

Chapter 1 : Gilbert and Sullivan | Revolvry

In Gilbert Before Sullivan, scholar Jane W. Stedman pairs authoritative texts for all six of Gilbert's German Reed Entertainments with an impressive array of scholarly research and analysis. The resulting study is sure to fascinate any fan of Gilbert and his works.

An early poster showing scenes from *The Sorcerer*, *Pinafore*, and *Trial by Jury* Gilbert found a subject in one of his own short stories, "The Elixir of Love," which concerned the complications arising when a love potion is distributed to all the residents of a small village. The leading character was a Cockney businessman who happened to be a sorcerer, a purveyor of blessings not much called for and curses very popular. Gilbert and Sullivan were tireless taskmasters, seeing to it that *The Sorcerer* opened as a fully polished production, in marked contrast to the under-rehearsed *Thespis*. Nevertheless, Carte and his syndicate were sufficiently encouraged to commission another full-length opera from the team. *Pinafore* Gilbert and Sullivan scored their first international hit with *H. Pinafore*, satirising the rise of unqualified people to positions of authority and poking good-natured fun at the Royal Navy and the English obsession with social status building on a theme introduced in *The Sorcerer*, love between members of different social classes. As with many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a surprise twist changes everything dramatically near the end of the story. Gilbert oversaw the designs of sets and costumes, and he directed the performers on stage. The result was a new crispness and polish in the English musical theatre. Our stage discipline was strict and unbending. He had unlimited fertility of invention in comic business and would allow no gag, no clowning, no departure from his own definite conception. Every part must be made subservient to the whole, and his sarcasms overwhelmed the transgressor with scorn. But there was nothing to hurt or offend us in this unswerving discipline, we took their good-humoured raillery as our due when we failed in our rendering or overstepped the bounds; and the patience and enthusiasm of that artistic pair so infected all of us that we worked willingly for hours and hours at rehearsals, trying with all our might to realize the conceptions of those two brilliant minds. *Pinafore* ran in London for performances, [35] the second longest run of any musical theatre piece in history up to that time after the operetta *Les cloches de Corneville*. The disgruntled former partners, who had invested in the production with no return, staged a public fracas, sending a group of thugs to seize the scenery during a performance. Stagehands successfully managed to ward off their backstage attackers. The libretto of *H. Pinafore* Gilbert and Sullivan added the element of the comic patter-singing character. With the success of *H. Pinafore* Before *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert had constructed his plays around the established stars of whatever theatre he happened to be writing for, as had been the case with *Thespis* and *Trial by Jury*. Building on the team he had assembled for *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert no longer hired stars; he created them. He and Sullivan selected the performers, writing their operas for ensemble casts rather than individual stars. Relatively unknown performers whom Gilbert and Sullivan engaged early in the collaboration would stay with the company for many years, becoming stars of the Victorian stage. These included George Grossmith, the principal comic; Rutland Barrington, the lyric baritone; Richard Temple, the bass-baritone; and Jessie Bond, the mezzo-soprano soubrette. *The Pirates of Penzance* Main article: *The Major-General and his many daughters* escape from the tender-hearted *Pirates of Penzance*, who are all orphans, on the false plea that he is an orphan himself. The pirates learn of the deception and re-capture the Major-General, but when it is revealed that the pirates are all peers, the Major-General bids them: Sullivan became the conductor of the Leeds festival beginning in and conducted the performance. The Carl Rosa Opera Company staged the cantata as an opera in Grossmith, who created the role of Bunthorne, based his makeup, wig and costume on Swinburne and especially Whistler, as seen in the adjacent photo. The story concerns two rival "aesthetic" poets, who attract the attention of the young ladies of the village, who had been engaged to the members of a cavalry regiment. But both poets are in love with Patience, the village milkmaid, who detests one of them and feels that it is her duty to avoid the other despite her love for him. *Pinafore* and becoming the second longest-running work of musical theatre up to that time in history. *Iolanthe* *Iolanthe* was the first of the operas to open at the Savoy. The fully electric Savoy made possible numerous special effects, such as sparkling magic wands for the female chorus of fairies. The opera

poked fun at English law and the House of Lords and made much of the war between the sexes. The Daily Telegraph wrote, "The composer has risen to his opportunity, and we are disposed to account Iolanthe his best effort in all the Gilbertian series. The quality throughout is more even, and maintained at a higher standard, than in any of his earlier works Gilbert had referred to the new technology in Pinafore in , only two years after the device was invented and before London even had telephone service. This was probably the first live "broadcast" of an opera. Although it was the operas with Gilbert that had earned him the broadest fame, the honour was conferred for his services to serious music. The musical establishment, and many critics, believed that this should put an end to his career as a composer of comic opera" that a musical knight should not stoop below oratorio or grand opera.

Chapter 2 : Gilbert and Sullivan - New World Encyclopedia

At a rehearsal for one of these entertainments, Ages Ago, in , the composer Frederic Clay introduced Gilbert to his friend, the young composer Arthur Sullivan. Over the next year, before the two first collaborated, Gilbert continued to write humorous verse, stories and plays, including the comic operas Our Island Home () and A Sensation Novel (), and the blank verse comedies The.

G Allen, Reginald; Gilbert, W. *The First Night Gilbert and Sullivan*. Limited Editions Club, Illustrated with Contemporary Drawings. Gold clamshell case with green label containing 27 facsimile programmes and indulgence slips , and guide thereof, the last now a bit creased at bottom edge; just a hint of rubbing to case hinge. Slipcase rubbed at extremities, as usual, yet strong and firm. The Heritage Press, With accompanying green printed gold box containing 27 facsimile programmes and indulgence slips , and guide thereto, all fine. Gold slipcase a touch dusty, with minor edge rubbing and 2" score on rear panel, yet strong and firm. The Pierpont Morgan Library; Boston: Compiled by Reginald Allen in collaboration with Gale R. Original pale olive cloth, lettered in brown on spine, fresh and clean; contents nice and tight. Bright yellow pictorial A. A fine volume in near fine dust jacket; this is an extensively illustrated catalogue of a major exhibit on the life and works of Sir Arthur Sullivan. Pierpont Morgan Library; London: Chappell and Company, Original pale-olive cloth, lettered in brown, bright and clean; contents excellent. Bookplate with ink crossmarks later owner? A very good, clean copy. Edited by Ulrich Tadday. Original photo-pictorial Sullivan in cream card wrappers , clean and fresh; contents excellent. *Their Lives and Times*. Profusely illustrated with photographs, drawings, caricatures, archival items, etc. Photo pictorial Light Opera of Manhattan Sorcerer scene card wrappers now creased at lower front corner. A near fine copy. With 10 colour plates and over illustrations in the text". *Reminiscences of Henry Clay Barnabee*: Chapple Publishing Company, Edited by George Leon Varney. Signed by the author on the front endpaper. Includes the chapter "H. Pinafore" describing the first U. Also refers to his performances in *Pygmalion* and *Galatea* and as Bunthorne in *Patience*. Original dark grey cloth with oval photographic onlay of Barrington on front cover, titled in gilt ; a little rubbed and worn at edges and corners; a trifle spotted on rear cover. Spine completely faded; lettering thereon almost illegible. With Thirty-two Illustrations from Photographs. Cloth a somewhat darkened at margins, as usual; spine almost black but gilt lettering remarkably and surprisingly sharp; head and tail of spine rubbed and creased. Bookplate; top edge gilt, others untrimmed very dusty; contents otherwise clean and tight. This one considerably more darkened and soiled, pink cloth almost evenly browned overall; onlay dusty, yet still fairly sharp; somewhat rubbed at extremities, with spine titling clear but a bit dulled; edges dusty. Endpapers toned, with hinges perfect; text block holding well, though a couple plates poorly tipped in and so extending slightly into untrimmed fore edges. Still, a very good copy. *The Gilbert and Sullivan Lexicon*: Third edition, revised and enlarged. Original lilac-blue laminated pictorial Shovelton drawing of Gilbert and Sullivan using the Lexicon, 2nd ed. As told by herself to Ethel MacGeorge. In the scarce photo-pictorial *Jessie Bond as Phoebe* white dust jacket , lightly soiled on panels; spine a bit darkened; tiny chips at extremities. Oxford University Press, *Lost Chords and Discords*. Elaborate pictorial dust jacket curled at top edge; spine a little spotted. A fine copy of this double biography. John Lane Company, From the "Stars of the Stage" series, edited by J. Original green cloth, decorated Greek figure with drama masks in brown, titled in gilt ; spine and edges of rear panel now somewhat sunned, gilt thereon a bit dulled; faint mark to front cover near figure. Neat ink name and ownership blind-stamp on front free endpaper; both free endpapers tanned; ink notation in margin of p. Chapman and Hall, Original bright green cloth, decoratively panelled in black, and lettered in gilt on spine , now soiled and worn; lower rear joint split 2", with corresponding split to inner hinge; evidence of label removed from upper front. Front hinge cracking yet still strong; bookplate; small label untidily removed from half-title; some evidence of dampstaining to top margin of pages, and some "thumbing". A good copy of this enjoyable reminiscence. Trischler and Company, [n. Sixth edition, thirty-eighth thousand. Original dark green cloth printed in pink , now a trifle faded on spine; with two darkened patches on front; corners and spine ends lightly rubbed, with minor fraying at tail. A bit of cracking to front hinge, yet all still nice and tight; patterned

