

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN SOCIETY



MAGAZINE No 48

SUMMER 1999

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Dear Member,

The Ninth Sullivan Festival duly took place at the palatial Toorak Hotel, Torquay, from 14 - 16 May 1999.

Writing about the Festivals is beginning to present a serious problem, because it is difficult to find new ways of describing something so uniformly successful. We gathered at 7 pm for the inaugural banquet, which was followed by a concert of Sullivan's music given by Occasional Harmony, who are an offshoot of the St David's Players of Exeter. We heard some fine choral and solo singing in items from the no-longer-quite-so-unfamiliar Sullivan repertory, including 'Over the Roof' from *The Sapphire Necklace* and a memorable performance of Saida's song from *The Beauty Stone* by Penny Daw. Sullivan's work was represented in its sacred and secular aspects, and we heard something, at least, from all his major works.

On Saturday morning those who were not in cars set out in a sort of a private bus for Pencarrow House, where Sullivan composed parts of *Iolanthe* while visiting Lady Molesworth. The eighteenth century house is chiefly remarkable for its glorious grounds and intact interiors. We saw the piano on which Sullivan is supposed to have played while at Pencarrow, and later heard it when Selwyn Tillett and Leon Berger gave a brief G&S recital (see photograph p.9). The house contains a small collection of D'Oyly Carte memorabilia and costumes, and is also home to the workbox given by Sullivan to his niece Edith (on loan from the Sullivan Society). After the tour we gathered on the lawn for a photo opportunity for the local press, Leon Berger dressing up in John Reed's old costume as Lord Chancellor.

Leaving Pencarrow we retraced our steps to Coleton Fishacre, the home of Rupert and Bridget D'Oyly Carte, now owned by the National Trust. Coleton Fishacre is best described as an austere 1920s machine for living in, surrounded by wonderful gardens, and with direct access to a private beach. Unhappily the green hills o' glorious Devon had an adverse effect on the bus, which broke down with clutch trouble. A replacement was found, and nobody missed dinner.

After dinner, within the facilities of the hotel, we had a complete semi-costumed concert performance of *The Emerald Isle*, given by the St David's Players of Exeter, with Andrew Curtis as conductor, and Ian Bond as narrator, first in red trousers and green socks, then in green trousers and red socks. This is known as the wearing of the green and the red. The fine performance served as a reminder of how effective *The Emerald Isle* is, whether the composer be Sullivan or German. I was particularly moved by

'Da luan da mort' in the first act finale. I have asked several people who claimed to read Gaelic what these words mean, only to receive replies which convinced me that the claims were unfounded. I think the words may simply be the names of the days of the week (Monday/Tuesday), but does anyone actually know?

On Sunday morning the Twenty Third AGM of the Sullivan Society was held, in the record time of about nine minutes flat, extended only by the fact that the outgoing Chairman, Selwyn Tillet, was presented with a copy of the Broudie Bros full score of *Trial by Jury* to mark his many years of valuable service to the Society. Stephen Turnbull's tribute to Selwyn Tillet is printed separately on page 3 below.

Roger Wild now took the floor with the discovery of two new, ie very old, G&S recordings on cylinder. The first was a substantially complete *HMS Pinafore* on Sterling cylinders of about 1906, found 'in a garage', and the only known surviving copy of this recording, which is extremely clear and sonorous, with some fine singers, including Walter Hyde. The second was a decaying *Mikado* cylinder of 1901 featuring the earliest known recording of Gilbertian dialogue, that which introduces 'Here's a how de do.'

It was now time for the launch of the Society's new *Kenilworth* CD (reviewed on page 4). Eliot Levin of Symposium Records introduced the recording, saying that from being an outsider he had now become interested in Sullivan, finding the choral music on the disc more impressive than G&S. Leon Berger also spoke about his part in the recording.

Next up was Dr David Russell Hulme, with a fascinating talk on Edward German, who always seems to have regarded Sullivan as his mentor. From the many excerpts played, and from Dr Hulme's own comments, it is clear that German and Sullivan were not in fact very much alike. German had little sense of humour, and outside his famous 'Olde Englysshe' style was rather more Elgarian than Sullivanesque. It is clear that his dealings with Gilbert over *Fallen Fairies* were traumatic for him (he is said to have exclaimed 'Thank God' on reading of Gilbert's death) and that this episode played a significant part in bringing about his retirement. In later years he thought that time had passed him by. We perhaps are allowed to conclude that time will eventually catch up with him again.

After coffee Leon Berger and Selwyn Tillet gave us a recital of music by people who were associated with Gilbert and Sullivan. Composers such as Richard D'Oyly Carte, Florence Gilbert (sister of W.S.G.), Fanny Ronalds, Walter Passmore and other Savoyards were represented. One listener at least was forcibly reminded of Nellie Melba's advice to Clara Butt - 'Sing 'em muck!' But this must be rephrased. The programme was a fascinating sidelight on Victorian musical life, with Mrs Ronalds perhaps the best of the composers represented on the day. No doubt she had privileged access to Sullivan's waste paper basket.

Finally David Steadman (Piano) and Patricia Leonard (Mezzo) gave us a beautifully honed cabaret recital, including items by Ivor Novello and Noel Coward as well as G&S. These two are consummate professionals, who know exactly how to play off against each other for the pleasure of the

audience. Their performance made a fitting conclusion to the Festival, which ended, as always, with 'The long day closes' (from the Society's new CD).

The thanks of everyone must be extended to Stephen and Julie Turnbull, whose efforts in preparing the Festivals ensure that no one else is required to make any effort at all. Only those who have regular contact with Stephen are in a position to judge just how much time and energy he puts into providing our enjoyment, and we should all be grateful. On the present occasion special thanks are also due to Ian Bond, whose enthusiasm brought the St David's Players and Occasional Harmony to the Festival for our entertainment. **D.E.**

TRIBUTE TO SELWYN TILLET

There are only two people who have served on the SASS Committee longer than Selwyn Tillett. One of them (David Eden) has just succeeded him as Chairman, and I am the other. I have known Selwyn almost twenty years - I don't know how long exactly, but I have a letter at home dated sometime in 1979 that begins 'Dear Mr Turnbull, or, as I suspect we will be getting to know one another rather well, Dear Stephen (!)' And he was right. We have worked together on the SASS Committee now for nineteen years, on numerous projects in good and in lean times. We have occasionally disagreed, but we have always remained friends. We have grown middle-aged together. Selwyn Tillett is godfather to Lesley, my elder daughter. He was my referee when I applied for my present job at the diocese of Durham. Heaven knows what he said, but they took me on!

