# How to begin?

## Operatic Introduction in Late Victorian Popular Musical Theatre

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# 1 Introduction

How to begin? This short question addresses a problem that is anything but simple. Proverbs like 'Well begun is half done' emphasize the importance of a well-wrought outset as highly relevant for the impact of a work. The more complex a scheduled project is, the more significant is an effective and convincing beginning. While this observation is true for projects of many kinds, it is definitely applicable to something as sophisticated and multilayered as musical theatre as well.

What exactly happens at the beginning of an opera or operetta? What can the audience see or hear? Who is on stage when the curtain rises? How do the spectators know when and where the work is set, who the characters represented by the performers are, and how they are related? Interestingly enough, there are not very many (scholarly) attempts at answering these questions in connection with any kind of musical theatre, as will be discussed in chapter 3.1, whereas the finales of musical theatre, which constitute an equally complex process as the beginning, have attracted a lot of interest. While this study is by no means the very first to analyse and compare the initial section(s) of musical theatre, it is nevertheless a small contribution to a field of research that has been much neglected by scholars so far.

In late Victorian popular musical theatre, the first number after the overture is customarily a chorus number. Choral music has always been especially important for British composers in the nineteenth century, which is why chorus numbers in musical theatre were very popular. The so-called 'opening chorus' arguably has to perform the important task of explaining or introducing aspects of the often very complicated plot of the work to the audience. Typical elements like mistaken identities and other confusing schemes—topsyturvydom, as Victorians would have put it—resulted in a storyline that was usually very intricate, sometimes even absurdly so. This complexity of the plot does not make the task of introduction any easier; so it will be interesting to work out on which aspects the first numbers customarily focus. The choristers, either as a whole or subdivided into a male and a female chorus, often represent the locals of the region where the work is set and are responsible for creating a suitable atmosphere for the first scenes, assisted by visual means such as scenery, costumes and so on. Singing the very first words on stage and therefore leaving the first impression of the vocal numbers is a function that carries a lot of weight and is therefore of the utmost importance. Furthermore, the number has to draw and to arrest the audience's attention as well. All of these aspects signify that opening numbers are a multilayered and worthwhile research topic.

In order to learn more about what actually happens at the beginning of popular musical theatre, a comparative analysis regarding the libretto and the score in equal measure seems to be a promising approach. If available, reports preceding the opening night as well as contemporary reviews will be taken into consideration, because it is especially interesting how the creators advertised their works, what the public expected of them and how they were assessed in Victorian times. As the examples in chapter 3 show, an opening chorus can be realised in very different ways —with or without the involvement of soloists, in a very simple strophic form or in a complex segmented form and so on. With regards to content, the number often, but not always informs the spectators about the main conflict and the characters involved; sometimes other aspects like the setting are the centre of attention.

But what about the overtures? Musical theatre in the nineteenth century usually begins with an overture, and since the works included in this study are no exception, these instrumental numbers should naturally be regarded. However, most of the available sources do not included overtures. As Derek Scott told me in a conversation, the vocal scores were usually produced before the overture was written, because they needed to be available for sale directly after the premiere. Overtures were not deemed important enough to be composed so early that it was possible to include them in the vocal score, resulting in vocal scores without overtures, at least concerning musical comedy and musical play. This is not applicable to Savoy opera, but since there are unfortunately no sources containing the overtures of musical comedy and play, it is impossible to make comparisons, and therefore the available overtures will only be regarded at the sidelines (if at all) in the respective analyses. As customary not only in Britain, the task of composing the overture was usually delegated to a composer's pupils. A remark in the review of *His Excellency* is an apt description of the lack of significance which the composer and obviously the public as well ascribed to this part of the work: "[T]he overture has so perfunctory an air that it might almost be intended to suggest the idea of being written on the night before the performance."[1] In one case, there is something akin to proof that Ivan Caryll was working on an overture himself: In an interview with *The Sketch*, which was obviously conducted shortly before the debut performance of *The Shop Girl*, the author frequently describes that the composer was working on the overture while answering their questions.[2]

[1] "Lyric Theatre." *The Times*, 29 Oct. 1894, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS202431325/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=81945913. Accessed 10 Nov. 2020.

[2] cf. "'The Shop Girl,' at the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Ivan Caryll, the Composer." *The Sketch*, 28 Nov. 1894, p. 216. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1894.

The 1890s are interesting times for popular musical theatre in London, which is why the works originating in this decade have been chosen for this study. On the one hand, the much celebrated leading composer-librettist-collaboration of the 1870s and 80s, Arthur Sullivan and William Schwenck Gilbert, were never able to regain their former popularity after their infamous dispute known as the 'carpet quarrel' which caused a temporary end of cooperative works after *The Gondoliers* (1889). Composer and librettist both tried to create popular musical theatre with other partners in the early 1890s, but both were not as successful on their own as they used to be as a team; which is probably the reason why they patched things up for two final collaborations, *Utopia Limited* and *The Grand Duke*. However, these works were and are not as popular as their earlier ones. On the other hand, a new genre was establishing itself on London stages in this decade, musical comedy and, closely related, musical play, which quickly made Savoy opera, as works by Gilbert and Sullivan were called, seem old-fashioned. So the 1890s were a crucial period for genres of popular musical theatre in London, including both the decline of the established 'old' form and the rise of the more modern 'new' genre. By comparing the first numbers of both forms, it is not only possible to analyse how opening choruses are structured and what exactly they introduce, but also if there are any differences between the (sub)genres. But as Williams points out, "new genres are never entirely new, but emerge from the assimilation and critique of older genres."[3] As Savoy opera had emerged from previous genres like melodrama and extravaganza in the 1870s, musical comedy was not an entirely new genre, but the 1890s modernization of popular musical theatre.
This decade of change is described by Gänzl as follows:

> "Now that musical tastes had become more frivolous, demanding chiefly the comic, the topical, the risqué and the glamorous with the least amount of intellectual content possible, 'these shows' [('variety musicals')] were just the ticket. The so-called 'Naughty Nineties' had a different theatrical taste to the seventies or even the eighties, and they had the time and the means to ensure that their chosen entertainment prospered. And prosper it did through a decade which was to see an unparalleled activity and success in the British musical theatre."[4]

Because a deep understanding of the developments and new tendencies in the 1890s as described by Gänzl is crucial in order to interpret differences as well as similarities between individual works, the analyses are preceded by a detailed discussion of the relevant genres in chapter 2.

[3] Carolyn Williams: *Gilbert and Sullivan. Gender, Genre, Parody*, New York 2011, p. 12.
[4] Kurt Gänzl: *The British Musical Theatre. Volume I 1865 - 1914*, Oxford 1986, p. 470.

For more conclusive results, the regarded works have been chosen by the following principles to ensure comparability. First, they were premiered in London between 1890 and 1900—because of the aforementioned circumstances, this period seems to be particularly interesting. Similar to the situation in France, London as the capital was the cultural centre and therefore the developments on London stages, especially those in the West End, were highly significant for theatres in the entire anglophone range of influence including the Broadway theatres in New York as well as the colonies. Naturally, this selection criterion means that the sung and spoken language of the works is English. Examples from the continent as well as Sullivan's earlier works will be included for comparison in chapter 4. While it is certainly very interesting to see if and how Sullivan's opening choruses in the 1890s differed from those of his earlier works, the same question is even more important for works belonging to the new genres musical comedy and play. Of course these works wanted to distance themselves from former and supposedly old-fashioned traditions, but Savoy opera was nevertheless an inspiring example. Although British popular musical theatre has almost completely vanished from German-language stages nowadays, there was a lively exchange going on in Victorian times,[5] so it is absolutely necessary to consider influences from German-language works, in particular contemporary Viennese operetta. Furthermore, French *opéras bouffes* had enjoyed an immense popularity in London in the 1870s, so it is mandatory to examine and compare the opening numbers of these works as well.

The second criterion concerns the 'popular' in popular musical theatre: The works included in this study were considered a success (with the exception of *The Grand Duke*).[6] This is highly relevant because it means that the works reflect significant elements of the contemporary development of popular musical theatre and that they were influential for the future of the genre(s). Furthermore, concentrating on the successful works has the convenient side benefit that (vocal) scores and sometimes even recordings are available. In addition to being successful, all of the works belong (more or less) to the comic genre. Strictly speaking, *Haddon Hall* is labelled an original light English opera and not a comic opera, whereas *Shamus O'Brien* is labelled a romantic comic opera, but does not contain very many comic elements. Nevertheless, both are included in this study because they belong to the comic genre after all, and meet the other criteria.

[5] cf. Len Platt, Tobias Becker and David Linton (eds.): *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin. 1890-1939*, Cambridge 2014.

[6] The work is included nevertheless because it is the last collaboration of Gilbert and Sullivan and therefore interesting concerning the decline of Savoy opera.

## 1.1 Sources

Unfortunately, there is no critical edition or even a full score available for most of the works included in this study. Therefore, readily available vocal scores are the main sources for the musical analyses, whose criteria consequently had to be adapted (or rather restricted) to the parameters evident therein (s. chapter 3). Apparently Sullivan sometimes compiled the vocal scores himself and did not delegate this assignment as was customary;[7] but there is no similar information concerning the other composers. Hulme explains the situation concerning critical editions of the Savoy operas in detail; unfortunately, there are none available for the works composed in the 1890s so far. The orchestral parts and full scores used by productions in the twentieth and twenty-first century were usually the ones issued by the D'Oyly Carte company which included several changes to the 'original' version staged in the 1890s.[8] On that account, they make an interesting research topic themselves, but are not relevant for this study.

The autograph of the full score of Stanford's *Shamus O'Brien* can be found in the British Library, but the situation is quite dire concerning the works that were neither by Sullivan nor Stanford: Neither full scores nor parts are available in any archive consulted on that matter. This material has never appeared in print, and the handwritten material used by theatres and touring companies has not found its way into archives (yet), and it is questionable if it still exists. Due to these conditions, the musical analyses focuses on the setting of the chorus—leaving questions of orchestration for future studies.

Fortunately, there are other sources allowing insight into the works included in this study, first and foremost the libretti. These are a very interesting source because they not only contain the text, but also descriptions of the scenery and stage directions. The libretti for the works of Sullivan and Stanford are available in print; Sullivan's libretti have even been edited and commented in detail by Ian Bradley.[9] The libretti of the other works can be found in the Lord Chamberlain's Plays collection archived in the British Library. This collection includes the version of the libretto handed in for a mandatory examination in order to receive the required license for the public performance. This means, however, that the final version may have been altered to meet the requirements of the Lord Chamberlain's Office. In comparison to the lyrics included in the vocal scores, only minimal alterations have been found in the first numbers, usually concerning punctuation. Unfor-

[7] cf. Regina B. Oost: *Gilbert and Sullivan. Class and the Savoy Tradition, 1875 - 1896*, Abingdon 2016, p. 52.

[8] cf. David Russell Hulme: "Adventures in musical detection. Scholarship, editions, productions and the future of the Savoy operas", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, pp. 231ff.

[9] cf. Ian Bradley: *The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan*, Oxford 1996.

tunately, the collection does not include the correspondence files with the reports filled out by the examiners for the 1890s; those would have been extremely interesting to read, especially regarding contemporary ideas of respectability.
Furthermore, the V&A Theatre and Performance Archive includes sources like prompt books (only for *Utopia Limited* and *The Grand Duke*), newspaper cuttings, programmes and pictures for almost all of the works included in this study. These sources, particularly the reviews, have been crucial for understanding the impact of popular musical theatre on late Victorian society. However, some of the newspaper cuttings contained in these collections do not include page numbers; in some cases even the name of the newspaper and the date are missing.

## 1.2 Literature

There was one work in particular which has been most helpful throughout all the stages of this study: Kurt Gänzl's *The British Musical Theatre* (1986) in two volumes provided a fantastic overview of the works staged in London during the 1890s, were they *Tra-la-la Tosca* or *Shamus O'Brien*. It does not only contain hard data like which work has been produced at what venue for how many performances, but also creates a detailed impression of how musical theatre at that time worked, and who was involved in the process.
There are a few more or less contemporary sources that are best described as memoirs; they provide valuable insight into the daily workflow at the theatres, including the process of creating a new work. These sources are James Jupp's *The Gaiety Stage Door. Thirty Years' Reminiscences of the Theatre* (1923) and Alan Hyman's *The Gaiety Years* (1975), focusing on the Gaiety Theatre, and D. Forbes-Winslow's *Daly's. The Biography of a Theatre* (1944), concentrating on Daly's Theatre. These sources, especially the anecdotes they pass on, have to be treated with caution concerning their accuracy; but they are nevertheless significant for creating a general idea of this bygone era of musical entertainment and the aspects that were considered most important by the people involved, which might be very different from how we look at these works today. Furthermore, Bernard Shaw's *Music in London 1890 - 94* (1949) has provided expedient insight into the musical life in London in the early 1890s from a very different, much more critical point of view by focusing not only on popular musical theatre, but including all kinds of musical performances.
There is no shortage of studies about the so-called Savoy operas, so I will only name a few. First, there is *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan* (2009) with contributions focusing on different aspects of the collaborations. The volume grants an

overview of the various aspects considered in this area of research. The focus of Michael Goron's *Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Respectable Capers'. Class, Respectability and the Savoy Operas 1877—1909* (2016) provides access to many details concerning the genre as it was consciously created by the so-called triumvirate (Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte) and as it was perceived by late Victorian society. The deliberate differentiation from French *opéra bouffe* in terms of respectability, and the thorough meditation on whom they wanted to entertain and how it might be possible to attract these people to become patrons makes the development of the genre a fascinating field of study. A similar approach is made in Regina B. Oost's *Gilbert and Sullivan. Class and the Savoy Tradition, 1875—1896* (2009), which can be seen as a kind of predecessor of the aforementioned study. However, the Savoy Theatre as a financially successful business is the focus of this publication. Another aspect is highlighted by Carolyn Williams's *Gilbert and Sullivan. Gender, Genre, Parody* (2011)—the elements given in the subtitle are analysed in detail for each of the works emerging from this collaboration. Although only two of the works included in my study are discussed in the aforementioned treatise, it is nevertheless relevant as background information about the genre. Gayden Wren's *A most Ingenious Paradox. The Art of Gilbert & Sullivan* (2001) deals with the almost unabated popularity of the Savoy operas throughout the anglophone countries and analyses each work concerning possible reasons for its success. The focus lies on the cultural phenomenon as a whole, not only the lyrics and score of the works.

However, as (among others) Saremba has pointed out, most of the studies deal with 'Gilbert & Sullivan' as a cultural phenomenon, treat librettist and composer as inseparable with emphasis on Gilbert or concentrate on the dialogues or the plot rather than analysing Sullivan's music (and Gilbert's libretto) separately and in detail,[10] so there is still much work to be done in that area—this study will contribute a small part of the musical analysis. *Arthur Sullivan. A Musical Reappraisal* (2018) is a recent contribution to this area of research; however, since it is a treatise that regards the composer's complete oeuvre, the chapter dedicated to "Comic Opera" can only serve as a starting point for future research.

While there is an overwhelming amount of (scholarly) literature about Gilbert and Sullivan's Savoy operas, there are still very few scientific publications about other forms of popular musical theatre in late Victorian times, probably because they were not considered worthy of the attention. The British West End musical comedy has often been

[10] cf. Meinhard Saremba: "'We sing as one individual'? Popular misconceptions of 'Gilbert and Sullivan"', in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, p. 51, pp. 62ff.

marginalized as being the predecessor of the American Broadway musical without regarding the fact that both influenced each other, or acknowledging the inspiration coming from related forms of popular musical theatre in Paris, Vienna or Berlin. Most of those studies focus on sociocultural aspects rather than on musical ones, but have nevertheless proven most helpful. Ben Macpherson's *Cultural Identity in British Musical Theatre, 1890—1939. Knowing One's Place* (2018) examines in seven 'stories', how changing ideas of Britishness were dealt with on the musical comedy stage, including for example the aspects of gender, class, and the representation of Otherness. The treatise regards popular musical theatre concerning recurring issues dealt with in the plot and thus analyses the sociocultural phenomenon from various angles, resulting in a multi-faceted appreciation of the works. Len Platt's *Musical Comedy on the West End Stage, 1890—1939* (2004) can be seen as the predecessor of the aforementioned publication, as the titles already suggest, because both studies deal with the same period and therefore the same productions. The works in the studied era are analysed from slightly different points of view; the significance of the concept of 'modernity' is considered with special attention in Platt's study.

There has been a significant increase of publications dealing with all aspects of operetta recently, for instance the *Cambridge Companion to Operetta* (2020). However, due to the purpose of the publication—to give an overview about this field of research—the individual contributions are a solid basis to start from, but cannot give many details. Some of the contributions to *Musical Theatre in Europe. 1830—1945* (2017) deal with works included in this study, *A Greek Slave* and *The Grand Duke*, focusing on the cultural context rather than musical details. The volume highlights various aspects in the domain of research, thus providing very specific case studies. Studies like *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin. 1890-1939* (2014) have recently been starting to analyse the complex network between venues in some of these cities. This conducive publication focuses on a different aspect than this study—the exchange and adaptations of works between cities in different countries. Nevertheless, the minutiae concerning day-to-day business in the venues and regarding procedures involved when adapting a work from a different cultural background have been most illuminating.

Another aspect that is not central, but nevertheless important for this study is the position of women in general and of female performers in particular in late Victorian times. Although not focusing on musical theatre, *Actresses as Working Women. Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (1991) provides valuable background information about the situation in Victorian theatres. This issue is especially interesting because it is addressed in several works included in this study, first and foremost *A Gaiety Girl*.

## 1.3 The Significance of the Chorus in Musical Theatre

Klotz constitutes the decline of the "heiteren Opernchors"[11] in opera in the middle of the nineteenth century, whose function was formerly to reinforce the soloists in the finales. Operetta, however, takes the chorus on and even extends its function: because the characters are no longer individuals, the chorus is arguably more independent than ever.[12] Klotz states three main functions of the chorus in operetta. The first is a composite or collective group hero who represents the opinion of a certain group of people, for example the inhabitants of the place where the work is set, or a group of people who have the same occupations. The second function is the reflection of a single character's rank, profession or spirit. This function is usually found whenever the chorus echoes a soloist and thus repeats or comments their lyrics. The third function is what Klotz denominates "lebendes Milieu"[13]—the chorus is used to enhance the atmosphere of the scene. Of course, the function of the chorus can change within the work or even within a single number. Klotz mentions the chorus in Sullivan's works as a typical example of the group hero: The choristers represent well-known traditional organisations or professions like the police in *The Pirates of Penzance*, the political system in *Iolanthe*, the navy in *H.M.S. Pinafore* or the legal system in *Trial by Jury*. Jacques Offenbach's *Les Brigands* was most likely a model for this employment of the chorus.[14] Stedman points out that Gilbert "began to change it [the chorus] from a group of repetitive bystanders to one of participants",[15] an approach which was new and most unusual for British popular musical theatre. She sees two main functions of the chorus in Savoy opera: First and most obvious from today's point of view, the choristers back up a major or minor character who belongs to the same group, they often give this character an advantage over their antagonist(s) simply by being superior in numbers, which definitely enforces their position. Furthermore, the well-trained and utmost respectable behaviour of the choristers "lent dignity to eccentricity, but it also furnished a box for eccentricity to burst out of".[16] This acting style,

[11] Volker Klotz: *Bürgerliches Lachtheater. Komödie, Posse, Schwank, Operette*, 4th ed., updated and extended, Heidelberg 2007, p. 301.

[12] cf. Ronny Porsch: "Zur musikalischen Dramaturgie der Operetten bei Jacques Offenbach und Arthur Sullivan am Beispiel von *Les Brigands* und *The Pirates of Penzance*", in: *Frankfurter Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 5 (2002), p. 53. Porsch proves this extended function in a comparative analysis of Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* and Offenbach's *Les Brigands*.

[13] Klotz 2007, p. 302.

[14] cf. ibid., pp. 304ff.

[15] Jane W. Stedman: *W.S. Gilbert. A Classic Victorian and his Theatre*, Oxford 1996, p. 219

[16] ibid., p. 220.

which is often referred to as being 'deadpan', was typical for Gilbert, and an impression of this style can still be observed in amateur performances today, which usually try to be as close to the 'original' as possible.

