

An examination of Gilbert and Sullivan's contribution to the emerging common culture of Victorian England 1871-1896.

by

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PREFACE.

Any study which attempts an examination of a new area will, by definition encounter problems. To my knowledge, no other study has been attempted which uses musical sources as evidence for historical enquiry. It is therefore hoped that this paper will, in some measure, broaden the field of cultural history, and provide a starting point for further research.

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SUMMARY.

The thesis examines the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, and argues that their popularity depended upon their being a part of an emerging common culture. This common culture was the product of social and economic change which had created the circumstances whereby people of all classes were permitted to share in the process of cultural selection. This replaced the earlier system where the socially dominant class directed cultural activities. In Victorian England, the influence of middle class values was nevertheless particularly evident on music. The preference for choral music of a religious nature and of German orchestral music reflected these values. However, the light operas succeeded in attracting a new audience of people from all social levels. Thus a new market for light musical entertainment had emerged and it was the successful exploitation of this market which suggests that the operas were the products rather than the initiators of change. Because of this, both the preferences of the audience and the opinions of the critics in newspapers and journals strongly influenced both artists. Sullivan's choice of musical idiom was directed by social attitudes towards music, whilst Gilbert's satirical comments reflected contemporary social values. Consequently, the operas indicate a dramatic change in the cultural pattern and provide a record or documentary of Victorian society.

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PART I

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN

VICTORIAN ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION

In the sixteenth century, England was known abroad everywhere as 'Merrie England'.
In the nineteenth century, it was referred to on the continent of Europe as 'The Land Without Music'.¹

Great Britain in the nineteenth century was famous for many artistic accomplishments - the notable exception being in music. Only in the production of light opera was new talent displayed. By considering one most popular example of musical entertainment, this thesis examines cultural change in the period 1871 - 1896 - the dates of the first and of the last new Gilbert and Sullivan opera. These operas formed an extensive series of fourteen works, and are unique in British musical history, as never before had a series of light operas acquired such popularity or won such international esteem. The success of these works depended upon their attracting a new audience of people from all classes of society. The broad nature of this popular appeal established the Gilbert and Sullivan operas as an integral part of an emerging common culture.

The term 'culture' has been defined by Raymond Williams as the body of intellectual and imaginative work, which forms a documentary record of a period by reporting and reflecting actual historical events. Beneath this documentary account, culture is a description of a

1 W.J. Turner, English Music (London, 1941), p.6.

particular way of life and records and "impresses meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour".² Williams argues that culture is a living force which is profoundly influenced by social changes.³ Cultural development thus depends upon an environment which permits the nurturing and growth of art. In an unfavourable environment, culture stagnates. Its growth depends upon classes in society selecting certain features of a culture and rejecting others.⁴ Cultural growth, it has been argued by Hoggart is therefore a cumulative process.⁵

In a common culture, all classes of society share significantly in this process of selection. During the last century, the monopoly exercised by single dominating classes over the tending and selection of culture was broken down. People, who had previously shared cultural interests only within their own class, with little inter-class borrowing occurring, now participated in a nation-wide sharing of common interests.⁶ Until this emergence of a common culture, the selection invariably represented the interests of the dominant social class, despite the considerable degree of inter-class borrowing that occurred. The composer Vaughan Williams has argued that "music has always spread from below upwards".⁷ However, the growth of musical form and style has depended upon, if not been dictated by the interests of

2 R. Williams, The Long Revolution (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), p.57.

3 R. Williams, Culture and Society (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), p.322.

4 Ibid., p.321.

5 R. Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959), pp.285-6.

6 R. Williams, Culture and Society pp.306-10.

7 R. Vaughan Williams, National Music (London, 1963), p.51.

the ruling class.⁸

This common culture emerged in Great Britain as a consequence of certain fundamental social and political changes. The broadening of political privileges permitted working class participation in the political processes of the nation.⁹ Similarly, the growth of industry created a new class of industrial entrepreneurs, upsetting the traditional class structure, and broadening the opportunities for the skilled tradesman and professional man. The development of industry also shifted economic power from the country to the cities, and weakened the cultural position of London, by creating new centres at Birmingham and northern industrial towns.¹⁰ Thus by the last quarter of the century, the economically and socially powerful middle-class combined with the numerically strong working classes to have a decisive influence upon the growth of culture.

The central characteristics of this became apparent during the two decades, 1840 to 1860. The traditional upper-class domination of cultural interests was, in this period, being seriously challenged and modified by the influence of the middle and lower classes.¹¹ During these decades, the selective process had become increasingly affected by a significant increase in the commercial exploitation of culture.¹²

It is the purpose of this thesis to use the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan as examples of a new type of musical entertainment

8 M. Weber, The Rational and Social Foundations of Music (Illinois, U.S.A., 1969), pp.120-1.

9 R. Williams, Culture and Society, p.14.

10 Ibid., pp.13,14.

11 R. Williams, The Long Revolution, p.75.

12 Ibid., pp.70-78.

which developed as a result of a changing cultural environment.

The study is intellectual history insofar as it involves a consideration of the ideas and theories related to cultural development. Williams' concept of a common culture is accepted, but instead of considering a body of literature, the music and librettos of the Savoy operas are examined as examples of a highly successful manifestation of musical entertainment.

The difficulty of using music instead of literature as a basis for a study of cultural development centres around the problem of adequate terminology. It is possible to quote a passage from a novel which conveys social criticism, but with music no such clear cut recognition can be established. So much depends upon interpretation - what the composer meant by a certain phrase or chord. Musicologists, including Denis Stevens, have been notorious for using relative expressions, such as 'colourful' or 'good' and 'bad' to describe a passage in music.¹³ In a history thesis, it is inadmissible to use such loose terminology. The generalisations 'light', 'serious' and 'art-music', which have come into current usage, are used sparingly. Where possible, a note by note analysis of a piece of music is necessary, using precise musical terms in order to make an accurate assessment. Thus the complex musical analysis of the third chapter is the only means by which imprecision in the assessment of Arthur Sullivan's music might be avoided. By combining such an analysis with an

13 A. Robertson and D. Stevens, The Pelican History of Music, Vol. II, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1968), p.312.

examination of social changes affecting people's attitudes towards music, the thesis offers a new approach to the study of music as a part of cultural history.

As artists, Gilbert and Sullivan came to depend upon commercial factors which directed their choice of art form. As such, they became established as consumer-composers. Between them, they devised a type of entertainment, deeply influenced and restricted by social convention, but intended for consumption by a broad public. The light operas were not single commissions but rather a series of works directed towards a mass-market. In structure, length and popular appeal, the series differed from works by any previous composer-librettist collaboration. Gilbert and Sullivan established themselves as consumer-composers because they directed their combined artistic endeavours towards a new audience. The concept of consumer-composers producing works for a classless audience was both a product and a reflection of the emergence of a common culture.

Thus the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were the products of cultural change. The Victorian musical environment in the years immediately prior to the Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations witnessed a common synthesising of class dominated musical pursuits. For example, the middle class cultivated a new interest in pianoforte music, formed musical clubs and joined choral societies. There were also recognisably working class forms of music. The inspiration for folk song, traditionally associated with a rural way of life, shifted to the city, so that a new form of industrial folk music, different in feeling and

mood from country life, emerged. The working classes also formed brass bands and joined choral societies, although both these activities were strongly encouraged and sponsored by the upper classes. Music, it was considered by authorities in society, could be used to allay popular discontent arising from poor living conditions and political frustrations.¹⁴ However, this sponsorship or directing of lower class musical activities also involved a general sharing of cultural interests.

The Victorian attitude to music in general tended to be highly conservative. For example, the use of new harmonic styles, such as those devised by Brahms, or large scale and unconventional orchestration in the style of Berlioz and Wagner was considered dangerously modern, even as late as 1890.¹⁵ As a freelance composer neither sponsored nor financially backed by a hereditary aristocracy, Sullivan had to produce music that would be readily accepted by society. This set limitations upon the form of his compositions. Sullivan composed a symphony and several other orchestral pieces, which, although well received, failed to overcome the cultivated preference for European orchestral music. So Sullivan composed choral music, associating himself with an English musical tradition that extended back to the seventeenth century. His compositions for choir were popular and earned Sullivan a modest reputation. Had he composed nothing else, his name would have survived as a successful composer of choral music.

14 R. Nettel, 'The Influence of the Industrial Revolution on English Music'. Royal Musical Association Journal, (1945-6), p.30. Nettel describes how employers were able to create a sense of loyalty amongst their workers by financing a company brass band to compete with the bands of other firms.

15 W. Hadow, Studies in Modern Music (London, 1893), pp.142-3.

However, by collaborating with Gilbert to produce a series of fourteen operas, Sullivan tapped a vast new popular market for light tuneful music. Tickets for the Savoy theatre were cheap, ranging from one shilling upwards, comparing favourably with the five guineas that was paid for seats at Covent Garden. As the amount of leisure time and the living standards of the lower classes had risen, so it was possible for people from all classes to visit the Savoy theatre.¹⁶ Furthermore, whilst intended primarily for the amusement of the middle classes, the light operas held broad appeal. The cost of tickets, as well as the length and complexity of grand opera, might have deterred many of the musically less sophisticated lower classes from visiting Covent Garden. No such restriction affected a Savoy audience. Thus the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, by allowing the sharing and exchange of cultural interests, represented part of a changing cultural pattern.

An analysis of the light operas reveals a wealth of material reflecting attitudes not only to forms of entertainment, but also to political and social changes. Gilbert's texts were highly topical and frequently made reference to current events. In this regard, they represent a record or documentary of historical occurrences. However, more significantly, the texts reveal a variety of social attitudes. Gilbert, as an entertainer was not always free to express his own opinions, but was guided by the prejudices of his audience. However, he was able to develop the Savoy opera as a vehicle for social criticism

16 E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969), Appendix Table 46.

since any offence that his often vehement satire might arouse was mollified by the very attractive music of Sullivan, and by Gilbert's own technique of paradox. No-one expected profound statements from light opera. However, an examination of the texts suggests that Gilbert's satire penetrated very deeply into controversial issues. Gilbert's treatment of the House of Lords and the system of party politics, for example, lead to the conclusion that the satirical value of the Savoy operas has been under-rated. Accounts, such as those by Baker¹⁷ or Godwin¹⁸ tended to consider Gilbert as a witty humorist and to dismiss Sullivan merely as a writer of pretty tunes. It has only been in the last fifteen years that scholars such as Jones in the United States of America have considered Gilbert's satire with the serious attention it warrants,¹⁹ and musicologists, such as Gervase Hughes have analysed the peculiarly individualistic style of Sullivan's music.²⁰

At the time of their performance, public reaction to the operas was recorded in the reviews published by newspapers and journals. Once the Gilbert and Sullivan operas became well known, each new opera received comment in most of the London newspapers and also in the musical and literary journals. The assessments made by the critics of both the music and the librettos tended to be highly conservative.

17 H. Baker, Exit Planché, Enter Gilbert (London, 1923).

18 A. Godwin, Gilbert and Sullivan - A Critical Appreciation of the Operas (London, 1927).

19 J. Jones, 'Gilbert and Sullivan's Serious Satire: More Fact than Fancy'. Western Humanities Review, Vol. 21, pp.211-24.

20 G. Hughes, The Music of Arthur Sullivan (New York, 1960).

These reviews would praise familiar features in new operas rather than encourage novelty. The audience appeared far more tolerant than the critics, both of Gilbert's satire of controversial topics, and of Sullivan's experiments in style. Nevertheless, both critics and public came to consider the Gilbert and Sullivan operas as a 'middle' standard of art - not to be compared to grand opera, but significantly superior to burlesque and opera bouffe.

The thesis is not intended as history of music. Its purpose is to examine one facet of culture at a critical period in history. The period is critical for two reasons: firstly, because the years 1871 to 1896 marked for the first time the emergence of a classless audience seeking a common form of entertainment. Secondly, this quarter century immediately precedes a recovery in the standard of British art music, considered to have begun with Elgar.²¹ An intensive investigation of one strand of musical development during this period may offer guidelines for later research into the complex relationship between musical growth and social change. Virtually no work has been done before in this field. Raymond Williams has used literature as a basis for his studies, whilst Richard Hoggart has considered largely those forms of culture that primarily interested the working classes in this century.

The failure of standard histories of music is that they tend to consider musical growth either as represented by the number of great composers living in a period, or by changes in style and structure of composition. The first approach, of considering composers alone places

21 F. Howes, The English Musical Renaissance (London, 1966), p.32.

too much upon chance and ignores the intricacies of social and political circumstance that affected the lives of these men. For example, what would have been the reputation accorded Handel had he not visited England and associated himself with Protestant choral music? And what were the circumstances that made England so attractive?

The second approach, favoured by Frederick Dorian, of considering musical history by means of stylistic changes is also inadequate.²² Max Weber, over fifty years ago, argued that Western harmonic and rhythmic styles were based upon rational foundations peculiar to Western society.²³ Thus any account that fails to consider the social, political and economic changes occurring in the period under examination is inadequate.

Previous studies have generally ignored or under-rated historical circumstances and often been forced to rely on unsubstantiated generalisations. In the eighteenth century, for example, Dr. Burney, accounting for a decline in standard of British music, considered this to have been caused by the early death of three men of genius - Orlando Gibbons, Pelham Humphrey and Henry Purcell.²⁴ Deprived of the potential genius of these men, British music deteriorated from its former position of pre-eminence enjoyed during the sixteenth century. The deficiency in native talent then created a reliance on European musicians, which in turn stifled the opportunity for British musicians. Consequently,

22 F. Dorian, The History of Music in Performance (New York, 1966).

23 M. Weber, The Rational and Social Foundations of Music (Illinois, 1958).

24 C. Burney, A General History of Music From The Earliest Ages To The Present Period, Vol. I, (London, 1957), p.405.

Burney concluded, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the once-flourishing school of British music had practically ceased to exist.²⁵ The difficulty with Burney's monocausal account is his assumption that the standard of British music declined purely because of the absence of genius. Little consideration is given to the social upheavals of the later seventeenth century, which led ultimately to the political connection with the Hanoverian monarchy. This connection was responsible for considerable cultural exchanges with Europe, a feature seriously under-rated by Burney.

Cecil Forsyth earlier this century attempted to relate nationalism with a pattern of musical development. World power, he argued, had a seriously detrimental affect on music.²⁶ Consequently, the lower standard of British music, compared to the rest of Europe, was a result of her great power status. Forsyth argued that "as soon as a nation begins to extend and exteriorize itself, it ceases to develop its musical, though not necessarily its other artistic, features".²⁷ This is one source of weakness in Forsyth's argument - the failure to differentiate convincingly between music and the other arts.²⁸ The major fault, however, is that his central assumption is invalid. Tudor England, for example, witnessed the parallel rise of British sea-power and an unprecedented expansion of music.

Arthur Sullivan had argued that British music underwent decline

25 Ibid., p.406.

26 C. Forsyth, Music and Nationalism (London, 1911), pp.30, 31.

27 Ibid., p.30.

28 Ibid., p.40.

because of "the enthusiasm with which commerce was pursued".²⁹ Thus, Sullivan suggested, the energies of the nation were diverted from music and applied to industrial and economic growth. However, this generalisation assumes that a nation can develop only a limited number of its resources simultaneously. Like Forsyth, Sullivan also failed to differentiate between the arts and explain why music should deteriorate, but not literature and painting. Furthermore, Sullivan's account fails to explain why industrial growth should cause a decline in music in Great Britain, but not in other industrial nations, such as Germany.

The theory that trade and commerce were related to British musical stagnation has been developed more recently by Frank Howes. He argues that Great Britain found it more expedient to import European musicians rather than encourage her own.³⁰ Britain was so prosperous, that she could afford to attract performers and composers from Europe, and thus there was little demand for native musicians. However, this argument does not explain why British born musicians, such as Hugo Pierson and John Field were forced to leave Britain but managed to make fortunes and reputations for themselves in Europe. The weakness of Howes' theory is that he considers music only through the names of eminent musicians, such as Parry and Mackenzie, but does not consider the fundamental historical circumstances that permitted these men to succeed.

Howes argued that a musical renaissance occurred in Great Britain towards the end of the nineteenth century. Certainly, it is undeniable

29 Letter by Arthur Sullivan, quoted in H. Sullivan and N. Flower, Sir Arthur Sullivan, His Life Letters and Diaries (London, 1950), p.71.

30 F. Howes, The English Musical Renaissance (London, 1966), p.73.

that since Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius' won world acclaim at Dusseldorf in 1902, the British Isles have produced more internationally esteemed musicians than occurred in the previous two centuries. Yet Howes accounts for this change merely by arguing that it was a result of deliberate attempts by scholars in mid-Victorian England "to create an English music".³¹ Nowhere does Howes seriously attempt to relate the social, economic and political circumstances that may have affected this musical development. Howes states that a favourable musical environment emerged, but does not explain why this happened.

The most useful and comprehensive study of the development of British music is the account by E.D. Mackerness. He rejects the traditional analysis of musical history as being a mere chronology of famous musicians, devoting attention to the circumstances that permitted these men to become famous.³² His study gives equal importance to all aspects of music - from folk-song, to music-hall to opera house and concert-hall. Mackerness traces a continuous tradition of popular music, which was relatively unaffected by the apparent decline of art-music. It was this tradition that ultimately contributed towards the revitalising of English art-music. Mackerness concludes that "the social history of English music in the nineteenth century is largely a history of the manner in which a vastly increased demand for music of all sorts was met".³³ Considerable use is made of primary source evidence to establish the nature of this increased demand against the background of a changing

31 Ibid., p.33.

32 E.D. Mackerness, A Social History of English Music (Norwich, 1966), p.125.

33 Ibid., p.153.

climate of cultural activity. Mackerness's study also makes a conscious effort to avoid the generalisations and use of imprecise terms often used by some of the accounts previously mentioned. His account has been of considerable value in providing a method of approach in the use of musical sources in the writing of cultural history.

The decisive change influencing the Savoy operas was the acceptance of the lower classes as a major part of the audience. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the working classes were restricted from attending places of entertainment which were popular amongst the upper classes by both social and economic circumstances. The concert halls and theatres charged up to five pounds for a seat - four months wages for the average worker³⁴ - or else sold expensive subscription tickets to members of musical societies.³⁵ What limited evidence exists suggests that the lower classes, untrained and inexperienced in music, and apparently satisfied with their own forms of musical entertainment, lacked the motivation to attend sophisticated concerts or grand opera. With the Savoy operas, both the economic and the social barriers were removed. Furthermore, by the second half of the century, social mobility and the self-help ethic of Samuel Smiles was becoming increasingly accepted. The presence of the lower classes in the pits of even the most lavish opera houses was welcomed once it was realised by managers that greater profits might be made by selling larger numbers of cheaper tickets, than relying upon a limited sale of expensive seats. The provision of

34 W.G. Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds (Cambridge, 1960), p.194.

35 H. Elkin, The Royal Philharmonic Society (London, 1946), pp.20-21.

culture had become a serious commercial enterprise.³⁶

The thesis examines the emergence of one type of musical entertainment, and argues that its success was a result of a changing pattern of cultural development. Without the political circumstances which permitted social mobility and provided an opportunity for satire, without the economic circumstances that led to the commercial exploitation of culture, and without the social circumstances that directed the choice of idiom adopted by the composer, the Savoy operas would not have taken the form they did, nor would they have met with the success that they achieved. The role of the Savoy operas in the British musical renaissance was symbolic. They reflected clearly that cultural interests had changed from the discouraging period earlier in the nineteenth century when British composers were successful only in exile. This change brought significant new opportunities to all aspects of British music.

36 E. Hanslick, Music Criticisms 1846-99 (London, 1963), p.267. Hanslick describes a concert at the Albert Hall where "Five thousand seats at a shilling apiece sell out at once. The next cost half-a crown, the most expensive, fifteen shillings."

CHAPTER 1.

'The Victorian Musical Environment: Patterns of Musical Entertainment.'

"When Sullivan and I began to collaborate, English comic opera had practically ceased to exist. Such musical entertainments as held the stage, were adaptations of the crapulous plots of the operas of Offenbach, Audran and Lecoq... We set out with the determination to prove that these elements were not essential to the success of humorous opera".¹ Gilbert believed that Sullivan and he had reformed the English musical theatre. However, their light operas were the products of a changing cultural environment, which was affecting literature and painting as well as music. The motivation for the Savoy operas was essentially commercial. Without the financial support of the entrepreneur, D'Oyly Carte, and the promise of a lucrative financial return, neither partner would have been seriously interested in light opera. Pearson has argued that when "Carte... met Gilbert in the year 1875, he had already perceived that a combination of Gilbert and Sullivan would probably make a fortune".² This, however, assumed the existence of an untapped or undiscovered but highly profitable market for popular musical entertainment. It is the emergence of this market around the middle of the century that is as important as its exploitation by the partnership.

1 W.S. Gilbert, interview in the Daily News 28 June, 1907.

2 H. Pearson, Gilbert and Sullivan (London, 1950), p.68.

The Victorian conception of music was closely related to religious attitudes. One such attitude was expressed by the Reverend H.R. Haweis, whose didactic volume 'Music and Morals' sold over one million copies in eight editions during the 1870's. Haweis argued that since music influenced the emotions, it could have either positive or harmful effects:³

When music becomes a mixed art, ... then it is easy to see how music is a moral or immoral agent as it is to decide upon the tendency of a picture or a poem.⁴

Music needed to be safe, conservative and preferably non-secular. It was Haweis' contention that deep emotional involvement in music degraded not merely the art, but also had a detrimental affect upon society. He quoted the case of Italy as an example where deeply emotional music had contributed to a decline in social standards.⁵ Haweis' argument was a conservative reaction against the Romantic movement which had encouraged emotional qualities in music. One positive feature emphasised by Haweis was his belief that music could be used to benefit society as a panacea for many social maladies.⁶ Matthew Arnold had also established a relationship between cultural development and social order.⁷ It was an opinion shared by many eminent authorities that music should be made to serve society. This could best

3 H.R. Haweis, Music and Morals (London, 1877), p.51.

4 Ibid., p.47.

5 Ibid., p.56.

6 Ibid., p.98.

7 Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (London, 1946), p.157.

be accomplished through education argued W.E. Hickson in 1837 who concluded that music:

has a tendency to wean the mind from vicious and sensual indulgences, and if properly directed, it has a tendency to incline the heart to kindly feelings and just and generous emotions.⁸

A similar opinion was later expressed in 1859, where an authority advocated musical instruction for adults, arguing that:

By spending your spare evenings at the singing class instead of at the public house, you not only have an hour of pleasant social intercourse, but the pleasure is followed by no morning headache. Your heart is lighter, but not so your purse.⁹

Music - together with the other arts - was exalted by many authorities. "The arts", writes Raymond Williams "- literature, music painting, sculpture, theatre - were grouped together in this new phrase, as having something essentially in common which distinguished them from other human skills".¹⁰ The musical anthologist William Barrett combined a highly moral as well as a sanctimonious attitude towards music:

Music may strengthen the moral sense ... It is because it is healthful in tone and pure in purpose, perhaps, that it is so earnestly sought after as the handmaid of religion. The emotions may be temporarily excited by the sounds of music, but music can never, by itself, give rise to unworthy thoughts.¹¹

8 W.E. Hickson, quoted in E.D. Mackerness, A Social History of English Music (Norwich, 1966), p.154.

9 W. Harrison, 'Recreation for the People', Tonic Sol-fa Reporter, January 1859.

10 R. Williams, Culture and Society (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), p.15.

11 William Barrett, English Part Songs and Gleees (London, 1886), p.4.

This attitude was popular with authorities on music throughout the Victorian era. It is only after 1893, when Hadow published his Studies in Modern Music¹² that scholars of music came to consider the art in more concrete and less ethereal terms, basing their judgement of quality upon technique and classifying musical styles in specific historical periods.

Music was also considered to be intimately connected with attitudes of social behaviour. The task of the popular musician became onerous since it was believed he had the opportunity to use his art to improve the moral welfare of society. As Haweis noted:

The ... musician is always before the world.... Yet it cannot be denied he has fewer outward inducements to be moral ... but ... that intemperance will end by impairing his powers, that even whilst occasionally stimulating them to high achievements it will destroy the fine balance and natural healthy force of all the emotions themselves.¹³

The strictures placed by such opinions on both the musical performer and the composer were such as to restrict experiment and create a highly conservative approach to musical style and technique. This conservatism was manifest in the continued popularity of Italian opera, which held a virtual monopoly in the English theatre from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth, and by a general suspicion of modern symphonic developments in Germany.

12 W.H. Hadow, Studies in Modern Music (London, 1893).

13 Haweis, op.cit., p.82.

Yet no such inhibitions restricted the popular music of the common people. This freedom of expression was manifest in the emergence of industrial folk music, which accommodated itself to the changing pattern of a rapidly industrialising society.¹⁴ Industrial folk song was a natural development from traditional folk music.¹⁵ At the turn of the century, Cecil Sharp argued that the art of folk music in the British Isles was dying, concluding that: "the last generation of folk singers must have been born not later than sixty or seventy years ago - say 1840".¹⁶ Yet this is the date given by A.L. Lloyd when industrial folk song became an influential feature of working class culture.¹⁷ One of the oldest songs remaining, is the 'Bury New Loom',¹⁸ first printed on a broadside in 1804. What is representative about this song is that although it "has the picaresque wit of the itinerant weaver songs ... its relish for machinery and technicalities is new".¹⁹ The songs of different trades varied considerably. In Durham, certain songs in the pentatonic scale bore unmistakable Highland influence, whilst those of Liverpool were often enriched by Irish and Welsh melodies; both instances reflecting the migration of labour.²⁰ The miners of the North of England had a rich folk lore, mythological heroes, such as 'Bob Towers' in Durham or 'Big Isaac' in South Wales, spirits supposedly endowed with super-human skills who dwelt deep within the bowels of the earth - a kind of common

14 A.L. Lloyd, Folk Song in England (London, 1967), p.317.

15 Ibid., p.316.

16 Cecil Sharp, English Folk Songs (London, 1959), p.151.

17 Lloyd, op.cit., p.317.

18 Appendix I, Ex.1.

19 Lloyd, op.cit., p.320.

20 Ibid.

man's Seigfried - inspired songs from the miners. The weavers, spinners, shipwrights and nail-makers²¹ developed songs peculiar to their trade.²² Their songs would be sung after a days work, or in the case of miners, between shifts, in public houses or occasionally at work either during a celebration or, as in the case of strike ballads, when the singing was intended to intimidate the employer.²³

Industrial folk song represented a continuous art form still evident today.²⁴ In the last century the more popular of these songs came to public notice through the medium of the music-hall,²⁵ but generally, musical authorities considered industrial folk music unworthy of mention, and forming only a starting point from which an interest in singing could be used to 'improve' the tastes of the working classes. Yet this very response to working class culture served to link it more closely with other forms of English music. In this way, industrial folk song came to form part of an emerging common culture, and, furthermore, as the amount of leisure time enabled workers to frequent music-halls, also formed part of the new popular market that was emerging simultaneously.

The idea of using music to reform or positively influence the lower classes was an essential feature of the sight-singing movement, which gained considerable popularity during the 1860's and 1870's.²⁶ At a time when society was shocked by reports indicating that out of a

21 Appendix I, Ex.2.

22 Lloyd, op.cit., pp.322, 362 and 363.

23 Ibid., p.338.

24 Ibid., pp.80-82.

25 Ibid., p.386.

26 P. Scholes, The Mirror of Music, Four Volumes (London, 1947), Vol. III, p.15.

population of 17,927,609, only 7,261,032 people regularly attended Church,²⁷ attempts were made, particularly by the Dissenters, to use music as an attraction to come to Church.²⁸ The connection between religious and musical revival was often very close. Even during the 1880's, William Barrett maintained that "religious worship gains in power and impressiveness in proportion to the dignity and solemnity of the music brought to its aid".²⁹ Many Victorians therefore believed that by encouraging music - particularly singing - they were carrying out a civilising mission amongst the untrained and often Godless habits of the urban masses.

New methods of singing instruction had been devised by Joseph Mainzer (1801-1851), John Hullah (1812-1884) and John Curwen (1816-1880). All three men received considerable encouragement. Mainzer's text-book 'Singing for the Million' claimed to have sold over 200,000 copies in the first six months of its publication,³⁰ whilst the educationalist James Kay assisted Hullah in his appointment as national Inspector for Music in 1872.³¹ Curwen's system was to prove the most influential since it provided a new and simple method of notation,³² but all three systems had served, by the close of the century, to make England famous for her choirs.³³

Choral music was particularly worthy of encouragement since, in Barrett's words "...as an aid to religious exercise, its value is set

27 Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (London, 1963), p.149.

28 Ibid., pp.171-183.

29 W. Barret, op.cit., p.3.

30 P. Scholes, op.cit., p.4.

31 Ibid., p.11.

32 Watkins Shaw, 'The Musical Teachings of John Curwen', Royal Musical Association Journal, (1950-1951), pp.18, 19.

33 A. Mees, Choirs and Choral Music (London, 1901), p.184.

at the highest point next to doctrine".³⁴ Although the earliest recorded choral festival took place in 1716,³⁵ it was not until the second half of the 19th century that such festivals became widely popular. In those industrial towns - such as Manchester and Leeds - not possessing cathedrals, generous public subscriptions financed the construction of lavish town halls,³⁶ whilst in Brighton, many shops closed early on Saturdays so as to allow employees the opportunity to join choral societies.³⁷ The quality of performance at choral festivals achieved such a standard as to prompt the German critic, Otto Lessman to write:

I heard choral performances of greater beauty in Leeds than in any other town in the Continent. The voices are so fresh; the sopranos and tenors command the high notes with astounding facility, and the basses display admirable fullness of power.³⁸

In the festival towns people with fine voices, regardless of their rank in society, were sought for the choirs. Frequently, employers would allow employees involved in the festival choir time off for rehearsals, whilst much of the finance for the festival came from public subscription from business. Class differences were transcended in the enthusiasm and pride attached to the choral festivals, which further facilitated a common sharing of cultural interests.

The brass band movement was another instance of upper-class sponsorship of a popular entertainment. The movement was a further

³⁴ Barrett, op.cit., p.3.

³⁵ Scholes, op.cit., p.188.

³⁶ A. Briggs, Victorian Cities (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1963), p.170.

³⁷ Scholes, op.cit., p.42.

³⁸ Ibid., p.161.

example of this attempt by authorities to use culture to serve society. Brass bands first appeared in industrial cities after the Napoleonic wars. The quality of instruments improved greatly between 1835 and 1874,³⁹ but it was the development by the Belgian, Adolf Sax, who invented a new system of valves and pistons after 1841,⁴⁰ that made the playing of brass instruments simpler. Enderby Jackson, the famous bandmaster acknowledged this, noting that brass instruments:

became favourites with the public for their tone and quality, and also with players, not merely for their full and free power and good intonation, but more especially for their ease in blowing and simple fingering. The latter was an inestimable boon for ...most of the members of this class of band were then ... drawn from the weekly wage-earning class Their hands horned and often malformed by their daily toil, were well served in those new instruments by the short easy manipulation, three fingers sufficing to work the mechanism of the three equidistant pistons.⁴¹

During the 1830's and 1840's, employers came to sanction, and later finance bands in their own factories. Initially, employers gave encouragement since they saw bands as diverting the attention of their employees from their distressing working conditions, and thereby averting strikes, if not more serious industrial trouble.⁴² As living standards improved during the 1850's more employers came to recognise bands as

39 Adam Carse, Musical Wind Instruments (Edinburgh, 1938), pp.69,70. Carse notes that in both Britain and Germany improvements in the system of valves on brass instruments were made.

40 A. Baines, ed., Musical Instruments Through the Ages (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1966), pp.308-314.

41 Enderby Jackson, 'Origin and Promotion of Brass Band Contests', Musical Opinion, 1st March, 1896, pp.392,393.

42 R. Nettel, 'The Influence of the Industrial Revolution on English Music', Royal Musical Association Journal (1945-1946), p.30.

providing a novel advertisement for their industry.⁴³ It was not unknown for band-masters and instructors to be hired as part of the permanent staff of a factory.⁴⁴

The improvement in the system of transport during the 1850's and 1860's made it possible to conduct nationwide band festivals. Railway companies offered concession fares to bandsmen travelling to competitions, the Leeds to London fare being reduced to 4/6d, one quarter of the normal fare.⁴⁵ Competitions were mostly held in London at the Crystal Palace, after 1862 and Hyde Park, although Belle Vue in Manchester was also famous for competitions.⁴⁶ Prizes ranged from 25 to 100 pounds,⁴⁷ and one band, the Nelson Brass Band under the patronage of a cotton manufacturer, won prizes totalling 900 pounds between 1870 and 1876.⁴⁸ New bands would be formed around the nucleus of an established band, and so extensive was the enthusiasm for band music that in 1895, one authority could report that there were some forty thousand brass bands in the United Kingdom with more than twenty band music publishers and twenty brass band journals.⁴⁹ The movement was a further instance of a sharing of cultural interests, since, without the enthusiastic support of employers, the activities of the brass band movement would have been seriously restricted.

The membership of brass bands was almost exclusively working-class. The pianoforte, however, during the nineteenth century became a favourite

43 J. Elliot and J. Russell, The Brass Band Movement (London, 1936), pp.88, 89.

44 Mackerness, op.cit., p.166.

45 Elliot & Russell, op.cit., p.92.

46 Ibid., p.133.

47 Ibid., p.134, 135.

48 Ibid., p.135.

49 R. Dunstan, Cyclopaedic Dictionary of Music (London, 1925), p.85.

instrument of the middle classes.⁵⁰ It acquired this position as a consequence of production methods applied firstly by Broadwood, and later British manufacturers,⁵¹ which so reduced the price of instruments as to make them available to a far wider section of society than previously.⁵² An observer as early as 1814 remarked:

The daughters of mechanics, even in humble stations would fancy themselves extremely ill-treated were they debarred the indulgence of a pianoforte.⁵³

Nevertheless, it is unreasonable to assume that the declining price of the instrument made it available to most. The piano was still a luxury. The new market was opened not amongst the working-classes, but amongst those with a little capital to spare - the lower-middle class skilled worker.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, an instrument whose possession had formerly been restricted by price to a small social elite was by mid-century more widely available and even "by 1820, the pianoforte was tending to become a piece of furniture, by owning which, a lower-middle class family might appear less lower."⁵⁵ As the century progressed, the daughters of such families were expected to play the piano, and with a degree of technical dexterity.⁵⁶ New compositions - songs and shorter but ostentatious keyboard works - were written by George Alexander Osborne (1806 - 1893) and other British and Continental musicians⁵⁷ to

50 M. Weber, The Rational and Social Foundations of Music (Illinois, U.S.A., 1958), p.124.

51 Loesser, Men Women and Pianos (London, 1955), p.235.

52 Ibid., p.427, 428.

As the price declined, the quality and quantity of instruments rose, making G.B. the worlds largest manufacturer.

53 Ibid., p.236.

54 Mackerness, op.cit., p.173.

55 Loesser, op.cit., p.236.

56 Scholes, op.cit., p.306.

57 Mackerness, op.cit., pp.172, 173.

satisfy a growing demand for drawing-room music.⁵⁸

It was consistent with the Victorian principle of using music as a means of reforming the moral standards of the masses, that the French political exile, and conductor, Louis Jullien (1812 - 1860) was encouraged to establish the 'Popular' concerts.⁵⁹ However, it was not until August Manns and George Grove combined after 1855 to conduct these concerts on Saturday afternoons that the enormous popularity of the 'Pops' became apparent.⁶⁰ The essential feature of the 'Pops' was the low cost of tickets which, by means of a skilful gradation of prices ranged from 6d upwards, as well as the concerts' lack of formality. Soon, alternate programmes were offered on Mondays, and despite the hostility of those religious authorities who objected to the performance of secular music, also on Sunday afternoons.⁶¹ In all, Manns conducted some twenty thousand concerts between 1855 and 1901, whilst Arthur Chappell, who took over the direction of the Monday 'Pops' in 1859, gave the thousandth concert during the Jubilee celebrations in 1887.⁶²

The sharing of these and other cultural activities between classes would have had little success or influence had not the amount of leisure-time and the capacity to spend money available to people risen significantly. Geoffrey Best has argued that:

The leisure patterns of modern industrial urban mass society now begin to take shape. These now develop... in the larger urban concentrations of socially

58 P. Young, Sir Arthur Sullivan (London, 1971), p.73.

59 Mackerness, op.cit., p.181-3.

60 G. Grove, Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London, 1904-1910).

61 Mackerness, op.cit., p.178.

62 T.H. Ward, The Reign of Queen Victoria, Two Volumes (London, 1887), Vol. II, p.611.

undistinguished people, certain recreational and cultural institutions characteristic of them alone; institutions called into being, it seems by the common people's needs and interests (rather than by what benevolent superiors thought was their need and ought to be their interest), financed by their own payments, and for the most part made possible by the slightly more leisured existence many of them were experiencing.⁶³

The Ten Hour Act had been passed by Parliament in 1887, but only slowly came to have effect.⁶⁴ Even during the 1850's, Sunday was the only day of the week when most working people might relax.⁶⁵ This decade marked a spectacular increase in the circulation of Sunday papers.⁶⁶ By the 1860's, many industries had introduced a half day on Saturdays, and thereby assisted in the creation of a growing mass audience with both spare time and money. The brass band and choral movements were types of recreation that had been sponsored by authorities in society; the popular continuance of industrial folk music and the bourgeois cultivation of the pianoforte during the first half of the century are examples of people pursuing and financing their own cultural interests.

The standard of living for the majority of British people rose steadily during the third quarter of the century.⁶⁷ Hobsbawm notes a rapid rise in the consumption of such 'luxury' items as tea and sugar, the consumption of which had remained relatively static until mid century.⁶⁸

63 G. Best, Mid Victorian Britain 1851-75 (St. Albans, Herts., 1973), p.220.

64 Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement (London, 1970), p.336.

65 R. Altick, The English Common Reader (Chicago, 1957), p.87.

66 R. Williams, The Long Revolution (London, 1971), p.54.

67 D. Beales, From Castlereagh to Gladstone 1815-1885 (Bucks., England, 1971), p.226.

68 E.J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969), Appendix Table 46.

The consumption of meat between 1850 and 1870 rose 10% per head of population.⁶⁹ Cole and Postgate conclude that: "in terms of real wages - that is of purchasing power - for workers in full employment there was a rise above the level of 1850 of 17% in 1865 ... and in 1874-5 of at least one third".⁷⁰ This rise in living standards appeared generally across the country in industrial areas, since textile workers in the North of England also recorded a substantial rise in real wages.⁷¹ There were bad years, such as the 'cotton famine' of 1862-3 brought about by the American Civil war, but broadly, this period is notable for the very real rise in living standards compared to the 1840's.⁷²

Places of entertainment became more readily accessible as transport improved. The penny a mile fare for third class passengers had been introduced on trains in 1844⁷³, and by the 1860's improvements in both comfort and safety had been accompanied by a reduction in fares. Railway excursions became increasingly popular, enabling thousands of Englishmen to spend holidays far away from their places of abode.⁷⁴ However, most people attending entertainments either walked or travelled by horse-tram to theatres, music halls or concerts within their own cities.⁷⁵

It was significant that the streets of London, as well as those of other

69 Cole and Postgate, The Common People 1746-1946 (London, 1968), p.351.

70 Ibid.

71 W.G. Rimmer, Marshalls of Leeds 1788-1886 (Cambridge, 1960), p.371.

72 Clark, op.cit., p.145.

73 J.D. Chambers, The Workshop of the World (Oxford, 1964), p.57.

74 Best, op.cit., pp.222, 223.

75 A. Briggs, Victorian Cities, p.272.

populous cities, were far safer from interference by vagabonds and thieves during the second half of the century than they had been in the first.⁷⁶ These general improvements tended to make visits to places of entertainment more attractive.

