

Edward II

**An Opera
in Six Tableaux**

for Narrator, Seven Singers,
and Medium Sized Orchestra

Piano Vocal Score

libretto with optional narrations
by the composer
based on the play by

Christopher Marlowe

Music by

David Edgar Walther

**The Acting Singers Project
Boston, 2010**

DEW © 2010

Cover by Christopher Aaron Smith
using the 1585 portrait of
Christopher Marlowe

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

my loving spouse, Drew Hubbard;

the wonderful musicians and crew
responsible for the CD of this work;

Daniel B. Kelly,

Janet Wheeler, and Robert Hubbard

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The Cast:

(in order of appearance)

Lightborn: Lyric Bass and Optional Narrator: A very charming "gentle tradesman." This may require two performers of similar appearance and voice: one to stand on the podium in chains; and one to lurk in the shadows and eventually sing and be part of the action of the flashbacks. Lightborn must have incredible sweetness and seductive charm. His singing, however, need not sound like a trained vocalist. His narrations should always be in the dominant language of the culture; while all singing is best in Marlowe's English. Lightborn's narrations may be expanded, contracted or otherwise altered in any way to fit the language, character, tempi... of a given production. They may even be left out entirely. The narrations given here are for what seemed to me to be the correct musical tempi and the speed of my reading of the text in English.

Edward II: Dramatic Bass-baritone: King of England. Father of Edward III, estranged husband of Queen Isabella, lover of Gaveston. Referred to as "Edward The Second." Historically, Edward II was a tall and strong man, like his father. His death mask shows him to have had red blond curly hair and a thin hooked nose.

Queen Isabella: Dramatic Coloratura Soprano: The Queen of England, sister of The King of France. Mother of Edward III and Joanna, and estranged wife of King Edward II. She is said to have been a great beauty. She is depicted as having brown hair.

Gaveston: High Lyric Tenor: Born of French peasant stock. Lover of Edward II.

Mortimer, Earl of Lancaster: Dramatic Tenor: The most powerful lord in The English Court.

Edward III: Lyric Baritone: The son of Edward II and Queen Isabella. His death mask showed him to have rugged features a full brown beard and curly brown hair. What is important in singing this role is a feeling of restraint, which develops into overwhelming strength. May be sung either by a counter tenor (original) or mezzo-soprano ("Eleanor" or as pants role).

Executioner: Bass.

Executioners, on-stage musicians, Attendants, Guards, Soldiers and one or more Dancers

The Orchestra: Flute, Piccolo, Oboe, English Horn in F, 2 Bb Clarinets, Bassoon, Contra Bassoon, 2 French Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in Bb, Tenor Trombone, Tenor-bass Trombone, Tuba in F, 2 Percussionists (Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Cathedral Bells, Triangle, Crash Cymbals, Gong, Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Finger Cymbals, Sleigh Bells (optional) and Bongós), Timpani, Celeste, Piano, Harp, and Strings (each string part divides). Every instrument is featured as soloist.

Notes from The Composer:

The Chamber Recording:

The Opera *Edward II* was recorded at John Weston's Futura Sound Studio in Roslindale, MA. by Mike Burke between July 11, 2009 and January 15, 2010 by the singers: Carol Millard, high soprano as Isabella; Michael Belle, high tenor, as Gaveston; Christopher Aaron Smith, tenor, as Mortimer; Brett Johnson, baritone, as Edward III; Drew Hubbard, bass-baritone, as Lightborn; Tom Dawkins, bass-baritone, executioner; and David Edgar Walther, bass, as Edward II. The instrumentalists were: flute & piccolo (Carol Millard); english horn, bassoon & contra bassoon (Tom Dawkins); clarinet & tenor saxophone (Christian Contreras); piano (Leah Kosch); and solo 'cello (Sam Ou) and ensemble 'cello (Priscilla Chew). Under the supervision of the composer, Mike Burke edited and mastered the CD.

Intermissions:

This work may be separated with one or two intermissions:

One intermission: Dividing the work in half gives it a darker tone, the first half ending with the murder of Gaveston. It also extends the victory of Isabella's troops into the two duets with Mortimer, which may present less variety than dividing into thirds.

Two Intermissions: The first two thirds end with a relatively more up beat tone, and the changing of the sets is designed to work with this formation.

Either two or three intermissions (or no intermission at all) will work. Which is best depends on the concentration span of the audience and the format of the venue.

Cuts:

The cuts provided in the appendix will be added into the body of the work in the future. They were created to conform to the recording. Better cuts would be: 5# *Arabesque* (if dancers are unavailable. It also breaks the flow); # 34. *Assassination* (m. 21 or 34 to 48) and mm. 30-40 of # 36. *Isabella's Farewell*. I strongly suggest that the head motive at the start, middle and end of each movement not be cut, as this will alter the form of the Tableau in question.

