



# The Guide to Musical Theatre

## CHU CHIN CHOW

Book and Lyrics - Oscar Asche : Music - Frederic Norton  
Opened His Majesty's Theatre, London August 1, 1916 (2238 performances)  
Manhattan Opera House October 22, 1917 (208 performances)

### THE STORY:

Chu Chin Chow is based on the tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. The setting is the magnificent Eastern palace of Kasim Baba who welcomes the Chinese merchant Chu Chin Chow. He is, in fact, not who he seems to be but the rascally Abu Hasan, a robber come to glean information that will enable him to rob his host. Hasan has a slave, Zahrat, already spying in the palace. She has made friends with Kasim's chief wife, Alcolom, who in turn is loved by Kasim's poor brother, Ali Baba. Another friend is the slave maid Marjanah who loves Ali's son, Nur Al-Huda. The downfall of Kasim would solve a lot of problems!



Marjanah recognises Abu Hasan and enlists him in a scheme to get rid of Kasim - she wants her freedom and Alcolom wants to be with her beloved Ali. In exchange, Abu Hasan's identity will not be disclosed. Kasim entertains his guests royally. Abu Hasan tries to buy Marjanah as intended, but drunken Ali Baba offers a fortune, forty thousand gold pieces, - which he does not possess - to buy her for his son. The offer is accepted.

Next morning, Ali can't remember anything, but wakes up in a cactus grove with a hangover. Meanwhile, Marjanah and Nur Al-Huda are preparing to escape when they overhear Abu Hasan and his men coming out of a concealed rock entrance. Abu has ordered Zahrat's lover, Omar, to be brought to the desert to ensure her loyalty to him. When the robber band has left, Marjanah and Nur tell Ali about the concealed cave, its treasure and its password - "Open Sesame". Later the incantation works for the three as well. Now they can acquire enough money to buy Marjanah from Ali. At the sale, Chu Chin Chow believes his identity has been revealed by Zahrat. He proposes to put Zahrat to death. She exposes his real identity and he leaves with her, his robbers and all the bid money.

Ali visits Kasim, his brother, tells him of the cave and brings the promised bid money for Marjanah, who can now wed Nur. The lovers return to the cave, where they discover a chained Zahrat. They are unable to release her as Kasim is ushered in. He goes mad at the sight of the treasure but is captured by Abu Hasan and put to death. Hasan has brought along Zahrat's lover to die with her. Eventually Zahrat is freed; the robbers are killed by boiling oil, and Hasan is stabbed to death. All that remains is for the young lovers to be united - and so are Ali and Alcolom.

### ORIGINAL CAST:

- Abu Hasan - the sheik of the robbers - OSCAR ASCHE
- Kasim Baba - a wealthy merchant - JAMES HERBERT
- Ali Baba - his poor brother - COURTICE POUNDS
- Alcolom - Kasim's head wife - AILEEN D'ORME
- Mahbubah - Ali's wife - SYDNEY FAIRBROTHER

- Bostan - Mahbubah's Servant - ANNIE MOORE
- Nur al-Huda Ali - Ali's son - J.V. BRYANT
- Marjanah - a slave - VIOLET ESSEX
- Zahrat al-Kulaub - a slave - LILY BRAYTON
- Baba Mustafa - a cobbler - FRANK COCHRANE
- Abdullah - Kasim's steward - NORMAN WILLIAMS
- Mukbil - An auctioneer - W. DAVIDSON
- Otbah - A stall-keeper - WILLIAM HOLLES
- Musab - member of Abu Hasan's band - SPENCER LLOYD
- Khuzaymah - member of Abu Hasan's band - JULIAN CROSS
- Zanim - slave dealer - BESSIE MAJOR
- Fitnah - slave dealer - LISA COLEMAN

Robbers, Dancers, Slave, etc.



