

The **DESERT SONG**

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME
1953



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SECOND PRODUCTION

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The Desert Song

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The Book and Lyrics by

OTTO HARBACH, OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II and FRANK MANDEL

The Music by

SIGMUND ROMBERG

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Matinee, Saturday, 31st OCTOBER, 1953, at 2-30 p.m.

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DAY AND NIGHT



*A Message
from
the President*

Dear Audience,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to "The Desert Song," the Society's second production. Our previous presentation — "The Arcadians" — was a great success and its reception justified our faith in the belief that Swindon would welcome the return of amateur light operatics to the town.

In our choice of "The Desert Song" we have acceded to what might be termed "popular demand." Last year I suggested that anyone with a preference for a show and would like it to be considered for production by S.A.L.O.S. should communicate with our Hon. Secretary. The result was that we had an enormous number of requests for such shows as "The Belle of New York," "Veronique," "The Quaker Girl," "Rose Marie," and "The Vagabond King," but the most popular request was for "The Desert Song," hence our choice. I hope that you will continue to send in your suggestions — they are very welcome and indeed most helpful.

I am sure that you will enjoy our show tonight and if your visit is being made in the early part of the week, may I suggest that you tell your friends about it. The Society realises that no matter what effort is put into its productions it comes to nought without your continued support. I do appeal to all to give us that support, thereby ensuring the future of S.A.L.O.S. to play an ever-increasing part in the social life of the town.

This message is, of course, being written before the event, and I would conclude it by saying a big 'Thank you' to everyone who is in any way assisting to make this presentation the success which its sponsors hope it will be — not, of course, forgetting you, our audiences, without whom no show can commence to be successful.

Yours sincerely,

GRAHAME HILL,
President.

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The Story

Our story opens in the Riff Mountains of French Morocco and concerns a young man, Pierre Birabeau. Formerly, when a French officer, Pierre, incensed by the injustices shown by the troops when raiding villages, had disagreed with his superior officer General Fontaine who, in his rage, struck the younger man. Pierre now devotes his life to helping the unfortunate people of Morocco in their struggle for justice and in the guise of the Red Shadow is the beloved leader of a band of Riffs. He pretends that the blow he received from the General has made him stupid and no one realises that Pierre, the half-wit, and the Red Shadow are one and the same person.

His plan works very well until on the death of Fontaine the post of Governor is taken by his father, General Birabeau, who with Captain Paul Fontaine, son of the dead General, has one purpose in life—the destruction of the Red Shadow.

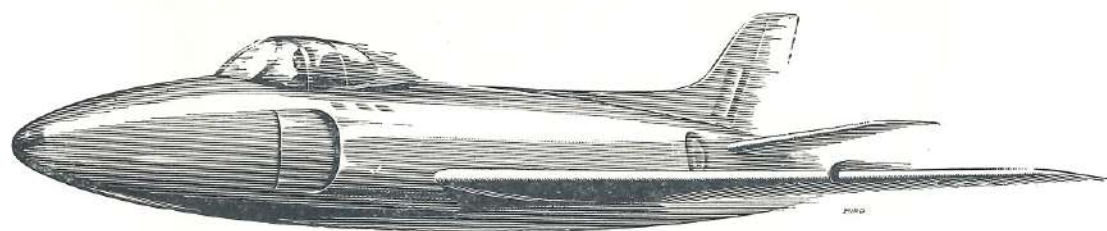
Margot Bonvalet, tiring of her life in a convent, pays a visit to General Birabeau and craving for romantic excitement finds Paul rather boring as a suitor. Meanwhile Pierre has fallen in love with Margot but realising that as a half-wit he has no chance with her, pays her a visit as the Red Shadow. Margot falls in love with him, but on the General's demand promises to marry Paul. Pierre on hearing this, kidnaps her and takes her to the palace of his friend, Ali Ben Ali.