Selwyn's impact on the work of the Society has been enormous. In 1981 he recorded the piano score of *Victoria and Merrie England*. Little did we think at that time that just over a decade later we would be able to listen to a full scale recording of V&ME on CD. This was substantially due to Selwyn's efforts. Not only that but, thanks to the work he and Rod Spencer did we also have *L'île Enchantée* complete - and the Holy Grail for G&S enthusiasts: the *Thespis* ballet music. The CD [*Kentworth*] you will hear launched in a few minutes owes much to his persistence and commitment.

Selwyn, we who are left behind will miss enormously your presence and your contributions to our work. Happily you're not completely rid of us - perhaps you are regretting taking out that life membership! - and so I venture to hope that we may occasionally call upon your services for *ad hoc* projects. In particular, I personally hope that you can continue to be involved with the planning of our commemoration of Sullivan's centenary in St Paul's Cathedral on 27 November 2000, and, indeed, I hope very much that you will be able to take an active part in it: a case of two capacities that definitely do NOT clash!

I would now like to present you, on behalf of the Society, with a small but tangible token of our collective gratitude. But what do you give the man who gave the world *Thespis*? Well, you go one step on and give him *Trial by Jury*! I hope you will accept this copy of the Broude Brother full score of *Trial* as a reminder of the trials and triumphs of the last nineteen years!

THE MASQUE AT KENILWORTH

The Masque at Kenilworth: *Kenilworth; Boer War Te Deum; Imperial Institute Ode; The Long Day Closes; Exhibition Ode.* Alison Roddy (Soprano); Leigh Woolf (Mezzo); Stephen Brown (Tenor); Leon Berger (Baritone); John Oxlade (Organ); Oxford Pro Musica Singers; Oxford Company of Musicians; Kidlington Concert Brass, conducted by Michael Smedley. Symposium 1247. Available from SASS Sales price £10 post paid (UK); £12/\$18 post paid (Overseas), or from Classic Tracks and other record shops.

If anyone had told me ten years ago that the first of Sullivan's choral works to get a complete recording would be the *Boer War Te Deum* I would have laughed very loudly. If the same person had told me, not only that the first major choral work to be recorded complete would be *Kenilworth*, but also that the *Boer War Te Deum* would achieve a *second* recording, it would probably have been necessary for gentlemen in white coats to escort me from the room. But, as a famous politician once said, it's a funny old world.

This CD owes its existence to an unusual set of circumstances. A recording that was to have been made in 1997 failed when almost an entire chorus broke their word to the conductor and failed to turn up, prompting our vice-president, George Hilton, (who very much wanted to hear *Kenilworth*) to agree to finance a fresh recording. This time no chances were taken and the task was entrusted to the Oxford Pro Musica Singers under Michael Smedley, who sang *The Light of the World* and the Odes so well at the Sullivan Festival in 1996, and Symposium Records, with whom the Society has collaborated on a series of projects. Soloists were engaged, a venue selected (St Barnabas' Church, Oxford) and the recording made in February 1999. On 16 May the finished disc was launched at the Sullivan Festival, just a month after we were all luxuriating in the BBC *Rose of Persia*. It is a funny old world.

Where do I begin? Even in the Society some have dismissed the Odes as almost joke pieces - use once, then discard - but here, with full orchestra and a first class choir under Michael Smedley, they seize the attention and demand to be taken seriously. Musically speaking, the 1887 *Imperial Institute Ode* is the more sophisticated and challenging of the two, but there is an irresistible sense of fun about the *Exhibition Ode* with its refrain (by Tennyson, no less) of 'Britons, hold your own!' Alison Roddy, a common link to *The Rose of Persia* and a singer of whom we shall hear much more, soars effortlessly over the chorus in the final verse.

Kenilworth is the real meat in the sandwich. Another work generally written off, even by the enthusiasts, not least because of its libretto (H.F. Chorley). Another work where we have to revise our opinions. Despite the rather uninteresting nature of the subject matter (a visit there by Queen Elizabeth I) the music positively buzzes with life and sparkle. The quartet and chorus 'Let fauns the cymbals ring' and the Brisk Dance spill over with brio, and the latter should jump straight into the concert programmes. The exquisitely beautiful duet 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps' (words by

Shakespeare - *The Merchant of Venice*) is already known in the Society through a couple of amateur performances and a recording, but here in the hands of Stephen Brown and Alison Roddy, is a revelation. The only disappointment is Leon Berger, who is uncomfortable with the register of Arion's song and often seems to be trying too hard. The pitch of his voice seems to have dropped since he recorded Mr Cox all those years ago.

The *Boer War Te Deum* is now quite well known, thanks to the SASS/Ely recording and a number of performances. This is certainly the slowest version I have heard, almost two minutes slower than Paul Trepte's on the Ely CD. For the most part this is not an impediment, as the *Te Deum* is a noble piece that benefits from an expansive treatment, but 'The glorious company' drags somewhat, and the finale (with 'Onward Christian Soldiers') needs a brisk march tempo to succeed. Here the speed is such that the impact is lost. On the other hand, 'When thou tookest' and the hushed funeral march 'O Lord save thy people' benefit from slow delivery. It is a huge bonus to have the full orchestration, although I did feel the brass could have been a little more forward.

The presentation of the CD is excellent, with a most attractive watercolour (hitherto unpublished) of Kenilworth Castle by Randolph Gibbons, the late father of the long serving SASS Sales Officer Peter Gibbons). Unfortunately someone involved in the booklet design committed the second greatest Sullivan solecism (after *Yeoman of the Guard*): the CD proclaims these works as by 'SIR Arthur Sullivan'. But Sullivan never used his title in this way: all his compositions are described as being by 'Arthur Sullivan'. There are one or two howlers in a generally excellent sleeve note by Selwyn Tillett, the worst being the overlooking of 'The Long Day Closes' in the opening paragraph, which tells us that the *Boer War Te Deum* is the only work on the disc to have been previously recorded! There are irritating inconsistencies of typography and layout, most notably a lack of consistency over the use of italic text. But as you will probably have gathered, these picky points are all I can find to say against this CD. Be grateful that such an astonishing rarity exists, go out and buy it. Sometimes the best thing to do with a funny old world is to enjoy it!

