

THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

OPERA THEATRE

P R E S E N T S

THE GOLDEN LION

BY

GERALD KECHLEY

LIBRETTO BY ELWYN KECHLEY

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

*W. B. Yeats*

University Playhouse

8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 28

Friday, May 1

Wednesday, April 29

Saturday, May 2

1959

# THE GOLDEN LION

by  
Gerald Kechley

Libretto by Elwyn Kechley

## CAST

In order of appearance

Theophilus: The Emperor.....Howard Nelson, *bass*  
Theodora: Court Lady.....Sharen Feetham, *soprano*  
Amos: A False Monk.....Thomas Tavener, *tenor*  
First Lady.....Judith Farrington, *mezzo-soprano*  
Second Lady.....Nancy Nuckols, *soprano*  
Third Lady.....Vera Neufeld, *soprano*  
John the Grammarian: Patriarch.....William J. Larsen, *bass*  
Euphrosyne: Empress-Dowager.....Elinor Bertram, *contralto*  
Casia: A Provincial Lady.....Peggy Nessel, *soprano*  
First Monk.....Dave Sannerud, *tenor*  
Second Monk.....Joseph LaRocque, *baritone*  
Third Monk.....Alan Lund, *bass*

Pilgrims, soldiers, servants, nuns, children: Robert Borden, Ann Erickson, Robert Kechley, Peter Kechley, Marjorie Kennedy, Richard Levin, Diane McDougall, Becky Ann Rosinbum, Michael Rosinbum, Linda Russel, GlennaJean Rust, Mahlon Schanzenbach, Arlene Flynn, Lenita Foster, Patricia Mullin, Irving Kranich.

TIME: In the Year Eight Hundred

PLACE: Constantinople

The story . . .

Act I R#1 (1414)

Scene 1: The Throne Room

In ninth century Byzantium, the Iconodules (image makers) wish to make symbolic use of images in public worship; the Iconoclasts (image smashers) oppose such idolatry. The Iconoclasts, led by the Patriarch John, are in power. The pleasure-loving Emperor, Theophilus, is soon to be married although his wife has not yet been chosen. Amos, a false monk and leader of the Iconodule, hopes that the Lady Theodora will be the new Empress as she will use her power to make him the Patriarch.

The Emperor, the Lady Theodora, three court ladies, and Amos return from the Hippodrome. Amos reminds the ladies that today the ceremony will be held in which each will take the vow to become a nun if the Emperor does not select her as the Empress. This vow is a proof of dedication; a candidate unwilling to take holy orders is unworthy to become Empress. The Emperor will give the lady of his choice a golden apple as a marriage pledge.

The Patriarch John and the Empress-Dowager enter and warn the Emperor against Amos. They also tell him that monks are illegally worshipping images in the Lady Theodora's chambers. The Empress-Dowager introduces the Lady Casia, who is her choice for Empress, to her son. The Lady Casia is appalled when the Emperor invites her to visit the Hippodrome and declares that her parents do not approve of this "running of beasts." Theophilus reminds her that he is the Emperor and commands her to visit the races. She consents but upsets him further by an impudent reply. The Emperor is bewildered but charmed by the Lady Casia.

Scene 2: The Courtyard

R#2 (1415)

Amos, the Lady Theodora, and three monks of the Iconodule party discuss the Lady Casia. Theodora tells the others that the Patriarch John and the Empress-Dowager have arranged an evening meeting between Casia and Theophilus. Amos comments that the Patriarch and the Dowager "would corrupt their 'saint' to gain a queen." When Theophilus enters, Theodora accuses him of abandoning her in favor of Casia. He denies, then partially admits, the accusation. Amos attempts to prevent Theophilus from meeting Casia by suggesting a game of archery. The Emperor tells Amos hypocritically that duty to the kingdom restricts his freedom in choosing a wife. Amos makes light of this duty and tells Theophilus "when the kingdom's free, the king's a slave."

Patriarch John enters with Casia and reminds the Emperor that he must choose a worthy Empress.

R#3 (1416)

Scene 3: The Throne Room

The ladies play a game of blind man's bluff with the Emperor Theophilus. He is to capture one of the ladies, using the sound of a bell as a guide. He gives Casia the bell which is symbolic of the golden apple he intends to give her when he chooses her as his Empress. But Casia is frightened by the roaring lion and becomes angry at Theophilus. They have an extremely violent argument which forces the Dowager to threaten to send Casia back to her parents. Theophilus then asks Casia to marry him. They exchange tokens of betrothal: Casia gives him her bell and Theophilus gives her his dagger as a renunciation of violence. Theodora is angry and vows that the "proud Casia" will be humbled.

Scene 4: The Throne Room

Amos steals Casia's bell from Theophilus' private rooms, and tells Casia that the Emperor has given the bell to Theodora as an engagement gift. Casia, hurt and angry, accuses Theophilus of treachery. He is bewildered, then outraged; in a fit of anger he gives the golden apple to Theodora. His choice, sanctified by civil and religious law, is irrevocable.

INTERMISSION

Act II

Scene I: The Throne Room

R#4 (1417)

A year has passed. Theophilus bitterly regrets his marriage to Theodora even though they have just had a son, Prince Michael. Theodora is heartbroken at his rejection. Amos demands that Theodora work more actively toward making him the Patriarch. He reminds her that he stole the bell to help her win Theophilus.

Theophilus enters and finds the bell. Theodora finally admits her treachery. Theophilus decides this action nullifies his marriage and demands that the Empress-Dowager and the Patriarch deliver Casia to him. They refuse and claim that the law still binds him to Theodora. The Emperor, in a rage, denounces his wife and son.

Pilgrims from the Iconodule party enter and praise their Empress and her son, Prince Michael. Amos, in desperation, plans to murder the Patriarch John and bargain with the Emperor for the position of Patriarch. He will offer Theophilus the Nun Casia as a wife in exchange for the Patriarch's robes. He tells Theodora he wishes to

confer with John to restore harmony in the kingdom and asks her to send for the Patriarch. Theodora is faced with the choice of renouncing her throne in favor of Casia or witnessing the death of John. She renounces her throne but demands Amos's death as payment. John prays for guidance as Theophilus goes to see Casia at the nunnery.

Scene 2: The Nunnery

R # 5 (1418)

Casia is writing her Discourse. Theophilus enters and is impressed by her sense of peace and spiritual joy. Casia persuades him that their separation was the will of God. Theophilus recognizes his responsibility and returns to Theodora determining to reign with honor and justice.

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Stage Director.....Ralph Rosinbum  
Assistant Conductor.....Gerald Kechley  
Repetiteurs .....Bill Clarke, Anita Hornstein

THE SCHOOL OF DRAMA PRODUCTION STAFF

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Assistant Art Director.....Alanson Davis  
Technical Director.....Warren C. Lounsbury  
Costumier .....James Crider  
Costume Designer.....Don Adams  
Electrician .....Anne Bowker  
Scenic Technician .....Tom Cook  
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Bows and arrows courtesy of Seattle Archery, Inc.

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