

Sir Arthur Sullivan Society



Magazine No. 17

Spring 1984

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN SOCIETY

MAGAZINE No 17 SPRING 1984.

Editorial: 55 Radwinter Rd, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3HU.

Dear Member,

After the heady heights of our colour section in Magazine 16 we have returned to plain black and white reproduction. However, we believe that the experiment in colour printing was so successful that we should repeat it in future. If possible, therefore, we will include coloured illustrations from time to time where the quality of the originals seems to warrant it. Any contributions will be gratefully received. We are fortunate in this issue in having secured an article from the distinguished composer Terry Hawes. As the Sullivan de nos jours Mr Hawes speaks with great authority on the subject of setting Gilbert's words to music. The cover illustration of Sullivan looking askance at a fish finger appeared in the Mail On Sunday in connection with an article on composers whose music has been used for television advertisements. The cartoon, by David Smith, refers to the Birds Eye fish finger commercial which features music from H.M.S.Pinafore. The Mail On Sunday did not reply to the Society's request for permission to reprint the cartoon. (Ed).

JOINT MEETING

There will be a joint meeting of the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society and London G&S Society on 2nd May 1984. The venue is the Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, London, (near Euston Railway Station). Time 7.15 pm, admission £1.50. There will be a mixed programme of Sullivan and Savoy-associated composers, including the duet 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps' from Kenilworth. The programme of the first performance of Kenilworth reproduced on the outside back cover was kindly supplied by Mr David Jacobs.

THE ROSE OF PERSIA

The Prince Consort will present a concert performance of The Rose of Persia at the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh at 3pm on Sunday June 17th 1984. Details from Alan Borthwick, 11 Dalkeith Street, Edinburgh, EH15 2HP. The Prince Consort's fine new recording of The Beauty Stone is reviewed below. It is hoped to include at this concert the first performance since 1887 of the ghost scene from Ruddigore in its original form.

SADLERS WELLS

The New Sadlers Wells opera will present a G&S Festival from 4th June - 21st July 1984. The repertoire will be: The Mikado, The Gondoliers, H.M.S.Pinafore. Donald Adams will appear in The Mikado and The Gondoliers; Thomas Lawlor will appear in The Mikado. From 24 July to 4 August the company will present The Mikado and H.M.S.Pinafore at the Theatre Royal, Bath.

The English National Opera Company's production of Patience will be taken on their forthcoming American tour. On Saturday Feb 25th 1984 the E.N.O. organised a study day on Patience, held at the London Coliseum. It is hoped to include an account of the study day in a later Magazine.

The Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of Imperial Opera and I.C.O.S., Conductor
Michael Withers, in Association with the Crystal Palace Foundation and the
Sir Arthur Sullivan Society
Present

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A Special Concert to Celebrate the Opening of the Crystal
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ON

SATURDAY 30th June 1984 at 7.30 pm.

AT

All Saints Church, Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, London SE 21*

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Sir Arthur Sullivan Society
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with Map and Photographs and Grand Walkabout of Crystal Palace site & grounds.

*All Saints Church is on the No 3 Bus Route and near to British Rail West
Dulwich Station.

G & S



CHRISTIE'S
SOUTH KENSINGTON

will offer for sale at the
LYRIC HAMMERSMITH
selected items from the
D'OYLY CARTE
wardrobe.

TUESDAY
24th JANUARY 1984.

D'OYLY CARTE

THE CHRISTIE'S SALE 24 Jan 1984

By Our Saleroom Correspondent

What appears to have been the conclusive act in the dissolution of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company took place at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith on 24th January 1984. Christie's, the auctioneers of South Kensington, auctioned a total of 220 lots of D'Oyly Carte costumes, comprising mostly the costumes of recent productions, but including also a few dresses from an earlier period. Military uniforms and the Peers' robes from Iolanthe were not included, on the grounds that they would be too expensive to replace if the DOC should ever be revived.

The Lyric Theatre was full for the occasion, and the atmosphere was mildly festive as television cameras recorded the event, if not for posterity, then at least for the evening news bulletins. The costumes were modelled by singers, who performed a snatch from the appropriate opera before each item was sold. Prices generally were up on the auctioneers' estimates, with most attention going naturally to the Charles Ricketts costumes for The Mikado. However, the sale was not really well organised; the hats and shoes were sold in job lots separate from the costumes, and the costumes themselves were not sold individually but in groups of half a dozen or more. As a result, private bidders tended to be squeezed out by institutions, even though costumes on a pro rata basis were realising moderate sums. Anyone wishing to make detailed enquiries about the sale may contact the auctioneers, who are required by law to furnish minimum information about the bidding, and who will pass on any correspondence to the successful bidder. Christie's, 85 Old Brompton Rd, London SW7 3JS. Tel 01 581 2231. Sale no TOS 2401/84. Generously, Christie's waived the buyer's premium on this occasion. The auctioneer did not, however, reply in kind to the chorus of 'All hail great judge' which greeted his arrival.

In total, the sale seems to have raised about £39,000. The following select list gives an idea of the prices realised. Many of the costumes seem to have been bought for the costume museum at Castle Howard, near York, where they will presumably be on display in due course.

The Sorcerer - Lot 10, including suits for Wells & Daly: £300; Bidding Number (BN) 267.

H.M.S. Pinafore - Lot 24, a dozen sailor suits: £130; BN 22.

Pirates of Penzance - Lot 44, a quantity of costumes for Pirate King: £260; BN 81.

Patience - Lot 51, Everyday young girl costumes for Angela, Saphir, Ella etc: £220; BN 102.

Iolanthe - Lot 64, Costumes for Iolanthe and the fairies' chorus: Castle Howard.

Lot 66, Costumes for Phyllis, Fairy Queen & Cloak for Iolanthe: £300; BN 114.

Princess Ida - Lot 78, Costumes for Gama, Florian & understudies: £180; BN 267.

The Mikado - Lot 108, Ricketts costume for the Mikado: £480; BN 111. (Highest price of sale)

Ruddigore - Lots 131 & 132 as one lot, 14 male chorus costumes + 1 ancestor: £380; BN 455.

Yeomen of the Guard - Lot 138, a wedding dress for Elsie: (Castle Howard).

Lot 140, 3 costumes for Fairfax: £350; BN 194. (Castle Howard).

Lot 144, Costumes for Jack Point: £350; BN 12.

(Castle Howard also bought lots 139, 141 & 142, costumes for Elsie & Fairfax.)

The Gondoliers - Lot 158, Costumes for Don Alhambra: £300; BN 101.

Lot 161, Quantity of costumes for male chorus: £300; BN 456.

Lot 181, Costume for Duke of Plaza-Toro: £300, BN 194.

Lot 184, Misc costumes, inc long blue velvet cloak: £300; BN 101.

The highest bidding number used at the sale was 456, suggesting that at least that number of people wished to purchase. In the event, only 72 bidders actually succeeded. In terms of lots, the following were the biggest buyers:

BN 21 - 17 lots
BN 22 - 15 lots
BN 81 - 17 lots
BN 114 - 6 lots
BN 122 - 8 lots
BN 129 - 6 lots
BN 194 - 9 lots

On examination after the sale, the costumes proved to be finely tailored, of heavy guage material, and sometimes well worn, though always in good condition. One of the Ruddigore costumes proved to be a close copy of the 'Falconer' ghost costume illustrated in Magazine 16 as having been used in the 1887 production. The colours, too, were the same - pale blue and brown. Several members of the Sullivan Society made successful bids at the sale, including Mr Vincent Daniels, who bought some Mikado costumes. Mr Daniels would like to buy further costumes from anyone who wishes to sell. Please contact V.Daniels, Research Laboratory, British Museum, London WC1. Tel 01 636 1555 ex 344.