Among others, Gossett asserts that the main function of choruses in nineteenth century Italian opera was that of the group hero, especially relating to the collective which forms (or is yet to form) a nation.[17] Regarding *tragédie lyrique*, Calella points out two different functions of the chorus, which both focus on affect: The chorus is either the sole representative of an affect, or supporting a character who is representing an affect (this point coincides with the second point mentioned by Klotz).[18]

Arguably, the first number of popular musical theatre is often a chorus number because the group of people represented by the choristers and their opinion is extremely important for the plot of the work. According to Klotz, the significance of the chorus is evident from its ability to keep the plot going by itself, whereas the soloists are only special cases who belong to the same organisation the chorus represents, trying to achieve their personal romantic, social or monetary goals.[19]

Apparently, choristers were not treated as a homogenous group, but rather than individual performers in the early musical comedies:

> "The chorus had no choreography as we would understand the word; yet they were more than *mannequins*. Described in the programmes as 'society ladies' or 'friends' of the leading lady, (in musical plays) they reacted to what was going on about them, and each was allowed to be individual in her reactions. The complete uniformity of appearance and movement which was to be the fashion half-a-century later was unthought-of, as was the vulgarity of a line of high-kicking girls which is our idea of the typical 1930s chorus."[20]

Unfortunately, the authors of this publication do not refer to any sources for their interesting observation. However this description matches the freedom the soloists were allowed when creating their roles in contrast to the customary restrictive treatment in the Savoy Theatre (s. chapter 2.2).

[17] cf. Philip Gossett: "Becoming a citizen. The chorus in *Risorgimento* opera.", in: *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2/1 (1190), pp. 41ff.

[18] cf. Michele Calella: *Das Ensemble in der Tragédie lyrique des späten Ancien régime*, Eisenach 2000, pp. 146f.

[19] cf. Klotz 2007, p. 304ff.

[20] Derek and Julia Parker: *The Natural History of the Chorus Girl*, Newton Abbot 1975, p. 54.

In Greek tragedy, the chorus sometimes reflects its own role and its actions on stage, especially the act of singing and dancing.[21] Henrichs stresses the importance of this aspect by proclaiming: "Die Unmittelbarkeit, mit der sich der Chor auf sein Singen und Tanzen bezieht, ist ein wesentliches Merkmal chorlyrischer Selbstdarstellung."[22] This phenomenon can be found in works analysed in chapter 3 as well, but not necessarily in the first numbers. Especially the female performers reflect their actions on stage in numbers like "Geisha are we" in Sidney Jones's *The Geisha*. This is particularly remarkable because the public perception of female performers, especially of the so-called 'chorus girls', is corrected and slightly improved in the 1890s.

As Baur points out, this aspect is extremely interesting because it is hard to differentiate between the group of performers and the role they perform: The chorus has a specific function, and this function is more or less the same in each play. Furthermore, there is an enormous difference between performers in the chorus and those portraying the protagonists. In reality, all of them are individuals. Some of them happen to be actors, their identity as a person includes their profession. Whenever they portray a character in a play, there is a major difference between their identity as an individual (which includes being an actor) and their function in the play. However, as soon as an individual becomes a performer in the chorus, they join a kind of group identity which makes up the chorus; they are perceived and referred to as a group. Their individual attributes are still there, but not particularly relevant, and this does not change much when they perform as a chorus in a certain play.[23]

Haß characterises the chorus in ancient Greek theatre as follows: "Der Chor eröffnet den Schauplatz. Er erwartet den Auftritt der Protagonisten und räumt ihnen einen Ort ein".[24] As chapter 3 shows, this is another similarity to the beginnings of the included works, almost all of them begin with a chorus number that creates a background for the protagonists. However, in ancient Greek tragedy the chorus also knew what had happened before and what was going to happen in the play[25]—this is a function which usually cannot be observed in the works included in this study.

[21] cf. Detlev Baur: *Der Chor im Theater des 20. Jahrhunderts. Typologie des theatralen Mittels Chor*, Tübingen 1999, p. 25; and cf. Albert Henrichs: *"Warum soll ich denn tanzen?" Dionysisches im Chor der griechischen Tragödie*, Stuttgart 1996, p. 23, pp. 30f.

[22] Henrichs 1996, p. 31.

[23] cf. Baur 1999, p. 25ff.

[24] Ulrike Haß: "Die zwei Körper des Theaters. Protagonist und Chor", in: *Orte des Unermesslichen. Theater nach der Geschichtsteleologie*, Marita Tatari (ed.), Zürich 2014, p. 142.

[25] cf. ibid., p. 144

## 2 Topsyturvydom concerning Genre

Musical theatre was extremely popular in London in late Victorian times: Spectators could enjoy a variety of different productions in venues as the Savoy Theatre, Daly's Theatre, the Gaiety Theatre and many more. Most of the theatregoers probably did not care whether they were attending a comic opera, a musical comedy or a musical play as long as the performance was entertaining. But researchers today are confronted with a complex challenge when they focus on the ticklish question of genre—usually, those works are labelled 'operetta' nowadays, although none of the works included in this study were given that label when they were created in the 1890s. Belina and Scott emphasize in the introduction to the recent *Cambridge Companion to Operetta* that "the definitional lines of operetta are blurred, and all sorts of nuanced meaning might come into play"[26] regarding all the subgenres discussed in this chapter. Later on, Scott particularizes that "the choice of the label 'musical play', 'musical comedy' or 'operetta', is often motivated by marketing decisions",[27] so in the end, these labels might have been selected at random. Linhardt seconds this assessment: "When a stage production was termed 'operetta', this did not necessarily refer to a decisive style of musical dramaturgy. Genre identification was often a matter of promotion, theatre law or the broader terrain of theatre politics".[28] These circumstances add yet another layer to the already complicated question of genre and are particularly hard to investigate because there are hardly any sources to consult on that matter.

The works composed by Arthur Sullivan, Ivan Caryll, Sidney Jones and other composers were promoted and published using various terms. Sometimes descriptive adjectives were added to the main labels musical comedy and musical play ('A Japanese Musical Play'), or expressions like 'Musical Farce' (Ivan Caryll's *The Shop Girl*) or 'An Original[29] Romantic Musical Drama" (Arthur Sullivan's *The Beauty Stone*) were applied.[30] On top of that, there is a group of works commonly referred to as 'Savoy operas', simply because they were performed in the Savoy Theatre. Should they be considered as a separate genre

[26] Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott: "Introduction", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, p. 3.

[27] Derek B. Scott: "British Operetta after Gilbert and Sullivan", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, p. 248.

[28] Marion Linhardt: "Local contexts and genre construction in early continental musical theatre", in: *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin. 1890-1939*, Len Platt, Tobias Becker and David Linton (eds.), Cambridge 2014, pp. 46f.

[29] The expression 'original' or 'new', which can be found in the titles of numerous works, simply implies that it is not a reworked version of an older piece (cf. Oost 2016, p. 50).

[30] Unfortunately, we do not know who applied those labels to the works—the composer, the librettist, the *impressario*, or someone else entirely?

as well, like the critic George Bernard Shaw did?[31] Should a 'Gaiety opera' or a 'Daly's opera' be added to the numerous terms, since the venue of the premiere seems to have influenced the genre of the compositions (or was it vice versa)? Is it necessary or wise to classify musical theatre into that many sub-genres, or should we rather be content to label all of the works falling in the comic category 'operetta', since they all consist of a mélange of spoken dialogue, instrumental music, dances and sung numbers for soloists, ensembles and the chorus?

The confusion concerning genre is not limited to comic works, but seems to be true for opera as a whole, as a quick glance at the beginning of the article 'Opera' in the New Grove Dictionary shows, which lists a dizzying amount of references to other articles dealing with sub-genres.[32] Obviously, the works included in this study were not seen as belonging to the genre 'opera' at all, which is shown most drastically in a statement by one of Stanford's pupils, Thomas Dunhill, in the 1920s: "In England Opera is not a tempting form for any composer to exploit, for it seems fore-doomed to failure from the beginning."[33] This statement is extremely astonishing regarding Sullivan's success in the late 19th century, but explainable when one excludes Sullivan's works despite the chosen label, and, of course, musical comedy and play, from the genre "Opera". This is mirrored by early 20th century publications about British opera which do not include the Savoy opera at all, but leave out this whole period of time except for mentioning Stanford and Sullivan's *Ivanhoe*.[34]

Platt pointed out that studies from the 1980s and 1990s, explicitly dealing with entertainment and popular culture in the British Empire, left out the musical comedy completely without giving any reasons, while including institutions like music halls.[35] For some reason, Letellier did not include Ivan Caryll in *Operetta. A Sourcebook*[36], whereas Gänzl even included Stanford in his chronicle focusing on popular musical theatre.[37]

Before attempting to answer the aforementioned questions, it is both interesting and helpful to take a look at the labels given to the works in the 1890s according to Gänzl's

[31]cf. Robert Ignatius Letellier: *Operetta. A Sourcebook, Volume II*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2015, p. 930.
[32]cf. Howard Mayer Brown et. al.: Art. "Opera", in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd, revised edition, Stanley Sadie (ed.), vol. 18, London 2001, p. 416. This was pointed out by Tim Carter at the "Across Labels" conference in Madrid in April 2018.
[33]Thomas F. Dunhill: "Charles Villiers Stanford. Some Aspects of His Work and Influence", in: *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 53rd Sess. (1926-1927), p. 46.
[34]cf. for example Edward J. Dent: "English Opera", in: *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 52/71 (1925), pp. 71-83.
[35]cf. Len Platt: *Musical Comedy on the West End Stage, 1890-1939*, New York 2004, p. 11.
[36]Letellier 2015
[37]Gänzl 1986

chronicle.[38] Works who are not given any label concerning genre will not be included. There are almost 70 different labels used to describe the genre, some of them make allusions to the nature of the time and/or place of the setting by including works like domestic, Chinese, Japanese, medieval, military or bicycle. On the other hand, some terms are extremely vague, like "Musical Piece".

Burlesque
Burlesque Extravaganza
Burlesque Opera
Burletta
Chinese Musical Comedy
Comic Opera
Comedy Opera
Comedy with Music
Coster Opera
Debate
Domestic Musical Play
English Comic Opera
English Military Comic Opera
Entertainment
Extravaganza
Farcical Comedy
Farcical Military Operetta
Farcical Musical Terpsichorial Burletta
Fantastic Opera
Indian Comic Opera
Japanese Musical Comedy
Japanese Musical Play
Light Opera
Light Romantic Opera
Lyrical Play
Mediaeval Operetta
Melodramatic Opera
Military Musical Comedy
Musical Absurdity
Musical Bicycle Comedy
Musical Burlesque
Musical Chinese Play
Musical Comedietta
Musical Domestic Comedy
Musical Dualogue
Musical Duologue
Musical Extravaganza
Musical Farce
Musical Farcical Comedy
Musical Farcical Nondescript
Musical Go-As-You-Please
Musical Melodrama
Musical Pantomimic Farce
Musical Piece
Musical Play
Musical Something-To-Laugh-At
Musical Sporting Comedy
Musical Trifle
Musical Variety Farce
Nautical Burlesque Drama
Nautical Comic Opera
Opéra-bouffe
Operatic Burlesque
Operatic Farce
Operatic Trifle
Operetta
Original Musical Piece
Play with Music
Racing Comedy with Music
Romantic Comedy Opera
Romantic Comic Opera
Romantic Musical Comedy Drama
Romatic Musical Drama
Romantic Musical Play
Travesty
Topical Burlesque Extravaganza
Unreality

In this list, some terms appear more often than others, those are the ones used to label quite a lot of works. Those terms are:

- Burlesque (27 works, including Burlesque Extravaganza (1 work), Burlesque Opera (1 work), Burletta (1 work), Farcical Musical Terpsichorial Burletta (1 work), Musical Burlesque (1 work), Nautical Burlesque Drama (1 work), Operatic Burlesque

[38] Gänzl 1986

(3 works) and Topical Burlesque Extravaganza (1 work), mainly in the first half of the 1890s)

- Comic Opera (46 works, including Comedy Opera (5 works), English Comic Opera (1 work), English Military Comic Opera (1 work), Indian Comic Opera (1 work), Nautical Comic Opera (1 work), Romantic Comedy Opera (1 work) and Romantic Comic Opera (2 works))

- Farce or Farcical... (26 works, including Farcical Comedy (1 work), Farcical Military Operetta (1 work), Farcical Musical Terpsichorial Burletta (1 work), Musical Farce (13 works), Musical Farcical Comedy (7 works), Musical Farcical Nondescript (1 work), Musical Variety Farce (1 work) and Operatic Farce (1 work), mainly in the second half of the 1890s)

- Musical Comedy (61 works, including Chinese Musical Comedy (1 work), Comedy with Music (1 work), Japanese Musical Comedy (1 work), Military Musical Comedy (1 work), Musical Bicycle Comedy (1 work), Musical Comedietta (2 works), Musical Comedy Drama (4 works), Musical Domestic Comedy (1 work), Musical Farcical Comedy (7 works), Musical Sporting Comedy (1 work), Racing Comedy with Music (1 work) and Romantic Musical Comedy Drama (2 works), mainly in the second half of the 1890s)

- Musical Play (15 works, including Domestic Musical Play (1 work), Japanese Musical Play (1 work), Musical Chinese Play (1 work), Play with Music (1 work) and Romantic Musical Play (1 work), only in the second half of the 1890s)

- Operetta (27 works, including Farcical Military Operetta (1 work) and Mediaeval Operetta (1 work), mainly in the first half of the 1890s, mainly works consisting of only one act)

Sometimes, works can be put in more than one group (for example, 'Farcical Musical Terpsichorial Burletta'), and sometimes it is very hard to decide whether or not a work should be included (for example, 'Musical Something-To-Laugh-At'), but this should be sufficient to get a general idea.

## 2.1 Comic Opera/Savoy Opera

As already pointed out, a lot of works with music by Arthur Sullivan and a libretto by William Schwenck Gilbert are labelled comic opera (or the label contains those words), although they are classified as operettas in the New Grove article "Sullivan"[39] and given attention to in the article "Operetta",[40] so both Hulme and Lamb seem to perceive those works as operettas. However, as Goron points out, "the term 'operetta', with its risqué, foreign connotations, was never used in conjunction with the D'Oyly Carte productions"[41] in late Victorian times on purpose—Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte clearly wanted to distinguish themselves and their works from anything not considered respectable. Saremba even warns "that the works are operettas" is one of "a number of myths - in the sense of fictitious and unproven beliefs - which are still lurking in the minds of admirers and enemies alike".[42] As a compromise, Taylor states that "the Savoy operas dwell in a strange no man's land between the serious (respectable) and popular (frivolous)"[43]—I am not content with the words in brackets, because in my opinion, popular works are not necessarily frivolous (while everyone would certainly agree that Mozart's *Zauberflöte* is a popular work, not many would call it a frivolous one, only to name one example).
It is only just to include the term 'Savoy Opera' in the title of this section, because Sullivan's works premiered at the Savoy Theatre (and usually all of his collaborations with Gilbert) were and are called Savoy operas after the venue which was build in 1881 mostly for the purpose of staging comic operas created by 'Gilbert&Sullivan', as they were usually referred to. According to Porsch this labelling, to be more precise the use of the term 'opera', implies that Sullivan sees himself in the tradition of grand opera rather than so-called "Boulevardtheater."[44] In my opinion, Sullivan did not think of his works like *The Pirates of Penzance* as grand opera, but he definitely aimed for a higher standard than simple entertainment by using the term 'opera' on purpose.
Williams uses the term English comic opera when referring to the works by Gilbert and Sullivan throughout her study.[45] Taylor recapitulates the significance of Savoy opera as a

[39] cf. David Russell Hulme: Art. "Sullivan, Sir Arthur (Seymour)", in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd, revised edition, Stanley Sadie (ed.), vol. 24, London 2001, pp. 596ff.
[40] cf. Andrew Lamb: Art. "Operetta", in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd, revised edition, Stanley Sadie (ed.), vol. 18, London 2001, pp. 707ff.
[41] Michael Goron: *Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Respectable Capers'. Class, Respectability and the Savoy Operas 1877 - 1909*, London 2016, p. 65.
[42] Saremba 2009, p. 51.
[43] Benedict Taylor: "Resituating Gilbert and Sullivan. The musical and aesthetic context", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, p. 36.
[44] Porsch 2002, p. 29.
[45] cf. Williams 2011.

topic of musicological research as follows: "a light genre, of merely middlebrow status akin to operetta (with which it is often conflated) and only a little better than the twentieth-century musical that it influenced."[46] This statement, which is obviously referring to the estimation of researchers in the 20th century, illustrates that the classification of the Savoy operas as operettas is very vague and should belong to the past.

The Savoy operas make an especially interesting subject for the discussion of genres because, as Oost points out, they were carefully and quite consciously created to be different than the former genres of popular musical theatre in London. This ambition was evidently accomplished because "they were hailed as distinctly British art and considered classics a few short years after their premières."[47] Gilbert and Sullivan intentionally set out to increase the quality and respectability of the theatre business and of the people involved in it in late 19th century London.[48] Furthermore, they succeeded in "doing nothing less than creating a new genre: English Comic Opera, born out of the spirit of continental operatic parody."[49] Fuller-Maitland highlights the importance of the Savoy operas because they "alter the condition of music in England as regarded by the average member of the public" as early as 1902, stating that they were equally attractive to both "the average man" and musicians.[50] Macpherson identifies the continental provenance of some aspects of the genre, in spite of its objective of creating an explicitly British (or English?) genre as follows:

> "stock characters borrowed from Italian *opera buffa*, while the farcical topsy-turvydom associated with the works of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan was derived from French works of *opéra comique* such as Jacques Offenbach's *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*".[51]

Saremba, on the other hand, emphasizes that it was Sullivan's (and Carte's, but not Gilbert's!) goal "to establish a national (comic) opera for the purpose of competing with French stage works", he furthermore compares the situation in Britain with the situation in Germany.[52] In order to achieve that goal, Sullivan and many others also signed a "memorial" written by Stanford which demanded "the foundation of a National Opera House"—however, this attempt was not successful for financial reason, although the idea

[46] Benedict Taylor: *Arthur Sullivan. A Musical Reappraisal*, London 2018, p. 1.
[47] Oost 2016, p. 5
[48] cf. for example David Cannadine: "Gilbert and Sullivan: The Making and Un-Making of a 'British Tradition"', in: *Myths of the English*, Roy Porter (ed.), Cambridge 1992, pp. 13f.
[49] Taylor 2018, p. 116; the aspect of parody will be dealt with later on.
[50] John Alexander Fuller-Maitland: *English Music in the XIXth century*, Portland 1902, reprinted 1976, pp. 172f.; the aspect of nationalism will be dealt with later on.
[51] Ben Macpherson: *Cultural Identity in British Musical Theatre, 1890-1939. Knowing One's Place*, London 2018, p. 11.
[52] Saremba 2009, p. 57

met with approval.[53] It is interesting to see that those two composers, different as they were, fought passionately for the same goal in this case.
There is no separate subchapter about the music of Savoy opera for two reasons: First, as pointed out in the introduction, there are not that many studies which focus on Sullivan's scores; and second, most of the following subchapters include information about the music because it is closely linked to other aspects.

### 2.1.1 General characteristics

Williams attempts a definition of the genre by naming three main aspects as follows:

> "The music cuts across the grain of plot and situation, interrupting the parody (and even the humour) with moments of great emotional fervor, seriousness, idealism, piercing sentiment, and sheer beauty. Perhaps this three-way tug-of-war—among absurd premises, tenaciously pursued; a deadpan acting style that pretends these premises are nothing out of the ordinary; and the emotional depth and variety of the music—would be the best characterization of Savoy opera."[54]

This definition focuses on three elements that are connected to three different (groups of) people: the librettist, the performers and the composer. The influence of the performers is especially important, because it is usually underrated (s. chapter 2.1.2). Eden detects an "uncomfortable mismatch between the characters as they appear in prose and their emotional qualities as expressed in music [as] one of the defining features of Gilbert and Sullivan opera".[55] However, this "mismatch" seems to be a view advanced by scholars nowadays, not by the spectators in late Victorian times.
Another important aspect is the splendid and lavishly decorated staging. This included the costumes as well as the scenery, both aspects, especially the costumes, were commented on in detail in newspapers like *The Illustrated London News*. Goron explains that this custom can be traced back to the restructuring of the West End in the 1850s and 60s: Instead of offering their potential spectators lots of different productions in quick succession, theatres now concentrated on a single production, aiming for a run as long as possible.[56] The unparalleled long runs of the West End theatres in the 1880s and

[53] Paul Julian Rodmell: *Charles Villiers Stanford*, Aldershot 2002, p. 200.
[54] Williams 2011, p. 28
[55] David Eden: "Savoy opera and its discontents. The theatrical background to a quarrel", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, p. 11.
[56] cf. Goron 2016, pp. 53f.