General information:

Orchestral scores, parts, CDs, and piano vocal scores are available from: email: actingsingersproject@earthlink.net phone: (617) 325-7745.

Historical Notes:

1. Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, not Roger Moritmer (Isabella's historic lover), was responsible for the death of Gaveston. Gaveston was beheaded rather than stabbed. Marlowe made these changes. Edward II's murderer is unknown, and there is one account (but ONLY ONE account); that details how Edward II escaped to the mainland after killing a guard.
2. Following Gaveston's murder, Edward may have had another lover in Hugh le Despenser, the first Earl of Winchester. It is less certain that they were lovers, but he was executed along side Edward. Marlowe included the character but did not imply any romantic involvement, other than friendship, between Hugh le Despenser and Edward II. I left him out of the opera for the sake of simplicity.
3. Although Edward III did ultimately side with his father, he had earlier supported Isabella and The French in the battles that deposed Edward II.
4. Christopher Marlowe invented Lightborn as a minor character, and I have elevated him to narrator, and created his ironic nature as a "charming" villain. David Wheeler, associate director of the A. R. T. Theater in Cambridge, MA. suggests in personal conversation that the name "Lightborn" is actually a variation of Lucifer, suggesting an association, perhaps in Marlowe's mind, with an incarnation of the extreme forces of evil.
5. Martha Blackman, early music specialist at Stanford University, helped me with the titles of the tableaux. They are an untraditional approach to the dance and song forms that Edward II would have known.
6. When I was in London I was disappointed that, unlike his father and son, Edward II is not buried in Westminster Abbey. However, I was pleased to find that the reason for this is that Edward II's popularity has never died in England, and pilgrimages to the magnificent tomb built in his honor by his son, Edward III, at St Peter's Abbey in Gloucester are the source of great revenue to this day.

Edward II

The Libretto with Optional Narrations:

Tableau I: Pastoral

(Fade up on Lightborn.: The stage is dark. There is just enough (blue) light to see as Lightborn is lead in from stage left, in chains, to a podium, extreme stage right, by two large, bare chested men: executioners with faces and groins covered in black leather)

Lightborn's First Monologue: *(These narrations are optional, but help to clarify the action)* Ladies and gentleman of the court, here is my story: The story of Lightborn, a poor tradesman. I tell it freely in hope of gaining your respect, and thereby your pity. For I have always been most merciful in my dealings, and my motives have always been most lofty. I have always acted professionally, and my mind has always kept to business. I thank the court for its indulgence in allowing me this opportunity to plead my gentle musings, and, today, I will show that I am unjustly accused. Not that I am innocent of all crime, but rather that there are a host of extenuating circumstances that warrant your mercy in my particular case. As my story unfolds my purity will be obvious to you all. But first I must take you back several years, to the time when Edward II was Prince of England. He had met a young fellow from France, named Pierce Gaveston. Over time, the friendship of the two boys grew into the love of two men. Edward II's father, King Edward I, did not approve of his son's love for another man. So Gaveston was exiled from England, back to his native France. Many years passed. Edward I is dead, and Edward II, is now king. See King Edward II as he writes to his exiled friend, to invite him back to London, to share his country and his love. On Gaveston's return there will be dancing and partying and Edward will bestow many titles on Gaveston. but first, Edward's letter of love will be intercepted by Isabella, his wife and Queen.

Scene i: Edward's Cottage *(A small area, extreme stage left, with chairs, a writing desk and a bed. A door leads to center stage. Ed. at desk, writes and reads the letter he has written:)*

1. Love Letter: "Come live with mee," *(Ed. at desk, writes and reads the letter he has written.*

Ed:	Song: Come live with mee, and be my love, And we will all the pleasures prove, That Vallies, groves, hills and fields, Woods, or steepie mountaine yeeldes.	And I will make thee beds of Roses, And a thousand fragrant posies, A cap of flowers, and a kirtle, Embroydred all with leaves of Mirtle.
	And wee will sit upon the Rocks, Seeing the Sheeheard's feede theyr flocks, By shallow Rivers, to whose falls, Melodious byrds sing Madrigalls.	A belt of straw, and Ivie buds, With Corall clasps and Amber studs, And if these delights thy minde my move; Then live with mee, and be my love.

(When he is finished he hands the letter to a messenger who exits, stage right, to take it to Isabella.)

Scene ii: Isabella's Cottage

(A small area extreme stage right, with a bed. A door leads to center stage. The letter is brought to Queen Isabella.)