*

KATIE BARNES bought a number of costumes from Ruddigore at the sale, including one of John Reed's Robin Oakapple costumes. She has most generously volunteered to sell this Oakapple costume on behalf of the Society's Golden Legend fund. Members of the Society living in the U.K. are invited to bid for the costume by postal bids addressed to the Editor at 55 Radwinter Rd, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3HU. The final decision about the destiny of the costume will be made by Katie Barnes, but obviously the higher the bid the greater the chance of success. The Society is much indebted to Katie for her gesture. Let us hope the object of the Golden Legend fund will be realised.

GOLDEN LEGEND FUND

As members will know, Sir Charles Mackerras is to conduct The Golden Legend in Leeds in 1986 (15th March). Like everything with which the name of Sir Charles Mackerras is associated, the performance will reflect the highest standards. It therefore represents a unique opportunity to obtain a recording worthy of the work. E.M.I. are prepared to undertake the recording, but, as with the comparable works of Elgar, are uncertain about its commercial viability. A sponsorship of £10,000 will, however, make the project possible. The Committee of the Society are actively exploring ways of raising so large a sum by sponsorship, and will welcome suggestions as to possible sources of money. In the meantime we are inviting members to contribute individually to the Golden Legend Fund, a Deposit Account held at Barclays Bank, Saffron Walden, the object of which is to further the project as far as possible through the Society's own resources. All contributions will be returnable if the attempt is not successful. Please send any contributions in the first instance to the Hon Secretary, Stephen Turnbull, with cheques made payable to 'The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society - Golden Legend Fund'. Contributions have been received so far from the following members: David Jacobs, Stan Meares, J.L. Storr-Best, Christopher Rose, H.J.Pearson, E.G.Draper, J.L.Pheasant, Craig Pearce, David Thomas, J.S.Bradshaw, Katie Barnes, Peter Miller, G.Bolstridge, and John Cannon.

MISCELLANEOUS PERFORMANCES

The James Verner production of Utopia Ltd is currently 'off', having been 'on' again for a time. A group called the London Chamber Opera is currently performing Cox & Box together with The Impresario (Mozart) and Ten O'Clock Call (Anthony Hopkins). Trial, Pinafore and Mikado were given by the London Savoyards over Christmas at St David's Hall, Cardiff. An aquatic version of H.M.S.Pinafore proved highly successful when given by children at the Dolphin Sports Centre swimming pool, Darlington.



MISS EMMIE OWEN IN "THE BEAUTY STONE."



MISS RUTH VINCENT AND MR. GEORGE DEVOLL IN "THE BEAUTY STONE."



MR. WALTER PASSMORE, HENRY LYTTON, AND MISS BRANDRAM IN "THE BEAUTY STONE."



Arthur Pinero
Dec 20th 1899

THE BEAUTY STONE

The Beauty Stone - Complete Opera performed by the Prince Consort (without dialogue).
Pearl Records, 48 High St, Pembury, Kent; in U.S.A. Qualiton Imports, 39-28 Crescent
St, Long Island City, NY 11101. Two records N.A.S. SHE 579/80; firm price not available
at time of going to press.

Philip, Lord of Mirlmont - Alan Borthwick; Guntran of Beaugrant - Scott Cooper; Simon
Limal - Ivor Klayman; Nicholas Dircks - Scott Cooper; The Devil - Richard Bourjo; Laine -
Mary Timmons; Joan - Margaret Leask; Jacqueline - Jane Borthwick; Loyse - Hazel Devlin;
Saida - Margaret Aronson. Chorus of the Edinburgh Gilbert and Sullivan Society and
Orchestra conducted by David Lyle; Chorus Mistress - Fiona Morison.

The welcome arrival of the Prince Consort's recording of The Beauty Stone means that
all of Sullivan's surviving operas have now been issued in recorded form. What is more,
these recordings are all currently available so that it is possible to acquire Sullivan's
entire operatic output at a stroke. No longer is it excusable for writers to rely on
century-old press notices or the perverse musical pedantry of Gervase Hughes when
discussing Sullivan's non-Gilbert works: they can now be heard, if not always in their
habit as they lived, at least in more questionable shape than the printed vocal score
allows.

The Beauty Stone is the last but one of Sullivan's completed operas. It survived less
than a couple of months at the Savoy in 1898, and has rarely been seen since, though the
Carl Rosa Opera Company seem to have produced it in the provinces, and an amateur
performance is recorded as late as 1950. Sullivan cannot seriously have expected it to
succeed as well as The Gondoliers, but seems to have decided deliberately to risk failure
in order to offer the public somewhat substantial musical fare of the kind they had
already accepted in The Yeomen of the Guard. No one should expect The Beauty Stone to
sound like the familiar G&S operas; the musical style certainly contains elements of the
standard Savoy manner, but in general the music looks towards Ivanhoe, and perhaps the
unwritten opera on King Arthur.

Very little needs to be said about the Prince Consort's performance, because it is
superb, surpassing their Emerald Isle, and constituting a realisation of the work in the
fullest sense. Among the fine soloists it is hard to know who deserves most praise.
Possibly the palm should go to Margaret Aronson for her singing of Saida. Saida shares
with Rebecca (Ivanhoe) the human credibility which Sullivan usually denies his heroines.
Both of these characters are exotic orientals, not subject to the limitations which
confined Victorian heroines in general. Richard Bourjo enhances the part of The Devil
with his cavernous bass, and Mary Timmons sings Laine with a firm, full voice; Margaret
Leask is most moving in the duet 'I would see a maid', and Alan Borthwick brings ringing
tone to the part of Phillip. But everyone is good; one wonders whether the work was so
well sung even under Sullivan's baton at the Savoy. The orchestra under David Lyle fully
matches the singers; if they are amateurs, they are certainly the most artistic and
reliable amateurs I have heard. The chorus are amateurs, but they have been thoroughly
well prepared. The only tiny cavil on the musical side is that some of the tempi are too
piously. The Devil's song and the first chorus, in particular, seem to require a faster
pace. The recording is clear and well balanced, but on my equipment at least the words
are sometimes indistinct.

There is no space here for a lengthy discussion of the music, about which opinions are
likely to differ. To my ear some of the knightly heroics are more sonorous than
substantial, as is the wont of knightly heroics. However, there are many passages of great
beauty, and some depth of feeling. The finest music in the work is surely Saida's song as
she remembers her life in Cephalonia. The pagan maidens of The Martyr of Antioch can be
sensed in the background, but here the mood is not one of joy but of profound nostalgia.
Sullivan never wrote more movingly than this. The most consistent strength of the work
lies in the wonderfully imaginative orchestral writing, which redeems even the bombastic
passages. However, the only way to find out about all this, and to decide on the strengths
and weaknesses of The Beauty Stone is to buy the recording, and the Sullivan Society's
libretto, which is available from the Hon Secretary (address on cover) @ £2.00 (U.K.) or
\$7.00 U.S.A. airmail.