Finally, a word of tribute to our sponsors. The CD owes its existence substantially to the generosity of Professor George Hilton, who bore most of the production costs. However the recording was also supported by a generous bequest in memory of Ivor Lishman, and another from David Jacobs in memory of his late mother, Evelyn.

Victoria Francis

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TOPSY TURVY

The title of Mike Leigh's new G&S film is *Topsy Turvy*. The film was not ready in time for Cannes, but will receive its première at the Venice Film Festival in September. In true Leigh fashion the contents of the film are a closely guarded secret, but press rumour suggests that Sullivan's amorous propensities will receive their due.

IVANHOE

King's Theatre, Edinburgh, 23-27 February 1999.

King Richard - Roderick Somerville; Prince John - James Mckirdy; Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert - Peter Winton Thomson; Maurice de Bracy - David Faulds; Lucas de Beaumanoir - Craig Nacbeth; Cedric - Richard Bourjo; Wilfred of Ivanhoe - Steven Griffin; Friar Tuck - Roland York; Isaac of York - Ian Lawson; Locksley - Darren Coutts; Squire - John Severn; Rowena - Fiona Main; Ulrica - Heather Boyd; Rebecca - Susan Brotherston.

Director - Alan Borthwick; Musical Director - David Lyle

No praise can be too high for the extraordinary achievement of Alan Borthwick and David Lyle in bringing *Ivanhoe* to the stage. Such a production as this does not come about simply as a result of dedication, or a year's hard work - it is the fruit of many years' involvement not only with the music of Sullivan, but with the musical life of Edinburgh. So many talented people could not have been brought together unless they had good reason to know and trust the Director and Musical Director. The result must count as a vindication of everyone concerned.

An opera is above all a musical work - it cannot make its effect if the musical standards of the performance are inadequate. Here Alan Borthwick and David Lyle had their greatest success. A splendid orchestra and chorus, a highly sympathetic conductor, and uniformly excellent soloists gave us Sullivan's opera as it should be heard, without the need for making allowances. It would be invidious to pick out individuals, so let the whole cast, named above, be praised without stint as a fine ensemble, who gave of their best. The cuts, made necessary by considerations of overtime payment, were sensitively carried out, on the basis of a thorough understanding of the work. For the most part they were over painlessly, almost before they were noticed. Only the curtailment of the beautiful colloquy between Rowena and Ivanhoe in Act 1 Scene II seemed inadmissible, and this, with the best will in the world, was *really* inadmissible. Understanding of the plot was assisted by projected summaries, and by some modernisation of the sung text.

Questions of production are more problematical. *Ivanhoe* is deliberately planned as a spectacular work - a kind of operatic *Ben Hur*. It is clear in retrospect that D'Oyly Carte's original production was hampered throughout by the sheer cost of staging it. An equivalent cost today would certainly run into the millions spent by Andrew Lloyd Webber on his West End shows. No amateur group can possibly hope to match such expenditure, and yet a proper staging of *Ivanhoe* demands it. In the present

case, the Edinburgh G&S Society burst their budget, and did everything that skill and ingenuity could to compensate for the missing millions. The results were very effective, but one could not help but realise how much more was required by the spectacular scenes. In attempting the impossible the production perhaps came nearest to success in Act III scene 1, the taking of Torquilstone. Here the use of strobe lighting and smoke was effective enough to capture something of the potential excitement of the scene. Similar comments apply to the Tournament scene, which ought properly to have real (or at least computer-generated) horses thundering towards each other across the wide screen. Even the recent BBC television adaptation looked rather thin in this respect. The opening scene at Rotherwood is less dependent on physical action, and here the staging, closely based on the original, was effective. Indeed it is probably true to say that the production was at its most effective when attempting least, visually speaking. The confrontation between Rebecca and the Templar was the highlight of the performance - intensely dramatic and powerfully sung. The quieter scene between Rowena and Ivanhoe was unfortunately marred by the constant sound of movement behind the curtain. 'Light foot upon the dancing green' came off surprisingly well - 'Plantagenesta' was superb. The finale obviously 'works' on stage - something which recordings alone had not fully established.

It would be possible to continue in this vein through every scene. The overall verdict must be that this production was quite good enough to give an adequate impression of *Ivanhoe*, and make possible some sort of judgement concerning its worth. What, then, are we to make of Sullivan's *magnum opus*? The case against is obvious. What we have here is not opera as conceived by Verdi or Wagner, that is to say a self-contained dramatic structure in which larger-than-life characters do emotional battle with each other until one or other of them dies of wounds. *Ivanhoe* is a solution to a different problem - the problem of how to make a specifically English opera which would keep an expensive theatre open and serve as a model for English opera in future. In arriving at his solution Sullivan made a fundamental decision to the effect that he could not afford to neglect either popular patriotism or the tastes of his audiences at the Savoy. He chose a popular book as the basis of his libretto, and chose further to set the book to music as it stood rather than have it converted into an independently viable operatic structure. The opera is, so to speak, the musical of Scott's novel. Everything that is operatically 'wrong' with *Ivanhoe* stems from this initial decision, from the awkward opening in which characters are introduced seriatim to the unsatisfactory love plot in which the true heroine, Rebecca, loses a feeble hero to a less worthy woman. Even this frustrating love plot is interrupted by scenes of pure spectacle in which the dramatic thread is lost to anyone who is unacquainted with the novel. Moreover the Wardour Street style - a universal phenomenon of Victorian culture - is deeply unfashionable today. It would require a revolution in taste to make it completely acceptable again.