endpapers; pages a touch age toned. Illustrated with caricatures and portraits of contemporaries, and manuscript facsimiles. A wonderful memoir filled with reminiscences of time spent with most of the Victorian theatrical and artistic notables of the day, including frequent mentions of Gilbert, Sullivan and the Savoy. Original black and white tweed-like boards, lettered in red on spine; decorative ownership ink stamp on front endpaper; contents excellent. Purple and black photo-pictorial Gilbert dust jacket price clipped; a touch age-toned. His Life and Character. The History Press, Illustrated with 8 pp. A fine copy in wine-red boards and brown-toned pictorial Gilbert photo over Victorian drawing dust jacket. Stories from Gilbert and Sullivan. Gilt lettered dark blue boards; ink name and date on front endpaper; contents clean and tight. Price clipped gold and yellow colour pictorial dust jacket a bit browned on rear, with small mark on spine, and dusty overall. Stedman and Owen French; historical and other text by Clemence Bettany. Profusely illustrated with photos, caricatures, costume designs, production scenes, etc. A detailed look at the company, its history, stars and productions. A History of the Savoy Company. The Savoy Company, Original gilt-decorated Savoy badge blue cloth ; a hint of fading to spine and edges; scuff above logo on front; contents clean and tight. A near fine copy of this history which includes annual production notes, lists of officers and members and a section called "Who Played What, When". Sir Arthur Sullivan and His Operas. His Life and Music. A near fine copy in green cloth over light boards, lettered in brown ; spine a trifle darkened, top corners and spine ends bumped. Pages very slightly age-toned owing to poor quality paper used; minor foxing at edges. Photo plates printed in red and white. Melbourne University Press, Woodcut illustrations by Wolfgang Cardamatis. Original yellowish-grey cloth, lettered in green; covers slightly bowed. Fine copy of this unusual Australian title. Three-line imprint Australia, London and New York on rear panel. This one in variant later? Near fine copy of this unusual Australian title. Could the above item be the original design of the dust jacket and this the revised version? Much Sound and Little Sense. John Camden Hotten, Ink name to front endpaper greenish-grey coated paper and evidence of bookplate removal from front pastedown; front hinge cracked but strong, rear perfect, with binders ticket "W. Together with Gilbert, W. George Routledge and Sons, [n. Mirage]", we infer that these are from the library of a ship of the Royal Yacht Squadron, the yacht club founded in and given royal patronage in

Chapter 3 : Gilbert & Sullivan: Their Greatest Hits (DVD,) | eBay

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

Early history Gilbert before Sullivan W. Gilbert was born in London, on November 18, His father, William, was a naval surgeon who later wrote novels and short stories, some of which included illustrations by his son. Many of these would later be mined as a source of ideas for his plays and operas, particularly his series of illustrated poems, called the Bab Ballads. Mike Leigh describes the "Gilbertian" style as follows: With great fluidity and freedom, [Gilbert] continually challenges our natural expectations. First, within the framework of the story, he makes bizarre things happen, and turns the world on its head. Thus the Learned Judge marries the Plaintiff, the soldiers metamorphose into aesthetes, and so on, and nearly every opera is resolved by a deft moving of the goalposts. His genius is to fuse opposites with an imperceptible sleight of hand, to blend the surreal with the real, and the caricature with the natural. In other words, to tell a perfectly outrageous story in a completely deadpan way. Gilbert developed his innovative theories on the art of stage direction, following theatrical reformer Tom Robertson. His father was a military bandmaster, and by the time Arthur had reached the age of 8, he was proficient with all the instruments in the band. In school, he began to compose anthems and songs. In , he received the first Mendelssohn Prize and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and at Leipzig, where he also took up conducting. Revised and expanded, it was performed at the Crystal Palace in , and was an immediate sensation. These commissions, however, were not sufficient to keep Sullivan afloat. He worked as a church organist and taught to earn his living, as well as composing hymns and songs. Burnand for an informal gathering of friends. Public performance followed, with W. The two were first paired in , when the manager of the Gaiety Theatre in the Aldwych, John Hollingshead, commissioned the two up and comers for the production of a musical burlesque show. Titled Thespis, the show was rushed, actors were under rehearsed and over worked. In fact, the first performance ran an hour long, lines were forgotten, and booing could be heard when it finally ended. Despite the fact that the show starred two big names of the time, J. Toole and Nellie Farren, it opened to mixed reviews; however, it did manage a modest ten-week run. In , Gilbert wrote a short libretto on commission from producer-composer Carl Rosa, whose wife would have played the leading role, but her death in childbirth canceled the project and left the libretto an orphan. Gilbert already had available the libretto he had written for Rosa, and Carte suggested that Sullivan write the score. The composer was delighted with it, and Trial by Jury was composed in a matter of weeks. It concerns a breach of promise of marriage suit. The defendant argues that damages should be slight, since "he is such a very bad lot," while the plaintiff argues that she loves the defendant fervently and seeks "substantial damages. Provincial tours and productions at other theaters quickly followed. Carte also proposed a revival of Thespis for the Christmas season, which Gilbert and Sullivan would have revised, but he was unable to obtain financing for the project. Gilbert found inspiration in one of his own short stories, "The Elixir of Love," which concerned the complications arising when a love potion is distributed to all the residents of a small village. The leading character was a Cockney businessman who happened to be a sorcerer, a purveyor of blessings not much called for and curses very popular. Gilbert and Sullivan were tireless taskmasters, seeing to it that The Sorcerer opened as a fully polished production, in marked contrast to the under-rehearsed Thespis. Nevertheless, Carte and his syndicate were sufficiently encouraged to commission another full-length opera from the team. Pinafore Gilbert and Sullivan scored their first international hit with H. Pinafore , satirizing the rise of unqualified people to positions of authority and poking good-natured fun at the Royal Navy and the English obsession with social status building on a theme introduced in The Sorcerer, love between members of different social classes. As with many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a surprise twist changes everything dramatically near the end of the story. Gilbert oversaw the designs of sets and costumes, and he directed the performers on stage. Sullivan personally oversaw the musical preparation. The result was a new crispness and polish in the English musical theater. Pinafore ran in London for performances. Gilbert and Sullivan added the