THE PRODIGAL SON

The Prodigal Son - Complete Oratorio performed by the Valley Light Opera, conducted by William Venman. Recorded on April 24th 1983. With Dianne Smith, Soprano; Barbara Buddin, Contralto; Walter Denny, Tenor; Joseph Donohue, Bass. C60 cassette available from Bill Venman, 43 Ridgecrest Rd, Amherst, Ma 01002 U.S.A. Price: \$10.50 within U.S.A.; outside U.S.A. dollar draft for \$12.00 made payable to Valley Light Opera Inc.

The Prodigal Son, which was premiered at the Worcester Festival of 1869, is the first of four major sacred choral works composed by Sullivan, and like The Golden Legend, The Martyr of Antioch and The Light of the World it enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the composer's lifetime and well into the twentieth century. Thanks to the efforts of the Sullivan Society and its members it is now possible to buy a good recording of all four of these works. Sadly in more recent times The Prodigal Son has fallen into desuetude, and there have been no known performances for many years. However, Mr Bill Venman of Amherst, U.S.A., a member of this Society, tracked down a set of band parts at Schirmers Inc and mounted a performance at the University of Massachusetts on 34th April 1983.

Whilst lacking the sustained brilliance of The Golden Legend and the Martyr, there are nevertheless some inspired passages in The Prodigal Son. The whole piece is eminently tuneful and falls easily on the ear. Perhaps the highlight is the joyous 'Bring forth the best robe' sung by the father (bass) on the return of the Prodigal (tenor), but best known is the moving 'How many hired servants', sung by the Prodigal, in which Walter Denny comes near to achieving the emotional intensity of the famous old Evan Williams recording. The duet 'My son is yet alive' for Prodigal son and father is well handled.

The women's parts in The Prodigal Son are of secondary importance, but the soprano narrative passages are given in clear and accomplished style by Dianne Smith. The part writing of the choruses is more redolent than most Sullivan of conventional Victorian church music; it is easy to see why several of them remained in the cathedral/parish repertory for decades after Sullivan's death. The chorus of Valley Light Opera sing this music with precision and assurance, and, apart from some hesitancy in the brasses in the opening bars, are very well supported by the orchestra under Bill Venman.

The English listener may be apprehensive about American accents, but this is unfounded. The work is intelligently interpreted throughout, and my adjusted effortlessly to the slightly different timbres of sound. The only serious reservation concerns the quality of the recording, which was made 'live' on the day. Coughs are few, but from time to time can be heard the sound of turning pages. There is also a slight background hiss - caused apparently by slight technical difficulties experienced in the production of the cassettes. The noise is not obtrusive and should not deter anyone from acquiring this valuable and enjoyable recording.

(S.H.T.)

A.G.M. Report

The eighth A.G.M. of the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society took place on 10th March in the Gallery Room of the Old Vic Theatre (London), and was attended by a record number of members, many of whom had travelled very considerable distances to be present. We are grateful to all those members who took the trouble to attend. The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were both (in the unavoidable absence of the Treasurer) presented by the Secretary, and the accounts for the year were accepted and submitted for audit. For the first time in the Society's history, the entire Committee was re-elected en bloc. Full minutes of the meeting, together with a copy of the audited accounts, will be sent to all members in due course.

(S.H.T.)

BOOK REVIEW

The Complete Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Guide by Alan Jefferson

Published by Webb & Bower, 5 Cathedral Yard, Exeter, EX1 1HJ. Price £12.95. Published in the U.S.A. by Facts on File, 460 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, and in Australia by J.M.Dent Pty Ltd, PO Box 289, Ferntree Gully, Victoria 3156.

We are currently enjoying a positive spate of new books about Gilbert and Sullivan. The Complete Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Guide is a book of 352 pages, and over 75 colour and monochrome illustrations. The bulk of the book is taken up by the complete Chatto & Windus text of the libretti as Gilbert left it at his death in 1911, but there is a page on recordings and films, and some of the illustrations are very up-to-date.

Given the extreme familiarity of the story of G&S, and the restricted space at his disposal, it was not to be expected that Alan Jefferson would throw startling new light on the subject. Nevertheless, he has furnished each opera with a popular and imaginative introduction, drawing on his wide experience of the general operatic repertory. A few errors have crept in, but the experienced reader will correct them easily enough. Somewhat out of the G&S field, the Christian name of the great French physician Charcot was Jean-Martin, not Jacques as given here.

The real strength of the book lies in the superb presentation by the publishers. It is beautifully designed, and printed on fine quality paper. Some of the illustrations are familiar, but many are not. There is a fascinating photograph of J.L.Toole in the green room of the old Gaiety Theatre, matched at the other end of the timescale by shots from the successful American Pirates production, and the video of Pinafore. Perhaps the finest picture in the book is a brilliant study from the maligned Cambridge Mikado. Included in the more traditional fare are reproductions of early stage and costume designs, a charming photograph of a Royal Worcester Patience teapot, and a generous selection of coloured posters and music covers. The general consensus among people I have consulted is that the book is worth the purchase price for the illustrations alone. At £12.95 it is not expensive for such a technically fine production. It would make an admirable gift.

(D.E.)

A History of English Opera by Eric Walter White. Faber £30

This book is a sequel to the same author's The Rise of English Opera. It is the fullest account so far published of the history of opera in England, and is invaluable to anyone whose interest lies in that particular area of musical debauchery. The approach is scholarly and matter-of-fact throughout. There is a substantial account of the partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan, but this in itself does not constitute a reason for purchase. One of the illustrations (p384) is an attractive painting by Alfred Stevens of the first night of Ivanhoe. Given the rapidity with which modern books are remaindered there is every hope that copies at bargain prices will soon be available. They should be snapped up. (D.E.)

In a future edition of the Magazine I hope to be able to include a review of Richard Traubner's Complete Guide to Operetta (Gollancz).. The book has been generally well received. (Ed).

WE HEAR THAT

The Ellen Terry Memorial Museum at her house in Smallhythe, Kent, contains Garrick's recorder, Phelps' cigar case, Bernhardt's handkerchief and Sir Arthur Sullivan's monocle.

16. Aug: 1876

STAGENHOE PARK.
N^o WELWYN.

Dear Jo.

Where are you? Are you
in town - or away for away!
I have all but done the impossible
work. I have worried my heart
out over it - I am waiting for
one thing. I can't make a
charm out of - slowly, slowly.
(comment of 2nd Sem). Can't
I make it a tale for a woman?

"Ussali haait much to do. why
not give it to her? What do you
say? If you are in town
why not run down here for
a Groat of air? There are
only two or three people with
me. we are very quiet. I
write all day, & the other
lounge about the gardens & park.
Say when you will come &

I will send to meet you, as
I am some distance from the
Station. Kind I distinctly offer
you no amusement! as I
haven't got any. But there are
lovely walks & drives.

Yours ever
A. S.

THE GOLDEN LEGEND - A SULLIVAN LETTER COMES TO LIGHT

By Brian Jones

Stagenhoe Park, Nr Welwyn. Telegraph & Railway Station Hitchin

16 Aug 1886

Dear Jo,

Where are you - in town - or are you far away? I have all but done the immortal work. I have worried my head out over it - I am waiting for one thing. I can't make a chorus out of "Slowly, Slowly" (commencement of 2nd scene). Can't I make it a solo for a woman? Ursula hasn't much to do - why not give it to her? What do you say? If you are in town why not run down here for a breath of air? There are only two or three people with me - we are very quiet. I write all day, and the others lounge about the gardens and park.

