deux million?

PAWNBROKER : Cinq milles!

FRANK : Cinq million!

PAWNBROKER : Deux milles francs.

FRANK : Cinq million!

PAWNBROKER : Deux milles!

FRANK : Cinq million Francs!

PAWNBROKER : Deux milles francs!

Deux milles!

FRANK : Ma foi!

Vous avez le – er – cheek – du diable.

Ce n'est pas assez d'argent

Pour payer le Prix

D'un – er – return ticket to Paris

Même le – er – clasp – is worth plus que ça

PAWNBROKER : Comme tu veux.

C'est pas le skin off mon nez.

Et bien – vingt mille francs

C'est mon offre finale.

Si tu n'accepterai mon offre,

Tu peux sticker tes jewels

Dans ton arse.

FRANK : Je n'ai pas une – er – choice.

Tu m'as vraiment sur un – er - barrel

PAWNBROKER : Exactement.

*[He offers his hand.]*

BOTH: *[To audience - through gritted teeth]*

I hate foreigners

*[They are about to shake hands, but there is a whistle off-stage.]*

***Silent film***

*KANE enters, chases FRANK who throws the 'jewels' to PAWNBROKER, KANE follows the 'jewels' as they are thrown to and fro. Characters freeze. Lights change from silent film.]*

**SCENE FOUR**

*Enter ROBERT ROSS pulling a cart, on which is a large teddy bear laid on top of a rich velvet cloth. (It is the corpse of OSCAR WILDE.)*

ROSS: I cleared Oscar's debts.  
His bankruptcy discharged  
Thanks to German royalties  
From Richard Strauss.  
The opera of *Salome* is decadent,  
But in German sounds quite respectable.

Enterrement de sixième classe  
En Cimetière parisien de Bagneux.  
No more the obscurity  
Of a suburban grave,  
You go now where you belong  
To Père-Lachaise  
Among the immortals of the arts  
Chopin, Molière and La Fontaine  
Bizet, Balzac, Beaumarchais.

And now, Division Eighty-nine  
On Avenue Carette,  
Oscar Wilde.  
No Bosie here today;  
Oscar is all mine now  
And soon will have  
A fine memorial.

*"And alien tears will fill for him  
Pity's long-broken urn,  
For his mourners will be outcast men,  
And outcasts always mourn."*

Inferior poetry but a fine epitaph.

*[To the Teddy Bear]*

Not long now, Oscar.  
Soon you can sleep in peace.

*[The chase unfreezes. **Silent Film***

*Continues around ROSS and OSCAR. 'Jewels' continue to change hands back and forth. As KANE finally collars FRANK, he slips the 'jewels' to ROSS, who double takes the audience, then slides them under the bear.*

*They freeze again as lights change back from silent film.*

*ROSS slowly pushes the cart past the chase group, who take take off their hats and bow their heads in respect. The PAWNBROKER collects his sign and follow ROSS off stage in mock cortège with lots of double takes and religiously crossing himself with his baguette.]*

## **SCENE FIVE**

*FRANK is left with INSPECTOR KANE who takes control in a change of mood.*

KANE: All right. Where are they?

FRANK: Where are what?

KANE: The jewels, the royal jewels

FRANK: Which jewels might those be?

KANE: You know the jewels I mean  
The Irish Jewels  
Nicked from Dublin Castle  
Two years ago

FRANK: Yes! I think I read

About it at the time.  
I was in London I believe.

KANE: I have tracked you half across Europe,  
To every pawnbroker you visited.  
Why did you go to all those pawnbrokers  
If not to pawn the jewels?  
But everyone refused you,  
They were too hot.

FRANK: If I have the jewels, where are they?  
You can search me.

KANE: I intend to.  
*[Menacing]* Stretch your arms  
And spread.

*[FRANK does so. KANE pats him down thoroughly. FRANK is ticklish. Comic business with search inside leg and crotch area. KANE is astonished at the size of FRANK's member and conveys this to the audience.]*

FRANK: Satisfied?

KANE: You must have them somewhere.  
You have hidden them.

FRANK: I have a perfect alibi for the theft.

KANE: Frank Shackleton, I arrest you  
On suspicion of robbery

FRANK: *[Intertwining]* I am innocent.  
I never stole the jewels  
I was in London

KANE: In that you did take  
The Star and the Badge  
Of the Grand Master  
Of the Order of Saint Patrick

FRANK: Ask my friends  
Ask Lord Ronald Gower  
KANE: Known as the Irish Crown Jewels.

FRANK: This is an outrage, an outrage.

I demand to see a lawyer  
Call my solicitor,  
Call Lord Ronald Gower

KANE: I must warn you  
That anything you say  
May be taken down  
And used against you.