element of the comic patter-singing character. With the success of *H. Before The Sorcerer*, Gilbert had constructed his plays around the established stars of whatever theater he happened to be writing for, as had been the case with *Thespis* and *Trial by Jury*. Building on the team he had assembled for *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert no longer hired stars; he created them. He and Sullivan selected the performers, writing their operas for ensemble casts rather than individual stars. Relatively unknown performers whom Gilbert and Sullivan engaged early in the collaboration would stay with the company for many years, becoming stars of the Victorian stage. These included George Grossmith, the principal comic; Rutland Barrington, the lyric baritone; Richard Temple, the bass-baritone; and Jessie Bond, the mezzo-soprano soubrette. *The Pirates of Penzance*, conceived in a fit of pique at the American copyright pirates, also poked fun at grand opera conventions, sense of duty, family obligation, the "respectability" of civilization and the peerage, and the relevance of a liberal education. The Major-General and his many daughters escape from the tender-hearted *Pirates of Penzance*, who are all orphans, on the false plea that he is an orphan himself. The pirates learn of the deception and re-capture the Major-General, but when it is revealed that the pirates are all peers, the Major-General bids them: Gilbert initially proposed a story for a new opera about a magic lozenge that would change the characters which he later presented in *The Mountebanks*, written with Alfred Cellier, in 1887, but Sullivan found it artificial and lacking in "human interest and probability," as well as being too similar to their earlier opera, *The Sorcerer*. The author and composer were at an impasse until May 8, 1887, when Gilbert dropped the lozenge idea and agreed to provide a libretto without any supernatural elements. *Ko-Ko* loves his ward, Yum-Yum, but she loves a musician, who is really the son of the emperor of Japan the Mikado, and who is in disguise to escape the attentions of the elderly and amorous Katisha. The Mikado has decreed that executions must resume without delay in Titipu. When news arrives that the Mikado will be visiting the town, Ko-Ko assumes that he is coming to ascertain whether Ko-Ko has carried out the executions. Too timid to execute anyone, Ko-Ko cooks up a conspiracy to misdirect the Mikado, which goes awry. Eventually, Ko-Ko must persuade Katisha to marry him, in order to save his own life and the lives of the other conspirators. With the opening of trade between England and Japan, Japanese imports, art, and styles became fashionable in London, making the time ripe for an opera set in Japan. Setting the opera in Japan, an exotic locale far away from Britain, allowed Gilbert and Sullivan to satirize British politics and institutions more freely by clothing them in superficial Japanese trappings. Gilbert wrote, "The Mikado of the opera was an imaginary monarch of a remote period and cannot by any exercise of ingenuity be taken to be a slap on an existing institution. Gilbert and Sullivan then spent close to four years away from the stage, returning in 1891, with *Utopia, Limited*. Their final collaboration, *The Grand Duke*, was first performed in 1896, and marked the end of their oft-quarrelsome, quarter century-long partnership. Together, they produced 14 comic operas. In 1897, Sullivan was knighted by Queen Victoria. Quarrels Gilbert and Sullivan quarreled several times over the choice of the subject for a new production. After both *Princess Ida* and *Ruddigore*, which were less successful than the seven other operas from H. While the two artists worked out their differences, Carte kept the Savoy open with revivals of their earlier works. Carte had charged the cost of a new carpet for the Savoy Theatre lobby to the partnership. Gilbert believed that this was a maintenance expense that should be charged to Carte alone. Williamson Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, and to amateur societies. I was born into a generation that still took light music seriously. The lyrics and melodies of Gilbert and Sullivan were hummed and strummed into my consciousness at an early age. My father sang them, my mother played them, my nurse, Emma, breathed them through her teeth while she was washing me, dressing me and undressing me and putting me to bed. My aunts and uncles, who were legion, sang them singly and in unison at the slightest provocation. The works of Gilbert and Sullivan are themselves frequently satirized. Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas are commonly referenced in literature, film, and television—such as the film, *Star Trek: Even more direct heirs are those witty and satirical songwriters found on both sides of the Atlantic in the twentieth century like Michael Flanders and Donald Swann in the United Kingdom and Tom Lehrer in the United States. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist added gold stripes to his judicial robes after seeing them used by the Lord Chancellor in a production of *Iolanthe*. There is even a German version of *The Grand Duke*. Ballets *Pirates of Penzance*—The Ballet!*

Chapter 4 : List of W. S. Gilbert dramatic works - Wikipedia

A collection of six comedies (without music)) written by W.S. Gilbert, before he soared to success as the librettist for Andrew Sullivan and merged into the Gilbert and Sullivan of musical comedy legend.

The piece was an extravaganza in which the classical Greek gods, grown elderly, are temporarily replaced by a troupe of 19th-century actors and actresses, one of whom is the eponymous Thespis, the Greek father of the drama. It outran five of its nine competitors for the holiday season, but no one at the time anticipated that this was the beginning of a great collaboration. Two of the male characters were played by women, whose shapely legs were put on display in a fashion that Gilbert later condemned. The musical score to Thespis was never published and is now lost, except for one song that was published separately, a chorus that was re-used in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and the Act II ballet. Over the next four years, Gilbert and Sullivan did not have occasion to work together again, but each man became more eminent in his field. Gilbert worked with Clay on *Happy Arcadia* and with Alfred Cellier on *Topsy-turvydom*, as well as writing several other libretti, farces, extravaganzas, fairy comedies, dramas, adaptations from novels, and translations from the French. Gilbert already had available the libretto he had written for *Rosa*, and Carte suggested that Sullivan write the score. The composer was delighted with it, and *Trial by Jury* was composed in a matter of weeks. It concerns a breach of promise of marriage suit. The defendant argues that damages should be slight, since "he is such a very bad lot," while the plaintiff argues that she loves the defendant fervently and seeks "substantial damages. Provincial tours and productions at other theatres quickly followed. Burnand wrote that he "was one of the most naturally comic little men I ever came across. He, too, was a first-rate practical musician As he was the most absurd person, so was he the very kindest After the success of *Trial by Jury*, Gilbert and Sullivan were suddenly in demand to write more operas together. Carte also proposed a revival of *Thespis* for the Christmas season, which Gilbert and Sullivan would have revised, but he was unable to obtain financing for the project. An early poster showing scenes from *The Sorcerer*, *Pinafore*, and *Trial by Jury* Gilbert found a subject in one of his own short stories, "The Elixir of Love," which concerned the complications arising when a love potion is distributed to all the residents of a small village. The leading character was a Cockney businessman who happened to be a sorcerer, a purveyor of blessings not much called for and curses very popular. Gilbert and Sullivan were tireless taskmasters, seeing to it that *The Sorcerer* opened as a fully polished production, in marked contrast to the under-rehearsed *Thespis*. Nevertheless, Carte and his syndicate were sufficiently encouraged to commission another full-length opera from the team. *Pinafore* Gilbert and Sullivan scored their first international hit with *H. Pinafore*, satirising the rise of unqualified people to positions of authority and poking good-natured fun at the Royal Navy and the English obsession with social status building on a theme introduced in *The Sorcerer*, love between members of different social classes. As with many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a surprise twist changes everything dramatically near the end of the story. Gilbert oversaw the designs of sets and costumes, and he directed the performers on stage. The result was a new crispness and polish in the English musical theatre. Our stage discipline was strict and unbending. He had unlimited fertility of invention in comic business and would allow no gag, no clowning, no departure from his own definite conception. Every part must be made subservient to the whole, and his sarcasms overwhelmed the transgressor with scorn. But there was nothing to hurt or offend us in this unswerving discipline, we took their good-humoured raillery as our due when we failed in our rendering or overstepped the bounds; and the patience and enthusiasm of that artistic pair so infected all of us that we worked willingly for hours and hours at rehearsals, trying with all our might to realize the conceptions of those two brilliant minds. *Pinafore* ran in London for performances, [28] the second longest run of any musical theatre piece in history up to that time after the operetta *Les cloches de Corneville*. The disgruntled former partners, who had each invested in the production with no return, staged a public fracas, sending a group of thugs to seize the scenery during a performance. Stagehands successfully managed to ward off their backstage attackers. The libretto of *H. Gilbert and Sullivan* added the element of the comic patter-singing character. With the success of *H. Before The Sorcerer*, Gilbert had constructed his plays around the established stars of whatever theatre he happened to

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Sullivan became the conductor of the Leeds festival beginning in and conducted the performance. It could be said that *Martyr* was the 15th opera of the partnership, since the Carl Rosa Opera Company presented the work as an opera in Grossmith, who created the role of Bunthorne, based his makeup, wig and costume on Swinburne and especially Whistler, as seen in the adjacent photo. The story concerns two rival "aesthetic" poets, who attract the attention of the young ladies of the village, who had been engaged to the members of a cavalry regiment. But the two poets are each in love with Patience, the village milkmaid, who detests one of them and feels that it is her duty to avoid the other despite her love for him. *Pinafore* and becoming the second longest-running work of musical theatre up to that time in history. The fully electric Savoy made possible numerous special effects, such as sparkling magic wands for the female chorus of fairies. The opera poked fun at English law and the House of Lords and made much of the war between the sexes. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote, "The composer has risen to his opportunity, and we are disposed to account *Iolanthe* his best effort in all the Gilbertian series. The quality throughout is more even, and maintained at a higher standard, than in any of his earlier works Gilbert had referred to the new technology in *Pinafore* in , only two years after the device was invented and before London even had telephone service. This was probably the first live "broadcast" of an opera. Although it was the operas with Gilbert that had earned him the broadest fame, the honour was conferred for his services to serious music. The musical establishment, and many critics, believed that this should put an end to his career as a composer of comic opera—that a musical knight should not stoop below oratorio or grand opera. Gilbert had written a blank verse farce based on the same material in , called *The Princess* , and he reused a good deal of the dialogue from his earlier play in the libretto of *Princess Ida*. *Ida* is the only Gilbert and Sullivan work with dialogue entirely in blank verse and is also the only one of their works in three acts. Lillian Russell had been engaged to create the title role, but Gilbert did not believe that she was dedicated enough, and when she missed a rehearsal, she was dismissed. A particularly hot summer in London did not help ticket sales. The piece ran for a comparatively short performances and was not revived in London until Sullivan had been satisfied with the libretto, but two months after *Ida* opened, Sullivan told Carte that "it is impossible for me to do another piece of the character of those already written by Gilbert and myself. Gilbert initially proposed a story for a new opera about a magic lozenge that would change the characters, [47] which Sullivan found artificial and lacking in "human interest and probability", as well as being too similar to their earlier opera, *The Sorcerer*. As dramatised in the film *Topsy-Turvy* , [48] the author and composer were at an impasse until 8 May , when Gilbert dropped the lozenge idea and agreed to provide a libretto without any supernatural elements. Ko-Ko loves his ward, Yum-Yum, but she loves a musician, who is really the son of the emperor of Japan the Mikado , and who is in disguise to escape the attentions of the elderly and amorous Katisha. The Mikado has decreed that executions must resume without delay in Titipu. When news arrives that the Mikado will be visiting the town, Ko-Ko assumes that he is coming to ascertain whether Ko-Ko has carried out the executions. Too timid to execute anyone, Ko-Ko cooks up a conspiracy to misdirect the Mikado, which goes awry. Eventually, Ko-Ko must persuade Katisha to marry him, in order to save his own life and the lives of the other conspirators. With the opening of trade between England and Japan, Japanese imports, art and styles became fashionable in London, making the time ripe for an opera set in Japan. Gilbert said, I cannot give you a good reason for our Problems listening to this file? Setting the opera in Japan , an exotic locale far away from Britain, allowed Gilbert and Sullivan to satirise British politics and institutions more freely by clothing them in superficial Japanese trappings. Gilbert wrote, "The Mikado of the