Meanwhile Azuri, a native girl who since the arrival of Margot has lost Paul as a lover, seeks to avenge herself. Knowing Pierre's secret she sells information to the General which leads him to the palace of Ali Ben Ali. Arriving there he challenges the Red Shadow to a duel, but Pierre will not fight although refusal means the loss of his position as leader of the Riffs. Margot returns with the General to safety and according to custom the Red Shadow is dispossessed of his leadership and turned out into the desert, his only weapon being a broken sword.

The General orders Paul to bring in the Red Shadow dead or alive, and Azuri arriving drunk to claim her reward is asked by the General why she was so sure the Red Shadow would not fight. Eventually, from Azuri's drunken utterings, it dawns on him that he has sent his soldiers to kill his own son. The soldiers return to tell him that the Red Shadow is dead, killed by none other than Pierre. On hearing the news Margot admits her love for the Red Shadow and is overjoyed when she learns of Pierre's duplicity.

Humour is sustained throughout by Benjamin Kidd, a Paris reporter, and his secretary, Susan.

1953 DESERT SONG



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SUBJECT TO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION

AT274

Page Ten



The Red Shadow and Margot

Page Eleven

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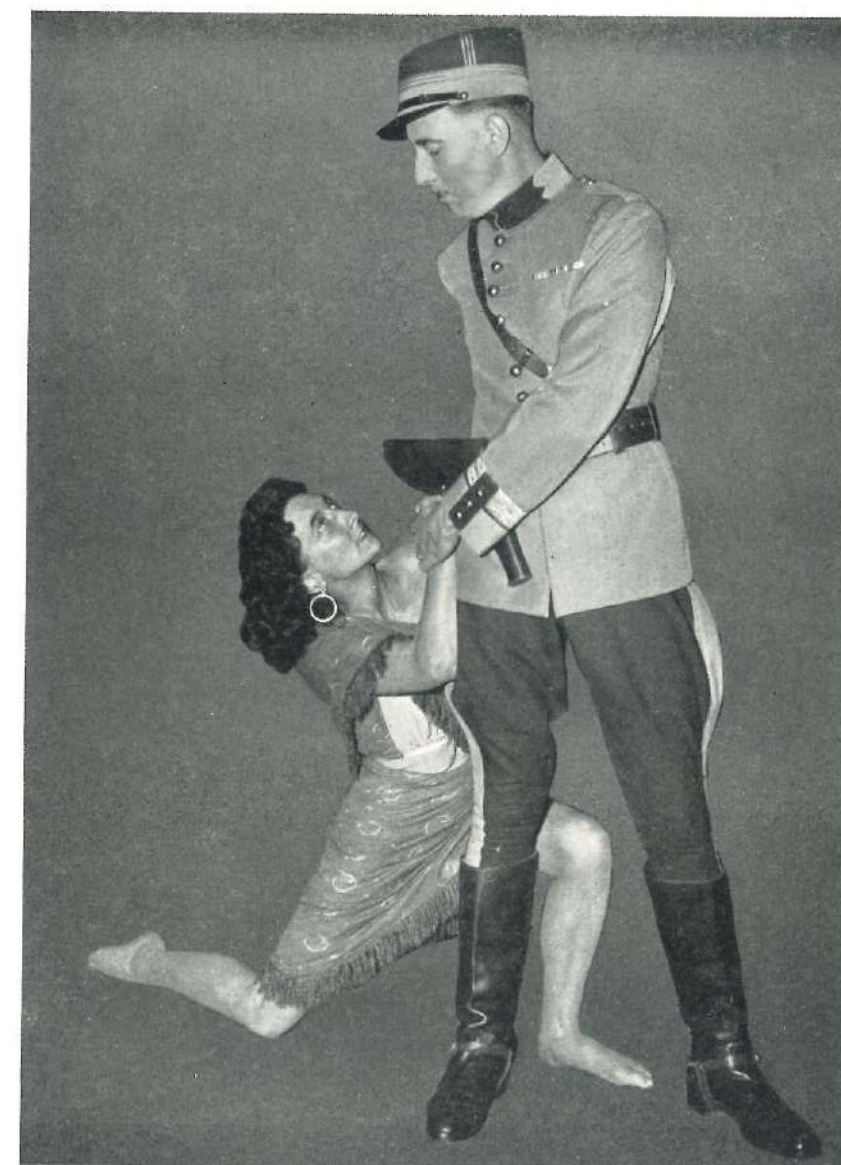
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Characters