*[KANE puts FRANK in handcuffs and takes him away.]*

FRANK: You have no evidence

KANE: I'll get the evidence

FRANK: No jewels – no proof – no charge

KANE: I'll break you yet

EACH TO OTHER: YOU SWINE!

**BLACKOUT**

## **PART THREE**

### **SCENE ONE**

*[EDWARD VII enters in a terrible, petulant temper.]*

EDWARD:                   Two years and still no jewels!  
                              What a disgrace!  
                              Two years!  
                              Why do I have policemen?

                              They are mine, too.  
                              "His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary"  
                              See? 'His Majesty' – that's me!  
                              His Majesty's Prisons too!  
                              Mine, all mine!  
                              And I want *my* police  
                              To find the thief of *my* jewels  
                              I want him tried in *my* court  
                              By *my* judges,  
                              To go to *my* prison.

                              Where is that fool Kane?  
                              I put him on the job  
                              Two years ago.  
                              I told him, Leave no stone unturned.  
                              But I hear nothing,  
                              He digs up nothing.  
                              It's not fair -  
                              I want my jewels!  
                              I want my...

*[KANE appears hauling on FRANK by the collar.]*

KANE:                    Your Majesty! Your Majesty!

*He drags FRANK to EDWARD dumping him on the floor, he bows deeply and leaves.]*

## **SCENE TWO**

EDWARD: So you are the villain who stole my jewels?

FRANK: How could I, Majesty?  
I was far away  
Across the Irish Sea,  
Here in London,  
With my good friend  
Lord Ronald Gower

EDWARD: That name again!

*[GOWER pokes his head round the corner]*

GOWER: *[To audience]* Yes, me again

EDWARD: He goads me everywhere,  
A gaudy, giddy, galling gadfly.

GOWER: Wonderful alliteration! Well done!

EDWARD: *[To FRANK]* You stayed with that notorious sodomite?

GOWER: How dare you! I am not a sodomite.

EDWARD: You are too,  
Have been for forty years.

GOWER: I'll sue the man who says so.

EDWARD: You can't, I am the King.  
So there! *[Sticks out tongue]*

FRANK: Gentlemen, gentlemen  
Truce I say.  
*[To EDWARD]*  
If you say I'm the thief, *sire!* *[ironic]*  
There'll be hell to pay.  
All the scandals the Castle has known  
Splashed in the press –

There'll be mud on the Throne.  
Your own appointee  
Lord Aberdeen,  
Governor of Ireland,  
Oft has been seen  
In the perfumed purlieus  
Of Lord Ronald Gower.  
Overripe and blousy  
In the halls of wanton power.

Then Aberdeen's son,  
The sickly Lord Haddo,  
Smothered by mother,  
A bit of a saddo.  
All of them here  
And all of the sort  
That belonged in the circle  
Where Gower held court.

Then Lorne – we've referred to  
Your brother-in-law  
Whose passions were stirred too  
By boys that he saw.  
He lingered awhile  
To be fingered awhile.  
And now in the court  
He'll be fingered again  
With all of the aristo  
Lovers of men

EDWARD: Hold! Stay! This cannot be!

Scandal, more scandal!  
Here, there and everywhere.  
Wilde and Gower,  
That infamous pair.  
The Cleveland Street scandal  
- Gower was there  
Along with Prince Albert  
My son and my heir.  
Feckless and reckless

By Gower sucked in.

FRANK: Perhaps you'd like to reword that  
There's many would laugh if they heard that?

EDWARD: Gower had to flee to France,  
Everybody looked askance  
Gave my son a telling glance.

But Albert could be fortunate,  
His father silenced and he paid off  
Rags that were importunate  
No-one would ever have known.

Then Wilde had his trials  
Despite his denials,  
And Gower had to take off  
To hinder detection.  
Though Albert was dead  
There were many who said  
He shared Lorne's – Aberdeen's -  
Haddo's too – Gower's too –  
And Wilde's ghastly predilection

Gower and his queer companions  
Twine round the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.  
Like Virginia creeper  
They will choke us all to death!

GOWER: And serve you right as well! *[Exits]*

EDWARD: This cannot be  
The monarchy is tottering.  
The Irish on the verge  
Of insurrection.  
Fenians lurk in every corner.  
Last thing I need  
Is sodomy in high places -  
Again.

FRANK: And think of your little Willie –

EDWARD: There's nothing little 'bout my –

FRANK: Your nephew Kaiser Wilhelm Two  
Of Germany, You lectured him,  
Remember all the scandals round his court  
The libel cases and revelations...  
How his chief of staff called him 'Darling'

EDWARD: Disgraceful. I told him –  
It'll bring the Hohenzollerns down.  
Take an honest mistress, just like me!  
It's far, far safer.

FRANK: And now see your own scandals  
Exploding in your face – pouf!

EDWARD: Pouf?

