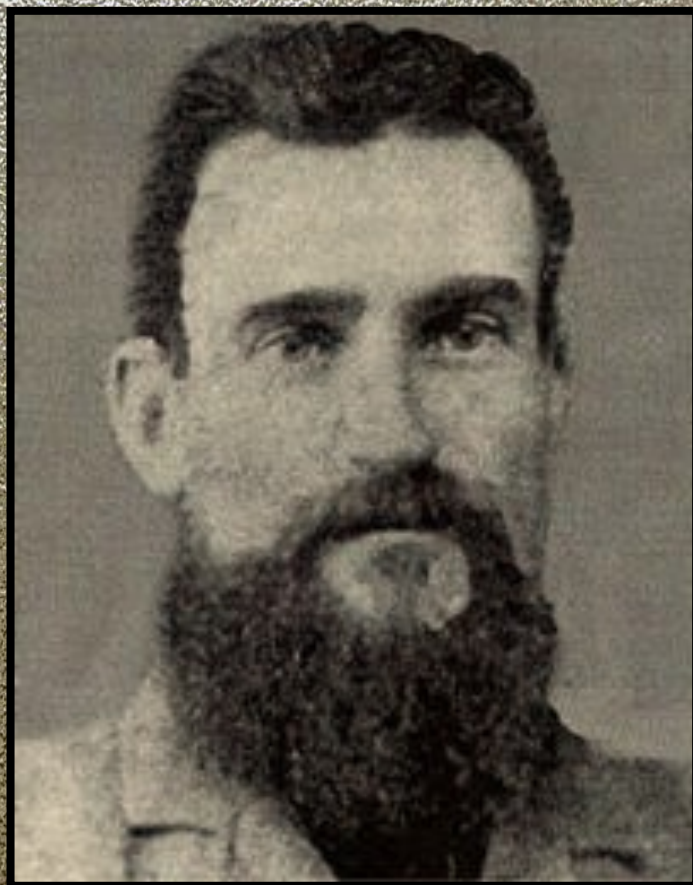


# THE MAN CALLED THUNDERBOLT



Libretto written and music composed

by

VIVIEN ARNOLD



# THE MAN CALLED THUNDERBOLT

Fred Ward - alias Captain Thunderbolt - was Australia's longest lasting and most successful bushranger. Over seven years he held people up in the New England area and was rumoured to have taken twenty thousand pounds. Naturally this peeved a great many people. However there were others who truly held him in esteem - even some of his victims.

This arose from admiration of his superb horsemanship, his unfailing politeness, his eschewed non-violence, his good humour and sense of fun, his soft-heartedness, his kindness to the orphaned, his championship of the underdog, and his sense of fair play. In short, he was Australia's real life Robin Hood.

In sharp contrast, the authorities showed him no leniency at any stage. Moreover, after his death, some believe accounts of his life were deliberately suppressed and expunged because he was a natural inspiration for the sort of republican rebellion they dreaded.

His strong and passionate relationship with Maryanne Bugg - Queen Yellow Long - pointed to reconciliation with the first Australians. Sadly their children were farmed out and the lineage lost.

This opera traces the story of their lives as a reality, albeit somewhat romanticised. At the same time it examines attitudes and interests of the day in the young colony of New South Wales through using both anecdotes and written records.

Its large cast features people documented in the stories told about Ward. All chorus members are required to have speaking or solo/ensemble singing roles so this is not a production that asks people to sit around back-stage for slabs of time. The original staging comprised large blocks that could be quickly rearranged for set changes. This too was the job of the entire cast, who sometimes turned their backs to the audience forming human walls as part of the set. Costuming is inexpensive.

The work was written for an amateur society with a cast of around 50 (good for ticket sales!). It received critical acclaim when it was staged in 1988 for the bicentennial. Being an historic piece it has not dated.

Maryanne: Bush ranging!

Ward: Yellow Long what else is there for me now? We're men on the run. Wanted criminals. The traps will be out for us the length and breadth of New South Wales. There'll be a price on our heads.

**#9 I wanted to give you - Ward sings**

**#10 So be it then - Ward and Maryanne sing**

Maryanne: Catch the stage. I'll give in my notice in two months' time when the chase has cooled off. I'll come to you then.

*Re-enter Britten*

Britten: Hey Fred! Too bad this is all that's left.