2. Isabella's Tears: "From my embracements thus he breaks away."

Is: Aria: From my embracements thus he breaks away.

O, that mine arms could close this isle about,

That I might pull him to me where I would!

Or that these tears, that drizzle from mine eyes,

Had power to mollify his stony heart,

That, when I had him, we might never part!

(The Messenger exits, stage left, to the center stage)

Scene iii: A Road To The Castle

(Center Stage: a pond with a waterfall or a fountain is down center stage left; a large rock, is down stage further left; and a smaller rock (for sitting) is down stage right center. The castle is behind, stage right and a road runs by the rocks up to the castle; Gav., is brought the letter, from Isabella's Cottage.)

3. Love's Reply: "Sweet prince, I come;"

Gav: Recit: *(Gav., reads and re-reads the letter.)*

Ah! words that make me surfeit with delight!

What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston

Than live and be the favourite of my king!

Whatso thy mind affects, or fancy likes.

Song: Sweet prince, I come; these thy amorous lines

Might have enforced me to have swum from France,

And, like Leander, gasped upon the sand,

So thou would'st smile, and take me in thine arms.

The sight of London to my exiled eyes

Is as Elysium to a new-come soul;

4. Reunion: "Embrace me, o my love, as I do thee." *(Ed. enters, from his cottage, and greets Gav.)*

Ed: Duet: Kiss not my hand:

Embrace me, Gaveston, know'st not thou whom I am?

Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!

(Embracing, the king and Gaveston continue simultaneously:)

Gav: And since I went from hence, no soul in h-ll

Hath felt more torment than poor Gaveston.

Ed: Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules

Than thou hast been of me since thy exile.

Both: Kiss not my hand:

Embrace me, o my love, as I do thee.

(They kiss and embrace deeply and relax to enjoy the show as courtiers enter to entertain them.)

5. Arabesque *(Instrumental with Dance. Dancers enter from stage right. Ed. & Gav. sit by the rock stage left.)*

6. Creation: "I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain."

Ed: I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain

Chief Secretary to the state and me,

Earl of Cornwall King and Lord of Mann.

Gav: No greater titles can happen unto me,

Than to be favoured of your majesty!

Ed: Fear'st thou thy person? Thou shall have a guard:

Wants thou gold go to my treasury

Wouldst thou be loved and feared receive my seal;

Save or condemn, and in our name command

Whatso thy mind affects, or fancy likes.

7. Heart: "My lord, these titles far exceed my worth."

Gav: My lord, these titles far exceed my worth.

Both: It shall suffice me to enjoy your love

Ed: Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts
Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart.

Gav: Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
As Caesar riding in the Roman street,

Gav: I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight;

With captive kings at his triumphant car.

8. Love's Dart: "What makes my bed seem hard seeing it is soft" (Marlowe's Tr. of Ovid's 2nd Ode)

Ed: Song: What makes my bed seem hard seeing it is soft?
Or why slips downe the Coverlet so oft?
Although the nights be long, I sleepe not tho,

Or lies he close, and shoots where none can spie him?
T'was so, he stroke me with a slender dart,
'Tis cruell love turmoyles my captive hart....

Ed & Gav: Duet: My sides are sore with tumbling to and fro.
Were Love the cause, it's like I shoulde descry him.

Loe I confesse, I am thy captive I,
And hold my conquered hands for thee to tie.

Tableau II: Estampie

Lightborn's Second Monologue: Gaveston is made Lord High Chamberlain, Chief Secretary to the state and the king; Earl of Cornwall; King and Lord of Man. He is crowned with all the pomp and lavish expense that the royal house of England can muster, while Mortimer looks on in horror. Gaveston is base born, and the titles that Edward now bestows on him make him a member of the nobility. I hold an eager eye on the inner workings of the court, and stand quietly in the background... in the shadows... observing and waiting until my services might be needed. Days and weeks have passed as the couple basked in the light of each other's love. See the queen as she sits alone in the grand throne room. Her solitude is to be disturbed by the one who she least would see. They will soon be joined by Mortimer, Earl of Lancaster, the most powerful of the lords. He mirrors the queen's sentiments and has always deeply felt her pain. Then Edward II will be added to the fray and Queen Isabella and Prince Edward III will be at a loss to stop the onslaught.

Scene i: The Same, Later (*Is. is alone, on the sitting rock, facing stage left, as Gav. enters, from Ed.'s Cottage.*)

9. Cat Fight: "Whither goes my lord?" (*Ed. II & III enter from stage right during the #.*)

Is: Duet: Whither goes my lord?