Say when you will come and I will send to meet you, as I am some distance from the station. Mind, I distinctly offer you no amusement! as I haven't got any. But there are lovely walks and drives.

Yrs ever,
AS

This is the text of a letter sent to me by Mr Rupert Seacome of Abingdon. In conversation at a college dinner, I mentioned that I was Editor of The Savoyard magazine, and Mr Seacome told me that he had a letter from Sir Arthur Sullivan which referred to the character Ursula, but that he had not been able to find her in the operas. He told me that the letter had been written to his grandfather's friend, Joseph Bennett, who had been musical critic of The Daily Telegraph. He mentioned that his family had a book by Bennett of reminiscences of his life in music.

The key to the letter of course is the fact that Joseph Bennett was Sullivan's librettist for The Golden Legend, first performed at the Leeds Music Festival on Saturday 16th October 1886. So when AS asks Jo "Ursula hasn't much to do - why not give it to her? What do you say?" he is asking a collaborator's permission, rather than a critic's opinion.

Bennett was a longstanding friend of Sullivan. In Forty Years of Music 1865-1905 (publ Methuen 1908), Bennett writes that he first met Sullivan round 1865. Bennett's home in Lupus Street, Pimlico, was just around the corner from Sullivan's at 47 Claverton Terrace. Bennett quotes an invitation from Maurice Strakosch, brother-in-law and agent of Adelina Patti - dated 24th July 1867: You should much oblige Mlle Patti and myself by dining with me at half past six. You will meet our common friend A.S.S. No evening dress as we shall be entirely en famille. Sullivan had written two postscripts on this invitation: Come here at 5½ sharp, and we will go together. A.S.S. He added: Come in the dress of a penny-a-liner - A.S.S.

Bennett described how in 1886 he received a letter from Sullivan saying that Miss Chappell had suggested Longfellow's Golden Legend for the Leeds Festival, and that he and Miss Chappell had tried to select material for a connected work. Sullivan enclosed a book of Longfellow's poems. The book fell open automatically at The Golden Legend. Bennett reports that the poem was adorned with many pencil marks, on many pages. He adds "It appeared to me on going through the marked passages that Sullivan selected incidents and scenes admirably adapted for musical effect, but having in many cases no relationship to one another".

Bennett edited the poem. "I determined without hesitation to take the story of Prince Henry out of the mass of matter in the poem and deal with it alone. The task was quickly accomplished without consulting Sullivan in any way." Bennett took his libretto round round to Sullivan. "I read it aloud. Sullivan listened without saying a word, but when I came to the end he looked up, his eyes beaming and his cheeks flushed, remarking: 'You have saved me, Jo'".

Sullivan found the quiet meditative solo "Slowly, slowly" difficult to write and it was the last piece he completed for the work. His diary records: August 25th - Last day of work. At it all day for introduction and solo in 2nd scene. Got it 5pm. Scored it and finished at 7.45! Thank God.

Bennett was not entirely happy with the change from choral song to solo. He must have suggested a compromise - a solo with the choir joining in chorus. He quotes Sullivan's reply in his memoirs: "Scene 2. I could not put any chorus into the 'Slowly, slowly' for the simple reason that it was too late. The parts were engraved. It was the very last thing I wrote of the work."

Mr Seacombe's grandfather, incidentally, was Samuel Aitken. Bennett records in his book how they met. "Early in 1883 Mr Samuel Aitken, a prominent musical amateur and organist in Cardiff, wrote to me stating that as honorary secretary of the musical department of a National Eisteddfod to be holden in the Welsh city some months later, he was empowered to offer me an engagement as one of the adjudicators. Neither of us had any personal knowledge of the other, but Mr Aitken informed me that he had long been a reader of my articles in The Daily Telegraph etc. I accepted the offer."

They became friends in January 1887; Aitken gave up the chance to go skiing in Switzerland (he was a keen mountaineer and member of the Alpine Club). Instead, they visited Venice and went on to Milan, where on 5th February they saw the premiere of Verdi's Otello at La Scala. Mr Seacombe suggested that perhaps Bennett may have sent Sullivan's letter to Aitken for a second opinion. I do not believe this is possible, because the close of the letter, from "If you are in town onwards, is quoted almost verbatim in Forty Years of Music. Both Bennett and Aitken retired to Gloucestershire. I believe Bennett gave Aitken the letter after his reminiscences had been completed. It was certainly a token of their friendship. It was perhaps even a sign that Bennett had finally forgiven Aitken for exposing him to the hazards of being a judge at a Cardiff Eisteddfod. According to Bennett's book these, for a London-based critic, were considerable.



Sue Ryder Home, Stagenhoe Park, Whitwell, Hitchin, Herts.

The above photograph of Stagenhoe Park was kindly supplied by Captain Knottley of the Sue Ryder Homes.

Review by Stephen Turnbull

THE GONDOLIERS: New Sadlers Wells Opera; Sadlers Wells Theatre (3 Mar)

This intelligent production is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the opera. The Act 1 set, a rather run-down wharf in mid-canal, is a tour de force, and virtually all the entrances are made by gondola (at one point there are five on stage). The ducal party - in gloriously shabby costumes - arrive in a very tatty sailing ship. The almost universal black of the set highlights the light colours of the costumes. Some aspects of the business, like Casilda's glasses, and some rather excessive screaming by the contadine in the opening number, are a cause of minor irritation; but others, like having Don Alhambra carried round in a litter complete with gouty foot, are a joy.

The second act is closer akin to slapstick, with a giant sandcastle set and the chorus in bathing dress (balmy isle!) and the two kings in a single giant wraparound robe. The bounds of bad taste are breached only by Inez, who is obliged to play her scene with a grotesque metal cage about her head and another about her waist. Not funny.

The whole opera is given with poise and assurance by a well chosen cast. Musically there are few complaints. With the possible exception of Joan Davies, for whom the Duchess's music seems a little taxing, all the principals perform well. Donald Adams (Don Alhambra) is in glorious voice. The orchestra plays with assurance, but the chorus is on the small side, and is at times lost in the accompaniment.

THE MIKADO: Stratford Festival, Canada; Old Vic (10 Mar)

This is an innovative production, employing a circular stage with no scenery, save for a few wooden platforms of various shapes and sizes. There is no curtain, and scene changes (which involve members of the chorus running on and moving what is necessary while others do tumbling scenes) are very openly made between numbers with instrumental reprises of various songs as 'cover'. The little list song and the Mikado's song have both been partially rewritten, but with more taste and humour than is normally the case. Sullivan's orchestrations are substantially unaltered, although there are some clashing cymbals, and xylophone accompaniments in one or two places.

The principal impression left is one of vitality, but without the breathless exhaustion induced by the Drury Lane Pirates. The costumes are attractive, and the chorus (8-10 of each sex) sing with great gusto and considerable intelligence. All the principals sing well, save for Pooh-Bah (Richard McMillan) whose voice is inclined to be thin. So is he, and his rubber-limbed interpretation, with a different speaking voice for (almost) every one of his offices, is the most radical aspect of the production. The entry of the Mikado (Avo Kittask) is spectacular - he is uncurled, chrysalis-like, from a large trunk on stage. The part of Go-To is dispensed with, and the Act 2 glee is omitted. There are prepared encores of the list song (2), 'To sit in solemn silence' (at breakneck speed) and 'Here's a how-de-do'.