90s proved them to be onto an extremely profitable, but at the same time financially venturous idea.

All of the Savoy operas share some characteristics that made and still make the audience recognize new or previously unknown works—Oost speaks of "the Savoy family likeness", quoting Cellier, who was musical director for D'Oyly Carte.[57] However, Gilbert always made sure to integrate allusions to modern and fashionable goods and/or places into his dialogues to avoid dull repetitions.[58] Sullivan was painfully aware of that "family likeness", using the same term in a letter to Gilbert in which he states his dissatisfaction and the difficulty of creating something musically fresh and new in the same genre as early as 1884.[59]

The libretti usually do not include any suggestive passages, maybe to avoid offending anyone.[60] All of them are usually seen as rather conservative.[61] This is a significant difference to the often insinuating dialogues in the musical comedy or play. According to Eden, the Savoy Operas are "end products" of a reform struggling to elevate theatre from an inelegant or even dubious pastime to a form of entertainment agreeable and appealing to the (well-funded) middle classes that had begun in the 1830s by the efforts of Elizabeth Vestris.[62] Oost points out that language is used as an indicator of class in the Savoy operas: The characters who are supposed to be seen in a positive light use exactly the same language as the audience concerning correct grammar and the use of fashionable foreign words, even if those characters do not belong to the middle class and therefore this kind of language would not be natural for them.[63]

In the Lord Chamberlain's Plays collection in the British Library Gilbert's libretti are included in printed form rather than as a written or typed manuscript like the other works submitted for approval, this seems to indicate that the Lord Chamberlain's office hardly ever found anything to criticize in the dialogues and lyrics. Gilbert (and D'Oyly Carte) were obviously aware of that fact, otherwise they would not have risked printing the libretti before gaining the Lord Chamberlain's official license for the performance.

When first staging the works by Gilbert and Sullivan at the Opera Comique in the 1870s, D'Oyly Carte emphasized that the works were quite different from French *opéra bouffe* that had been formerly performed at the venue and could be enjoyed by "respectable

[57]Oost 2016, pp. 83ff.
[58]cf. ibid., p. 107.
[59]cf. Sullivan's letter to Gilbert, 2 April 1884, cited by Oost 2016, p. 135.
[60]cf. Porsch 2002, p. 53.
[61]cf. Oost 2016, p. 10.
[62]Eden 2009, p. 3, pp. 5ff.
[63]cf. Oost 2016, pp. 116f.

Englishmen and women looking for intelligent entertainment"[64]—he was aiming for an audience that had a strict sense of decorum and therefore made sure that, in contrast to earlier or other forms of entertainment, the works and their performances were decent affairs that were appropriate for decent people.[65] Oost even claims that D'Oyly Carte promoted the Savoy operas as "an ideological triumph over foreign theatrical fare" by "evoking propriety, wit, and national pride".[66] There were stagings by other producers that seem to have had other standards concerning respectability, and D'Oyly Carte, Gilbert and Sullivan all made sure that the public knew that they distanced themselves from those indecent performances.[67] However, as Cannadine has pointed out, in spite of the middle class audience's strict moral code, "allusions to this older, more vulgar theatrical tradition would have been understood and appreciated",[68] "this" referring to formerly popular genres such as pantomime, extravaganza, (nautical) melodrama, burlesque and so on. The Savoy operas "are an outgrowth of the forgotten repertoire of the London theatre" and therefore nowadays hard to categorize.[69] To summarize, the Savoy operas were "precisely pitched between the music hall and the concert hall, [...] intelligent but not intellectual, tasteful but not pretentious, tuneful but not cloying."[70]

One of the most distinctive features of Savoy opera is parody—mostly of British institutions like the military or parliament, but also of theatrical genres and social, cultural or gender stereotypes. Williams points out that parody of theatrical genres like (fairy) extravaganza, (nautical) melodrama, grand opera and music hall enabled the genre Savoy opera to establish itself by presenting the older forms as charming, but also old-fashioned and outdated—the works showcased themselves as something new and different while they were carrying on traditional genres at the same time as is the paradox nature of parody. Especially the typical finales of extravaganza and melodrama are mimicked and mocked in several works.[71] Therefore Savoy operas do not only offer insight into late Victorian culture and society, but also into earlier genres and their works, which might be otherwise forgotten nowadays. In and after *The Mikado* (1885), the genre was so well-known that it occasionally even made fun of itself or reflected on issues concerning "the conditions of their own production",[72] directly or indirectly.

[64] Oost 2016, p. 48.
[65] cf. Linhardt 2014, p. 50.
[66] Oost 2016, p. 59.
[67] cf. Oost 2016, pp. 52f.
[68] Cannadine 1992, p. 15.
[69] Eden 2009, p. 9.
[70] Cannadine 1992, p. 16.
[71] cf. Williams 2011, pp. 4ff.
[72] Williams 2011, pp. xiiif., pp. 4ff.

But Gilbert and Sullivan did not only prey on British genres, they also included Italian structures and forms like *bel canto* and the *stretta*.[73] Scott points out how various other characteristic features of Italian opera were parodied in the Savoy operas. The chorus was likewise object to ridicule, especially when interacting with soloists and seemingly spontaneous giving (sometimes quite verbose) answers or explanations in unison (or at least usually using the exact same words in a homophonic setting); or when trying (and failing) to be stealthy.[74]

According to Eden, "Sullivan's arrival transformed burlesque into opera."[75] It was "his ultimate purpose [...] to create English opera in the proper sense by giving expression to human emotion through musical drama",[76] resulting in a form of popular musical theatre on a level that had not been reached in London for a very long time. However, this purpose was one of the reasons that made a further collaboration with Gilbert impossible for Sullivan in the 1890s.[77] Critics and scholars alike have always found Sullivan's musical humour quite remarkable. In his comic operas, he frequently uses melodies taken from well-known songs or other operas which were recognized by a large part of the audience. In doing so he cultivates the long standing tradition of musical parody. But he often takes the parody even farther by using the melody in a context that is in harsh contrast to its original context, therefore achieving a comic effect for everyone who noticed this musical joke. It was also typical for Sullivan to use this method to characterize a group of people musically, or to employ certain voice registers "that exaggerate the role of gender in sound production."[78]

In order for a parody to work, it is absolutely necessary that the audience recognizes the matter that is being ridiculed, so by taking a closer look at parodies in Savoy operas, it is revealed what general knowledge and which conventions could be taken for granted by Gilbert and Sullivan. Gilbert was known as an author whose works included a lot of elements of parody, and the spectators enjoyed this aspect of his libretti.[79] In most works there were several layers of parody, so the shows were entertaining for almost every background and every level of previous knowledge—the more a spectator knew, the more allusions they were able to understand. Since parody involves the re-use of old, well-known and, concerning Savoy opera, popular traditions, it is able to reach a broad

[73] cf. Taylor 2018, pp. 104ff.
[74] cf. Derek B. Scott: *Sounds of the Metropolis. The 19th-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna*, Oxford 2008, pp. 102f.
[75] Eden 2009, p. 8.
[76] ibid., pp. 9f.
[77] cf. ibid., pp. 11ff.
[78] Williams 2011, pp. 24ff.
[79] cf. Oost 2016, p. 23, p. 40.

audience. Williams emphasizes that the works "treat social conventions as if they were theatrical conventions", and that it is "this intertwining of metatheatrical and sociological critique [which] lends the Savoy operas their distinctively late-nineteenth-century flavor."[80] They were popular with a huge audience because they were truly embedded in late Victorian cultural life.

Oost points out that it is quite obvious from the interior of the venue and the works chosen to be performed therein that the main target audience of the Savoy operas were the middle and upper classes.[81] She concludes from the prices of the tickets that D'Oyly Carte, like other West End theatre managers, used rather high admission fees in order to secure a more exclusive audience that was able to afford those tickets and happy to keep mostly to themselves in a venue like the Savoy Theatre.[82] However, according to Goron, a little more than half of the tickets were for "unreserved lower-priced accommodation" and therefore their purchasers probably belonged to the working class. These tickets, however, made up only about one fifth of the Savoy Theatre's daily profit, and on these grounds it is clear that the main target group of the management was the more affluent middle class.[83] Nevertheless, determining the composition of the audience in late Victorian times is extremely difficult, because prejudices and conscious misinformation were widespread for several reasons.[84]

There was a huge awareness of class and rank even between members of different middle class backgrounds which was reflected in the different entrances and areas in the theatre. Oost breaks down the seating arrangements as follows: "the elite in the private boxes and stalls, the public and grammar school set in the balconies and pit, the lower middle class in the amphitheatre, pit, and gallery."[85] Everybody knew where they belonged—in society as well as in the theatre—and everybody was aware of the differences, although all of them shared the same set of values. In spite of all the mockery, Oost argues that Savoy operas did not want to change Victorian society or the class system, they rather aimed to consolidate it.[86]

[80]Williams 2011, pp. 13ff.
[81]cf. Oost 2016, p. 3.
[82]cf. ibid., p. 22.
[83]Goron 2016, pp. 109f.
[84]cf. Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanov: "Victorian and Edwardian audiences", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, Kerry Powell (ed.), Cambridge 2004, pp. 93ff.
[85]Oost 2016, p. 32.
[86]cf. ibid., p. 95.

### 2.1.2 Performers

As Goron argues, much can be learned about the style of Savoy opera from observations about the cast. He states that "Sullivan's scores were not suited to grand opera's singers, nor were Gilbert's intended methods matched to the majority of actors", that the ideal performer's "manner fell somewhere between grand opera and burlesque" and that "those performers would have to be prepared to accept instruction."[87] Obviously, Savoy opera needed a new and special kind of performer, one that could not be easily found. Because of the aspired respectability of the works and the theatre, the management thought it wise not to employ any performers with a burlesque background in order to enhance their disparity from that kind of entertainment, and preferred performers with musical experience that was considered proper and decorous—in fact, inexperience was seen as an advantage because it made the performers more responsive to directions.[88] Eden adds that the employment of inexperienced performers might have been even necessary for the Savoy Theatre because "no established artist would have submitted to such parade-ground methods" as Gilbert was infamous for and which "put an end to the old approach to production which allowed the principals to wander the stage at will".[89] Stedman emphasizes Gilbert's "passion for control over every aspect of production" which even included costume and, in a certain degree, stage design; but also describes his immense patience with performers who did their utmost to follow his lead.[90] Cox-Ife sums up Gilbert's almost revolutionary attitude towards the choristers like this: "each member of the chorus was a real character and not just a 'singer in costume'. This was a revelation to performers as well as audiences."[91] Seeing the group character represented by the choristers interacting with the characters played by the soloists and reacting 'naturally' to their actions and statements was entirely new for the spectators and arguably contributed significantly to the heightened importance and popularity of the chorus in musical theatre. The group of choristers was apparently very large, Ainger reports that *The Mountebanks* featured 53 choristers at the beginning of its run; 28 female choristers were involved in *Utopia Limited*.[92]

The aforementioned middle-class values apply to the compulsory behaviour of the female choristers: They were presented as stunning, but inaccessible and decent women in an

[87] Goron 2016, p. 186—Goron refers specifically to *The Sorcerer*, but these requirements usually apply to Savoy opera in general.
[88] cf. ibid., pp. 156f., pp. 186f.
[89] Eden 2009, p. 11.
[90] Stedman 1996, pp. 216ff.
[91] William Cox-Ife: *W.S. Gilbert. Stage Director*, London 1977, p. 70.
[92] cf. Michael Ainger: *Gilbert and Sullivan. A Dual Biography*, Oxford 2002, p. 334, p. 343.

attempt to overcome the wide-spread prejudice that women on stage were usually prostitutes. In order to avoid financial distress in times when there were no performances because of rehearsals that might have forced (female) performers to resort to prostitution as a means to necessary subsidiary earnings, the singers at the Savoy Theatre had a quite extraordinary contract which gave them the safety of regular employment and salary.[93] Interestingly, being a good singer was not the most important quality of a female Savoy chorister, her refined manners, including proper elocution, were much more significant. Physical attractiveness was advantageous, but apparently not considered as important as in other theatres like the Gaiety.[94] According to Delorenzo, the choristers "must have concert voices and be able to sing with accurate intonation", and also be able to implement the "uncomplicated basic movements" that were required for the dancing scenes.[95]

### 2.1.3 Promotion and merchandise

Oost points out that the marketing strategy to promote the Savoy operas differed a lot from the usual course of action: Instead of focusing on the prominent singers to attract the audience, D'Oyly Carte focused on librettist and composer.[96] She adds that the performances were accompanied by frequent newspaper articles dealing with librettist and composer, the performers or the ongoing rehearsals to draw the public's interest in what was going on at the Savoy theatre.[97]

It is important to keep in mind that the first objective of the Savoy operas was to be profitable.[98] The stagings were extremely expensive due to their splendid costumes and scenery, so the long runs and provincial tours were absolutely necessary to cover the expenses and pay the wages of the numerous participants. D'Oyly Carte, Gilbert and Sullivan were highly conscious of that fact—and also interested in maintaining their expensive lifestyles with the income earned at the theatre.

Everyone who bought a ticket for a performance at the Savoy Theatre received a programme for free, whereas in other venues they usually had to be purchased separately. Those programmes included a list of the *dramatis personae* and the performers, general information about the performance and many advertisements (s. Figures 1 and 2).[99]

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[93] cf. Williams 2011, pp. 20f.
[94] cf. Goron 2016, pp. 153f.
[95] Joseph P. Delorenzo: *The Chorus in American Musical Theatre. Emphasis on Choral Performance*, Diss. New York University, 1985, pp. 3f.
[96] cf. Oost 2016, p. 47.
[97] cf. ibid., p. 51.
[98] cf. ibid., p. 37.
[99] V&A Archive, THM-73-26-18—NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION!!!

Figure 1: *Utopia Limited*—Programme p. 2 - 3

Figure 2: *Utopia Limited*—Programme p. 4 - 5

There were several versions of programmes depending on the price of the ticket: For example, the paper of the programmes given to the audience in the pit was rather thin, whereas the programmes for the private boxes were printed on paperboard. There were also versions for extraordinary occasions named "souvenir programess" which included tasteful illustrations of the performers.[100] The programmes, even the regular ones, were popular souvenirs and can also be seen as items which assisted in forming a sense of class identity in several aspects: First, they included guidelines for a proper behaviour inside the theatre which were usually followed willingly by the spectators—by respecting the set of rules for the correct behaviour in the theatre, they both felt and at the same time displayed that they were true members of the (upper) middle class. The advertisements included in the programmes also appealed to the audience's pleasure in being in the lap of luxury. The goods and services promoted were customized to class-specific likings. The performances also used 'product placements' to advertise goods, especially fashion, but the programmes furthermore named the artisans that had contributed parts of the scenery or the publisher of the sheet music from the production. Even the programmes itself as well as other goods connected with the productions were seen as status symbols that emphasized the owner's wealth class affiliation.[101]
Printed libretti were also available for sale at the venue, and since the lights in the theatre were not dimmed for the performance, the spectators could read the text like in any other theatre at that time. Whenever there were adaptations made to the libretto, the publishers transferred them so that the versions available at the theatre were identical to the spoken dialogue on stage.[102] In the 1880s, the purchasable goods connected to the Savoy operas were not only items as souvenir programmes, libretti and sheet music, but merchandise produced to match the operas designs like fashion or tableware. Furthermore, it was considered fashionable to have a so-called 'Mikado Room' furnished and decorated in designs that resembled the operas setting—not only in Britain, but also in the United States. Sometimes, the lyrics of popular songs were adapted and harnessed to advertise even entirely unrelated good.[103] This illustrates the influence the Savoy operas had on consumer behaviour, which is strongly analogical to the so-called "Merry Widow craze" that was to follow the success of Lehár's operetta about three decades later.

[100]cf. Oost 2016, p. 72.
[101]cf. ibid., pp. 60ff., pp. 79f.
[102]cf. ibid., p. 63, pp. 75f.
[103]cf. ibid., pp. 78f.

### 2.1.4 Plot and Structure

Most of the Savoy operas are number operas with spoken dialogues, this structure had a much higher significance in English opera than on the continent. But musical numbers and spoken dialogues are not simply alternating without being connected, "in their ideal form, the music grows out of the dramatic situation as an intrinsic part of the conception."[104] Gilbert and Sullivan experiment with more through-composed forms using recitatives in addition to spoken dialogues in their earlier collaborations. In the 1880s, these efforts concentrate on the complex finales, especially the much longer Act I finale, which consists of several contrasting sections which differed in instrumentation and style of performance: chorus numbers, ensembles, recitatives and songs.[105] Nelson points out that in most Savoy operas "the last act ends with a perfunctory finale consisting entirely of music from earlier in the opera, often from the first act finale, and serving dramatically only to bring the work to a satisfactory happy ending."[106]

The *dramatis personae* of the Savoy operas usually contains a young man (tenor) and a young woman (soprano) as romantic leads, a comical baritone who sings the characteristic patter songs[107] and an alto or mezzo who often represents a strange spinster.[108] This structure is parodied felicitously by the singer and comedian Anna Russell in her musical sketch "How to write your own Gilbert and Sullivan Opera".[109] It is Sullivan's music that adds emotional depth and self-reflection to Gilbert's characters; there are even scenes in which the music questions the credibility of the words the performers utter.[110]

The roles represented by sopranos are usually in conformity with domestic virtues encouraged in women in Victorian times, whereas "'unhealthy' masculine attributes—the desire for control, a predatory interest in (often younger) members of the opposite sex, and an awareness of violence or punishment"[111] are reflected in the aforementioned contralto roles. These roles are one of the reasons why the Savoy operas and especially Gilbert as the librettist have often been described as misogynist, a position which Williams aims to prove as wrong or at least too strong. Goron agrees with her, pointing out that the

[104] Taylor 2018, p. 118.

[105] cf. Taylor 2018, p. 97, pp. 115f.

[106] John C. Nelson: "Tonal and Structural Design in the Finales of the Savoy Operas, with Some Suggestions as to Derivation", in: *Indiana Theory Review* 13/2 (1992), pp. 1f.

[107] On the matter of patter songs cf. Laura Kasson Fiss: "'This particularly rapid, unintelligible patter'. Patter songs and the word-music relationship", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, pp. 98ff.

[108] cf. Porsch 2002, p. 37.

[109] First published on a record in 1953, now available online—cf. e.g. Anna Russell: "How to Write Your Own Gilbert and Sullivan Opera", https://youtu.be/aYCXO_FZj5k, accessed 04.08.2020.

[110] cf. Saremba 2009, pp. 51ff.

[111] Goron 2016, p. 198.

role of women in society presented on stage is necessarily meant to be acceptable to the audience, usually reflected the contemporary social reality and does not inevitably have to be Gilbert's own opinion: "The ideology of the operas was [...] inextricably linked with their marketability."[112]

Interestingly, in the early works up to *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888), the chorus is split up in a male and a female chorus belonging to two different, often conflictive groups,[113] sometimes in order to mock the "separate spheres of Victorian domestic ideology" they represented.[114] The two oppositional positions are enhanced musically, the two groups usually sing a different text to a different melody, sometimes culminating in a contrapuntal combination at the end of a number.[115] In some of the Savoy operas, Sullivan describes (and sometimes even ridicules) a group of characters musically, for example the fairies and the Lords in *Iolanthe*, to point out their differences.[116]

The chorus in Savoy opera had a distinctively new and different function as in grand opera: The singers no longer represent just a living background for the soloists, but intervene in whatever happens on stage, and take an active part as well as only commenting passively on the action. This is often ensured by a supporting character who belongs to the group the chorus is representing, or by the chorus backing one of the main characters. Sometimes, Gilbert even uses the chorus to mock its use in ancient Greek drama.[117] Furthermore, the commenting function of the chorus is often enhanced by adding irony to the singers' remarks.[118] All of these augmentation of the function of the chorus stem from "Gilbert's desire to integrate the chorus [...] into the dramaturgical fabric of the operas",[119] as well as from Sullivan's effort to provide the chorus with a typical recognizable musical feature.[120] Delorenzo states that "the main function of the chorus [...] is musical embellishment."[121] He analyses the function of the chorus in *H.M.S. Pinafore* and summarizes that it "establishes atmosphere, emphasizes rapidly shifting plot lines, and takes part in social criticism."[122]

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[112]Goron 2016, p. 44.
[113]cf. Williams 2011, pp. xivf.
[114]ibid., p. 22.
[115]cf. ibid., p. 22.
[116]cf. Taylor 2018, p. 121.
[117]cf. Williams 2011, pp. 17f.
[118]cf. Taylor 2018, p. 117.
[119]Goron 2016, pp. 38f.
[120]cf. Martin T. Yates: "Musical contexts II. Characterisation and emotion in the Savoy operas", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, pp. 143ff.
[121]Delorenzo 1985, p. 4.
[122]ibid., p. 44.