Is: These hands are tired with haling of my lord

Gav: Fawn not on him, get thee gone!

From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston,

Is: On whom but on my husband should I fawn?

And all in vain; for, when I speak him fair,

Gav: On Mortimer! with whom, ungentle queen-

He turns away, and smiles upon his minion.

I say no more- judge you the rest....

For never doated Jove on Ganymede

Is: In saying this, thou wrong'st me, Gaveston;

So much as he on cursed' Gaveston.

Is't not enough that thou corrupt'st my lord,

Like Frantic Juno will I fill the earth

And art a bawd to his affections,

With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries.

But must thou call mine honour thus in question?

Villain! 'tis thou that robb'st me of my lord.

Gav: Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,

Gav: Madam, 'tis you that rob me of my lord.

10. Love's Defense: "Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,"

(Ed. goes to Gav. as Ed. III addresses Is.. During the # Mort. enters from stage left.)

Ed III: Aria: Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,
And, seeing his mind so doats on Gaveston,
Let him without controulment have his will.
The mightiest kings have had their minions:
Great Alexander loved Hephestion;

The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept;
And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped
And not kings only, but the wisest men:
The Roman Tully loved Octavius;
Grave Socrates wild Alcibiades.

11. Anger: "Why should you love him whom the world hates so?"

Mort: Trio: Why should you love him whom the world hates so?

Ed: Because he loves me more than all the world. *(They sing simultaneously:)*

Mort: Trio: My lord, why do you thus incense your peers,
That naturally would love and honour you,
But for that base and obscure Gaveston?
My lord, you may not thus disparage us.
Away, I say, with hateful Gaveston!

Is: Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer.
Ed: (For) he loves me more than all the world.
Is this the duty that you owe your king?
I will have Gaveston; and you shall know
What danger 'tis to stand against your king.

12. Wound: "That villain Mortimer is grown so brave,"

Gav: Trio: That villain Mortimer is grown so brave,
That to your face he threatens civil wars.
He threatens civil wars.
Strike off his head, and let it preach on poles!
And let it preach on poles!

Mort: Monster of men!

Is: Ay me, poor soul, when these begin to jar.

Mort: Look for no other fortune, wretch, than death!

Gav: My swelling heart for very anger breaks!
Yet, shall the crowing of these cockerels

Affright a lion! Edward, unfold thy paws,
And let his lives' blood slake thy fury's hunger.
Mort: *(Drawing his sword.)* Villain, Villain-
thy life, unless I miss mine aim,
I'll have his blood, or die in seeking it.
Is: Lift not thy sword against thy king.
Mort: Upon my weapon's point here should'st thou fall,
And welter in thy gore. *(Mort. wounds Gav.)*
Is: Furious Mortimer, you've wounded him.
Gav: *(the first section repeated embellished.)*

13. Cat Interlude *(Instrumental)*

Scene ii: The Same, Later *(Is. is on the sitting rock facing stage left. Mort. is behind her, to stage right.)*

15. Poison Cup: "O miserable and distresséd' queen!" *(Is. alone. Mort. watches her.)*

Is: Aria: O miserable and distresséd' queen!
Would when I left sweet France and was embarked,
That charming Circe walking on the waves,
Had changed my shape, or at the marriage-day
The cup of Hymen had been full of poison,
Or with those arms that twined about my neck
I had been stifled, and not lived to see
The king my lord thus abandon me!

In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,
Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston.
But yet I hope my sorrows will have end,
And Gaveston this blessed' day be slain.
Witness the tears that Isabella sheds,
Witness this heart, that sighing for thee, breaks
How dear my lord is to poor Isabel.

16. Unto The Forest: "Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?"

Mort: Recit: *(Aside:)* Look where the sister of the King of France
Sits wringing of her hands, and beats her breast!
The king, I fear, hath ill-entreated her.
Hard is the heart that injuries such a saint.

(Is. rises, turns and starts to exit, stage right, where she bumps into the watching Mort.)

Mort: Duet: Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?

Is: Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,
To live in grief and baleful discontent;
For now, my lord, the king regards me not,
But doats upon his Gaveston.
He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,
Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;
And when I come he frowns, as if to say,
Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston."

Mort: Is it not strange that he is thus bewitched?
Madam, return unto the court again:
That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exile,
Or lose our lives; And yet on that day,
The king shall lose his crown; for we have power,
And courage too, to be revenged in full.