In the decades immediately prior to the first Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations, musical entertainment provided by theatres existed at three closely related levels. The first of these were the high quality and elaborate operatic productions presented by the big houses - 'Covent Garden', 'Her Majesty's' and 'Drury Lane'. The majority of works listed on the programmes of these operas were Italian, and then German and French.⁷⁷ What little English opera there was, was produced most often at Drury Lane.⁷⁸ The attempt to build a Grand National Opera House in 1875 failed disastrously.⁷⁹ For the presentation of grand opera at these houses, little expense was spared in engaging the finest singers and providing costumes and sets of the highest standard.⁸⁰ Ticket prices were high, which tended to make the performances exclusive. Grand Opera in London continued a tradition established in the 18th century of specialising in Italian operas, a tradition scarcely modified until the twentieth century.⁸¹ Unlike some Continental opera houses, notably

76 J.J. Tobias, Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972), pp.219-225.

77 Frank Howes, The English Musical Renaissance (London, 1966), pp.43, 68, 69.

78 E.W. White, The Rise of English Opera (London, 1951), p.110.

79 Ibid., p.111.

80 H. Rosenthal, Opera at Covent Garden (London, 1967), p.3. Rosenthal's book is one of the most useful in analysing and assessing productions staged at Covent Garden in this period and should be consulted for further information.

81 Ibid.

Bayreuth, the London Opera-houses were restricted by a tradition of conservatism which made them reluctant to promote new developments in music.

On the opposite extreme, the music-hall developed from the Public House, which workingmen frequented increasingly after the middle of the century in search of some form of diversion. "The music-halls ..." writes Geoffrey Best, "... were part of the mid-Victorian city's leisure apparatus and that apparatus had plenty of low and primitive tastes to cater for".⁸² The warmth and comparative comfort of the music hall proved an attraction when living conditions at home were poor. A contemporary wrote:

Alas for our working friend! he thinks one moment of his unetched home; he gazes the next on the brilliant palace: at one instance Conscience tells him to be a man; the next his companions laugh at his scruples.⁸³

The music-halls were condemned by some as having a detrimental influence upon those who attended since they offered "frequent musical entertainments of a low and immoral character", as another contemporary, T.W. Marshall wrote, "for which performers are in great demand",⁸⁴ but in fact they were part of the continuing folk-music tradition, which Mackerness argues that:

The music-hall lyrics were the legitimate successors to the ballads ... discussed earlier and reflect with considerable accuracy the ways of life of those accustomed to go out of an evening.⁸⁵

82 Best, op.cit., p.237.

83 Viscount Ingestre (ed.), Meliora, Second Edition (London, 1853), p.93.

84 T.W. Marshall, 'General Report on Roman Catholic Schools in Great Britain', quoted in Mackerness, op.cit., p.146.

85 Ibid., pp.146-147.

By the 1860's, a large number of people were becoming increasingly accustomed to going out, and the number of music-halls throughout the country rose rapidly. Geoffrey Best notes:

Its songs were the pop songs of the day, their topics could be highly topical ... And it must be judged popular on account of numbers too ... The specialist newspapers' enumeration of music-halls in 1868 says there were twenty-nine of the larger, ten of the smaller, sort in London; ten in Sheffield, nine in Birmingham, eight in Manchester and Leeds; over the United Kingdom as a whole, excluding the London ones, about three hundred.⁸⁶

If authorities in Victorian England frowned on the music-halls, they looked a little more benevolently upon the third level, that of the Burlesque House or Opera Bouffe. This offered a more formal type of entertainment where two or three light musical works would be performed on stage by a regular cast, and where tickets sold at more than the 6d. entrance fee charged by music-halls.⁸⁷ Typical of these burlesques were German Reed's 'Illustrations', which were short dramatic sketches set to music, and whose texts, although often weak, made a conscious effort "to accommodate the tastes of parents who had doubts about the propriety of taking young people to the theatre".⁸⁸ A conscious effort was made by burlesque houses to dispel any hint of the unsavoury reputation that had surrounded the theatre since the eighteenth century.⁸⁹ However, as the burlesque house strove to acquire respectability, it lost in quality and those sketches performed, came to rely heavily on

⁸⁶ Best, op.cit., p.237.

⁸⁷ Mackerness, op.cit., p.185.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Best, op.cit., p.238.

puns and contrived jokes during the 1860's.⁹⁰ Entertainers such as Corney Grain and John Parry acquired considerable popular esteem during this period and appeared at a number of different burlesque houses.⁹¹ However, these 'Illustrations', as they were known, suffered from two serious weaknesses: they failed to sustain a continued season for more than a few nights for each work; and they failed to earn favourable mention from the rising number of musical critics, who staunchly reflected the extreme moral attitudes expressed by such authorities as Haweis, Hickson and Barrett. Indeed, most of the leading newspapers, whilst they advertised the works performed, steadfastly refused to condescend to a serious review, whilst of the smaller circulation theatrical journals, the 'Tomahawk' was most hostile, noting: "Nothing more pitiable can be imagined than these attempts to transplant in England that which flourishes in France".⁹²

It was burlesque opera that Gilbert and Sullivan took as a model for establishing their series of comic operas. Gilbert, Carte and Sullivan are the best known and most influential entertainment team to emerge in the second half of the century, but they were not the only team of consumer-composers. The consumer-composer differed from the commissioned composer since he produced musical entertainments for the newly expanded market in popular music. Unlike the composers earlier in the century, who had written works commissioned for performance before a smaller upper-class audience, the consumer-composer took advantage of

90 Ibid., p.239.

91 L. Baily, The Gilbert and Sullivan Book (London, 1956), p.92.

92 'The Tomahawk', 24 August, 1867.

the growth of choral societies, the mass-production of pianofortes and the rising number of lower-class folk attending entertainments from the 'Pops' to the burlesque house, to supply this new demand for a variety of popular music.

The nearest rival in popularity to the Gilbert and Sullivan light operas was Alfred Cellier's 'Dorothy', first performed in 1886 and which ran for a record nine hundred and thirty-one performances at the Gaiety Theatre.⁹³ However, George Bernard Shaw, musical critic of the 'Star' after 1888, considered 'Dorothy' inferior to any of the Gilbert and Sullivan works because:

the book of 'Dorothy' was not only silly, but stupid ... On the other hand, the music of 'Dorothy' was pretty, and had a certain elegance and technical finish.⁹⁴

Many composers such as Cellier (1844-91) and Edward German (1862-1936) and librettists such as Grundy and F.C. Burnand (1836-1917) and theatre companies such as the Moody-Manners and Carl Rosa companies produced highly popular light operas, lacking the team-work of the Savoy enterprises, they all failed to produce a series of such works. Gilbert and Sullivan wrote fourteen popular light operas between 1871 and 1896, and it was the continued success of this entertainment team that above all else distinguished them from their rivals.

Gilbert and Sullivan wrote works that were specifically designed

93 Baily, op.cit., p.310.

94 G.B. Shaw, London Music 1888-1889 As Heard By Corno De Bassetto (London, 1950), p.368.

to amuse a middle-class audience.⁹⁵ However, these works were not exclusive, since ticket prices ranged from 1/- upwards. It had been the custom since the 1850's for theatrical managers as well as publishers of newspapers⁹⁶ to attempt to capture a mass market. Geoffrey Best considers that this was a new phenomenon:

Theatres, we know, might be patronised by all classes; their accommodation and prices were often expressly designed to that end, and pit and gallery had long brought the mob close to the classics.⁹⁷

The Savoy operas might have been designed for the bourgeoisie, but they were available to most people.

The emergence of a common-culture became apparent with the attempts made in the middle of the century to direct the cultural interests of the lower-classes. The sectional interests of other classes - such as working-class industrial folk song or the bourgeois cultivation of the pianoforte merged when people attended entertainments, such as the 'Pops' or the music-hall and burlesque house. The big opera houses continued to be exclusive, largely because of the cost of tickets, and it was the light opera houses that became centres of a shared cultural interest. This increasing tendency for all classes in society to share a culture in common was a consequence of the changing political and social structure of nineteenth century Britain.⁹⁸ The broadening of political liberties

95 I am indebted to Albert Truelove of the Savoy theatre for this information, given in a bibliographical interview.

96 Raymond Williams, The Long Revolution, p.57.
Williams notes: "This decade brought crucial developments in the commercial exploitation of culture".

97 Best, op.cit., p.221.

98 R. Williams, Culture & Society, pp.288-9.

facilitated the participation of all classes in the selection of culture.⁹⁹ However, this process of selection was further affected by both the middle class providing cultural material for the masses, and by a popular desire by many of the lower classes to imitate their social superiors.¹⁰⁰ It was this cross-fertilization of cultural interests between classes that rendered it impossible for one class to isolate itself in its recreational and entertainment interests from another class.¹⁰¹ The percentage of working people attending the Savoy operas is not known, however, they formed a vital part of the audience since it was they, who by coming night after night accounted for the long seasons.

The second half of the century witnessed a fusing of many features of working class, bourgeois and upper-class cultures. Industrial folk music provided a background of popular songs for the music-halls, whilst the middle class cultivation of the pianoforte created a new market for lighter musical compositions. The sponsorship by groups within society of choral festivals, of musical education and of popular concerts, served to bring the masses closer to sharing in a culture formerly the preserve of the well-to-do. This sponsorship also demonstrated to entrepreneurs the financial opportunities available for exploiting the new mass market that had emerged as living standards rose. Nevertheless, the logic behind this sponsorship - using the arts to rescue the masses from moral decadence - placed a tremendous responsibility upon musicians and providers of musical entertainment in a country that considered itself

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.318.

¹⁰⁰ J.H. Bulkley, The Victorian Temper (Cambridge, 1951), p.131.

¹⁰¹ Best, op.cit., pp.221-222.

unmusical. As a composer, Sullivan was sympathetic to this didactic mood of thinking. He therefore wrote light operas for the London theatre, and choral compositions for the festival choirs in the North of England. It is a peculiar feature of cultural development that as social attitudes to music changed, those works that were a product of these attitudes - described by one authority¹⁰² as Sullivan's 'serious' music - soon lost public favour. This side to Sullivan's artistic career warrants a special consideration because it exemplifies the contrast between Sullivan, the consumer-composer of light opera, and Sullivan the commissioned composer of serious music.

102 P. Young, Sir Arthur Sullivan (London, 1971), p.231.

PART II

SULLIVAN AS COMPOSER.

CHAPTER 2.

'Response to Demand: Sullivan's choice of idiom'.

"It is my opinion", wrote a youthful and ambitious Arthur Sullivan in 1861, "music as an art in England will go to the very devil soon if some few enthusiastic practical and capable young educated musicians do not take it to hand".¹ During his lifetime, Sullivan became certainly the most popular and probably the best loved composer to be born in the British Isles since Purcell. He acquired this position of popularity because of the broad appeal of his music.

Sullivan's compositions can be divided conveniently into two categories, the first being the light operas, and the second, the considerable quantity of attractive choral, domestic and orchestral music that he composed. The motivation for the composition of these latter works was a combination of both his youthful ambition and a recurrent desire to establish himself as a major composer in a society whose attitudes towards music were rigid and conservative.

Sullivan first studied at the Royal Academy of Music under Goss and Bennett, where he acquired a thorough grounding in Harmony and Church music,² acquiring proficiency not merely in keyboard, but in woodwind and strings.³ In 1858 he was one of the few English-born composers to win a Mendelssohn scholarship enabling him to continue his studies in

1 Arthur Sullivan, letter quoted in A. Lawrence, Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan (London, 1899), p.44.

2 B. Rainbow, The Choral Revival in the Anglican Church 1839-72 (London, 1970), p.78.

As a boy Sullivan was a chorister at the Chapel Royal under Thomas Helmore.

3 P. Young, Sir Arthur Sullivan (London, 1971), p.15.

Leipzig, the musical capital of Europe. Here, Sullivan's talents as a composer were developed. His style was strongly influenced by the styles of Schumann and Mendelssohn because in Leipzig, it was these two composers who had established the criterion by which new compositions were assessed.⁴ Sullivan became a musical disciple of Schumann, and reflected the influences of both musicians throughout his career.

Amongst those teaching at Leipzig during Sullivan's sojourn at that centre of culture, were Moschelles, Louis Plaidy, Hans Von Bulow and Richter, amongst the more conservative, whilst Listz and Karl Brendel represented a new element of modernity.⁵ Most of these musicians were not only highly praised in England, but as frequent visitors, had particular influence in that country. However, it was the more conservative tutors that had the greatest effect on Sullivan, especially Schumann who was considered the acme of modernity in 1859 by most of Sullivan's English contemporaries.⁶ Nevertheless, Sullivan was keen to borrow ideas from other contemporaries which he put to good effect in his harmony and orchestration. "He absorbed all he heard or read," writes Gervasse Hughes, "and although contemporary music did not much attract him, he was not above taking a few hints from Wagner and Parry when it suited his purpose".⁷ Thus Sullivan's harmonic style always bore the stamp of his tutors, whilst itself never achieving a special individuality.⁸

4 Ibid., p.18.

5 Ibid., pp.17-20.

6 Ibid., p.32.

7 Gervasse Hughes, The Music of Arthur Sullivan (New York, 1960), p.44.

8 Ibid.

For the last thirty years of his life, Sullivan enjoyed the support of the foremost names in Victorian music. It was, for example, the musicologist, Sir George Grove who assisted Sullivan in producing his music to 'The Tempest' in 1862. This work was warmly acclaimed by both the 'Times'⁹ and the 'Manchester Guardian'.¹⁰ The conductor Michael Costa produced Sullivan's first and only ballet 'L' Ile Enchantee' on May 16, 1864. This piece was less successful,¹¹ and Costa himself complained of Sullivan's lack of commitment.¹² Four years later, Sir John Goss wrote to Sullivan, commenting upon the young composer's new oratorio, 'Jephtha':

Some day I hope you will try at another oratorio, putting all your strength - not the strength of a few weeks or months ... Don't do anything so pretentious as an oratorio or even a Symphony without all your power, which seldom comes in one fit.¹³

When composing, Sullivan's custom was to work hastily, often working all through the night.¹⁴ Thus many of his works - including the Savoy operas - exposed the limitations of the composer who too frequently was satisfied with a composition that might well have been improved by further revision.

In his biography of Sir Arthur Sullivan, Percy Young has considered how the adverse musical climate of Victorian England affected and restricted the opportunities available to the composer.¹⁵ Sullivan

⁹ 'Times', 7th April 1862.

¹⁰ Manchester Guardian, 7th April 1862.

¹¹ Young, op.cit., pp.34-35.

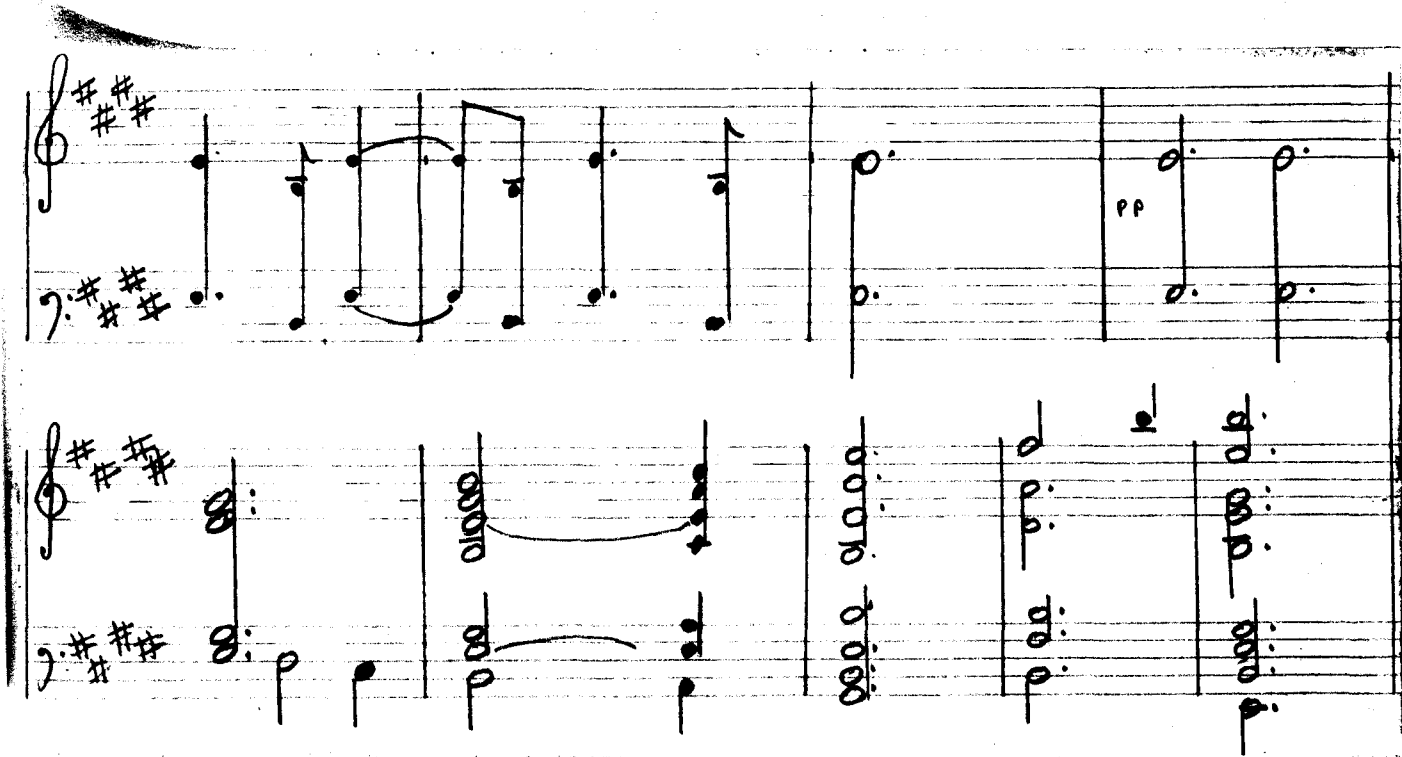
¹² C.V. Stanford, Interludes (London, 1924), p.34.

¹³ John Goss, Letter to Arthur Sullivan, quoted in Young, op.cit., p.61.

¹⁴ Hughes, op.cit., pp.42-43.

¹⁵ Young, op.cit., pp.81-83 and p.167.

was restricted by the conservatism of the concert-going public in the type of work he composed. Major orchestral compositions, such as symphonies and concertos simply would not sell.¹⁶ The field of symphonic composition was dominated by European composers¹⁷ - for example Brahms - whose works invariably enjoyed greater popularity in England than those works by English composers, such as Sterndale Bennett or Pierson. Nevertheless, Sullivan did experiment with the idiom of orchestral music, producing a symphony, a concerto for 'Cello and a concert overture in 1866. The 'Irish Symphony', as it became known, revealed Sullivan as a particularly skilled and imaginative young composer. The symphony opened with a solemn introduction for brass:



¹⁶ Ibid., p.60.

¹⁷ Frank Howes, The English Musical Renaissance (London, 1966), pp.32,33.

The critic of the 'Musical Standard' was most impressed with this working:

The orchestration is very beautiful; like a skilled colourist our composer has handled his lights and shadows tenderly, and while we are not stunned by incessant blair, bright tints are not wanting when they can lend charm.¹⁸

The 'Times' was less enthusiastic in its description, and anticipated Sullivan's production of a second symphony.¹⁹ When Sullivan's 'Cello concerto was produced later in the year, the critics were already commenting upon certain recognisable features and individual qualities to be found in the music of the 24 year old composer. However, Sullivan was to produce no more concertos or symphonies, his orchestral music henceforth was limited to a few marches and overtures.²⁰

Although the critics may have welcomed Sullivan's larger compositions for orchestra, the problem lay with the fact that symphonies and concertos - particularly those by an English composer²¹ - failed to attract a continuous attendance by an audience.²² When Sullivan produced the first of his light operas - 'Cox and Box' and the 'Contrabandista' - it became at once apparent that a work which would attract an audience for thirty or forty nights, and which was easier to write than either a symphony or a concerto, was also more financially rewarding. The composition of a major orchestral work would reap its return for the composer only after publication and performance over a number of years.

18 'Musical Standard', Vol. V, No. 122, December 1866.

19 'The Times', 12th April 1866.

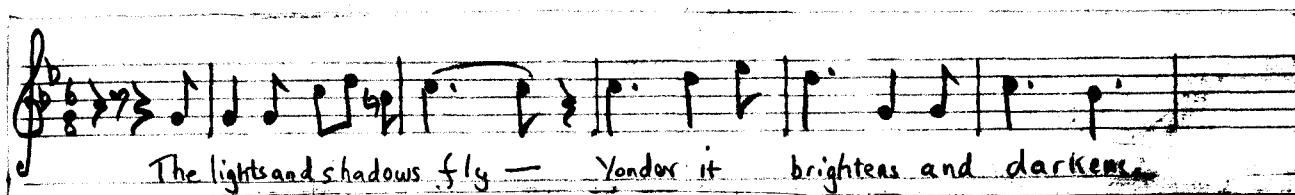
20 Young, op.cit., Appendix I, p.272.

21 Ibid., pp.159-60.

22 Ibid., p.40.

The 'Irish Symphony' was not published until 1915.²³ Commercial factors, as well as competition from European symphonists, were influencing Sullivan's choice of musical form.

Sullivan's search for an idiom was further directed by the preferences of a public that developed a marked predilection for domestic music.²⁴ A widening market for songs, lighter pianoforte compositions and simple works that might be performed in a middle class drawing-room emerged.²⁵ Sullivan published well over one hundred songs and a smaller number of piano compositions for this market. One of his more popular works was his arrangement of Tennyson's song cycle, 'The Window'.²⁶ The first song opened with an undulating melody in C minor, reminiscent of Schumann:



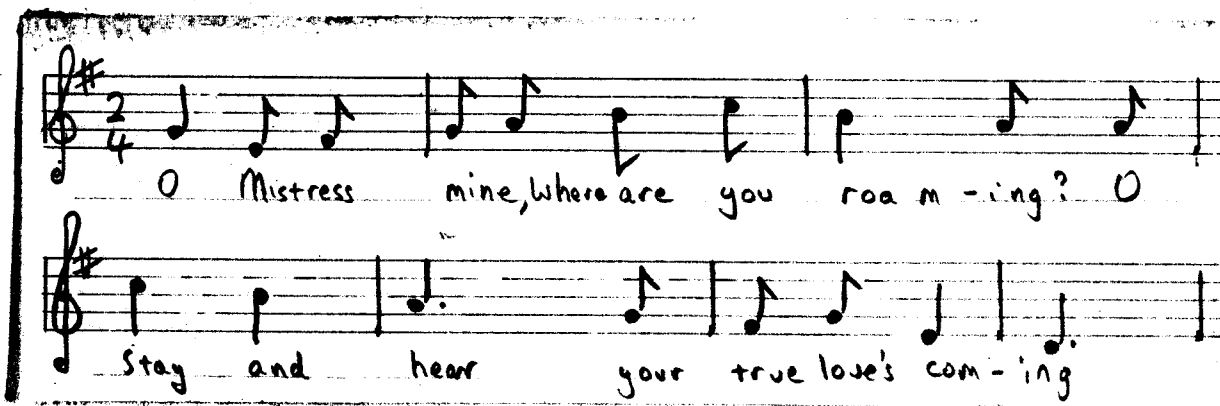
Sullivan was also most impressed by music of the Elizabethan era, and certain of his songs possessed a quality reminiscent of the madrigal. A fine example was Sullivan's setting of the madrigal by Thomas Morley,

23 The work was then published posthumously by Norello and Company.

24 Chapter 1, pp.26,27.

25 Young, *op.cit.*, p.74.

26 'The Window', published by Strahan in 1871.

'O Mistress Mine':²⁷

Many of these songs and hymns - such as 'Lead, Kindly Light'²⁸ and the arrangement of the carol 'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear'²⁹ were very popular in the last century.

Sullivan's reputation as a serious composer lay largely upon his success in providing new choral music for the festival choirs.

'The Prodigal Son', Sullivan's first oratorio - was written for the Gloucester Festival in 1868. This work was more studied than inspired, echoing Handel in its chorus parts.³⁰ In 1873, the 'Light of the World', another oratorio, dedicated to the Duchess of Edinburgh, was produced at the Birmingham Festival before a most enthusiastic audience amongst whom was the Duke of Edinburgh.³¹ This work was described by Queen Victoria as "destined to uplift British music."³² It is doubtful if it did, but Sullivan, a personal friend of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh,

27 'O Mistress Mine' and other songs, published by Metzler in 1865.

28 'Lead, Kindly Light', published by Boosey in 1871.

29 'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear', published by Boosey in 1871.

30 Young, *op.cit.*, p.90.

31 *Ibid.*, p.98.

32 L. Baily, The Gilbert and Sullivan Book (London, 1956), p.117.

relished royal flattery. The oratorio was later performed in Manchester, where a testimonial of 200 pounds was subscribed by leading citizens who realised the comparatively low financial remuneration on such works for the composer, but were anxious to encourage the young musician.³³ This, coupled with a contract from Cramers for publishing the work, earned Sullivan over 500 pounds.³⁴

Sullivan's relationship with the festivals of the north of England was firmly established when, on October 15th, 1880, 'The Martyr of Antioch' was produced for the Leeds Festival. The work, described by the composer as a 'Musical Drama', depicted a conflict between the reality of heathendom, and the idealism of Christianity.³⁵ The most appealing part of the work, the chorus 'Brother thou art gone before us' was later performed at Sullivan's funeral. In October of 1880, the work was repeated at the Norwich festival, and was praised by the critic of the Academy Review.

On Wednesday morning came the performance of the 'Martyr of Antioch', conducted by the composer ... the pleasing orchestration combined to render the work an honourable specimen of English art.³⁶

By 1880, Sullivan was probably the most admired of all English composers. However, it was Parry who became the leading composer of choral music in this period. During the 1880's Sullivan became increasingly attracted by the financial rewards of the Savoy theatre. This ultimately earned him

33 Young, *op.cit.*, pp.98, 99.

34 *Ibid.*, p.99.

35 *Ibid.*, p.218.

36 *Academy Review*, No. 494, 22nd October 1880, p.319.

a reputation as a composer of primarily light opera.

Sullivan's most ambitious venture in choral music was the 'Golden Legend', commissioned for the Leeds festival of 1886. The composer had hoped that this work might, at one stroke win him the reputation he desired, and counterbalance his reputation as a composer of light opera. The 'Golden Legend' was a fine work, containing excellent chorus sections. It also contained some of Sullivan's most inspired string writing:

Tenor

In to the pallid realms of Sleep — Rest. Rest. O give me rest.

The cantata was the climax to the festival and received warm praise from the provincial critics. The 'Leeds Mercury' wrote:

Sir Arthur Sullivan has the ear of the public whether he writes oratorios, cantatas, comic operas, or songs ... English amateurs believe in him and are prepared to take his music upon trust, that when a first performance is announced, they do not wait to hear what the critics or anybody else has to say about it.³⁷

³⁷ 'Leeds Mercury', 18 October 1886.

The 'Yorkshire Post' was equally enthusiastic, concluding "'The Golden Legend' would command an attendance ..."³⁸ The London press was a little more subdued; 'The Times' noted condescendingly, "It is pleasant for the critic for once to be in full accord with the vox populi ..."³⁹ The 'Morning Post' accepted the opinion of the audience concluding "the unanimous verdict of the audience stamped the 'Golden Legend' as the work of the week."⁴⁰ whilst the critic of the 'Daily Telegraph' noted warmly "a greater, more legitimate and undoubted triumph has not been achieved in my experience ..."⁴¹

Later the 'Golden Legend' was produced in London, where once more it was acclaimed by critics and supported by the public, a total audience of 10,000 coming to hear the work.⁴² However, this enthusiasm was transitory; when the work was revived a decade later, it received a cool response. The critic of the 'Saturday Review', J.S. Shedlock analysed the music, noting that the "orchestration ... is safe, academic; his melodies are devoid of real vitality and savour, his declamation is common place."⁴³ It became a feature of Sullivan's 'serious' compositions, that after initial enthusiasm, popular interest generally waned. Shedlock's judgement, however, was more guided by a contempt for Sullivan's involvement with light opera:

38 'Yorkshire Post', 18 October 1886.

39 'The Times', 18 October 1886.

40 'Morning Post', 18 October 1886.

41 'Daily Telegraph', 18 October 1886.

42 Baily, *op.cit.*, p.312.

43 'Saturday Review', 26 January 1895.

Let us rejoice in the Savoy entertainments,
but let us stand out against the bourgeoisie
when the entertainers try their hands at higher
matters.⁴⁴

According to many critics, Sullivan could be either a composer of popular light opera or of more serious choral and orchestral compositions - not both.

This tendency to recognise Sullivan more as a composer of light opera - particularly apparent in London - affected public attitudes towards the production of 'Ivanhoe', Sullivan's only grand opera. The opera has been described by Percy Young as "one of the biggest non-events in the history of music."⁴⁵ No expense was spared for its presentation; D'Oyly Carte, fully conscious of Sullivan's disillusionment with light opera,⁴⁶ hoped that this English grand opera might prove as financially rewarding as the Savoy operas had been, but also, he hoped he might, at one stroke, create a popular interest in English grand opera.⁴⁷ A new opera house was constructed, one of the finest casts available assembled,⁴⁸ and Carte excelled himself in providing costumes and scenery for the presentation.⁴⁹ Francois Cellier was engaged as musical director, and Julian Sturgis as librettist. Although Sturgis' text has been criticised for its dramatic weakness,⁵⁰ Nigel Burton, writing in 'Music and Musicians' has argued that Sir

44 Ibid.

45 Young, op.cit., p.232.

46 Sullivan and Flower, 'Sir Arthur Sullivan - His Life, Letters and Diaries' (London, 1950), p.140.

47 Young, op.cit., p.232.

48 Baily, op.cit., p.358.

49 'Times', 23rd November 1900.

50 Young, op.cit., p.243.

Walter Scott's romantic novel was an unfortunate choice, since it was unsuited to operatic presentation, and that any weaknesses lay in the plot rather than the libretto.⁵¹

Most critics, long accustomed to reviewing the Savoy operas, wished the work success. Success was measured by the same criterion as light opera - by the number of consecutive performances. The 'Academy', describing the music as 'Sullivan-esque', concluded; "it must be regarded as a work of great skill and beauty"⁵² - The 'Saturday Review' found qualities in the work common to the light operas, noting "The composer's gift for humour finds scope in the part he has written for the Friar ... Sir Arthur's ability in this direction is well known."⁵³ In a lengthy and analytical review, the 'Athenaeum' believed Sullivan had broken free from the limitations of popular demand:

His comic operas, charming as they are, must necessarily be ephemeral and ... have to be written down to the capacities of the company and the tastes of that large section of the public which prefers light musical entertainment. In the present instance, he was bound by no such limitations but was free to employ his powers to the fullest extent ...⁵⁴

Yet Sullivan did not exercise this freedom. The music was lyrical and the orchestration evocative:

51 Nigel Burton, 'Grand Opera Without Gilbert', Music and Musicians May 1973, p.24.

52 'The Academy', 7th February 1891.

53 'The Saturday Review', 7th February 1891.

54 'The Athenaeum', 7th February 1891.

The wind blows cold across the moor

Str.

Fl. Ob.

pizz.

but, nevertheless, it generally tended to be more academic than spontaneous, and Nigel Burton has written:

Sullivan ... arrived at a quasi-Wagnerian synthesis in which the divergent elements of his musical personality were emulsified, and the music gained in consistency, but lost in individuality. ⁵⁵

Indeed, the comparative conservativeness of the music was commented upon by the 'Times', which wrote:

The general structure of the work is a curious example of transition between two opposing systems, each of which, in its own day, has produced masterpieces of undoubted supremacy ... the unmistakable influence of Berlioz and, to a lesser degree, Wagner upon orchestration and treatment of themes ... contrasts with a series of numbers, which require slightly more conventional development to rank with the set pieces of old-fashioned opera. ⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Burton, op.cit., p.24.

⁵⁶ 'Times', 7th February 1891.

Technically, Sullivan tended to be rather old-fashioned, and even if the work had enjoyed a most extensive first season, it is questionable whether 'Ivanhoe' would have been selected as part of a living culture during the twentieth century.⁵⁷

'Ivanhoe', however, did not enjoy a long run. It was withdrawn after 155 performances: this was an all-time record for an English grand opera,⁵⁸ but was modest compared to the Savoy operas. More importantly, it failed to cover the financial costs incurred.⁵⁹ George Bernard Shaw expressed disappointment at the withdrawal of the work:

Failure means simply failure to replace the expended capital with a fair profit to boot in a single run ... The fact is, there is no grand opera in the world which will run long enough in one capital to pay for a complete and splendid mise-en-scene ...⁶⁰

However, Carte was a businessman and had anticipated a similar financial return, as the Savoy operas had brought; economic factors were now increasingly powerful in the selection of culture.

Sullivan's public image rested upon his co-partnership with Gilbert. In producing 'Ivanhoe', he had acted out of character, and this had confused the expectations of the audience. Furthermore, this audience was quite unaccustomed to what English grand opera really was. Sullivan

57 'Ivanhoe' was most conservative when compared to Debussy's 'Pelleas and Melisande', produced in 1902 or Strauss's 'Salome' of 1905 or 'Elektra', 1909.

58 Baily, op.cit., p.359.

59 In consequence, Carte cancelled his commissions from Cowen and Parry for a sequel to 'Ivanhoe', and sold the theatre.

60 G.B. Shaw, Music in London, Vol. III (London, 1949), p.23.

had acted as a pioneer, but at a late stage in his life; he was nearly fifty when 'Ivanhoe' was commissioned. Disillusioned after the relative failure of his grand opera, he realised his image was indelibly connected with the Savoy theatre. He wrote to a friend: "a cobbler should stick to his last."⁶¹ The composer thereafter produced no more 'serious' works neither oratorio nor grand opera. The fall from popularity of his 'serious' music was dramatic - a newspaper in Wolverhampton in 1901 wrote on the anniversary of Sullivan's death that as far as his orchestral and choral works went he had "become a composer of the past."⁶²

Sir Arthur Sullivan was very much a composer of his time. The choice of music he wrote, as well as his style as a composer reveal a peculiarly strong identity with Victorian attitudes towards music. But this is not to say that Sullivan was unoriginal - features of his music, such as his gift for melody, reveal a genius of spontaneity and originality, which properly and thoroughly exploited might have earned Sullivan the reputation of being a composer of 'serious' music, for which he so desperately yearned. Instead, the dichotomy between his Savoy operas and his other compositions, which soon fell from public favour, graphically reflected the changing pattern of cultural selection. It was Sullivan's exploitation of the new market for light opera that established him as a consumer-composer, producing music of a specific type for a specific market. An analysis of this music reveals a special affinity between composer and librettist.

61 Letter by Arthur Sullivan quoted in H. Pearson, Gilbert and Sullivan (London, 1950), p.169.

62 Young, op.cit., p.265.
Newspaper article quoted.

CHAPTER 3.

'The Savoy Opera: the music and its appeal'.

"Naturally, I should prefer to please serious musicians", wrote a frustrated Sullivan in 1888, "but one must consider the general public".¹ Sullivan was a consumer-composer, bound by public demand to produce a specific type of entertainment. In this, he was highly successful. But what specific musical qualities in the operas enabled him to acquire such popularity? Gervasse Hughes has argued that: "the popularity of Sullivan's music is above all else due to the memorable quality of his tunes."² The simple, yet appealing melodies proved most popular with the musically inexperienced members of the audience, whilst also being admired for their charm by the more sophisticated listener. Yet Sullivan's success depended upon more than attractive tunes. In order to succeed as a consumer-composer, Sullivan needed not only to attract the newly emerged lower-class audiences, but he had the equally difficult task of satisfying fellow professional musicians and critics. Furthermore, he needed to convince a society that viewed sceptically compositions by Englishmen that the works he was producing were not only worthwhile compositions technically, but were also improvements upon other forms of light entertainment. In this Sullivan succeeded. However, only by a thorough analysis of these

1 Sir Arthur Sullivan, interview in 'Home News', quoted in R. Allen 'First Night Gilbert and Sullivan' (New York, 1958), p.344.

2 Gervasse Hughes, The Music of Arthur Sullivan (New York, 1959), p.119.

technical qualities can the real basis of Sullivan's universal popularity be assessed.

Those light operas composed after 'Penzance' came to fit a clearly recognisable pattern. Unlike earlier opera bouffe, the works filled the entire programme and the familiarity of structure appealed to an audience that became accustomed to regularly attending the Savoy Theatre. The 'Gondoliers' was a typical example of a Gilbert and Sullivan light opera and fell into a pattern familiar to Savoy audiences. The work opened with a boisterous three-section overture, the first part, in G major, leading to a passage in B major,³ thence through colourful modulations to F major, returning to the original key before finally modulating to the minor.⁴ The second section was slower than the first, leading to a conclusion, after a further change in time, and this time of a faster tempo.⁵ As the curtain rose, a chorus of Contadine and Gondoliers sang 'List and Learn', the syncopated accented rhythm⁶ emphasising the final word of the opening phrase, and leading smoothly into the body of the opera.

An opening chorus was a common feature of the Savoy operas, presenting not merely a powerful opening to an audience which might not have settled, but also the colourful spectacle of a stage full of activity.

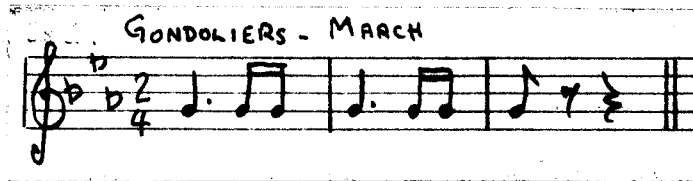
3 Appendix II, Ex.1.

4 Ibid., bar 100.

5 Sullivan changes from $\frac{3}{4}$ back to common time.

6 The first two words come with the last two beats of the bar in $\frac{6}{8}$ time.

The chorus was followed by a march:



the mock heroic music here anticipating the entry of the mock-hero, The Duke of Plaza Toro. A little later, another familiar feature appears, the 'tragic' love aria, this time sung by Casilda:



in a parody of the sentimental ballad then in vogue. The first act ended with a boisterous quartet between Marco, Guiseppe and their wives, sung for the most part in octaves, with both words and music creating an atmosphere of mild anticipation.

The second act also opened with a chorus, but this time for tenors and basses only. Guiseppe's song, enumerating the duties and obligations of a monarch, was followed by his philandering brother's song 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes',⁷ a musical climax to the work and a fine parody of the traditionally florid Italian love song.⁸ Another grand march heralded the arrival of the Duke and Duchess, the chorus singing 'With ducal pomp and ducal pride'.⁹ The unison octaves here

7 Appendix II, Ex.2.

8 G. Hughes, The Music of Arthur Sullivan (New York, 1959), p.148.

9 Appendix II, Ex.3.

emphasised the rhythmical opening of this march. This was followed by an aria and then a duet between the Duke and Duchess. In the middle of this act came a dance. Audiences expected a dance of some form in the light operas, this feature being most popular in Victorian vaudeville. Dances occurred in other Gilbert and Sullivan operas, for example in 'Patience', 'Iolanthe', 'Mikado', 'Sorcerer', as well as in 'Gondoliers'. In style, however, this dance - a 'cachucha' - was hardly Italian, despite its rapid tempo, gaining its Latin mood more from its collection of Italian phrases and its impact as a visual display. A second dance followed towards the end of the opera, where, in a stately gavotte, the Duke attempted to instruct the two gondolieri in the subtleties of court etiquette.¹⁰ Here the music was far more effective, Sullivan excelling himself in capturing something of an eighteenth century flavour, giving vigour to this inspired musical satire of aristocratic elegance. This appealed directly to members of the audience familiar with the conventions of grand opera. The 'Gondoliers' concluded with a quintet and a spirited finale, forming a good-humoured ending to the work. The only opera in the series to end in a note of tragedy was 'Yeomen of the Guard', which was something of an exception to the series.¹¹

All of the operas, excepting the single act 'Trial by Jury' and the

¹⁰ Ibid., Ex.4.