Looking at the same phenomenon positively, it may be said that opera is more than the works of Verdi and Wagner. Their particular ideas of the dramatic are not the only possible ideas, as thousands of works from Cavalli through Handel to Debussy and Delius bear witness. In particular *Ivanhoe* belongs with the genre of 'national' opera, which in Russia and

Czechoslovakia, for instance, consists of very little besides jolly peasants singing the praises of the *ancien régime* (which oppressed them brutally) and patriotic noblemen going forth to save it (the better preserve their right to oppress the peasants). Nobody (especially in England) despises these works, though they are as silly and politically naïve as anything in *Ivanhoe*. Nationalism at this level is a myth, but other countries are willing to accord it the suspension of their disbelief, as the eighteenth century Scots did for Ossian, and their modern descendants have done for the film *Braveheart*. As a genre piece, *Ivanhoe* is no worse than others of its kind, the difference being that the myths of English nationalism (as created, incidentally, by a Scot) are not PC.

As far as structure is concerned, criticism is illegitimate. The composer is entitled to his choice, and criticism may be applied only to what he makes of it. The semi-operas of Purcell, which have no structure at all, are performed with reverential awe by people whose devotion to the mystical watercross tradition in English music hardly entitles them to an opinion on the subject of Sullivan. But if their views are to be contended with, in peaceful art of minstrelsy, then it must be said that the music Sullivan put into *Ivanhoe* is as good as anything Purcell put into *King Arthur* or *The Fairy Queen*. If we can accept 'St George, the Patron of our Isle' (*King Arthur*), on what grounds are we to reject 'Plantagenesta'? If we are to applaud the drunken poet in *The Fairy Queen*, by what wretched process of doublethink are we to despise 'Ho Jolly Jenkin'? Where, with the exception of Dido's Lament, is there in any branch of Purcell's posturing and mannered operatic music anything so emotionally intelligent and humanly true as the two great duets in *Ivanhoe*? One is driven out of patience by those critics of the British musical Establishment who will not, under any circumstances, give Sullivan his due.

What is due to Sullivan, as this Edinburgh *Ivanhoe* made abundantly clear, is a recognition that he really did possess the gifts of an operatic composer, however that may be defined. The genre of *Ivanhoe* is open to question, but the quality of the music it contains ought to be sufficient to obtain for it the status of a classic, at least in the context of an English musical tradition that accommodates the semi-operas of Purcell. The variety of imaginative resource, the superb orchestral mastery, the emotional maturity of the score, all compel recognition. The literary critic Frank Kermode pointed out that great art is patient - it can afford to wait for understanding. Sullivan's opera has been waiting for more than a century, but its patience is by no means exhausted. Sooner or later the musical world in general will notice what is already obvious to members of this Society, and *Ivanhoe* will be honoured as it deserves. **D.E.**

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A video and programme of *Ivanhoe* are available from Alan Hogg, 154 Newhaven Rd, Edinburgh, Scotland UK, EH6 4PZ. Price inc p&p £20.00 (UK) \$35.00 U.S.A. Cheques to Edinburgh G&S Society.

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**Selwyn Tillett & Leon Berger at Sullivan's Piano
Pencarrow House**

ROSE of PERSIA 1

The Rose of Persia will be performed by the Leighton Linslade AOS from 12th October to 16th October 1999 at the Leighton Buzzard Theatre, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, commencing at 7.30. This will be a staged production with full orchestra. Tickets from the theatre box office on 01525 378310.

ROSE OF PERSIA 2

Good news for G&S fans. Last week the Hanover Band completed the first professional recording of *The Rose of Persia*, Sir Arthur Sullivan's best known "non-Gilbert" work. Hearing that this is to be released as a cover-disc by BBC Music Magazine, I am surprised to discover that one of the singers recruited for the 28-strong chorus is none other than Graeme Kay, the editor of said magazine. Tom Higgins, who conducted the Hanover Band for the recording, assures me: "It really was a coincidence." Presumably, then, it was also a coincidence that the new general manager of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the marketing manager of Select Records were in the chorus, too. "Let's just say," comments Kay, "that singing in the choir allowed me to keep an eye on our investment." ('Rasselas', *The Sunday Times* 'Culture' section, 7 February 1999, p. 31).

ROSE OF PERSIA 3

It is no exaggeration to say that I have been overwhelmed by the letters and e-mails I have received following the issue of the May 1999 *BBC Music Magazine* with the 2-CD set of *The Rose of Persia*. The sheer volume of letters has meant that I have been unable to reply to them all, so I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Society, to thank all of you who wrote and e-mailed for your kind words and good wishes. Further, may I encourage every one of you to write to the Editor of *BBC Music Magazine*, Graeme Kay, expressing your gratitude to him for the recording, urging a sequel and perhaps reminding him of the forthcoming Sullivan centenary? The more letters he receives, the greater the chance that a sequel will be forthcoming.

The recording has made a good impact. It was *The Observer's* Classical Record of the Week on 18 April, and has had significant exposure on BBC Radio 3. The *In Tune* programme on 29 April had a 20-minute feature including three excerpts and a very positive interview with the conductor, Tom Higgins, who urged the case for a staged professional revival. Tom Higgins' *Yeomen of the Guard* overture was included in the same programme. The entire Act 1 finale of *The Rose* was broadcast in *Brian Kay's Sunday Morning* on 2 May. **SHT**

LOST PINAFORE SONG

A long-lost song written by Gilbert and Sullivan for *H.M.S. Pinafore* but dropped before the première has been discovered and is to be given its first public performance this summer. The words to 'Reflect, my child' are lodged in the British Library, but two G&S scholars claim to have found Sir Arthur Sullivan's score to accompany them.

Bruce Miller from Massachusetts, and Helga Perry, from Gloucester, were examining manuscripts owned by a private collector who wants to remain anonymous. 'It is not quite the Holy Grail but from my point of view it's not far off,' said Miss Perry, 41. 'It is one of those that people thought were

never going to turn up.' She added: 'I was going through old manuscript orchestral parts of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which once belonged to the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company but are now in a private collection in England. I said I had found a viola part for the original song number six and we both got very excited, especially when I turned up parts for flutes and clarinets that had some small vocal cues in, also horns and cello/bass.' Miss Perry said there could be several reasons why the song was dropped. 'The words are quite sneering about middle class values and it may have been felt to be a little too satirical for comfort,' she said.