Tableau III: Plaint

Lightborn's Third Monologue: Mortimer wonders

what possible deeds performed by a commoner can merit his being placed on equal ranks with the lords. Mortimer feels that his breeding and birth give him certain rights and privileges, and yet the base born Gaveston is promoted to ranks that equal and even surpass the highest of the lords. This while the king siphons monies that are needed elsewhere in order to pay for his expensive indulgences. I watch from a safe distance, as Mortimer's anger begins to grow and fester. I watch as Mortimer stalks his prey as he would a hunted animal. I'm not sure whether he acts completely in passion... or whether he thinks that he has some sort of strategy. It is known that at a certain hour of every day that the king must attend to affairs of state. During that time Gaveston is left to walk the grounds with his young friend, Edward III. The three mostly discuss Gaveston's great love for the king... and if not that, then the king's great love for her Gaveston. Suddeny, Gaveston realizes that they are being watched. Gaveston sees Mortimer, who is totally consumed with feelings of hatred. Gaveston manages to escape his relentless pursue and finds a secret place, where he believes he will not be found. Here he prays for protection from the man who would take his life.

Scene i: A Clearing In The Dark Forest *(The center stage with tall dark green pine trees. It is night, and a full moon is above to stage right. To extreme stage left is a large stone with a cave in it (where Ed's Cottage was in Act I).*

16. Dark Forest *(Instrumental)*

17. Jealousy: "That villain Gaveston is made an earl."

(From dream 9/26-27/10: Mort. may put on makeup (#17.) & kill Gav. dressed as a clown (#19.))

Mort: <u>Aria:</u> That villain Gaveston is made an earl. An earl! Ay, and besides Lord Chamberlain of the realm, And Secretary too, and Lord of Man. But this I scorn, that one so basely born Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert, That Midas-like, he jets about the court Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show, He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,	Larded with pearl, and, in his Tuscan cap, A jewel of more value than the crown. We will not suffer this. Were all the earls and barons of my mind, We'd hale him from the bosom of the king, And at the court-gate hang the peasant up, Who, swoln with the venom of ambitious pride, Will be the ruin of the realm and us.
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18a. Gaveston's Prayer "Now, sweet Gd. of heaven" (Optional Introduction in Appendix)

Gav: Recit: Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
There is a point, to which when men aspire, Why should I grieve at my declining fall?
They tumble headlong down: that point I touched,

18. Gaveston's Prayer "Now, sweet Gd. of heaven"

Gav: Prayer: Now, sweet Gd. of heaven Yet liveth Pierce of Gaveston unsurpris'd,
I do commit this Gaveston to thee: Breathing in hope
Be thou this night his keeper. To see his royal sovereign once again.

19. Murder of Gaveston: (entering from stage left, Mort. finds his prey)

19a. Murder of Gaveston: (Optional Exposition in Appendix)

"Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants?"

Mort: Aria: 1. Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants?

Ignoble vassal, that, like Phaeton,
Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sun!
Thus, arm in arm, the king and he doth march:

And all the court begins to flatter him.

2. This totter'd ensign of my ancestors,

Will I advance upon this castle wall--
Drums, strike alarum, raise them from their sport,
and ring the knell of Gaveston!

19b. Murder of Gaveston: "While others walk below,"

Mort: 3. While others walk below, the king and he

From out a window laugh at such as
They flout our train, and jest at our attire.
He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,
Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;
And when I come he frowns, as if to say,
"Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have my Gaveston."
(An embellished version of verse 2. is performed here.)

4. Thou proud disturber of thy country's peace,
Corrupter of thy king,
Base flatterer, yield! It is our country's cause
That here severely we will execute
Upon thy person.

(Mort. stabs Gav. up stage extreme right, stage right.)

Mort. exits down stage right.)

(Ed. III enters, stage left, to discover the dying Gav.)

20. Gaveston's Death "O, must this day be period of my life,"

Gav: Aria: (sung from where he falls:)
O, must this day be period of my life,
Speed to the king,
Center of all my bliss.

To go from hence grieves not poor Gaveston;
But to forsake him, in whom
The blessedness of Gaveston remains;
For in him alone seeks he felicity. (He dies.)

Scene ii: The Cave (small area, stage left. The interior is illuminated with a fire.)

21. Mourning: "My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,"

Ed II: Recit: What, my good son, dost thou come alone?

Ed III: Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.

Ed II: Aria: My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain.
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah, had some bloodless Fury rose from h-ll,

And with my kingly scepter struck me dead,
When I was forc'd to leave my Gaveston!
He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn:
Did never sorrow go so near my heart
As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston.

Scene iii: The Clearing

22. Dark Forest (Instrumental: Ed. III. takes his father. to the body of Gav. where he collapses with greif.

The light in the Cave goes out as they exit it.)