PATIENCE: English National Opera; Coliseum (10 Mar)

It is difficult to find serious fault with this production, but it is overall a most disappointing evening's entertainment. The sets are beautiful, the costumes opulent, and the singing fine, but the result is completely lacklustre. One felt that the orchestra regarded it as a night off ('oh, it's only G&S') and the rather limp conducting of Victor Morris did nothing to help matters. Some of his tempi were erratic - the effect of the Act 1 finale was completely lost as it was gabbled through at great speed. Best of the men was Christopher Booth-Jones (grosvenor) in a costume that gave him an uncanny resemblance to old photographs of Leslie Rands as Florian. He was far more aware of the humorous opportunities of his part than his opposite number Derek Hammond-Stroud. Bunthorne, who really wasted all his opportunities. Patricia O'Neill has a slightly heavy voice for the virginal Patience, though her Welsh accent was endearing. Anne Collins (Jane) sang well, and even though she is plainly nowhere near as hideous as the libretto would have us believe, played the Act 2 introduction for all it was worth. The cello business was a delight.

Review by Martin Yates

The recent revival by Cheam A.O.S. of Sullivan's last completed opera The Rose of Persia allows a rare opportunity of assessing the work's viability for the stage. Both this production and the one a few years ago in Cheltenham strongly persuade me that the opera does work, and comes out as fresh and entertaining as the better known and more frequently performed Savoy Operas.

Sullivan approached the composition of this opera in a mood of uncertainty. His attempts to widen the bounds of comic opera into Historical and Romantic areas with such works as Haddon Hall and The Beauty Stone had been misunderstood and counted as failures - a verdict we now know to be unjust. Perhaps because of this uncertainty in his own powers he was influenced much by the new trends in light opera, and a few pieces in the Rose are tinged with the influence of musical comedy. We see Sullivan writing more with his public in mind. The song 'Neath my lattice' shows off the voice of a fine singer even to the extent of including a special cadenza with an incredibly high note.

The love aspect of the story also brings out the musical comedy influences on the score. 'Oh what is love' and Yussuf's 'Our tale is told', charming as they are, both clearly show their origins. Sullivan has been criticised for these lapses in taste, and commentators are allowed to judge a composer by his best work. But the century was changing, and different times lay ahead. Sullivan moved with, and was influenced by, those times. Furthermore, Sullivan broke new ground in the use of dances after a number. The Gilbert operas, though they contained dances, avoided those which follow a song or duet. However the dances in the Rose are such an attractive feature. Some of them evoke a definite Eastern atmosphere, while others add graceful point to the songs. It is regrettable that Cheam chose to cut most of them, with the result that much charm was missing and, perhaps worse, the pieces ended far too abruptly. 'If you and I should tell the truth' was a painful example of this.

In The Rose of Persia, therefore, Sullivan was adapting his style to accommodate other influences, and changing his attitude towards features such as the use of dances and the appeal of vocal prowess. He was certainly not failing in his powers of composition as some critics would have us believe. Many numbers still show Sullivan the master.

The accumulative 'Dancing Dervish' quartet for the entrance of the Sultan is a brilliant piece, built entirely upon an ostinato figure. Beginning in D minor, it touches different keys to introduce each character: D minor for the Vizier, E minor for the Physician, E major for the Executioner, and finally F sharp minor for the Sultan, which then leads to a D minor. This use of keys is especially brilliant when it is realised that the ostinato figure never ceases from beginning to end. The only other time I can recall Sullivan using the ostinato is in The Prodigal Son - 'Let us eat and drink' - so it is especially interesting that he uses it twice in this opera, the second time in Hassan's first act dance. This time it is the repetition of just two notes, C and D, apparently in emulation of the Dervish music Sullivan had heard in Egypt. The notes are carried through the dance to culminate in a choral climax in which the men sing 'Allah' to them while the ladies have the tune. (See the Flower biography of Sullivan, p 119).

Key changes and chromatic harmony are employed in a more assured and expressive way, especially in the duet 'Suppose, I say suppose' (despite the ugly baby-talk), parts of the Act One finale - Veiled so thickly Royal Lady - and the entrance of the drugged Hassan, 'Laughing low on tiptoe'. Indeed, at times key changes become almost too adventurous. In the quartet 'If you and I should tell the truth' the change from G major to Bb may give emphasis to the word 'executed', but it does ruffle the flow of the tune a little too brashly. Less jarring is the example in the finale of Act One, where the change from Db major to D major tells us musically that Hassan is quite another man.

The trio for the three ladies, 'Harum-Scarum' is also a brilliant piece of composition where each voice, carefully characterised, blends beautifully with the others, and at the end all combine to make most expressive and rich harmonies with the orchestra. Rarely did

Sullivan show so much freedom in combining melody and harmony together. Even in such a piece as 'The Sultan's Executioner', where the melody is rather ordinary, Sullivan adds a touch of distinction by the use of cross-rhythms at the end, where the basic four beats in a bar (12/8 time) become three with the repetition of the words (from different singers) 'me-them-us, me-them-us'.

But as with all Sullivan's music it is with the orchestra that The Rose of Persia comes most fully to life, and the 'glitter' which it adds is certainly not suggested by the vocal score. This aspect of Cheam's performance cannot be faulted, for all the many fine details came through from an orchestra firmly controlled by Robert Stewart (famous as the arranger of Torvill and Dean's version of Bolero). One noticed the beautiful cello phrase in the overture, repeated as Hassan emerges from his drugged state in 'Laughing low on tiptoe'; the bassoon phrases in Dancing Sunbeam's 'Life has put into my hand' - further evidence that Sullivan did not use the bassoon as the clown of the orchestra - and the oboe echoing Rose-in-Bloom's plea 'Hassan' in the Act One finale; the expressive chords for brass in Abdallah's 'When Islam first arose', and the repeated woodwind chords which punctuate the texture of the Octet, and recall for an instant the fairies in Iolanthe.

It is hearing the music played so well that makes one long for a really good recording of the opera. Though Cheam have served Sullivan well in the past, their performance cannot really be viewed as ideal. While the orchestra was excellent, the singers varied in quality. Some were very good, like Joan Edwards, who sang Dancing Sunbeam's music beautifully, and Sue Kennett, who coped with Rose-in-Bloom's difficult music in an expressive manner. Other singers were merely adequate, and others less so. But it was the cuts which reduced the effectiveness of the performance, and while it was interesting to hear the septet 'It has reached me a lady named Hubbard' it was a shame that two whole songs besides some recitative. Also one missed some of the fun which Cheltenham had been so successful in conveying in their performance.

The Rose of Persia seems to have retained its popularity until the last war, for one can often see it included in the lists of Past Productions in the older-established amateur societies. I can wholeheartedly recommend it to any Society which wants a change from the usual G&S operas. If you want an opera that goes with a 'bhag', then here it is.

PETER MILLER

Offers his vocal score of The Golden Legend to the highest bidder in aid of the Golden Legend Fund. Please send sealed bids to the Editor at 55 Radwinter Rd, Saffron Walden, Essex. The Society is grateful to Mr Miller for his gesture.