*He holds up a woman's dress and bonnet*

Ward: I think I'd rather go back to Cockatoo

Maryanne: O no you don't! Come on. Out them on. You're smaller than him. You can pass as his wife. You'll have to shave this off but. There's a razor in the bag.

Britten: This sure is a variation of petty-coat rule! I've heard of sheilas who wear the strides but never ones who insist their husbands wear frocks!

Ward: We must all be off. We'll look for you in two months Maryanne.

Britten: Not me. This is goodbye. I'm splitting with him in Maitland. It'll be better if we don't stay together.

Ward: Well that's pretty gratitude I must say.

Maryanne: He's right. You shouldn't stay together.

Britten: Always listen to this women Fred. She's an old head on young shoulders. Goodbye Maryanne. Thanks for your help. I pray God'll bless you and yours. Not much from an old lag but it's heartfelt.

Maryanne: Goodbye. And may God bless you too

*Exit Britten (tactfully)*

Maryanne: Au revoir, Fred

**#11 Kiss me Yellow Long - Ward sings**

**#12 Incidental music**

*Exit Ward to incidental music #12*

- Mr Parsons: And he said we could go without even turning out our pockets! Some bushranger!
- Mrs Byrne: So you still have your money?
- Mrs Parsons: Yes all five pounds still intact. And this little bit of excitement was a real birthday treat.
- Mr Parsons: We should go home and rest now, Emmy. You mustn't tire yourself.
- Mrs Parsons: Home? O no, John. We have to go and report the robbery.
- Mr Parsons: Yes of course,
- Mrs Byrne: Report it? But he didn't take anything! Maybe you've put him off the whole thing. I thought you had a soft spot for bold young men Mrs Parsons. You enjoyed it too. Give him a break.
- Mrs Parsons: That's not the point.

□ **#25 It's the principle of the thing - Mr and Mrs Parsons sing**

- Mrs Parsons: Besides, it's a wonderful story and I'm sure the newspapers will want to print it. As a caution to other bushrangers. And an encouragement to other travellers to resist force with subterfuge or whatever else it takes. Mind you, you have to be quick-witted, although I say it myself. There now! I don't suppose you've heard of such excitement in a long while.

□ **#26 Trio - Mr and Ms Parsons, Mrs Byrne sing**

*Exit Mr and Mrs Parsons*

□ **#27 Recit - Well now Thunderbolt - Mrs Byrne sings**

□ **Segue to #28 -Incidental**

*Exit Mrs Byrne to incidental music #28*

Maryanne: Play us something new.

Ward: Wait a minute! I must introduce you. They don't know what an honour is being bestowed on them. This is a royal command performance! Gentlemen allow me to present you to Queen Yellow Long. Now bow like nice German courtiers. Bow, I say!

Maryanne: Oh Fred! (*to the bandsmen*) Don't take any notice of him!

*(They do bow - persuaded by Ward's pistol)*

McIntosh: They also wish to pay for the honour, Captain. Here's the fee. Twenty pounds.

Ward: Only twenty pounds! Stewth! That's not much to pay for an honour and opportunity such as this!

Maryanne: Leave off and let them get on with it. Play something new and lively. I want to dance.

Band leader: Offenbach?

Ward: As often as you like.

Band leader: This is from 'Orpheus in the Underworld' - French operetta.

Maryanne: I've heard of it!

Band leader: Eins, zwei, drei, vier

□ **#42 Cancan music - Band plays**

*(Maryanne and Ward start to dance and are then joined by the others)*

Ward: That's good stuff! Now you can sit down and listen to her. She can do French songs you know. Maryanne do that one about the dove.

Maryanne: If I can get my puff back.

Johnny (*concerned*) You're all right aren't you with the baby an all

Maryanne: 'Course silly! Expecting a baby doesn't turn you fragile all of a sudden!

McIntosh: Well here's a turn up!

Ward: Great isn't it! Go on Mary, sing and we'll all join in the chorus. Sit down you lot. You're in for a treat!

1st Hawker:           What's this?

Ward:                   He said, 'bail up'. If you want that more fully explained it means, give us your cash - all of it. McIntosh, go through their bags and take whatever you think we can use. Johnny, check outside

*Exit Johnny. McIntosh discovers ten pounds*

Ward:                   Ten quid. That's not bad. Now Mr Forrester, perhaps you'd like to make a donation to our worthy cause.

Mr Forrester:         We don't keep cash in the house. We use cheques.