The song was written for Captain Corcoran, a social climber, to discourage his daughter, Josephine, from showing her affections for an uncouth sailor. Mr Miller, a music publisher in America, presented a paper on the discovery at the annual conference of the Society of Textual Scholarship at the City University of New York. The song will have its first public performance, with orchestra and a professional soloist, at the Gilbert and Sullivan International Festival in Buxton, Derby, on July 29. (*Daily Telegraph*, 17 April 1999 p.3. Reserched by John Gardner.)

RUDDIGORE

The original score of *Ruddigore*, a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, is at the centre of a legal dispute over its ownership. The Savoy Theatre in London is suing Giles Wontner, its former chairman, for the return of the manuscript. Diana Oxford, solicitor for the theatre, said yesterday that Wontner was lent the score some years ago but had refused to return it. He was unavailable for comment. (*The Sunday Times*, 2 May 1999).

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

From a letter from Harry Benford, 18 April 1999: As you know, the politically correct churches over here [U.S.A.] have consigned 'Onward Christian Soldiers' to the dustbin of history. But it's hard to keep a good tune down. This morning our congregation was given an elaborate team-spiel about a special *ad hoc* pitch ('Mission Opportunity') aimed at raising funds for special outreach purposes such as missionaries in various parts of the world. The program culminated with the team joining in the following chorus sung to the tune of Sir Arthur's best known (but currently suppressed) hymn:

Mission Opportunity
Is our song today,
Bring to Christ your checkbook
So you, too, can pay.

If you cannot go abroad,
Send your cash instead.
This thru countless ages
Helps to lift the load.

Mission Opportunity
Is our song today.
Bring to Christ your checkbook
Please do not delay.

SCENES AT THE SULLIVAN FESTIVAL



SCENES AT THE SULLIVAN FESTIVAL



HENRIETTA STREET

The Times (30 April 1999 p. 28) reports that a blue memorial plaque has been placed on No 10, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, which was the house in which Jane Austen's brother Henry conducted his bank. Jane Austen stayed in the house on several occasions in 1813 and 1814. From 1829 to 1833 this house was occupied by Gilbert's maternal grandfather Thomas Morris, who took over the lease originally held by the bankers Austen, Maunde and Tilson. While on the subject of Jane Austen, it may be worth remarking that the first self-forged will was not that of Robin Oakapple but that of Austen's *Young Lady*, whose feelings being too Strong for her Judgement led her into the commission of Errors of which her Heart disapproved: 'I have been a perjured witness in every public trial for these last twelve Years; and I have forged my own Will. In short there is scarcely a crime that I have not committed.' The criminal young lady is found in *Volume The Second* of Jane Austen's juvenilia, and is dated about the year 1790. Surely the well-read Gilbert must have known this? Apparently not, because *Volume The Second* was not published until 1922. **Ed.**

ELAINE FIFIELD

Elaine Fifield, who created the part of Poll in the ballet *Pineapple Poll* in 1951, has died at the age of 68. Elaine Fifield was born in Australia in 1930. She entered the Sadlers Wells Ballet School in 1945, and worked in Britain before returning to Australia in 1957. Her first husband was John Lanchberry, the composer/arranger of *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*. See obituary in *The Guardian*, 31 May 1999 p. 16. **Ed.**

SALE OF DESIRABLE G&S ITEMS

Nicholas Scahill writes: You won't find me exhibiting at fairs or conventions, and I haven't advertised for years. For some time I have been successful in tracking down rare items for major collections - from enamelled cigarette cases and 19th century toy theatres to original costume designs, photographs, autographs and programmes. If you would like to hear about the items in my next sale please feel free to telephone or fax me on 01273 421123 or e-mail me at: nscahill@gofornet.co.uk. (Plain Text, not HTMC). If you are interested in sheet music covers, *Fallen Fairies*, *The Happy Land*, *Fun*, *Judy*, early/1st night programmes, the odd biscuit tin etc, be in touch! Wants lists happily received.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The photographs on the centre pages show scenes at the Sullivan Festival. On page 12 we have a general scene and the presentation of the *Trial by Jury Score* Selwyn Tillett. On page 13 we have Eliot Levin of Symposium Records introducing the *Kenilworth* CD, and another general scene. The photograph on the inside back cover is by John Bird. It shows the party gathered at Pencarrow, and is available in a full-colour 10 x 7 print from Stephen Turnbull. Price £6.50 each post free before 31 July. After this date the photograph will be available only direct from John Bird @ £10. The advertisement for Koko For the Hair was kindly supplied by John Cannon.

Can anyone identify the photograph on the front cover? Discovered by David Cookson, it shows Sullivan allegedly rehearsing the Dublin Musical Society. Is this the case, and who are the singers? Or is it Leeds? **Ed.**

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN LEXICON

The Gilbert and Sullivan Lexicon (Third Edition) by Harry Benford. Foreword by Kenneth Sandford; major illustrations by Geoffrey Shovelton. Hardback; xvii + 254 pp. The Queensbury Press, 13507 Queensbury Lane, Houston, TX 77079, U.S.A. Price: U.K. £15.95 + £3.60 p&p = £19.55; U.S.A. \$25.95 + \$2.70 = \$28.65; Canada: \$CAN 38.95 + \$CAN 4.00 = \$CAN 42.95. Other countries contact the publisher.

The first edition of this book appeared as long ago as 1978; the second in 1991. Professor Benford has now undertaken a thoroughgoing revision of a work which achieves a remarkable balance: it is both scholarly and fun! [Sullivan, it strikes me as I write this, struck a similar balance].

The *Lexicon* sets out to explain the myriad of words and expressions in sixteen libretti (the G&S canon, *Cox and Box*, and *The Zoo*), some obscure, some familiar, whose precise meaning may not these days be immediately obvious. Each opera is allocated a chapter, and, after a brief introduction, we are into the definitions. For these, Harry Benford has consulted a whole range of reference works and specialists (it is surprising how many G&S experts are knowledgeable in other disciplines): a total of 326 sources are acknowledged.