opera was an imaginary monarch of a remote period and cannot by any exercise of ingenuity be taken to be a slap on an existing institution. I doubt if there is a single joke in the whole play that fits the Japanese. But all the jokes in the play fit the English. About England Pooh-bah is something more than a satire; he is the truth. The original title, Ruddygore, together with some of the plot devices, including the revivification of ghosts, drew negative comments from critics. For instance, the Illustrated London News praised the work and both Gilbert and, especially, Sullivan: In the former respect, the charm of graceful melody prevails; while, in the latter, the music of the most grotesque situations is redolent of fun. When Ruddigore closed, no new opera was ready. Gilbert again proposed a version of the "lozenge" plot for their next opera, and Sullivan reiterated his desire to leave the partnership. While the two men worked out their artistic differences, Carte produced revivals of such old favourites as H. Denny as Wilfred and Jessie Bond as Phoebe in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, their only joint work with a serious ending, concerns a pair of strolling players—a jester and a singing girl—who are caught up in a risky intrigue at the Tower of London during the 16th century. The dialogue, though in prose, is quasi-Shakespearian, or early modern English, in style, and there is no satire of British institutions. For some of the plot elements, Gilbert had reached back to his tragedy, *Broken Hearts*. The Times praised the libretto: Gilbert has earnestly endeavoured to leave familiar grooves and rise to higher things. The Daily Telegraph wrote: Schubert himself could hardly have handled those instruments more deftly, written for them more lovingly. We place the songs and choruses in *The Yeomen of the Guard* before all his previous efforts of this particular kind. Thus the music follows the book to a higher plane, and we have a genuine English opera. During the run, on 12 March, Sullivan wrote to Gilbert, I have lost the liking for writing comic opera, and entertain very grave doubts as to my power of doing it. You say that in a serious opera, you must more or less sacrifice yourself. I say that this is just what I have been doing in all our joint pieces, and, what is more, must continue to do in comic opera to make it successful. Gilbert did not feel that he could write a grand opera libretto, but he offered a compromise that Sullivan ultimately accepted. The two would write a light opera for the Savoy, and at the same time, Sullivan a grand opera *Ivanhoe* for a new theatre that Carte was constructing to present British grand opera. After a brief impasse over the choice of subject, Sullivan accepted an idea connected with Venice and Venetian life, as "this seemed to me to hold out great chances of bright colour and taking music.

Chapter 5 : Ages Ago Introduction

Edited and with an Introduction by Jane W. Stedman., ed. Gilbert Before Sullivan - Six Comic Plays by W. S. Gilbert. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

The opening night performance was under-rehearsed, partly because the new Gaiety Theatre was not finished until the last moment, leaving no time for rehearsal on its stage. However, The Times noted that "Like the other extravaganzas from the same pen, Robert the Devil shows an endeavour to avoid the ordinary vulgarities of grotesque drama, and bring its most elegant contingencies into the foreground The burlesque has been received with a storm of approbation. Although Gilbert gave up direct parodies of opera soon after Robert, his parodic pokes at grand opera continued to be seen in the Savoy operas. Gilbert is somewhat severe on a style of burlesque which he did much to popularise in the old days before he invented what I may call burlesque in long clothes. It was an extravaganza played on a very large scale. The work was revived at the Gaiety Theatre several times over the next few years, and a tenth anniversary revival was staged at the Gaiety in Among them is Albert, the Prince of Granada. Robert leaves the bill for Bertram to pay. He asks for a volunteer. Of course, no one steps forward. Rambaldo, a minstrel, arrives and offers to sing about Robert. He circulates his cap. The saintly Alice then arrives, whom Robert claims as his foster-sister. Bertram advises Robert to steal a magic branch that will give him great powers. All Robert has to do is sign an indenture for his soul. Before Robert can seize the branch, Bertram insists that he sign the contract. The wax works perform a naughty ballet recalling the ballet in a "cloister by moonlight" of faithless, deceased nuns that created a sensation at the time of the Meyerbeer opera including, according to the stage directions, "the usual business between Robert and the Lady Abbess". Robert says, "My father? Then of course I must submit! But are you sure? A terrified Bertram pleads desperately to escape this, asking that one of the other wax works be disguised as him. The following list is from the programme. London press reports confirm these names. They may have formed the Grand Ballet, performed at the beginning of the last scene, before "Pity me, Robert, now you know".

Lord Mayor's Day [translated from *La Cagnotte* by Eugène Labiche: Gilbert translated the first two acts before abandoning the project, but when it was produced his name did not appear] (Three-Act Farce): Folly, 30/6/

Arthur Sullivan Gilbert and Sullivan refers to the Victorian-era theatrical partnership of the dramatist W. Gilbert and the composer Arthur Sullivan and to the works they jointly created. The two men collaborated on fourteen comic operas between 1871 and 1891, of which *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *The Mikado* are the most famous. His father, William Gilbert, was a naval surgeon who later wrote novels and short stories, some of which included illustrations by his son. Director and playwright Mike Leigh described the "Gilbertian" style as follows: With great fluidity and freedom, [Gilbert] continually challenges our natural expectations. First, within the framework of the story, he makes bizarre things happen, and turns the world on its head. Thus the Learned Judge marries the Plaintiff, the soldiers metamorphose into aesthetes, and so on, and nearly every opera is resolved by a deft moving of the goalposts. His genius is to fuse opposites with an imperceptible sleight of hand, to blend the surreal with the real, and the caricature with the natural. In other words, to tell a perfectly outrageous story in a completely deadpan way. Sullivan before Gilbert Sullivan was born in London on 13 May 1842. His father was a military bandmaster, and by the time Arthur had reached the age of eight, he was proficient with all the instruments in the band. In school he began to compose anthems and songs. In 1858, he received the first Mendelssohn Scholarship and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and then at Leipzig, where he also took up conducting. *H.M.S. Pinafore*, revised and expanded, it was performed at the Crystal Palace in 1878 and was an immediate sensation. He worked as a church organist and composed numerous hymns, popular songs, and parlour ballads. *H.M.S. Pinafore* was performed for an informal gathering of friends. Public performance followed, with W.S. Gilbert. The piece was an extravaganza in which the classical Greek gods, grown elderly, are temporarily replaced by a troupe of 19th-century actors and actresses, one of whom is the eponymous Thespis, the Greek father of the drama. It outran five of its nine competitors for the holiday season, and its run was extended beyond the length of a normal run at the Gaiety,[21] but no one at the time anticipated that this was the beginning of a great collaboration. Two of the male characters were played by women, whose shapely legs were put on display in a fashion that Gilbert later condemned. Gilbert worked with Frederic Clay on *Happy Arcadia* and with Alfred Cellier on *Topsy-turvydom*, and wrote *The Wicked World*, *Sweethearts* and several other libretti, farces, extravaganzas, fairy comedies, dramas and adaptations. At the same time, the audience for theatre was growing because of the rapidly expanding British population; improvement in education and the standard of living, especially of the middle class; improving public transportation; and installation of street lighting, which made travel home from the theatre safer. The number of pianos manufactured in England doubled between 1850 and 1860 as more people began to play parlour music at home and more theatres and concert halls opened. Gilbert read the piece to Sullivan in February 1871, and the composer was delighted with it; *Trial by Jury* was composed and staged in a matter of weeks. It concerns a breach of promise of marriage suit. The defendant argues that damages should be slight, since "he is such a very bad lot," while the plaintiff argues that she loves the defendant fervently and seeks "substantial damages. Provincial tours and productions at other theatres quickly followed. Burnand wrote that he "was one of the most naturally comic little men I ever came across. He, too, was a first-rate practical musician. As he was the most absurd person, so was he the very kindest. After the success of *Trial by Jury*, Gilbert and Sullivan were suddenly in demand to write more operas together. Carte proposed a revival of *Thespis* for the Christmas season, which Gilbert and Sullivan would have revised, but he was unable to obtain financing for the project. In early 1874, Carte requested that Gilbert and Sullivan create another one-act opera on the theme of burglars, but this was never completed. An early poster showing scenes from *The Sorcerer*, *Pinafore*, and *Trial by Jury* Gilbert found a subject in one of his own short stories, "The Elixir of Love," which concerned the complications arising when a love potion is distributed to all the residents of a small village. The leading character was a Cockney businessman who happened to be a sorcerer, a purveyor of blessings not much called for and curses very popular. Gilbert and Sullivan were tireless taskmasters, seeing to it that *The Sorcerer* opened as a fully polished production, in marked contrast to the under-rehearsed *Thespis*. Nevertheless, Carte