¹¹ Robert Hall, 'Satire of Yeomen of the Guard', Modern Language Notes, LXXIII (November 1958), pp.492-7.

three act 'Princess Ida' divided, like 'Gondoliers', into a two-act scheme, the opening of each, being introduced by a chorus, and concluded with a group or small chorus. Sullivan's more melodically appealing compositions, such as 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes', could occur practically anywhere in the operas. The music to each opera was original, seldom being repeated in any other opera,¹² although ideas from unpublished operas might sometimes be refurbished. The music, however, came to sound familiar because of Sullivan's easily recognised qualities which permeated each work.

It was Sullivan's harmony that tended to make the music sound familiar. The bulk of the audience admired the familiar and easily recognised features of Sullivan's harmony, whilst the more sophisticated listener complained that such familiarity was a weakness, the harmony being conservative and influenced strongly by his teachers and the European mentors of his Leipzig days. According to Frank Howes, Sullivan's early musical training left a serious flaw in the composer's style, this being "the infection of his music by his church training."¹³ This weakness is apparent in an analysis of the harmonic structure of 'The Sorcerer',¹⁴ and in 'Iolanthe',¹⁵ where Sullivan depended heavily upon Tonic pedal point. In the later operas, this tendency towards 'churchiness' became almost cliché, the potential dangers of which

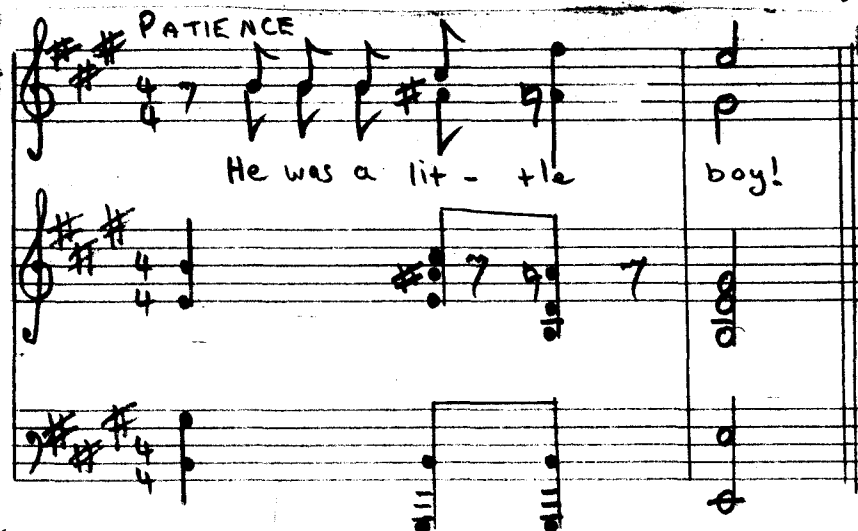
12 There were exceptions. In 'Utopia Ltd.', for example, Captain Corcoran of 'HMS Pinafore' is introduced, his famous 'What Never?' song being repeated.

13 Frank Howes, The English Musical Renaissance (London, 1966), p.54.

14 Appendix II, Ex.5. Opening bars.

15 Ibid., Ex.6. Opening passage in 6/8 .

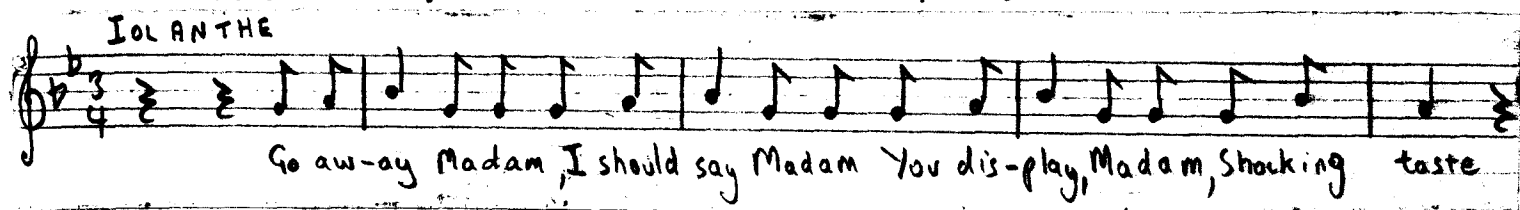
Sullivan was unable to avoid in 'Patience'. The final chord,



far from being dramatic, creates an anti-climax. Generally, Sullivan's harmony tended to be conservative. However, in 'Pinafore', as a climax to the arrival of Sir Joseph Porter, Sullivan indulged in a display of unusually adventurous chromatic harmony. Chromatic colouration was also employed to effect in the dragoons chorus, in 'Patience', where the longer notes, concluding the chorus gave added atmosphere and a touch of humour:

Such displays of chromatic harmony, however, were rare, Sullivan usually preferring a conventional resolution to each chord.

Sullivan's modulation to minor harmony was also infrequent, and his full use of the minor rare. Of the thirteen operas there were only eighteen numbers that concluded in the minor.¹⁶ When the minor mode was used, it was either to create atmosphere, or as in 'Iolanthe'



to emphasise the element of mock-heroic. In this example, the influence of Verdi is detectable. The funeral music from 'Yeomen of the Guard'



was an excellent example of Sullivan's use of expressive music to reinforce atmosphere. After a brief modulation to E^b major, the piece concluded with a tierce de Picardie in the second inversion preceding the full close before the final root position chord. The use of archaic harmonic styles in this instance heightened the mediaeval imagery of the scene. A further fine example of Sullivan's use of the minor to create atmosphere occurred in 'Ruddigore'.¹⁷ Sir Roderick's song followed the awakening of the ghosts of the ancestors of the house of Murgatroyd, who proceeded to step from the frames of their portraits.¹⁸

¹⁶ Hughes, *op.cit.*, p.52.

¹⁷ Appendix II, Ex.7.

¹⁸ A similar illusion to that used by Benjamin Britten in 'Owen Wyngrave'.

The haste indicated by the descending semiquavers created an effective musical illustration of the night wind whistling past the chimney pots on the roof of the old mansion.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Sullivan's utilisation of the minor mode was uncommon, only really being used for musical symbolism. The minor was never used to reflect sadness or human tragedy, except for brief passages of parody, such as occur in 'Mikado' during the impassioned contralto solo 'Oh fool that fleest My hallow'd joys'.²⁰ The emotional possibilities of the minor scale remained unexploited. This, however, was an attraction, since in a comic opera, the audience would have regarded sincerely emotional music as contradictory to the mood of the work.

In modulation from one key to another, Sullivan's harmony revealed certain stylistic weaknesses, which were blatant to the trained listener, and were obvious to all members of the audience who would have considered the overall effect ugly. Fortunately, these weaknesses were infrequent. Sometimes, Sullivan would fail to establish the tonic key clearly in the mind of the listener before modulating. This occurred in 'Ruddigore',²¹ in the 'chorus of bridesmaids', where the opening in E^b major modulated, in the second bar directly into the dominant.²² The opening motif was then repeated a tone lower, and then a leading very swiftly into Subdominant harmony. The whole chorus became clumsy to sing and confusing to hear as the composer moved between keys without fixed tonality.²³ Yet

19 Appendix II, Ex.7.

20 Hughes, *op.cit.*, p.54.

21 Appendix II, Ex.8.

22 Ibid., Bars 2, 3 and 4 in B^b minor.

23 After modulating to A^b major, Sullivan modulated again to D^b major, the subdominant of A^b.

Sullivan enjoyed experimenting with modulations of this type, jumping from one chord to another, and could often turn this to good effect.²⁴ In 'Iolanthe', in the peers chorus 'Paragons of legislation',²⁵ the experiment paid dividends. Here, the modulations were skilfully handled. In 'Mikado', a pronounced dramatic effect was added to Ko Ko's exclamation 'Tis Nanki Poo!'²⁶ by the use of chromatic modulations from D major to A minor and thence to G major. Given care, and painstaking effort, Sullivan was capable of developing interesting and highly original harmony, and where such effort was applied, the results were invariably satisfying to both listener and musician.

In general, Sullivan's orchestration was superior to his harmonisation. The styles of those influencing his early musical development were again obvious.²⁷ Sullivan devoted more attention to the woodwinds than to the other sections of the orchestra, a reflection of Mendelssohn, although the influence of Wagner upon brass scoring was at times recognisable.²⁸ The orchestral accompaniment to the operas took a very positive part in illustrating certain features of behaviour in characters in the operas. In 'Mikado', Ko Ko's shriek was accompanied by descending piccolo, flute and clarinets.²⁹ In 'Ruddigore', the winds further depicted musical characterisation when the flute was used to introduce Mad Margret. This device, of using the flute to indicate insanity was popular with many Romantic composers,

24 For example, the modulation from Tonic to Subdominant occurred seven times in the first half dozen bars of 'Gondoliers'.

25 Appendix II, Ex.9.

26 Ibid., Ex.10.

27 Young, op.cit., p.178.

28 Hughes, op.cit., p.97.

29 Young, op.cit., p.181.

most notably, Berlioz in 'Symphonie Fantastique', and Donizetti in 'Lucia Lammermoor'. The use of the flute in this way, would have been familiar to many listeners in the audience who would have recognised the allusion at once. In 'Ruddigore' the orchestration of the passage 'When the Night Wind Howls'³⁰ heightened the supernatural atmosphere by means of careful scoring of the woodwinds. Sullivan also experimented with his orchestration. Some influence of Berlioz was evident, as early as 1867 in the 'Marmion Overture'³¹ and also later in 'Cox and Box'. One of the finest examples of Sullivan's experiment with Berlioz orchestration and with rhythmic variation occurred in *Iolanthe*:

The musical score is arranged in four systems. The first system is for 'FLUTES AND CLARINETS' and the second for 'BASSOON'. Both are in 2/4 time and feature a series of rests followed by a short melodic phrase. The third system is for 'LORD CHANCELLOR' in 6/8 time, featuring a continuous eighth-note melody. The fourth system is for 'STRINGS' in 6/8 time, featuring a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. A handwritten lyric is written below the Lord Chancellor's part.

FLUTES AND CLARINETS

BASSOON

LORD CHANCELLOR

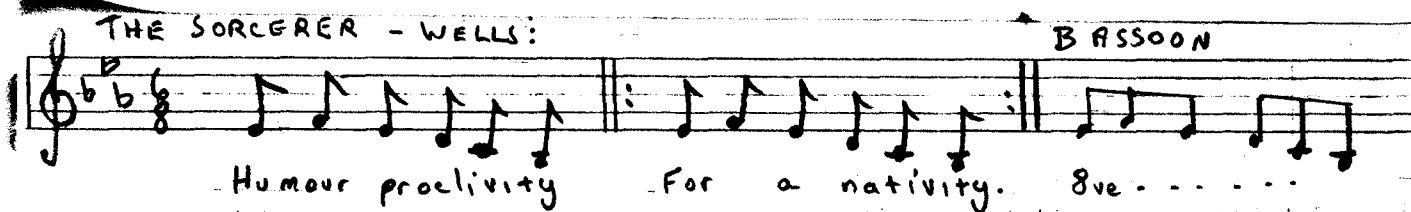
And he and the crew are on bicycles to which they're somehow or other invested in, And he

STRINGS

30 Appendix II, Ex.7.

31 Hughes, op.cit., pp.98, 99.

In this example, strings, solo and bassoon play in $\frac{6}{8}$ time against flutes and clarinets in $\frac{2}{4}$. The off-beat rhythm heightened the sense of excitement whilst simultaneously creating much amusement. Humour could sometimes be created by using the deep gruff notes of the bassoon, such as in the 'Sorcerer',



but, Sullivan generally avoided such comic treatment of the orchestra.³² The subtleties of orchestration would have appealed largely to those members of the audience who possessed a fairly wide background knowledge of European music.

However, the use of brass band instruments in the orchestra was familiar to most people, particularly those lower-class members of the audience who participated in brass band competitions. The inclusion of brass band instruments, such as cornets and saxhorns, which were not a popular choice of European composers, was a recognition by Sullivan of the widening in interest in band music in England. In the second act of the 'Chieftain', an A^b cornet was used,³³ whilst in the 'Contrabandista', a brass saxhorn was used in preference to a trombone.³⁴ Cornets were used in conjunction with the more familiar brass instruments in 'Yeomen'

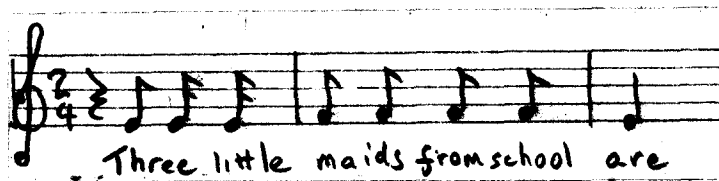
³² Ibid., p.108.

³³ Ibid., p.111.

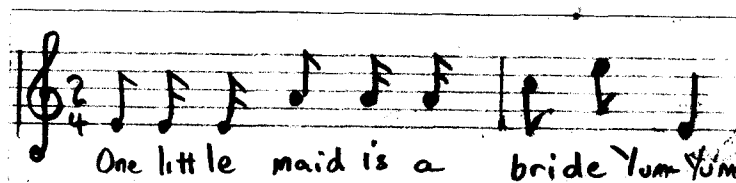
³⁴ Ibid.

B^b cornets supplemented the trombones and replaced the trumpet. Rather than detracting from tonal quality, the inclusion of cornets gave an atmosphere totally lacking if replaced by the more conventional trumpet.

The metre of Gilbert's texts, with its unusual accents, provided Sullivan with the opportunity to compose strongly rhythmical melodies, which became a hallmark of the Savoy enterprises.³⁵ Basically, Sullivan preferred to follow a one-note, one syllable pattern, as occurred in act one of 'Mikado'.



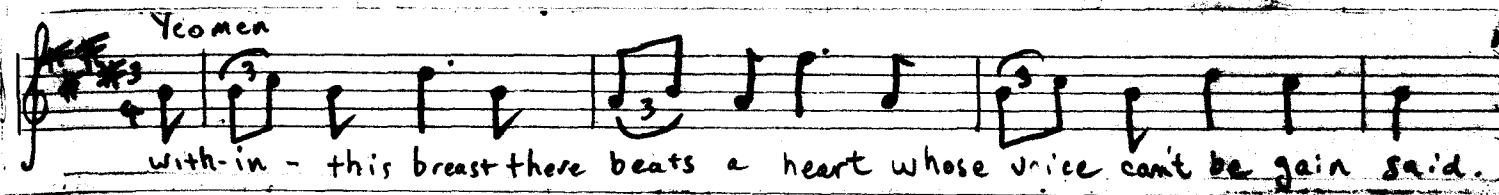
The inherent danger of monotony was circumvented by varying the rhythm, where in the second verse of this example, the accent was shifted from the second beat to the first:



By such imaginative changes in rhythm, Sullivan was able to exploit the implied shift in accent that occurred in the song 'Within this Breast',

³⁵ Young, *op.cit.*, pp.173, 174.

from 'Yeomen of the Guard'.



Rhythmic variation further provided Sullivan with a useful method of parody. Syncopation in 'Gondoliers' was used to imitate Italian dance rhythm.



Indeed, parody, both by means of rhythmic and melodic content, whereby established musical styles might be lampooned, was a special point of force in Sullivan's light operas. But generally, his rhythmic changes leant heavily upon the quality of Gilbert's libretti:

When Sullivan lapsed into rigidity or in-apposite accentation in the operas, it may sometimes have been because Gilbert's words failed to inspire him (...) but we must also remember that when pressed for time - as he often was - he tended to dash down the first thing that came into his head. Sometimes he even used ready-made tunes without any regard for either metre or sense, which account for the astonishing ineptitude of 'Oh happy the lily' ('Ruddigore') and 'Oh sweet surprise' ('Utopia Ltd').³⁶

³⁶ Hughes, *op.cit.*, p.42.

Given Gilbert's later less-inspiring texts, and Sullivan's failing health, circumstances combined to have a urgent effect upon the decline in standard apparent in the last two operas.

The most popular and generally appealing feature in Sullivan's music was his gift for composing memorable tunes.³⁷ This gift for melody was of considerable importance to Sullivan's reputation as a consumer-composer. The 'pitter-patter' rhythms, such as 'The flowers that bloom' from 'Mikado',³⁸ of many of Sullivan's melodies served to make them very popular with the less musically sophisticated members of the audience who would often recall the words by remembering the rhythm of the tune. Sullivan could also compose fine songs, such as 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes'³⁹ from 'Gondoliers' or 'The flowers that bloom' from 'Mikado', where in both songs the $\frac{6}{8}$ metre created tunes of tongue-catching appeal. Sullivan's most popular tunes owed their success to the skill with which a melodic outline was superimposed upon a highly original rhythmic base.⁴⁰ Sullivan's finest songs not only provided pleasure to the listener, but also a considerable challenge to the singer since they often encompassed a wide vocal range and could be technically most complex. Consequently, Sullivan's tunes won the popularity of both the musically trained and the untrained listener.

But as with harmony, so with melody, Sullivan was rarely able to capture any real depth of emotion. One fine exception was 'The

37 Ibid., p.119.

38 Appendix II, Ex.11.

39 Ibid., Ex.2.

40 Hughes, op.cit., p.119.

Merryman and his maid', from 'Yeomen of the Guard'⁴¹ where a distinct element of pathos added a depth of feeling to the lines unsurpassed in any other aria. In this remarkable song, the contrast of long and short notes in bars seventeen to twenty-seven and bars twenty-eight to thirty create a small masterpiece and a highlight to the entire Savoy repertoire. Gervasse Hughes claim is justified that:

When Sullivan wrote what we call a 'good tune', it was nearly always 'good music' as well. Outside of the ranks of the giants there are few other composers of whom the same could be said.⁴²

In 'Iolanthe', Lord Mountararat's anthem 'When Britain really ruled the waves'⁴³ was an impressive example of a Sullivanian ballad. The satire of the text was brilliantly matched by Sullivan's mock-heroic music. The added 'fifth line' necessitated an extension of the song offering a challenge in which the composer excelled himself. If there were technical weaknesses in some of Sullivan's music, he was nevertheless able to write melodies of exceptional quality. It was these melodies, more than any other single feature that formed the basis for the broad appeal of the Savoy operas with the public.

Sullivan's melodies were frequently enhanced by the skilful use of counterpoint. One technique popular with the composer, though not original,⁴⁴ but which was used to particular effect, was the superimposing of one theme upon another, the first and second singers singing

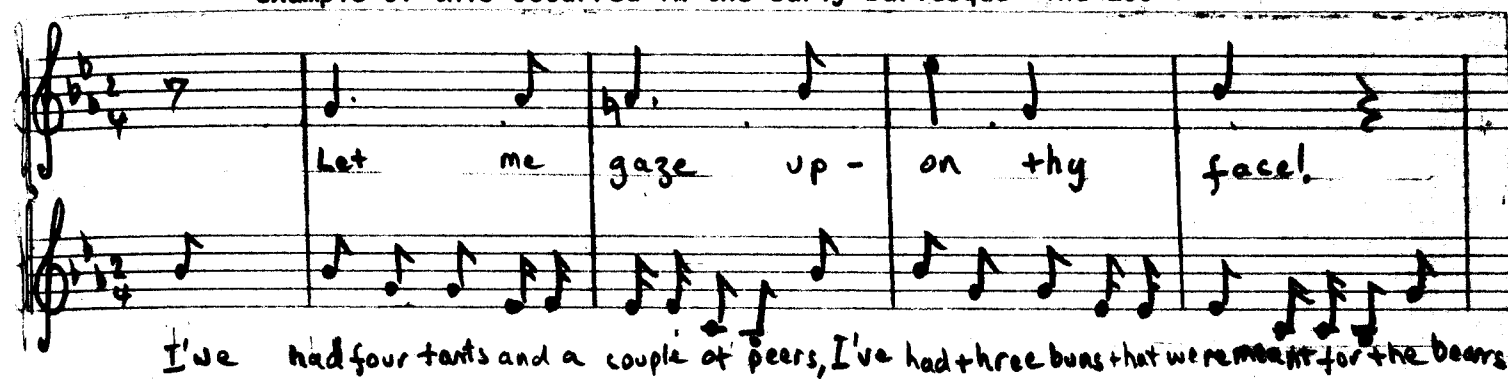
41 Appendix II, Ex.12.

42 Hughes, op.cit., p.129.

43 Appendix II, Ex.13.

44 Hughes, op.cit., p.78.

lines which were contrary in both feeling and meaning. The finest example of this occurred in the early burlesque 'The Zoo':



Here a slow romantic love song was combined with a pattering little song whose words were absurd. In the Savoy operas, a very good example occurred in the first act of 'Ruddigore', where a chorus of girls welcomed the arrival of the men, but the latter sing in counterpoint, they are "thoroughly tired of being admired // By ladies of gentle degree".⁴⁵ The technique was also effectively applied in the 'Grand Duke', 'Patience' and 'Yeomen of the Guard', where it served not only to create humour through irony, but also to illustrate the chattering of a crowd. More complex examples of counterpoint were not evident in the light operas, Sullivan preserving this for his more serious compositions.⁴⁶ The music to the Savoy operas was meant to entertain rather than impress.

Yet Sullivan's ability to capture mood in his music impressed both the public and Gilbert. The nautical setting of three of the operas -

45 Ruddigore I., Gilbert, The Savoy Operas (New York, 1967), pp.508-9.

46 Hughes, op.cit., pp.73, 74.

'Pirates of Penzance', 'Ruddigore' and 'HMS Pinafore'⁴⁷ - gained essential atmosphere from the melodies composed by Sullivan. In 'Pinafore', the crew sang a glee 'A British Tar is a souring soul', where words and music were united to establish a genuinely nautical flavour. Surprisingly, there was only scant reference to nautical allusions of this sort in 'Penzance', the chorus of pirates being more mock-heroic, parodying the choruses of 'Il Trovatore'. Richard Dauntless, in 'Ruddigore', whose profession as a sailor was rather bluntly established in his song "I've shipped d'ye see, in a Revenue sloop" was made much more convincing when his 'shanty' was followed by a hornpipe.⁴⁸ In this example, however, it was the rhythm rather than the thematic content that flavoured the work with the taste of the sea.⁴⁹

Sullivan was even more successful in creating melodramatic atmosphere in his music, and 'Ruddigore' offered a further example of this, in the opening of 'When the Night Wind Howls'.⁵⁰ The Incantation scene in the first act of 'The Sorcerer' was both dramatically and musically reminiscent of 'The Wolf's Glen' scene from Weber's 'Die Freischutz', whilst the concluding chorus echoed the chorus of fiends from Purcell's 'Dido'.⁵¹ When suitably presented on stage, the melodrama of this scene forms a tremendous contrast, once more musically and dramatically, to the following scene of a tea party.⁵² To reinforce

47 The setting of these works reflected Gilbert's own deep interest in sailing.

48 Appendix II, Ex.14.

49 Ibid. Note the accented triplets in bars 2 and 6.

50 Appendix II, Ex.7.

51 Ibid., Ex.15.

52 Ibid.,

the mediaeval setting of 'Yeomen of the Guard', Sullivan set the chorus 'Here's a man of jollity'⁵³ in the Lydian mode. Gervasse Hughes comments upon Sullivan's affinity with Elizabethan music, "the anthem ... 'Strange adventure, Maiden wedded', for all its four square rigidity captures something of the spirit of Dowland's 'Never weather-beaten sail'".⁵⁴ The melodrama of the music held broad appeal, whilst the allusions to other well known compositions provided special interest for the more astute member of the audience. In 'Patience', 'Princess Ida', 'Ruddigore' and 'Gondoliers', Sullivan's music was particularly successful in creating atmosphere in order to reinforce the setting created by the dramatist.

It was not merely setting that Sullivan was able to illustrate, since Gilbert's satire gained much more force from effective musical composition. In 'Gondoliers', the music of the entry of Don Alhambra parodied the hesitant bravery of the Duke, whilst the policeman's chorus in the second act of 'Penzance', so reminiscent of Verdi in style⁵⁵ illustrated the reluctant courage of the policemen. Perhaps the finest example of mock-heroic music in the Savoy operas was Mountararat's anthem 'When Britain really ruled the waves',⁵⁶ which remains one of the best parodies of any nationalistic anthem written. The majestic three-beat to a bar measure, and its stately tempo are strongly reminiscent of many a national anthem. Gilbert's satirical wit was surpassed by Sullivan's skill as a musical parodist in this instance. The compatability

53 Ibid.,

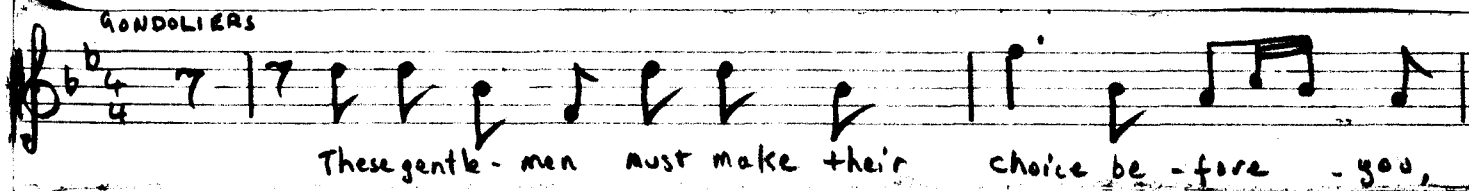
54 Hughes, op.cit., p.76.

55 Ibid., pp.150, 151.

56 Appendix II, Ex.13.

of composer and librettist was powerfully illustrated by the ability of one to supplement the other in creating atmosphere or establishing satire.

Yet Sullivan parodied nationality in a more blatant manner, when he imitated the musical idiosyncracies of certain countries. The opening chorus of 'Mikado' afforded Sullivan the opportunity to match Gilbert's cliché Japanese setting with quasi 'Japanese' music.⁵⁷ The separation of the voices an octave apart, the progression of the theme by perfect fourths, and the semiquaver accentuation on the first beat of the bar⁵⁸ was a fine representation of what an audience believed Japanese music ought to sound like. Sullivan, however, did not over-stress this idea in 'Mikado'. Sullivan also made a conscious effort to provide Italian-sounding music for the 'Gondoliers'. Fiametta's little song "These gentle men", was an example, where the turn at the end of the third bar was an obvious imitation of Italian music:



Generally, however, Gervase Hughes concludes that the music to 'Gondoliers' reflected more French rather than Italian influence, the composer being more familiar with the music of the former country.⁵⁹

57 Ibid., Ex.16.

58 Ibid.

59 Hughes, op.cit., pp.148, 149.

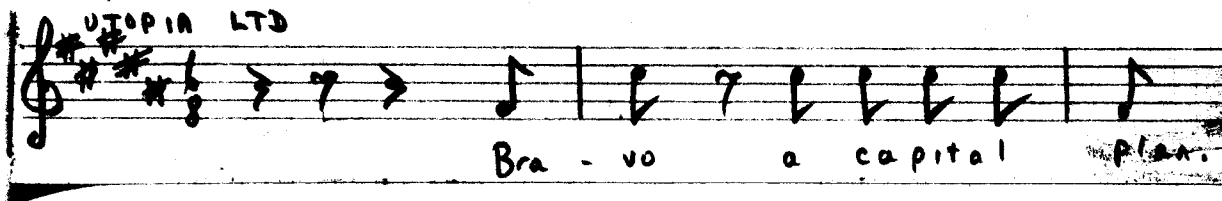
In 'Haddon Hall', Sullivan parodied Scottish music, by introducing the Scotsman, McCrankie, with a highland jig. The Scots were again Sullivan's object of parody in 'Gondoliers', where the Scottish term, 'toddy', in Don Alhambra's song in the second act, was given particular emphasis by the imitation of mock-Scottish harmony:



In this example, the acciaccaturas and the rising demi-semiquavers, imitated the sounds normally associated with Highland music. A similar use of this method of parody was used in 'Beggars Opera', to introduce the highwayman Macheath. This technique of musical parody reflected Sullivan's extensive knowledge of music and the variety of musical satire which he employed.

The clichés of Italian opera were a further source of satirical inspiration for Sullivan. As early as 1866, in 'Cox and Box', Sullivan had gently mocked the accented recitative typical to Italian opera. A particularly good instance of this style of parody occurred in

'Utopia Ltd':



where the exaggerated recitative was exaggerated still further. In 'Penzance', the choruses of policemen, and particularly the pirates chorus towards the end of the opera,⁶⁰ with its two and a half bar virtuoso section⁶¹ represented most effective parodies of operas in the style of 'Il Trovatore'.⁶² Sullivan also parodied French opera. The quintet, 'Here is a fix unprecedented'⁶³ from 'Gondoliers' was an obvious stylistic reference to 'Carmen'. In 'Trial by Jury', the chorus 'A nice dilemma have we here' and the mock-heroic chorus from the 'Sorcerer', 'See! See! They drink!' were clear parodies of Bellini. Thus, whilst the Savoy Theatre might have vied with Covent Garden in popularity, Sullivan's music gently mocked the conventions of the Italian and French operas which played in London. It is of interest, that nowhere did Sullivan attempt to ridicule the conventions of German opera, unless the incantation scene from 'The Sorcerer' be considered.⁶⁴ Italian theatre music enjoyed greater popularity than German in most London opera houses, and would therefore have been more familiar to the public, but it is also feasible that a parody of German music would have entailed more complex treatment than Sullivan was prepared to devote to

60 Appendix II, Ex.17.

61 Ibid. Bars 8, 9 and 10.

62 Hughes, *op.cit.*, p.151.

63 Appendix II, Ex.18.

64 Ibid., Ex.15.

his light operas.

In an age of reviving interest in choral music, Sullivan's Savoy public were familiar with the sound of a Handelian chorus. Sullivan's skill as a composer of cantatas and oratorios equipped him perfectly to parody the stylistic conventions of his eighteenth predecessors.

The introduction to the 'What Never?' chorus:

PINAFORE

My gallant crew good morning! (Sir good morning!) I hope you're all quite well? (Quite well, and you Sir?) I am in reasonable health And happy to meet you once more (You do us proud, Sir!)

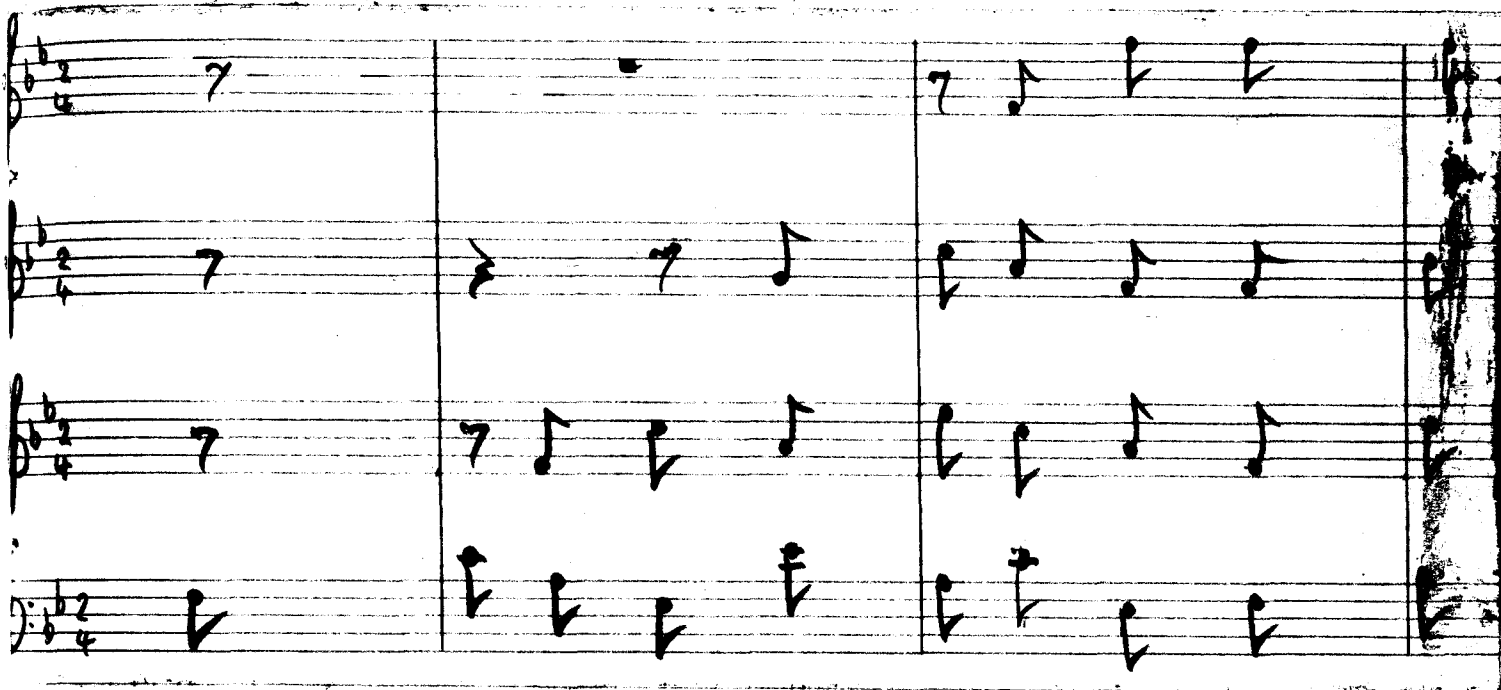
from 'Pinafore', convincingly imitated Handelian recitative, and incidentally made Gilbert's lines appear all the more incongruous. A close liaison between librettist and composer in writing chorus parts was essential. In commenting upon this liaison, Gervase Hughes writes:

As an ex-chorister ... Sullivan knew the value of a kindly chorus and rejoiced that Gilbert's libretti - unlike those of Italian opera, French opera-bouffe or German Singspiel - made an integral part of the dramatic scheme.⁶⁵

In the later operas, when Gilbert's libretti had lost some of their

65 Hughes, op.cit., p.84.

spontaneity; Sullivan seemed to lack encouragement. In the 'Grand Duke' for example:



Sullivan attempted a contrapuntal opening in the style of Handel, but in this instance the harmony was forced and the imitative parts contrived.

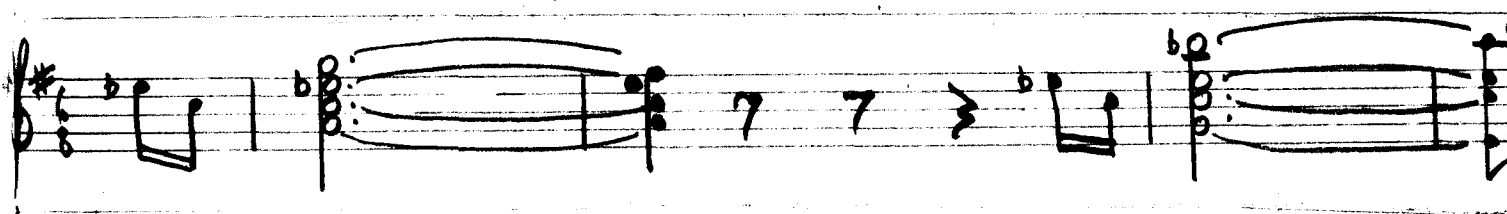
It was the smaller chorus sections that inspired Sullivan as a musician more than as a parodist. In the duets and trios, for example, imitative passages would follow, being harmonically combined only a few bars before a cadence. An excellent example of Sullivan's skill in this technique occurred in the duet between Phyllis and Strephon in 'Iolanthe'.⁶⁶ The basses, baritones and altos were generally better served, musically, than the tenors which tended to be sadly neglected⁶⁷ or the sopranos, although the soprano solo 'A simple sailor lowly born' from 'Pinafore', provided full opportunity for a display of virtuosity.

⁶⁶ Appendix II, Ex.19.

⁶⁷ Hughes, op.cit., p.93.

Gilbert was often obliged to create chorus parts - such as the twenty love-sick maidens from 'Patience' - so as to provide musical variety between solo and ensemble parts. Sullivan was quite capable of allowing his technique as a musical satirist expression in both chorus or solo sections alike, whilst also giving the singers something of a challenge - albeit rather minor compared to grand opera - to their musical prowess. Thus Sullivan was able to satisfy the serious music-lover, whilst his parody of very well known musical styles contributed towards the broad appeal of the music.

Most of the overtures to the Savoy operas opened boisterously, such as the overture to 'Gondoliers'.⁶⁸ This was customary in most light operas, a powerful overture being employed to quieten a rowdy audience. The exception was 'Iolanthe':



where, in a slow opening, the dominant seventh solemnly indicated G minor, before ultimately modulating to G major, the tonic key of the overture. The earlier operas, 'Thespis', 'Trial by Jury' and 'The Zoo' had no real overture to speak of rather an orchestral introduction, whilst that to the 'Sorcerer' was only a later addition.⁶⁹ The overture to 'Yeomen of the Guard' was impressive, the main theme recurring as a 'leitmotiv' several times in the opera, and was reminiscent of Wagner.

⁶⁸ Appendix II, Ex.1.

⁶⁹ Hughes, op.cit., pp.133-4.

In the subsequent opera, 'Gondoliers', Sullivan reverted from a strict form of overture to the original scheme of an orchestral introduction, in order, so he claimed to placate his audience whom, he felt, would be bored by the length of a formal overture if used to introduce a light opera.⁷⁰ The overtures to the last works were really only orchestral introductions, 'Utopia Ltd' having an opening of 120 bars, whilst the authenticity of the brief introduction to the 'Grand Duke' has by no means been established.⁷¹ It is apparent that Sullivan had lost interest in producing formal overtures, and not merely to satisfy his audience (whom, if the critics are taken as representative of opinion, actually preferred a well-written overture⁷²) but because of his growing disillusionment with light opera by this stage in his career.⁷³

Most critics, in their overall assessments of Arthur Sullivan's music have recognised, or imagined they recognised, certain uniquely English qualities in his music. When the 'Golden Legend' was produced at Leeds in 1886, one critic claimed: "it is true English music and bears on every page the composer's sign-manual..."⁷⁴ whilst another described Sullivan as "the English Offenbach".⁷⁵ Arthur Sullivan's biographer, Percy Young, has maintained that it was the melodic qualities which were more cogent than the harmonic (which was strongly influenced

70 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan (New York, 1958), p.344.

71 Young, op.cit., pp.186, 187.

72 Allen, op.cit., p.309.

73 Young, op.cit., pp.209-212.

74 'Academy Review' No. 755, 23 October 1886, p.284.

75 'The Saturday Review', 26 January 1895, p.125.

by his studies at Leipzig) in reflecting these national qualities:

He did, however, develop a lyric sense that was set on a narrower base: the best of his songs and dances were purely and recognisably English. The link between his first and second phases was his Shakespearian music.⁷⁶

Upon Sullivan's death, the critic Charles Maclean remarked: "What I have to say is that Sullivan, in Englishing his sometimes high and elegant art (...) executed a task of extra-ordinary difficulty."⁷⁷ A precise definition of Sullivan's national qualities is difficult. Sullivan did not use folk music to illustrate national qualities, but rather identified his music closely with an earlier English musical tradition. This identification was made in his choral music, and more particularly by his deep association with the idiom of the Elizabethan madrigalists. It is significant that these qualities in Sullivan's melodies enabled both critics and public alike, both past and present, to identify English qualities in Sullivan's music, since he had made a conscious effort to re-establish contact with a past musical tradition.