Ward:                   Mmm. I have noticed gentlemen don't carry cash much anymore. I'm sorry for it.

**#58 I have ten pounds - Granny Forrester and Ward sing (segue to #59)**

**#59 Incidental**

*Dialogue below continues beneath incidental*

Mrs Forrester:        Mother!

Ward:                   One more thing. Do you have any newspapers? We get desperate for reading matter in the bush.

Granny Forrester:

                              There's bundles in the out-house. Help yourself.

Mrs Forrester:        Mother!

*Re-enter Johnny*

Johnny:                I found some gunpowder

Ward:                   Excellent! Gunpowder's worth more to us than gold you know. Now thank you and a good evening to you all.

Granny Forrester:    Good evening.

*Exeunt Ward, Maryanne and gang.*

Mrs Forrester:        Mother!

Mr Forrester:         It's an outrage! You helped them help themselves!

**#60 You've no need to be hoity-toity - Granny Forrester sings**

**#61 Incidental for set change**

*Lights dim.*

**SCENE 9 - INSIDE BRADFORD PROPERTY**

*The room is empty. There is a knock on the door. Mrs Bradford enters and crosses to the door to let Ward in*

□ **#74 Dear Lady - Ward and Mrs Bradford sing (segue to #75)**

□ **#75 Incidental under following dialogue**

Ward: Will you take her in?

Mrs Bradford: Just show me where she is. I'll get the dray and horses and we'll move her back down here on dusk. You can stay here with her. Rest assured, the traps won't hear of it. We'll protect you. Where did you say she is?

*During this Maryanne has entered and is leaning against the doorpost*

□ **# 76 Here she is, right here - Maryanne and Ward sing**

*She is overwhelmed by coughing as she finishes the song. She slumps.*

Mrs Bradford: Here, put her on the settee.

*Ward carries Maryanne and lowers her onto the settee close to a wall/flat (to enable the actor to be replaced by a body for burial)*

Mrs Bradford: She should have a doctor.

Maryanne: No! No! It isn't necessary. Just let me rest.

Mrs Bradford: I have some cough medicine somewhere

*Exit Mrs Bradford*

□ **#77 Incidental starts here under following dialogue.**

Ward: How are you feeling?

Maryanne: Better now I'm off that horse. I swear it bruised every bone in my body.

Ward: You've grown so thin.

Maryanne: You can't grow thin. I've shrunk thin.

Ward: Don't joke. I can't bear it.

Maryanne: Why ever not? We've always liked a laugh. Don't wish a sentimental death scene on me Fred! Sing me some opera.

Ward: I can't. Don't leave me Mary.

Maryanne: Sakes Fred! I don't want to die any more than the next person and I do feel a bit on the young-side to go. But we've had a very full life these last few years and I wouldn't change a thing. So come on, let's sing.

*She begins to sing a verse of 'her bright smile' but stops as he joins in and she takes over*

Maryanne: Keep singing. I think I'll have a little sleep. Your voice is very soothing - sometimes!

*She closes her eyes as he finishes the verse. Mrs Bradford re-enters with the medicine.*

Ward: Don't wake her now. She can have it when she wakes up. She needs the rest.

*Mrs Bradford crosses over and discovers Maryanne is dead.*

Mrs Bradford: Mr Ward, stay here a while and hold her hand. She won't be waking again I'm afraid.

*Ward lets out a howl of anguish and gathers her body into his arms.*

***A tolling bell begins*** and continues until after the burial (NB into the orchestra pit works well for this purpose)

*People gather round the settee screening Ward and Maryanne. The actor slips away to be replaced by the body.*

Autopsy reader:

Autopsy on Maryanne Bugg, alias Queen Yellow Long, common law wife of Frederick Ward, also known as Captain Thunderbolt:- 'Death resulted from acute inflammation of the lungs. It is likely that this was caused by pulmonary tuberculosis '

*At the end of the burial mourners exeunt leading Ward and Mrs Roach on either side of the stage.*

Mrs Roach: You're Ward aren't you? You've got a lot to answer for!



## #2 Cockatoo chorus

♩. = 110

Cock-a-too, Cock-a-too! The livi- ing hell of a des- per- rate crew. - A

♩. = 110

Ped. Ped. Ped.

6


S. hun- dred men - cramm'd on the isle


B. Solo  
Give me a rasp! Get me a file! I'll


Pno.

Ped. Ped.