and his syndicate were sufficiently encouraged to commission another full-length opera from the team. Pinafore Gilbert and Sullivan scored their first international hit with *H. Pinafore*, satirising the rise of unqualified people to positions of authority and poking good-natured fun at the Royal Navy and the English obsession with social status building on a theme introduced in *The Sorcerer*, love between members of different social classes. As with many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a surprise twist changes everything dramatically near the end of the story. Gilbert oversaw the designs of sets and costumes, and he directed the performers on stage. The result was a new crispness and polish in the English musical theatre. Our stage discipline was strict and unbending. He had unlimited fertility of invention in comic business and would allow no gag, no clowning, no departure from his own definite conception. Every part must be made subservient to the whole, and his sarcasms overwhelmed the transgressor with scorn. But there was nothing to hurt or offend us in this unswerving discipline, we took their good-humoured raillery as our due when we failed in our rendering or overstepped the bounds; and the patience and enthusiasm of that artistic pair so infected all of us that we worked willingly for hours and hours at rehearsals, trying with all our might to realize the conceptions of those two brilliant minds. *H. Pinafore* ran in London for performances,[35] the second longest run of any musical theatre piece in history up to that time after the operetta *Les cloches de Corneville*. The disgruntled former partners, who had invested in the production with no return, staged a public fracas, sending a group of thugs to seize the scenery during a performance. Stagehands successfully managed to ward off their backstage attackers. The libretto of *H. Gilbert and Sullivan* added the element of the comic patter-singing character. With the success of *H. Before The Sorcerer*, Gilbert had constructed his plays around the established stars of whatever theatre he happened to be writing for, as had been the case with *Thespis* and *Trial by Jury*. Building on the team he had assembled for *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert no longer hired stars; he created them. He and Sullivan selected the performers, writing their operas for ensemble casts rather than individual stars. Relatively unknown performers whom Gilbert and Sullivan engaged early in the collaboration would stay with the company for many years, becoming stars of the Victorian stage. These included George Grossmith, the principal comic; Rutland Barrington, the lyric baritone; Richard Temple, the bass-baritone; and Jessie Bond, the mezzo-soprano soubrette. *The Major-General and his many daughters* escape from the tender-hearted *Pirates of Penzance*, who are all orphans, on the false plea that he is an orphan himself. The pirates learn of the deception and re-capture the Major-General, but when it is revealed that the pirates are all peers, the Major-General bids them: Sullivan became the conductor of the Leeds festival beginning in and conducted the performance. The Carl Rosa Opera Company staged the cantata as an opera in Grossmith, who created the role of Bunthorne, based his makeup, wig and costume on Swinburne and especially Whistler, as seen in the adjacent photo. The story concerns two rival "aesthetic" poets, who attract the attention of the young ladies of the village, who had been engaged to the members of a cavalry regiment. But both poets are in love with Patience, the village milkmaid, who detests one of them and feels that it is her duty to avoid the other despite her love for him. *H. Pinafore* and becoming the second longest-running work of musical theatre up to that time in history. The fully electric Savoy made possible numerous special effects, such as sparkling magic wands for the female chorus of fairies. The opera poked fun at English law and the House of Lords and made much of the war between the sexes. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote, "The composer has risen to his opportunity, and we are disposed to account *Iolanthe* his best effort in all the Gilbertian series. The quality throughout is more even, and maintained at a higher standard, than in any of his earlier works Gilbert had referred to the new technology in *H. Pinafore* in, only two years after the device was invented and before London even had telephone service. This was probably the first live "broadcast" of an opera. Although it was the operas with Gilbert that had earned him the broadest fame, the honour was conferred for his services to serious music. The musical establishment, and many critics, believed that this should put an end to his career as a composer of comic opera—that a musical knight should not stoop below oratorio or grand opera. Hildebrand and soldiers rush through the gate. Gilbert had written a blank verse farce based on the same material in, called *The Princess*, and he reused a good deal of the dialogue from his earlier play in the libretto of *Princess Ida*. *Ida* is the only Gilbert and Sullivan work with dialogue entirely in blank verse and is also the only one of their works in three acts. Lillian Russell had been engaged to create the title role, but Gilbert did not believe that she was

dedicated enough, and when she missed a rehearsal, he dismissed her. A particularly hot summer in London did not help ticket sales. The piece ran for a comparatively short performances and was not revived in London until Sullivan had been satisfied with the libretto, but two months after *Ida* opened, Sullivan told Carte that "it is impossible for me to do another piece of the character of those already written by Gilbert and myself. Gilbert initially proposed a story for a new opera about a magic lozenge that would change the characters,[56] which Sullivan found artificial and lacking in "human interest and probability", as well as being too similar to their earlier opera, *The Sorcerer*. As dramatised in the film *Topsy-Turvy* ,[57] the author and composer were at an impasse until 8 May , when Gilbert dropped the lozenge idea and agreed to provide a libretto without any supernatural elements. The story focuses on a "cheap tailor," Ko-Ko, who is promoted to the position of Lord High Executioner of the town of Titipu. Ko-Ko loves his ward, Yum-Yum, but she loves a musician, who is really the son of the emperor of Japan the Mikado , and who is in disguise to escape the attentions of the elderly and amorous Katisha. The Mikado has decreed that executions must resume without delay in Titipu. When news arrives that the Mikado will be visiting the town, Ko-Ko assumes that he is coming to ascertain whether Ko-Ko has carried out the executions. Too timid to execute anyone, Ko-Ko cooks up a conspiracy to misdirect the Mikado, which goes awry. Eventually, Ko-Ko must persuade Katisha to marry him, in order to save his own life and the lives of the other conspirators. With the opening of trade between England and Japan, Japanese imports, art and styles became fashionable in London , making the time ripe for an opera set in Japan. Gilbert said, "I cannot give you a good reason for our Gilbert wrote, "The Mikado of the opera was an imaginary monarch of a remote period and cannot by any exercise of ingenuity be taken to be a slap on an existing institution. I doubt if there is a single joke in the whole play that fits the Japanese. But all the jokes in the play fit the English. About England Pooh-bah is something more than a satire; he is the truth. A Edison Records recording of selections from *The Mikado*. Problems playing this file? The original title, *Ruddygore*, together with some of the plot devices, including the revivification of ghosts, drew negative comments from critics. For instance, the *Illustrated London News* praised the work and both Gilbert and, especially, Sullivan:

Chapter 7 : W. S. Gilbert Explained

New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players (often known as NYGASP) is a professional repertory theatre company, based in New York City that has specialized in the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan for over 40 years.