SULLIVAN FESTIVAL

Bookings are rapidly filling for the Sullivan Festival in York on 22 & 23 September 1984. To secure your place (total cost about £35) write now to Stephen Turnbull at 27 Burnholme Avenue, York, YO3 0NA. *

THE BEAUTY STONE

The recording of The Beauty Stone may be obtained from Alan Borthwick, 11 Dalkeith Street, Edinburgh EH15 2HP. Price £10 + £1.30 p&p = £11.30.

WARREN COLSON

Of 35 West Central Street, Natick, Ma 01760, U.S.A. has for sale a G&S badge in blue and gold which may be ironed onto clothing, or any part of the anatomy which can stand the heat of the iron. Please write to him for details.

MORE MISCELLANEOUS PERFORMANCES

H.M.S. Pinafore was performed for the first time aboard a Victorian ironclad battleship in Warrington in May 1982. A centenary performance of Princess Ida was given at the Symphony Space on Broadway by the New York G&S players. Guest artist: John Reed. Iolanthe will be performed in East Berlin in the summer. The Gondoliers - well laced with production kitsch - appeared at the Nottingham playhouse over Christmas. Pineapple Poll returned to Sadlers Wells for a season Dec 29th - Jan 14th.

A NEW SCORE FOR HIS EXCELLENCY

By Terry Hawes

I forget where I read recently something to the effect that we should "reassess" Sullivan's achievement in the Savoy Operas in view of his good fortune in having Gilbert as librettist.* By the same token we should downgrade the Verdi of Otello and Falstaff because of Boito's contribution, knock some marks of Figaro and Don Giovanni because Mozart had the luck to work with Da Ponte on these, and disqualify altogether the cad Wagner for cheating and collaborating with himself on the libretti.

My own work on Gilbert's His Excellency in attempting to reproduce Sullivan's style reinforced my admiration for Sullivan's skill, resource, and musicianship, which is notably superior to that of other settings of Gilbert's words - at least the ones I have seen by Osmond Carr and Alfred Cellier. In fact neither of the famous collaborators was a major success on the light stage without the other. There are some very good things in, say, Haddon Hall and The Rose of Persia, but it is true to say that a composer for that trickiest of all media, the light musical theatre, needs to find his musical soul mate - Rodgers his Hart (or Hammerstein), Lerner his Loewe, Strauss his Haffner & Genée, (not to mention Mozart his Da Ponte) - before he can work at his full capacity. Such ideal partnerships are to be treasured when they arrive, witness Verdi's pre-Boito battles with librettists only partly in tune with his ideas. When they arise it is as pointless to talk of reassessing the composer as the librettist.

All this arose because being asked to write something about my problems in setting Gilbert's lyrics in His Excellency for an amateur production at Southgate Technical College in 1982, my thoughts turned to how seriously Sullivan's achievement is still underrated by many musicians, for all I know the same ones who talk of The Beatles and Schubert in the same breath, and if this article is more about Sullivan than me that is probably a good thing.

Let us concede one point straight away - the operettas contain a number of excellently 'go-ey' lyrics ('Here's a first-rate opportunity'; 'I stole the Prince'; 'My object all sublime'); which do provide the framework for catchy tunes, and it is probably true that any competent composer with a sense of humour could have done pretty much what Sullivan did here. But these are only one element in the success of the Savoy Operas, and as a counterweight consider what Sullivan did with the handful of perverse lines provided for the Iolanthe Peers' Chorus. Who, looking at these verses on the pages, would guess the splendid structure that Sullivan builds, proud and overbearing, yet tuneful and hitting exactly the right note while never descending to mere spoof of grand opera.

We are told that on receiving the lyrics Sullivan's first step was to find an appropriate rhythm for the words, which he would write out many times with different rhythmic notations. Having found the 'right' rhythm he would then clothe it with a melodic shape: 'Were I thy bride' and 'The sun whose rays' are often quoted as examples of lyrics which look most unpromising and awkward on paper, consisting as they do of successions of short lines, which by skilful rhythmic manipulation Sullivan makes into convincingly fresh and original tunes - largely by judicious running of one line into another to make longer phrases. Since these two examples are probably familiar to the reader, I will illustrate my own attempt to produce a similar effect in Nanna's song from Act I of His Excellency. Nanna is explaining to her lover Erling that he cannot keep her in the manner to which she is accustomed.

*The classic statement of this view is in Ernest Walker's History of Music in England (Ed).

EXAMPLE 1

NANNA

My wedded life must ev'ry pleasure bring on scale ex- tensive When
I'm your wife, I must have everything that's most ex-pensive.

No doubt a suitable tune sometimes occurred to Sullivan spontaneously on seeing Gilbert's lyrics, but it is surprising how often one finds that even in some of the most familiar pieces Sullivan sought out a rhythm which is 'right', and yet not the obvious one. Forget - if you can - the famous tune, and what is the obvious accentuation of the following?

Three little maids from school are we
Pert as a schoolgirl well can be.

I believe this is how Gilbert conceived it, but Sullivan puts the accent one beat later, giving a freshness to the rhythm, and allowing a melisma on the word 'glee':

EXAMPL

Three little maids from school are we, Pert as a schoolgirl well can
be, Filled to the brim with girlish glee - - Three little maids from school.

This gets the music back onto the right beat, where it stops for the rest of the piece; but how lacking in freshness the opening would have been without the misplaced accent!

Sometimes Sullivan uses two settings of the same lyric in one piece, as in the opening chorus of Iolanthe, which shows us both the 'plodding' setting and the one which takes wing from it:

EXAMPLE 3

Tripping hither, tripping thither, no-bo--dy knows etc
Tripping hither, tripping thither, nobody knows why or whither, We-- must dance etc.

Sullivan does the same thing with 'We're called Gondolieri' in Act I of The Gondoliers:

We're called Gondolieri,
But that's a vagary,
It's quite honorary
The trade that we ply etc.

Obviously something has to be done here to avoid a boringly predictable jog-trot. I have no evidence, but I believe that on experimenting Sullivan came up first with the rhythm he uses at the end of the duet:

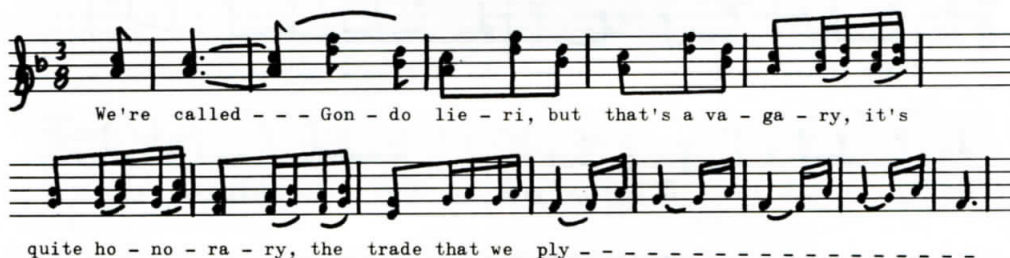
EXAMPLE 4



Musical notation for Example 4, showing a single staff with a 3/8 time signature. The melody is written in a key with one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "We're called Go - - - ndo - lie - ri, but that's a - - va - - ga - ry." The melody features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with a melisma on the word "ply" in the original text.