The critics have tended to be kinder to Sullivan's light operas than they have to his more serious music. Horace Thorogood, writing after the first world war, maintained that: "Sullivan ... brought the English out of the dunce's class in music"⁷⁸ as Sullivan had helped make the English people accustomed to hearing music by English composers.

⁷⁶ Young, op.cit., p.160.

⁷⁷ Charles Maclean, 'Journal of Musical Association' (London, 1901), pp.93, 94.

⁷⁸ H. Thorogood, 'Nation and Aethenaeum' (London, 1927).

Young, in assessing Sullivan's music, concludes that:

Sullivan wrote easily, often casually, and without much sense of self-criticism. The dividing-line between charm and elegance ... and banality was ... thin and to put certain works on one side or another is a matter of personal opinion.⁷⁹

Gilbert's biographer, Hesketh Pearson, however, argued that the real popularity of the Savoy ventures was due less to the music and more to Gilbert providing the composer inspiration.⁸⁰ Pearson was strong in his condemnation of Sullivan, and bluntly asserted: "Gilbert had a clearer conception of what the public demand; he led and Sullivan followed."⁸¹ Yet Sullivan's pre-occupation with light opera showed only too clearly that he understood the nature of public demand. As consumer-composers, both he and Gilbert depended upon this demand. The weakness in Sullivan's music, according to Pearson, was that the composer catered too strongly to the puritanical tastes of the Victorian public.⁸² But J.A. Fuller-Maitland, writing at the turn of the century, had considered this a strength:

From beginning to end of his career, Sullivan wrote nothing that was subversive or polemical; the taste of the average man was what he sought to meet and it was in meeting this taste that his work in regard to the renaissance was fulfilled.⁸³

Regardless of the moral virtues that might exist in Sullivan's music, this itself is an indication of the composers' orientation towards

79 Young, op.cit., p.80.

80 H. Pearson, Gilbert and Sullivan (Harmondsworth, 1950), p.94.

81 Ibid., p.110.

82 Ibid., pp.150, 151.

83 J.A. Fuller-Maitland, English Music in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1902), p.170.

his public and his sympathy with social attitudes. Both serious studies of Sullivan⁸⁴ agree that the Savoy operas not only won popular and lasting appeal, but furthermore, played a significant part in restoring music as an art in England. Gervasse Hughes writes:

Gilbert and Sullivan raised operetta from the level of the music-hall to that of the opera house, thus helping to change the climate of public opinion in its attitude to the theatrical and musical professions generally.⁸⁵

Young maintains that, through generally popularizing music, Sullivan and his partner were able to widen the opportunities available to other composers and musicians.⁸⁶

Yet there was a fault, or perhaps rather the absence of a quality, that has clearly differentiated Sullivan's music from the realms of the great composers. This was the absence of a sustained and sincere emotional commitment. Even in 'Yeomen of the Guard' where an element of pathos and tragedy is present, no real attempt was made to exploit the emotional potential of the play. This inability to interpret human feeling other than superficially, precluded Sullivan from comparison with the great composers of the romantic period - Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms or even Elgar.⁸⁷ It is feasible to assume that Sullivan, so much a man of his times, had absorbed the Victorian facility of concealing feelings so profoundly that emotion was absent from his music. It was not only in the Savoy operas that genuine feeling was absent, but in Sullivan's

84 P. Young, 'Sir Arthur Sullivan' and Gervasse Hughes, 'The Music of of Arthur Sullivan'.

85 Hughes, op.cit., p.165.

86 Young, op.cit., p.264.

87 Hughes, op.cit., p.164.

serious works as well.⁸⁸ Thus the comic operas could survive as part of a repertoire, because in these, deep passion was never expected.

Sullivan was a highly skilled composer with considerable talents as a musical humorist. The absence of emotion in his music made his light operas more effective than his longer orchestral and choral compositions. Sullivan was bound by the conventions of a society that tended to restrict his musical development, and by the predilections of an audience which frankly did not look for anything deep or profound in the music. It was the desire by the composer to escape from these limitations and his ambition to acquire a reputation as a composer of more serious works that placed a burden on the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership and which ultimately led to a breakdown in the liaison that had formerly functioned so well. Like Sullivan, Gilbert was also restricted by public demand, but as a dramatist he enjoyed greater freedom of action than Sullivan. Victorian England was more accustomed to great literary satirists than to great composers. Besides, Gilbert did not have the same ambition as Sullivan, and was content to concentrate his efforts on the medium of light opera.

88 Young, op.cit., p.265.

PART III

GILBERT AS LIBRETTIST.

CHAPTER 4.

'Gilbert's Satire: a reflection of
emerging social attitudes'.

"I have heard no more about 'Thespis'", wrote an impatient Gilbert to Arthur Sullivan late in 1871, "its astonishing how quickly these capitalists dry up under the magic influence of the words 'cash down'."¹ Gilbert, in his private correspondence had a reputation for biting sarcasm. In his public writings, this element of sarcasm was mellowed into witty, but at times bitter satire. Like Sullivan, however, Gilbert's artistic liberty was directed by the sensibilities of public opinion. As a consumer-composer, Gilbert was obliged to provide for the interests of this public. Frequently he would be forced to moderate his satire so as to avoid the risk of offending his audience. Those topics which he chose to ridicule were ones that this audience considered worthy of ridicule.

Gilbert developed the Savoy operas so as to provide a structure whereby social attitudes could be strongly satirised. Yet the continued popularity of the works demonstrated that society had grown more tolerant of criticism. Gilbert's areas of satire divided into two categories. The first were areas - such as his favourable treatment of the monarchy, and his caustic treatment of the House of Lords - where he reflected common social values and created a sense of identity with his public. Gilbert, however, did not flatter his audience. In the second

1 W.S. Gilbert to Arthur Sullivan 1871 quoted in H. Pearson, 'Gilbert His Life and Strife' (London, 1957), p.89.

category, he satirised controversial topics - such as Victorian attitudes to prostitution - whilst in his discussion of the rights of women, he proved ahead of his time. In this regard, Gilbert was highly topical, if not controversial. But, by using the medium of comic light opera, Gilbert could be controversial without alienating his audience.

Class distinction was a popular area for satire. In 'Iolanthe', the middle classes were described as coming from the professions, such as law and "the Army, the Navy, the Church and the stage"². However, the ranks of the professional middle-classes were by 1882 much wider.³ Appointment by examination in the Civil Service had been made compulsory by Gladstone's Order in Council of June 1870, thus making the Civil Service a further area of social mobility.⁴ Gilbert's references would have applied more during the first half of the century, but the inclusion of 'the stage', which even during the second half of the century was considered in some quarters as a place of low moral tone,⁵ was not merely self-adulation, but the dramatist re-inforcing the still novel concept that actors and singers required as much training and skill as any of the other professions mentioned.

Gilbert differentiated between those people with professions or

2 Lord Chancellor, *Iolanthe* I, Gilbert, The Savoy Operas (New York, 1967), p.348.

3 R. Altick, The English Common Reader (Chicago, 1957), p.83.
"The segment of the middle class which grew with unusual speed was that of physicians, teachers, civil servants and other professional or white-collar workers. In 1851, the census placed 357,000 persons in that class; ten years later there were 482,000 and in 1881 the total was 647,000 ...".

4 R. Ensor, Oxford History of England 1870-1914 (London, 1966), p.147.

5 H. Haweis, Music and Morals (London, 1877), pp.65-72.

trades and those who merely lived off investments. In 'Pinafore'

Ralph's song:

No golden rank can he impart -
No wealth of house or land -
No fortune save his trusty heart
And honest brown right hand!⁶

Those of the bourgeoisie not connected with the professions but who acquired wealth through commercial enterprises were regarded by Gilbert with disdain for their unscrupulous materialism.

Some seven men form an Association
(If possible, all Peers and Baronets)
They start off with a public declaration
To what extent they mean to pay their debts
That's called their Capital: if they are wary
They will not quote it at a sum immense.⁷

This class of commercial entrepreneurs was rapidly rising in influence after the 1870's and "after 1878", as Ensor remarks, "the downfall of agriculture and the pinched fortunes of the country landlords quickened the process."⁸ In Gilbert's operas, the bankrupt aristocracy could attempt to repair their fortunes by forming limited liability companies, such as that proposed by the Duke of Plaza Toro in 'Gondoliers', when he remarked:

a Company to be called the Duke of Plaza Toro
Ltd. is in the course of formation to work for
me. An influential directorate has been secured⁹
and I shall myself join the board after allotment.

6 Josephine, Pinafore II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.83.

7 Mr. Goldbury, Utopia Ltd. I, ibid., p.636.

8 Ensor, op.cit., p.164.

9 Duke, Gondoliers I, Gilbert, op.cit., pp.108-109.

But by following such practices, Gilbert maintained, people lost human dignity. Pooh-Bah, the Lord High Everything Else was a character without human dignity:

I go and dine with middle-class people on reasonable terms. I dance at cheap suburban parties for a moderate fee. I accept refreshment at any hands, however lowly. I also retail State secrets at a very low figure.¹⁰

Gilbert wrote primarily for a middle-class public. Nevertheless, he would send up his middle and lower middle-class public, allowing them the opportunity to laugh at themselves.

In Gilbert's operas, class structures were depicted as rigid, with an upper class exploiting its position of superiority at the expense of the lower orders. In 'Pinafore', Sir Joseph Porter, having achieved a high place in society, could condescend to marry the daughter of a Captain, but not of a common seaman, thus leaving Ralph free to marry Corcoran's daughter after it was discovered that it was Ralph who should have been Captain.¹¹ Corcoran complained: "... love levels all ranks."

Sir Joseph: It does to a considerable extent, but does not level them as much as all that.¹²

In 'Yeomen of the Guard' Colonel Fairfax engineered his escape from the Tower of London and his marriage to Elsie Maynard, Jack Point's

10 Pooh-Bah, Mikado I, *ibid.*, p.8.

11 Sir Joseph, Pinafore II, *ibid.*, p.94.

Sir Joseph: "Then am I to understand that Captain Corcoran and Ralph were exchanged in childhood's happy hour that Ralph is really the captain, and the captain is Ralph?"

12 *Ibid.*

betrothed, by using Point.¹³ The ambitious Elsie thus found herself in an elevated social position, and was equally unscrupulous in her abandoning Point, ironically echoing her changed circumstances in the song 'The Merryman and his Maid' where she substituted "who loved a lord" in Act I¹⁴ to "who loved her lord"¹⁵ in the conclusion. It was always the lower classes who had to bear the burden for the mischief or errors committed by the upper-classes. John Wellington Wells in 'The Sorcerer' was obliged to accept the responsibility for the spell cast at the request of Alexis (despite the fact that Alexis ignored Wells' instructions¹⁶) and surrender his soul to the Devil.¹⁷ Wells possessed all the bourgeois mannerisms of the proprietor of a well established and highly respectable business,¹⁸ but must suffer the fate justly due to Alexis. Sir Marmaduke, Alexis' father was quick to condemn Wells.

Wells: Or I or he
Must die!
Which shall it be?
Reply!
Sir Marmaduke: Die thou!
Thou art the cause of all offending.¹⁹

- 13 Yeomen of the Guard I, *ibid.*, p.394.
Fairfax must marry because, he notes "my kinsman, Sir Clarence Poltwhistle ... has charged me with sorcery, in order that he may succeed to my estate which devolves to him provided I die unmarried."
- 14 Elsie, Yeomen of the Guard I, *ibid.*, p.387.
- 15 *Ibid.*, II, p.440.
- 16 Wells, 'The Sorcerer I, *ibid.*, p.558.
- 17 *Ibid.*, II, pp.577-578.
- 18 *Ibid.*, I, p.558. Wells remarks: "Sir we are not in the habit of puffing our goods. Ours is an old established house with a large family connection, and every assurance held out in the advertisement is fully realized."
- 19 *Ibid.*, II, p.577.

Gilbert illustrated that the higher one's social status the greater the privileges available. However, class privilege inevitably meant the exploitation of others.

Gilbert never questioned the necessity of class barriers, but ridiculed the concept of social mobility. Egalitarianism was impossible.²⁰ Dick Deadeye in 'Pinafore' explained this simply: "When people have to obey other people's orders, equality's out of the question."²¹ This argument was repeated in 'Gondoliers':

In short, whoever you may be
To this conclusion you'll agree
When everyone is somebodee
Then no-one's anybody!²²

The incongruity arising from a character attempting to traverse class barriers was a familiar theme in many of the operas, forming a basis to the plots of 'Pinafore', 'Gondoliers', 'Patience', 'Iolanthe' and 'Penzance'. In 'Pinafore', Ralph, anxious to marry Josephine, questioned the validity of class barriers:

But it is a strange anomaly that the daughter
of a man who hails from the quarter-deck may
not love another who lays out on the foreyard
arm. For a man is but a man, whither he hoists
his flag at the main-truck or his slacks on the
maindeck.²³

Similar ideas of romantic egalitarianism were echoed by Alexis in the

20 E.P. Lawrence, 'The Happy Land' - W.S. Gilbert as Political Satirist, Victorian Studies. Vol. 15, September 1971, p.180.

21 Dick, Pinafore I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.72.

22 Don Alhambra, Gondoliers II, ibid., p.141.

23 Ralph, Pinafore I, ibid., p.63.

'Sorcerer'. Alexis, however was gentry, and would never marry below his station. He soliloquises:

Oh that the world would break down the
artificial barriers of rank, wealth, education,
age, beauty, habits, taste and temper and
recognise the glorious principle, that, in
marriage alone is to be found the panacea for
every ill.²⁴

Gilbert was no romantic: none of his characters marry happily outside their own class, since harmonious relationships could only be found in couples of the same class.²⁵ The evidence suggests that this was not a personal view of Gilberts', since many members of the audience would have regarded marriage outside their class as unusual, despite the greatly increased opportunities for social mobility.

Where wealth or social status were at stake, unions between couples of different classes did occur, though these were seldom happy. There was a total absence of romantic idealism between the Duke and Duchess of Plaza Toro in 'Gondoliers', the latter confessed frankly: "... I said to myself: 'That man is a Duke, and I will love him'. Several of my relations bet me I couldn't, but I did - desperately."²⁶ The marriage survived, but could not be seen as a success.²⁷ The idea of divorce was unthinkable in the operettas. In 'Gondoliers', the arranged marriage between Casilda and the King of Baratania, believed to be either Guiseppe or Marco, created a crisis when it was discovered that both these

²⁴ Alexis, Sorcerer I, *ibid.*, p.553.

²⁵ Lawrence, *op.cit.*, Victorian Studies Vol. 15, September 1971, pp.180-181.

²⁶ Duchess, Gondoliers II, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.146.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.151.

The Duke, in a slip of the tongue when giving his daughter in marriage says "Take her, and may she make you happier than her mother has made me."

brothers were already married:

Guiseppa: Its quite simple. Observe. Two husbands have managed to acquire three wives. Three wives two husbands. That's two-thirds of a husband to each wife.

Tessa: O Mount Vesuvius, here we are arithmetic! My good sir, one can't marry a vulgar fraction!²⁸

Divorce was never considered, since:

Divorce, though it had been obtainable at law since 1857, was still held unspeakably disgraceful. It was not till 1887 that Queen Victoria would allow even the innocent party to a divorce-suit to attend her court.²⁹

Furthermore, the cost of a divorce suit limited it to the upper classes.³⁰

Gilbert had created a situation in which divorce was an obvious solution.³¹ but was obliged to find alternative and often far-fetched solutions. Gilbert therefore reflected common social attitudes and by avoiding a solution that might have been offensive to certain members of his public, further contributed to the broad appeal that the light operas possessed.

The most blatant example of a marriage of convenience in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas occurred in 'Trial by Jury'. The Judge, ironically hearing a breach-of-promise case, recounted how marriage enabled him to

28 Ibid., p.143.

29 Ensor, op.cit., p.169.

30 R. Webb, Modern England (London, 1969), p.407.

"divorce was available on proof of certain matrimonial offences ... the expense ... still limited recourse to the middle and upper classes."

31 Chorus, Gondoliers II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.155.

O Moralists all

How can you call

Marriage a state of union true.

succeed in the legal profession:

But I soon got tired of third class journeys
And dinners of bread and water
So I fell in love with a rich attorney's
Elderly, ugly daughter.³²

The practice of marriage for gain of social status or property was not uncommon, and legislation was passed in 1870, 1882 and 1893 giving the wife the same property rights as an unmarried woman.³³ Generally, Gilbert maintained that the most suitable matches could only be found between couples of the same class, since class differences placed an often overwhelming burden upon a marriage. When one party aspired to wealth or increased social status through marriage, the results were seldom satisfactory. In 'Yeomen of the Guard', the connexion between Fairfax and Elsie was at the expense of Point;³⁴ in 'Mikado', Ko Ko was forced to marry Katisha, or suffer a terrible death;³⁵ whilst in 'Iolanthe' the Queen must marry a common soldier, as she remarked: "to save my life, it is necessary that I marry at once."³⁶ In each case, an element of compulsion forced a match between people of differing classes. In society, Gilbert suggested, less brutal forms of compulsion operated, forcing inter-class marriages, but often the consequences could be unfortunate upon the marital relationship. In his analysis of class structures, the questions Gilbert posed, and their solutions were

32 Judge, Trial by Jury, *ibid.*, p.585.

33 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.407.

34 Yeomen of the Guard II, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.440.

35 Mikado II, *ibid.*, p.48.

36 Queen, Iolanthe II, *ibid.*, p.380.

conducted so as to test popular opinions but not offend the audience, but at the same time give them something to think about. During a period of increasing social mobility the basis of class structures was a popular topic for discussion.

After 1870, the system of Civil Service examinations had permitted a considerable degree of social mobility in a field traditionally the preserve of the upper classes.³⁷ Gilbert created Sir Joseph Porter, in 'Pinafore', as an example of an individual who had risen in the ranks of the Civil Service. Sir Joseph was actually a caricature of W.H. Smith, First Lord of the Admiralty after 1877, who had himself risen from humble origins.³⁸ Gilbert had earlier expressed suspicion at having a commoner as First Lord in a play, 'The Happy Land' which had strongly attacked Gladstone's government for procrastination during the Franco-Prussian war.³⁹ In 'Pinafore', Sir Joseph is a practical example of Samuel Smiles' ethic, that by means of hard work and diligence, it was possible to traverse class barriers. He sings:

When I was a lad, I served a term
As an office boy to an attorney's firm
I cleared the windows and swept the floor,
And I polished up the handle on the big front door.
I polished up that handle so carefullee
That now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!⁴⁰

37 Webb, op.cit., p.407.

38 Gilbert wrote to Sullivan "... the fact that the First Lord in the Opera is a RADICAL ... will do away with any suspicion that W.H. Smith is intended", quoted in R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan (New York, 1958), p.73.

39 Lawrence, op.cit., Victorian Studies, Vol. 15, September 1971, pp.170-171.

40 Sir Joseph, Pinafore I, Gilbert, op.cit., pp.68-70.

Gilbert, himself a keen amateur yachtsman, made Sir Joseph appear ignorant of nautical matters.⁴¹ For example, Sir Joseph requested his captains to modify their commands with an "if you please",⁴² that they should never use strong language in front of the crew⁴³ and insists that "all sailors should dance hornpipes".⁴⁴ He even gave the crew an anthem to sing - itself a sorry replica of 'Hearts of Oak'.⁴⁵ However, despite his exalted rank, Sir Joseph failed to impress anyone - least of all the fair Josephine.⁴⁶ Sir Joseph was arrogant and failed to see, since he had made a success of his career, why others in society could not improve their circumstances. In 'Gondoliers', Marco and Guiseppe suddenly found themselves Kings.⁴⁷ They were themselves unsuited to this position in society, and their attempt to obliterate class privilege meets with disaster.⁴⁸ Once it was discovered that a mistake had been made, Marco and Guiseppe were quite content to return to the trade and the social rank with which they were more familiar:

Once more gondolieri
Both skilful and wary
Free from this quandrary
Contented are we
From Royalty flying
Our Gondolas plying.⁴⁹

41 H. Pearson, Gilbert and Sullivan, pp.82-83.

42 Sir Joseph, Pinafore I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.70.

43 Ibid., p.71.

44 Ibid.

45 Appendix II,

46 Josephine, Pinafore I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.73.

Josephine confessed: "Sir Joseph's attentions nauseate me. I know he is a truly great man, for he has told me so himself ..."

47 Gondoliers I, ibid., p.120.

48 Lawrence, op.cit., Victorian Studies, Vol. 15, September 1971, p.181.

49 Chorus, Gondoliers II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.157.

Gilbert had contempt not for the honest and industrious individual who acquired a position in society which he deserved, but for the hypocrite who took advantage of others to achieve a degree of eminence which was either undeserved or to which he was totally unsuited professionally. Gilbert promoted this concept of a meritocracy in 'Mikado', where Pooh-Bah was contemptible, but Nanki-Poo sincere and prepared to abdicate as heir to the throne in order to marry his beloved Yum-Yum.⁵⁰

The hereditary aristocracy, who inherited both wealth and social status, considered by Gilbert undeserved, became a target for strong ridicule. The fact that Gilbert was so vehement in his criticism of the aristocracy suggested that a large section of the public shared Gilbert's opinions in questioning the value of an aristocracy. In 'Mikado', pedigree of ancestry was made a mockery. Pooh-Bah remarked:

I am in point of fact a particularly haughty and exclusive person, of pre-Adamite ancestral descent. You will understand this when I tell you that I trace my ancestry back to a protoplasmal primordial atomic globule.⁵¹

In this passage, Gilbert satirised a literal interpretation of evolutionary theory as well as placing the concept of hereditary pedigree in its most unsavoury light. Pooh-Bah had created an ancestral tree of his own. In disgust, the other ministers of state have resigned their commissions "because they were too proud to serve under an ex-tailor."⁵²

50 Mikado I, *ibid.*, pp.4, 5.

51 Pooh-Bah, *ibid.*, pp.7, 8.

52 *Ibid.*, p.8.

The fact he was able to undertake all these new responsibilities without discomfort reflected Gilbert's opinion that a hereditary governing class performed a vacuuous function. Gilbert was writing at a time when the landed aristocracy in England were undergoing a serious decline in influence. Pooh-Bah epitomized the 'nouveau-riche', similar to the Newcomes in Thackeray's novel. Professor Webb remarks:

Families in the gentry had disappeared, as they had always done, but their places were taken, with a new ease of adaptation and acceptability by recruits from commerce and industry, who had not only the wealth to acquire landed estates, but, thanks to the reformed and expanding public schools, ready access to means of planing away the rough edges of an obscure origin.⁵³

The decline in fortunes of the landed aristocracy began with the agricultural depression of the 1870's.⁵⁴ In 'Mikado', in 1885, Gilbert was commenting upon a phenonemon generally recognised. By expressing opinions accepted by the audience, Gilbert was able to identify himself with the public.

In 'Iolanthe', Lord Tolloller also boasted an extensive ancestral background "Dating from the Flood // Blue Blood".⁵⁵ The ancestral lineage of the Sangazure household in the 'Sorcerer' encouraged the doddering Sir Marmaduke to urge his witless son Alexis into a connexion with that family.

53 Webb, op.cit., p.370.

54 Ensor, op.cit., p.164.

Ensor mentions the date 1878.

55 Lord Tolloller, Iolanthe I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.345.

Sir Marmaduke: You are a fortunate young fellow and I will not disguise from you that this union with the house of Sangazure realises my fondest wishes. Aline is rich and she comes from a sufficiently old family, for she is the seven thousand and thirty seventh in direct descent from Helen of Troy. True, there was a blot on the escutcheon of that lady - that affair with Paris - but where is the family other than my own, in which there is no flaw?⁵⁶

But those who attempted to convince others of their aristocratic pedigree were depicted as contemptible in the operas: Pooh-Bah discovered that respect could not be inherited.

I think you ought to recollect
You cannot show too much respect
Towards the highly titled few;
But nobody does ...⁵⁷

In 'Gondoliers', Marco and Guiseppe, staunch republicans though they once had been, came to resent the cursory treatment they received from the palace servants who took neither of them seriously.⁵⁸ To the servants, these two gondoliers were indeed equals, and so in this regard, egalitarianism was achieved. The palace cooks refused to provide more than one meal for the two Kings, since it was a breach of tradition to have more than one monarch.⁵⁹ Thus Guiseppe and Marco had to waive their republican principles and demand the proper treatment accorded a King.

For Guiseppe and Marco, the task of King never ceased to be anything other than a new occupation, and one which they attempted to fulfill

⁵⁶ Sir Marmaduke, *The Sorcerer I*, *ibid.*, p.548.

⁵⁷ Pooh-Bah, *Mikado I*, *ibid.*, p.17.

⁵⁸ Marco and Servants, *Gondoliers II*, *ibid.*, p.131.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

conscientiously. Gilbert never ridiculed the monarchy as an institution, but rather tended to depict it as a very special kind of profession. Nowhere was a monarch expected to account for himself by reference to ancestry, as was expected of the aristocracy.⁶⁰ A ruler worked particularly hard; Guiseppe interpreted the responsibilities of a King to be:⁶¹

First we polish off some batches
Of political despatches,
And foreign politicians circumvent
Then if business isn't heavy,
We may hold a Royal levee
Or ratify some act of parliament
Then probably review the household troops.⁶²

Gilbert here advocated that the monarch should take a direct interest in the affairs of government, and not merely the advisory role recommended by Bagehot. Indeed, the list was so extensive that a ruler was expected to work an eighteen-hour day, the sole reward being the gratifying feeling that our duty has been done!⁶³ 'Gondoliers' was produced in 1889, but Gilbert still recalled the criticism made of Queen Victoria in 1871 when, after her withdrawal from public affairs following the death of the Prince Consort, "there was a widespread feeling" as Sir Robert Ensor comments, "that she neglected her national duty, and did not earn the large grants made to her and her family by parliament."⁶⁴

In 'Mikado', the King (here represented as an individual rather than

60 Iolanthe I, *ibid.*, p.341.

61 L. Baily, The Gilbert and Sullivan Book (London, 1956), p.340. Queen Victoria was quoted as being amused by the extensive list of responsibilities expected of a monarch.

62 Guiseppe, Gondoliers II, Gilbert, op.cit., pp.132-133.

63 *Ibid.*, p.133.

64 Ensor, op.cit., p.26.

as a symbol of the institution of monarchy) was depicted as a ruthless autocrat, whose word was law.⁶⁵ The 'Mikado', however, did not govern a constitutional monarchy, but rather a distant and remote land.⁶⁶

The pirate King in 'Penzance' was less autocratic and justified his actions in the following terms:

When I sally forth to seek my prey,
I help myself in a royal way.
I sink a few more ships its true,
Than a well-bred monarch ought to do;
But many a King on a first-class throne,
If he wants to call his throne his own
Must manage somehow to get through
More dirty work than ever I do.⁶⁷

But Gilbert referred here to autocracies. In the other extreme, the ruler of the island paradise in 'Utopia Ltd.', "anticipated all the wants"⁶⁸ of his subjects. However, the King, deprived of the benefit of public criticism,⁶⁹ was unable to offer the island-kingdom the bountiful advantages possessed by England's limited monarchy. It was claimed "England has made herself what she is because ... everyone has to think for himself."⁷⁰ Gilbert appeared to assume that the British system, despite periodic confusion caused by alterations in policy

65 Mikado I, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.6.

66 G.K. Chesterton, 'The Mikado' in de la Mare, 'The 1880's' (London, 1930, pp.147-148.

Chesterton described the setting of 'Mikado' as "the undiscovered island of a dream."

67 King, Penzance I, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.448.

68 Calynx, Utopia Ltd. I, *ibid.*, p.602.

69 *Ibid.*, p.603.

The only 'critic' was Tarara, the Public Exploder, whose duty was to blow up the King "on his first lapse from political or social propriety ..."

70 *Ibid.*, p.602.

following a change in governing party was the nearest attainable to an ideal form of government.⁷¹ Gilbert expected the monarch to take an interest in politics,⁷² and saw the monarchy as a supreme authority above the legislative political power of party government, offering the advantages of a republic, without the disadvantages exposed in 'Gondoliers'. An autocratic ruler - such as Rudolph in 'The Grand Duke' or the 'Mikado' - was as impractical as a republic where "all shall equal be".⁷³ Gilbert saw the monarchy as an industrious and ultimate source of authority, transcending political parties and to which all members of society might look for guidance.⁷⁴ A good monarch could not be inflexible; even the Queen of the Fairies in 'Iolanthe' was obliged to compromise in order to reaffirm her authority over her refractory subjects.⁷⁵ In Gilbert's stereotypes, good monarchs were the servants of their subjects and worked perhaps harder than anyone else in the Kingdom. The formidable list of duties quoted by Guiseppe (who seemed to take his responsibilities more seriously than his philandering brother⁷⁶) would daunt even the most ambitious from desiring to become king or queen.⁷⁷ Gilbert was not attempting to flatter royalty; indeed, he was less successful than Sullivan in earning royal recognition, but the

71 Lawrence, *op.cit.*, Victorian Studies, September 1971, p.182.

72 *Ibid.*, p.169.

73 Guiseppe and Marco, *Gondoliers I*, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.126.

74 *Pirates of Penzance I*, *ibid.*, p.448.

Utopia Ltd. I, *ibid.*, pp.602-603.

75 *Iolanthe II*, *ibid.*, pp.379-380.

76 Marco, *Gondoliers II*, *ibid.*, pp.132-134.

Whilst Guiseppe lists the responsibilities of a king, Marco sings a love song - 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes'.

77 *Ibid.*, pp.132-133.

strength of his opinions suggests he was expressing his own deep feelings.⁷⁸ In his treatment of the monarchy, Gilbert also reflected a mood of popular nationalism and a feeling of pride in the British system of government. These views - which were shared by most of the Savoy audience - enabled the dramatist to identify himself with his public and so contributed towards the broad appeal of the light operas.

Gilbert was less sympathetic in his treatment of the House of Lords, which was depicted as an institution not warranting the respect its existence presumed. Gilbert openly questioned the intellectual prowess of members of this House. In 'Utopia Ltd.', produced in 1891, the King decreed:

Our Peerage we've remodelled on an intellectual basis,
Which certainly is rough on our hereditary races.

Whilst the chorus threatened: "We are going to // Remodel it in England".⁷⁹ This comment reflected a proposal put nearly forty years earlier in the Wensleydale case of 1857 which had suggested "reconstructing the House of Lords through an infusion of proved ability."⁸⁰ Such a reference in a light opera, even at a time when the House had caused some embarrassment by rejecting Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in 1886 caused little offence⁸¹: Gilbert's satire on this occasion no longer controversial. Public opinion was generally critical of the powers of the House of Lords,

78 Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1917).
Sullivan was knighted by the Queen in 1883, but Gilbert not until 1907. Furthermore Sullivan was a close friend of the Prince of Wales.

79 King and Chorus, *Utopia Ltd.* II, *ibid.*, p.644.

80 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.315.

81 Ensor, *op.cit.*, pp.97-99.

and Gilbert's audience were prepared to tolerate if not sympathise with such satire. However, the heaviest criticism of this House occurred in 'Iolanthe' where the peers were depicted as little better than good natured idiots. Despite this, they succeeded in attracting the devotions of the fairies.⁸² Lord Mountararat, replying to the suggestion that the House be made open to competitive examination remarked:

I don't want to say a word against brains -
I've a great respect for brains - I often wish
I had some myself - but with a House of Peers
composed exclusively of people of intellect,
what's to become of the House of Commons?⁸³

Mountararat continued to acclaim the merits of the upper house, concluding ambiguously that the institution was incapable of further improvement.⁸⁴

In the anthem 'When Britain really ruled the waves', which combined musical parody with verbal satire,⁸⁵ Gilbert warned of the danger of giving these men the power of veto over legislation:

And while the House of Peers withholds
Its legislative hand,
And noble statesmen do not itch
To interfere with matters which
They do not understand.⁸⁶

The question of inheriting a high position in society by birth was neatly

82 Jane Stedman, 'The Genesis of Patience', Modern Philology, Vol. 66. August 1968, pp.48, 49.

Gilbert often made use of the incongruity of traditionally romantic figures being deserted in preference for traditionally unromantic ones. Another instance occurs in 'Patience'.

83 Mountararat, Iolanthe II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.364.

84 Ibid.

85 Appendix II, Ex.13.

86 Mountararat, Iolanthe II, Gilbert, op.cit., pp.364-365.

inverted when the Lord Chancellor apologised for being a peer, confessing: "high rank involves no shame."⁸⁷ The 'Beggars Opera' a century and half earlier had lampooned the Walpole administration: Gilbert now ridiculed the House of Lords, reflecting not merely a personal conviction, but a very real sense of public dissatisfaction with one area of the British body-politic. Gilbert did not advocate the abolition of the House of Lords, but merely its reform and some limitation of its influence.

These opinions suggested an orientation towards the Liberal Party. In the operas, however, Gilbert never openly professed support for one party or the other, since to do so, would have cost him the sympathy of a large portion of his audience. He therefore considered political issues individually and condemned blind party loyalty.⁸⁸ The ambitious Sir Joseph Porter in 'Pinafore' confessed: "I always voted at my party's call, // And I never thought of thinking for myself at all".⁸⁹ The weakness of popular government, Gilbert warned, was that party politics no longer merely divided the Commons into two antithetical bodies, but had in fact split the nation. In 'Iolanthe', Gilbert was criticising the Midlothian campaign of 1879-1880, when Gladstone won office by "appealing to the people to sit in judgement."⁹⁰ Gilbert saw a danger in people voting for parties rather than issues. In the opera, Private

87 Tolloller, *ibid* I, p.345.

88 Lawrence, *op.cit.*, Victorian Studies, September 1971, p.169. Lawrence maintains Gilbert's attack on Gladstone in 'The Happy Land' showed Gilbert to be a firm Tory.

89 Sir Joseph, *Pinafore* I, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.69.

90 D. Beales, From Castlereagh to Gladstone 1815-1885 (London, 1971), p.236.

Willis, who symbolised the common man, considered:

That every boy and every gal
That's born into this world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative.⁹¹

To Willis, it seemed party loyalty transcended political issues, and ultimately all parliamentarians would obey the party leader.⁹²

When in that House M.P.'s divide
If they've got a brain and cerebellum too,
They've got to leave that brain outside,
And vote just as their leaders tell'em to.
But then the prospect of a lot
Of dull M.P.'s in close proximity
All thinking for themselves is what
No man can face with equanimity.⁹³

The two party system might have stultified individual radical action, but it had made for a smoother operation of the political system. In 1877, Chamberlain had founded the National Liberal Federation, offering a central party organisation which was intended to dictate how members of parliament should vote.⁹⁴ It was this type of organisation that Gilbert criticised in 'Iolanthe', rather than popular government as such.⁹⁵

91 Willis, *Iolanthe II*, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.362.

92 The irony is re-inforced since Willis is a soldier, accustomed to obeying orders himself without question.

93 Willis, *Iolanthe II*, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.362.

94 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.398.

95 Lawrence, *op.cit.*, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 15, September 1971, pp.161-183.

Lawrence maintains that Gilbert, in 'The Happy Land', was a stern critic of popular government and that "Gilbert ... was ... a confirmed conservative." Gilbert may have criticised the operation of party government, but his disgust at social inequalities, his condemnation of the House of Lords, were not the attributes of a firm tory. Finally, in the light operas, practical commonsense is to be found only amongst the lower classes, in characters such as Private Willis, Buttercup, Dick Deadeye, and Patience.

Gilbert, nevertheless approved of a two party system, despite its weaknesses. In 'Utopia Ltd.', a brief reference was made to the Irish party, when the King remarked: "that glorious country called Great Britain - // To which some-add but others do not - Ireland."⁹⁶ In 'Utopia Ltd.', the progressive reforms introduced by the Flowers of Progress had created a system of government close to perfection. Lawrence remarks:

But Gilbert employs these admirable results merely as a means of attacking British political intransigence. The Flowers of Progress have forgotten to impart the 'most essential element of all' in the British system, party politics:⁹⁷

Princess Zara exclaimed:

Government by Party! Introduce that great and glorious element - at once the bulwark and foundation of England's greatness - and all will be well! No political measures will endure because one party will assuredly undo all that the other party has done; and while grouse is to be shot, and foxes worried to death, the legislative action of the country will be at a standstill. Then there will be sickness in plenty, endless lawsuits, crowded jails, interminable confusion in the Army and the Navy,⁹⁸ and in short, general and unexampled prosperity!

This mood of cynicism was far stronger than in Gilbert's earlier satire of the party system. Gilbert seemed to indicate that one of the responsibilities of a political party was to assist the less fortunate in society, rather than attempt to score points off its opposition.

The full satirical force of this passage was modified by the dramatist's

96 King, Utopia Ltd. I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.109.

97 Lawrence, op.cit., Victorian Studies, Vol. 15, September 1971, p.182.

98 Zara, Utopia Ltd. II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.659.

assumption that human nature automatically rejects a perfect social system.⁹⁹

In 'Iolanthe', however, loyalty to the party was temporarily forgotten by the peers when they fell in love.¹⁰⁰ The Queen¹⁰¹ frankly confessed to being confused by party politics, and therefore decided to send Strephon into the House of Commons as a "Liberal-Unionist".¹⁰² In this capacity, and with the supernatural powers given him by the Queen, Strephon revolutionised the political system, to the great alarm and confusion of the Lords. The situation was ultimately resolved when the Lords, Fairies, Strephon and Phyllis were married, all exchanging the "House of Peers for House of Peris".¹⁰³

Gilbert exposed the fundamental weakness of the two party system - people were motivated less by moral issues and more by self interest. The British public were kept politically informed by reading daily papers, whose contents, Sir Robert Ensor remarks, "was ... overwhelmingly political ... the staple was politics, especially speeches, and proceedings in parliament were reported and read all over the country."¹⁰⁴ It is of interest that nowhere did Gilbert nominate one party as representative of one particular class in society. The political consciousness of Private Willis indicated that it was the lower classes who, in the operas, were most politically aware, and who could observe anomalies in the political system that were often invisible to their

99 Ibid., pp.657-659.

100 Mountarat, Iolanthe I, *ibid.*, p.344.

"All questions of Party are merged // In a frenzy of love and devotion".

101 Queen, *ibid.*, p.359.

102 Ibid., p.338.

103 Lord Chancellor, *ibid.* II, p.381.

104 Ensor, op.cit., p.144.

myopic social superiors.¹⁰⁵ Here, Gilbert argued that the political consciousness of the lower classes equipped them to play an important part in the process of selecting an elected government.

The alternative to the British political system with its limited monarchy was a republic; but Gilbert considered republics impractical. The republican sentiments of Charles Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain during the 1870's would still have been recalled in 1889.¹⁰⁶ However, the republican experiments of Marco and Guiseppe were decidedly unsuccessful. Gilbert illustrated in 'Gondoliers' that a system where "all departments rank equally and everyone is the head of his department"¹⁰⁷ was certain of failure because of the absence of an accepted authority. The attempt to govern a country as though it were a corporate company failed because it was so efficient in eliminating social problems that it created widespread unemployment amongst those professions - such as law, defence, medicine and the Civil Service - accustomed to dealing with these problems.¹⁰⁸ Gilbert distrusted the short-term panaceas proposed by governments to cure social problems.¹⁰⁹ Gilbert was not revealed in the operas as a conservative but rather as a champion of the two party system.¹¹⁰ His criticism of its shortcomings suggest more

105 Willis, Iolanthe II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.362.

106 Webb, op.cit., p.343.

107 Guiseppe, Gondoliers II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.138.

108 Utopia Ltd., ibid., pp.658-659.

109 Lawrence, op.cit., Victorian Studies, Vol. 15, September 1971, p.180.

110 King, Utopia Ltd. II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.659.

The King decrees: "From this moment, government by party is adopted, with all its attendant blessings and henceforth Utopia will no longer be a Monarchy Limited, but what is a great deal better, a Limited Monarchy!"

that he supported the liberal principle of continuing reform of the political system.