Another important distinction between Savoy opera and the genres it emerged from is that it did not use any cross-dressing main characters after the very early *Thespis* (1871). This decision supported the genre's claim to being reputable entertainment, which the burlesque and extravaganza most definitely were not. Therefore, the Savoy operas spoke to an audience coming from a different kind of background, the (upper) middle class. As Oost put it, they "embraced a distinctive set of values, including thrift, sobriety, self-improvement, honesty, chastity, orderliness, cleanliness, and above all, respectability."[123] All or at least most of these values are featured prominently in the Savoy operas.

Another typical feature of a Savoy opera plot is commercialism—usually treated as an aspect of (middle) class affiliation. Like Oost has pointed out, this can be seen in Josephine's thoughts about her potential future life as Ralph's (working-class) wife in *H.M.S. Pinafore*: consumption and goods or the lack thereof seem to be quite crucial to her,[124] and probably most middle class women would have agreed with her.

National identity and pride is yet another aspect that is deeply integrated into the plots of Savoy operas. According to Goron, D'Oyly Carte "declared an intention to create a form which equalled or surpassed that of existing foreign entertainments",[125] and his efforts were supported both by the settings and plots of Gilbert's libretti and by Sullivan's musical references to traditional English genres. Again, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and especially the number "He is an Englishman" is a good example, as pointed out by Oost.[126] Becker points out that the distinctive Britishness of most of the Savoy operas was probably the reason why *The Mikado* was extremely successful in non-anglophone countries because of its 'exotic' setting and characters, whereas the other works were too deeply involved in specifically British issues to be of much interest there.[127] The same seems to be true for the musical play *The Geisha*, which was comparably successful on an international level (s. chapter 3.13).

In the Savoy operas, the audience was assured that "charity, politeness, and respect trump cruelty and snobbery in maintaining social order"[128]—they were presented an idyllic world on stage which reminded them comfortably of their own reality. Cannadine goes even further and states that the Savoy operas were not only extremely conservative in their choice of topics, but also in their silence about uncomfortable, but current political and social problems; he stresses that the people in the audience "were encouraged

[123]Oost 2016, p. 17.
[124]cf. ibid. p. 96, on the inclusion of commercial topics in general cf. ibid., pp. 108f.
[125]Goron 2016, p. 70.
[126]cf. Oost 2016, p. 98f.
[127]cf. Tobias Becker: "Globalizing Operetta before the First World War", in: *The Opera Quarterly* 33/1 (2017), p. 11.
[128]Oost 2016, p. 103.

to laugh rather than to think."[129] However, he also points out that in all Savoy operas the idyllic world is in danger and only saved by ridiculous coincidences—"in the context of the time, the boundary line between humour and anxiety was very narrow indeed."[130] Although there was some mild criticism included, the main intention of the genre was to reassure rather than to be thought-provoking.

### 2.1.5 Decline

With the rise of the musical comedy in the middle of the 1890s, Savoy opera was perceived as old-fashioned and an institution of the past; it was even made fun of in musical comedies on stage,[131] so it received the same treatment it had accorded its predecessors in the 1870s. Both Gilbert's libretti and Sullivan's music were no longer up-to-date and considered "too sophisticated and too cerebral".[132] Since D'Oyly Carte had not been able to find a successor for Sullivan, whose comic operas were not as popular in the 1890s as they used to be, the genre pretty much died with him. Shaw perceived the development of the genre in the 1890s like this:

> "When the Gilbert-Sullivan series came to an end, the attempt to keep up the school at second-hand produced the old vulgarity and extravagance without the higher element; and Savoy opera instantly slipped down towards the lower level."[133]

## 2.2 Musical Comedy

One of the extremely popular genres in the 1890s was the musical comedy, "the forerunner of today's stage and film musical",[134] as Bailey put it. This genre complements or even replaces the French *opéra bouffe* and Sullivan's Savoy operas on London's popular musical theatre stages; those genres were not as successful in the 1890s as they had been in the decade before.[135] Fuller-Maitland harshly refers to the genre as "a farrago of nonsense in which neither style, unity, nor originality is generally admissible" and "'go-as-you-please'

[129] Cannadine 1992, p. 21.
[130] ibid.
[131] cf. Platt 2004, p. 32.
[132] Cannadine 1992, p. 22.
[133] cf. Bernard Shaw: *Music in London 1890 - 94, Volume II*, London 1949 (revised and reprinted), p. 75.
[134] Peter Bailey: "'Naughty but nice'. Musical comedy and the rhetoric of the girl", in: *The Edwardian Theatre. Essays on performance and the stage*, Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan (eds.), Cambridge 1996, p. 36.
[135] cf. Lamb 2001b, p. 711.

entertainments", bemoaning the "dismal state" of English comic music in the 1890s and renders the crushing judgement that "they [the works staged in other theatres than the Savoy] are not comic opera or even *opéra bouffe*, and do not supply the place of these really artistic things."[136] Obviously, he felt the decline of quality in popular musical theatre after the hey-day of the Savoy operas quite acutely; his verdict can be seen as exemplary for conservative taste in the 1890s—critics were constantly demanding what they called 'true comic opera' or something in this vein.

Snelson sees the musical comedy as "a light diversion (usually with a domestic narrative) [...] often representing an idealized, fashionable contemporary life",[137] whereas Lamb describes its "formula" consisting of "sumptuous contemporary dresses, youthful cast, romantic plot and catchy tunes".[138] Bailey defines the musical comedy as a genre consisting of three elements: "song, dance, and a romantic narrative [...] written in everyday speech, and played in everyday settings";[139] indicating further that it is an offspring of the burlesque, a very successful genre throughout the whole Victorian era (and quite a large fraction of the works of musical theatre performed on London stages 1890 - 1900 were burlesques as well, s. the beginning of chapter 2), usually a parody of a famous story, play or opera.

In an article in *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* following the opening night of *San Toy* (1899), the anonymous author comments on the genre in the following way:

> "It seems difficult in one musical comedy to get far away from the musical comedies which preceded it. The personages always appear to be doing much the same sort of thing in much the same sort of way. I am not sure whether the special class of playgoer for whom musical comedy is written would appreciate a genuine new departure. I should not like to say even that he would understand one."[140]

This contemporaneous (and understanding, but not positive) opinion of the genre indicates that the works always consisted of very similar elements, which seems to appeal to a certain kind of audience. The author also implies that these spectators are of a limited understanding, at least when it concerns musical theatre. However, the genre succeeds in giving its audience exactly what it desires.

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[136] Fuller-Maitland 1902, p. 182.

[137] Andrew Lamb and John Snelson: Art. "Musical", in: *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19420, accessed 14.11.2020.

[138] Lamb and Snelson 2001

[139] Bailey 1996, p. 37.

[140] "Our Captious Critic. 'San Toy"' *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 4 November 1899, p. 239. V&A archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99

Macpherson characterizes musical comedy as follows:

> "Its sentiments of self-praise mixed with self-mockery, configured in narratives of topsy-turvydom drawn from comic opera, framed as a spectacular satire littered with topical references in a manner similar to burlesque, and performed with a theatrical knowingness utilising carefully staged eroticism negotiated in line with censorship laws".[141]

This definition focusses on very different aspects of the genre as the ones given before, it can be seen as the modern approach to musical comedy as a valid field of research in contrast to the often prejudiced attitude of former generations of scholars (and critics). Since the Gaiety Theatre, which can be seen as the home of the musical comedy, had mainly staged burlesques before it became *the* venue for the musical comedy, it is only natural that both genres had a lot in common. According to Scott, this is the reason why the first attempts to create a new genre (for example the musical farce *In Town* and the musical comedy *A Gaiety Girl*) were not made at the Gaiety, but at the Prince of Wales Theatre.[142] Platt even sees the musical comedy as the "improved version" of the burlesque, because it manages a balancing act between being both originated from a popular tradition and breathtakingly modern.[143] Other genres that are generally seen as the predecessors of the musical comedy were the ballad opera, the vaudeville and the American minstrel show.[144] Scott argues that especially the adjacency to variety enabled composers and producers to include numbers in the style of the Music Hall because it went with the general structure of the genre in contrast to Savoy opera.[145] Cannadine compares the genre to the Savoy opera and states the following characteristics: "Its lyrics were less intellectual, there was no satire, the melodies were simpler, the humour was broader and there was a greater stress on romantic entanglement and lavish spectacle."[146] Especially the last aspect can be observed in the opening choruses, as the analyses will show (s. chapter 3).

According to Bailey, we do not know for sure who exactly attended, for example, the Gaiety Theatre or Daly's Theatre to enjoy the performance of a musical comedy or play, although it is usually believed that the audience was formed mainly by the middle class (s. chapter 2.2).[147] The audience also included a lot of people belonging to a new group

[141] Macpherson 2018, p. 19.
[142] cf. Derek B. Scott: "Ivan Caryll, the Belgian doyen of British musical comedy", in: *Forum 'Who is British Music?', Twentieth-Century Music* 15/3 (2018), p. 478.
[143] Platt 2004, p. 31.
[144] cf. ibid., p. 1.
[145] cf. Scott 2020, p. 247.
[146] Cannadine 1992, p. 17.
[147] cf. Peter Bailey: "Theatre of Entertainment/Spaces of Modernity. Rethinking the British Popular

forming at that time: those who found employment in various locations connected to the growing consumerism at the end of the century. They did not belong to the working class, in the traditional meaning of that word, but not to the middle class either. Instead, they were perceived one of the signs that the edges of the traditional classes had become quite indistinct and were not as clear-cut, and maybe not as important as before.[148] At the same time, the number of female spectators seems to have increased significantly, especially in the venues managed by George Edwardes.[149]

It has already been discussed at length which work actually qualifies as the very first musical comedy. Platt gives an overview of this discussion, for the sake of completeness I will briefly state its outcome. He lists three possible options: *In Town*, *A Gaiety Girl* and *The Shop Girl*, and decides that it cannot be *In Town* because its plot is too incoherent to be anything more than a developmental stage somewhere between burlesque and musical comedy. Since *The Shop Girl* "followed in the footsteps of *A Gaiety Girl*",[150] he declares the latter to be the first work of this new genre.[151]

According to Platt, *A Gaiety Girl* changes the meaning of the concept *gaiety* as a special form of entertainment: "The old voyeurism was still there, but in a new designer style, and was accompanied by a politicized spirit, a *joie de vivre* expressed as a *fin de siècle* antidote to conservative values."[152] In order to remain on the right side of the very fine line dividing proper and improper entertainment, managers took special care in avoiding dances considered to be too eroticised and presented their female performers as "living mannequin[s]". Their performances were closely linked to consumerism, they succeeded in creating a new and special aesthetic that similarly pleased male and female spectators.[153] Therefore, the premiere of *A Gaiety Girl* was not only the birth of a soon to be extremely popular genre, but it marks the beginning of a new and very modern kind of amusement that was immensely successful because it reflected the *zeitgeist* perfectly. More importantly, it announced itself to be *the* fashionable, up-to-date and respectable entertainment suitable for the upper and middle classes both while elevating the social

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Stage 1890-1914", in: *Nineteenth Century Theatre* 26/1 (1998), p. 14; cf. Bailey 1996, pp. 53f.; and cf. Len Platt: "Berlin/London: London/Berlin - an outline of cultural transfer 1890-1914", in: *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin. 1890-1939*, Len Platt, Tobias Becker and David Linton (eds.), Cambridge 2014, p. 14.

[148]cf. Platt 2004, p. 30.

[149]cf. Viv Gardner: "The Sandow Girl and her sisters. Edwardian musical comedy, cultural transfer and the staging of the healthy female body", in: *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin. 1890-1939*, Len Platt, Tobias Becker and David Linton (eds.), Cambridge 2014, pp. 204f.

[150]Platt 2004, p. 46.

[151]cf. ibid., pp. 41ff.

[152]ibid., p. 44.

[153]Macpherson 2018, p. 78.

status of actresses at the same time by presenting a corresponding plot.[154]
Snelson sees the employment of late Victorian popular music in the musical comedy as a decidedly new feature on stage, stating that "early examples of British musical comedy [...] juxtaposed rather than integrated comic opera and popular song styles."[155] This inclusion of modern music brought the somewhat old-fashioned comic opera up to date and kindled public interest in musical theatre once more.
What the so-called Triumvirate—D'Oyly Carte, Gilbert and Sullivan—were to Savoy opera, George Edwardes, called the Guv'nor, was to musical comedy. In the 1890s, he became the manager of both the Gaiety Theatre and Daly's Theatre, which were home to the musical comedy and the musical play respectively. Forbes-Winslow calls him "the father of musical comedy in this country", because he "organised its scattered elements and shaped them into form."[156]

### 2.2.1 Opinions on the Question of Genre

General information about musical comedy can be found in the New Grove articles "Operetta"[157] and "Musical comedy",[158] the latter includes much more details. Further information can also be found in the Grove Music Online article "Musical".[159] This seems to indicate that musical comedy is seen as an independent genre rather than a sub-genre of operetta, or as much closer to musical than to operetta.
Hyman thinks of musical comedy as a mélange consisting of elements of Savoy operas, French *opéras bouffes*, German-language operettas and English burlesque,[160] but rather as a genre of its own than as a subgenre of operetta. In the article "Operetta", Lamb clearly seems to see musical comedy and musical play both as a sub-genre of operetta, a new development in English popular musical theatre parallel to the development of the 'Revueoperette' in Berlin which included "elements of the contemporary variety theatre" and noticeably increased the "displays of female glamour, fashionable dress and elaborately staged routines".[161] In the article "Musical comedy", he acknowledges that the terms 'operetta' and 'musical comedy' are often used synonymously because it is highly

[154]cf. Platt 2004, p. 45.
[155]Lamb and Snelson 2001.
[156]D. Forbes-Winslow: *Daly's. The Biography of a Theatre*, London 1944, p. 44.
[157]cf. Lamb 2001b, pp. 707ff.
[158]cf. Andrew Lamb: Art. "Musical comedy", in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd, revised edition, Stanley Sadie (ed.), vol. 17, London 2001, pp. 815ff.
[159]cf. Lamb and Snelson 2001
[160]cf. Alan Hyman: *The Gaiety Years*, London 1975, p. 64.
[161]Lamb 2001b, p. 708.

problematic to differentiate between both genres.[162] Bailey points out that one of the novelties of the musical comedy was the participation of popular comedians from the music halls, who were used to involve the spectators and reacted on impulse[163] rather than strictly following their lines, as Savoy opera was (in)famous for. Lamb furthermore states that "these shows were concerned less with the integrity of the libretto than with a more immediate appeal",[164] probably referring to their main intention to entertain the audience. This statement also hints at a plot that was often predictable or illogical, a common accusation not only when a work was not successful, as chapter 3 shows.

Obviously, Platt does not think of musical comedy and operetta as one genre when he states "for many years musical comedy was *the* predominant musical theatre, outpacing operetta for most of its history".[165] (Of course this is only true for the London venues.) He even argues that the heyday of musical comedy continued for such a long time that it might not be considered just as a step towards the musical, but as an autonomous genre. Subsequently, he adds that the venues presented musical comedy as a genre explicitly different from operetta, among other things because of its emphasis of modern life. He highlights the importance of the dialogues, the genre was "a play with music" and not the other way round. This is, in his opinion, the main difference between musical comedy and operetta, as well as between musical comedy and "light opera" (referring to the Savoy opera), because it influences the priorities when choosing the performers—they mainly had to be good actors and entertainers, but not necessarily amazing singers.[166] However, Platt does not distinguish between musical comedy and musical play in his study, although works of both genres are included. This indicates that they are much closer connected with each other than with operetta.

Scott refers to musical comedy as "something fresh and more related to modern life", in contrast to "the topsy-turvy world of the Savoy operas" which seemed a bit old-fashioned in the 1890s. He describes the music typical for the genre as "an eclectic score with musical styles ranging from operetta to music hall", so he differentiates between musical comedy and operetta.[167]

Klotz remarks that he does not include musical comedies and musical plays in his monograph about the operetta (interestingly, he includes some works by Caryll and Jones anyway). In his opinion, both genres are most definitely not operettas, because the

[162] cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 815.
[163] cf. Bailey 1996, p. 48.
[164] Lamb 2001b, p. 711.
[165] Platt 2004, p. 2.
[166] cf. ibid., p. 29f.
[167] Scott 2018, p. 478ff.

function of music is completely different. He states that in operetta music influences and determines the plot, whereas in all kinds of musical, music is treated as an addition to the plot. The position of a certain musical number in the musical comedy is often arbitrary and not adapted to the scene (although this is pretty much what he criticised in Johann Strauß' operetta *Eine Nacht in Venedig*),[168] furthermore there are hardly any composers or works with a distinctive style. Additionally, he emphasizes that there are hardly any ensemble numbers set for several voices, but mostly simple songs. He ends this chapter with the closing remark that good operetta and musical are in many aspects the complete opposite.[169]

As chapter 3 will show, some of these characteristics can be confirmed, while other most definitely are not applicable, at least not for early musical comedy in the 1890s. Critics often commented on the fact that numbers were not or only very loosely connected to the plot, and reviews often leave the impression that the music is not as important as performers, costumes, scenery and the libretto. It was a very common accusation that the score lacked originality, but obviously, this hardly ever did any harm to the success of a work. However, the last aspect Klotz mentions is not true, there are several opening numbers who are more than simple songs; for example in *A Gaiety Girl* or *Florodora*.

### 2.2.2 Plot

An article following the debut performance of the musical comedy *San Toy* (1899) states that the plot of a musical comedy was not relevant to its success:

> "Surely then the credit of the Daly successes must rest mainly with the management, with Mr. George Edwardes, who is able to give a bald and unconvincing work the appearance of a genuine artistic achievement. His author provides a scraggy joint and he serves it up with such appetising sauce that we forget the quality of the meat, and pleasingly imagine we are partaking of the best of fare. [...] We have grown accustomed to have the eye catered for, as well as the ear and the mind, and as spectacular effects conquer all along the line in a Drury Lane drama and pantomime, so Mr. George Edwardes' productions at Daly's triumph, in spite of their inherent badness"[170]

However, as pointed out before, the critics usually blamed the deficiencies of the libretto whenever a work was not successful, so the situation must have been at least slightly

[168] cf. Klotz 2007, p. 324.
[169] cf. Volker Klotz: *Operette. Porträt und Handbuch einer unerhörten Kunst*, München 1997, pp. 20f.
[170] "Music." *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 Oct. 1899, p. 300. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.

different than the critic would have his readers believe. While the libretti might not have lived up to the standards of contemporary literature, there were certain expectations they had to meet, as this chapter will exemplify.

According to Hyman, the plot of most musical comedies had two main purposes: "keeping the audience amused between the song or dance numbers and [...] to give the comedians scope for putting in their individual gags."[171] Interestingly, Hyman's statement is contradictory to the frequent complaints that the libretto was weak (although it is of course possible that a plot is entertaining despite deficiencies in the libretto). However, the importance of the performers he implies cannot be underrated. Edwardes's productions were known for their high amount of improvisation expected from the performers, because the spoken dialogue was not as preassigned as usual for other forms of musical theatre, and for the extent of freedom granted to the performers regarding the creation of their roles.[172] This is a big difference to Savoy opera—Gilbert was known for rigorously insisting on the performers pronouncing each and every syllable exactly as he instructed them to do, as various sources portray with many more or less humorous anecdotes.