If one had the time and the inclination, one could find many of these words and expressions explained in other reference books. But why would any G&S enthusiast want to do this when Harry has done the work already and collected it all together in one place where his fellow enthusiasts can find whatever they want at a glance? For instance, on pages 55-6, he actually teaches us the croaking chorus from *The Frogs* of Aristophanes! We are taught many other things, too: this is the ideal bedside companion to dip into.

Furthermore, where else in the world could one find so much erudition laced with a liberal dose of dry, delightful humour? Who said the Americans have no sense of irony? Nobody told Harry Benford. Consider, for example, this entry on British pre-decimal coinage from *Cox and Box*, (page 218):

One pound seventeen and sixpence: In the old British monetary system, this means one pound, seventeen shillings and six pennies. There were twenty shillings to the pound, and twelve pennies (or pence) to the shilling. In our opinion the system was invented to confuse American tourists, and we are gratified that the British gave it up. Now if they would just learn to drive on the righteous side of the road.

There is so much more in similar vein that it is very tempting to list all the jokes and amusing asides. However, to do so would make for a very long review. In any case, you should buy the book and then read them for yourself! And while you are about it, buy a couple more to give as presents.

Victoria Francis

CHILDREN'S CHIEFTAIN

Trinity Arts Centre, Gainsborough, December 1&2 1998. Children of North County Primary School present the world première of the children's version of *The Chieftain* by David Eden and Martin Yates. Cast: Peter Grigg - Christopher Cook; Dolly Grigg - Leah Green; Inez - Tracy Bradley; Pedro - Richard Stanton; Sancho - Thomas Drewery; José - Liam Moore; Rita - Kerry Beardsall; Juanita - Kathryn Otter; Vasquez - James Taylor; Nina - Zoe Mountcastle; Wiggins - John Stokes; Maraquita - Samantha Thirkell; Zitella - Sally Henderson; Pistoletta - Laura Smoothery; A large cast of junior stars as Brigands, Sentinels, Goldwashers, Chambermaids, etc. Pianist & Director - Martin Yates.

Enormous credit goes to everyone concerned with this production of *The Chieftain*. A cast of about seventy junior school children, with no previous stage experience, gave a disciplined and sensible performance of a work which one would have expected to be beyond them. The music was edited by Martin Yates to bring it within the reach of young voices, and some numbers were cut or shortened, but otherwise no concessions were made to the age of the performers.

Perhaps the single most impressive aspect of the production was the thorough way in which everything had been learned. The spoken dialogue was almost word perfect, and the music was performed without serious hesitation or error. Nobody seemed to have stage fright, and nobody missed a cue or forgot what to do. Considering that all the children involved were aged ten years or less, this was a remarkable achievement, and a tribute to the powers of Martin Yates as director, and Mrs M. Ellerington as dialogue coach.

It would be a pity to single out any individual performer when everyone was so good. All the principals did justice to their parts, and the chorus joined in with gusto. The brigand costumes were colourful - evidence that a great many parents at home had joined fully in the spirit of the production. Indeed one sensed in the audience that people had come in a committed way to support their children and the school. Altogether a charming and encouraging production. **D.E.**

*

DON'T FORGET

The Chieftain (original version) performed by The Prince Consort is available on CD from: Sounds on CD, Victoria House, 228B High Street, Croydon, Surrey, CR60 1NF. Price £22; and from Richard N. Freedman, 89 Staniford Street, Apt 7, Auburndale, MA 02466-1128, U.S.A. Price \$38.

*

A SULLIVAN LETTER

By

Katie Barnes

I bought this letter some years ago without any clue as to its provenance or its adventures between leaving the recipient and arriving at the dealer from whom I bought it. It reads:

6 Nov 1893

Dear Bridge,

I hope the Lord Mayor will let you read the enclosed letter, as a mere apology for my absence on such an occasion, is hardly enough. I know you will read it very slowly and clearly, and I also know that you are one of the best fellows in the world.

Yr sincerely

Arthur Sullivan

I assume that the addressee is Sir Frederick Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, who was a pallbearer at Sullivan's funeral. As Selwyn Tillet noted in Magazine No 47, Bridge was responsible both for compiling the music, which included an adaptation of the 'Men and Bretheren' chorus from *The Light of the World*, for Edward VII's coronation, and also for ensuring that Sullivan's name was included in the table of contents.

Given the time of year, the 'occasion' for which Sullivan was sending his apologies may have been the Lord Mayor's Banquet. Of course 'the enclosed' was not with my letter by the time I bought it. There remains the question: why did Sullivan have to absent himself? Given the state of his health in the early 1890s, he may simply have been unwell that day. However Sullivan and Flower (1950 edition), p.228, states that:

In November [1893] he went to Berlin to superintend the preparations for the production of "Ivanhoe" by Count Hochberg at the Opera House.

It is therefore possible that Sullivan may have written this letter before his departure, to cover an event taking place either just before he left or while he was away. This covering note did not need to give any details, as all would have been explained in 'the enclosed letter', and Bridge was probably acquainted with the situation anyway.

Have readers anything to add to this?



THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY STUDYING NAVIGATION.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Stephen Turnbull has forwarded the following letter from David Thomas, of Melbourne, Australia:

In one of the articles which Charles Dickens wrote for his weekly miscellany *Household Words* - a jaunty sea-side reminiscence entitled 'Our English Watering Place' - he describes a fine naval officer, and goes on to say:- 'If we were First Lord (Really possessing the indispensable qualification for the office of knowing nothing whatever about the sea), we would give him a ship tomorrow.'

Whether this prototype of a first Lord, of whom Dickens wrote in the 1850s, influenced that devoted and well-read Dickens enthusiast W.S. Gilbert, either consciously or unconsciously, in his later creation of Sir Joseph Porter, is a speculation not put forward, to the best of my knowledge, in any book on Gilbert or Sullivan.