Tableau IV: Round Dance

Lightborn's Fourth Monologue: Backed by the help of her dear friend, Mortimer, the queen now rallies the lords to her service in the field. Her warmth is now turned to ice; her passion is now turned to fire, that her pain may be turned to military victory. Edward III is sent to France for aid. See as the bloody revolution unfolds.

Scene i: The Same (*bright daylight. Is. speaks to her troops, Mort. is at her side.*)

23. Sword: "Look for rebellion, look to be deposed;"

Is: Aria: 1. Look for rebellion, look to be deposed;

Sound trumpets, and forward let us march.
Edward will think we come to flatter him.
I would he never had been flattered more!
And for the open wrongs and injuries
Edward hath done to us, his queen and land,
We come in arms to wreak it with the sword.

2. Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wreck;
And, Edward, thou art one among them all,
Whose looseness hath betrayed thy land to spoil,
And made the channel overflow with blood.
(Repeat Verse 1.)

Scene ii: The Cave (*As before a fire illuminates the interior*)

24. Atlas' Shoulder: "Commit not to my youth"

Ed II: Recit: You shall go parley
with the King of France.

Go, see you speak bravely to him
And do your message with a majesty.

Ed III: Aria: Commit not to my youth things of more weight
Than fits a prince so young to bear,

And fear not, lord and father, Heaven's great beams
On Atlas' shoulder shall not lie more safe,
Than shall your charge committed to my trust.
Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their king;

Ed. end them once! My lord, I take my leave,
To make my preparation for France.

Scene iii: The Clearing

(*The Eds. exit the cave (the fire goes out) Ed. II confronts the rebel armies. Ed. II exits stage left.*)

25. Earth: "By earth, the common mother of us all,"

Ed: Aria: By earth, the common mother of us all,
By Heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,
By this right hand, and by my father's sword,
And all the honours 'longing to my crown,
I will have heads, and lives for this, as many
As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers!--

If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
And stain my royal standard with the same,
That so my bloody colours may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally
On your accursed' traitorous progeny

26. Confrontation: "Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces,"

Mort: Scene: Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces,
It is but temporal that thou canst inflict.
The worst is death, and better die
Than live in infamy under such a king.

Ed: This day I shall pour vengeance with my sword
On those proud rebels that are up in arms,
And do confront and countermand their king.

27. Battle Music: (*Instrumental: Ed.'s army enters, down stage left. The Queen's Army wins the battle.*)

28. Crown: "What the heavens appoint, I must obey!"

Ed: Aria: 1. What the heavens appoint, I must obey!
Here, take my crown, the life of Edward too;
Two kings in England cannot reign at once.
Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I transgressed,
Unless it be with too much clemency?

Come, death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,
Or if I live, let me forget myself.
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.
all places are alike,
And every earth is fit for burial.

29. Victory: "Successful battle gives the Gd. of kings"

Is: Aria: (*She addresses her victorious troops*)
1. Successful battle gives the Gd. of kings
To them that fight in right and fear his wrath.
Since then successfully we have prevailed,
Thanked' be Heaven's great architect, and you.

2. That England's queen in peace may repossess
Her dignities and honours: and withal
We may remove these flatterers from the king,
That havoc England's wealth and treasury.
(Repeat Verse 1.) (*Ed. is led away in chains*)

Tableau V: Ductia

Lightborn's Sixth Monologue: The queen and her lover, Mortimer, have won the day. Edward has resigned his crown. But there are still those who have remained faithful to Edward II. What if Edward should rally his forces and rise again to his former glory? Mortimer gives me a note, intended to be read only by the king's guard, a man secretly in Mortimer's employ. The note, written in Latin, is without punctuation, so it may be translated in two entirely different ways. It could either mean: "fear not to kill the king, it is good that he should die," or "kill not the king, it is good to fear the worst." This letter gives me entrance to the dungeon wherein the king is held captive without incriminating those involved. Mortimer did not care to know how the murder would be committed. He knows that my abilities in this area are quite unsurpassed. I am totally professional in my work, and, unlike Mortimer, I have always liked the king. After all, my work is not about personal taste. It is about money, pure and simple, and Mortimer has always been quite generous in that regard. So I resolve to do it quickly, as he bids me... cautiously, and with as little pain to his majesty as is possible. I devise a plan whereby the wound that I bring to the king will not be easily found... in a place on his body where sunlight has never ventured. To ensure my success, I heat my weapon with the fire of my torch. There is almost no sound to be heard in the dungeon when I enter. I find Edward praying silently by himself, almost as if he realizes the peace that I will bring him. I have always been known for my gentleness, and although we have never met, after our brief acquaintance, all of his problems will be at an end due to my soft loving caresses. I try to enter quietly, so as not to interrupt his highness; but the light that I bring gives me away, and I'm afraid that I do disturb his solitude. But first see Mortimer and Isabella as they celebrate their love, and victory.