As a young man, Gilbert had had a decidedly unsuccessful career as a barrister.¹¹¹ It was the strength of personal experience which left him with such a hearty contempt for the law. The operas suggested that considerable reform of the legal system was needed. This was an opinion shared by many people in society. Weaknesses in the British legal system were ridiculed in 'Trial by Jury', the second opera in the Gilbert and Sullivan series. Far from being impartial, the jurors were shown to have decided upon their verdict long before the evidence had even been given,¹¹² and blindly sympathetic towards the attractive plaintiff whose breach of promise case was being heard.¹¹³ The judge was shown as corrupt and devoid of moral scruples.¹¹⁴ The ultimate contempt came when the judge solved the whole dilemma himself: "Put your briefs upon the shelf // I will marry her myself".¹¹⁵ The satire in 'Trial by Jury' was not as deep as might be found in the later operas, and remained good-humoured throughout. The operetta was produced in 1875 at a time when major reforms of the legal system were being introduced. In 1873, Gladstone accomplished a comprehensive reform of the law, bringing to a climax the improvements of the preceding sixty

111 Pearson, op.cit., pp.14-17.

112 Chorus, Trial by Jury, Gilbert, op.cit., p.583.

113 Chorus, ibid., pp.591-592.

114 Judge, ibid., p.586.

Judge: All the thieves who could my fees afford
Relied on my orations
And many a burglar I've restored
To his friends and his relations.

115 Ibid., p.596.

years¹¹⁶. "These reforms", writes Webb, "created the present structure of the English courts".¹¹⁷ Gilbert also recognised the power still exercised by the judiciary, and in 'Mikado', he made "every judge ... his own executioner".¹¹⁸ If every judge were aware of the consequences of the sentence he passed, Gilbert proposed, then the operation of the law would be radically different. In 'Mikado', Gilbert was conscious of the situation during the first half of the century, when the British criminal code was one of the harshest in Europe.¹¹⁹ In consequence of the severe penalties, J.J. Tobias notes, "both victims and magistrates were very reluctant to send to prison anyone of apparent good character, and especially youngsters."¹²⁰ But by the 1880's, the system of detection and law enforcement had improved so remarkably, that Gilbert's reference to a harsh criminal code in 'Mikado' would not have appeared topical.¹²¹ Thus in his treatment of the law, much of Gilbert's popular appeal rose from the fact that his satire was not topical. By referring to the unreformed legal code, Gilbert was not merely justifying these reforms, he was also demonstrating the advantages of a legal system which - despite its shortcomings - could constantly improve itself.

However, Gilbert's references to the complexity and ambiguity of legal terminology was topical. In 'Mikado', Ko Ko was able to account for his failure to obey the commands of the Mikado by explaining: "When

116 Webb, op.cit., p.341.

117 Ibid.

118 Pooh-Bah, Mikado I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.7.

119 Webb, op.cit., p.174.

120 J.J. Tobias, Crime and Industrial Society in the Nineteenth Century (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972), p.238.

121 Ibid., p.289.

your Majesty says 'Let a thing be done' it is as good as done - because your Majesty's will is law."¹²² According to Gilbert, if the law were open to such wide interpretation, it might also be simply altered. In 'Iolanthe' a problem of legal interpretation was succinctly overcome by using the negative:

Lord Chancellor: The thing is really quite simple - the insertion of a single word will do it. Let it stand that every fairy shall die who doesn't marry a mortal.¹²³

In both 'Gondoliers' and 'Utopia Ltd.' Gilbert ridiculed the phraseology of Company Law. In 'Gondoliers', the Duke of Plaza Toro had floated himself as a Limited Company, with, however, the attending danger that his daughter, Casilda might one day "witness her honoured sire in the process of liquidation."¹²⁴ In 'Utopia Ltd.' an:

... Invention new
The Joint Stock Company's Act -
The Act of Sixty-Two¹²⁵

had enabled the island Kingdom of Utopia to become a Limited Company. This was Gilbert's only direct reference to a specific Act.

Gilbert also heeded of the manner in which the language of the law might be twisted by a skilful barrister. In 'Iolanthe', the Lord

¹²² Ko Ko, Mikado II, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.54.

¹²³ Lord Chancellor, Iolanthe II, *ibid.*, p.379.

¹²⁴ Casilda, Gondoliers II, *ibid.*, p.109.

¹²⁵ Chorus, Utopia Ltd. I, *ibid.*, p.638.

Chancellor boasted that:

I'll never throw dust in a juryman's eyes
 (Said I to myself, - said I)
 Or hoodwink a judge who is not otherwise
 (Said I to myself - said I)
 Or assume that the witness, summoned in force
 In Exchequer, Queens Bench, Common Pleas or Divorce
 Have perjured themselves as a matter of course.¹²⁶

However, the reforms of 1873 had replaced the Exchequer, Queens Bench and Common pleas with a single Supreme Court of Judicature, as well as greatly simplifying the language of the law.¹²⁷ In 'Iolanthe', Gilbert merely justified reforms that had taken effect nine years earlier. In 'Penzance', the dramatist indicated that there was a law for the rich and influential, and another for the poor. It was discovered of the pirates that "They are no members of the common throng // They are all noblemen who have gone wrong."¹²⁸ Thus, because of their position in society, the pirates were absolved from their former crimes. Gilbert's satire of the legal system was both topical and penetrating in his later operas; in these, he demonstrated that the words 'law' and 'justice' were by no means synonymous, and might even on occasion be contradictory.

It was the wealthy who were in a position to exploit the law. In 'Utopia Ltd.', for example, the Joint Stock Companies Act of 1862 provided the opportunity for entrepreneurs to escape responsibility for

¹²⁶ Lord Chancellor, *Iolanthe* I, *ibid.*, p.348.

¹²⁷ Webb, *op.cit.*, p.341.

¹²⁸ Ruth, *Pirates of Penzance* II, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.483.

debts.¹²⁹

If you come to grief and your creditors are craving
 (For nothing that is planned by mortal head
 Is certain in this Vale of Sorrow - saving
 That one's Liability is Limited), -
 Do you suppose that signifies perdition?
 If so, you're but a monetary dunce -
 You merely file a Winding-up Petition
 And start another Company at once!¹³⁰

Gilbert was as bitter in condemning the capitalist in the 1890's
 who could repudiate his debts, as he had been sympathetic to the poor
 in the 1860's who could find no escape. In a 'Bab Ballad', Gilbert
 had described Christmas as 'celebrated' by the poor:

They've seen the ghastly pantomine
 They've felt its blighting breath
 They know that rollicking Christmas-time
 Meant cold and want and death -
 Starvation - Poor low Union fare,
 And deadly cramp and bills
 And illness - illness everywhere
 And crime and Christmas bills.¹³¹

These two passages reveal Gilbert's strong social conscience. It was
 necessary to conceal his feelings in order not to alienate his public,
 but on occasion Gilbert's disgust at social injustice became apparent.
 The law seemed to protect the rich. In 'Yeomen of the Guard', Jack
 Point, in dire need of money, was prepared to sacrifice Elsie in

129 G.D.H. Cole and R. Postgate, The Common People
 (London, 1968), p.331.

This Act was the culmination of reforms dating from the 1840's.

130 Chorus, Utopia Ltd. I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.483.

131 'At a Pantomine' quoted in Baily, op.cit., p.88.

marriage to Fairfax for one hundred crowns.¹³² Point was not motivated by personal desire for wealth, as he explained since Elsie's mother:

... Old Bridget Maynard travels with us (for Elsie is a good girl),¹³³ but the old woman is a-bed with a fever, and we have come to pick up some silver to buy an electuary for her.¹³⁴

Point was shown as not merely being poor, but also closely involved with Elsie's family difficulties. Only those fortunate enough to be within the wealthier ranks of society could afford to refuse an offer of easy money. Point was a victim of circumstances, unlike Pooh-Bah, who lived by taking bribes¹³⁵ or the Duke of Plaza Toro who could sell his name and become a limited liability company¹³⁶ in order to survive financially without having to seek employment.¹³⁷ The poor did not even have the protection of the law, and the opportunity for social advancement was almost non-existent.

When the poor committed a crime out of necessity, Gilbert indicated the law was swift to prosecute. But when a company director declared bankrupt, not only was he protected by the law, but, in 'Utopia Ltd.', won the sympathy of society. Money was considered a source of

132 R.J. Hall, 'The Satire of 'Yeomen of the Guard', Modern Language Notes, Vol. LXXIII, November 1958. p.495.

133 This moralistic statement in parenthesis is of interest. It indicated a further surrender to the opinions of an audience who might have considered it improper for a heroine in an opera to accompany a man unless married or chaperoned.

134 Point, *Yeomen of the Guard* I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.399.

135 Pooh-Bah, *Mikado* II, *ibid.*, p.37.

136 Utopia Ltd. I, *ibid.*, p.636.

In 'Utopia Ltd.', it was indicated that it was preferable to have a board of directors who were aristocrats.

137 Duke, *Gondoliers* I, *ibid.*, pp.108-109.

corruption. In 'Patience', the corpulent poet, Bunthorne, in a forlorn attempt to capture the affection of Patience by appearing brutishly materialistic, confessed:

Patience, you don't like poetry? - well, between
you and me, I don't like poetry ... What's the
use of yearning for Elysian Fields when you
know you can't get 'em and would only let 'em
out on building leases if you had 'em?¹³⁸

In the operas, the desire to accumulate personal wealth or property motivated most of the major characters, including Guiseppe and Marco, who would: "make everything cheap, except gondolas."¹³⁹ All people, Gilbert concluded were basically materialist.

Gilbert's satire penetrated even more deeply when he questioned the hypocrisy surrounding the moral attitudes of society. Prostitution had been forced underground in Victorian England, but the sensational trial of the journalist, W.T. Stead in 1885 exposed the hypocrisy of society's inflexible moral code.¹⁴⁰ Gilbert's objects for satire were not always topical issues, but it was more than coincidence that in 'Mikado' (performed first in March 1885) that a decree was issued commanding:

That all who flirted, leered or winked
(Unless connubially linked)
Should forthwith be beheaded.¹⁴¹

138 Bunthorne, *Patience I*, *ibid.*, p.175.

139 Guiseppe, *Gondoliers I*, *ibid.*, p.120.

140 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.406.

141 Pish Tush, *Mikado I*, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.6.

Gilbert was making a clear reference, if not to the Stead case, at least to one of the more controversial issues of legal reform - those laws concerning prostitution. Furthermore, he was alluding to a topic generally considered unmentionable, and which, if anything might have alienated the support of the more conservative members of his audience.

Frequent reference was made in the operas to large families. In 'Pinafore', Sir Joseph Porter was accompanied by "his sisters and his cousins and his aunts",¹⁴² whilst in 'Penzance', General Stanley was joined by his: "four and twenty daughters".¹⁴³ Although such large casts helped augment the chorus, they also reflected the large families which were characteristic of Victorian society. However, the size of middle-class families, which during the early years of Victoria's reign had been large - between six and nine children¹⁴⁴ - by the 1880's had fallen to two or three.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, most members of Gilbert's audience would probably have grown up in large families and found Gilbert's exaggeration of family sizes a source of amusement.

Late marriage was customary, since it was expected a husband refrain from marriage until he was capable of supporting a family.¹⁴⁶ This served to reinforce the principle that the father was master of the house. The sentimental Captain Corcoran in 'Pinafore', was an illustration of an understanding, although not necessarily enlightened figure of Victorian fatherhood who "... in a matter of the heart ... would not coerce his

142 Chorus, Pinafore I, *ibid.*, p.68.

143 Pirates I, *ibid.*, p.452.

144 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.404.

145 Ensor, *op.cit.*, p.272.

146 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.405.

daughter."¹⁴⁷ However, many of Gilbert's father figures were henpecked. Gianetta and Tessa in 'Gondoliers' nagged Guiseppe and Marco shortly after their wedding, and displayed a lack of trust in their husbands' fidelity.¹⁴⁸ In the same opera, the Duchess of Plaza Toro did most of the talking on behalf of her henpecked husband,¹⁴⁹ whilst the massive Katisha in 'Mikado' completely overawed Ko Ko.¹⁵⁰ In the operas, it was apparent that the father-figure was not always master of his house. Such amusing references questioning the role of the father as head of the family appealed particularly to male members of the audience.

Women were expected to be dutiful wives to their husbands. The 'three little maids' in 'Mikado' typified the subservient model of Victorian womanhood.¹⁵¹ The narrow life of an exclusive girls school had made prudes of these three, and prepared them for little more in life than marriage. Zara in 'Utopia Ltd.', had also been educated at an exclusive college, Girton, and this education, she claimed, enabled her to sort "the wheat from the chaff ... At Girton, all is wheat, and chaff is never heard within its walls".¹⁵² Girton college was an exclusive girls school established by Emily Davies at Hitchin in 1869.¹⁵³ During the 1870's, the education of women was given much encouragement.¹⁵⁴ The light opera 'Princess Ida' concerned the establishment of a women's

147 Corcoran, Pinafore I, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.66.

148 Tessa and Gianetta, Gondoliers I, *ibid.*, p.127.

149 Duchess, *ibid.*, p.145.

150 Katisha, Mikado II, *ibid.*, p.54.

151 *Ibid.*, p.14.

152 Zara, Utopia Ltd. II, p.640.

153 Ensor, *op.cit.*, p.149.

154 Webb, *op.cit.*, p.407.

university, which would confer degrees only upon those who deserved to graduate. "You'll find no sham degrees for noblewomen here",¹⁵⁵ warned Ida. Gilbert took the idea for the play from Tennyson's poem 'The Princess', but he was not the only one inspired by the poet-laureate, for in 1883:

Thomas Holloway ... was inspired by memories
of Tennyson's 'Princess' to build Holloway
College as the nucleus of a separate residential
women's university.¹⁵⁶

Holloway College failed in its ambitious programme because of lack of support;¹⁵⁷ Castle Adamant failed because it misunderstood human nature:

It were profanity
For poor humanity
To treat as vanity
The sway of Love¹⁵⁸

Gilbert was sympathetic towards the education of women, but nevertheless exhibited a prejudice against women seeking employment in certain professions. Hence "lady novelists" were included in Gilbert's list of people who "never would be missed",¹⁵⁹ since Gilbert considered literature was a man's profession. Thus the evidence suggests that Gilbert was rather ahead of his time in the opinions he expressed concerning the rights of women.

155 Ida, Princess Ida II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.235.

156 Ensor, op.cit., p.150.

157 Ibid.

158 Chorus, Princess Ida III, Gilbert, op.cit., p.263.

159 Ko Ko, Mikado I, ibid., p.11.

In 'Gondoliers', Marco's madrigal 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes' was a fine instance of Gilbert's satire of romantic love.¹⁶⁰ The anti-climax in this example came when Tessa and Gianetta arrived at Barataria and began quizzing their husbands.¹⁶¹ Ko Ko's love song 'Tit Willow', with its absurdly sentimental theme, was sufficient to woo Katisha.¹⁶² Gilbert also satirised the romantic ideal of love lasting till eternity. The suggestion that Nanki-Poo continue his travels and attempt to forget Yum-Yum was reminiscent of Max's temporary exile in 'Freischutz', and in both instances exile merely strengthened the romantic relationship.¹⁶³ However, the love-sick maidens in 'Patience' boasted that: "Twenty years hence, we shall be // Twenty love-sick maidens still".¹⁶⁴ This stretched the romantic notion of fidelity to absurd lengths, particularly as the emotional attachments of these maidens fluctuated constantly. The love-sick maidens were the daughters of wealthy middle-class families who, in their idleness had nothing better to do with their time than to pretend to be in love with the obese poet, Burthorne. They had rejected the officers of the Dragoon guards, the traditional cliché heroes, criticising the colour scheme of the men's uniforms: "red and yellow! Primary colours! Oh South Kensington!"¹⁶⁵ to which an offended Colonel replied, after the maidens had withdrawn, "a uniform that has been as successful

160 Marco, *Gondoliers* II, p.134.

161 Gianetta and Tessa, *ibid.*, pp.135-136.

162 Ko Ko, *Mikado* II, *ibid.*, p.51.

163 Nanki-Poo, *ibid.*, pp.23 and 32.

164 Chorus, *Patience* I, p.161.

165 Jane, *ibid.*, p.171.

in the courts of Venus as on the field of Mars!"¹⁶⁶ The symbol of the heroic soldier-figure of romantic opera was further parodied in 'Princess Ida',¹⁶⁷ and 'Utopia Ltd.',¹⁶⁸ whilst in 'Iolanthe', Private Willis married the Queen of the Fairies, not for emotional, but for purely chivalrous reasons, remarking "well, Ma'am, I don't think much of the British soldier who wouldn't ill-convenience himself to save a female in distress."¹⁶⁹ Robin Oakapple in 'Ruddigore' was the opposite of the brusque guards - he was modest and shy in his wooing of Rose, discussing the weather and all subjects bar the one which concerned them both.

Gilbert differentiated between the naive but sincere behaviour of characters such as Rose and Robin, and the artificial code of manners required by society. Captain Corcoran was forbidden from using strong language by Sir Joseph.¹⁷⁰ In 'Penzance', Frederick was driven from his place of concealment at the prospect of General Stanley's daughters displaying their ankles in preparation for bathing. In mock-horror he exclaimed:

... I had intended
Not to intrude myself upon your notice
In this effective but alarming costume,
But under these peculiar circumstances
It is my bounden duty to inform you
That your proceedings will not be unwitnessed.¹⁷¹

166 Colonel, *ibid.*

167 Chorus, *Ida I*, *ibid.*, p.217.

168 Troopers, *Utopia Ltd. I*, p.621.

169 Willis, *Iolanthe II*, p.380.

170 Sir Joseph, *Pinafore I*, *ibid.*, p.71.

171 Frederick, *Pirates of Penzance I*, *ibid.*, p.452.

The artificiality of social etiquette was parodied in 'Utopia Ltd.', where Lady Sophy was instructing Zara's sisters on how they should behave in polite society:

When a man of rank and title
His position first discloses,
Always cock your little noses
When at home let all the class
Try this in the looking glass.
English girls of well-bred notions
Shun all unrehearsed emotions
English girls of highest class
Practise them before the glass.¹⁷²

In 'Gondoliers', the Duke also attempted to offer instruction in social etiquette, demonstrating to Marco and Guiseppe how a monarch should behave.¹⁷³ The entrance of the Mikado and his procession represented an even more formal spectacle of court behaviour on the stage.¹⁷⁴ Such exaggerated behaviour Gilbert illustrated as being artificial. Robin Oakapple's boyish shyness was far more genuine than Lady Sophy's class rehearsing modes of etiquette before mirrors. Cultivated good manners were, to Gilbert, another manifestation of the hypocrisy in society that he so much despised.

Indeed, in the operas, good-manners were perceived very much as a matter of common courtesy. The list of discourteous people "who never would be missed" in 'Mikado', included autograph hunters, those who dressed lavishly, cynics who praised: "with enthusiastic tone, // All centuries but this and every country but his own"¹⁷⁵ as well as

172 Lady Sophy, Utopia Ltd. I, *ibid.*, p.613.

173 Duke and Duchess, Gondoliers II, *ibid.*, p.153.

174 Mikado II, *ibid.*, p.38.

175 Ko Ko, *ibid.*, p.10.

politicians "of a compromising kind".¹⁷⁶ King Gama, Princess Ida's father, had made a personal study of bad manners and boasted that:

I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer.
To everybody's prejudice I know a thing or two;
I can tell a woman's age in half a minute - and I do.¹⁷⁷

In contrast, the peers in 'Iolanthe' had firm views on good manners, and considered it "shocking taste"¹⁷⁸ for the Queen to insist that Strephon was her son, despite the obvious similarity in their ages.¹⁷⁹ The naive Rose Maybud was perhaps Gilbert's finest example of a sincere character confused by social etiquette. She was puzzled by the book of etiquette she read, and remarked:

The man who bites his bread or eats his peas
with a knife, I look upon as a lost creature,
and he who has not acquired the proper way of
entering and leaving a room is the object of
my pitying horror ... In truth I could pursue
this painful theme much further, but behold,
I have said enough.¹⁸⁰

It was Rose's natural good manners that prevented her from making comparisons which a literal reading of her book of etiquette might have prompted, and which would cause offence. To Gilbert, natural good manners were far more virtuous than studied etiquette. The former was

176 Lawrence, *op.cit.*, Victorian Studies, Vol. 15. September 1971, p.172. It is highly probable that Gilbert was making a veiled reference to Gladstone.

177 King Gama, Princess Ida I, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.218.

178 Peers, *Iolanthe* I, *ibid.*, pp.35-37.

179 *Ibid.*, p.356.

"But to find a mother younger than her son is very curious //
And that's the kind of mother that is usually spurious."

180 Rose, *Ruddigore* I, *ibid.*, p.491.

honest, the latter hypocritical.

In 'Patience', it was not so much the Aesthetic movement, established by Swinburne and Wilde that Gilbert was parodying, but rather as the debasing of any popular movement when adopted by insincere adherents.¹⁸¹ Once a movement became fashionable in society, Gilbert showed it attracted charlatans. Bunthorne and Grosvenor illustrated this perfectly. Bunthorne, when confronting his rival confessed:

It's no use, I can't live without admiration.
Since Grosvenor came here, insipidity has been
at a premium.¹⁸²

Grosvenor replied:

I assure you, if you could only suggest some
means whereby, consistent with my duty to
society, I could escape these inconvenient
attentions, you could earn my everlasting
gratitude.¹⁸³

Bunthorne offered a compromise - Grosvenor must abandon his pretentious behaviour:

Your conversation must henceforth be perfectly
matter-of-fact. You must cut your hair and
have a back parting. In appearance and costume,
you must be absolutely common-place.¹⁸⁴

The exaggerated gestures characteristic of Aestheticism were parodied

181 Stedman, *op.cit.*, Modern Philology, Vol. 66. August 1968, p.57.

182 Bunthorne, *Patience II*, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.201.

183 Grosvenor, *ibid.*

184 Bunthorne, *ibid.*, p.202.

by the grotesque attempt by the Duke, Colonel and Major to mimic Bunthorne.¹⁸⁵

Aestheticism, however, only became a target for ridicule only after the original plot had been abandoned. Gilbert explained to Sullivan:

The Genesis of 'Patience' is to be found in the Bab Ballad called 'The Rival Curates'. In the original draft of the M.S. of my play, Reginald Bunthorne and Archibald Grosvenor were two clergymen belonging to two adjoining parishes as in the ballad ... While I was engaged upon the construction of the plot, I became uneasy at the thought of the danger I was incurring at dealing so freely with members of the clerical order, and felt myself crippled at every turn by the necessity of protecting myself from the charge of irreverence.¹⁸⁶

Gilbert was obliged to be tactful. The second half of the century witnessed religious differences as significant if not as profound as those earlier in the century that had finally culminated in the Oxford movement.¹⁸⁷ In 1851, for example, society was appalled by a census which revealed that slightly over one third of the population attended Church.¹⁸⁸ In response, all denominations made a tremendous effort to "evangelize and civilize those who seem to have been deprived of the Christian message by the growth of population or the failures of previous centuries."¹⁸⁹ To mock those who made this effort was

185 Trio, *ibid.*, p.197.

186 Gilbert, letter to Arthur Sullivan 1st November, 1880 quoted in R. Allen, *op.cit.*, pp.139-140.

187 Webb, *op.cit.*, pp.409-412.

188 G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (London, 1963), p.149.

189 *Ibid.*, p.176.

unthinkable. Gilbert, as a consumer-composer could not risk offending public opinion by even mild satire of the clergy. A change of subject was needed. The idea of substituting 'aesthetes' for 'curates' in the opera came upon the dramatist suddenly, and enabled Gilbert to use the same idea in a less vulnerable context.¹⁹⁰ Gilbert was successful and Jane Stedman remarks:

... the Reverend Charles Dodgson, who a year before had publicly denounced Gilbert for laughing at pale curates, breathed a sigh of relief "... 'Patience' ... is entirely unobjectionable, which one is glad to be able to say to one of Gilbert's plays".¹⁹¹

By 1881, Gilbert, the successful playwright and provider of light entertainment took care to avoid offending the sensibilities of his audience but also exercised artistic licence. Those who had read 'The Rival Curates' could not fail to recognise its similarity to 'Patience', yet even the most vehement critic could not accuse Gilbert of irreverence.

In the other operas, matters pertaining to religion were scarcely ever mentioned or were abstained from altogether. Dr. Daly in 'The Sorcerer' was a very insignificant vicar in a very insignificant village.¹⁹²

190 Stedman, op.cit., Modern Philology, Vol. 66. August 1968, pp.48-49.

191 Ibid., p.58.

192 Dr. Daly, *The Sorcerer* I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.545.

Dr. Daly recalls: Time was when Love and I were well acquainted ...
Time was when maidens of the highest station,
Forsaking even military men,
Would gaze upon me in rapt adoration -
Ah me, I was a fair young curate then.

Stedman, op.cit., Modern Philology, Vol. 66. August 1968, p.49.
Jane Stedman has noted how the theme of the above passage is closely reflected in 'Patience'.

Unaware that supernatural forces were at work, he was delighted that:

"All the village now have mated // All are happy as can be -".¹⁹³

However, Gilbert avoided the temptation of using Dr. Daly as a symbol of good triumphing over evil. Wells' incantation in casting the spell, with its chorus of fiends,¹⁹⁴ was followed, in complete contrast, by a most innocuous tea-party.¹⁹⁵ In 'Gondoliers', the confusion concerning the identity of the rightful heir to the throne of Barataria arose because the Grand Inquisitor had abducted the heir after the old King:

that misguided monarch had abandoned the creed
of his forefathers, and became a Wesleyan
Methodist of the most bigoted and persecuting type.¹⁹⁶

This reference - the only one concerning religious matters in the opera - was a brief comment upon the inroads made by Methodism throughout the nineteenth century upon the congregations of the Established Church.¹⁹⁷ Satire of the Church, and of religious matters in general, was conspicuous by its absence. Gilbert understood that any serious reference to religion would inevitably cause offence and was therefore best omitted. The substitution of 'aesthetes' for 'curates' in 'Patience' indicated that Gilbert, heedful of public opinion, considered himself primarily an entertainer, and only secondarily a social critic.

The rivalry between 'light' and 'serious' music was more obviously satirised. In 'Gondoliers', Gilbert, taking advantage of the Italian

193 Dr. Daly, *The Sorcerer* II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.571.

194 Chorus, *ibid.*, pp.560-562.

195 *Ibid.*, p.163.

196 Duke, *Gondoliers* I, *ibid.*, p.108.

197 Kitson Clark, op.cit., p.171.

stage setting parodied Italian opera by using strongly accented syllables: "Till then enjoy your dolce far niente // With pleasure, nobody contradicente".¹⁹⁸ This passage was then followed by a brief dialogue in Italian. The artificial barriers that divided audiences into those who preferred concerts and Italian opera and those preferring lighter entertainment was commented upon in 'Mikado', where a decree was issued commanding:

The music-hall singer attends a series
Of masses and fugues and 'ops
By Bach interwoven
With Spohr and Beethoven
And classical Monday Pops.¹⁹⁹

By this juxtaposition of two contradictory ideas, Gilbert exposed the distinction between light and serious music.

Gilbert possessed a keen sense of national pride, and never ridiculed the British Empire. In 'Pinafore', Gilbert satirised those who migrated to other countries, and abandoned the land of their birth. Ralph, despite his lowly circumstances, boasted:

... in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman!²⁰⁰

Loyalty to the Queen compelled the surrender of the pirates in 'Penzance',²⁰¹ whilst the vain attempt by Robin to abduct Rose in 'Ruddigore' was

198 Fiametta and Antonio, Gondoliers I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.100.

199 Chorus, Mikado II, ibid., p.40.

200 Boatswain, Pinafore II, ibid., p.89.

201 King, Penzance II, ibid., p.482.

frustrated by the arrival of Richard Dauntless waving the Union Jack, "a flag that none dare defy".²⁰² 'Ruddigore' was performed some thirty years after the Don Pacifico incident, and this reference would probably have been associated more readily with imperial expansion in Africa.²⁰³ Richard typified the jingoist British sailor, and introduced himself in the opera in a song boasting the martial superiority of the "sturdy British salt" over the Frenchman.²⁰⁴ This ballad was reminiscent, in sentiment, to the 'shanty', given the sailors in 'Pinafore' by Sir Joseph Porter.²⁰⁵ Both ridicule, by exaggeration, ultra-nationalist sentiment.²⁰⁶ In 'Utopia Ltd.', the basis of British power rested upon force, according to Captain Corcoran:

I'll teach you how we rule the sea
And terrify the simple Gauls;
And how the Saxon and the Celt
Their Europe-shaking blows have dealt
With Maxim gun and Nordenfelt.²⁰⁷

Here, too, the French were considered the traditional enemies of the British, but it is of interest that the two weapons cited, by which British power was maintained, were both manufactured under licence by Krupp. The light opera ended with an elegy, apparently exalting the

202 Richard, *Ruddigore II*, p.523.

203 Woodward, *The Age of Reform 1815-1870*, Oxford History of England (London, 1962), pp.246-247.

204 Richard, *Ruddigore II*, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.496.

205 Ralph, *Pinafore I*, *ibid.*, p.73.

206 *Ibid.*

A British sailor is described as a creature whose "... foot should stamp and his throat should growl".

207 Corcoran, *Utopia Ltd. I*, *ibid.*, p.634.

British Isles:

There's a little group of isles beyond the wave
 So tiny that you might almost wonder where it is -
 That nation is the bravest of the brave
 And cowards are the rarest of all rarities.
 The proudest nations kneel at her command;
 She terrifies all foreign-born rascallions;
 And holds the peace of Europe in her hand
 With half a score invincible battalions!
 Such at least is the tale
 Which is borne on the gale
 From the island which dwells in the sea.
 Let us hope, for her sake
 That she makes no mistake -
 That she's all she professes to be.²⁰⁸

In this example, Gilbert questioned whether the tremendous responsibility of maintaining peace could be accomplished with a tiny army.²⁰⁹

Gilbert also observed, however, that the jingoists and super-patriots had, through their vaunting, created an image of British power which needed to be proven. Although he was proud of his nation, Gilbert considered the chauvinist a liability.

In the light operas, Gilbert had developed a technique for expressing his opinions in a generalised and overt manner. His idiom of 'topsy-turvydom' provided a front behind which he was, to a certain extent, able to ridicule often controversial topics. This allowed Gilbert a measure of artistic licence and in consequence he was able in some measure to avoid the danger of becoming a prisoner of public demand. As an entertainer, however, Gilbert had always to be conscious of the prejudices and preferences of his audience. His satire could be both

208 Zara, *ibid.*, p.660.

209 Lawrence, *op.cit.*, Victorian Studies, Vol. 15. September 1971, p.162.

highly topical - referring directly to affairs of current interest - and retrospective. Gilbert developed the Savoy opera as a vehicle to both entertain and satirise the hypocrisy of Victorian society.

CHAPTER 5.

"Gilbert Assessed".

Gilbert had developed the Savoy opera as an apparatus for social criticism. As such, the texts provide a valuable documentary of Victorian social attitudes. However, to complete an assessment of the operas, an examination of Gilbert's literary techniques is required. In his treatment of plot, characterisation and setting, Gilbert is closely identified with an established Victorian theatrical tradition.¹ However, Gilbert is distinguished from his contemporaries because of his success in using musical comedy to disguise and temper the impact of wide-ranging social satire. Like Sullivan, Gilbert was obliged to entertain rather than exert his artistic freedom. A literary examination suggests that in the last three operas, Gilbert had become cynical towards rather than frustrated by the limitations of the Savoy theatre. This cynicism on the part of the dramatist, coupled with the frustration felt by the musician, explains the gradual dissolution of the Savoy partnership.

Satire was at the very core of the Savoy operas. Consequently, the characters in the operas were rather caricatures, and lack an individual identity.² It is, however, tempting to read deeply into

1 R. Allen, Gilbert - An Anniversary Survey (New York, 1961), pp.10-11.

2 G. Lambton, Gilbertian Characters and a Discourse on W.S. Gilbert's Philosophy (London, 1931), pp.52-54.

Gilbert's characters. One authority, Clarence Day, has gone so far as to comment:

To go back to Gilbert, the people in his operas are frontiersmen, not geographically, but emotionally. The orderly emotional surroundings are exchanged in these operas for scenes of the most frightful turbulence.³

In discussing Gilbert's feminine characters, another authority, G. Lambton, has remarked: "The rapturous maidens of 'Patience' are ordinary society girls with too much money and too little to do."⁴ This expresses a satirical comment conveyed through the behaviour of certain characters. Jane Stedman, in her penetrating study of Gilbert's older female characters maintained that these possess "sufficient identity to seem women in their own right".⁵ The degree of realism portrayed in Gilbert's characters is debatable and relatively unimportant since the operas form a unit, where music, characterisation, plot, libretto and orchestration all combine as a social commentary.⁶

The characters in the operas were motivated by a common theme of duty or social obligation. This theme reflected closely the rigidity of class divisions, where each individual had obligations expected of his class in society. Frederick in 'Penzance' described himself as "the slave of duty",⁷ whilst Captain Corcoran fulfilled his duty at the conclusion of 'Pinafore' by exchanging places with Ralph, once it

3 Clarence Day, The Mikado and Other Plays (New York, 1956), Introduction pp.(ix) - (x).

4 Lambton, op.cit., p.63.

5 Jane Stedman, 'Gilbert and Transvestism', Victorian Studies, September 1970, p.44.

6 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan (New York, 1958), pp.(xvi) and (xvii).

7 Pirates of Penzance I, Gilbert, The Savoy Operas (New York, 1967), p.444.

was discovered that the latter was the rightful captain.⁸ A similar denouement occurred in 'Gondoliers'.⁹ Richard Dauntless, in 'Ruddigore' believed it to be his duty to act "accordin' to my heart's dictates"¹⁰ which was a relatively easy task for a sailor no longer bound by social restrictions.¹¹ Nanki-Poo, escaped his duty of being compelled to marry Katisha by running away and following his own "heart's dictates",¹² but Patience confessed that she only loved Bunthorne because it was her duty.¹³ It was this motivation of duty that served to manipulate Gilbert's characters rather like marionettes at a pantomime. In each instance, the theme of duty reflected a code of behaviour generally expected in society.

As a consumer-composer, humour was a vital ingredient in contributing towards Gilbert's popularity. His style of wit varied, and at times could be heavily sardonic. For example, the Mikado, on hearing that Ko Ko has unwittingly decapitated his only son, remarked: "Dear, dear, dear! this is very tiresome."¹⁴ The means by which Marco and Guiseppe randomly selected their brides,¹⁵ might be considered unusual unless it were realized that, contrary to the theatrical conventions of romantic love, Gilbert had intended that any two 'contadine' would be suitable.

8 Pinafore II, *ibid.*, p.93.

9 Gondoliers II, *ibid.*, p.156.

10 Ruddigore I, *ibid.*, p.504.

11 Ensemble, Ruddigore I, *ibid.*, p.505.

In sailing o'er life's ocean wide
No doubt the heart should be your guide
But it is awkward when you find
A heart that does not know its mind!

12 Mikado II, *ibid.*, p.38.

13 Patience II, *ibid.*, p.193.

14 Mikado II, *ibid.*, p.44.

15 Gondoliers I, *ibid.*, pp.104-105.

It was necessary for both gondoliers to be married for the complication of accidental bigamy to occur once it had been discovered that whichever brother was King, had already been married by secret agreement. In 'The Sorcerer' after John Wellington Wells had been condemned to die, he accepted his fate, briefly and unsentimentally uttering a mere two-line farewell: "So be it! I submit! My fate is sealed. // To public execration thus I yield".¹⁶

The only really tragic character in Gilbert and Sullivan light opera, was Jack Point. Point collapsed 'insensible' at the conclusion of the opera, having been jilted by Elsie (partly as a result of his own weaknesses)¹⁷ and cheated by Fairfax. Point, a jester providing amusement for a paying public to whom he was no more than a servant¹⁸ has been interpreted as a reflection of Gilbert's own personality.¹⁹ Hall, however, dismisses this argument, since Point's jokes are deliberately feeble²⁰ and also since the attempt to make Point a tragic figure fails.²¹ Some ambiguity exists as to whether Gilbert intended Point to die at the end of the opera, as Henry Lytton originally played the part, or whether this was merely artistic licence on the part of the actor.²² The secondary characters in 'Yeomen of the Guard' are also significantly different from those in other Gilbert and Sullivan operas. "They are", writes Hall, "callous, selfish, ungrateful,

16 Sorcerer II, *ibid.*, p.577.

17 R. Hall, 'The Satire of Yeomen of the Guard' Modern Language Notes Vol. LXXIII, (November, 1958), p.492.

18 Yeomen of the Guard I, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.401.

19 I. Goldberg, The Story of Gilbert & Sullivan (London, 1929), p.364.

20 Hall, *loc.cit.*, pp.494-495.

21 *Ibid.*, p.497.

22 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert & Sullivan, p.342.

if not actively repulsive".²³ Certainly, Colonel Fairfax, described in the play as "the bravest, handsomest and the best young gentleman in England!"²⁴ proved to be a blackguard.²⁵ The 'Yeomen of the Guard' warrants careful analysis; it was the fourth last of the Gilbert and Sullivan series. Although the music might still have been fresh and original, the librettos of the preceding operas had fallen into a distinctive pattern, of which the 'Yeomen' is a decided exception.²⁶ In this opera, Gilbert had attempted to vary his style and expand the range of the Savoy works.

Few of Gilbert's heroes could be described as being brave. Mostly they were 'anti-heroes' - not actually cowardly, but nevertheless reluctant to face violent conflict. The Duke of Plaza Toro boasted of his leadership of the household troops: "He occasionally led them into action. He invariably led them out of it."²⁷ In 'Penzance' the police were particularly reluctant to face the pirates,²⁸ whilst Strephon, in 'Iolanthe', thwarted by the Lord Chancellor, broke down in tears.²⁹ G. Lambton has described Alexis, in 'The Sorcerer', as "a parody of the chocolate-soldier hero of the Victorian stage, and like that type, he appears in uniform, and looks very fine, though not as fine as he thinks."³⁰ Most of Gilbert's characters were typical

23 Hall, loc.cit., p.497.

24 Yeomen of the Guard I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.388.

25 Hall, loc.cit., p.497.

26 Ibid.

27 Gondoliers I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.109.

28 Penzance II, ibid., p.468.

29 Strephon, Iolanthe I, ibid., p.349.

30 Lambton, op.cit., p.56.

facsimiles of the Victorian theatre, except certain of their human weaknesses were exaggerated. In order to colour the mock-heroic atmosphere of his works, Gilbert made his heroes mock-heroic, although nowhere are they truly contemptible.³¹

Only in 'Princess Ida' do any of the masculine characters exhibit martial qualities. But here, Gilbert was careful to demonstrate that it was the dull and unimaginative who were brave. King Gama's three sons sing:

We are warriors three
Sons of Gama, Rex
Like most sons we are
Masculine in sex ...
Politics we bar,
They are not our bent
On the whole we are
Not intelligent.³²

But despite their warlike appearances, the three were vanquished by the milder heroes, Hilarion, Cyril and Florian. Arac and his brothers symbolised the masculine equivalent of the extreme feminist attitudes followed by their sister, Ida, at the woman's university, where anything male was condemned.³³ In 'Patience', however, Gilbert parodied the hackneyed image of a soldier, where the virtues of a 'Heavy Dragoon' included: "...the pluck of Lord Nelson ... the Genius of Bismark ... the science of Jullien ... the wit of Macaulay

31 Bunthorne, Patience I, Gilbert, op.cit., p.173.
Even the obese Bunthorne is protected from any implication of effeminacy by his frank confession that he has only adopted Aetheticism as a guise.