The libretto of the musical comedy is often full of allusions and ambiguity,[173] but librettists and impresarios managed a "delicate balancing act between exuberance and respectability"[174] in order to create a show that was both fashionable and exciting, but also decent enough that respectable people could come to see them openly. For example members of royalty, aristocracy and clergy seem to have been regular visitors at the musical theatre venues. Forbes-Winslow emphasizes that musical comedy "was always 'clean' entertainment, appealing to all classes, even the most strait-laced", which led to "the widest possible patronage in a social sense."[175]

Debut performances at musical comedy theatres were social events many people of distinction wanted to be part of—and be seen at. It was not at all considered indecent to watch the show for women from the middle-class because the genre apparently never crossed the line in presenting matters or situations that were perceived as unacceptable by the public.[176] Since Savoy opera times, a career as a chorister was no longer completely unthinkable for a middle-class woman,[177] this shows the extremely increased

[171]Hyman 1975, pp. 63f.
[172]cf. William A. Everett: "*A Greek Slave* (1898) at Daly's Theatre. Performing Antiquity, Gender and Class in Late Victorian Musical Comedy", in: *Musical Theatre in Europe 1830 - 1945*, Michela Niccolai and Clair Rowden (eds.), Lucca 2017, p. 231.
[173]cf. Bailey 1996, pp. 45ff.
[174]Platt 2004, p. 5.
[175]Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 53.
[176]cf. Platt 2004, pp. 5f. and Scott 2018, p. 481
[177]cf. Goron 2016, p. 151.

respectability of the venues which had been considered part of the *demimonde* not so many years earlier—now they were seen as origins of "safe pleasure".[178]

The plot often focuses on the life of a modern young woman living and working in the city, resulting in a lot of titles including the term 'girl' (for example, *A Gaiety Girl*, *The Shop Girl*, *The Circus Girl* and so on). The use of the term 'girl' instead of 'woman' signifies that the heroines are very young, making them a little bit naive and inexperienced, but full of optimism, hopes and dreams. As Bailey has pointed out, musical comedy seems to focus especially on modern, but influenceable women in an urban environment—they are shown as active members of public society, but will, in the end, subordinate themselves to their soon-to-be husbands without questioning. Scott characterizes these women further as "not prim or over-zealous in religion and politics, nor intellectually ambitious in the manner of the New Woman of the 1890s", as "a woman who knew her own mind and was not inclined to passivity in her dealings with men."[179] However, Macpherson sees at least a relation between the New Woman movement and the genre because of its focus on women in public rather than in domestic and private settings. The aspects taken up by musical comedy include "the performance of personal ambition, desire, class-consciousness, and a rejection of Christian patriarchy".[180] However, musical comedy is not a genre that tends to be overly critical of society, although mild criticism might be included without tarnishing the "essentially upbeat optimism"[181] of the genre.

Especially "the issues of gender and sexuality are suggestive of some of the defining contradictions of musical comedy and go to the heart of its character as popular culture."[182] As mainstream entertainment, musical comedy could not afford to offend anyone, so the playwrights always tried to stay on everybody's good side by managing an enormous balancing act between oppositional ideas. Of course they wanted to portray modern women in their works to maintain their position as an up-to-date culture to appeal to the fashionable and more progressive crowd, but on the other hand they did not want to scare of their more conservative audience by presenting anything too radical.[183]

Despite being so modern (or maybe rather trying to appear modern?), the ideals presented in the plot of most musical comedies were strongly influenced by "national, masculinist and bourgeois identities that had strong continuities with the past."[184] Platt states that "the idea of modernity [...] is the essential domain of the musical comedy

[178]Platt 2004, p. 8.
[179]Scott 2018, p. 483.
[180]Macpherson 2018, p. 70.
[181]Platt 2004, p. xii.
[182]ibid., p. 108.
[183]cf. ibid., p. 108.
[184]ibid., p. 5.

story", while listing "national identity, [...], gender, sexuality and class"[185] as fundamental aspects of the genre. These aspects are dealt with—naturally with varying emphasis—in almost every work included in this study. By means of analysing the ideals, hopes and conflicts presented in musical comedies, it is possible to gain insight into the ideals, hopes and conflicts in Victorian society reflected on stage.[186] By embracing modern ideas, musical comedy forms a contrast to so-called highbrow culture, which often damned new developments and stressed the importance of traditions instead.[187] On the other hand, a nostalgic and sentimental view of the 'olden days' became more and more important in early 20th century musical comedy, especially after the Great War.[188]

Consumption and especially fashion are very important aspects of the genre—like operettas, musical comedies reflect their audiences dreams and wishes, which might be quite material in some cases. By presenting the latest fashion on stage, the producers catered to the (female) audience's wishes and might at the same time have enhanced the sales of the stores who sold the garments and accessories showcased in the shows, although a lot of costumes were clearly created to be part of a "spectacle", not of everyday life.[189] Other than in France, the female choristers did not show a lot of skin, although the costumes were usually very tight and left little to the audience's imagination.[190] The works were produced to entertain its audience, to be consumed. Therefore, the genre is generally seen as the beginning of the entertainment industry;[191] some insight into the procedures will be given later on. Letellier even calls the genre "featherweight entertainment".[192]

Consumption was also illustrated on stage, in some musical comedies that are set in department stores like *The Shop Girl* and *Our Miss Gibbs*, there was even cooperation between musical comedy venues, fashion designers and department stores in the neighbourhood to maximise the effect on the audience and to organise 'product placement'; obviously a modern phenomenon that can be traced back to late Victorian times.[193] Bailey has pointed out that the situation in a shop, especially in a department store, is quite similar to the situation in a theatre: Goods (or singers) are carefully arranged and presented by vendors (or *impresarios* and stage directors) to pique the potential buyer's (or audience's) curiosity. Another aspect that makes the setting in a department store

[185]Platt 2004, p. 19.
[186]cf. ibid., p. 20.
[187]cf. ibid., pp. 54ff.
[188]cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 210.
[189]Platt 2004, p. 34.
[190]cf. Parker and Parker 1975, p. 54.
[191]cf. Platt 2004, p. 3.
[192]Letellier 2015, p. 953.
[193]cf. Platt 2004, p. 4, cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 67.

so interesting for playwrights, especially when writing libretti for musical comedy, is that it enables men and women to interact in public without being considered indecent.[194] Scott adds that "there was a link between the big shops and the theatre, because affluent women from the suburbs would often combine a hopping trip with a visit to the theatre." He also points out that "both of these activities were respectable, although both might involve chance interactions with men."[195] So after these women sampled the urban shopping experience during the day, they might be able to relive a more glamorous version at night in the theatre. This makes it easy for them to identify with the characters on stage, a fact which adds to the attractiveness of the works. The possible "chance interactions with men" were surely seen as an exciting bonus by single women.

Modernity with all its aspects is often presented as a contrast to tradition in musical comedies. This usually results in a conflict between two groups of characters, one representing tradition and the other modernity, which is dissolved throughout the plot. Because musical comedy is part of the modern entertainment industry, modernity typically triumphs over old-fashioned ways, resulting in modern culture celebrating itself on stage. As Platt has pointed out, this contrast may be combined and enhanced by adding other contrasting aspects like gender and race.[196] Those contrasts will be discussed in chapter 3 whenever they apply. Platt also notes that the modernity on stage was by no means meant to be realistic, but displayed a rather romanticized version of a fashionable contemporary lifestyle.[197] This enabled the audience to deal with issues of modernity in everyday life. Musical comedy also tried to achieve both: "continuity with 'Victorian' order and efficiency, but also a break with its sobriety and its hierarchical control."[198] This somewhat paradox purpose meant nothing else but a very civilized and mainstream form of rebellion—rebellious enough to feel excitingly naughty, but restrained enough to be acceptable. This is probably the reason why it was immensely popular—people got to feel a little rebellious without facing any serious consequences. Musical comedies also did not want a radical break with bygone traditions and ideas probably held dear by many people in the audience, they rather "reconciled contemporaneity with its past and thus helped confirm the modern in its status as the authentic new order."[199] This genre was part of a mainstream entertainment culture, not of the avant garde.

[194] cf. Bailey 1996, p. 42.
[195] Scott 2018, p. 479.
[196] cf. Platt 2004, pp. 42f.
[197] cf. ibid., p. 49.
[198] ibid., p. 59.
[199] ibid., p. 94.

As in other genres, 'exotic' settings were extremely popular for musical comedies. Especially Japanese and Chinese culture were very much *en vogue* in late Victorian times as the interest in that countries at the exhibitions shows. This resulted in a regular Japanese/Chinese craze which was reflected in contemporary fashion, furniture, and of course on the stages as well. Naturally, retailers and *impresarios* both were happy to cater to this taste as it led to an increased turnover for them. 'Oriental' settings were popular as well. Platt points out that especially 'Oriental' characters were often derided and presented in a certain (negative) way. They were laughed at particularly for trying (and failing) to be British or to duplicate British manners and traditions.[200]
A setting in an 'exotic' country usually involved a love story including a British (or European) man and a native woman. Occasionally, there were also European women who fell in love with a native man, interestingly these women were in most cases not British, but French. Those relationships on stage implied by no means that a connection like that would have been acceptable in reality, Platt emphasizes that the audience's awareness of the fact that the exotic characters were British actresses (or actors) instead of real natives from a foreign country meant that the situation was safe and controlled enough to be observed on stage and that this was yet another opportunity for the audience to experience something they might secretly wish to sample, but were forbidden to do so because it was not accepted by society.[201] In addition, these musical comedies were made less 'exotic' by the music, which usually did not include any foreign elements,[202] as chapter 3 will show.
So-called 'exotic' settings enabled the audience to experience the extraordinary Other through an "illusion of unmediated access between themselves and the imperial periphery" while sitting safely in their theatre seats in London.[203] It fulfilled their desire to travel and see faraway places without having to face the expenses and perils of an actual voyage, therefore being a welcome distraction from the toils of everyday life. Of course, the other cultures shown on stage did not have a lot to do with reality, and nobody expected them to do so: The shows made use of lots of clichés instead of trying to reproduce the foreign country correctly. The audience usually did not want to learn anything, and the venues did not want to educate their audience, the 'exotic' settings were just employed to demonstrate the predominance of their very own British culture.[204] The motive for this enthusiastic patriotism on stage obviously originated in a growing con-

[200]cf. Platt 2004, p. 70.
[201]cf. ibid., pp. 74f.
[202]cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 817.
[203]Marty Gould: *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and the Imperial Encounter*, New York 2011, p. 15.
[204]cf. Platt 2004, p. 39, cf. Becker 2017, pp. 21f.

cern about the future of their own society and culture.[205] Like straight theatre, popular musical theatre was an effective instrument in "publicly disseminat[ing] its [the British Empire's] operational ideologies of racial difference, political domination, military conquest, cultural interventionism, and commercial opportunism."[206]

Today, a lot of musical comedies would appear downright racist, which might be a reason why few of them have ever been re-staged. Interestingly, the one which actually has been re-staged it *The Geisha*, a highly delicate work in that matter. The language, considered quite normal and not particularly offensive around 1900, is far from today's political correctness when dealing with 'exotic' settings (for example, the word "niggers" is used in the opening number of Caryll's *The Messenger Boy*). There was also a (today highly problematic) remnant from the minstrel shows: The so-called 'coon-' or 'piccaninny-songs' were very popular in late Victorian times and therefore included in many musical comedies. To realise such a number, two white performers dressed up as people from foreign countries, usually people of colour, and copied language and style of these foreigners in a musical number that did not even have to do anything with the rest of the plot. Again, this was not meant to be ethnically correct, but apparently, the audience considered these numbers very entertaining.[207]

In many musical comedies "British culture [...] figured as the omphalos of modernizing forces—*the* centre of invention, democracy, liberalism and rationalism."[208] This is much easier to show when there is another 'inferior' culture that forms a contrast, so this is probably the real reason why 'exotic' settings were so popular in late Victorian times. While most British people enjoyed experiencing other cultures and wanted to show that they did so because it was fashionable and modern, the encounter with the 'exotic' Other was not pursued out of thirst for knowledge or the wish to understand a different culture, but rather to satisfy one's curiosity and with voyeuristic intentions. The interest was only perfunctory. Other cultures and politics were usually depicted as barbaric, and needed to be anglicized for the benefit of the 'deplorable' locals. In those uncertain times when people started to wonder if the British Empire was really going to last forever, British superiority and the role of leadership needed to be vindicated by all means. This is also reflected in the relationships between British men and 'exotic' women, because these women obviously prefer a British partner to one from their native country, thus accepting and even seeking the superiority of British culture and a modern lifestyle.[209]

[205] cf. Platt 2004, p. 60.
[206] Gould 2011, p. 15.
[207] cf. Platt 2004, pp. 72ff.
[208] ibid., p. 59.
[209] cf. ibid., pp. 72ff.

Another popular approach in terms of exoticism were the "sentimentalized versions—picturesque to the point of nausea"[210] that show other, usually continental countries in a flowery and endearing, but hopelessly old-fashioned way. The incitement for this procedure was, of course, again to highlight British superiority compared to continental countries. However, America is treated differently than European or 'exotic' countries. American characters are usually displayed as rich and respectable people, and other than characters from 'exotic' countries, they can interact with the British characters as if they were British themselves (there are no restrictions concerning marriages). Obviously, they are not regarded as a threat to the superiority of the British Empire and British culture in musical comedy.[211]

However, there was one particular aspect that musical comedy 'inherited' from Savoy opera: It liked to make fun of British institutions and their members, and it relished pointing out their publicly well-known faults.[212] However, this was not meant to degrade British reputation, and the audience did not see it like that. Another feature that is similar to Savoy Opera is the popularity of aristocratic characters and their traditions (including, of course, opulence and glamour). The new social mobility and the resulting degradation of aristocracy was a complex development that was interesting and either exciting or frightening for almost everyone, therefore it was quite natural that this class and especially the interaction between classes featured prominently in musical comedy.[213] One especially popular storyline involves an impoverished young aristocrat who needs to be rescued by a modern young women because she has somehow obtained a lot of money.[214] Additionally, aristocratic characters and settings necessarily meant fashionable and opulent costumes, furniture and festivities which were very entertaining and therefore favoured by the audience. People with so-called new money were usually portrayed favourably, as they were an accepted part of a modern society.[215]

[210]Platt 2004, p. 65.
[211]cf. ibid., pp. 81f.
[212]cf. ibid., p. 78.
[213]cf. ibid., pp. 83f.
[214]cf. ibid., p. 94.
[215]cf. ibid., p. 89.

### 2.2.3 Music

Everett points out that Sidney Jones uses musical means to emphasize a character's social affiliation:

> "For noble characters, either through birth or due to behaviour, Jones typically created graceful *legato* melodies reminiscent of comic opera or the Savoy opera style. For characters of low social standing, the music generally resembled that often associated with music hall, with narrow ranges, frequent rests an almost speech-like singing style, and occasional suggestive lyrics."[216]

He characterizes the composer as follows: "Jones possessed particular gifts at creating expansive and occasionally soaring melodic lines as well as sophisticated multi-voice ensembles in extended musical-dramatic sequences."[217] This aspect had been denied by Klotz, as pointed out earlier. The music was usually played by an orchestra consisting of approximately 30 musicians.[218]
So far, there are no studies focusing on the music of musical comedy. Interestingly, contemporary articles do not include a lot of detailed information or comments on the actual music of a work either. Other aspects like the performance of the numbers or aspects that were not related to music at all are clearly at the forefront of public interest.

### 2.2.4 How to make a Musical Comedy

Lamb describes that

> "the structure of early British musical comedies was essentially that of comic opera, with a typical two-act score consisting of about 20 numbers including opening choruses for each act, an extended first-act finale, assorted songs and duets (often with a chorus refrain or danced repeat), concerted pieces and even snatches of recitative."[219]

The production of musical comedies had to be efficient, therefore the genre was often accused of being perfunctory—proclaiming modernity in a well-known mainstream (musical) style. The audience wanted to comprehend the modern world rather than criticise it.[220] Musical comedy venues embraced new technological possibilities (there were even

[216] Everett 2017, p. 231.
[217] ibid., p. 229.
[218] cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 816.
[219] ibid., p. 815.
[220] cf. Bailey 1998, pp. 13ff.

expensive devices made for one short moment in a certain work, and when they did not work properly, they were not used) and happily included them in their productions, making their audience experience the wonders of modern life—according to Platt a typical *fin de siècle* feature. Later on, he uses the term "spectacle" to describe the stagings. Every work had to be more elaborate and full of surprises in comparison to its predecessor regarding stage design, costumes and effects.[221] Jupp confirms that "only the leading artists were employed to design the costumes, [...] and you could depend upon seeing *le dernier cri* on the boards of the Gaiety."[222]

As already mentioned, the genre was inseparably connected with the Gaiety Theatre, where *impresario* George Edwardes managed a lot of successful productions of musical comedies. Arguably the first work staged in that category was *A Gaiety Girl* at the Prince of Wales Theatre, it even features the Gaiety Theatre's famous 'chorus girls' in the plot. Davis claims that these singers/actresses usually had no professional training in singing, dancing and acting[223]—at least in the beginning (this means that they were rarely graduates from a conservatoire, not that they never had any lessons). Jupp points out that a performer usually went through some years of training by singing (and performing) in the chorus and by being the understudy of one of the main performers.[224] Other sources indicate that the most important feature of a Gaiety Girl was her beauty, singing skills were less important and only considered a 'bonus'.

Lamb points out that "performers [were] chosen more for their ability to put over a number than for their singing skill", resulting in a lot of melodies that had a rather small vocal range and were easy to sing to suit their abilities.[225] One publication even states that the Gaiety Girls did not sing at all:

> "In a sense, *the chorus*, at the Gaiety, were choristers - ladies who sang their hearts out, unseen, behind a convenient 'flat'. The Girl, meanwhile, sat (beautifully) while the star did a number - perhaps moving an elegant arm in time to the music, pointing a neat foot in one direction, then another, and walking sinuously around the stage. Nothing very demanding; nothing requiring years of training, concentration, pain.
>
> But what the Girl had to do, she had to do extremely well, and with the greatest possible style. And there was a sharp division between her 'dancing', and the dancing of the girls of

[221] cf. Platt 2004, pp. 27ff.
[222] James Jupp: *The Gaiety Stage Door. Thirty Years' Reminiscences of the Theatre*, London 1923, p. 173.
[223] cf. Tracy C. Davis: *Actresses as working women. Their social identity in Victorian culture*, London 1991, pp. 23f.
[224] cf. Jupp 1923, p. 261.
[225] Lamb 2001a, p. 816.

> 'the ballet'; later, apart from leading dancers, they became almost one and the same; but at the time when the Gaiety was gaining its reputation, the dancing choruses at other theatres had considerable shortcomings; their beauty was often matched not by their technique but by their frills and feathers."[226]

As mentioned above, the authors do not name any sources for their statements; no other publication I found supports that theory. Concerning (early) 20th century American musical comedy, Delorenzo describes the performance of the choristers as "gustily in a 'shouty' style at full volume."[227] To be accurate, we have to differentiate between actual choristers and mere 'show girls' who were employed as background actors (and therefore did not have to sing or even speak on stage). Those 'show girls' sometimes enjoyed an immense popularity, according to Jupp

> "brains are not asked for so long as the show girl knows how to wear the beautiful gowns provided for her; but the most important question is: how many stalls and boxes can she fill, with whom is she well acquainted? If she is a woman of great personal attraction and boasts a lover or two of the aristocracy, she is certain of a position."[228]

This indicates that a 'show girl', however small her actual contribution to the performance was in comparison to the performers who spoke, sang and danced, could be extremely important for the financial success of a work; because of her popularity, she was sure to be mentioned in almost as many newspaper articles as the singers and dancers. Therefore, it might be possible that the publication claiming that the choristers did not actually sing confused them with 'show girls'. However, Lamb points out that the music itself suggests that the singing skills of the performers were not particularly distinguished.[229] In chapter 3, I will therefore aim to find evidence in the scores to either support or discard this theory.