After brief careers as a government clerk and a lawyer, Gilbert began to focus, in the 1850s, on writing light verse, including his Bab Ballads, short stories, theatre reviews and illustrations, often for *Fun* magazine. He also began to write burlesques and his first comic plays, developing a unique absurdist, inverted style that would later be known as his "topsy-turvy" style. He also developed a realistic method of stage direction and a reputation as a strict theatre director. In the 1860s, Gilbert wrote 40 plays and libretti, including his *German Reed Entertainments*, several blank-verse "fairy comedies". Gilbert is best known for the 14 comic operas known as the Savoy operas produced in collaboration with the composer Sir Arthur Sullivan. The most famous of these include *H. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and one of the most frequently performed works in the history of musical theatre, *The Mikado*. Lines from these works have become part of the English language, such as "short, sharp shock", "What, never? Gilbert won the ensuing lawsuit, but the argument caused hurt feelings among the partnership. Although Gilbert and Sullivan were persuaded to collaborate on 2 last operas, they were not as successful as the previous ones. In later years, Gilbert wrote several plays, and a few operas with other collaborators. He died of a heart attack while attempting to rescue a young woman to whom he was giving a swimming lesson in the lake at his home. His creative output included over 75 plays and libretti, and numerous short stories, poems and lyrics, both comic and serious. He was the only son in a family of 4 children of William Gilbert "by his wife Atino Morris. His 2nd christian name was the surname of his godmother. As an infant he traveled in Germany and Italy with his parents. In later days when visiting Naples he recognised in the Via Posilippo the scene of the occurrence. He is said to have been a child of great beauty, and Sir David Wilkie was so attracted by his face that he asked leave to paint his picture. At the age of 7 he went to school at Boulogne. From 10 to 13 he was at the Western Grammar School, Brompton, and from 13 to 16 at the Great Ealing School, where he rose to be head boy. He spent much time in drawing, and wrote plays for performance by his schoolfellows, painting his own scenery and acting himself. Alfred Ainger and Walter Besant were fellow students. Some of his earliest literary efforts were verses contributed to the college magazine. He remained a student during 1860, intending to go to Oxford, but in 1861, when he was 19 years old, the Crimean war was at its height, and commissions in the Royal Artillery were thrown open to competitive examination. Giving up all idea of Oxford, he read for the army examination announced for Christmas "An Autobiography" in *The Theatre*, 2 April 1861, p. But the war came to an abrupt end, and no more officers being required, the examination was indefinitely postponed. Gilbert then graduated with a B. Parepa, afterwards Madame Parepa-Rosa, whom he had known from babyhood, had made a singular success there with the song in its original French. In 1862 Gilbert commenced both as author and artist, contributing an article, three-quarters of a column long with a half-page drawing on wood, for *Fun*, then under the editorship of Henry James Byron. His illustrations of his own Bab Ballads have much direct and quaint humour. In *The Piccadilly Annual* was described as "profusely illustrated by W. Gilbert and other artists. From this date they became a regular feature of the paper. They were first collected in volume form in the same year. A collected volume of *More Bab Ballads* followed in 1863. In spite of these activities Gilbert found time to continue his military duties, and became captain of his militia regiment in 1864. He retired with the rank of major in 1865. He was aggressive and combative and rarely let the discomfort of a victim deprive him and his companions of a brilliant epigram or a ready repartee. Nevertheless he had a kind heart, and was only a cynic after the manner of Thackeray. Many of the artists who worked under him bore testimony to his personal kindness. He was not interested in sport. He had a constitutional objection to taking life in any form. His wife survived him without issue. To Thomas William Robertson, the dramatist, he owed the needful introduction. Miss Herbert, the lessee of St. Frank Matthews made a success in the title role, and it ran for several months and was twice revived. No terms had been arranged, and when Mr. It ran for nights. *The mother, the maid, and the mistletoe bough: A travestie of Norma*. Gilbert was much attached to second titles. His musical collaborator was Frederick Clay. On 22

November they produced together *Ages Ago*, which was afterwards expanded into the opera *Ruddigore*; on 30 Jan. This was afterwards the basis of the opera *Princess Ida*. Kendal, and W. Kendal in the cast. It proved a remarkable success. The play was revived at the Lyceum with Miss Mary Anderson in and later in, at the same theatre, with Miss Julia Neilson in the part. *The Wicked World*, a fairy comedy, followed at the Haymarket on 4 Jan. Latour Tomline 15 November His name did not appear on the bill, where the piece was assigned to F. Gilbert and a Beckett. *The Happy Land* was received with enthusiasm. But three of the actors, Walter Fisher, W. Ayrton, members of the liberal administration then in office. The lord chamberlain insisted on the removal of this feature of the performance. It was denounced as immoral by the general public, and was withdrawn after a run of 80 nights. *Gretchen*, a 4-act drama in verse on the Faust legend, was produced on 24 March at the Olympic. The memorable series of operas in which he and Sullivan collaborated began with *Trial by Jury*, which was produced at the Royalty Theatre by Madame Selina Dolaro on 25 March A sketch of an operetta under this title had appeared in *Fun* on 11 April The words now took a new shape, Sullivan supplied the music, and the rehearsals were completed within 3 weeks. The result was *The Sorcerer*, which was first played at the Opera Comique on 17 November, and introduced George Grossmith and Rutland Barrington to the professional stage. This opera proved the forerunner of a long series of like successes. *Pinafore*; or, *The lass that loved a sailor*, under the same management on 25 May This ran for nights and enjoyed an enormous popularity throughout the country. This ran for a year. *Patience* was a satire on the current "aesthetic movement" and enjoyed great popularity. The last piece ran for 2 years, was played over times in America, and found favour on the Continent. A disagreement on financial matters arose between Gilbert and Carte, and Gilbert thought that Sullivan sided with Carte. It was produced at the Lyric Theatre on 4 January It was produced at the Savoy on 7 October, but was not so popular as its predecessors, although it ran till 9 June His final production was *The Hooligan*, a grim sketch of the last moments of a convicted murderer, played by Mr James Welch at the Coliseum in The estate covered acres and the house had been built for Goodall by Norman Shaw. Gilbert added an observatory and an open-air swimming lake. He was something of an astronomer as well as a dairy farmer, bee-keeper, and horticulturist. Few if any contemporary writers for the stage made so much money from that source alone, none acquired so wide a fame. In all his writing there is an effort after literary grace and finish which was in his early days absent from contemporary drama. The success of his operas was largely due to their freedom from vulgarity and to the excellence of the lyrics, which not only were musical and perfect in form but applied mastery of meter to the expression of the most whimsical and fanciful ideas. He had little or no ear for tune, but a wonderful ear for rhythm. This was overhauled and corrected and cut down to a skeleton, and then broken up into scenes with entrances and exits arranged. Not until the fifth MS. In arranging the scenes, too, no trouble was too great. *Pinafore* Gilbert went down to Portsmouth and was rowed round about the harbour and visited various ships, and finally pitched upon the quarter-deck of the *Victory* for his scene, which he obtained permission to sketch and model in every detail. He was a master of stage management. In a privately printed preface to *Pygmalion and Galatea* he pointed out that "the supreme importance of careful rehearsing is not sufficiently recognised in England. A sufficient rehearsal for a play he then considered to be 3 weeks or a month. *Edwardes and Gilbert*, produced at the Royalty on 17 January, led to a quarrel with Miss Henrietta Hodson, which was renewed over the production of *Pygmalion and Galatea* in January Until Gilbert took the matter in hand choruses were practically nothing more than a part of the stage setting. It was in *Thespis* that Gilbert began to carry out his expressed determination to get the chorus to play its proper part in the performance.

Chapter 8 : de Freitas Books-Gilbert & Sullivan

Robert the Devil, or The Nun, the Dun, and the Son of a Gun is an operatic parody by W. S. Gilbert of Giacomo Meyerbeer's grand opera Robert le diable, which was named after, but bears little resemblance to, the medieval French legend of the same name.