Scene i: Isabella's Bed Room (*Extreme stage right.*)

30a. Wolf's Ear: (Optional Instrumental Introduction in Appendix)

30b. Wolf's Ear: "Fair Isabel, now we have our desire;" (*Mort. and Is. are alone.*)

Mort: Duet: Fair Isabel, now we have our desire; And gripe the sorer, being griped himself.
The proud corrupters of the light-brained king Think therefore, madam, that imports us much
Have done their homage to the lofty gallows, To erect your son with all the speed we may,
For he himself lies in captivity. And that I be protector over him;
Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm. For our behoof will bear the greater sway
In any case take heed of childish fear, Whenas a king's name shall be writ.
For now we hold an old wolf by the ears, The king hath willingly resigned his crown.
That, if he slip, will seize upon us both, (*Mort. shows the crown to Is.*)

Is: O happy news! send for my son.

How fares my lord the king?

Mort: In health, madam, but full of pensiveness.

Is: Alas, poor soul, would I could ease his grief! And bear him this as witness of my love.
Commend me humbly to his majesty, (*She kisses Mort. passionately, and laughs*)
And tell him that I labour all in vain. But Mortimer, as long as he survives,
To work his liberty; What safety rests for us, or for my heirs?

Mort: Speak, shall he presently be despatched and die?

31. Second Love: "Be thou persuaded that I love thee well;"

Is: Duet: So well hast thou deserv'd, sweet Mortimer, **Both:** Be thou persuaded that I love thee well;
As Isabel could live with thee for ever. Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes.
Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel, (*Is. kisses him softly and exits through the door.*)

32. Plot: "The king must die"

Mort: Aria: The king must die, or Mortimer goes down (*Mort. calls to Lightborn*)
The commons now begin to pity him: **Mort:** Recit: Lightborn, come forth.
Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death, (*Lightborn enters through the door.*)
Is sure to pay for it when his son's of age; Art thou so resolute as thou wast?
Therefore will I do it cunningly. **Light:** What else, my lord?
This letter, And far more resolute.
Contains his death, yet bids them save his life; **Mort:** Well, do it bravely, and be secret.
That, being dead, if it chance to be found, Go, and never see me more!
The rest bear the blame, (*Mortimer gives L. the letter.*)
And we be quit that caus'd it to be done.

Scene ii: The Dungeon (*extreme stage left, with a bed and a table and chair. It is extremely dark, all light comes from the fireplace; the furnishings are of poor quality.*)

33. Fleeting Hence: "I see our souls are fleeting hence" (*Ed. prays alone.*)

Ed: Recit: Lay me in a hearse, We are deprived the sunshine of our life:
And to the gates of hill convey me hence; Make for new life, man; throw up thy eyes,
Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell, And heart and hands to Heaven's immortal throne;
And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore, Pay nature's debt with cheerful countenance;
For friends hath Edward none but these, Reduce we all our lessons unto this,
And these must die under a tyrant's sword. To die, sweet Gaveston, therefore live we all;
Song: I see our souls are fleeting hence; all live to die, and rise to fall.

34. Assassination: "I see our souls are fleeting hence"

Scene: (*The Light from Lightborn's torch is seen as he enters, through the door.*)

Ed: Who's there? what light is that? wherefore cometh thou?

Light: To comfort you, and bring you joyful news.

Ed: Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.

Light: O speak no more... This breaks my heart.

Lie on this bed, and rest yourself a while. (*Edward lies on his bed.*)

<u>Ed:</u> Something still buzzeth in mine ears, And tells me, if I sleep, I never wake. What fear is that which makes me tremble thus? Assist me, sweet Gd., and receive my soul!	O Gaveston, 'tis for thee that I am wronged! And for thy sake a thousand wrongs I'll take. Farewell. I know the next news they bring Will be my death; and welcome shall it be: To wretched men death is felicity.
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(Optional Interludes before and after last line in Appendix)

(*Ed, falls asleep, resting on his front, facing the audience. Lightborn draws his sword, and heats it in his torch, then lifts Eds garment from the rear, as the lights fade.*)

Scene iii: The Grand Throne Room (*Center stage: two thrones are down stage center. The stage is dark.*)

35a. Jove's Huge Tree: "Now is all sure" (*Mort is alone*)