Platt describes the 'Gaiety Girls' as "high class and elegant [...] refined, but with an edge [...] new century icons on the West End stage".[230] According to Delorenzo, the function of the chorus was to "back[] star personalities and featured performers, create[] energetic drive, and help[] to create spectacle."[231] The female choristers at the Gaiety Theatre had to fulfil all the requirements of the new and respectable version of a 'chorus girl' (beauty, youth, certain manners, grace), but they also had to live up to the contemporary ideals of

[226] Parker and Parker 1975, pp. 52ff.
[227] Delorenzo 1985, p. 5.
[228] Jupp 1923, p. 50.
[229] cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 817.
[230] Platt 2004, p. 31.
[231] Delorenzo 1985, p. 4.

womanhood proclaimed by musical comedy, on and off stage both. Edwardes obviously "encouraged them to extend the glamorous aura which accompanied their stage appearances to their everyday lives, promoting their attendance at fashionable restaurants or at the races",[232] so that their public appearances became spectacles to promote the productions they were part of. There was an elite group of choristers at the Gaiety Theatre called the "Big Eight", they were selected because of their beauty and talent. Being part of that informal group meant receiving a much higher salary.[233]
Hyman claims that many female choristers in the Gaiety Theatre had a middle-class background,[234] obviously the Gaiety stage was regarded as an acceptable job option for young women now. However, in contrast to the Savoy theatre which strongly emphasized the decency and modesty of their (female) performers, the Gaiety clearly puts their (sexual) attractiveness in the spotlight and was always at risk of crossing the fine line between what was still considered as acceptable behaviour and what was most definitely not.[235] However, times had changed in the 1890s in comparison to the 1870s and 1880s, the heyday of the Savoy opera, when the rules of impeccable respectability had been much stricter and especially female public behaviour was monitored more critically.
The female roles were clearly superior to the male roles, their actresses were the true stars of musical comedy. In these protagonist roles, musical comedy created a female ideal that was complex, contradictory and highly attractive to female spectators: on the one hand naive and modest, on the other hand strong and self-assured. However, the genre did not support more radical ideas like the suffragette movement or equal educational and vocational possibilities for men and women, it strongly supported the traditional role of wife and mother, therefore aiming for a compromise between two extreme positions.[236] A lot of the heroines can be described as Cinderella-like characters who strive for independence, whereas there is quite often the role of an elderly, often aristocratic lady who clings to the traditional way but has to give in to the heroine in the end.[237] Especially these 'harridan'-characters "provided a bulwark of morality that enabled these popular entertainments to be elevated above the lascivious music hall sketches".[238] Gardner points out that both somehow contradictory concepts, the Gaiety Girl and the New Woman, came into the awareness of the public eye more or less contemporaneously in the 1890s.[239]

[232]Goron 2016, p. 154.
[233]cf. Hyman 1975, p. 96.
[234]cf. ibid.
[235]cf. Goron 2016, p. 155.
[236]cf. Platt 2004, pp. 113ff.
[237]cf. Macpherson 2018, pp. 63ff.
[238]Macpherson 2018, p. 82.
[239]cf. Gardner 2014, p. 204.

A lot of the 'girl'-plots end with a marriage between a gentleman and a woman from the working or lower middle class (but, of course, with either "genteel birth, lost but now recovered" or "a natural gentility"[240])—a dream of social mobility probably dreamt by a lot of young working-class women; in fact, a lot of these plots can be characterized as Cinderella-stories.[241] Thus, aristocracy and/or elite society were prominently featured in most musical comedies, in a time when their leading position was questioned by a rising middle and lower class.[242] This dream of social mobility certainly came true for a lot of performers on the Gaiety stage—according to Forbes-Winslow, Edwardes even included "an anti-nuptial clause in all contracts with ladies", because they almost always decided to stop performing when they were married and this was obviously very problematic for a running show or a tour.[243]

Platt argues convincingly that apparently quite a large part of the audience was female because the target group of most of the advertisements included in magazines that feature musical comedy like *The Play Pictorial* are clearly women.[244] Media coverage and merchandise were important for the success of the genre, not only because of the reviews, but also because of the highly popular reports about the actresses and actors and the purchasable pictures of the female choristers.[245]

In the beginning, music hall shows and musical comedy influenced each other quite a lot: Songs and comedy routines were adopted, there were transitions of performers and it was in the music hall that songs from the musical comedy were still sung when nobody in the audience could remember their origin. Later on, musical comedy venues made a point of emphasizing the differences to the music hall—they presented themselves as a respectable and decent form of entertainment, which the music hall was clearly not.[246]

Concerning musical comedy and musical play, there was a fruitful exchange going on between the London and American stages, examples were Leslie Stuart's *Florodora* (1899) or Gustave Kerker's *The Belle of New York* (1897).[247] It was also quite common to to add songs from the American vaudeville to a musical comedy whenever it showcased a performer's talent.[248]

[240]Bailey 1996, p. 44.
[241]cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 65.
[242]cf. Platt 2004, p. 24.
[243]Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 133.
[244]cf. Platt 2004, p. x.
[245]cf. ibid., p. 121.
[246]cf. ibid., p. 29
[247]cf. Lamb 2001b, pp. 711f.
[248]cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 817.

Unlike opera and operetta (this includes Sullivan's Savoy operas), a musical comedy (and a musical play as well) was not the work of a single librettist and a single composer. There were teams at the venues that worked together, the vocal scores usually mention at least two people for the text (divided into words and lyrics), and there were usually several numbers written by a different person than the main composer (usually mentioned on the cover of the vocal score using a phrase like "additional numbers by..."). According to Lamb, the theatre's conductor was usually responsible for the numbers involving many singers, such as the chorus numbers and the concerted pieces, whereas songwriters were employed to create the solo numbers and a specialist for orchestration worked on the score as well.[249] This was a great possibility for young composers to gain experience and popularity, since the most successful songs were often performed in the music halls and also at home in the drawing rooms (which meant sheet music sales). This procedure was established because the success of the genre partly relied on its increased amount of memorable or even haunting melodies. Everett states that George Edwardes "aimed to generate a spirit of competition among his artists in order to inspire them to work at their best"; a method that backfired when Sidney Jones decided to leave Daly's Theatre because he did not want anyone to interfere with his work.[250] Eventually, this course of action led to the general acquiescence of the formerly somewhat concealed habit of employing someone else to orchestrate the compositions. As Lamb put it, "musical comedy differed from operetta precedents in the extent to which it became acceptable, even respectable, for composers to use this assistance."[251] This might be one of the main differences between both genres—there were not two artists (composer and librettist) working together to create a work of art, but several specialists working together to create a *production* that would ensure financial success and popularity for everybody involved in it.

This procedure enabled the venues to produce new works more quickly and efficiently than before, but apparently it also led to standardized parts that made all of the musical comedies sound more or less the same (or at least pretty similar). According to Platt, the key to "success was a matter of striking the right balance between innovation and familiarity."[252] The audience wanted to see a *new* production, of course, but they also did not want something that was shockingly different than what they had seen and liked before. They pretty much wanted to see a refreshingly new and up-to-date musical comedy without losing the comforting feeling of knowing what to expect. In order to achieve

[249]cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 817.
[250]Everett 2017, p. 229.
[251]Lamb 2001a, p. 816.
[252]Platt 2004, p. 37.

an ongoing popularity, works were often ameliorated after the opening night, sometimes they were even tested in other, smaller cities before their improved version was premiered in London (a procedure that lives on in today's Broadway-musicals).[253]
Musical comedy adopted a custom that has been traditional for musical theatre from the very beginning: The score was far from being a concluded, unchangeable work, it was adjusted to make the most of every performer's talent by adding numbers that matched their abilities particularly well.[254] Thus the producers always ensured the best possible entertainment for the audience.
Various anecdotes about the staging and rehearsal process of new musical comedies can be found in various memoirs written by performers and people otherwise involved with the stage business, like the Gaiety Theatre stage-doorkeeper James Jupp.[255]

## 2.3 Musical Play

Works labelled musical play are mainly associated with Daly's Theatre, but this is not necessarily applicable in the 1890s when the genre was still young—there was no clear distinction between musical comedy and musical play yet. Among the works included in this study, there are three musical comedies which were produced at Daly's Theatre (*An Artist's Model*, *A Greek Slave* and *San Toy*), three musical plays produced at the Gaiety Theatre (*The Circus Girl*, *A Runaway Girl* and *The Messenger Boy*) and only on musical play produced at Daly's Theatre, *The Geisha*. Apparently, the common association of Daly's Theatre as the 'home' of musical play, whereas the Gaiety Theatre was 'home' of musical comedy is based on later works.
According to Letellier, "Jones's musical play were written in a more musically substantial style than the featherweight entertainment given at the Gaiety. Their librettos had a solid and serious romantic backbone [...], and the scores included, in addition to lighter material, sentimental and dramatic numbers, as well as concerted and vocally demanding ensembles and finales." Furthermore, he describes that "Jones's style was similar in technique to the music of Arthur Sullivan and Cellier, [...] but it was lighter and breezier, appealing to the popular tastes of the time."[256] Scott specifies that "in a musical play, romance took precedence over comedy, and a higher standard of singing was expected."[257]

[253]cf. Platt 2004, pp. 37f.
[254]cf. Lamb 2001a, p. 817.
[255]cf. Jupp 1923, pp. 15ff.
[256]Letellier 2015, p. 953.
[257]Scott 2020, p. 247.

This position is supported by Lamb, who adds that "comic relief [was] restricted to secondary characters"[258] in musical plays, resulting in libretti that were more similar to those of conventional comic opera with the customary distinction between principal and secondary roles.

Lamb names *The Geisha* by Sidney Jones as the first work to be labelled a musical play; afterwards the term was commonly accepted for works somewhere in between musical comedy and comic opera.[259] When commenting *A Greek Slave* (which is labelled a musical comedy, but was produced at Daly's theatre), Gänzl remarks that "Daly's fare and that of the Gaiety were getting further apart" and that it "advance[d] towards a more substantial kind of piece".[260] Concerning (early) 20th century American musical play, Delorenzo states that "the chorus supports the dramatic structure and is used only when motivated by the book."[261] Since musical comedy and musical play are usually mentioned in the same context or not distinguished from each other at all, musical play seems to be much closer to musical comedy than to comic opera.

However, in the New Grove article "Musical comedy [musical play, musical]", Lamb states that there are "two principal traditions for musical comedy: the song-and-dance musical, [...], [and] the musical play, [which] sought a closer integration between the plot (which might have serious overtones) and the musical and spectacular elements of the show."[262] This distinction is a little problematic—while there are works labelled "musical play", there are none labelled "song-and-dance musical" (s. chapter 2). This other category, which "linked the musical and choreographical numbers with a rather flimsy and contrived plot",[263] is in my opinion nothing else than what is generally described as musical comedy; so rather than seeing musical play as a subgenre of musical comedy, as the title of the article seems to imply, I see both as two separate genres (with a lot of similarities, especially in the 1890s). In my opinion, his definition fits perfectly when the term "song-and-dance musical" is replaced by the term "musical comedy".

Forbes-Winslow emphasizes the importance of the performers, especially Letty Lind, when considering the success of the genre when stating that "[c]ontemporary readers of Owen Hall's book of *An Artist's Model* will search in vain for a formula of success. The secret has vanished with the period it expressed, and with its interpreters."[264] This statement highlights the importance of the genre when trying to understand late Victorian

[258]Lamb and Snelson 2001.
[259]cf. ibid.
[260]Gänzl 1986, p. 669.
[261]Delorenzo 1985, p. 6.
[262]Lamb 2001a, p. 816.
[263]ibid.
[264]Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 39.

culture and society. Forbes-Winslow hardly ever refers to the works staged in Daly's theatre as musical plays, but almost always as musical comedies—however, he probably did not consider questions of genre and simply used the term commonly employed in late Victorian times. *An Artist's Model* is labelled a comedy with music; another example of a work produced at Daly's Theatre, but not labelled musical play.
According to Gänzl, who likewise names the performers among the main reasons for the success of the genre, the female choristers

> "had already established their own particular followings [as early as 1895], and, if the girls at Daly's were never given the prominence or the soubriquet of their counterparts at the Gaiety, they were nevertheless popular, much photographed and generally more talented."[265]

Unfortunately, there are no details to what extent they were more talented; but it is certainly true that there is no such term as 'The Daly's Girls'.

## 2.4 Operetta

Most of the works included in this study are labelled operetta nowadays. The second half of the 19th century is usually considered the first florescence of this genre, especially in Vienna and Paris. But what exactly is the difference between operetta and other genres like *opéra bouffe*, musical comedy or comic opera? Is 'operetta' used as a generic term? If yes, is it justified to use it that way?
According to the New Grove Dictionary, an operetta is "a light opera with spoken dialogue, songs and dances."[266] This is a definition that almost every musicologist would readily agree to; the word "light", however, is problematic. What does "light" mean? Less serious? Concerning what—the libretto, the music, the characters? This word was sometimes used in labels for musical theatre as shown in the list in chapter 2, like in "Light Romantic Opera". Linhardt claims that operetta "represent[s] a form of cultural hybridity where the transitions between popular and 'high' musical theatre became blurred",[267] using the word "popular" instead of "light", which seems to me less problematic, but obviously refers to another aspect of the works—the way they were perceived by society rather than the quality of their libretto or score.

[265] Gänzl 1986, p. 541.
[266] Lamb 2001b, p. 707.
[267] Linhardt 2014, p. 48.

Lamb concludes his definition with the statement: "The term 'operetta' has also commonly been applied in a more general way to describe other works that are short, or otherwise less ambitious, derivatives of opera."[268] This means that obviously operetta is and has been used as a generic term for a special sub-genre of musical theatre. The statement that the works labelled operetta were short is definitely true for the British works in the 1890s, as Gänzl's chronicle shows.[269] The expression "less ambitious" is problematic because it does not specify what it refers to—the libretto, the music, etc. In the section "Nature and Development", Lamb states that "when English-language works were produced, the terms customarily used were 'comic opera' or 'comedy opera'; it is only in retrospect that the term 'operetta' has come to be applied to all national schools."[270] This confirms the assumption that 'operetta' was and is indeed used as a generic term, maybe in an attempt to create a common term for all of the different European traditions. This is supported by Snelson as well who states "operetta, as so influentially highlighted by Lehár and *The Merry Widow*, had, in the early 1900s, been viewed as a continental form, albeit adapted to British (and American) tastes."[271]

The plot of an operetta usually displays the conscious and unconscious desires of the characters, which are supposedly the same as the desires of its middle-class audience—commonly adultery, money and/or social ascension. The characters are in a challenging situation they cannot control. In the end, they might not be happy, but they are definitely optimistic. This optimism and an opulence of everything people usually enjoy is a typical feature of operetta around 1900. True happiness is almost never achieved, but often within the characters' grasp—in that way suspense is created which makes the plot interesting. The characters are usually very optimistic that they will achieve true happiness in the end, even if they might not be too sure what that true happiness really means, and they convey their optimism and their stalwart belief in the possibility to achieve that happiness to the audience.[272]

Operetta criticises social grievances openly, sometimes using irony, satire and even self-criticism. It is a common method to invert established systems of power in operettas in order to create comical situations,[273] examples from this study are Sullivan's *The Grand Duke* or *The Rose of Persia*. Klotz emphasizes that it is this use of irony, sometimes even self-irony, which makes operetta special and distinguishes it from other forms of

[268]Lamb 2001b, p. 708.
[269]Gänzl 1986.
[270]Lamb 2001b, p. 708.
[271]John Snelson: "The Waltzing Years. British Operetta 1907 - 1939", in: *Musical Theatre in Europe 1830 - 1945*, Michela Niccolai and Clair Rowden (eds.), Lucca 2017, p. 258.
[272]cf. Klotz 2007, pp. 279ff.
[273]cf. Klotz 1997, p. 129

middle-class entertainment.[274] He gives Sullivan's operettas, as he denominates them, as especially remarkable examples for the use of irony and satire: They show traditional organizations like the military in unusual locations where their usual behaviour is highly unsuitable, therefore exposing their traditions as ridiculous.[275] Another example for satire in Sullivan's operettas is the artful discrepancy between text and music.[276]

An additional characteristic of operetta which is usually associated with the employment of self-irony is the conscious handling of the fact that the plot is just an illusion by the characters themselves on stage.[277] Examples from the works included in this study are several numbers in which the characters sing about the role they represent at that very moment—the chorus numbers "Chorus of Stage Beauties" from *The Shop Girl*, the "Entrance of School Girls" from *An Artist's Model*, "We're the Cream of Courtly Creatures" from *San Toy* and the numbers "Geisha are we" from *The Geisha* as well as "Musical Maidens are we" from *The Rose of Persia*. All of the pieces mentioned above are considered musical comedies or plays, therefore I doubt Klotz's opinion that both genres are completely different. Baranello does not differentiate the genres at all, she just includes all of these works in the term operetta, calling Sidney Jones "the most popular composer of this time [1900 - 05]".[278]

For Klotz, the key attributes of operetta are characters who personify social roles rather than individual personalities, the clear structure in numbers and the importance of the chorus. Operetta adopts and adapts a lot of proven and popular features opera starts to neglect in the middle of the 19th century, like the former *commedia dell'arte* character Pantalone and the reinforcing chorus.[279] Baranello adds that producers of operetta constantly had to keep in mind financial success, which was only possible if the performed work entertained and thus pleased the audience. Simply put, in contrast to opera, operetta should not be challenging to understand for the audience, but rather bring comfort to their lives.[280] Furthermore, operetta can be seen as guidance, as it "demonstrated to its audiences how to live and how to behave in the big city."[281]

Becker does not approach the question of genre, but he stresses the similarities of characteristics (which have already been discussed in chapter 2.2) by enumerating them as

[274] cf. Klotz 2007, p. 289.
[275] cf. ibid., pp. 302ff.
[276] cf. ibid., p. 314.
[277] cf. Klotz 1997, p. 131.
[278] Micaela K. Baranello: "*Die lustige Witwe* and the Creation of the Silver Age of Viennese Operetta", in: *Cambridge Opera Journal* 26/2 (2014), p. 183.
[279] cf. Klotz 2007, pp. 298f.
[280] cf. Baranello 2014, pp. 178ff.
[281] Becker 2017, p. 19.

follows, implying that he does not perceive the two terms as synonyms:

> "Most operettas and musical comedies were set in urban environments, celebrating the pleasures of hotels, restaurants, department stores, amusement parks, racecourses, cabarets, and, of course, the theatre, as well as picking up on topics like fashion, changing gender identities, technological innovations, and immigration."[282]

Frey uses the term 'operetta' for works created by continental composers, and the term 'musical comedy' for British or American works when making observations about the international exchange of popular musical theatre from about 1910 until the first World War without discussing the question of genre.[283] At that time, other related genres like *opéra bouffe* or Savoy opera were considered old-fashioned and no longer influential.
As Becker has shown, several non-musical aspects are very important for the international dissemination of operetta. In the late 19th century, technologies concerning travel and communication developed rapidly, enabling theatres worldwide a much better exchange of ideas, performers and productions. Furthermore, these developments enabled composers to profit from national and international touring companies, at that time their almost only opportunity of benefiting financially from performances of their works elsewhere. The enormous increase of the urban population led to an increased demand for entertainment, which was gladly satisfied by more and more theatres specializing in popular musical theatre. Becker argues that the demand for profitable works exceeded the local supply, so the production of well-tried successes from abroad was the natural consequence. This development was further increased by the colonial structures. To sum up, "operetta had to appeal to the broadest possible audience" and therefore "made ample use of stereotypes but most often ironically so as to avoid seriously offending anyone."[284]
The same is applicable to Savoy opera, as pointed out in chapter 2.1
Additionally, Becker stresses that the inclusion of dances from all over the world in many operettas made them "cosmopolitan" and therefore ideal for international success. As typical features of the genre he further mentions the combination of a local connection, usually given by the setting or the main characters, and a "cosmopolitan" aspect like a journey to pique the audience's interest, and an urban setting.[285] All of these aspects can be found in the works discussed in chapter 3.

[282]Becker 2017, p. 19.
[283]cf. Stefan Frey: "How a sweet Viennese girl became a fair international lady. Transfer, performance, modernity - acts in the making of a cosmopolitan culture", in: *Popular Musical Theatre in London and Berlin. 1890-1939*, Len Platt, Tobias Becker and David Linton (eds.), Cambridge 2014, p. 114.
[284]Becker 2017, p. 9.
[285]ibid., pp. 8ff., pp. 19ff.

## 2.5 Why Popular Musical Theatre?

The previous chapters have revealed that there are indeed many reasons why 'operetta' can be used as a generic term, as many scholars do. As chapter 3 will show, the characteristics of an operetta's plot as described in chapter 2.4 also apply to the works included in this study: They also display the conscious and unconscious desires of the audience concerning, for example, the desire to experience faraway countries and cultures or the desire for social ascension. The works are likewise optimistic; however, in contrast to operetta, the critical element is so subdued in musical comedy and play that many deny its existence. There are similarities between Savoy opera and operetta that are not very significant for musical comedy and play, like the element of parody or satire. The typical self-referentiality of operetta, on the other hand, can be found in several numbers of both Savoy opera and musical comedy and play, as pointed out in chapter 2.4.