I think Sullivan realised that this off-beat setting was not suitable for expanding into a complete tune, though if he had lived in the twentieth century he might have thought differently. Fascinating are the few bits of 'pre-jazz' that appear now and again in Sullivan - I suppose they derive from his knowledge of the rhythms of the Elizabethan composers. Be that as it may, for the bulk of the duet Sullivan uses a different version of the rhythm - magnificently extending the four short lines into a broad Italianate melody with a melisma on the word 'ply':

EXAMPLE 5

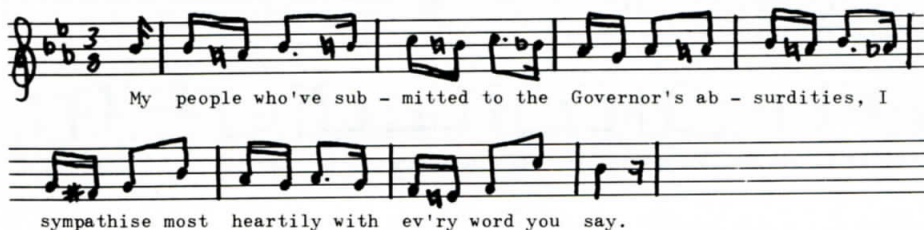


Musical notation for Example 5, showing two staves with a 3/8 time signature. The melody is written in a key with one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "We're called - - - Gon - do lie - ri, but that's a va - ga - ry, it's quite ho - no - ra - ry, the trade that we ply - - - - -". The melody features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with a melisma on the word "ply" in the original text.

Sullivan uses his off-beat setting at the end of the duet, and also for the instrumental introduction to the number, touches which help to give the Gondoliers score its feeling of richness and invention without forcing those qualities on our attention.

It is this element of 'unpredictable rightness' that I tried to catch in at least some of my settings in His Excellency. Sometimes this is achieved by using 3/4 or 3/8 where 2/4 would be more expected:

EXAMPLE 6



Musical notation for Example 6, showing two staves with a 3/8 time signature. The melody is written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are: "My people who've sub - mitted to the Governor's ab - surdities, I sympathise most heartily with ev'ry word you say." The melody features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with a melisma on the word "ply" in the original text.

The opening chorus, 'Set the merry bunting flying', gave me endless trouble. Most of the Savoy opening choruses are very simple tunes, and I wonder how much pruning and adapting was done at Sullivan's request. I found the lengthy and rather wordy lyric very difficult to set to a catchy tune. I tried cutting lines and repeating them, and eventually I added a line of my own as well as some repetitions. I ended up with a tune which I think works, but is certainly more complex in structure than most of the Savoy opening choruses:

EXAMPLE 7



Set the merry bunting flying, fire the cannon, ring the bells.



Our great townsman glorying, who with sculptor's skill undying all comp -



etitors ex - cels. Who with sculptor's skill undying all comp - etitors ex - cels.

As all readers are not musicians perhaps I may be forgiven for explaining that form in music is not just the way the composer chooses to stick the ideas together, still less is it a purely technical affair, of interest only to other composers and students. Form is what makes the music comprehensible, enjoyable, and - in light music - memorable. Certain forms have enjoyed enormously lengthy usages because they have been so successful - in pop music the 32 bar refrain from well back in the nineteenth century up to the 1950s; and, from the 1950s, the blues pattern which served for many of the early rock numbers. The 32 bar refrain allows the same idea to be heard three times in the same tune, with just enough contrasting material - in the 'B' section - to add contrast and make the repetition tolerable. Composers who want their music to catch on depart from these forms at their peril, though geniuses like Gershwin, Berlin and Kern can occasionally get away with something out of the ordinary: the composer of light music constantly walks the tightrope between what is boringly predictable and what is too 'different' for the indiscriminating ear to grasp.

Most of the numbers in the Gilbert & Sullivan operas - other than extended finales and concerted pieces - are in a very simple strophic form. There are very few pieces in freer and more extended form such as one finds in Orpheus and Fledermaus. The trouble with His Excellency was that many of the verses did not easily lend themselves to a simple musical form. I found many of the lyrics very verbose and cumbersome - there were just too many words. I therefore made some drastic cuts - for instance in the scene in Act 2 where the Prince Regent (whom Griffenfeld and his daughters believe to be an impostor of their own creation) redresses the citizens' wrongs - opening quoted in ex 6 above. Each of the first two of the three verses has appended a coda in which a number of the characters comment in asides:

ENSEMBLE

Regent Aside to Griff.

Your orders I am trying to obey,
I hope I don't exceed in any way;
For so nobly you array me,
So magnificently pay me,
That your orders I am anxious to obey.

Griff aside to Regent.

My orders you implicitly obey,
Proceed with perfect certainty you may;
Now unmercifully flay me,
& with punishment dismay
Or my orders you will /me surely disobey.

Erling Aside.

Oh, Nanna will be mine this very day,
And all my sorrows hide themselves away;
For the trick he dared to play me,
It will handsomely repay me,
If Miss Nanna will be mine this very day.

Nanna Aside

Thora, Other Principals & Chorus

It's fortunate that this is all in play,
I shouldn't like to marry him today;
It would terrible dismay be
If he really came to claim me
It is lucky that it's only said in play.

Oh, Nanna will be his this very day,
And all his sorrows hide themselves away;
I will handsomely array me
In my very best to play me
For Miss Nanna will be his this very day!

I cannot think of any Gilbert & Sullivan opera lyric which has such an awkward burden,
and I simplified and telescoped the lyrics thus in order to round off the verse:

EXAMPLE 8

NANNA

REGENT
Your orders I o - bey - - - - -

GRIFF
Continue thus you may - - - - -

ERLING
Now all my sorrows

NANNA
It's really just as well it's only said in play!

REGENT
- - - I hope I don't ex - ceed in an - - - - - y way.

GRIFF
- - - so please o - - - bey.

ERLING
hide themselves a way - - - - they hide a - - - way!

A similar problem occurred in the 'Practical Joke' trio in Act 1 between Griffenfeld and his daughters. The lines in which they gleefully describe their activities are interspersed with lines pointing out that their jokes are only funny when played on other people:

Oh what a fund of joy jocund lies his in harmless hoaxes
 What keen enjoyment springs
 From cheap and simple things!
 What deep delight from sources trite inventive humour coaxes,
 That pain and trouble brew
 For everyone but you!

This makes a good dramatic point, but a cumbersome lyric for the composer. Once again I found it impossible to incorporate into a catchy tune, and I searched in vain for some kind of model in the operettas. Finally I jettisoned all the extra lines, wrote some extra stanzas on those remaining, and came up with the following, which has I hope an impetus that could not have been got from the original lyric:

EXAMPLE 9

Oh what a fund of joy jocund lies hid in harmless hoaxes, What
 deep delight from sources trite in - ventive humour coaxes!

The Act I Finale has the same mood almost throughout - indignation and anger. Yortenssen and Erling, finally discovering the trick played on them by Griffenfeld and his daughters, summon the citizens and relate their grievances.. Dame Hecla Cortlandt then enters, also angry at the trick played on her. Everyone resolves to lay their complaints before the Regent in Copenhagen, but Griffenfeld and his daughters enter and more anger is directed at them. They attempt to pacify the people with the news that the Regent has arrived and will hear their complaints. The citizens then revile the three miscreants and look forward to the reckoning as the curtain falls.

This series of angry moments is just about impossible to build into a satisfactory musical scheme, even, as I did, changing the fast 4/4 of Erling/Tortenssen into an angry 3/4 bolero rthm for the Dame's entrance - something of a skit on 'Di quella pira' from Il Trovatore, I must confess:

EXAMPLE 10

Tempo di Bolero

Str. The truth's revealed the mystery's dispelled, My rage cannot be stifled.