## MUSICAL NUMBERS:

### Act I

1. Prelude
2. Song (Abdullah & Chorus) - HERE BE OYSTERS - Here be oysters stewed in honey
3. 2a: Zahrat Theme
4. 2b:(Abdullah) - There be perfumed wines from Persia
5. 2c: Underscore
6. 2d: (Abdullah) - Here be bitter juice of orange
7. Entrance of Chu Chin Chow - I AM CHU CHIN CHOW - I am Chu Chin Chow of China
8. Javanese Dance and Entrance of Ali
9. Song (Marjanah & Chorus) - CLEOPATRA'S NILE - When the blood-red sun is gliding o'er the Nile
10. Finale Scene 1 (Ali Baba & Company) - I'LL SING AND DANCE - I'll sing and dance and dance and sing
11. Scene 2. Serenade (Nur Al-Huda & Marjanah) - CORRALINE - Marjanah, O list to my sighs
12. Scene 3. Song (Ali Baba) - MY HEAD, MY HEAD - My head, my head, it weighs like lead
13. Song (Ali Baba) - WHEN A PULLET IS PLUMP - When a pullet is plump, she's tender
14. Robbers' March (Robbers Chorus) - WE ARE THE ROBBERS OF THE WOODS - We are the robbers of the woods
15. Scene 4. Song & Trio (Ali Baba, Marjanah & Nur Al-Huda) - WHY SHOULD I REPINE - Awah! Temperamental am I
16. Song (Marjanah) - I LOVE THEE SO - Although I've often asked before
17. Duet (Marjanah & Ali Baba) - ALL MY DAYS TILL END OF LIFE - All my days till end of life
18. Scene 5 - Underscoring
19. Song (Abdullah) - BEHOLD - Behold, spare not your gold
20. 14a. Underscoring
21. Finale Act I - THE ROBBERS' MARCH

### Act II

22. Scene 1 - Introduction
23. Dance
24. Song (Alcolom & chorus) - I LONG FOR THE SUN - How can I sing from a heart that's cold?
25. Exit music
26. Ensemble (Ali Baba, Kasim, Alcolom, Marjanah & Chorus) - HAIL THE GRAND WAZIR - Hail to the grand wazir to be
27. Song (Marjanah, Nur Al-Huda, Alcolom, Kasim & Chorus) - MAHBUBAH - She will say her say all night and day
28. Change of scene

29. Scene 2. Song (Marjanah) - I BUILT A FAIRY PALACE IN THE SKY - I built a fairy palace in the sky, all women do
30. Change of scene - Interlude Music
31. Jewel Ballet
32. Chorus - ROBBERS' MARCH - We are the robbers of the woods
33. Song (Abu Hasan & Chorus) - THE SCIMITAR - I draw my short, sharp scimitar
34. Scene 4. Interlude Music
35. Song (Alcolom) - ANYTIME'S KISSING TIME - People have slandered out love serene
36. Scene 5. Interlude Music - Change of scene
37. Song (Baba Mustapha) - THE COBBLER'S SONG - I sit and cobble at slippers and shoon
38. Bazaar Music
39. Song (Fruit Girls) - WE BRING YE FRUITS - We bring ye fruits of ev'ry clime
40. Underscoring
41. Mannequin Scene (Girls) - From Cairo, Baghdad, Khorasan
42. Reprise - From Cairo ... and underscoring
43. Scene 6. Duet ( Alcolom & Ali Baba) - HOW DEAR IS OUR DAY - How dear is our day now that Kasim's away
44. Interlude Music - Change of scene
45. Underscoring
46. Song ( Abdullah & Chorus) - OLIVE OIL - Sweet olive oil
47. Underscoring
48. Finale Act II - WEDDING PROCESSION - On with the wedding let joy be complete

## SCENES AND SETTINGS

### ACT 1

- Scene 1: Kasim Baba's Palace
- Scene 2: Marjamah's Window
- Scene 3: The Cactus Grove
- Scene 4: The Silk Stall
- Scene 5: Kasim Baba's Palace

### ACT II

- Scene 1: Kasim Baba's Palace
- Scene 2: In the Starlight
- Scene 3: The Cave
- Scene 4: Picture Set
- Scene 5: The Bazaar
- Scene 6: Picture Set (Same as Scene 4)
- Scene 7: Kasim Baba's Palace