The piece was an extravaganza in which the classical Greek gods, grown elderly, are temporarily replaced by a troupe of 19th-century actors and actresses, one of whom is the eponymous Thespis, the Greek father of the drama. It outran five of its nine competitors for the holiday season, and its run was extended beyond the length of a normal run at the Gaiety, [20] but no one at the time anticipated that this was the beginning of a great collaboration. Two of the male characters were played by women, whose shapely legs were put on display in a fashion that Gilbert later condemned. The musical score to Thespis was never published and is now lost, except for one song that was published separately, a chorus that was re-used in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and the Act II ballet. Over the next four years, Gilbert and Sullivan did not have occasion to work together again, but each man became more eminent in his field. Gilbert worked with Clay on *Happy Arcadia* and with Alfred Cellier on *Topsy-turvydom*, as well as writing several other libretti, farces, extravaganzas, fairy comedies, dramas, adaptations from novels, and translations from the French. *Trial by Jury* Main article: *Trial by Jury* In *Trial by Jury*, Gilbert wrote a short libretto on commission from producer-conductor Carl Rosa, whose wife would have played the leading role, but her death in childbirth cancelled the project. Gilbert already had available the libretto he had written for Rosa, and Carte suggested that Sullivan write the score. The composer was delighted with it, and *Trial by Jury* was composed in a matter of weeks. It concerns a breach of promise of marriage suit. The defendant argues that damages should be slight, since "he is such a very bad lot," while the plaintiff argues that she loves the defendant fervently and seeks "substantial damages. Provincial tours and productions at other theatres quickly followed. Burnand wrote that he "was one of the most naturally comic little men I ever came across. He, too, was a first-rate practical musician As he was the most absurd person, so was he the very kindest After the success of *Trial by Jury*, Gilbert and Sullivan were suddenly in demand to write more operas together. Carte proposed a revival of *Thespis* for the Christmas season, which Gilbert and Sullivan would have revised, but he was unable to obtain financing for the project. In early 1875, Carte requested that Gilbert and Sullivan create another one-act opera on the theme of burglars, but this was never completed. An early poster showing scenes from *The Sorcerer*, *Pinafore*, and *Trial by Jury* Gilbert found a subject in one of his own short stories, "The Elixir of Love," which concerned the complications arising when a love potion is distributed to all the residents of a small village. The leading character was a Cockney businessman who happened to be a sorcerer, a purveyor of blessings not much called for and curses very popular. Gilbert and Sullivan were tireless taskmasters, seeing to it that *The Sorcerer* opened as a fully polished production, in marked contrast to the under-rehearsed *Thespis*. Nevertheless, Carte and his syndicate were sufficiently encouraged to commission another full-length opera from the team. *Pinafore* Gilbert and Sullivan scored their first international hit with *H. Pinafore*, satirising the rise of unqualified people to positions of authority and poking good-natured fun at the Royal Navy and the English obsession with social status building on a theme introduced in *The Sorcerer*, love between members of different social classes. As with many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a surprise twist changes everything dramatically near the end of the story. Gilbert oversaw the designs of sets and costumes, and he directed the performers on stage. The result was a new crispness and polish in the English musical theatre. Our stage discipline was strict and unbending. He had unlimited fertility of invention in comic business and would allow no gag, no clowning, no departure from his own definite conception. Every part must be made subservient to the whole, and his sarcasms overwhelmed the transgressor with scorn. But there was nothing to hurt or offend us in this unswerving discipline, we took their good-humoured raillery as our due when we failed in our rendering or overstepped the bounds; and the patience and enthusiasm of that artistic pair so infected all of us that we worked willingly for hours and hours at rehearsals, trying with all our might to realize the conceptions of those two brilliant minds. *Pinafore* ran in London for performances, [31] the second longest run of any musical theatre piece in history up to that time

after the operetta *Les cloches de Corneville*. The disgruntled former partners, who had each invested in the production with no return, staged a public fracas, sending a group of thugs to seize the scenery during a performance. Stagehands successfully managed to ward off their backstage attackers. The libretto of *H. Gilbert and Sullivan added the element of the comic patter-singing character*. With the success of *H. Before The Sorcerer*, Gilbert had constructed his plays around the established stars of whatever theatre he happened to be writing for, as had been the case with *Thespis* and *Trial by Jury*. Building on the team he had assembled for *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert no longer hired stars; he created them. He and Sullivan selected the performers, writing their operas for ensemble casts rather than individual stars. Relatively unknown performers whom Gilbert and Sullivan engaged early in the collaboration would stay with the company for many years, becoming stars of the Victorian stage. These included George Grossmith, the principal comic; Rutland Barrington, the lyric baritone; Richard Temple, the bass-baritone; and Jessie Bond, the mezzo-soprano soubrette.

The Pirates of Penzance Main article: *The Major-General and his many daughters* escape from the tender-hearted *Pirates of Penzance*, who are all orphans, on the false plea that he is an orphan himself. The pirates learn of the deception and re-capture the Major-General, but when it is revealed that the pirates are all peers, the Major-General bids them: *Margaret of Antioch* in the 3rd century. Sullivan became the conductor of the Leeds festival beginning in and conducted the performance. It could be said that *Martyr* was the 15th opera of the partnership, since the Carl Rosa Opera Company presented the work as an opera in *Patience* opera *Patience* satirised the aesthetic movement in general and its colourful poets, in particular, combining aspects of Algernon Charles Swinburne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Oscar Wilde, James McNeill Whistler and others in the rival poets Bunthorne and Grosvenor. Grossmith, who created the role of Bunthorne, based his makeup, wig and costume on Swinburne and especially Whistler, as seen in the adjacent photo. The story concerns two rival "aesthetic" poets, who attract the attention of the young ladies of the village, who had been engaged to the members of a cavalry regiment. But the two poets are each in love with *Patience*, the village milkmaid, who detests one of them and feels that it is her duty to avoid the other despite her love for him.

Pinafore and becoming the second longest-running work of musical theatre up to that time in history. *Iolanthe* *Iolanthe* was the first of the operas to open at the Savoy. The fully electric Savoy made possible numerous special effects, such as sparkling magic wands for the female chorus of fairies. The opera poked fun at English law and the House of Lords and made much of the war between the sexes. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote, "The composer has risen to his opportunity, and we are disposed to account *Iolanthe* his best effort in all the Gilbertian series. The quality throughout is more even, and maintained at a higher standard, than in any of his earlier works Gilbert had referred to the new technology in *Pinafore* in, only two years after the device was invented and before London even had telephone service. This was probably the first live "broadcast" of an opera. Although it was the operas with Gilbert that had earned him the broadest fame, the honour was conferred for his services to serious music. The musical establishment, and many critics, believed that this should put an end to his career as a composer of comic opera" that a musical knight should not stoop below oratorio or grand opera. Gilbert had written a blank verse farce based on the same material in, called *The Princess*, and he reused a good deal of the dialogue from his earlier play in the libretto of *Princess Ida*. *Ida* is the only Gilbert and Sullivan work with dialogue entirely in blank verse and is also the only one of their works in three acts. Lillian Russell had been engaged to create the title role, but Gilbert did not believe that she was dedicated enough, and when she missed a rehearsal, she was dismissed. A particularly hot summer in London did not help ticket sales. The piece ran for a comparatively short performances and was not revived in London until Sullivan had been satisfied with the libretto, but two months after *Ida* opened, Sullivan told Carte that "it is impossible for me to do another piece of the character of those already written by Gilbert and myself. Dodging the magic lozenge

Main article: Gilbert initially proposed a story for a new opera about a magic lozenge that would change the characters, [50] which Sullivan found artificial and lacking in "human interest and probability", as well as being too similar to their earlier opera, *The Sorcerer*. As dramatised in the film *Topsy-Turvy*, [51] the author and composer were at an impasse until 8 May, when Gilbert dropped the lozenge idea and agreed to provide a libretto without any supernatural elements. The story focuses on a "cheap tailor," Ko-Ko, who is promoted to the position of Lord High Executioner of the town of Titipu. Ko-Ko loves his ward, Yum-Yum, but she loves

a musician, who is really the son of the emperor of Japan the Mikado , and who is in disguise to escape the attentions of the elderly and amorous Katisha. The Mikado has decreed that executions must resume without delay in Titipu. When news arrives that the Mikado will be visiting the town, Ko-Ko assumes that he is coming to ascertain whether Ko-Ko has carried out the executions. Too timid to execute anyone, Ko-Ko cooks up a conspiracy to misdirect the Mikado, which goes awry. Eventually, Ko-Ko must persuade Katisha to marry him, in order to save his own life and the lives of the other conspirators. With the opening of trade between England and Japan, Japanese imports, art and styles became fashionable in London , making the time ripe for an opera set in Japan. Gilbert said, "I cannot give you a good reason for our Gilbert wrote, "The Mikado of the opera was an imaginary monarch of a remote period and cannot by any exercise of ingenuity be taken to be a slap on an existing institution. I doubt if there is a single joke in the whole play that fits the Japanese. But all the jokes in the play fit the English About England Pooh-bah is something more than a satire; he is the truth. Problems listening to this file? Ruddigore Ruddigore , a topsy-turvy take on Victorian melodrama , was less successful than most of the earlier collaborations with a run of performances. The original title, Ruddygore, together with some of the plot devices, including the revivification of ghosts, drew negative comments from critics. For instance, the Illustrated London News praised the work and both Gilbert and, especially, Sullivan: In the former respect, the charm of graceful melody prevails; while, in the latter, the music of the most grotesque situations is redolent of fun. Gilbert again proposed a version of the "lozenge" plot for their next opera, and Sullivan reiterated his desire to leave the partnership. The Yeomen of the Guard W. Denny as Wilfred and Jessie Bond as Phoebe in Yeomen The Yeomen of the Guard , their only joint work with a serious ending, concerns a pair of strolling playersâ€”a jester and a singing girlâ€”who are caught up in a risky intrigue at the Tower of London during the 16th century. The dialogue, though in prose, is quasi- early modern English in style, and there is no satire of British institutions. For some of the plot elements, Gilbert had reached back to his tragedy, Broken Hearts. The Times praised the libretto: Gilbert has earnestly endeavoured to leave familiar grooves and rise to higher things. The Daily Telegraph wrote: Schubert himself could hardly have handled those instruments more deftly, written for them more lovingly We place the songs and choruses in The Yeomen of the Guard before all his previous efforts of this particular kind.