32 Princess, Ida I, ibid., pp.216-217.

33 Princess, Ida II, ibid., p.226.

... The pathos of Paddy ... Victor Emmanuel ... Daniel Defoe ... Anthony Trollop ..."³⁴ A comparable list of prerequisites for being a 'modern Major-General' was quoted by Stanley in 'Penzance'.³⁵ In the operas as a whole, blind heroism reflected stupidity, the main quality being not physical bravery, but loyalty. A soldier, no matter how he might boast, was expected to be chivalrous; he was also considered a professional man, but one whose function in society was over-rated and whose capabilities were sometimes open to question.

Gilbert's feminine characters divided precisely into those who were young and attractive and those who were middle-aged and plain. Of the former, Patience is of interest since she symbolised naive innocence.³⁶ She was bored by the pretentious behaviour of the poet Bunthorne, but succeeded in marrying her childhood sweetheart, Grosvenor, after he had forsworn his adherence to Aestheticism.³⁷ Rose in 'Ruddigore' was another innocent heroine confused by the attentions of the dashing Richard Dauntless.³⁸ Nevertheless, she was, as John Jones suggests, using: "her apparent innocence and reliance on etiquette to hide the fact that she is a vacillating gold-digger".³⁹ The evidence indicated that in England a woman could not acquire social

34 Patience I, *ibid.*, pp.165-166.

35 Penzance I, *ibid.*, pp.457-458.

36 J. Jones, 'Gilbert and Sullivan's Serious Satire', Western Humanities Review Vol. 21. p.220.

37 Patience II, Gilbert, *op.cit.*, p.106.

Patience: "Is it quite certain you will always be a commonplace young man? ... Why then, there's nothing to prevent my loving you with all the fervour at my command."

38 Ruddigore I, *ibid.*, p.505.

39 Jones, loc.cit., p.219.

status by her own merit, but only through marriage with a suitor in the upper ranks of society. Thus women were put in the degrading position of competing with each other for socially desirable husbands. Princess Ida was, however, a more complex character, possessing far more individuality than other heroines in the operas. At the university, her students were given the opportunity to develop their full intellectual powers. But Gilbert was exposing fallacies in the more extreme utterances of the feminists.

We women-household drudges as we are -
 That two and two make five - or three - or seven;
 Or five-and-twenty, if the case demands!
 Diplomacy? The wildest diplomat
 Is absolutely helpless in our hands
 He wheedles monarchs - woman wheedles him!
 Logic? Why tyrant Man himself admits
 It's waste of time to argue with a woman.⁴⁰

However, Ida was possessed of the same ruthlessness as her father and brothers (although lacking their stupidity) and was prepared to kill Hilarion and his friends despite the fact that he had just saved her life.⁴¹ Lambton argues that Ida's "Spartan behaviour is only the result of her embittered struggle for women's rights."⁴² But although Gilbert ridiculed through exaggeration the extreme views advocated by Ida, he was very far from being critical of the feminist cause. He never questioned the fundamental premise - that women were an oppressed sector of society - but illustrated the almost inevitable

40 Ida II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.228.

41 Ibid., p.246. Ida.

I know not mercy, men in women's clothes!
 The man whose sacrilegious eyes
 Invade our strict seclusion, dies
 Arrest those coarse intruding spies!

42 Lambton, op.cit., p.54.

failure of a community attempting to isolate itself from reality.⁴³

However, Gilbert indicated, such extreme reactions were inevitable in a society that degraded women. Ida's individualism had far more human dignity than Rose Maynard's competition in the marriage market.

Gilbert has been censured by critics for his less kindly treatment of older women. The most vehement of these critics was Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who stated bluntly: "Gilbert was essentially cruel and delighted in cruelty".⁴⁴ Gilbert's treatment of his more mature heroines ostensibly displayed an apparent lack of gallantry. In 'Mikado', Katisha is described as:

A most unattractive old thing
 Tra la
 With a caricature of a face.⁴⁵

Katisha had admitted that she had passed her prime, but described herself as an "acquired taste".⁴⁶ In 'Trial by Jury', the attorney's daughter "... may very well pass for forty-three // In the dusk with the light behind her."⁴⁷ whilst King Gama, in 'Princess Ida' boasted that he was able to tell a woman's age in half a minute.⁴⁸ Ludwig in the 'Grand Duke' was horrified to discover that, by winning the statutory duel, he had also won the middle-aged wife of the Grand Duke, Rudolph.⁴⁹ Age was the determining factor in persuading Frederick in

43 Ida III, Gilbert, op.cit., p.263.

44 Quiller-Couch quoted in Baily. The Gilbert and Sullivan Book. p.218.

45 Mikado II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.49.

46 Mikado II, ibid., pp.43-44.

47 Judge, Trial by Jury, ibid., p.586.

48 Gama, Ida I, ibid., p.218.

49 Grand Duke II, ibid., p.315.

'Penzance', that Ruth would be an unsuitable match.⁵⁰ In each case, these older women admitted their maturity. Lady Jane, in a tragic-comic aria, lamented her fading charms:

Silvered is the raven hair,
 Spreading is the parting straight
 Mottled the complexion fair
 Halting is the youthful gait
 Hollow is the laughter free
 Spectacled the limpid eye,
 Little will be left of me
 In the coming by and by.⁵¹

In this passage, Gilbert was elucidating the incongruity of a middle-aged spinster courting a younger man. Yet was Gilbert displaying a personal disregard for feelings, or was this a deliberate literary device, in keeping with the traditions of Victorian drama? Jane Stedman maintains that the ridicule of older women on the stage was an accepted device of Victorian burlesque⁵² and that:

Although Gilbert's comic women preserve memories of their burlesque antecedents, there are certain important differences to be noted. Cosmetic comedy is at a minimum; obviously uncomplimentary remarks are rarely to be made in the presence of plain women, while unfavourable to or about them are to some extent palliated by the tense situations in which they occur - for example: Frederick's anger at being deceived, Bunthorne's disappointment, Ko Ko's horror at having to marry or be boiled in oil ... Finally ... Gilbert uses the characters of Ruth, Lady Jane and Katisha not merely to satirize middle aged spinsterhood, but also to satirize the premium which his contemporaries placed on youthful beauty.⁵³

50 Penzance I, *ibid.*, p.448.

51 Patience II, *ibid.*, p.188.

52 Stedman, *loc.cit.*, p.33.

53 *ibid.*, p.41.

Thus Gilbert's apparent cruelty merely reflected a common Victorian attitude towards older women and which was frequently expressed on stage.

Nor was Gilbert's satire confined to female characters. The Duchess of Plaza Toro married the elderly Duke simply to become a Duchess,⁵⁴ an interesting reversal of the situation recounted by the Judge in 'Trial by Jury'. The elderly Phantis in 'Utopia Ltd.' loved the headstrong young Princess Zara and believed his feelings reciprocated: "I feel sure", says he, "that she does not regard me with absolute indifference, for she could never look at me without having to go to bed with a sick headache."⁵⁵ Phantis was a masculine Lady Jane. It was the incongruity of the young man wooed by an older woman and vice versa, or the rich and influential marrying the poor but ambitious that inspired Gilbert's ridicule. This ridicule acquired pungency from exaggeration, and it was this exaggeration that prompted the older characters - male and female - to confess their ages and admit their failing capabilities.⁵⁶

In short, the only generalisation that may be made about Gilbert's women (...) is that the majority of them, like the majority of all caricature-characters, represent extremes of human behaviour pushed to the point of absurdity in order to comment upon the manifold aspects of hypocrisy and folly.⁵⁷

It was not sadism that prompted Gilbert to exaggerate human weakness, nor was it a lapse of chivalry. Indeed, Gilbert omitted sections of

54 Gondoliers II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.146.

55 Phantis, Utopia Ltd. I, ibid., p.606.

56 Ibid. I., p.606.

Phantis admits to being fifty-five.

57 Jones, loc.cit., p.220.

the librettos of some of the operas, because he felt these might have caused offence.⁵⁸ Those sections which twentieth century critics take exception to formed part of a literary tradition in Victorian England.⁵⁹

The only other possible evidence of cruelty which might be brought against Gilbert was his certain tendency to exaggerate ruthlessness. The account given of Nanki-Poo's alleged decapitation might be considered bloodthirsty were it not for the point Gilbert was establishing:

When a man's afraid
A beautiful maid
Is a charming sight to see⁶⁰

a parody of the chivalrous ethic of dying for one's beloved. The entire account was intended to entertain the Mikado - a ruthless leader of a supposedly rather cruel race.⁶¹ Similarly, the mediaeval setting of 'Yeomen of the Guard' safely removed from the comforting reality of 19th century England, made considerable capital by referring to archaic instruments of torture. Insight was given into Wilfred Shadbolt's character when he remarked:

In the nice regulation of a thumbscrew
... lieth all the difference between
stony reticence and a torrent of impulsive
unbosoming that the pen can scarcely follow.⁶²

58 Stedman, loc.cit., p.43.

Jane Stedman quotes a deleted section of 'Gondoliers' where the fading qualities of Don Alhambra are bluntly stated.

59 Ibid., pp.42-43.

60 Mikado II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.52.

61 G.K. Chesterton, 'The Mikado' in Walter de la Mare The 1880's (London, 1930), pp.147-148.

62 Yeomen of the Guard, Gilbert, op.cit., p.405.

Wilfred was attempting to impress Phoebe, and have her share his macabre enthusiasm for his occupation - at which she was naturally disgusted.⁶³ The curse placed on the house of Murgatroyd also dated from the middle-ages.⁶⁴ Time had clouded the savagery of the crime committed by Sir Rupert, although his descendents continued to bear responsibility. Whenever Gilbert did exhibit a tendency toward cruelty, it was with a purpose; either to illustrate the savagery of a character or society, or to extend the impression of distance, in either time or space, between the real world, and that depicted upon the stage. By contrast, Gilbert was showing the comforting level of civilisation enjoyed in Victorian England, a point of view highly popular with the audience.

Gilbert's satire of Victorian institutions was strong, at times almost amounting to invective.⁶⁵ His very questioning of the existence of the House of Lords cannot be passed over, nor can his contempt for the materialistic motivations of society. However:

Gilbert's chief enemies were hypocrisy, pretension and the general absurdity of human behaviour. While he may not have concerned himself much with the profound moral questions, he did have a keen eye - ... - for the 'correctness' of good form, of playing by the rules of the game, of commonsense sanity of rational and emotional behaviour, in short, of decorum. Ignorance in 'Iolanthe', is one object

63 Ibid., p.405.

Phoebe: "Thou are a most light-hearted and delightful companion Master Wilfred." Wilfred missed the irony.

64 Ruddigore I, *ibid.*, p.489.

65 Jones, *loc.cit.*, p.223.

of his critical attack; in 'Patience' it is faddism. Extremism ... ('Princess Ida') or politics ('The Gondoliers') is satirised by Gilbert. And those individuals whom Gilbert unmasks as hypocrites or frauds receive the brunt of his satiric blows.⁶⁶

In his quest for originality, Gilbert would satirize some new pillar of society and create a novel setting for each new opera. The success of Gilbert's satire reflected a broadening toleration by society to criticism. It is significant that Gilbert's audience were prepared to accept this satire, and the evidence suggests that the testing of social attitudes on the stage was a highly popular feature of the texts.

Extensive as Gilbert's range of satire might have been, he held back on occasions. Changes were made in the texts of the operas both before and after the first night,⁶⁷ but these changes were not always made with a specifically artistic motive in mind.⁶⁸ It is apparent that Gilbert deleted one song, intended for the Duke in 'Patience' in order to avoid offending the religious sentiments of his audience.⁶⁹ The Church was one institution that Gilbert, despite his satirical attack on its failings in the 'Bab Ballads' was most careful to avoid

66 Ibid., p.224.

67 One of the drawbacks to Allen's First Night Gilbert and Sullivan is that it considers only those changes made after the first performance. Much might be learnt by examining the M.S. of the operas, noting cuts made prior to presentation. Meanwhile, the American monopolisation of these sources makes such a study difficult.

68 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, pp.203-204. There is much speculation as to why certain songs were dropped. For instance 'Fold your Flapping Wings' from 'Iolanthe' was deleted from the second edition despite its popularity in the U.S.A.

69 Jane Stedman, 'The Genesis of Patience', Modern Philology Vol.66. August, 1968, p.57.

reference to in the text of his light operas.⁷⁰ In 'Utopia Ltd.', Gilbert deleted some of the more polemic lines in Zara's speech:⁷¹

Government by Party! Introduce that great and glorious element ... and all will be well ... no social reforms will be attempted, because out of vice, squalor and drunkenness, no political capital is to be made; and while grouse is to be shot, and foxes worried to death, the legislative action of the country will be at a standstill.⁷²

Such bitter satire, exceeded, in this, the second last opera of the series, even Gilbert's former treatment of the House of Lords in 'Iolanthe'. John Bush Jones maintains:

In the original version of Zara's final speech before the finale, the satiric thrust very nearly becomes outright invective, and it is perhaps for this reason that Gilbert seems to have deferred to audience reaction or the censors in later shortening it.⁷³

Thus in order to entertain rather than offend his now-devoted public, Gilbert censored his works, making alterations not merely for the sake of artistic improvement.⁷⁴ As a consumer-composer, the sensibilities of Gilbert's audience took priority over his own artistic instinct as a satirist. Like Sullivan, who had to restrict the length of his overtures, Gilbert was obliged to limit the scope of his satire.

70 Ibid., pp.48-49.

71 Utopia Ltd. II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.659.

72 Zara, Utopia Ltd., first M.S. quoted by J. Jones, loc.cit., p.223.

73 Jones, loc.cit., p.223.

74 Much valuable primary source material was destroyed by water-damage during the last war. Valuable collections have also been taken to the United States, by collectors such as Reginald Allen. I am indebted to Albert Truelove of the Savoy Theatre for this information.

There is sufficient evidence available to argue that Gilbert, the successful partner in the Savoy operas, placed entertainment in higher regard than social comment. Nevertheless, Gilbert was a social satirist, and one particularly observant of the injustices and incongruities of society. Those areas he chose to satirise provided a valuable documentary record of social attitudes. But the very nature of his success demanded that Gilbert limit, to some extent, his more outspoken criticism of institutions. This fusion of serious satire within the framework of light opera is complex:

Satire ... begins and ends in seriousness. The satirist is not an irresponsible misanthrope. Even though he may not have a detailed programme or platform of reform, it is his purpose to explore the foibles, follies and absurdities of the human lot; this is, almost by definition, a serious intention. And again, the end of the satirist and the satire is serious, whether to correct, prevent, or graphically and dramatically demonstrate to men their ridiculousness.⁷⁵

This Gilbert achieved. As a satirist, the reflection of popular attitudes to institutions of Victorian society was clearly discernable. However, as a humorist, Gilbert could penetrate further still. The audience came to expect social comment from the operas, but also expected a great deal of amusement which enabled them to accept the lampooning of institutions that they might have admired or at least considered above public ridicule. Thus an assessment can be made of

⁷⁵ Jones, loc.cit., p.224.

public attitudes towards aspects of Victorian society, an assessment modified by examination of newspaper reactions in their reviews of each opera.

If Gilbert was prepared to censor his operas in order to satisfy what he believed his public enjoyed, what was his own attitude towards those who thus restricted his artistic freedom? In an early play, 'Pygmalion and Galatea', Pygmalion described a patron:

... He is an ignorant buffoon,
But purses hold higher rank than brains,
And he is rich; wherever Chrysos buys,
The world of smaller fools comes following,
And men are glad to sell their works to him
At half its proper price that they may say,
'Chrysos has purchased handiwork of ours'
He is a fashion and he knows it well.⁷⁶

Gilbert also had become a fashion: in 'Yeomen of the Guard', the temptation had been to recognise Jack Point as a representation of Gilbert.⁷⁷ There is a danger of reading too deeply into the play. Point may have sold his wit like Gilbert, but his humour is poor and he is himself a weak character motivated by profit.⁷⁸ The 'Yeomen' is significant, however, as an analysis of Gilbert's attitude towards his art; it was the fourth last of the series, and the second last really successful work.⁷⁹ By the time the 'Yeomen' was produced, the Savoy operas had become an institution, forming part of the accepted

76 Pygmalion and Galatea, p.53. Pygmalion.

77 Goldberg, op.cit., p.364.

A. Godwin, Gilbert and Sullivan (London, 1927), pp.62-64.

78 Fairfax and Point, Yeomen of the Guard, Gilbert, op.cit., p.399.

79 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.(xvi).

scene of Victorian entertainment. Thus the works lost their individuality and their spontaneity, which had been the most appealing qualities of the operas. As Jack Point remarked in the opera: "... 'Tis ever thus with simple-folk - an accepted wit has but to say 'Pass the mustard' and they roar their ribs out!"⁸⁰ Gilbert recognised that he had been trapped by the popular cultivation of the Savoy operas. Sullivan had become disillusioned by his recognition of this fact. Gilbert, however, cynically used his own creation - the Savoy opera, now part of the Victorian way of life - as a topic for satire. Robert Hall concludes his examination of the satire in the 'Yeomen' stating:

Satire there is in the 'Yeomen', and in plenty,
but it is the bitterest of all satire, that of
a man mocking his own work. The 'Yeomen' is, in
other words, Gilbert's satire on Gilbertian
tomfoolery.⁸¹

If Gilbert was restricted by popular opinion in the scope of his satire, he fully recognised this limitation. By the late 1880's, the Savoy operas had come to follow rigid and accepted patterns of artistic design. Realising this, Gilbert had satirised the institution he himself had created. Gilbert considered himself an artist trapped by his patrons.

Gilbert's light operas revealed not merely a wealth of social comment, they also revealed the dramatist as a man. The operas played before a wider public than the 'Bab Ballads' had ever enjoyed and this

⁸⁰ Yeomen of the Guard II, Gilbert, op.cit., p.429.

⁸¹ Hall, loc.cit., p.497.

obliged Gilbert to modify his satirical technique. He became, as time passed, a symbol of a certain style of satire, combining social comment with a poignant wit and a jovial sense of humour, clothed in the tapestry of Sullivan's finest music. Gilbert was nevertheless primarily an entertainer. In the 'Yeomen', he recognised this limitation, expressing in the play, the frustration that he shared with Sullivan that, despite their respective abilities, they were, after all, merely the producers of comic light opera, which the public appeared to take less seriously than either artist would have wished.

PART IV

REACTIONS TO THE OPERAS.

CHAPTER 6.'Audience and Press Reactions
to the Savoy Operas'.

The operas of Gilbert and Sullivan attracted a wider cross-section of the British public than any previous form of musical entertainment. The success of these works can be gauged by two criteria. The first was the capacity of the operas to attract a sustained interest from the public. The second, and more complex to assess, was the reaction of the journal and newspaper critics who reviewed the operas shortly after their presentation. Both criteria are useful.

The critics wrote for a specific type of reader, not merely the general public, and their reviews reflected the interests of both the social position and the professional status - particularly in the case of the musical or literary journals - of their readers. It must be assumed that these readers formed a regular part of the Savoy operas. An examination of the reviews reveal that the critics exerted considerable influence upon both the musician and the librettist in restricting and defining the limits of artistic licence. The reviews also suggest that public opinion was more tolerant of satire and musical experiment than the critics, who, by contrast, appeared highly conservative in their assessments. Public opinion was based upon the popular support given a work, whilst the opinions of critics were published in reviews. The conservative nature of the reviews and the

opinions expressed are a further valuable source of social attitudes. The response by critics to features of Gilbert's satire permits a balanced assessment of cultural and social attitudes to be made. Once the Savoy operas began attracting notable members of society, the reviews were generally addressed to the upper-class, first night audience. The opinion of the vast majority of the public who attended these works on subsequent nights were largely unrecorded and can only be measured by the support this audience gave each work. Thus the critics lost contact with popular feeling in the later operas of the series. The reversion of Gilbert's style after 'Yeomen of the Guard' to its more traditional form was highly praised by most critics and the first night public, but attendance rates for works following 'Gondoliers' progressively fell. This reaction by the public goes far to explain the ultimate decline of the Savoy operas, since Sullivan and Gilbert found themselves trapped by critics praising traditional elements in the operas, and an audience expecting novelty.

The sharing of cultural interests between classes is an essential feature of a common culture. Raymond Williams has argued that even in a society where one class is socially dominant, cultural development depends heavily on contributions by other classes to a common stock.¹ Gilbert's humour and satirical comment were specifically directed toward the educated middle class, whilst Sullivan 'wrote down' to the supposed level of the Savoy public, concentrating his efforts for his more serious

1 R. Williams, Culture and Society 1780-1950 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), p.307.

and esoteric music. Unlike any previous form of musical entertainment, tickets to the Savoy theatre were purchased by all classes in society, from the wealthy who engaged servants or messengers to obtain tickets, to the workingman who would queue for tickets. Thus the selection of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas into the scheme of Victorian cultural development was made freely and commonly by a broad cross-section of society, such a selection being fundamental to Williams' definition of common culture.² The overall effect was the creation of an entertainment that was popular with all classes, enjoying the continued support of the lower classes, whilst attracting the patronage of the upper classes.

As the series of light operas continued, the class-composition of the Savoy audiences broadened. The audience attending the premiere of 'Thespis' were castigated by the critic of the 'Daily Telegraph', who wrote: "possibly a holiday audience ... does not care to exercise the requisite intellect to unravel an amusing, and by no means intricate plot ...".³ The 'Times' reported that this audience was coarse and rowdy, but despite this, the work:

met with an excellent reception, and on any other occasion than Boxing night, the numerous merits of the piece cannot fail to secure for it in the public estimation a high place among the novelties of the season.⁴

2 Ibid., p.322.

3 Daily Telegraph, 27th December 1871.

4 Times, 27th December 1871.

It was largely because the composer conducted the work that the 'Times' condescended to review the light opera.⁵ On January 9th, 1872, the work received royal patronage when the Duke of Edinburgh, a personal friend of Arthur Sullivan, visited the theatre.⁶ The visit by such a distinguished patron, however, does not seem to have greatly increased the popularity of the work, which was withdrawn at the end of the month.

As the series continued, the opening night of a new Gilbert and Sullivan work became an event of considerable social importance. As more distinguished visitors came to the subsequent operas, so the interest of newspaper critics grew. Light opera before the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration had tended to attract the lower-middle classes, and the distinction between light opera, burlesque and musical entertainment was slight.⁷ The earliest reference to the elite of society attending a first night presentation occurred in the review of 'Pirates of Penzance' in the 'Daily Telegraph', which played: "in the presence of a most aristocratic audience"⁸ at Paignton. According to Reginald Allen, the same opera was attended on its first night in America by the upper-classes of New York.⁹ Three years later 'Iolanthe' was described by the 'People' as being presented before "one of the

5 Ibid.

The 'Times' only reviewed those lighter works written by established artists.

6 P. Young, The Music of Arthur Sullivan (London, 1971), p.102.

7 Chapter 1, pp.32,33.

8 'Daily Telegraph', 31 December 1879.

9 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan (New York, 1958), p.104.

most brilliant audiences ever attracted to the theatre".¹⁰

This included:

Lord and Lady Donoughmore, Lord Dunraven,
Lord and Lady Londesborough, Lady Molesworth,
Lady Augusta Fane, Sir George Wombwell,
Sir Bruce Seton, Mrs. Renalds, Mr. A.B. Coutts,
Mr. Hamilton Aide, Dr. George Grove, Mr. J.R.
Robinson, Mr. Hollingshead, Mr. Frederick Clay
and ... Captain Eyre Massey Shaw.¹¹

Gilbert and Sullivan operas produced after 'Iolanthe' were assured of attracting a combination of leading members of society as well as the literary and musical elite of London on each first night performance. Nor, according to the 'Daily Telegraph' was this audience wanting in appreciation. In his review of 'Gondoliers' the critic remarked: "We have left ... little space ... to picture the enthusiasm of the audience, growing throughout the performance to a climax as the curtain fell".¹²

When, on March 7th, 1896, the 'Grand Duke' was presented, "the audience was, if possible, more brilliant than at any previous Savoy premiere and celebrities were to be seen on every hand."¹³ The light operas thus came to attract support from the elite of society, who came to monopolise the first night of each new work. Those who could afford, sent messengers or servants to queue for tickets for a premiere performance, and thus this audience came to represent the more influential and wealthy members of society.

If the first night of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera had become a

¹⁰ 'People', 27th November 1882.

¹¹ 'World', 27th November 1882.

¹² 'Daily Telegraph', 9th December 1889.

¹³ 'Sunday Times', 8th December 1896.

social occasion, attracting the upper classes, the succeeding nights drew the less well-to-do. It was these folk, however, who dictated the length of run each work would enjoy. If large numbers of people attended on consecutive nights, not merely did the margin of profit increase, but the extending of the season made the work better known and more familiar, which in turn contributed to the overall popularity of Gilbert and Sullivan. The first work, 'Thespis', ran for sixty-four performances, and 'Trial by Jury', in 1875 ran for one hundred and twenty-eight performances,¹⁴ the longest run enjoyed by an English opera in a first season.¹⁵ However, it was the phenomenal seven hundred consecutive performances of 'HMS Pinafore' between May 1878 and March 1880 that not merely set a record, but also established Gilbert and Sullivan as the leading light music team in the British Isles.¹⁶ In his review of 'The Sorcerer', the critic of the 'Times' recorded that the "audience crowded the theatre in every part".¹⁷ Carte realized the seating capacity of the Opera Comique was too small, and in 1881 transferred Gilbert and Sullivan operas to the new Savoy Theatre.¹⁸ But even in the Savoy Theatre with fifteen hundred seats, accommodation appears to have been insufficient for the premiere performance of 'Utopia Ltd.'. The 'Times' reported that "the demand for seats ... was greater than on any former occasion",¹⁹ whilst the 'Morning Advertiser' commented

14 Allen, op.cit., p.4.

15 E.J. Dent, 'Opera' (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1968), pp.170-190. Balfe's 'Bohemian Girl' ran for 100 performances, and Gay's 'Beggars Opera' ran for 62 performances in 1728.

16 Allen, op.cit., p.4.

17 'Times', 9 November 1877.

18 Allen, op.cit., pp.141, 142.

19 'Times', 9 October 1893.

upon the competition to obtain tickets.²⁰ Yet the enthusiasm of the first night audiences seldom effected the length of run of a work - 'Utopia Ltd.' was withdrawn after some two hundred and forty-five performances.²¹ What did decide the success of a work was less its first night reception and more its ability to attract an audience who came to enjoy the light opera rather than attend a premier performance. Indeed 'Pinafore', described by the 'Daily Telegraph' as "a frothy production soon to subside into nothingness"²² came close to collapse after a few weeks. Public interest was revived on this occasion by Sullivan who included selections from the opera in a programme he was conducting at the Promenade Concerts.²³ This also demonstrated that people attending these cheaper concerts also visited the Savoy theatre.

Ultimately, success depended more upon public interest than patronage of the upper classes. This dependence upon popular support for success established the works as part of an emerging common culture. Although designed for the bourgeoisie, the operas needed the support of people from all classes - particularly those of the lower-middle and working classes upon whose sustained interest the length of run was dependent. This type of audience differentiate the Savoy operas from, for example, grand opera which relied upon the sale of a few expensive tickets during a short season to an upper-class audience who could afford the cost of tickets.

20 'Morning Advertiser', 3 March 1894.

21 Allen, op.cit., p.4.

22 'Daily Telegraph', 27 May 1878.

23 Sullivan and Flower, Sir Arthur Sullivan (London, 1950), p.93.

Until premier performances of Gilbert and Sullivan opera became established as important social events, critics of the major papers showed only slight interest, because they wrote primarily for an upper-class reading public. It is because the papers were so selective in the public to whom they addressed themselves, that little mention was made of earlier forms of light musical entertainment. The earliest reviews to 'accept' the light operas as legitimate forms of culture and therefore worthy of criticism, were the ephemeral and short-circulation journals, such as 'Fun' or the 'Tomahawk', which wrote specifically to those people involved closely with the theatre. The 'Tomahawk' wrote a highly favourable review of Arthur Sullivan and F.C. Burnand's 'Contrabandista', one of Sullivan's earliest efforts in the idiom of light opera.²⁴ These papers also served as a forum, whereby most people connected with the arts came into contact with each other. Gilbert had contributed articles to 'Fun' in the 1860's, and this journal henceforth continued to give sympathetic reviews to Gilbert and Sullivan opera, acclaiming 'HMS Pinafore' as a "great hit".²⁵ 'Fun' was a rival publication to 'Punch', and, furthermore, the editor of 'Punch', after 1880 was F.C. Burnand who had earlier collaborated with Sullivan in producing both the 'Contrabandista' and 'Cox and Box'.²⁶ Allen maintains that this personal rivalry between Gilbert and Burnand explained

24 'Tomahawk', 28 December 1867.

25 'Fun', 5 June 1878.

26 Gilbert saw the latter play in 1868, and wrote: "Mr. Sullivan's music is in places too high a class for the grotesquely absurd plot to which it is wedded." Quoted by R. Allen, 'William Schwenk Gilbert - An Anniversary Survey' (New York, 1961), p.6.

much of the traditional hostility exhibited towards Gilbert by 'Punch'.²⁷ However, 'Punch' tended to be caustic towards most light operas, and actually became increasingly sympathetic to Savoy works - such as 'Mikado'²⁸ and 'Utopia Ltd.'²⁹ - produced after Burnand became editor.

The number and length of reviews increased with each new opera; the conservative 'Times' writing for its upper class readers first reviewed 'Thespis' in half a column.³⁰ But when the 'Pirates of Penzance' was presented, the 'Times' gave the opera priority, devoting a column and a half to the review.³¹ When 'Gondoliers' was produced in 1889, comprehensive reviews were printed by not merely the leading papers, but by the established journals, such as 'The Saturday Review', the 'Musical Times', the 'Pall Mall Gazette' and the 'Athenaeum'³² - journals that would formerly have never deigned to review an opera bouffe or burlesque, since their bourgeois readers would never have deigned to visit such places of light entertainment. The public came to expect these reviews, as part of the growing acceptability of the Savoy operas into the cultural tradition of late Victorian England. This acceptance was stimulated by two major factors. The first was Sullivan, who was generally recognised by the press as England's leading composer and whose involvement in any musical enterprise would not go unnoticed by the musical journals. Secondly, the interest taken by many of the daily papers tended to increase as the number of socially significant members

27 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.78.

28 'Punch', 28 March 1885.

29 'Punch', 28 October 1893.

30 'Times', 27th December 1871.

31 'Times', 5 April 1880.

32 'Athenaeum', 14 December 1889.

rose. Thus the papers tended to follow, rather than lead, public opinion.

The reviews of the operas could not accurately predict the future success or failure of a work. As early as 1882, the 'Times' could write, in its review of 'Iolanthe':

The artistic collaboration of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan stands so high in popular favour that the success of any work of their composition amounts to a foregone conclusion.³³

As the series of works continued, the reviews became less critical and more sentimental. When 'Utopia Ltd.' was produced after the financial dispute between Carte and Gilbert, most of the critics were intoxicated with the new spirit of reconciliation surrounding the presentation. The 'Daily News' wrote after witnessing the dress rehearsal: "In brief, the old days have clearly come back, and the Savoy is about to be itself again",³⁴ whilst after the performance the 'Daily Telegraph' eulogized: "Gilbert and Sullivan once more! After the winter season ... lo, spring begins."³⁵ The work ran for two hundred and forty-five performances, and merely covered Carte for the unprecedented 7,200 pounds spent in mounting the work. The final opera, the 'Grand Duke' was also enthusiastically greeted by the press. The 'Times' reported that enthusiasm grew with each new opera,³⁶ whilst the 'Pall Mall Gazette' remarked the opera "may claim to stand in the front rank of comic

33 'Times', 27th November 1882.

34 'Daily News', 7th October 1893.

35 'Daily Telegraph', 9 October 1894.

36 'Times', 9 March 1896.

operas".³⁷ The 'Daily Telegraph' noted a certain familiarity in the work, but believed "Mr. Gilbert's well-accustomed machinery still serves; the old humour yet runs on ..." ³⁸. The opera was withdrawn after one hundred and twenty-three performances.³⁹ The sentimentality of the critics had failed to recognise the seeds of failure in the work.

The opinion of the critics had differed from that of the public in their assessment of 'Ruddigore'. Most reviews believed the work a failure. The audience, according to the 'Daily News', contained representatives from the elite of society⁴⁰ and yet, according to the 'Times': "with the rapturous applause of a more than sympathetic first night audience ... a small, but determined minority mingled its hisses."⁴¹ The 'Times' believed that, for the first time, a Savoy opera was destined to failure and "in our opinion, its constructive faults are too serious for merely negative remedies."⁴² In describing the second act, the 'St. James Gazette' stated "gradually the enthusiasm faded ... until at last the plot had seemed within an ace of collapsing altogether".⁴³ Some reviews were more generous, but only 'The Athenaeum' was prepared to state "we are perfectly safe in predicting a long run for the new work."⁴⁴ The work proved a modest success, and ran for some two hundred and eighty-

37 'Pall Mall Gazette', September 1896.

38 'Daily Telegraph', 9 March 1896.

39 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.4.

40 'Daily News', 24 January 1887.

41 'Times', 24 January 1887.

42 Ibid.

43 'St. James Gazette', quoted in Allen, 'First Night Gilbert and Sullivan', p.273.

44 'Athenaeum', 29 January 1887.

eight performances.⁴⁵ The weakness in 'Ruddigore' lay less with any dramatic fault and more with the fact that the work followed the highly popular 'Mikado',⁴⁶ and critics and first night audience came to the Savoy with a rather jaundiced attitude. The merits of the opera were appreciated by the public visiting the theatre on the succeeding nights.

With the exception of 'Ruddigore', the critics generally considered each new Gilbert and Sullivan work an improvement upon its predecessor. This tendency was first remarked upon by the critic of the 'New Era' who wrote of 'Pinafore': "as a humorous effort we consider that "HMS Pinafore' surpasses its predecessor ..."⁴⁷ However, when the work was revived in 1887, the 'Athenaeum' considered that "... the work is not equal to some of the later examples of the Gilbert and Sullivan series".⁴⁸ The following year, in his review of 'Yeomen of the Guard', the critic of the 'Daily Telegraph' concluded: "we place the songs and choruses of 'The Yeomen of the Guard' before all ... previous efforts of this particular kind."⁴⁹ The 'Times' considered that the succeeding opera, 'Gondoliers', was equal to any earlier work, but "the average level of interest and beauty is in this instance higher than usual".⁵⁰ The 'Athenaeum' believed the music to 'Gondoliers' was a further improvement, but considered "the book of 'Gondoliers' ... is ... scarcely equal to that of 'Mikado'".⁵¹ Only with 'Ruddigore', was there a general consensus

45 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.4.

46 Pall Mall Budget, 22nd January 1887. The critic wrote: "It is the misfortune of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan that they are their own rivals, and every new work makes their task harder."

47 'New Era', quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.77.

48 'Athenaeum', 19 November 1887.

49 'Daily Telegraph', 5th October 1888.

50 'Times', 9th December 1889.

51 'Athenaeum', 14th December 1889.

by critics that the standards expected of the Savoy had not been maintained. By 1887, the critics had come to recognise each new Savoy opera as part of a continuous series. Their method of judgement had now come to depend on simple comparison with the preceding work in the series.

Specific features in each opera received consideration by most critics. Sullivan's gift for melody, for example, became a familiar source of praise. The critic of the 'Times', reviewing the 'Sorcerer' noted:

the music is spontaneous, appearing invariably to spring out of the dramatic situations as though it was their natural concomitant. It is also distinguished by marked character and skilfully varied in accordance with the nature of the incidents its composer has to illustrate.⁵²

The same paper, in its review of 'Patience' praised Sullivan for his ability "to supply flowing and pretty tunes for melodious or rattling lines".⁵³ Most critics agreed, however, that it was in 'Yeomen of the Guard' that Sullivan's melodic qualities excelled. The critic of the 'Morning Advertiser', impressed with the song 'The Merryman and his Maid', commented: "Sir Arthur Sullivan has never written anything more delicately melodious and elegant than this."⁵⁴ The critic of the 'Daily Telegraph' commented "we place the songs and choruses in 'The Yeomen of the Guard' before all ... previous efforts of this particular kind",⁵⁵ whilst the 'Athenaeum' concluded "Beyond all question the score of 'The Yeomen of the Guard' is his masterpiece in this line".⁵⁶ This novelty of melodic

52 'Times', 9 November 1877.

53 'Times', 25 April 1881.

54 'Morning Advertiser', 5 October 1888.

55 'Daily Telegraph', 5 October 1888.

56 'Athenaeum', 6 October 1888.

design became an obvious criterion by which critics assessed the musical value of the operas.

Criticism of orchestration, tended naturally, to come more from the scholarly journals rather than the daily papers. The 'Athenaeum' praised the orchestration in the 'Sorcerer', noting "The concerted pieces and the treatment of the orchestra are worthy of serious opera",⁵⁷ but the same journal, reporting upon a revival of 'Penzance' later described "the part-writing ... thin and poor ... and the orchestration at times even vulgar".⁵⁸ In view of the same journal's praise of the orchestral writing in 'Yeomen of the Guard',⁵⁹ it is reasonable to assume that the critic was tracing what he considered a continuous improvement in Sullivan's technical treatment of the orchestra. The 'Times' commented upon Sullivan's choice of instruments in the orchestra,⁶⁰ but had reservations about the standard of overtures in 'Patience', which the critic felt "left something to be desired"⁶¹ and 'Utopia Ltd.' which was considered 'meagre in extent and poor in quality'.⁶² The 'Daily Telegraph' also commented upon the overture in the latter work, describing it as being 'less than usually important'.⁶³ The daily papers tended to comment upon the more obvious musical features - such as the length of the overture, the size and consistency of the orchestra. In each case, the review of the music was given similar treatment to

57 'Athenaeum', 18 October 1884.

58 'Athenaeum', 24 March 1888.

59 'Athenaeum', 6 October 1888.

60 'Times', 25 April 1881.

61 'Times', 27 November 1882.

62 'Times', 9 October 1893.

63 'Daily Telegraph', 9 October 1893.

that accorded grand opera, and critics spoke of special characteristics displayed by the composer. The public came to recognise these characteristics once they had been identified by the press, and to expect them in each new performance. Thus the newspaper reviews provided a means by which public interest in music was greatly stimulated.

The reactions of the audience to the length and the setting of a work were relatively easy to assess. Coughing, talking or people leaving early were clear signs of disapproval, whilst requests for encores gave a favourable indication of the length of an opera. Critics observed these obvious reactions, and in their reviews, expressed a certain consensus with the audience. 'Thespis' and 'Trial by Jury' were single-act productions, and the 'Times' described the latter as "no more than a humorous bagatelle".⁶⁴ The longest work in the series was 'Princess Ida', produced in 1884, and the only three-act Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Most critics found this made the work too long, the 'Figaro' and 'Observer' both criticising the length of the second act.⁶⁵ The 'Athenaeum' recommended shortening this act because "the second act is so abnormally long that a sense of fatigue cannot be resisted."⁶⁶ The only other opera of the series to be condemned for its length was 'The Grand Duke'. The 'Sunday Times' felt a few cuts in the work were necessary, remarking "it will stand slight condensation"⁶⁷ whilst 'Punch' insisted that the entire work required considerable re-organisation.⁶⁸ The evidence suggests that the audience were impatient and restless

64 'Times', 29 March 1875.