11


S.   
You won't be heard of an - y more.


B.   
break my chains and swim to the shore - You won't be heard of an - y more.

Pno. 

16

S.   
Dead-ly grey war-ders are circ-ling a-round, and on-ly bits of es-cap-ees are found. They

B.   
Dead-ly grey war-ders are circ-ling a-round, and on-ly bits of es-cap-ees are found. They

Pno. 

20

S. keep up their int'-rest with off - al andscraps from the meat -

B. keep up their int'-rest with off - al andscraps from the meat -

Pno.

23

S. works. - And no-bod-y yet hassprung the trap of Cock-a- too. - Cock-a too!

B. works. - And no-bod-y yet hassprung the trap of Cock-a- too. - Cock-a too!

Pno.

# #6 I'd like to be more like Mary

$\text{♩} = 140$

Maids

I'd like to be more like Mar-y more self - poss

$\text{♩} = 140$

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

8

ess'd amd free. Morepois'd, soph - ist - i - cat - ed -

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

14

- Com-par'd with Mar - y we con-fess we've ov - er - a - ted our

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.



selves - - - I'd like to be more like her

27 Ped. Jess Emily

D'you think she'll teach me to swim? Six in-ches

33 Ped. Nancy

tall - er would be fine No fam - 'ly ties to

38 Ped. Rosie

drag me down To talk prop-er how div - ine I'd

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

# #18 Good-day Mrs Parson

**Allegro**

Mrs Byrne

Musical staff for Mrs Byrne, first system, measures 1-3. The staff is in 6/4 time and contains a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note B4, and a dotted half note C5 in measure 2. Measure 3 contains a whole rest.

Good - day Mr - s Par - sons

Mrs Parsons

Musical staff for Mrs Parsons, first system, measures 1-3. The staff is in 6/4 time and contains a whole rest in measure 1, a whole rest in measure 2, and a quarter rest in measure 3. In measure 4, it contains a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note B4, and a dotted half note C5.

Mr - s Byrne good -

**Allegro**

Mrs Byrne

Musical staff for Mrs Byrne, second system, measures 1-3. The staff is in 6/4 time and contains a whole rest in measure 1, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note B4, and a dotted half note C5 in measure 2. Measure 3 contains a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G3, A3, B3, C4, G3, A3, B3, C4.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

4

Musical staff for Mrs Byrne, third system, measures 1-3. The staff is in 6/4 time and contains a quarter rest in measure 1, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note B4, and a dotted half note C5 in measure 2. Measure 3 contains a whole rest.

Why you're all dress'd up in your best

Musical staff for Mrs Parsons, second system, measures 1-3. The staff is in 6/4 time and contains a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note B4, and a dotted half note C5 in measure 1. Measure 2 contains a quarter rest, and measure 3 contains a whole rest.

day to you

Musical staff for piano accompaniment, second system, measures 1-3. The staff is in 6/4 time and contains a quarter note G3, an eighth note A3, a quarter note B3, and a dotted half note C4 in measure 1. Measure 2 contains a quarter note G3, an eighth note A3, a quarter note B3, and a dotted half note C4. Measure 3 contains a quarter note G3, an eighth note A3, a quarter note B3, and a dotted half note C4. The piano accompaniment in the bass clef consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G3, A3, B3, C4, G3, A3, B3, C4.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

7

Where are you off to?

Well Mr-s Byrne if you'll prom-ise

Ped. Ped. Ped.

Detailed description: This block contains measures 7, 8, and 9 of a musical score. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are: "Where are you off to?" (measures 7-8) and "Well Mr-s Byrne if you'll prom-ise" (measure 9). The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass clef and a more melodic line in the treble clef. Pedal points are indicated by a 'Ped.' symbol with a horizontal line underneath the bass staff at the beginning of measures 7, 8, and 9.

10

not to men-tion it to an-y-one to-day is my birth-day, and Par-sons is tak-ing me to

Ped. Ped. Ped.

Detailed description: This block contains measures 10, 11, and 12 of a musical score. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef. The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are: "not to men-tion it to an-y-one to-day is my birth-day, and Par-sons is tak-ing me to" (measures 10-12). The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass clef and a melodic line in the treble clef. Pedal points are indicated by a 'Ped.' symbol with a horizontal line underneath the bass staff at the beginning of measures 10, 11, and 12.