I discovered on looking at an earlier version of Gilbert's finale that before the Dame's entrance Tortenssen and Erling had a verse each in lyrical vein, lamenting the falsehood of their sweethearts, and I realised that this was just what was needed to lower the tension before the Dame's outburst. In fact, because of copyright problems, I could not use this unpublished material, but wrote something of my own on similar lines for the situation.* At the end of the finale most of the cast have these words:

Shall we endure this outrage, say?
 Are we but toys to serve his whim?
 Is he on heartstrings thus to play,
 As may, perchance seem good to him?

*I must thank Victor Golding for drawing my attention to the existence of unpublished material, and Michael Walters for kindly loaning me his own copy and copious notes on Gilbert's sketches for this opera. (21)

Coincidentally with these words Griffenfeld and his daughters have:

When a Governor triumphs through quibble and quiddity,
He may employ with a cheerful avidity
Any amount of tol-lol-the-rol-liddity,
Tol-the-rol, lol-the-rol, lol-the-rol-lay.

I could not get any sort of Sullivanesque tune out of this, let alone one that was suitable for the situation, even after nearly a year of mulling it over, and thinking about the Act 1 curtain tunes of the G&S operas. They are nearly all basically very simple tunes (in fact the absence of a clear strong tune at this point in Utopia is one of the uncomfortable features of the piece) and each one is a 'once off' event - often a genre piece connected with the locale of the opera. Pinafore and Pirates have flaunting horn-pipe tunes (these are the only ones that reprise earlier tunes); Patience has an Italian opera type flowing melody; Iolanthe and Princess Ida (Act 2) have military marches - the former going through several contrasting sections; The Mikado is an operatic ensemble akin to that of Patience, but more elaborately constructed; The Gondoliers has a barcarolle, and the Yeomen, more than any of the others, a 'once off' inspiration. In fact there is no typical Sullivan Act I curtain tune to serve as a model.

Eventually, in desperation, I wrote some lyrics of my own incorporating some of Gilbert's words from earlier in the finale, and ended the act with an angry choral codetta somewhat on the lines of that at the end of Act 2 of Princess Ida. A number of people have said how effective they find this finale, so presumably I have not been totally unsuccessful.

Osmond Carr, who wrote the music for the original production, used Gilbert's words of course. I deliberately did not look at Carr's score until I had finished my own, when Michael Walters loaned me his copy. At this point Carr sets the lyrics to a jolly jaunty tune which to my mind gives no feel of the situation as Sullivan would have done. Perhaps Carr did not have Sullivan's privilege of questioning Gilbert's decisions, or perhaps he simply did not have Sullivan's unerring capacity to hit off a dramatic mood.

As a small child I was half scared to death by the 1930s Mikado film - the grotesque Katisha was the dominant image - but at 15 I fell under the fatal spell of the immortal duo, and have been a devotee ever since. Perhaps therefore I can be forgiven for not being blind to the fact that Gilbert occasionally nods - especially in his later works, where things are left in the final version that might have been cut or altered in earlier operas. Who agrees with me that the Utopia duet for the King and Lady Sophy 'Oh the rapture unrestrained' is one of the most depressingly wet things ever penned by author and composer?

However this may be, I found parts of the first act lovers quartet in His Excellency too coy and whimsical to stomach:

Compared with our own
All others are inkiness!
They are, alone,
Two visions of pinkiness!
Pinkiness, veiled
With ivory pellicle -
Everywhere hailed
As simply angelical!

I therefore made some alterations, cutting these lines from my version. Similarly with the second act lovers' quartet, which I found totally impossible:

Topsey turvey turn the tables!
Tit for tat and tat for tit -
As in fusty fairy fables,
Badly is the biter bit!
Takes a time to tame a Tartar!
Dad's delightful darling darter,
Mostly makes a man a martyr -
Here's a hero hardly hit!

In this case, with great difficulty and trepidation, I wrote my own lyrics, taking a leaf from some of Sullivan's contrapuntal pages in my version. After the two men have sung a lyrical section looking forward to their marriage, and the two girls (aside) have sung in patter of their regret at having once more to disappoint them, the two motifs are combined, with the girls slightly adapted:

EXAMPLE 11

THORA
Oh we could like them quite a lot And seek a quiet rural

ERLING
Oh speed the day the honeyed hour, When

NANNA
spot But worthy suitors they are not, And worldly wealth they've not a jot!

TORT
lovers are un - - - - i - - - - - ted. The

A number for which I would dearly like to hear what Sullivan would have done is the duet for the Dame and Griffenfeld, almost, in fact, a solo for her with interjections by him in which she expounds at length on just what she would do if his proposal of marriage turned out to be a trick (it is). This is another lyric full of words at a high emotional level; the only thing I could do with the bulk of it was to treat it as a kind of chromatic patter song, not quite like anything in the Savoy canon, though the end of the *Iolanthe* nightmare song and the *Grand Duke* 'Bilious' song are a little like it. It makes a very difficult song for the contralto, especially if the producer demands a lot of comic business with Griffenfeld, as ours did:

EXAMPLE 12

Your heart I'd tear from its loathsome lair, I'd pluck out your eyes and your

tongue likewise and limb from limb with a growling grim I'd rend the man who'd re-

p.
fuse me! etc

Carr's solution of setting the patter parts mostly to a repeated note unmeasured recitative seems to me to be 'opting out'. I would like to know what Sullivan would have done.

Act 2 calls for a Ballet of Dragoons' as the soldiers of the local garrison demonstrate to the Regent how the Governor forces them to drill to ballet steps. There is no movement like this in any Savoy opera, and I had to try to imagine what Sullivan would have written in the 1890s for the scene. Some people have pointed out Tchaikovsky elements in my music here, but Sullivan's splendid early music for Shakespeare's Tempest and the Eb Symphony of 1866 contain Tchaikovsky-like traces, although both were written before Sullivan could have heard any of the Russian's music, so I hope my guess was not too far from the mark.

I suppose this ballet was one of the high spots of our production. Phillip Golding, who played Erling, choreographed a ballet for the six men to classical dance steps, which they tried hard to get right with no attempt at all to be funny. The resulting contrast between their aspirations and achievement was hilarious, much more so than any overtly comic business. When at the end a moustachio'd Dragoon, scowling with concentration, and in a 'Queen of the Swans' pose, was borne aloft in precarious triumph by his perspiring fellows - well, Gilbert (who forbade his cast to sit on a pork pie just for a laugh) might have been pleased. Who can tell?

Terry Hawes' setting of His Excellency is available from him at Southgate Technical College, High St, Southgate, London N14 6BS. In U.K. £4.50 inc p&p. Overseas: Sterling draft for £6.50 airmail postage.

W.S. GILBERT

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ERRATA IN Magazine 17: Page 8, para 2 - the date is 24 April 1983; para 4, last line - the incomplete word is 'well'; para 5, line 2 - insert the word 'ear' between 'my' and 'adjusted'. Page 15, para 3, next to last line - insert the words 'were lost' after 'recitative'. Page 15, final paragraph - the performance of HMS Pinafore on board a Victorian ironclad battleship was on board H.M.S. Warrior at Hartlepool - not landlocked Warrington!