Belina and Scott have chosen to include all works that are "music of the commercial theatre" in the genre 'operetta', as opposed to "the concert tradition on one side, and folk music on the other",[286] clearly seeing 'operetta' as a superordinate genre with many subgenres. Bower reasons that, concerning Savoy opera, people (including D'Oyly Carte, Sullivan and Gilbert) have been reluctant or even against the utilization of the term 'operetta' because it was linked to works that were found to be either indecent or inferior (or both), and since these notions have changed in the last years, we should no longer shy away from the word.[287] I absolutely agree to his position when it comes to practical situations such as texts to be included in theatre programmes, however I do not think it is accurate enough in scientific contexts. In general, 'operetta' scholars seem to agree that the term, while not being precise, is suitable for their purposes because, when not focusing on the genre, there seems to be little need to explain its exact meaning.

As the title of my dissertation shows, I have decided to use a neutral term when referring to all of the works included, because this term reflects the exact criteria by which I have chosen which works to regard: popular musical theatre.[288] The reason for this decision is that the term 'operetta' referred to one-act works in late Victorian London, as pointed out in chapter 2. Furthermore, these operettas were produced in different venues as Savoy opera and musical comedy and play, and arguably addressed a different kind of audience. Therefore, 'operetta' meant a very specific kind of entertainment, and using it as a generic term would be imprecise.

[286] Belina and Scott 2020, p. 3.

[287] cf. Bruno Bower: "London and Gilbert and Sullivan", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, pp. 47f.

[288] This exact term has also been chosen by Linhardt when referring to both continental and British works: cf. Linhardt 2014, pp. 44ff.

# 3 Analysis

The criteria, by which the works included in this chapter have been chosen, have been explained in the introduction—all of the works were premiered in London in the 1890s, were more or less successful and belong to the comic genre. The following analysis focuses on several dramatic aspects of exposition that have been pointed out by Pfister,[289] complemented by musical aspects: What is the function of the number? Does it convey important information about plot, characters and setting? Which aspects seem most important? Is this information given in a monologue or a dialogue? Are any soloists involved in the number? What is the function of the chorus, and does this function change throughout the number? Which period of time is dominant in the opening chorus—the past, the present or the future? What is the function of the music? Is there any evidence in the scores to either confirm or falsify the accusation that most of the female choristers were mediocre singers at best and simply hired for their beauty?[290] Therefore the complexity of the choral parts will be analysed.

Each analysis will at first concentrate on stage directions and lyrics. For better orientation, every musical analysis begins with a table showing the structure of the number. Although the abbreviations used in these tables mostly follow conventions, several aspects will be briefly clarified in advance. If the time signature changes throughout a section, this will be indicated by giving both time signatures (e.g. 2/4 - 6/8). With few exceptions, the time signature changes usually a few bars after the beginning or before the end of a section. Concerning the column 'key', the tables give the key right in the beginning and at the end of each section. Letters in brackets indicate that there is no triad, but only a single note or several notes in no clear key. 'Instrumentation' only differentiates between orchestra, chorus (SATB) and soloists. In most of the works, the female voices are not denominated 'soprano' and 'alto', but rather 'soprano 1' and 'soprano 2' or 'contralto'. This denomination reflects the ambitus of the parts, which is usually almost identical. Varying abbreviations for the lower female voices in the tables seemed to be unnecessarily confusing, which is why the abbreviation A for alto is used for the lower female voice in every analysis. The column 'function' sometimes contains incipits if there is no recognizable function.

Some periods of time seem to be missing or under-represented in this study, for example the year 1890. This is due to the fact that many works included had extremely long runs that could last up to two years, making it unnecessary for the theatres to mount

[289] cf. Manfred Pfister: *Das Drama*, München [3]1982.
[290] cf. Parker and Parker 1975, p. 52.

a new production. *The Gondoliers* had premiered in December 1889, and its long run did not make a new production at the Savoy Theatre necessary. As already pointed out in the introduction, the whole decade, but especially the first years covered, are a time of change concerning popular musical theatre including the decline of Savoy opera and the emergence of musical comedy as a new genre. Whereas Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte were occupied with the futile attempt of establishing English Grand Opera at the newly built Royal English Opera house, inaugurated with Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* (1891), Gilbert (and later on Sullivan as well) was looking for other composers to set his words to music. On the other hand, the first musical comedy premiered in 1893, so the works included in the years before that belong solely to one genre, comic opera, instead of two. Burlesque was still the predominant musical entertainment in the early 1890s, but the genre is not relevant for this study due to its structure.

## 3.1 How to Begin? An Introduction to Operatic Introduction

Strangely enough, musicologists have not been overly concerned with operatic introductions in the past, although there has been a lot of research about dramatic exposition.[291] The operatic finale, on the other hand, has received plenty of attention. So far, only a few studies on operatic introductions regarding mainly special composers are available, concentrating on a very limited number of works.[292] This study is a contribution to this hitherto neglected field of research. As Liebscher has pointed out, great care is necessary in terms of terminology: Operatic *introduction* and operatic *exposition*, which might or might not take place in one and the same part of the opera, have to be distinguished accurately.[293] Usually, the term 'introduction' refers to a well defined part of the opera which might even be labelled 'introduction'. This section is normally the first number after the overture, according to Rienäcker it is used as a transition between the purely musical (instrumental) overture and the action on stage.[294] But this is only true when nothing happens on stage during the overture, which is hardly ever the case nowadays.

[291] cf. Pfister 1982, p. 124.

[292] For example Julia Liebscher: "Introduktion und Exposition in der Oper. Eine musikdramaturgische Untersuchung am Beispiel des 'Otello' (1816) von Gioacchino Rossini", in: *Die Musikforschung* 44/2 (1991); Calella 2000—Tragédie lyrique

[293] cf. Liebscher 1991, p. 105, cf. Pfister 1982, p. 124.

[294] cf. Gerd Rienäcker: Art. "Introduktion", in: *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, 2nd revised edition, Ludwig Finscher (ed.), Sachteil, vol. 4, columns 1107ff.

'Exposition' refers to the dramatic conception. This term is customary in drama theory, but it is usually not found in the actual text of the drama itself. In music theory, exposition is a term that refers to instrumental music, to be more precise, to the beginning of sonata form. It is not a term that is usually utilised to describe the beginning of musical theatre. In drama theory, exposition means "die Vergabe von Informationen über die in der Vergangenheit liegenden und die Gegenwart bestimmenden Voraussetzungen und Gegebenheiten der unmittelbar dramatisch präsentierten Situationen",[295] so the main point is to inform the audience about what has happened in the past, but is still relevant for the plot (the present and the future). This information can include facts about incidents and characters, but also about the setting (time and place); it can be given in a monologue, a dialogue or by non-verbal means such as scenery and costumes.[296]
An introduction is in most cases the beginning of the exposition, which usually includes several numbers. Concerning Savoy opera, "a significant part of the plot, including exposition, [...] was contained in the lyrics",[297] so the musical numbers played an important part for the exposition. According to Liebscher, a first number called introduction is usually a chorus number enhancing the "repräsentative Aura"[298] of the scene, or a solo number introducing one of the protagonists. Rienäcker defines it as "durchkomponierte, oft orchestergeprägte Szene mit Chören und Ensemblesätzen" which includes information about the characters and their relationship to each other.[299] In *opera buffa*, the term is often used for ensemble and chorus numbers which might consist of several parts.[300]
Usually, there is an event which introduces the setting and the atmosphere of the opera. This task is typically performed by the overture and by non-verbal, non-musical means like costumes and stage design as well. In most works included in this study, the first number features such an event—a celebration (*The Circus Girl* and *San Toy*) or the announcement of a celebration, for example a wedding (*The Grand Duke*), the arrival or return of one or several people (*Haddon Hall* or *Morocco Bound*) or a piece of news (*Shamus O'Brien*). However, the text sung in these numbers usually does not offer a lot of explanation concerning the plot, but describes the initial situation.[301] The beginning of an opera also has to fulfil so-called phatic functions—that is, to attract the audience's attention and to create a suitable ambience for the (fictitious) setting.[302]

[295]Pfister 1982, p. 124.
[296]cf. Volker Klotz: *Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama*, München 1969, p. 28, pp. 130ff., p. 136.
[297]Stedman 1996, p. 218.
[298]cf. Liebscher 1991, p. 106.
[299]Rienäcker 1996, column 1109.
[300]cf. Liebscher 1991, p. 107, cf. Rienäcker 1996, column 1114.
[301]cf. Liebscher 1991, pp. 108f.
[302]Pfister 1982, p. 124, pp. 161f.

## 3.2 *The Mountebanks*

The comic opera *The Mountebanks* by Alfred Cellier with a libretto by William Schwenck Gilbert premiered at the Lyric Theatre on 4 January 1892 and ran for 229 performances.[303] The work was created after the infamous 'carpet-quarrel', Gilbert wanted to show Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte that he did not need them in order to be a successful librettist and, after being turned down by Arthur Goring Thomas (composer of the English grand opera *Esmeralda* (1883)), teamed up with Alfred Cellier, composer of the extremely popular comic opera *Dorothy* (1886), who was, however, severely restricted by ill health and did not live to see the opening night. It was Ivan Caryll, then musical director at the Lyric Theatre, who completed the score.[304]
This is what Shaw thought about the libretto:

> "Mr Gilbert has gone wrong in his old way: he has mixed his *genres*. In this Shakespear-ridden [sic!] land one cannot be a stickler for the unities of time and place; but I defy any dramatist to set the fantastic and the conventional, the philosophic and the sentimental, jostling one another for stage-room without spoiling his play."[305]

In his opinion, Gilbert had tried to meld too many different ideas in his libretto, resulting in a weird combination. This verdict is somehow reminiscent of what Williams remarked about *The Grand Duke* (s. chapter 3.12).[306] Maybe this is the result of Gilbert not having anyone who discussed the libretto with him, and whose criticism he respected and took seriously, as had been the case in his prior collaboration with Sullivan (s. chapter 2.1). Shaw was much more lenient towards Cellier, stating that the music was

> "better than the occasion required it to be; and in this very superfluity of musical conscience one recognizes his want of the tact which has saved Sir Arthur Sullivan from ever wasting musical sentiment on Mr Gilbert."[307]

Additionally, he observes that Cellier was quite able to harness "those musical facetiousnesses which tickled the public so hugely at the Savoy", acknowledging that the number "Put a Penny in the Slot" might even be more popular than any Savoy number. But he

[303] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 446.
[304] cf. ibid., pp. 431ff.
[305] Shaw 1949a, p. 1.
[306] Williams 2011, p. 350.
[307] Shaw 1949a, p. 3.

also makes it very clear that in his opinion pleasing the audience and being popular is not the same as creating great and inspired music. This becomes obvious in his remark:

> "The old and easy expedient of making the men sing a solemn chorus and the women a merry one successively [...] and then repeat them simultaneously, is achieved in the second act to the entire satisfaction of those who regard it as one of the miracles of counterpoint."

He acknowledges Cellier's music for what it does, satisfying the audience's expectations and entertaining them, but for nothing more and most certainly not for anything special. Shaw concludes that Gilbert "cannot, on the whole, be said to have changed for the better when he left the Savoy for the Lyric."[308] Gänzl classifies the libretto as "belong[ing] more naturally to Gilbert's pre-Savoy phase", which was somehow enhanced by Cellier's style being a little outdated as well.[309] The review in *The Times* comes to a very different assessment although it points out many shortcomings of the plot later on:

> "In any opera in which Mr. Gilbert bears a share, the libretto must be at least equally important with the music, and it is no disrespect to the composer who has just passed away to admit that in the present case the words claim primary attention. [...] the dialogue is so crammed with quips of the true Gilbertian ring [...]"[310]

Although many musical numbers are praised, the author cannot help but to remark that

> "[a] good deal of the music bears traces either of over-fatigue or of a sad lack of inspiration, and the themes not seldom contain reminiscences both of Mr. Cellier's own compositions or of the Savoy operas."[311]

The opening number *The Chaunt [sic!] of the Monks* is preceded by the following stage directions, according to the libretto:[312]

> SCENE. A mountain Inn on a picturesque Sicilian pass. A range of mountains, with Etna in the distance. In the middle distance, a Monastery on a steep rocky elevation.
>
> As the curtain rises, a procession of Dominican Monks winds down the set pieces on the stage.

[308] Shaw 1949a, p. 3.
[309] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 433.
[310] "Lyric Theatre." *The Times*, 5 Jan. 1892, p. 7. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS118674981/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=763436bd. Accessed 9 Nov. 2020.
[311] ibid.
[312] Gilbert, William Schwenck. *The Mountebanks*. https://gsarchive.net/gilbert/plays/mountebanks/mountebanks_home.html

The stage directions describe an idyllic rural scenery in Sicily, Gilbert employs a popular 'exotic' setting in *The Mountebanks*—Carl Millöcker's operetta *Gasparone* (1884, Vienna) is set in Sicily as, and Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (1890, Rome) likewise. Gänzl scornfully denominates the setting "banditti land", the "most over-used of locations"[313]—it was nevertheless a favourite with the audience that promised excitement. The Mediterranean setting caters to the audience's desire to experience faraway places, whereas the rural atmosphere created by the scenic stage design speaks to the nostalgic sentiments that were associated with country life in late Victorian times.
This is the text of the first number (excluding most repetitions):[314]

**Chorus. [Monks]**

*Miserere!*
*umbra fere!*
*Pauper sum diabolus.*
*Semper dolens;*
*nolens, volens,*
*Monachus moestissimus!*
*Quum oramus*
*jejunamus;*
*Eheu! otiose dens!*
*Sitiens sumque,*
*Ac, plerumque,*
*Acriter esuriens!*

**The Tamorras.**

*We are members of a secret society, (hush!)*
*Working by the moon's uncertain disc,*
*Our motto is "Revenge without anxiety,"*
*That is, without unnecessary risk. (hush!)*
*We spend our nights on damp straw and squalid hay*
*When trade is not particularly brisk, (hush!)*
*But now and then we take a little holiday,*
*And spend our honest earnings in a frisk. (Hush!)*

**Giorgio.**

*Five hundred years ago*
*my ancestor's next door neighbour*
*Had a mother whose brother by some means or other*
*Incurred three months' hard labour.*
*This wrongful sentence, though,*
*On his head he contrived to do it,*
*As it tarnish'd our 'scutcheon which ne'er had a touch o*
*We swore mankind should rue it.*

**[Chorus.]**

*So we're members of a secret society, (hush!)*
*Working by the moon's uncertain disc,*
*Our motto is "Revenge without anxiety,"*
*That is, without unnecessary risk.*

[313] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 432.
[314] Gilbert, William Schwenck. *The Mountebanks.* https://gsarchive.net/gilbert/plays/mountebanks/mountebanks_home.html

To most spectators, the "chaunt" of the monks probably sounded like authentic plain chant, although they are in fact complaining about their lives in Latin. Displaying members of the clergy and religious symbols on stage was a delicate matter and downright forbidden in Vienna;[315] many people in London were usually likewise very sensitive about it as the case of *A Gaiety Girl* shows (s. chapter 3.6), but maybe the public was more lenient when 'only' monks were concerned. Subsequently, the Tamorra Secret Society introduces itself, while at the same time trying (and failing) to be sneaky, which certainly produced a very comic effect. Giorgio Ravioli,[316] a member of the Tamorras, relates the absurd and far-fetched circumstances of their origin. Because the Tamorra Secret Society is ridiculed, its members are decidedly less scary; this is a common device in works with a romanticized brigand-setting, which led to an entertainment "without anxiety".
As the text indicates, the first number is subdivided into two large sections (s. Table 1). The first part is shaped by the "chaunt" of the monks, the second by the Tamorras. Although this is a chorus number, it is sung by the male choristers only, divided into two groups; joined by a soloist in part B.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 15 | C | (a) - d | orchestra | prelude |
| | 16 - 31 | | d - F | orchestra & TB | "Chaunt" (Monks) |
| | 32 - 40 | | d - C | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 40 - 52 | | (c) - f | orchestra | interlude |
| | 53 - 68 | | f - f | orchestra & TB | 1st stanza (Tamorras) |
| | 69 - 70 | | (a♭) - D♭ | orchestra | interlude |
| | 71 - 83 | | D♭ - D♭ | orchestra, TB & Giorgio | 2nd stanza (Giorgio) |
| | 84 - 85 | | D♭ - C | orchestra | interlude |
| | 86 - 93 | | f - f | orchestra & TB | repetition 1st stanza |

Table 1: Structure of *The Mountebanks*—The Chaunt of the Monks.

As customary, the number begins with an instrumental prelude. The tempo, *andante*, is rather slow, and the first part is set in d-minor—this is very rare for an opening number in popular musical theatre, which are typically set in a major key. Tremolo, chromaticism and dissonances create a strikingly fraught atmosphere for a comic opera (s. Figure 3). After this prelude full of suspense, the performers representing the monks sing the "chaunt" in unison. The music follows the structure of the text closely, it is regularly

[315] cf. Krzeszowiak, Tadeusz: *Freihaustheater in Wien 1787-1801. Wirkungsstätte von W.A. Mozart und E. Schikaneder*, Wien 2009, pp. 37ff.
[316] A lot of the characters have names that are as well popular Italian dishes, like ravioli, risotto, pasta,...

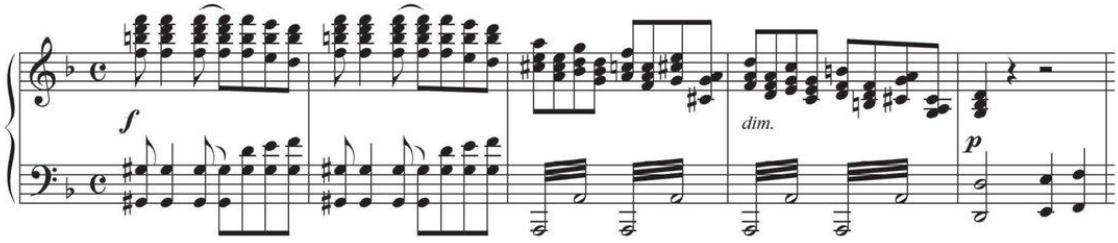


Figure 3: *The Mountebanks—The Chaunt of the Monks* (bars 9 - 13)

arranged in two short and one long verse. The beginning of the melody is highly reminiscent of the Gregorian chant *dies irae*. The orchestra is set in a completely different style, the *staccato* bass line moves in regular quavers and contrasts with the *legato* accompaniment of the other instruments. The dissonances illustrate the grievances described by the monks in the lyrics (s. Figure 4)

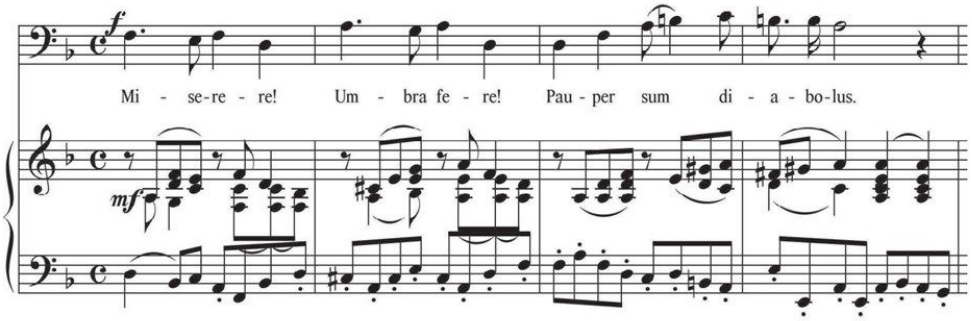


Figure 4: *The Mountebanks—The Chaunt of the Monks* (bars 16 - 19)

After an instrumental ending which revisits musical elements from the prelude, a general pause clearly separates part A from the part B, although tempo and metre remain the same. The key changes from d to f-minor, however, more striking is the change in atmosphere. The first few bars of the prelude maintain the suspense with repeated seconds and a motif in the basses beginning with a tritone, but the music becomes less fraught and more confident soon afterwards. The prelude introduces the dotted rhythm dominating the first and second stanza and anticipates motifs sung by the chorus.
Part B is arranged in an internal aba'-structure as suggested by the text: The Tamorras introduce their life as "members of a secret society" in the first stanza (a), Giorgio informs the audience about the society's background (b), and the Tamorras repeat the first four verses of the first stanza (a'). There is no instrumental postlude apart from an f-minor chord, which is quite unusual.