Gilbert's claims to be 'entirely original', coupled with the genuine originality of his work, have created the impression that he really did think of everything for himself, which is untrue. Part of the trouble is that Gilbert's sources have not been studied with proper thoroughness by anyone because they are inaccessible, and uninteresting to modern taste. Essentially his roots are not in 'literature', but in the pantomime, burlesque and comic journalism of his impressionable youth. The First Lord referred to by Dickens in his article was Lord Ellenborough (1790-1871), who was First Sea Lord from 1846 to 1858. Previous to that he had been a colonial administrator, notably as Governor-General of India. His unfitness for naval administration seems to have been a popular topic of the time. The cartoon on p.18 appeared in *Punch* in 1846. The accompanying text says:

Dibdin's sea songs are said to have done miracles for the British Navy, by inspiring a love for the sea in the hearts of Englishmen. What a true benefactor to the country will that poet be who can infuse into the head of LORD ELLENBOROUGH any knowledge of that element over which he has been chosen to preside, or the smallest comprehension of even the rudiments of that service he has been placed at the head of.

We shall endeavour from time to time to implant into his Lordship's mind, through the medium of the Muse, a proper admiration for, and some comprehension of, that glorious pursuit which he will in future have not to follow, but to lead and control.

We insert a few specimens of the style in which the Nautical Lyrics for LORD ELLENBOROUGH will be written. They are of course adapted to his Lordship's present state of advancement

in the science to which they relate, or, in other words, 'to the meanest capacity,' and are intended to be sung to guitar accompaniments:-

THE SONG OF THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

Ye mariners of England,
I'll thank you if you please
To come and tell me something of
The service of the seas:
I've sometimes heard of horse marines
But nothing do I know;
Though a trip in a ship
I to India once did go.

Then courage, all you admirals,
And never be dismay'd,
For I'm a bold adventurer
That never learnt my trade.
Our ministers employ me
To vote for them, you know;
Then be bold when you're told
That by interest things go.

If enemies oppose me,
And say I'm very far
From being what I ought to be,
I'll say that others are.
So come, brave tars, and teach me
A vessel for to know:
If the heel is the keel -
Or abaft means down below.

Then here's a health to WELLINGTON
Who made of me the choice;
And to his worthy colleagues bold
Who scorn the public voice.
Tell France and tell America
They may begin to crow:-
While I reign o'er the main
Is the time to strike a blow.

A second song, 'I may be worthy yet', is omitted here. It is impossible to say exactly how much Lord Ellenborough has to do with Sir Joseph Porter. Gilbert always denied that W.H. Smith was his intended target, and if he was indeed thinking of Lord Ellenborough one can understand why. However Lord Ellenborough need not have been in any direct sense the model for Sir Joseph. In 1846 Gilbert was aged ten, and well able to read *Punch*, on which his father's friends the à Becketts actually worked. What seems to have happened is that he absorbed from this source, and probably from many others in the course of his adolescence, the general idea that a First Sea Lord may be comically incompetent and corrupt. When he came to write *H.M.S. Pinafore* the idea had been latent in his mind for years, and now its time had come to be expressed in characteristically Gilbertian language. If audiences thought of W.H. Smith, Gilbert could deny it with a clear conscience, because his intention was a general picture of a comic First Lord, and not a direct satirical portrait of the present incumbent. (This explains why Sir Joseph does not 'fit' Smith particularly well.)

Another case in point is the *Tomahawk* cartoon of 1868, printed on page 21 opposite, and kindly supplied by Nicholas Scahill. Mr Scahill writes: 'This 1868 cartoon (taken from the pages of the radical journal *The Tomahawk*) was dedicated, albeit satirically, to Miss Lydia Becker. Together with the celebrated Mrs Pankhurst, she was a leading member of the Married Women's Property Committee; this body campaigned to reform laws which effectively allowed a husband to own the property, personal belongings, earnings and savings of his wife - whether they lived together or were acrimoniously separated. The Lord Chancellor and an inconsolable Miss Becker (?) are seen reflecting upon the defeat of the reforming Married Women's Property Bill.' Gilbert certainly read *The Tomahawk*. No doubt the the cartoon made its contribution to the hypotheses of *Iolanthe*. **Ed.**



PARADISE LOST!

OR,
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND THE PERI.

(Dedicated to Miss Becker.)

THE BUCALOSSIS

By Philip Scowcroft

When I asked the Editor if he would like Magazine article on 'Bucalossi', he replied, 'What's that?' (I have to admit that he did then recall the name of P. Bucalossi on several of those dance arrangements of Sullivan tunes which were popular in late Victorian ballrooms). When writing my book *British Light Music* a few years ago, I attempted to consult a few people knowledgeable in that area about the Bucalossis, but none of them had realised that there was more than one Bucalossi. This short article is no more than a pilot study, but I hope one worth doing, as at least three members of the family were involved in the British light musical theatre either side of Sullivan's death in 1900, and two of them at least produced much attractive light orchestral music.

The family were, as the name suggests, of Italian extraction, but the eldest of the three Bucalossis we here discuss, Procida, came to London some time prior to 1865, when he is credited with composing the music for a German Reed show entitled *Love Wins The Way*. His first full-length show, rejoicing in the unpromising title of *Pom*, chalked up a mere 30 performances at the Royalty Theatre in 1876. In 1879 he contributed to two Alhambra shows: the *féerie La Poule aux Oeufs d'Or* (with George Jacobi) and the musical comedy *Rothomago* (with Edward Solomon, Gaston Serpette and Jacobi contributing an act each, Bucalossi providing Act II).

Procida's great success for the stage came at the Avenue Theatre in 1882 with *Manteaux Noirs*, an adaptation of a French opera, *Giralda*, which had been set to music by Adolphe Adam. Procida's score replaced Adam's *in toto*, but it received indifferent reviews in the theatre press (the book and lyrics were praised). Despite this it ran for 190 performances and even crossed the Atlantic, where it was put on in New York by Richard D'Oyly Carte with additional music by Alfred Cellier. It was not a success there, only achieving 36 performances, but its simple, old-fashioned, rather Frenchified score was very popular throughout the 1880s in the provinces, which had for some time lapped up French operettas by Offenbach, Planquette, Lecocq and others. Doncaster, for example, had five performances on three separate occasions between 1883 and 1886. The show returned to the Avenue in 1885.