FRANK: Pouf!  
Imagine how they'll laugh throughout Berlin.

EDWARD: A laughing stock.

*[He stops to think for a moment then turns to address Frank]*

Shackleton, I've changed my mind  
You're free to go.  
I'll order Kane to drop all charges,  
This case is closed.  
If the jewels are lost  
It is a small price to pay  
For the future of the monarchy  
And the British Empire.

*[He turns away from FRANK – lost in thought.]*

*[As EDWARD sings to himself FRANK slowly stands to attention.]*

"Land of Hope and Glory  
Mother of the free.

How may we extol thee,  
Who are born of thee?"

*[He turns back to FRANK]*

That's my song, you know  
AC Benson wrote the words for me –  
The son of the Archbishop -

FRANK: *[to AUDIENCE]* Another of the Mary-Anns.  
Truly we are everywhere.

Your majesty, perhaps a little *douceur*...  
In exchange for keeping quiet?

EDWARD: Blackmail? Hush money?  
Don't push your luck, sonny.

**BLACKOUT**



No –  
They stay here,  
Here where they belong.

Yes, where they belong.

These philistines owe you  
For the loathing they've shown you  
Despised and rejected,  
Your honour in tatters.  
Now the future holds  
The only fame that matters.

Why should you not have them,  
These jewels, these baubles?  
Some sort of recompense  
For all the discontents.  
You were royal in your presence,  
A prince among peasants.  
And so-called royals  
Cower in your shadow.

You deserve everything  
They deserve nothing.  
This would be just,  
This would be vengeance.

Here let them slumber and never be found  
Sleeping with Oscar, safe underground.  
Where in the world should the jewels have been,  
Except by the side of the true Irish queen?

*[He places the 'jewels' on OSCAR's chest and covers the corpse with the velvet cloth. Then kneels by its side, lost in thought or prayer. Slow fade to blackout.]*

## **EPILOGUE**

*[ROSS and the BALLADEER double, so the changeover should be seen by the audience.]*

*ROSS rises from his knees, removes his jacket and hat, and changes into the BALLADEER's clothes in full view of the audience.*

*Whilst he changes, the violinist retunes, then starts the cadenza solo.]*

BALLADEER:        Thus ends a tale of an impudent crime.  
                         The whole world agog with the news at the time.  
                         The jewels are still missing, they've never been found,  
                         So they might as well lie in a hole in the ground.

                         The whale-like King Edward soon passed away.  
                         Poor Vicars was shot by the Kerry IRA.  
                         Frank swindled Lord Gower for all that he'd got

*[Inspector KANE casually enters and looks thoughtfully at the grave]*

                         And served fifteen months for his dastardly plot

KANE: *[Spoken]* Frank is buried in Chichester under a false name.  
                         On his tombstone it says 'He lived for others'.

                         Gorges, the man who actually stole the jewels,  
                         shot a policeman in 1915 but got off with twelve years.  
                         He threw himself under a train at Edgware Road  
                         station in the 1950s.

                         One member of his family commented, "The least he  
                         could have done was use a decent address, like South  
                         Kensington station."

*[KANE moves to the rear of the grave as the BALLADEER moves to the front of the stage and addresses the audience.]*

BALLADEER:        So when you're in Paris, go see Père Lachaise.  
                         Visit the tomb where Wilde's dreaming these days.  
                         Admire his memorial, perhaps lay a wreath.  
                         Imagine poor Oscar with his jewels underneath

                         His beautiful Sphinx caused an outrage back then.  
                         His testicles flaunted his queerness again,  
                         Till a gardener, a prude, in a fit of the vapours  
                         Castrated him,

*[He turns back towards the grave as VICARS, GOWER and FRANK enter individually, each carrying a plastic flower. They join KANE at the graveside.]*

Just for a weight for his papers.

*[VICARS, GOWER and FRANK lay their flowers one at a time on the teddy bear.]*

And now they're replaced – this is rather pathetic –  
With an anodyne, plastic and tasteful prosthetic.

G, F, V, K: The Jewels, the jewels

BALLADEER: Turned men into fools

GOWER: You mock at your peril  
Any Uranian.

FRANK: Without any pity  
He'll rifle your kitty

VICARS/KANE: And it too may meet

G, F, V, K: With a fate subterranean

The jewels, the jewels

BALLADEER: Turn men into fools.

VICARS: The rare sort of treasure

FRANK: For which they fight duels.

GOWER: Ponder his lost genitalia

G, F, V, K: The Jewels  
Remember the royal regalia.

BALLEDEER: Whichever you're thinking  
You're thinking of Oscar's crown jewels.

*[GOWER & VICARS and FRANK & KANE join as couples and waltz off – the BALLADEER watches, bemused.]*

**BLACKOUT - THE END**