65 'Figaro' and 'Observer' quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, pp.206-207.

66 'Athenaeum', 12 January 1884.

67 'Sunday Times', 8 March 1896.

68 'Punch', quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.417.

towards the end of the work. Generally, Gilbert was able to fill a full evening's programme without causing fatigue. Originally, the earliest works had run in conjunction with one or two other short burlesques, but, after 'Penzance', each new light opera provided the complete programme for the evening. Gilbert heeded the advice of the critics after 'Princess Ida', keeping to a two act scheme.

The most consistent praise given, concerned the setting of each new work. In 'Trial by Jury', the 'Times' assured its readers "the various costumes are exact, without caricature and that ... everything is precisely what might be witnessed on such an occasion in the court at Westminster".⁶⁹ In the review of 'HMS Pinafore' three years later the 'Standard' admired the setting noting "so perfect a quarter-deck as that of 'HMS Pinafore' has assuredly never been put upon the stage. Every block and rope to the minutest detail is in its place ..."⁷⁰ In 'Iolanthe' the critic of the 'Theatre' found "the get-up of the peers is correct to a ribbon end",⁷¹ whilst the costumes in 'Mikado' were praised by the 'Daily News', "The Japanese gowns, with their delicate tints, their richly embroidered conceits and fantasies, and their ample sashes but not a little to the oddly pleasing effect."⁷² 'Gondoliers' was later described by the 'Times' as a "marvel of stage adaptation",⁷³ whilst similar praise was given the scenery and setting in the later operas.⁷⁴ Gilbert took fastidious care to check that costumes and presentation were as near to perfect as possible. The Savoy became

69 'Times', 29 March 1875.

70 'The Standard', quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.76.

71 'The Theatre', 1 January 1883.

72 'Daily News', 16 March 1885.

73 'Times', 9 December 1889.

74 'Times', 9 March 1896.

famous for the skill in its productions which provided a most important feature in the success of these works.

Satire was a hallmark of Gilbert's texts, and this was intended specifically for the amusement of the educated and politically aware middle-classes. It was the more scholarly journals rather than the daily papers that showed greatest appreciation. Some critics tended to be over-sensitive. The 'Times' considered 'Princess Ida' was an insult to Lord Tennyson: "Mr. Gilbert's libretto professes to be a 'respectful' perversion'. We admit the noun, but we must take exception to the adjective."⁷⁵ The 'Times', addressing itself to its upper-class readers, considered that the Savoy operas were a lower form of art than the poetry of the Poet Laureate. On the other hand, the 'Daily Telegraph', in its review of 'Patience' considered Gilbert's target for ridicule contemptible and scarcely worthy of satire.⁷⁶ In his criticism of 'Utopia Ltd.', the critic of the 'Daily Graphic' over-reacted when he considered Gilbert's reference to 'running a ship ashore' was a "lamentable error in taste ... within a few months after the loss of 'HMS Victoria'".⁷⁷ Gilbert, in this instance was not being topical, but merely repeating the reference from 'HMS Pinafore' as he re-introduced Captain Corcoran into this later opera. The 'Daily Graphic' was the only paper to take exception to this reference. The 'Times' recognised two important features in Gilbert's satire in 'Utopia':

75 'Times', 7 January 1884.

76 'Daily Telegraph', 25 April 1881.

77 'Daily Graphic', 9 October 1893.

Mr. Gilbert has not often appeared as the preacher of a political creed, but here he has directed all his satire against the enemies of progress, and, in another direction, shows a marked approval of a modern type of young ladyhood.⁷⁸

The satire of this opera appeared to miss the critic of the 'Morning Advertiser' who complained "Mr. Gilbert has left a great deal too much to the imagination of his spectators".⁷⁹ This varied response by the press reveals that in their reviews of the later operas, the critics were reading deeply - in certain cases too deeply - into the message conveyed by Gilbert's satire.

The message in 'Iolanthe' was quite clear. The 'Telegraph' was hostile, remarking:

his fertile fancy invents no new jibe against an institution many Englishmen admire, and the rest are content to tolerate. For this reason his satirical humour falls flat.⁸⁰

The 'Theatre' was even stronger in criticising Gilbert for going too far.

Advocacy and denunciation of this sort are all very well in melodrama where telling points may always be made with the unmerited wrongs of the poor and reprehensible uselessness of the aristocracy. But they jar upon the ear and the taste alike when brought to bear upon us through the medium of song sung by half-a-fairy in a professedly comic opera.⁸¹

Carte actually feared that the work might be censored.⁸² In response to

78 'Times', 9 October 1893.

79 'Morning Advertiser', 9 October 1893.

80 'Daily Telegraph', 27 November 1882.

81 'The Theatre', 1 January 1883.

82 Richard D'Oyly Carte to Miss Lenoir. Letter quoted in L. Baily, The Gilbert and Sullivan Book (London, 1956), p.234.

this criticism, Gilbert later withdrew one song from future presentations of the work.⁸³ Yet despite the reservations of the critics, the work appeared to attract surprisingly little criticism from the public. The Prime Minister actually wrote to Sullivan, praising the new work which he considered "so good in taste and so admirable in execution from beginning to end."⁸⁴ The opera ran for some three hundred and ninety-eight performances, and the publisher, Chappell, reported selling thousands of vocal scores of the work. The reaction of the critics indicated a conservativeness in outlook strongly in excess of public opinion.

The 'Times', in a review of 'Pirates of Penzance' remarked:

Mr. Gilbert writes in fact not comedies, but parodies, and music has accordingly to follow him to the sphere of all others most uncongenial to it - the mock-heroic. The skill and ingenuity evinced by Mr. Sullivan in such disadvantageous circumstances cannot be sufficiently admired.⁸⁵

The critics soon came to recognise Sullivan as being as skilful as Gilbert in the art of satire and parody. The 'Daily Telegraph' in its review of 'Patience' mentioned examples where the Handelian chorus was parodied, concluding "in all these appear the ideas and the hand of a musician who has something to say and knows how to say it."⁸⁶ The 'Athenaeum' wrote a more scholarly critique of Sullivan's parody of Handel, and

83 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, pp.203, 204.

The song in question was 'Fold your flapping wings' in Act II.

84 Gladstone to Sullivan, letter quoted in Baily, op.cit., p.238.

85 'Times', 5 April 1880.

86 'Daily Telegraph', 25 April 1881.

concluded its review of 'Princess Ida', noting:

The composer is never more happy than when he reproduces the mannerisms of former musical epochs ... The gem of the opera is the duet for Lady Blanche and Melissa, with its old-world grace; but scarcely inferior are a Handelian trio for the three sons of Gama, and a sham Anacreontic song for Cyril.⁸⁷

The parody of Italian opera contained in 'Gondoliers' was commented upon by the 'Times' as being "one of the chief musical attractions"⁸⁸ considering the extent to which Sullivan used musical parody, it is unusual that so few examples were commented upon by critics.

Mock-heroic music attracted more comment. The 'Times' was deeply impressed by Sullivan's use of solemnly orchestrated music to accompany the trial in 'Mikado'.⁸⁹ The same paper reviewing 'Ruddigore' two years later wrote "Sullivan ... treats Mr. Gilbert's grotesque spectres as if they were a dread reality coming straight from the charnel house."⁹⁰ In 'Iolanthe' the critic of the 'Daily Telegraph' was struck by the mock-heroic quality in the anthem 'When Britain really ruled the waves', which, he noted "has a character of its own, subtly mingled with the least possible flavour of 'Rule Britannia'".⁹¹ Of the same opera, the critic of the 'Theatre' considered the mock-heroic march accompanying the entry of the Peers was a musical climax to the work.⁹² Generally, Sullivan's mock-heroic music was better appreciated by critics than musical parody, an understanding of the latter requiring a deeper

87 'Athenaeum', 12 January 1884.

88 'Times', 9 December 1889.

89 'Times', 16 March 1885.

90 'Times', 24 January 1887.

91 'Daily Telegraph', 27 November 1882.

92 'The Theatre', 1 January 1883.

background of musical knowledge.

Sullivan's portrayal of humour in music was a feature most popular with both critic and public, and a major attraction. The 'Times' in a review of 'Trial by Jury' commented:

There is genuine humour ... and the clever parody of one of the most renowned finales of modern Italian opera; and there is also melody, both fluent and catching ... which reveal the experienced hand.⁹³

Of the same opera, the 'Daily Telegraph' remarked "we believe ... the music to 'Trial by Jury' ... illustrates Mr. Sullivan's great capacity for dramatic writing of the lighter class."⁹⁴ If Sullivan's music was light, according to the 'Athenaeum', it avoided vulgarity since "even in his lightest moments, there is a certain grace and delicacy in his themes and their treatment which charm the ear of the educated musician."⁹⁵ As a craftsman, Sullivan could satisfy the more scholarly music lover, and as a humorist he could amuse those less studied in the art. The critic of the 'Morning Advertiser' in a review of 'Utopia Ltd.' believed that Sullivan's capacity to illustrate humour surpassed that of Gilbert:

As to the music, I am ready to confess gladly that for coherence and unity of design, for a continuous level of refined excellence, for interminable inspiration of fine humour, the new opera has not its equal in the whole range of the Sullivan and Gilbert series.⁹⁶

93 'Times', 29 March 1875.

94 'Daily Telegraph', 29 March 1875.

95 'Athenaeum', 14 December 1889.

96 'Morning Advertiser', 9 October 1893.

As a composer of light music, Sullivan was immune from some of the more severe criticism meted out by critics of serious music. But this also meant that certain critics often only looked superficially at the music and appear to have disregarded some of the musical devices used by the composer. It was, ironically, the journals such as 'Saturday Review' and the 'Athenaeum' - journals accustomed to reviewing serious music - that assessed these deeper qualities.

Textual humour was more readily recognised. In 'Trial by Jury', the 'Daily News' accustomed to Gilbert's wit as earlier revealed in the Ballads, believed "in whimsical invention and eccentric humour, Mr. W.S. Gilbert has no living rival among our dramatic writers."⁹⁷ Four years later, the 'Times' in a lengthy analysis of 'Penzance', noted "Mr. Gilbert has a rein of quaint and spontaneous humour as peculiarly his own as any gift ever possessed by the most individual artists and poets."⁹⁸ Like Sullivan, Gilbert also had much to offer the more scholarly critic. Beatty-Kingston, critic of the 'Theatre' in a review of 'Mikado' wrote: "as for the dialogue, it is positively so full of points and hits as to keep the wits of the audience constantly on the strain."⁹⁹ However, the 'Times' considered Gilbert's humour a trifle coarse:

In ... places the line between genuine fun and a mere tickling of the ears of the groundlings is not sufficiently observed, as, for example, where ... the lady is speaking of the irresistible fascination of her right elbow ... This is far-fetched and common at the same time.¹⁰⁰

97 'Daily News', 27 March 1875.

98 'Times', 5 April 1880.

99 'The Theatre', quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.240.

100 'Times', 16 March 1885.

Gilbert's humour, however, was seldom in bad taste. Like Sullivan, the true subtlety of his humour was directed more towards the educated and socially aware members of the audience. It was to these people that most of the daily papers - such as the 'Times', 'Telegraph' and 'Daily News' - addressed their reviews. Any lapse in standard invariably brought criticism from the press.

Both Gilbert and Sullivan depended upon novelty in attracting interest. But as the series of operas continued, the critics noted a gradual loss of originality. As early as 1880, the 'Times' could criticise 'Pirates of Penzance' saying "the chief characters are copies - copies from Mr. Gilbert's own originals, but copies still ...".¹⁰¹ The 'Daily Telegraph' commented on the succeeding opera "Mr. Gilbert repeats himself a good deal".¹⁰² In the next opera of the series - 'Iolanthe' - the 'Times' noted that "Mr. Sullivan's melodies even more than formerly suggest the idea that one has heard them before",¹⁰³ whilst the 'Daily Telegraph' considered at length that Gilbert:

has created an appetite that must be fed; imparted a flavour of pleasant fooling without which no concoction would be palatable, and marches as a prisoner bound to the chariot wheels of his own art ... There is danger of exhaustion on the one hand, and of satiating public taste on the other. Face to face with such a contingency Mr. Gilbert has not yet arrived, but even now each succeeding play is revealed to a public who have discounted its character, divined its method and prophesied its personages.¹⁰⁴

101 'Times', 5 April 1880.

102 'Daily Telegraph', 25 April 1881.

103 'Times', 27 November 1882.

104 'Daily Telegraph', 27 November 1882.

By the time the sixth Gilbert and Sullivan opera had been produced, the critics, who had come to use the method of comparison with earlier Gilbert and Sullivan operas as a criterion for judgement, noted that these works fitted a clearly defined pattern. This, however, did not affect the public who, if they noticed at this relatively early stage in the series that the works were becoming repetitive, appreciated the light operas for their simplicity of design. Indeed, the 1880's was a decade of increasing popularity in Savoy opera;¹⁰⁵ repetition became a positive benefit, since the public came to anticipate familiar features in each new opera. Nevertheless, the newspapers and journals continued to criticise both dramatist and composer for lack of originality. Of 'Princess Ida', the 'Athenaeum' wrote:

Sir Arthur Sullivan is not to be alarmed because in 'Princess Ida' we meet with rhythms, phraseology, and tricks of orchestration which sound familiar. There is rather cause for wonder that ... there is so much that strikes the hearer as spontaneous ...¹⁰⁶

The critic of the 'Times' accused Gilbert of repeating himself in this opera also.¹⁰⁷ The next opera in the series - 'Mikado' - sought to establish a degree of novelty through its unique setting. Despite this, the 'Times' noted:

The characters are the same ... the robes of the British peers in 'Iolanthe' have been exchanged for the flowing draperies of Daimios, the academic gowns of Princess Ida's fellow-collegiates have been laid aside for tight skirts and long sleeves.¹⁰⁸

105 R. Allen, 'First Night Gilbert and Sullivan', p.4.

106 'Athenaeum', 12 January 1884.

107 'Times', 7 January 1884.

108 'Times', 16 March 1885.

The 'Athenaeum' also found many of the characters in 'Mikado' familiar, but gave the composer a negative compliment, writing that Sullivan "has been singularly successful in avoiding the danger of repeating himself."¹⁰⁹

The 'Yeomen of the Guard', most critics agreed, was a new departure in style. It was prompted partly by the mixed reception given 'Ruddigore' by both critics and first-night public, and by Gilbert's desire to appease Sullivan, who, after the success of the 'Golden Legend' in 1886, was giving serious consideration to abandoning light music and concentrating his career in serious composition. When Sullivan was shown an outline of the new play, he recognised with enthusiasm that Gilbert had attempted a new departure in style, noting that the play possessed a "pretty story, no topsy-turvydom, very human and funny also."¹¹⁰ The originality of the text, however, was questioned by the 'Times', which recognised the plot as resembling that of 'Maritana'.¹¹¹ The 'Athenaeum' also recognised the similarity between 'Yeomen of the Guard' and Wallace's opera, but concluded:

The change was perilous but it is a distinct success, and now that the new departure has been taken, we may reasonably look forward to another series of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, far loftier in aim and accomplishment, and not less entertaining than those of the 'Pinafore', 'Patience' and 'Mikado' type.¹¹²

109 'Athenaeum', 21 March 1885.

110 Diary of Arthur Sullivan, quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.307.

111 'Times', 4 October 1888.

112 'Athenaeum', 6 October 1888.

The 'Daily Telegraph' considered Sullivan had responded well to the challenge in providing original music, noting "the music follows the book to a higher plane ..."¹¹³ The critic of 'Punch' was confused by the ambiguous ending "... none of the actors play with conviction. They seem uncertain as to the character - is it serious or isn't it?"¹¹⁴ The work, as the 'Daily News' noted, was "more or less in the nature of an experiment,"¹¹⁵ an experiment, deemed by Gilbert, despite the work's impressive four hundred and twenty-three performances,¹¹⁶ as a failure. An explanation lies in the Gilbert/Sullivan correspondence: Gilbert wrote "the success of 'The Yeomen' - ... a step in the direction of serious opera - has not been so convincing as to warrant us assuming that the public want something more earnest still". Sullivan replied to this, arguing "I looked upon its success as opening out a large field, for works of a more serious and romantic character". But Gilbert did not want this change and replied "the librettist of a good opera is always swamped by the composer."¹¹⁷ Gilbert appears to have resented Sullivan's desire to specialise in serious music, and therefore returned to the familiar pattern of traditional Savoy opera, where his talent for direction and whimsical satire had full scope.

The extreme reluctance of the critics to accept change was shown by their marked approval of the reversion to the traditional Savoy opera form with 'Gondoliers'. Of this opera, the 'Illustrated London News'

113 'Daily Telegraph', 4 October 1888.

114 'Punch', 6 October 1888.

115 'Daily News', 4 October 1888.

116 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.4.

117 Gilbert/Sullivan Correspondence, 1888, 1889, quoted in Baily, op.cit., p.328.

commented "Mr. Gilbert has returned to the Gilbert of the part, and everyone is delighted. He is himself again."¹¹⁸ The 'Athenaeum' which had earlier hailed the 'Yeomen' as a successful experiment, conceded that the dramatist was wise to return to the conventional, noting that in the 'Yeomen' "a sense of incongruity was felt and the beautiful music written by Sir Arthur Sullivan alone saved the opera from failure."¹¹⁹ George Bernard Shaw, music critic of the 'Star' commented upon the repetitiveness, stating that "... the music was much more familiar to the band than to the composer ..."¹²⁰ and, in a later review of the same opera, "... we know the exact limits of Mr. Gilbert's and Mr. Sullivan's talents by this time, as well as we know the width of the Thames at Waterloo Bridge."¹²¹ In 'Utopia Ltd.' and 'The Grand Duke' the press continued to comment upon familiar features in the operas. However, a marked change in attitude had occurred. Whereas earlier, the critics had castigated the artists for plagiarising themselves, they now came to praise with sentimental enthusiasm the repetition of features traditional to Savoy opera. This repetition of style ultimately affected the popularity of the operas - not with the first-night audience, who came largely for the social occasion - but with the audience attending on subsequent nights. Thus a steady decline in attendance rates occurred, which was largely unnoticed by critics reviewing the operas early in the season. This decline, itself a response to absence of originality in the Savoy operas, was an important factor

118 'Illustrated London News', quoted in Allen, 'First Night Gilbert and Sullivan', p.343.

119 'Athenaeum', 14 December 1889.

120 G.B. Shaw, Music in London, Vol. I (London, 1949), p.95.

121 G.B. Shaw, London Music 1888-1889 (London, 1950), p.270.

contributing to the eventual collapse of the works.

The most common criticism made, concerned shortcomings in the plots of the operas. The critic of the 'Athenaeum' considered the plot of 'Pinafore' inadequate;¹²² the 'Times', however noted: "with Mr. Gilbert a plot is seldom more than a lay figure which he delights in dressing in the fantastic garb of his wit and imagination."¹²³ Indeed, Gilbert considered the plot, if not of superficial importance in itself, most certainly of secondary importance to dialogue. The critics considered the inadequacies in 'Ruddigore' stemmed from weaknesses in the plot, particularly the second act. If Gilbert's wit and satire were keen, the critics would overlook a weak plot. Thus the 'Daily Telegraph' could write of 'Utopia Ltd.':

The plot and the characters are both subordinate to the satirical motive, and it would not be fair to go on with examples of 'hits' which make their best effect upon unsuspecting ears. The second act, we fancy, scarcely comes up to the level of the first ...¹²⁴

Yet, in the 'Grand Duke', where the dialogue was weak, the plot almost collapsed. 'Punch' maintained: "about a third of the first act ... might be omitted with advantage",¹²⁵ whilst the 'Sunday Times' also conceded that substantial alterations were necessary to the structure of the work.¹²⁶ The critic of the 'Musical Standard' considered the

¹²² 'Athenaeum', 1 June 1878.

¹²³ 'Times', 27 May 1878.

¹²⁴ 'Daily Telegraph', 9 October 1893.

¹²⁵ 'Punch' quoted in R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.417.

¹²⁶ 'Sunday Times', 8 March 1896.

plot seriously inadequate, concluding "the idea is not really funny, and it is enlarged upon to wearisomeness."¹²⁷ The 'Times' placed any weaknesses in the opera squarely with the dramatist, noting:

This time the libretto is conspicuously inferior to the music. There are still a number of excellent songs, but the dialogue seems to have lost much of its crispness, the turning point of what plot there is, requires considerable intellectual application before it can be grasped, and some of the jests are beaten out terribly thin.¹²⁸

The texts depended heavily upon sharp and witty dialogue; if this failed, there was no structure in the plot capable of holding the work together, and this weakness was obvious to critic and public alike.

The success of each opera, depended ultimately upon the cast. Gilbert personally trained and directed the cast to such a standard that they invariably excited the praise of critics by their quality of performance.¹²⁹ 'Punch' in a review of 'Mikado' analysed Gilbert as a theatrical director, noting that in the Savoy theatre:

The Actor-singers are only intelligent puppets in their Showmen's hands, and the more faithfully they carry out the instruction given them by their masters, the greater their individual and collective chance of success ... The result is that the ensemble is about the most effective thing in London - or Paris for that matter - because the individuality of the Actor-singer is not destroyed, but judiciously made use of, and worked up, as valuable material for the character he has to represent.¹³⁰

127 'Musical Standard', quoted in R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.417.

128 'Times', 9 March 1896.

129 'Sussex Gazette', 15 February 1894.

'Morning Post', 9 October 1893.

130 'Punch', 28 March 1885.

According to the critic, Gilbert had gone far in reforming the theatre in Victorian England. Certainly, the success of the Savoy cast set new standards of performance in light entertainment, whilst the improvements pioneered by Gilbert were to profit playwrights of the Edwardian era.

The one regular complaint critics had of Sullivan did not concern any weaknesses in style, but that the composer was prostituting his talents as a musician by writing light opera. The readers for whom the papers wrote considered that light opera was a lower form of art, and that the composer was abusing his talents. Originally, the critics viewed Sullivan's involvement in light opera as merely a diversion. The 'Times' noted in 'Trial by Jury' "Mr. Sullivan ... proved his ability to cope with the most admired French composers of burlesque, while, at the same time better provided in a strictly musical sense than any of them."¹³¹ The 'Times' was most critical of Sullivan's increasing attraction into light opera, and wrote:

While recording this decided success of Mr. Sullivan's new work we cannot suppress a word of regret that the composer on whom before all others the chances of a national school of music depend should confine himself ... to a class of production, which, however attractive, is hardly worthy of the efforts of an accomplished and serious artist.¹³²

The 'Times' repeated this complaint in reviews of 'Patience',¹³³ 'Mikado'¹³⁴

131 'Times', 29 March 1875.

132 'Times', 27 May 1878.

133 'Times', 25 April 1881.

134 'Times', 16 March 1885.

and 'Ruddigore'.¹³⁵ Of the music to 'Mikado', the 'Athenaeum' lamented that "so much ability should be employed on productions which from their very nature must be ephemeral."¹³⁶ Yet, in the succeeding opera, this journal had reversed its attitude. In a lengthy review, the critic noted:

No other English musician has such a hold upon the public as Sir Arthur Sullivan, nor ... so much influence for good, if he choose to exert it. The complaint has not unfrequently been made that he is prostituting his great talent by writing comic operas instead of turning his attention to the higher forms of art. We hold a different opinion. We consider that he is doing his best to elevate public taste. If we compare the music of one of his earlier successes, such, for instance as the 'Pinafore' with that of 'Mikado' or of the present work, we find a very distinct advance in style.¹³⁷

In a speech to the Royal Society of Musicians made four years previously, Sullivan had suggested that the popularising of music through light entertainment could raise the nation's musical standards.¹³⁸ In those operas written after 'Yeomen of the Guard', most critics came to accept the music of the Savoy operas as having artistic value of its own.

The critics were at pains to classify the Gilbert and Sullivan works. Because of the high quality of the music and text and the professional standard of presentation, the operas were generally considered as works of art. 'Thespis' was defined by the critic of the 'Observer'

135 'Times', 24 January 1887.

136 'Athenaeum', 21 March 1885.

137 'Athenaeum', 29 January 1887.

138 'Lute', 16 April 1883.

Speech by Arthur Sullivan, pp.77-79.

as an attempt "to imitate French comic opera ..."¹³⁹ The 'Tomahawk' disputed this, claiming the composer "has contrived to steer clear of the modern French school which ... will scarcely bear imitation."¹⁴⁰ When 'Trial by Jury' was presented in 1875, it followed a short work by Offenbach, and of the inevitable comparison, the 'Times' noted "'Trial by Jury' suffered nothing whatsoever from so dangerous a juxtaposition."¹⁴¹ 'HMS Pinafore' was still being described as French opera bouffe by the 'Athenaeum', whose critic wrote: "the setting is of the School of Offenbach and Herve, Mr. Sullivan being gifted with the tuneful inspiration of the former and with the romantic attainments of the latter."¹⁴² But the 'Times' disagreed, and maintained 'Pinafore' was superior to anything from the Continent, being "... witty and amusing without a shadow of the more or less veiled improprieties characteristic of French importations."¹⁴³ The same paper, when reviewing 'Patience' in 1881 considered "Mr. Sullivan's workmanship is infinitely above the level of 'opera bouffe' as imported from abroad."¹⁴⁴ Thus by the sixth opera of the series, the critics had recognised the Savoy operas as being a decided improvement on imported light opera.

As the Gilbert and Sullivan operas themselves began to penetrate an overseas market, British critics began to take a national pride in the accomplishments of this superior form of British light musical entertainment. The 'Times', first described 'Pinafore' as being an "English

139 'The Observer', quoted in Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan, p.6.

140 'Tomahawk', 28 December 1867.

141 'Times', 29 March 1875.

142 'Athenaeum', 1 June 1878.

143 'Times', 27 May, 1878.

144 Ibid., 25th April, 1881.

opera".¹⁴⁵ Later, 'Iolanthe'¹⁴⁶ and 'Ruddigore'¹⁴⁷ were classified as English operas by the same paper. When 'Yeomen of the Guard' was produced in 1888, the critic of the 'Daily Telegraph' described it as a "genuine English opera".¹⁴⁸ The journals tended to be more cautious, noting a distinction between opera in English, and English opera. However, the 'Athenaeum', in a review of 'Gondoliers' conceded that "Sir Arthur Sullivan's style is peculiarly his own",¹⁴⁹ and that he was indeed producing opera that was uniquely British in character. The 'Daily News' also considered that 'Gondoliers' was "so thoroughly English in style that the demand for an encore was uproarious".¹⁵⁰ The critics of the papers had gradually come to recognise the Savoy operas as a new art form, a musical commodity in which Britain was pre-eminent.

The enthusiasm of European - particularly German critics - tended to re-inforce this opinion. Gilbert and Sullivan opera had been performed in Europe and the U.S.A. with increasing popularity since 1878. When the Austrian critic, Eduard Hanslick visited London in 1885, he wrote of 'Mikado':

Sullivan's operetta, 'Mikado', merits special comment. It is the greatest success any English composer for the stage has ever achieved. First performed on the 14th March 1885 in London, it has been playing nightly ever since. A number of companies are touring with it in America; one of them has got as far as Australia, another, even more remarkably to Berlin and Hamburg. I should hardly have thought that this comedy, so packed

145 'Times', 27 May 1878.

146 Ibid., 27 November, 1882.

147 Ibid., 24 January, 1887.

148 'Daily Telegraph', 5 October 1888.

149 'Athenaeum', 14 December 1889.

150 'Daily News', 9 December 1889.

with references and specifically English jokes, would ever go over with a German audience. The fact it did - which would indicate that there is a healthy root of real comedy in the music, the play and the performance.¹⁵¹

This was praise indeed. A German critic, reviewing 'Mikado' in Hamburg repeated Hanslick's sentiments, remarking: "we are conscious of entertaining a very pronounced predilection for all our home products, but we scruple not to profess that as a performance, 'Mikado' surpasses all our operettas."¹⁵² Gilbert and Sullivan were becoming recognised as ambassadors of a specific type of national culture. When 'Gondoliers' was presented in Germany, the eminent German musicologist and critic, Professor Ehrlich, maintained that "'Gondoliers' ... is ... superior to all other operettas of the present day."¹⁵³ The international success earned by Gilbert and Sullivan, however, carried a responsibility. The 'Times' expressed concern that 'Patience', with its lampooning of the aesthetic movement, might tarnish British prestige abroad, adding "in America, no doubt, the new opera will be hailed with welcome as a faithful counterfeit presentment of London society in its latest development."¹⁵⁴ But there was no disguising the pride that even the most cynical critic took in the success of the Savoy operas. For the first time in two centuries, a series of musical works by a British composer and librettist were winning high praise by the most

151 E. Hanslick, Music Criticisms 1846-1899 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1950), p.270.

152 'North German Gazette', quoted in Baily, op.cit., pp.278-9.

153 Ehrlich, quoted in

154 'Times', 25 April 1881.

fastidious of European critics.

What was the attraction of these works? The critic of the 'Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News' in attempting to explain this, believed Gilbert and Sullivan were filling a cultural vacuum, writing:

England is very well satisfied with meagre results, madly enthusiastic over successes, pleased with moderate performances, and tolerant of absolute failures. Can it be wondered at, then, that the grand combination of musical and literary talent brought to bear upon the aesthetic opera known as 'Patience' should have been rapturously received by the members of the general public?¹⁵⁵

Such a negative explanation did not explain the success of the Savoy works overseas. The 'Athenaeum' had noted in 'Ruddigore' that Sullivan was performing an educating function in his attempt to 'elevate public taste',¹⁵⁶ and that his music had a universal appeal. The critic of the 'Daily Telegraph', in his review of the same work, went further:

the remarkable alliance of humour and musicianship ... commands the admiration of everybody, from the connoisseur to the man who knows nothing about music, but knows what he likes.¹⁵⁷

Thus, the critics acknowledged the major reason for the success of the Savoy operas was the broad nature of their popularity. Unlike other forms of musical entertainment - such as grand opera or the music-hall - the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were not selective.

155 'Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News', 7 May 1881.

156 'Athenaeum', 29 January 1887.

157 'Daily Telegraph', 24 January 1887.

The critics reflected two distinct changes of attitude in their response to Gilbert and Sullivan opera. The first change followed the production of 'Pinafore', when lists of notable persons in society who attended the premier performance began to appear in papers, and when it became apparent that the operas were attaining world-wide popularity. In the following decade, criticism tended to be stronger, as critics came to expect a continuously improving standard from the Savoy. The second change occurred after the production of 'Yeomen of the Guard', as critics, even those of the more learned journals, tended to allow sentiment to influence their judgement. In this way, the critics became less didactic and the value of their criticism to the partners declined.

The reactions of both the public and the press to the Gilbert and Sullivan operas was overall highly favourable. However, an analysis of the attitudes of the critics suggests that the reviews tended to follow rather than lead public opinion. By the 1880's, the critics were addressing their reviews of premiere performances to the middle and upper class readers who had attended the first night. Gradually, the critics lost touch with the general mood of audiences on subsequent nights who had come to expect novelty rather than convention at the Savoy theatre. Thus the critics appeared conservative and came to reflect the more conservative responses of the audience. As a result, the paradox arose where the critics acclaimed Gilbert and Sullivan opera as a new and superior form of light entertainment compared to any earlier opera bouffe

but at the same time refused to acknowledge the operas as anything more than a light, and therefore to many, ephemeral, art form. Nevertheless, the reviews reveal a changing of attitudes and an increasing toleration towards popular forms of entertainment.

CONCLUSION.

Through their production of light opera, Gilbert and Sullivan had developed a novel type of entertainment that not only attracted widespread public support, but which was also considered an effective medium for elevating the standards of popular musical entertainment. These operas became part of an emerging common culture for two basic reasons. Firstly, the works were accepted by authorities as a means of improving popular entertainment. Secondly, the widespread popularity of the operas - an unprecedented popularity in terms of British music - was based upon the appeal of the Savoy operas to people of all classes. Though these operas were intended for a bourgeois public, the audience consisted of people from all ranks of society.

The success of Gilbert and Sullivan as consumer-composers depended upon their ability to sell this entertainment. Success depended upon a sustained popular interest over a period of several hundred nights rather than patronage from an upper-class audience on the first night. The most successful of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, in these terms, were 'Pinafore' which played for seven hundred consecutive performances, and 'Mikado' which ran for six hundred and seventy-two.¹ Judgment of success was made not by critics praising specific artistic qualities, nor by the approbation of fellow artists, although such praise was appreciated by Gilbert and particularly Sullivan. Success was measured by the sustained support of the public. This enabled Carte to recoup his heavy

1 R. Allen, First Night Gilbert and Sullivan (New York, 1958), p.(xvi).

financial investment, and allowed a considerable margin of profit for the three partners.

Because ticket prices were low, the operas were able to sell to a newly emerged mass-audience of people of limited means. By the last quarter of the century, economic and social circumstances had created an increase in both living standards and the amount of leisure time available to people of all classes. The Savoy operas did not replace the traditional forms of entertainment, such as public house or music-hall, but rather complemented these by offering a more 'respectable' place of entertainment. A conscious effort was made to direct most forms of popular recreation. Matthew Arnold reflected the opinions of many authorities in society, when he wrote that "culture is the most resolute enemy of anarchy."² The well-being of society, so these authorities believed, depended upon some control or direction being given to popular entertainment.

Both Gilbert and Sullivan consciously strove to improve existing forms of entertainment. The Savoy operas were developments of burlesque or opera bouffe, which itself was considered by Victorian authorities a preferable form of amusement to the music-hall. The music-hall itself had become a formal medium for the presentation of popular and, less widely, industrial songs. Although certain critics might have complained that the Savoy operas were a debased manifestation of grand opera, they were, in reality developments from a more popular type of entertainment.

2 M. Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (London, 1946), p.204.

By improving an existing model, the Savoy operas were able to attract the public that formerly had only attended opera bouffe or the music-hall. Thus the Savoy operas became an entertainment in their own right.

Gilbert, however, made little attempt to attract a lower class audience. Indeed, the lower classes were often the butts of his satire. He did, nevertheless direct his main attention to drawing in the educated middle-class. The texts clearly show Gilbert's assumption of middle-class values. This did not prevent those from the lower ranks of society from enjoying and sharing in what was primarily a bourgeois entertainment. Professor Bulkley has argued that the lower middle-class would frequently ape their social superiors in an attempt to elevate their own social status.³ The Savoy operas were a melting pot of cultural attitudes, where if bourgeois interests were dominant, there was at least a sharing of common cultural interests.

Sullivan's influence is more complex to assess because of the relatively stagnant nature of British music in the nineteenth century. It was the Savoy operas that won him a lasting reputation and not the composer's more serious works. Sullivan's music in the light operas held popular appeal, being tuneful and easily recognised by the unskilled ear, but well constructed harmonically and scholarly orchestrated. Indeed, certain of Sullivan's qualities, such as musical parody, were, if not too sophisticated for the audience, at least too subtle for many critics to recognise. Undoubtedly, a major reason for the popularity of

3 J.H. Bulkley, The Victorian Temper (Cambridge, 1951), p.131.

the music amongst experienced listeners was that the music reflected the workmanship of an accomplished and highly trained musician.

Yet Sullivan was not attracted into light opera by commercial motives alone. The choice of composition that was open to the composer was tightly restricted by social convention. In Britain, grand opera was dominated by Italian composers, whilst the Victorian concert-going public preferred symphonies by German composers. Sullivan's attempt at grand opera, 'Ivanhoe', failed because it did not fit any established musical tradition, and because it was composed by composer of light opera. Sullivan had earlier attempted a symphony and several less ambitious orchestral works, but these failed to win sustained popularity. They failed because they did not have the wide audience appeal of the Savoy operas - they did not fit into the emerging pattern of culture, and hence remained musical curiosities. These compositions were directed towards an upper-class, which frankly preferred orchestral works by German musicians. There was no tradition of selecting and tending English orchestral music in nineteenth century England. Hugo Pierson (1815-1873), John Barnett (1802-1890) and William Sterndale Bennett (1816-1875) had attempted earlier in the century to compose English orchestral music, and also failed. They, like Sullivan, composed music for an upper-class that scorned the efforts of English symphonists in preference for European music. But unlike Sullivan, these composers lived in a period when cultural interests were still separated by class divisions.

Sullivan's choral music held more appeal than his orchestral compositions, because, like the Savoy operas, these works drew on interest from all classes in society. The English choral tradition, though influenced by Europeans such as Handel, Spohr and Mendelssohn, had survived from the seventeenth century. The deliberate attempt by authorities to direct and encourage working-class entertainment by sponsoring choral societies and providing singing instruction, as well as the widespread popularity of choral festivals amongst both working and middle classes in the industrial towns, helped establish choral music as a part of this same emerging common culture. The financial reward from choral music was much less than from the Savoy operas, yet it was sufficient for the composers Charles Hubert Parry (1848-1918) and, ultimately Edward Elgar (1857-1934) to earn a livelihood.

But Sullivan's serious music lacked a quality possessed by these two composers. This was the absence of a sustained emotional commitment. In the light operas, depth of feeling was unnecessary, and its absence was considered a positive advantage. Sullivan had so absorbed the Victorian belief that any show of emotion - particularly in music - was a sign of weakness, that much of his music lacked feeling. It was the light operas that allowed the composer the opportunity to turn this apparent fault to advantage. However, in the grand opera 'Ivanhoe' this was one cause of failure.

The controversy surrounding 'Yeomen of the Guard' reveals that Gilbert, in this light opera, became emotionally involved. As a result,

the work went deeper and contained more meaning than any previous light opera of the series. Critics, although they praised Gilbert's new departure in style were confused by the tragic ending. Yet the opera was a success, running for some four hundred and twenty-three consecutive performances.⁴ Gilbert, appreciating that any new work at the Savoy theatre was certain to attract some following, did not consider this was sufficient support to extend the scope of future operas into a field where humour would be subordinate to deeper emotional content.

Indeed, the non-emotional content of the Savoy operas was an important feature explaining their sustained popularity. A musically sophisticated audience might have been able to accommodate and appreciate a more serious type of Savoy entertainment, but not the masses who provided the sustained popularity of the Gilbert and Sullivan works. According to Hoggart, working class audiences prefer comedy to tragedy, and have traditionally considered art as 'fun', divorced from reality, but a means of escaping the complexities and hardships of daily life.⁵ The Savoy operas created an atmosphere where very little was taken seriously.

By collaborating in the Savoy operas, Sullivan had demonstrated that a British composer had excelled in the field of light opera, triumphing over European competitors. The Gilbert and Sullivan operas did not, however, establish a new tradition of light opera. There were

⁴ Allen, *op.cit.*, p.(xvi).

⁵ R. Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959), p.196.

successors to Gilbert and Sullivan - Cellier's 'Dorothy' and George Edwardes' productions of 'The Shop Girl', 'A Gaiety Girl', 'The Geisha', 'San Toy' and 'The Merry Widow'.⁶ But these were exotic imitations of the Savoy operas, and after initially extensive runs, soon ceased to be regularly performed.

Sullivan, however, had helped re-establish the popularity of British music. By means of his compositions he had encouraged the choral festivals of the industrial towns and broken the monopoly previously enjoyed by European conductors in the direction of these festivals. Sullivan had also satisfied a popular demand for light musical entertainment in Britain and overseas. Thus he had shown that both money and fame could be acquired by British musicians.

By reflecting the changing pattern of Victorian culture, the Savoy operas played a part in the revitalisation of British music. By virtue of their appeal, the light operas illustrated the emergence of a common culture. They were the products of change, the creations of a society undergoing a process of cultural re-organisation. Bound by the restrictions placed by society upon musical entertainment, and supported by a new audience, Gilbert and Sullivan developed an entertainment that satisfied both the limitations of society and the demands of the public. If the music composed in Britain after the last Savoy opera differed from that composed quarter of a century earlier, this was not due to the direct influence of either Gilbert or Sullivan, but rather it was due to a fundamental change that had taken place in the nation's cultural environment.