Gilbert also wrote the Bab Ballads, an extensive collection of light verse accompanied by his own comical drawings. His creative output included over 75 plays and libretti, numerous stories, poems, lyrics and various other comic and serious pieces.

He was compelled, you know, to speak the truth. Of course, I understand. Zoram, your hand Z: Shaking hands with Chrysal. Badly translated and adapted French operettas and poorly written, prurient Victorian burlesque s dominated the London stage. As Jessie Bond vividly described it, "stilted tragedy and vulgar farce were all the would-be playgoer had to choose from, and the theatre had become a place of evil repute to the righteous British householder. Gilbert created six musical entertainments for the German Reeds, some with music composed by Thomas German Reed. Ages Ago was also the beginning of a collaboration with the composer Frederic Clay that would last seven years and produce four works. Many of the plot elements of the German Reed Entertainments as well as some from his earlier plays and Bab Ballads would be reused by Gilbert later in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. First, within the framework of the story, he makes bizarre things happen, and turns the world on its head. Thus the Learned Judge marries the Plaintiff, the soldiers metamorphose into aesthetes, and so on, and nearly every opera is resolved by a deft moving of the goalposts His genius is to fuse opposites with an imperceptible sleight of hand, to blend the surreal with the real, and the caricature with the natural. In other words, to tell a perfectly outrageous story in a completely deadpan way. This series of plays was founded upon the idea of self-revelation by characters under the influence of some magic or some supernatural interference. In , with Pygmalion and Galatea , one of seven plays that he produced that year, Gilbert scored his greatest hit to date. Together, these plays and their successors such as The Wicked World , Sweethearts , and Broken Hearts , did for Gilbert on the dramatic stage what the German Reed entertainments had done for him on the musical stage: The success of these plays, especially Pygmalion and Galatea, gave Gilbert a prestige that would be crucial to his later collaboration with as respected a musician as Sullivan. There should be no exaggeration in costume, makeup or demeanour; and the characters, one and all, should appear to believe, throughout, in the perfect sincerity of their words and actions. Directly the actors show that they are conscious of the absurdity of their utterances the piece begins to drag. He required that his actors know their words perfectly, enunciate them clearly and obey his stage directions, which was something quite new to many actors of the day. He was able to extract from his actors natural, clear performances, which served the Gilbertian requirements of outrageousness delivered straight. Gilbert is a perfect autocrat, insisting that his words should be delivered, even to an inflection of the voice, as he dictates. He will stand on the stage beside the actor or actress, and repeat the words with appropriate action over and over again, until they are delivered as he desires them to be. Gilbert himself went on stage in a number of productions throughout his lifetime, including several performances as the Associate in Trial by Jury , as substitute for an ailing actor in his play Broken Hearts , and in charity matinees of his one-act plays, such as King Claudius in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Thespis outran five of its nine competitors for the holiday season, and its run was extended beyond the length of a normal run at the Gaiety, [49] However, nothing more came of it at that point, and Gilbert and Sullivan went their separate ways. Gilbert worked again with Clay on Happy Arcadia , and with Alfred Cellier on Topsyturveydom , as well as writing several farces, operetta libretti, extravaganza s, fairy comedies, adaptations from novels, translations from the French, and the dramas described above. In , Gilbert had published a short comic sketch in Fun magazine titled "Trial by Jury: In , Gilbert was asked by the theatrical manager, Carl Rosa , to write a work for his planned season. Gilbert expanded Trial into a one-act libretto. He contacted Gilbert, asked about the piece, and suggested Sullivan to set the work. Sullivan was enthusiastic, and Trial by Jury was composed in a matter of weeks. The score to Thespis was never published, and most of the music is now lost. It took some time for Carte to gather funds for another Gilbert and Sullivan opera, and in this gap Gilbert produced several works including Tom Cobb , Eyes and No Eyes , his last German Reed Entertainment , and Princess Toto , his last and most ambitious work with Clay, a three-act comic opera with full orchestra, as opposed to the shorter works for much reduced accompaniment that came

before. Engaged continues to be performed today by both professional and amateur companies. This work was a modest success, [55] and H. Pinafore followed in May. Despite a slow start, mainly due to a scorching summer, Pinafore became a red-hot favourite by autumn. After a dispute with Carte over the division of profits, the other Comedy Opera Company partners hired thugs to storm the theatre one night to steal the sets and costumes, intending to mount a rival production. Gilbert, Sullivan and Carte tried for many years to control the American performance copyrights over their operas, without success. The successful comic operas with Sullivan continued to appear every year or two, several of them being among the longest-running productions up to that point in the history of the musical stage. Gilbert not only directed and oversaw all aspects of production for these works, but he actually designed the costumes himself for *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *Princess Ida*, and *Ruddigore*. Gilbert arranged the original epic poem by Henry Hart Milman into a libretto suitable for the music, and it contains some original work. However, he no longer needed to turn out multiple plays each year, as he had done before. Indeed, during the more than nine years that separated *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Gondoliers*, he wrote just three plays outside of the partnership with Sullivan. It gave me an idea of what Oliver Cromwell would have made of the character. Gilbert had referred to the new technology in Pinafore in , only two years after the device was invented and before London even had telephone service. Gilbert was often confrontational and notoriously thin-skinned, though prone to acts of extraordinary kindness, while Sullivan eschewed conflict. After both *Princess Ida* and *Ruddigore*, which were less successful than the seven other operas from H. While the two artists worked out their differences, Carte kept the Savoy open with revivals of their earlier works. Among other items to which Gilbert objected, Carte had charged the cost of a new carpet for the Savoy Theatre lobby to the partnership. Gilbert confronted Carte, who refused to reconsider the accounts. Gilbert stormed out and wrote to Sullivan that "I left him with the remark that it was a mistake to kick down the ladder by which he had risen". After all, the carpet was only one of a number of disputed items, and the real issue lay not in the mere money value of these things, but in whether Carte could be trusted with the financial affairs of Gilbert and Sullivan. Gilbert contended that Carte had at best made a series of serious blunders in the accounts, and at worst deliberately attempted to swindle the others. It is not easy to settle the rights and wrongs of the issue at this distance, but it does seem fairly clear that there was something very wrong with the accounts at this time. Gilbert eventually won the lawsuit and felt vindicated, but his actions and statements had been hurtful to his partners. Nevertheless, the partnership had been so profitable that, after the financial failure of the Royal English Opera House, Carte and his wife sought to reunite the author and composer. *Utopia, Limited* and *The Grand Duke*. After that, the partnership ended for good. In , Gilbert would write, " Savoy opera was snuffed out by the deplorable death of my distinguished collaborator, Sir Arthur Sullivan. When that event occurred, I saw no one with whom I felt that I could work with satisfaction and success, and so I discontinued to write libretti. Gilbert shows sympathy for his protagonist, the son of a thief who, brought up among thieves, kills his girlfriend. As in some earlier work, the playwright displays "his conviction that nurture rather than nature often accounted for criminal behaviour". Pinafore and *The Mikado* giving, in some cases, backstory that is not found in the librettos. Gilbert was, however, the first British writer ever to receive a knighthood for his plays alone—earlier dramatist knights, such as Sir William Davenant and Sir John Vanbrugh, were knighted for political and other services. Personality Gilbert was known for being sometimes prickly. Actress May Fortescue recalled, "His kindness was extraordinary. On wet nights and when rehearsals were late and the last buses were gone, he would pay the cab-fares of the girls whether they were pretty or not, instead of letting them trudge home on foot. He was just as large-hearted when he was poor as when he was rich and successful. For money as money he cared less than nothing. Gilbert was no plaster saint, but he was an ideal friend. Jessie Bond wrote that Gilbert "was quick-tempered, often unreasonable, and he could not bear to be thwarted, but how anyone could call him unamiable I cannot understand. As a matter of fact, he was a generous, kind true gentleman, and I use the word in the purest and original sense. For instance, he quarrelled with his old associate C. He also saw his friendship with theatre critic Clement Scott turn bitter. However, Gilbert could be extraordinarily kind. Gilbert purchased the play back from his grateful widow.