Procida's later stage works never quite equalled the success of *Manteaux Noirs*. The romantic military comic opera *Delta* (1889) was toured in the provinces, as were *Brother George* (1892) and *Massaroni* (1894), a versions of Planché's *The Brigand*. Finally *En Route* (1896), set on board the ocean liner 'S.S. Planet', was notable primarily for being a family affair jointly between Procida and his two sons, Brigata, who was mostly involved with the show's management. and Ernest (1859-1933), who both conducted

and composed some of the music. It did not however catch on, and *Manteaux Noirs*' bubble having by then burst, Procida's name lived on mainly by his arrangements for Victorian ballrooms derived from music by Sullivan (among them *Ruddigore Lancers*, *Haddon Hall Polka* and *Quadrille*, *Victoria and Merrie England Waltz and Polka*) and others like the *Polka*, *Queen of My Heart* and other melodies from Alfred Cellier's big success *Dorothy*. He also composed other light music, prolifically, for various publishing houses, titles like the *P&O Polka*, the waltzes *Golden Hours* (1887) and *My Queen* and songs such as *The Midnight Hour* and *Love I Will Love You Ever*, which was a vocal version of *My Queen*. Some titles which have been attributed to Ernest may be by Procida; it is sometimes difficult to disentangle which of them composed what.

Now to Procida's two sons. Brigata, who liked to be known as Signor Brigata, did conduct (notably *Delta*) and compose - one or two minor stage pieces like the operetta *A Capital Joke* (1889) and the one act burlesque *The Prancing Girl*, produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre in 1891 - but he tended to concentrate on management and production. Ernest may have been christened Ernesto. His career lay for a time in the theatre with a one act comic operetta *A Shower of Blacks* (1887), the one act 'musical absurdity' *Binks the Downy Photographer* for the Strand Theatre 1893 (its 'Laughing Song' had a brief vogue), and his contributions to *En Route*, already mentioned, to *The Earl and the Girl* (1903), especially its 'Gondola Song', to *The Catch of the Season* (1904), especially the waltz song 'Butterfly', and to *The Maid and the Motor Man* in 1907.

Ernest composed the incidental music for a play *A Kiss For Cinderella*, which achieved publication, and a large number of light orchestral movements: the waltzes *Queen of the North*, *Pastorella*, *Mia Cara*, *Valse-Berceuse*, *Valse Dorée* and, based on Irish melodies, *Dear Erin*, the polka *Midnight Chimes*, the barn dance *Careless Cuckoos*, a march, *Pennon and Plume*, *A Hunting Scene*, the intermezzi *Algerian Love Song*, *The Enchanted Valley*, *Night and Morn*, *Pensées d'Amour*, the serenata *I Studenti* and, much the most popular, the delicately scored, jaunty, even rather cheeky, *Grasshoppers' Dance*. In my young days - the late 1940s and early 1950s - when light orchestras were still in their heyday, this could often be heard, but as time wore on we had to rely on those bastions of conservatism, brass bands, to hear an occasional performance of it. However it was given a new lease of life a few years ago when a few bars were adopted for a TV advertisement for milk. Ernest has been credited with the popular waltz song *Ciribiribin*; but this was in fact composed by Alberto Pestalozza (1851-1934). However Ernest (or even Procida) may have made an orchestral arrangement of this.

Ernest made a satisfying career for himself as a conductor, not only in theatres, but in restaurants and elsewhere, and his compositions *did* get played during British light music's great days, though we cannot reasonably say that he challenged, say, Percy Fletcher and Haydn Wood, both of whom (unlike Eric Coates) also worked in the light musical theatre; nor can we say that his father, despite the success of *Manteaux Noirs*, approached the achievements of Clay and Alfred Cellier, still less those of Sullivan or German. They were not leaders of the British light music industry, rather respected members of the rank and file.

SYLVIE SÖDERLAND

Sylvie Söderland the Swiss soprano, accompanied by John Burrows, gave a song recital at the Westminster Theatre on 17 Oct 98. She sang songs by Grieg, Fauré, Wolf, Ture Rangström, and, by Sullivan, Tears Idle tears; Orpheus, The Willow Song, and Where the Bee Sucks.

A VERY BRITISH FRIENDSHIP

Radio 4 Saturday Nov 21 1998 at 2.30 pm - The secret which nearly ruined the leading British composer ASS's life.

THE GENIUS OF GILBERT & SULLIVAN

Madingley Hall, Cambridge University is to hold a weekend course from 24-26 September 1999 on 'The Genius of Gilbert and Sullivan.' The course will be 'A study in depth of the works of the greatest partnership in British musical theatre - analysis of the music, libretti and poetic verse, with the satire placed in the context of the time; with additional consideration of the practical realities of singing the roles, characterisation, and staging. Profusely illustrated aurally with recordings (many historic) and visually with production over a century.' Tutor Ian Taylor. Fee £125. Apply to Madingley Hall, University of Cambridge Board of Continuing Education, Madingley, Cambridge, CB3 8AQ. Tel 01954 280399.

ALLUSIVE EMULATION

'Creating borrow'd and again convey'd/From book to book - the shadows of a shade.' (George Crabbe: *The Borough*, 1810). To this one might add: 'To him no author was unknown/Yet what he wrote was all his own.' (John Denham: *On Mr Abraham Cowley*, 1668).

IMPEACHING THE PRESIDENT

Although it is only a very short step across the road for the Chief Justice, William Rhenquist, from the Supreme Court to the Senate, the event was adjourned for nearly three hours for him to arrive. Then somebody mentioned that the bars on his robes were inspired by a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. (*The Times*, 8 January 1999, p. 3.)

AUDIO & VISUAL

David Jacobs is looking for audio and video tapes of G&S from the UK and overseas in any language. Anyone who can help, please contact him at 167 Western Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 8UJ.

BEST OF BRITISH

An article on Gilbert & Sullivan (a stormy alliance) appeared in *Best of British* magazine August 1998, pp. 664/5. The article, by Allan Warburton, says nothing new, but is almost accurate, and nicely illustrated in colour.

AT THE FILMS

Music from *The Pirates of Penzance* (How beautifully blue/Poor Wandering one) is heard during a Jean Paul Gaultier fashion show in Robert Altman's film about the Paris fashion world *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994). One can only admire his chic.



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I have used "KOKO" for the Hair for years, and can assure my friends that it stops the Hair from falling out, promotes its growth, eradicates Dandruff, and is the most pleasant dressing imaginable.