6 M. Lubbock, The Complete Book of Light Opera (London, 1962), Index.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.A Note on Sources.

The bulk of primary source material used in this thesis was obtained in the British Isles. Regrettably many useful sources, such as letters, original manuscripts, memoirs and copies of reviews kept by the artists themselves have been acquired by private collectors in the U.S.A. Co-operation with such collectors has not been forthcoming. Furthermore, the records kept by the Savoy theatre company were damaged by water during air-raids in 1940. I am particularly indebted to Albert Truelove, secretary of the Savoy theatre company, for his assistance in helping me locate available sources.

Until such time as the private papers of the artists become accessible, any research must be based upon what sources are available, edited collections of letters and those accounts which were published at the time in the daily press.

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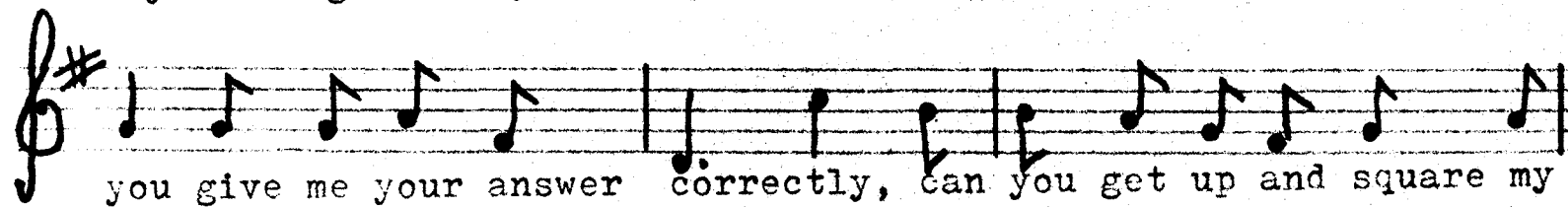
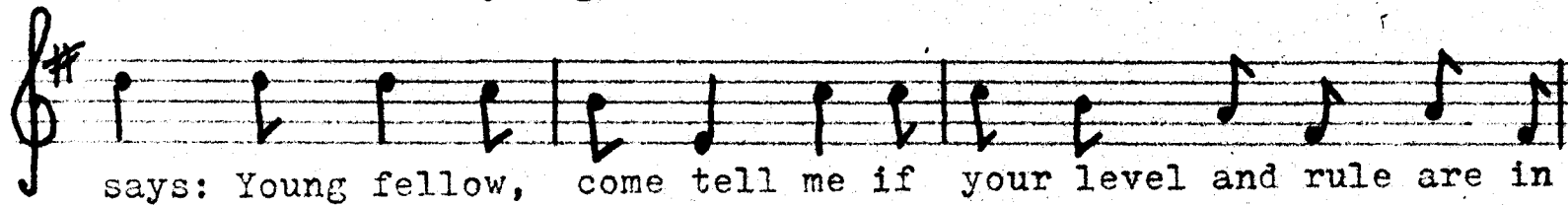
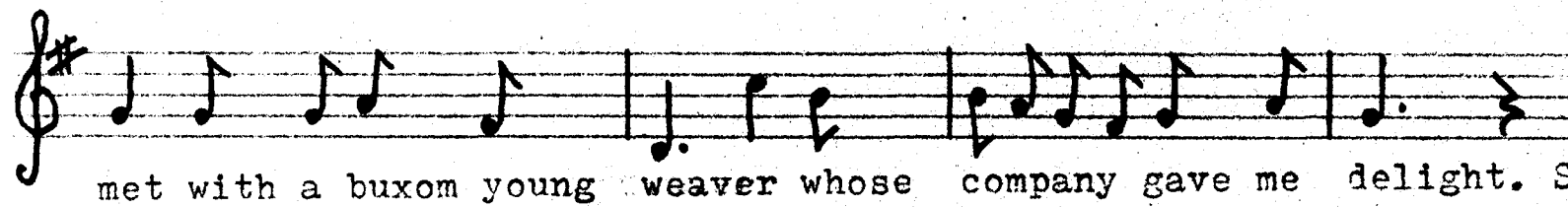
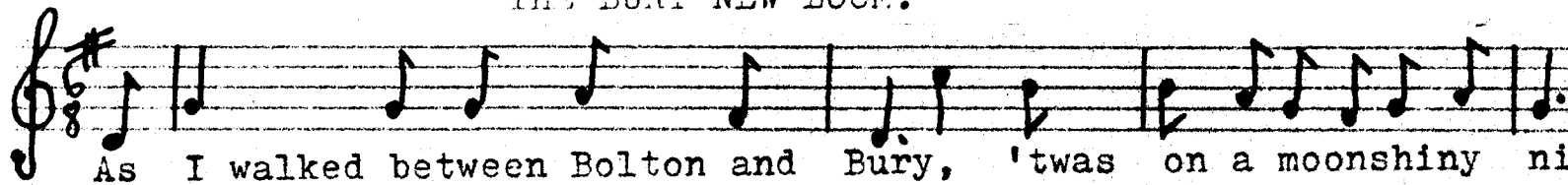
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APPENDIX I.

- Ex. 1. 'The Bury New Loom'.
 2. 'The Nailmakers Strike of 1852'.

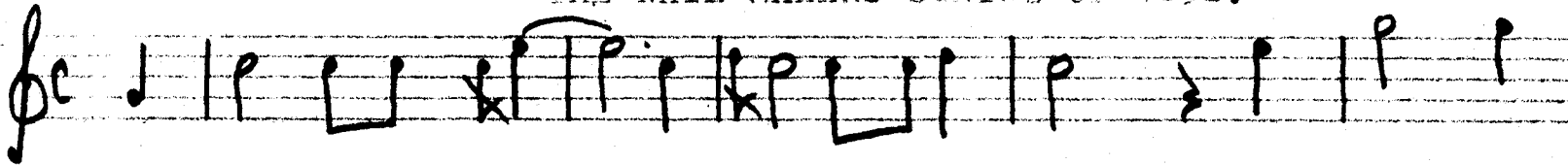
1. 'THE BURY NEW LOOM'.

THE BURY NEW LOOM.

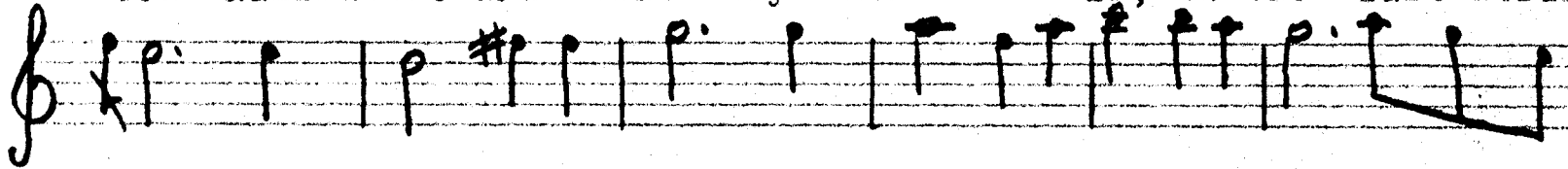


2. 'THE NAILMAKERS STRIKE OF 1852'.

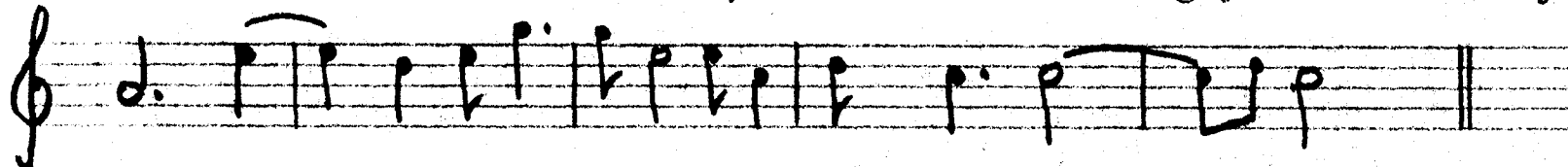
THE NAIL-MAKERS STRIKE OF 1852.



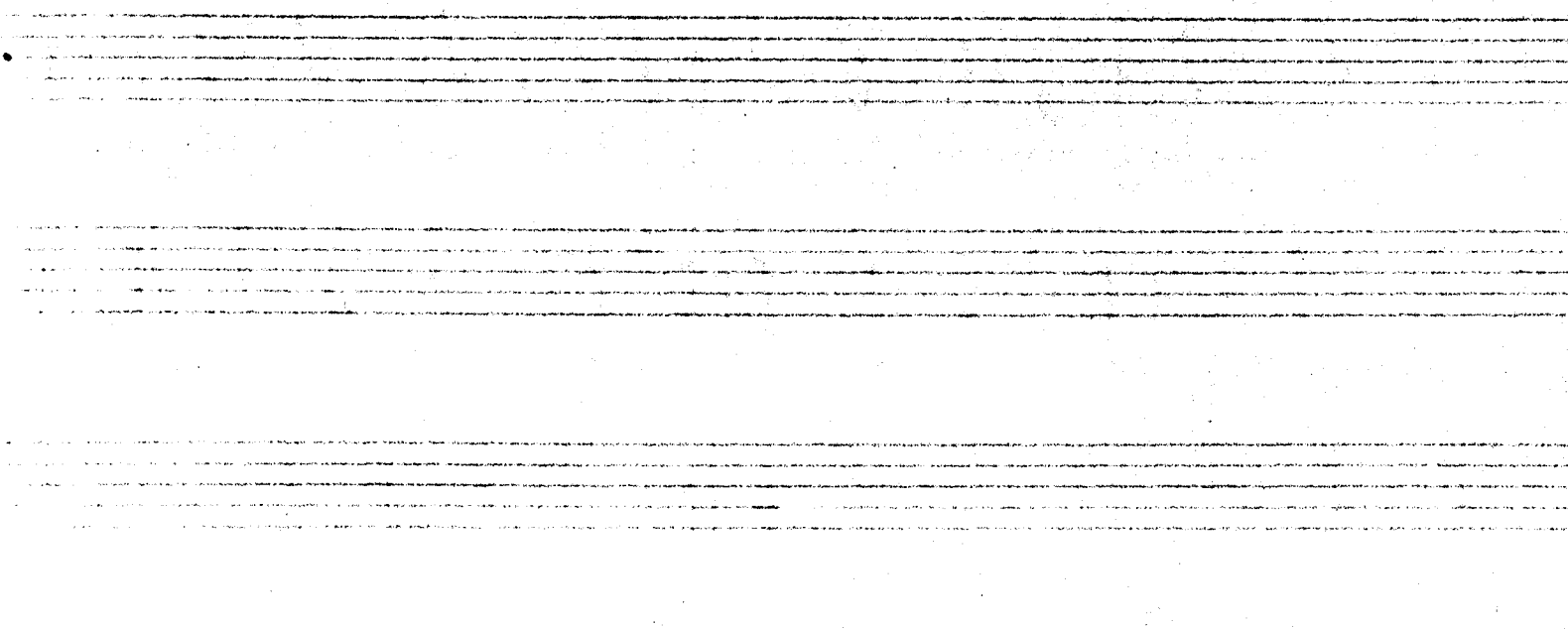
You Nailmakers all that day remember well, In the last strik



which this tale I do tell, How cold and hungry we that heavy



day, To Bromsgrove town did take our toil - some way.



APPENDIX II.

- | | | | |
|--------|------------|---|---------------|
| Ex. 1. | Gondoliers | - | Overture. |
| 2. | Gondoliers | - | Song - Marco. |
| 3. | Gondoliers | - | Chorus. |
| 4. | Gondoliers | - | Gavotte. |
| 5. | Sorcerer | - | Song. |
| 6. | Iolanthe | - | Song. |
| 7. | Ruddigore | - | Song. |
| 8. | Ruddigore | - | Chorus. |
| 9. | Iolanthe | - | Chorus. |
| 10. | Mikado | - | Duet. |
| 11. | Mikado | - | Song. |
| 12. | Yeomen | - | Duet. |
| 13. | Iolanthe | - | Song. |
| 14. | Ruddigore | - | Hornpipe. |
| 15. | Sorcerer | - | Incantation. |
| 16. | Mikado | - | Chorus. |
| 17. | Penzance | - | Chorus. |
| 18. | Gondoliers | - | Chorus. |
| 19. | Iolanthe | - | Duet. |

GONDOLIERS - OVERTURE

1

Composed by
ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

$$\text{---} + \text{---}$$

ANO

15844



First system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes a series of notes with a wavy line underneath, and asterisks (*) are placed below the staff.

Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece. The bass staff features a series of notes with a wavy line underneath, and asterisks (*) are placed below the staff.

Third system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes a series of notes with a wavy line underneath, and a dynamic marking *p* is present.

Fourth system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes a series of notes with a wavy line underneath.

Fifth system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes a series of notes with a wavy line underneath.

Sixth system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes a series of notes with a wavy line underneath, and a dynamic marking *f* is present.

First system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff with complex rhythmic patterns and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

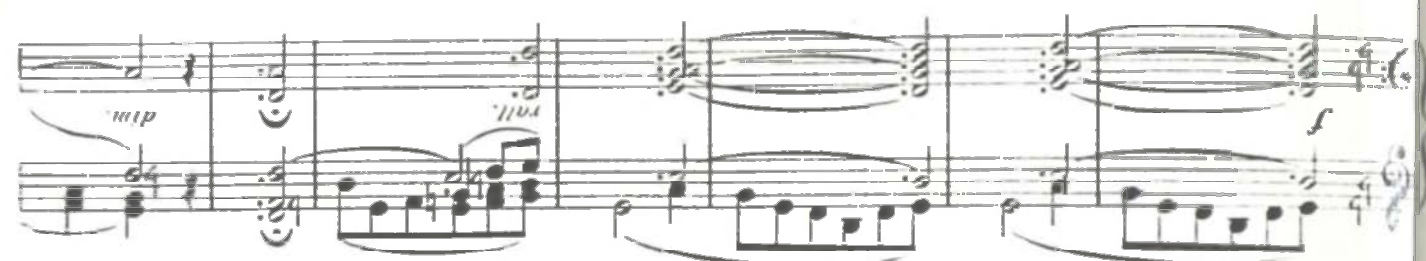
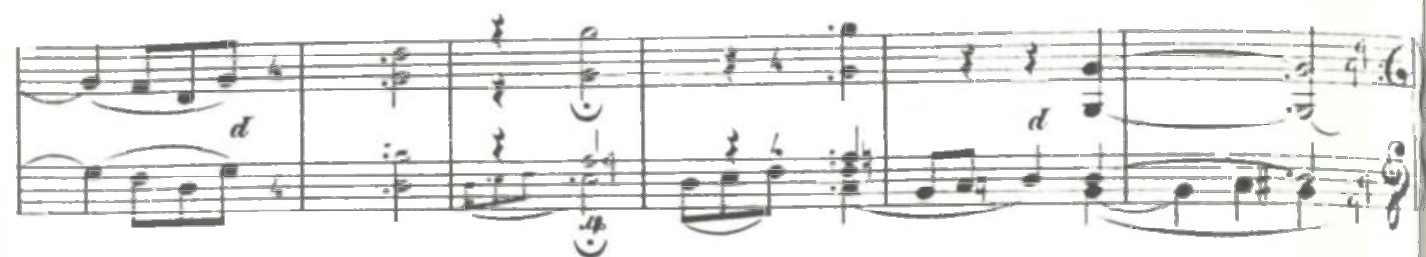
Second system of musical notation, continuing the piece with similar rhythmic complexity and a key signature of one sharp.

Third system of musical notation, including a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a tempo marking of *Allegretto grazioso*.

Fourth system of musical notation, featuring a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a key signature change to one flat (Bb).

Fifth system of musical notation, including a dynamic marking of *dim.* (diminuendo) and a key signature of one flat.

Sixth system of musical notation, concluding the page with a key signature of one flat and various musical ornaments.

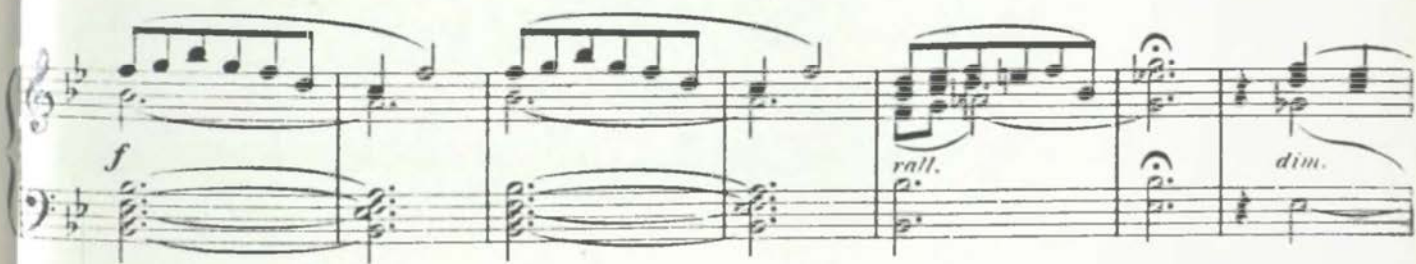


Allegretto. Tempo di Gavotte.

p

f

p





2. GONDOLIERS - SONG - MARCO.

Allegretto moderato.

MARCO.

1. Take a
2. Take a

PIANO.

The first system of music shows the vocal line for Marco and the piano accompaniment. The piano part begins with a forte dynamic marking 'f'.

pair of spark-ling eyes, — Hid-den, ev - er and a - non, — In a mer - ci - ful - e -
pret - ty lit - tle cot — Quite a mi - nia - ture af - fair — Hung a - bout with trel - liss'd

- clipse — Do not heed their mild sur - prise — Hav - ing pass'd the Ru - bi -
vine, — Fur - nish it up - on the spot — With the trea - sures rich and

- con. — Take a pair of ro - sy lips; — Take a
rare — I've en - dea - vour'd to de - fine. — Live to

3. GONDOLIERS - CHORUS.

CHORUS OF MEN. (with Duke & Duchess.)

Allegro à la marcia.

PIANO.

ff

TENORS.

With du-cal pomp and

BASSES.

With du-cal pomp and

du-cal pride

(An-nounce these com-ers, O ye ket-tle-drummers!)

du-cal pride

(An-nounce these com-ers, O ye ket-tle-drummers!)

4. GONDOLIER - GAVOTTE.

GAVOTTE.-(Duke, Duchess, Casilda, Marco & Giuseppe.)

Tempo di Gavotte, Allegretto.

DUKE.

PIANO.

I am a

cour - tier grave and se - rious Who is a - bout to kiss your hand: Try to com -
-votte per - form se - date - ly - Of - fer your hand with con - scious pride; Take an -

-bine a pose im - pe - rious With a de - mean - our ro - bly bland.
at - ti - tude not too state - ly, Still suf - fi - cient - ly dig - ni - fied.

MARCO & GIUS.

1. Let us com -
2. Now for an

That's, if
Once - ly,

-bure a pose im - pe - rious With a de - mean - our no - bly bland!
at - ti - tude not too state - ly, Still suf - fi - cient - ly dig - ni - fied!

cresc.

any - thing, *too* un - bend - ing - Too ag - gres - sive - ly - stiff and grand; 1. Now to the
twice - ly - once - ly, twice - ly - Bow im - pres - sive - ly - ere you glide. **DUKE. 2nd time.**

2. Ca - pi - tal, both,

cresc.

mf

CAS.

1. Now to the
DUCHESS.

1. Now to the

o - ther ex - treme you're tend - ing - Don't be so deuc - ed - ly con - de - scend - ing!

CAS. & DUCH. 2nd time

ca - pi - tal, both - you've caught it nice - ly! That is the style of - thing pre - cise - ly! Ca - pi - tal, both,

p

ther ex - treme you're tend-ing-Don't be so dread-ful-ly con - de - scend-ing!

ther ex - treme you're tend-ing-Don't be so dread-ful-ly con - de - scend-ing!

ca - pi - tal, both - you've caught it — nice - ly! That is the style of — thing pre - cise - ly!

MARCO.

Oh, hard to please some no-ble-men seem! At first, if a - ny-thing, *too* un -

GIUS.

Oh, hard to please some no-ble-men seem! At first, if a - ny-thing, *too* un -

MARCO, 2nd time.

Oh, sweet to earn a no-ble-man's praise! Ca-pi-tal, both, ca-pi-tal, both-we've caught it

GIUS, 2nd time.

Oh, sweet to earn a no-ble-man's praise! Ca-pi-tal, both, ca-pi-tal, both-we've caught it

p

-berd-ing, Off we go to the o-ther ex-treme- Too con-found-ed-ly con-de-

-berd-ing, Off we go to the o-ther ex-treme- Too con-found-ed-ly con-de-

nice-ly! Sup-po-sing he's right in what he says, This is the style of thing pre-

nice-ly! Sup-po-sing he's right in what he says, This is the style of thing pre-

1. -scend-ing! 2. CAS. *f* Ca-pi-tal, both,

-scend-ing! DUCHESS. *f* Ca-pi-tal, both,

MARCO. *f* -cise-ly! Ah,

GIUS. *f* -cise-ly! Ah,

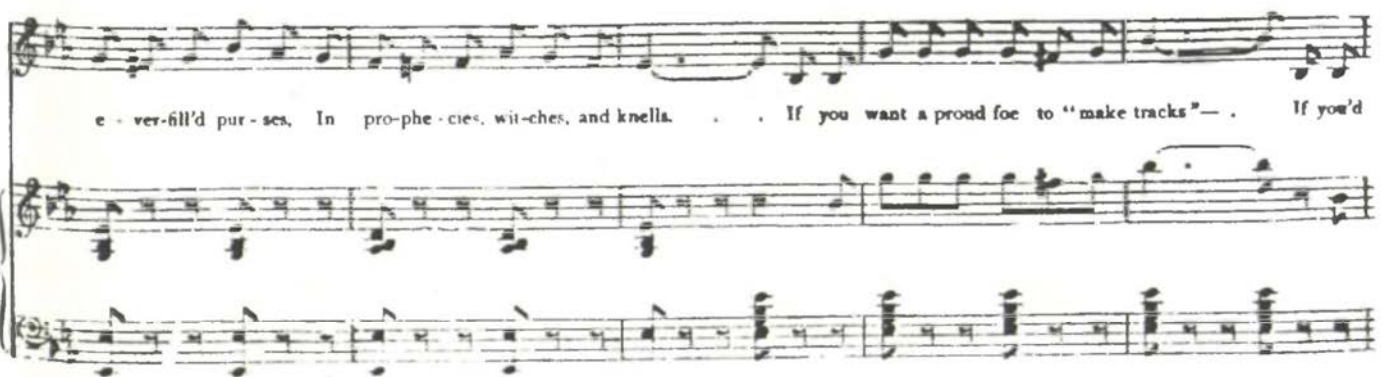
DUKE. 2. Now a ga - Ah,

p *f*

5. SORCERER - SONG.

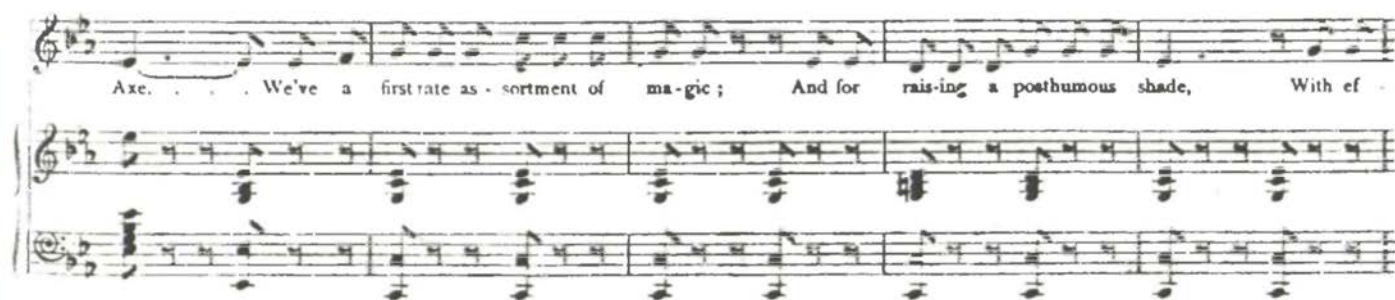
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SONG—(Mr. Wells)—“My name is John Wellington Wells.”

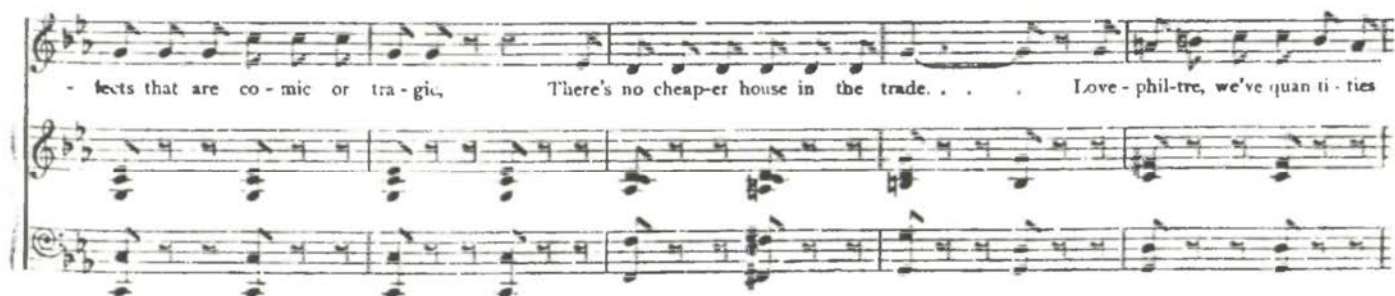




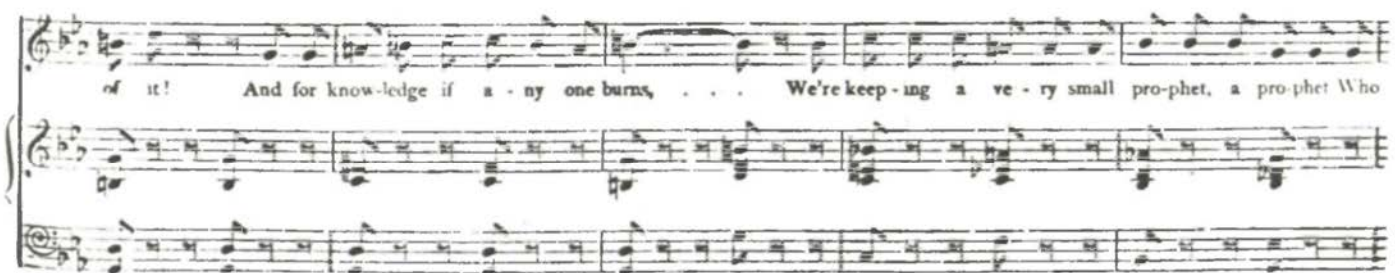
melt a rich un-cle in wax— . . . You've but to look in On the re-si-dent Djian, Number sev-en-ty, Sim-me-ry



Axe. . . We've a first-rate as-sortment of ma-gic; And for rais-ing a posthumous shade, With ef-



-fects that are co-mic or tra-gic, There's no cheap-er house in the trade. . . Love-phil-tre, we've quan-ti-ties



of it! And for know-ledge if a-n-y one burns, . . . We're keep-ing a ve-ry small pro-phet, a pro-phet Who



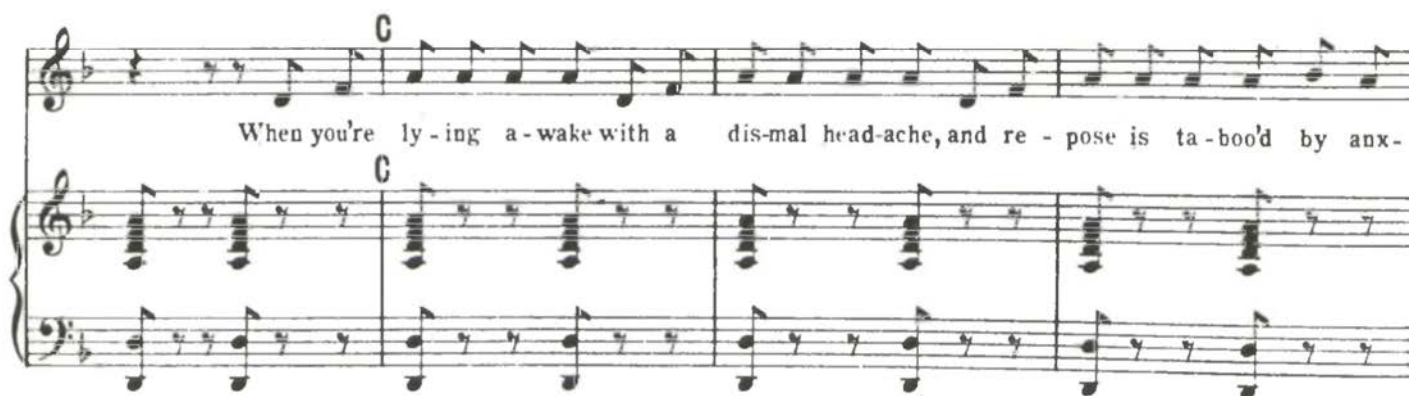
brings us unbound-ed re-turns: . . . For he can pro-phe-sy With a wink of his eye, Peep with se-cu-ri-ty

6. IOLANTHE - SONG.

Allegro ma non troppo.



Piano introduction in 6/8 time, key of B-flat major. The score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef with whole rests. The middle and bottom staves are a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music begins with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand, followed by a repeat sign. After the repeat, the music continues with eighth notes in the right hand and eighth notes in the left hand, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.



Vocal and piano accompaniment for the first line of the song. The vocal line is on a single treble clef staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The time signature is 6/8. The tempo is *Allegro ma non troppo*. The lyrics are: "When you're ly-ing a-wake with a dis-mal head-ache, and re - pose is ta-boo'd by anx-". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and chords in the right hand. There are two common time (C) markings above the vocal staff.

17614.

-i - e - ty, I con - ceive you may use a - ny lan - guage you choose to il

dulge in, with-out im-pro - pri - e - ty; For your brain is on fire— the bed-clothes con-spire— of

u - su - al slum-ber to plun - der you: First your coun - ter - pane goes, and un-

-co - vers your toes, and your sheet slips de - mure - ly from un - der you; Then the

7. RUDDIGORE - SONG.

No. 5.

SONG—Sir Roderic & Chorus.

Sea.
Allegro energico.

AND<

ff

Ped.

SIR RODERIC.

When the night wind howls in the

p

chimney crows, and the bat in the moon - light flies, And

ink - y clouds, like fu - neral shrouds, sail o - ver the mid - night

skies— When the foot pads quail at the night - bird's wail, and

8. RUDDIGORE - CHORUS.

ACT I.

No. 1.

CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS—(Solo Soprano, Zorah).

All.retto moderato.

P AN-1

ff

p

crec.

Ped.

f

p

9. IOLANTHE - CHORUS.

First system of a musical score. The vocal line (treble clef) has a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The lyrics are "We are Peers of high - est sta -". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) is mostly silent in this system.

We are Peers of high - est sta -

Piano accompaniment for the first system. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A piano dynamic marking 'p' is present at the beginning.

Second system of a musical score. The vocal line (treble clef) continues with the lyrics "Pa - ra - gons of le - gis - la -". The piano accompaniment (bass clef) remains silent.

Pa - ra - gons of le - gis - la -

Piano accompaniment for the second system. The right hand (treble clef) continues with the same melodic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand (bass clef) continues with the eighth-note accompaniment.

10. MIKADO - DUET.

RECIT.

cloy! Come back, oh, shallow fool, come back to joy!

f Go, leave thy dead-ly work un- done! A-way! a-

f Go, leave thy dead-ly work un- done! A-way! a-

a tempo *f* *RECIT.* *a tempo* *f*

NANKI-POO.

- way! ill - favour'd one! Ah! 'Tis Ka-ti-sha, The

- way! ill - favour'd one!

dim. *f*

KATISHA.

maid of whom I told you. No! You shall not go, These arms shall thus en-fold you!

11. MIKADO - SONG.

**DUET— Nanki-Poo and Ko-Ko,
(with Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Pooh-Bah.)**

Allegro gioioso. (♩ = 80.) NANKI-POO

VOICE. The

PIANO. *ff* *p*

flow-ers that bloom in the spring, Tra la, Breathe pro-mise of mer-ry sun-shine— As we

mer-ri-ly dance and we sing, Tra la, We wel-come the hope that they bring, Tra la, Of a

sum-mer of ro-ses and wine, Of a sum-mer of ro-ses and wine. And

12. YEOMEN - DUET.

MANO.

PIANO.

p


Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

POINT. ELISE.

I have a song to sing, O! — Sing me your song, O! —

POINT.

It is sung to the moon By a love-lorn loon, Who



Ed. * Ed. *

fled from the mock - ing throng, O! It's the song of a mer - ry-man, mop - ing mum, Whose

soul was sad, and whose glance was glum, Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb, As he

Red. * *Red.* * *Red.* * *Red.* *

sighed for the love of a la - dye, Heigh - dy! Heigh - dy! Mis-e - ry me,

pp *Red.* *

lack-a - day-dee! He sipped no sup, and he craved no crumb, As he sighed for the love of a

Red. * *Red.* *

la - dye!

ELSIE.
2. I have a song to sing, O!

Red. *

13. IOLANTHE - SONG.

SONG—(Lord Mountarat, with Chorus.)

Moderato.

VC CE.

1. When

PI/NO.

f

Bri - tain real - ly rul'd the waves - (In good Queen Bess's — time) The House of Peers made
 Wel - ling - ton thrash'd Bo - na - parte, As ev - 'ry child can tell, The House of Peers through -
 while the House of Peers with - holds its le -gis - la - tive hand, And no - ble states - men

p

no pre - tence, To in - tel - lec - tual em - in - ence, Or scho - lar - ship su - blime; Yet
 - out the war, Did no - thing in par - tic - u - lar, And did it ve - ry well: Yet
 do not itch To in - ter - fere with mat - ters which They do not un - der - stand, As

Bri - tain won her proud - est bays In good Queen Bess - 's glo - rious days! Yet
 Bri - tain set the world a - blaze In good King George - 's glo - rious days! Yet
 bright will shine Great Bri - tain's rays, As in King George - 's glo - rious days! As

CHORUS. FAIRIES.

Bri - tain won her proud - est bays In good Queen Bess - 's glo - rious days. Yes,
 Bri - tain set the world a - blaze In good King George - 's glo - rious days. Yes,
 bright will shine Great Bri - tain's rays, As in King George - 's glo - rious days. As

PEELS.

Yes,
 Yes,
 As

last verse only In good King George - 's glo - rious 1. & 2. *last*
 2. When days.
 3. And

Bri - tain won her proud - est bays In good Queen Bess - 's glo - rious days. days.
 Bri - tain set the world a - blaze In good King George - 's glo - rious days.
 bright will shine Great Bri - tain's rays, As in King George - 's glo - rious

Bri - tain won her proud - est bays In good Queen Bess - 's glo - rious days. days.
 Bri - tain set the world a - blaze In good King George - 's glo - rious days.
 bright will shine Great Bri - tain's rays, As in King George - 's glo - rious

14. RUDDIGORE - HORNPIPE.

15. SORCERER - INCANTATION.

No. 13. INCANTATION—Aline, Alexis, Mr. Wells, and Chorus.

ALL: RETTO
C: JASI
L: NTO

p *p*

MR. WELLS.

Sprites of earth and air. Fiends of flame and fire!

p

De - mon-souls, come here in shoals, This fear - ful deed in - spire! . . . Ap - pear! Ap -

pear! Ap - pear!

p

CHORUS.

Good mas - ter, we are here!

dim.

MR. WELLS.

Noi - some hags of night! Imps of dead - ly shade! Pal - lid ghosts, a -

Str.

rise in hosts, And lend me all your aid! Ap - pear! Ap - pear! Ap - pear!

Str.

fly! let us fly! let us fly! let us fly! let us fly!

let us fly! let us fly! let us fly! let us fly!

late! it may not be! That hap - py fate is not for thee

ha! ha! ha! ha! ho! ha! ha! ha! ha!

dim. *al* *fine.*

pp

16. MIKADO - CHORUS.

Allegro vivace. (♩ = 128.)

PIANO.

The piano accompaniment consists of four systems of grand staves. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegro vivace' with a quarter note equal to 128 beats per minute. The first three measures of the first system are marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups of eight, as indicated by the '8' above the notes. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system shows a change in the bass line, moving to a more active role with chords and eighth notes. The fourth system concludes with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking in the bass line, which is playing a series of chords.

CHORUS of TENORS & BASSES
In Unison.

If you

This section contains the vocal entry and the piano accompaniment for the chorus. The vocal part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a rest for four measures, followed by the lyrics 'If you'. The piano accompaniment continues on the grand staff. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A fortissimo 'ff' dynamic marking is placed above the piano part in the third measure of this system.

want to know who we are, We are gentlemen of Ja -

pan. On many a vase and jar =

On many a screen and fan,

We figure in live - ly paint, - Our

at - titude's queer and quaint - You're wrong if you think it ain't.

17. PENZANCE - CHORUS.

So to Constab-u-lar-y, pi-rates yield! Oh, rap-ture!

H *Allegro moderato.*

PIRATES *ff*

We tri-umph now, for well we trow Your—
You tri-umph now, for well we trow Our

H *Allegro moderato.*

mor-tal ca-reer's cut short; No pi-rate band will take its stand At the
mor-tal ca-reer's cut short; No pi-rate band will take its stand At the

Cen - - - - - tral Cri - mi-nal Court!
Cen - - - - - tral Cri - mi-nal Court!

18. GONDOLIERS - CHORUS.

QUINTET & FINALE. - (Marco, Giuseppe, Casilda, Gianetta,
Tessa & Chorus.)

Molto vivace.

CASILDA. Here is a case un -

GIANETTA. Here is a case un -

TESSA. Here is a case un -

MARCO. Here is a case un -

GIUSEPPE. Here is a case un -

PIANO. *ff* *p*

-pre - ce - dent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill - starr'd! Ev - er since marriage was

-pre - ce - dent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill - starr'd! Ev - er since marriage was

-pre - ce - dent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill - starr'd! Ev - er since marriage was

-pre - ce - dent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill - starr'd! Ev - er since marriage was

-pre - ce - dent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill - starr'd! Ev - er since marriage was

-pre - ce - dent - ed! Here are a King and Queen ill - starr'd! Ev - er since marriage was

first in-vent - ed Nev-er was known a case so hard!

first in-vent - ed Nev-er was known a case so hard!

first in-vent - ed Nev-er was known a case so hard!

first in-vent - ed Nev-er was known a case so hard! I may be said to have

first in-vent - ed Nev-er was known a case so hard! I may be said to have

Thro' a ca-la-mi-ty

Thro' a ca-la-mi-ty

Thro' a ca-la-mi-ty

been bi-sect - ed, By a pro-found ca-tas-tro-phe!

been bi-sect - ed, By a pro-found ca-tas-tro-phe!

19. IOLANTHE - DUET.

No 2

Andante non troppo lento.

PIANO.



PHYLIS.

1. None shall part us from each o - ther, One in life and death are we: All in
STREPHON. 2. All in all since that fond meet - ing When, in joy, I woke to find Mine the



all - to one an - o - ther, I to thee and thou to me! All in
heart, with - in thee beat - ing, Mine the love that heart en - shrined! Mine the



all to one an - o - ther - I to thee - and thou to me!
heart, with - in thee beat - ing, Mine the love that heart en - shrined!