<u>Mort:</u> <u>Arig:</u> Now is all sure: the queen and Mortimer Shall rule the realm; and none rule us. All tremble at my name, and I fear none:	Let's see who dare accuse me of his death! As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge tree, And others are but shrubs compar'd to me.
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35b. Coronation of Edward III (Optional Instrumental in Appendix) (*Mort. is joined by the court entering, down stage from both left and right; two trumpeters may perform on stage, the stage is brightly lit.*)

Tableau VI: Apotheosis

Lightborn's Seventh Monologue: Mortimer's plans quickly unravel before the gaze of the young, new king. Isabella tries to protect the one to whom she once looked for her own protection; but all of her pleas seem only to implicate her further, as well as implicating the one she hopes to aid. See Edward III, the new king. In his vengeance, set so keenly on Mortimer, may he overlook the gentle workings of this, his most humble servant, Lightborn. I thank the court for its indulgence in allowing me this opportunity to plead my gentle musings, and, today, I feel certain that I have shown that I am unjustly accused. Not that I am innocent of crime, exactly, but rather that there are a host of extenuating circumstances that warrant your mercy in my particular case. I have always acted professionally, and my mind has always been kept to business. Ladies and gentleman of the court, here ends my story: The story of Lightborn, a poor tradesman. I have told it freely in hope of gaining your respect, and thereby your pity. For I have always been most merciful in my dealings, and my motives have always been most lofty. (*Edward III has heard this final monologue, and with a wave of his hands the executioners take Lightborn away.*)

Scene i: The Same, Later (*Edward's body is on a funeral pyre, up stage right; The stage is dark again.*)

36. Isabella's Farewell: "O! is he gone? is noble Edward gone?"

(Is. alone. The messenger brings her a note which she reads. The room is dark.)

<u>Is:</u> <u>Aria:</u> O! is he gone? is noble Edward gone? Parted from hence? never to see us more? Rend, sphere of Heaven! and, fire, forsake thy orb! Earth, melt to air! gone is my sovereign,	<u>Is:</u> Gone, gone, alas! never to make return. But what are kings, when regiment is gone, But perfect shadows in a sunshine day? Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.
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37. Discovery: "Weep not, sweet child!"

(Mort enters stage right, Ed. III, and court enter stage left. The light comes up to half light)

<u>Is:</u> <u>Trio:</u> Weep not, sweet child!	<u>Is:</u> As thou receivedest thy life from me, Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer!
<u>Ed III:</u> Forbid me not to weep; he was my father; And, had you loved him half so well as I, You could not bear his death thus patiently. But you, I fear, conspired with Mortimer.	<u>Ed III:</u> This argues that you spilt my father's blood, Else would you not entreat for Mortimer.
<u>Is:</u> That rumour is untrue; for loving thee, Is this report raised on poor Isabel.	<u>Mort:</u> But has your grace no other proof than this? <u>Ed III:</u> Yes, if this be the hand of Mortimer. <i>(Shewing the letter.)</i>
<u>Ed III:</u> Away with her, her words enforce these tears, And I shall pity her if she speak again.	<u>Mort:</u> It is my hand; what gather you by this? <u>Ed III:</u> That thither thou didst send a murderer. <u>Mort:</u> I feared as much; murder cannot be hid.

38. Traveler: "Farewell, fair queen:"

<u>Mort:</u>	<u>Aria:</u> Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer, That scorns the world, and, as a traveler, Goes to discover countries yet unknown.
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39. Edward's Ghost: "In me my loving father speaks,"

Ed III: Aria: *(To Mort:)* In me my loving father speaks, to witness to the world that by thy means
And plainly saith, 'twas thou that murder'st him. His kingly body was too soon interr'd.
And thou shalt die,

*(the two executioners to escort Mort. out, stage right; They soon return with Mort.'s dismembered head;
Ed. III is center stage where he remains to the end. They hand the bag containing Mort.'s head to the Ed. III.)*

Executioner: *(to Ed. III:)* My lord, here is the head of Mortimer.

Ed III: Go fetch my father's hearse, where it shall lie;
And bring my funeral robes.

(Attendants exeunt, stage right, and re-enter and move the hearse to center stage in front of Ed. III; and they place the white funeral robes on the new king. He removes the head from the bag and addresses it: Ed. III addresses Mort.'s head:)

<u>Ed III:</u> Accursed head, Could I have rul'd thee then, as I do now, Thou had'st not hatched this monstrous treachery! <i>(Ed. III places Mort.'s head on the hearse:)</i> <i>(Ed. III looks straight into the house with both hands out stretched at his side: with palms facing the audience. The hearse is as an altar before him. The stage is still as the lights fade</i>	Sweet father, here unto thy murder'd ghost I offer up this wicked traitor's head; And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes, Be witness of my grief and innocence.
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