13

Well Mr-s Par-sons if I were  
Mait - land. Shop - ping

Ped. Ped.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 13, 14, and 15. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment, and a pedal point. The vocal line starts with a rest in measure 13, followed by the lyrics 'Well Mr-s Par-sons if I were' in measure 14 and 'Mait - land. Shop - ping' in measure 15. The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a pedal point marked 'Ped.' in measures 13, 14, and 15. The treble staff has rests in measures 13 and 14, and then plays a melodic line in measure 15.

16

you I'd get - him a-way from the bar - - be - fore he los - es  
Some new fur trim for my coat, or p'rhaps a nice new

Ped. Ped.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 16, 17, and 18. It features a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment, and a pedal point. The vocal line starts with the lyrics 'you I'd get - him a-way from the bar - - be - fore he los - es' in measure 16 and 'Some new fur trim for my coat, or p'rhaps a nice new' in measure 17. The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a pedal point marked 'Ped.' in measures 16, 17, and 18. The treble staff plays a melodic line in measure 16 and then rests in measure 17.



his gen'-rous urge Mr - s Par - sons *til ready under dialogue*

hat with - flowers, yell - ow flow - ers

Ped. Ped. Ped.

Mrs Parsons: Oh it's alright. He hates shopping so I bribe  
 him by letting him have one for the road before we start. Why  
 It keeps him good humoured  
 Mrs Byrne: It's women who should be the politicians Mrs Parsons  
 We're wasted in the kitchen  
 Mrs Parsons: We've always known that Mrs Byrne.

Ped. Ped. Ped.





10

Not spelt with a 'k', I hope!

Woo-mer - a, kan-gar-oo and cult-ure

Ped. ^ Ped. ^

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 10 through 13. It features three staves: a vocal line in the top staff, a piano accompaniment line in the middle staff, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) at the bottom. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal line begins with a whole rest in measure 10, followed by a half rest in measure 11, and then the lyrics 'Not spelt with a 'k', I hope!' in measures 12 and 13. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands. Pedal points are indicated by 'Ped.' with a wedge-shaped symbol under the bass line in measures 10 and 12.

14

Corr-ob-er-ee and Chau-cer

Ward: I can spell other words like 'love' and 'kiss'

Mor - wong and

Ped. ^ Ped. ^

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 14 through 17. It features three staves: a vocal line in the top staff, a piano accompaniment line in the middle staff, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) at the bottom. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The vocal line begins with a whole rest in measure 14, followed by a half rest in measure 15, and then the lyrics 'Corr-ob-er-ee and Chau-cer' in measure 16. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands. Pedal points are indicated by 'Ped.' with a wedge-shaped symbol under the bass line in measures 14 and 16. The lyrics 'Ward: I can spell other words like 'love' and 'kiss'' are positioned below the piano accompaniment in measure 14, and 'Mor - wong and' is positioned below the piano accompaniment in measure 17.



Brown-ing, Wom-bat Who?

Moz-art. Bill-a-bong Watt! Not who, Watt. In-vent-or of steam pow'r

Ped. Ped. Ped.

How would I know that? Maryanne: Girls aren't taught that sort of thing! Eu-rip-i-des, ech-

Ward: Well it's about time they were!

Ped. Ped. Ped.

# #85 There's a Legend

**Allegro**

There's a leg - end in New En - gland Thun - der - bolt has

There's a leg - end in New Eng - land Thun - der - bolt has

There's a leg - end in New En - gland Thun - der - bolt has

There's a leg - end in New En - gland Thun - der - bolt has

Detailed description: This block contains the vocal score for the song. It consists of four staves. The top three staves are for different vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass), and the bottom staff is for the Bass. All staves are in the key of A major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "There's a leg - end in New En - gland Thun - der - bolt has".

**Allegro**

Ped. ^ Ped. ^

Detailed description: This block contains the piano accompaniment. It features a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is in A major and 4/4 time. The right hand has a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Pedal markings are present at the bottom of the page.

ne - ver died. Still he haunts the Moon - bi Rang - es

ne - ver died. Ah - - -

ne - ver died. Ah - -

ne - ver died. Ah - - - -

Ped. ^ Ped. ^

(The next 8 bars can be unaccompanied)

and the love - ly coun - tri - side - - There's a grave-yard in

and the love - ly coun - tri - love-ly coun-tri - side There's a grav - yard in

and the love - ly coun - tri - side - - There's a grave-yard in

and the love - ly coun - tri - side - - There's a grave-yard in

Ped. Ped. Ped.