(in order of appearance)

SID EL KAR	Trevor Owen
MINDAR	Derick Stuart-Kelso
HADJI	Frederick Stroud
HASSI	Victor Dibbin
NERI	Hilda Bassett
PIERRE BIRABEAU	Reginald Hipperson
BENJAMIN KIDD	David Wainwright
CAPT. PAUL FONTAINE	Deryck Johnstone
LIEUT. LA VERGNE	Leonard Millman
SERGEANT DE BOUSSAC	John Purdy
AZURI	Betty Symonds
EDITH	Peggy Walker
SUSAN	Vera Bennett
MARGOT BONVALET	Phyllis Whitewood
GENERAL BIRABEAU	Frank Endersby
CLEMENTINA	Pearl Dixon
ALI BEN ALI	Sydney Sheldon

THE DANCERS

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Pamela Hill	Beryl Summerhayes
Betty Oldland	Barbara Wheeler
Evereld Poole	Barbara Yeulett

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Una Boffin	Jeanne Hancock	Ethel Lever
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Dulcie Dunne	Jill Harris	Meryl Rowe
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Jean Guntrip	Peggy Jones	June Smith
Ruth Griffiths		Patricia Taylor

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George Hicks	George Streetly	Basil Thorpe
Alec Hemmings		Gerald Winslow

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Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1	Retreat of the Red Shadow in the Riff Mountains	(Evening)
Scene 2	Outside General Birabeau's House	(The same evening)
Scene 3	A room in General Birabeau's House	(A few evenings later)

ACT 2

Scene 1	The Harem of Ali Ben Ali	(Afternoon of the following day)
Scene 2	A Corridor	(A few minutes later)
Scene 3	The Room of the Silken Couch	(A few minutes later)
Scene 4	The edge of the Desert	(The following morning, before dawn)
Scene 5	The Courtyard of General Birabeau's House	(Two days later)

Time—The present

Locale—Northern Africa

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The Play Produced by REGINALD HIPPERSON

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Musical Numbers

ACT 1

Prelude and Opening Chorus "High on a hill is our stronghold"
Song (Red Shadow) Sid and Riffs "The Riff Song"
Finaletto—Scene 1
Song (Paul) and Soldiers "Margot"
Finale—Scene 1

Opening—Scene 2 and Song (Susan) "I'll be a buoyant girl"

Opening Chorus—Scene 3 "Why did we marry soldiers"
Song (Margot) and Girls "Oh! Girls, girls, here are cavaliers"
Song (Margot) and Girls "Romance"
Duet (Margot and Pierre) and Chorus "Then you will know"
Trio (Margot, Paul and Pierre) and Chorus "I want a kiss"
Duet (Susan and Bennie) and Girls "It"
Duet (Margot and Red Shadow) "The Desert Song"
Finale—Act 1

ACT 2

Entr'acte
Opening Chorus "My little castagnette"
Song (Clementina) and Girls "Song of the Brass Key"
Spanish Dance
Duet (Clementina and Bennie) "One good boy gone wrong"
Concerted Number (Red Shadow, Sid, Ali) and Men
(a) "Let love go"
(b) "One flower in your garden"
(c) "One alone"

Opening—Scene 3
Scene (Margot and Red Shadow) "The Sabre Song"
Finaletto—Scene 3

Scene 4 "Farewell"

Opening—Scene 5 "All hail to the General"
Reprise (Susan and Bennie) and Girls "It"
Dance of Triumph (Azuri) "As we are drinking"
Finale "Soldiers, when the battle is over"

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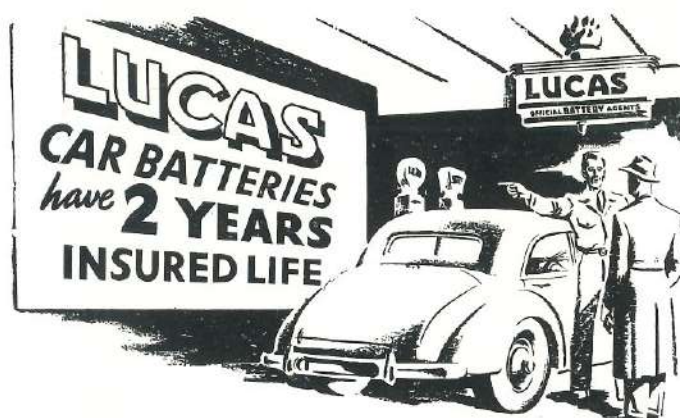
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—Help us to please you.

Acknowledgments

The Committee, on behalf of the Society, desire to express their sincere thanks to all those who have supported this our second production:—

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All Members of the Cast
The Officers of the Society
The Hon. Producer, Mr. Reginald Hipperson
The Hon. Musical Director, Mr. Charles Comley
The Hon. Dancing Mistress,
Miss Madeleine Smart
The Hon. Pianists, Miss M. Page and
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The Callers, June Hogan & Roger Osborne

Mr. Bassett and his Team for Make-up
Property Master, Mr. Maurice Griffith
The Swindon Press Ltd. for Photographs
The Programme Stewardess, Mrs. E. A. Blanchard and the Ladies who so willingly assisted her
The Advertisers whose generosity made possible the production of this Programme
Mr. Doak and the Staff of the Empire Theatre
To all who exhibited window and car bills
The Committee of Management, Presbyterian Church, for kindly allowing use of rooms for rehearsals
To everyone, however small their services

In accordance with the requirements of the Council—

1.—The public may leave at the end of the performance or exhibition by all exit doors and such doors must at that time be open. 2.—All gangways, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for exit shall be kept strictly free from obstruction, either permanent or temporary. 3.—Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways. If standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be strictly limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in these positions. 4.—The safety curtain must be lowered in the presence of each audience.

NOVEMBER 2nd

AND ALL NEXT WEEK

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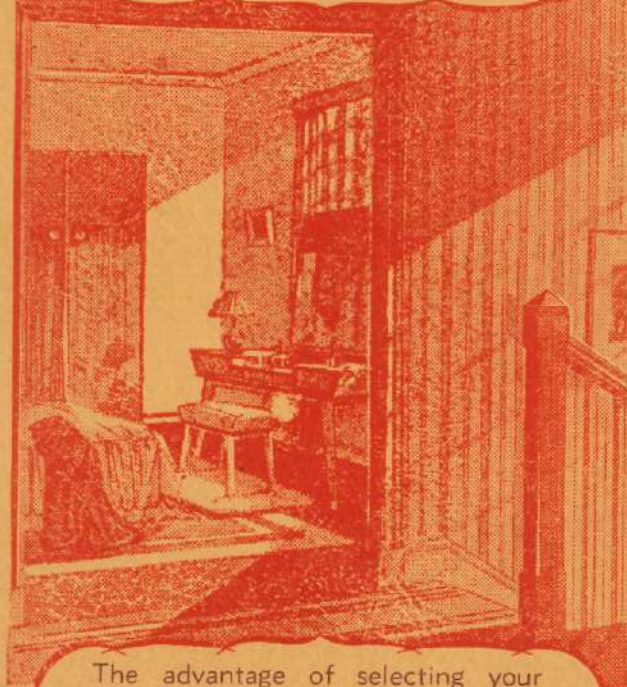
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