This part introduces a group of people that actually plays a big part throughout the opera, other than the monks who do not appear again—however, later on, the Tamorras dress up as the monks and even become them by means of an alchemic potion, this connection is the reason behind the seemingly strange combination of monks and Tamorras in this number. Whereas the monks are little more than living and singing scenery and were probably the targets of light mockery by Gilbert's staging, the stanzas sung by the Tamorras introduce indications for a subplot that is based on their motto "revenge without anxiety". This part of the plot was probably due to the popularity of rather flowery than realistic stories involving brigands throughout the whole 19th century.
The choristers sing mainly in unison, the 6nd and 8th verses are set in three parts for greater variety. The simple melody is based mainly on seconds; the orchestra plays *colla parte* all the time, using the rests between the verses for small interjections. The focus here is clearly on the comic representation of the faint-hearted wannabe-brigands.
The second stanza (b) forms a musical contrast to a and is sung by the soloist representing Giorgio, the chorus echoes the 4th and 8th verse—a pretty common structure in comic opera. Giorgio's simple melody is accompanied with a *legato*-motif in semiquavers providing a harmonic background, the orchestra occasionally supports the performer by playing *colla parte*. Gilbert's quite unusual text structure—short verse, short verse, long verse, short verse—is set by Cellier using a peculiar rhythmic design. The first two verses are common enough, but the 3rd verse is set in triplets, followed by the 4th verse set in regular quavers as if to stabilize the music, before the chorus enters (s. Figure 5). The chorus's echo is set in three parts, but consists mainly of prime intervals and is therefore easy to sing.
As the analysis has shown, the first number of *The Mountebanks* is comparatively unusual for popular musical theatre in the 1890s: It is set in a minor key and the atmosphere is quite tense, especially in the instrumental introduction. However, Cellier uses a common structure (several contrasting parts that can be easily followed by the audience). It has to be said that Cellier as well as Sullivan belonged to a different generation than Caryll and Jones, he died a few days before the premiere. He had composed very popular and successful comic operas before, although not in the same amount as Sullivan; so while his style was naturally different, he was certainly influenced by the same traditions.
The function of the number is to introduce the Sicilian setting with a Dominican monastery and a secret society called Tamorra, an allusion to the Camorra (not the Sicilian Mafia, but the criminal organization dominating Naples). By using a lot of clichés, the first number conjures up a vivid image of the setting in the spectators' minds. However, Cellier does not resort to the *Siciliano* to enhance those clichés musically. The male

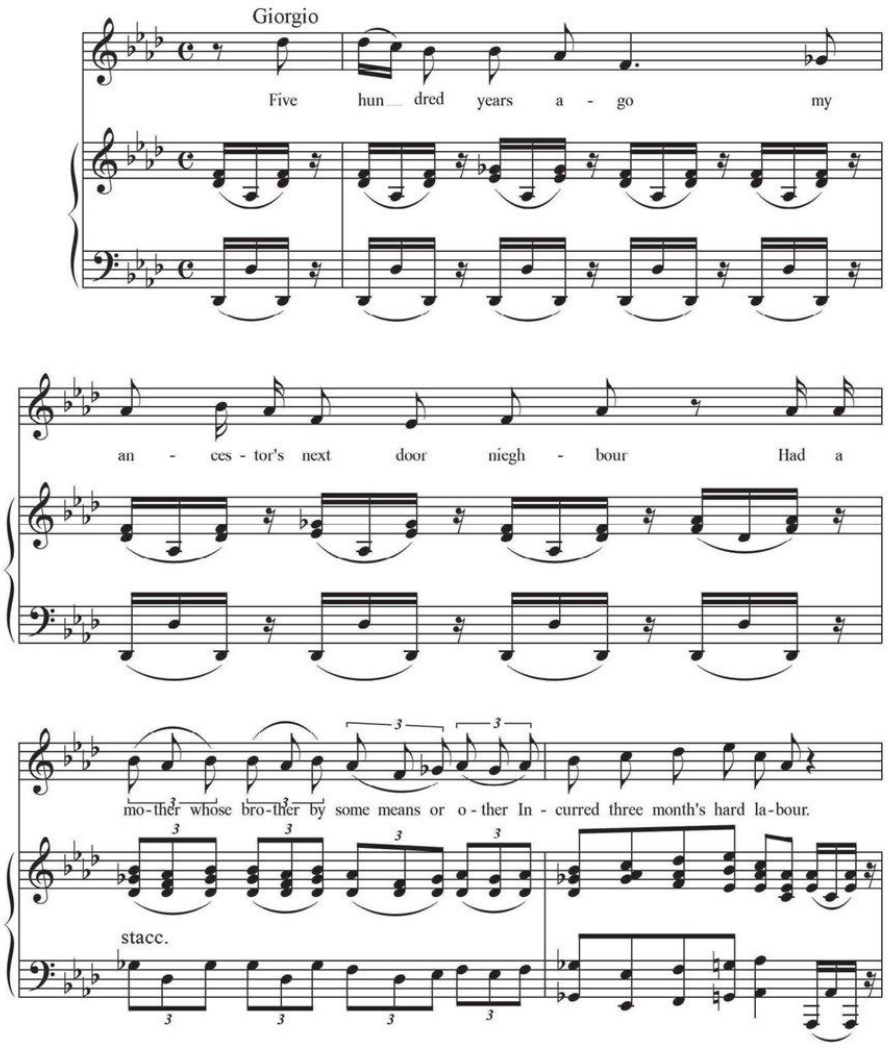


Figure 5: *The Mountebanks—The Chaunt of the Monks* (bars 71 - 74)

choristers represent two different groups—whereas the monks, as pointed out above, are merely living scenery, the Tamorras are a group character that is actively involved in the plot by pursuing their own goal. The first number of *The Mountebanks* focuses not only on the present as usual, but also relates past events. The complexity of the choral setting is low, but not unusually so, and fitting for the displayed occasion.

## 3.3 *Haddon Hall*

Arthur Sullivan's original light English opera *Haddon Hall* with a libretto by Sydney Grundy premiered at the Savoy Theatre on 24 September 1892 and ran for 204 performances.[317] Although it could not score the number of performances achieved by the most popular collaborations with Gilbert, the work was considered a success. Jacobs suggests that Sullivan might have added the descriptive adjective 'light' to emphasize that *Haddon Hall* is not another romantic opera like *Ivanhoe* had been, although it does not exactly match the genre of his former pieces, either.[318] Gänzl agrees to this assessment, pointing out that "the different style of *Haddon Hall* [...] fell somewhere between the English grandeur of *Ivanhoe* and the merriment of Gilbert's musicals." Therefore, it did not exactly suit the taste of the Savoy audience, but rather pleased those who had loved Cellier's *Dorothy* (1886). The creation of the work was challenged by Sullivan's health issues, whereas the lack of former Savoy principals in the ensemble resulted in a reduced attraction of all the spectators who used to go to the Savoy Theatre to see and hear their favourite performers.[319] It is obvious that the quite detailed review in *The Times* struggles to categorize the work:

> "*Haddon-hall* is not in the least like *Ivanhoe*, but belongs, at least as far as its music is concerned, to the famous series connected with the Savoy Theatre. Mr. Sydney Grundy's libretto conforms more or less closely to another type than Mr. Gilbert's, since the main plot has a certain amount of serious interest [...] In pieces of this class the comic element is naturally of very great importance [...] the book, while meriting praise on the score of clearness and, in some of the patter songs, humour falls considerably below the standard of Mr. Gilbert's work, and in more than one passage of the spoken dialogue we recall irresistibly the librettos of the English opera of the last generation [...] Of the music as a whole it is extremely difficult to speak dispassionately. [...] Still, it would be absurd to

[317] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 449.
[318] cf. Jacobs, Arthur: *Arthur Sullivan. A Victorian Musician*, Hants 1992, pp. 345f.
[319] Gänzl 1986, pp. 430f.

> blink the fact that, judged by the standards he himself has given us, the latest specimen must rank almost as far below the best of his productions in this kind as it ranks below the finer portions of *Ivanhoe* in earnestness of intention and sustained power."[320]

This excerpt shows the writer's difficulty, but also their need to compare *Haddon Hall* with Sullivan's (and Gilbert's) previous works in order to categorize it. Sullivan's first contribution to popular musical theatre without Gilbert had raised great expectations, therefore the writer tries to describe what potential theatregoers could expect from the work. The lenient, but nevertheless unmistakable assessment of libretto and score is reflected in the relatively low number of performances.

The opera is based on a love story that supposedly really happened in the 16th century, but it has—of course—been modified by the librettist. The plot is about an elopement with a happy ending which is set in the eponymous manor house "Haddon Hall" in Derbyshire. Shaw praises *Haddon Hall* as "the highest and most consistent expression [Savoy Opera] has yet attained."[321] Grundy's libretto was both praised and frowned upon,[322] a rather unusual reaction for popular musical theatre, which perhaps reflected the critics' difficulties to classify the work.

Instead of an overture, the opera begins with a most unusual number called *Introduction.* This number is not purely instrumental, it also contains a section for chorus. However, it does not sound like first numbers usually do[323]—actually, there is such a number in *Haddon Hall*, the first number in act one, *Chorus with Solos.* Jacobs simply refers to both numbers as "opening numbers",[324] using the plural form for them. Because this is such a special case, both numbers will be analysed, starting with the introduction. These are the stage directions and the lyrics of the number:[325]

[320]"Savoy Theatre." *The Times*, 26 Sept. 1892, p. 11. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS184735546/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=0c89d9e4. Accessed 7 Nov. 2020.
[321]Letellier 2015, p. 930.
[322]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 430.
[323]cf. William Parry: "Identity crisis and the search for English opera", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, p. 24.
[324]Jacobs 1992, p. 346.
[325]Grundy, Sydney. *Haddon Hall.* https://gsarchive.net/trutt/Libretti/HaddonHallLibretto.pdf

PROLOGUE

(CHORUS behind the scenes.)

**Chorus, Male Voices**

*Ye stately homes of England,*
*So simple, yet so grand;*
*Long may ye stand and flourish,*
*Types of our English land!*

**Chorus, Tutti**

*Ye stately homes of England,*
*Long may your towers stand;*
*Types of the life of man and wife, ...*
*Types of our English land!*

**Chorus, Female Voices**

*Ye stately homes of England,*
*Such mansions only grew*
*Where virtue reign'd from cot to throne, ...*
*And man and wife were true.*

In this number, the chorus praises the "stately homes of England", beginning each stanza with this verse, and furthermore speaks in high terms of the virtuous people who live there. The venerable manor house "Haddon Hall" is and was definitely considered one of those "stately homes". Beckerman even suggests that "Haddon Hall" and the virtues it represents might be "the real hero of the piece".[326] The number introduces the setting of the opera and is used to arouse the audience's national pride by presenting the traditional, respectable way of life as desirable and honourable. The function of the chorus is to put the setting into words—the choristers sing behind the scenes and do not represent a specific group of people.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 44 | C - 3/4 | (b) - G | orchestra | prelude |
| part B | 44 - 52 | 3/4 | G - D | orchestra & TB | 1st stanza |
| | 52 - 60 | | D - (d) | orchestra & SA | 2nd stanza |
| | 60 - 72 | | D7 - G | orchestra & SATB | 3rd stanza |
| | 72 - 77 | | G - G | orchestra | postlude |
| (part C) | 77 - 78 | | (b) - (b) | orchestra | prelude to No. 1 |

Table 2: Structure of *Haddon Hall*—Introduction.

[326] Michael Beckerman: "Standing still and moving forward. The Mikado, Haddon Hall and concepts of time in the Savoy operas", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, p. 120.

It is obvious that Sullivan wanted the introduction to be short and quite simple (s. Table2). The instrumental introduction starts with a timpani roll on b to get the audience's attention and to 'announce' the grand subject that follows immediately (s. Figure 6):

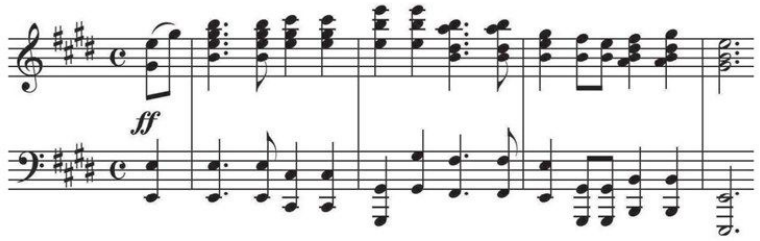


Figure 6: *Haddon Hall*—Introduction (bars 3 - 6)

The subject is echoed by the low-pitched instruments. After that, Sullivan introduces a contrasting secondary subject which creates suspense by using syncopation in the accompaniment and chromaticism, adding even more sharps (s. Figure 7).

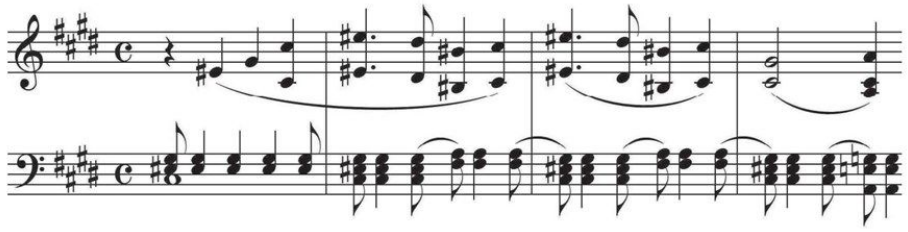

Figure 7: *Haddon Hall*—Introduction (bars 16 - 19)

The first subject is repeated over a pedal point on b, followed by a different secondary subject. A lot of the sharps are resolved, this secondary subject segues harmonically into part II which is set in g-major.
The second part is announced by fourths (a - d), Sullivan already uses them in bar 40f. to segue melodically into part II as well. In bar 42, the fourth-motif is extended, sounding a little like a run-up now. Eventually, it develops into a steady quaver-pattern used as an accompaniment during the stanzas sung by the chorus (s. Figure 8).
Despite all these efforts to connect both parts, they are still audibly different: In addition to the changes illustrated in Table 2, the tempo changes from *Allegro moderato* to *Andante*. The chorus sings behind the scenes; the melody is quite simple, sounding like a folk song or an anthem. It really stands out against the orchestra's accompaniment (s. Figure 9). The choristers usually sing in unison, supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*, as befits the simple melody.

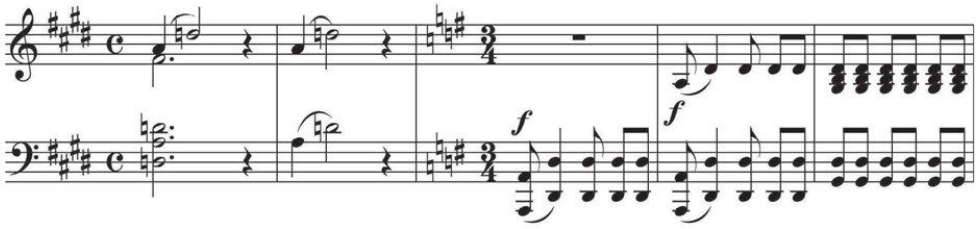


Figure 8: *Haddon Hall*—Introduction (bars 40 - 44)

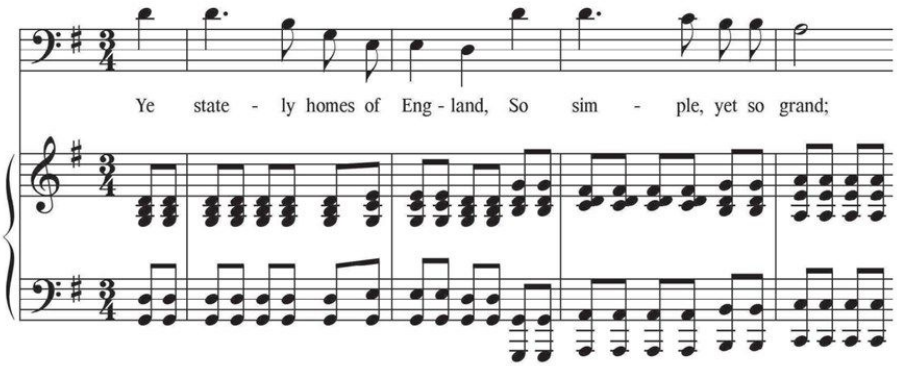


Figure 9: *Haddon Hall*—Introduction (bars 44 - 48)

The introduction of the setting in the lyrics is supported by the anthem-like setting of the melody. Due to the briefness of the number, it does neither introduce the time in which the opera is set nor any characters or any information about the plot. The instrumental postlude takes up the motif used in the secondary subject to segue into the second part, the number fades out gently.

The introduction is followed by *No. 1. Chorus with Solos.* These are the stage directions and the lyrics of the number (excluding most repetitions):[327]

[327]Grundy, Sydney. *Haddon Hall.* https://gsarchive.net/trutt/Libretti/HaddonHallLibretto.pdf

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Terrace.*

**Chorus**

*Today, it is a festal time:*
*The Bridegroom comes today,*
*And we are here to sing a rhyme*
*To speed him on his way*
*Today, our mistress, ever dear,*
*Doth plight her virgin troth;*
*And we are all foregather'd here*
*To sing, God bless them both!*

DANCE.

*Enter* **Dorcas.**

**Dorcas**

*But midst our jubilation,*
*Comes the echo of a sigh;*
*It's full signification*
*Ye will gather by-and-bye.*
*Now, lend me your attention,*
*While I tell you all a tale,*
*Anent a dainty dormouse,*
*And an unattractive snail.*

**No. 1a. Song - Dorcas & Chorus**

*'Twas a dear little dormouse-*
*A little mousemaid!*
*Her papa and mamma*
*She had always obey'd*
*Pitapat went her heart,*
*And her cheek grew pale,*
*When commanded to marry*
*A stupid old snail.*
*"Oh, father, I cannot!"*
*"But, daughter, you must,*
*For he has a house,*
*And we haven't a crust!"*

*The snail he was ugly,*
*The snail he was black;*
*But for all that, he carried*
*A house on his back.*
*Said the wily old dormouse,*
*"When thou art his bride,*
*He will lend us his house,*
*And we'll all live inside!"*
*"Oh, father, I cannot!" etc.*

*A gallant young squirrel*
*Sat perch'd on a tree,*
*And he thought to himself,*
*There's a good wife for me!*
*On the eve of the wedding*
*He said to the mouse,*
*"Wilt thou marry a squirrel*
*Who hasn't a house?"*
*"Oh, squirrel, I cannot!"*
*"But, dormouse, thou must!*
*Her heart to a squirrel*
*A dormouse may trust!"*

*The squirrel was handsome;*
*They plighted their vows,*
*And the squirrel ran off*
*With the little dormouse.*
*And I'm sure if you ever*
*Set eyes on a snail,*
*You will all sympathize*
*With the dormouse's wail.*
*"Oh, father, I cannot,*
*Don't tell me I must;*
*Though he has a house,*
*And we haven't a crust."*

**Chorus**

*"But who is the dormouse?*
*And who, who is the snail?"*

Enter **Sir George Vernon**, **Lady Vernon** and **Dorothy.**

**Chorus.**

*Hail to the Lord of Haddon!*
*And thee, his silver bride!*
*And to thy daughter, fairest flower*
*Of all the countryside!*

*Nor violet, lily,*
*Nor bluebell we bring,*
*To garland thy pathway*
*With fragrance of Spring.*
*No beauty of blossom*
*That dies in a day*
*Can speak an affection*
*That blossoms alway. [sic!]*
*And never a chaplet*
*Our hands could entwine,*
*Could tell the devotion*
*That ever is thine.*

**Chorus, Tutti**

*In lieu of the lily*
*And bonny bluebell,*
*We lay on thine altar,*
*True love's* immortelles.

**Dorothy**

*Dear playmates of childhood,*
*Right welcome are you!*
*More fragrant than lily,*
*A love that is true.*

**Lady Vernon**

*Like flower amaranthine,*
*Whose blossoms ne'er fade,*
*It blooms in the sunshine,*
*And blooms in the shade.*

**Lady V, Dorcas.**

*Right welcome are you,*
*welcome,*
*welcome are you!*

RECITATIVE.

**Sir George**

*Welcome, I bid ye welcome, one and all!*
*Let youth and beauty keep their merry May;*
*For all too soon the leaves of autumn fall,*
*And evening shadows quench the laughing day.*

**No. 1b. Madrigal**

**Sir George.**

*When the budding bloom of May*
*Paints the hedgerows red and white,*
*Gather then your garlands gay;*
*Earth was made for man's delight!*

**Lady Vernon.**

*May is playtime,*

**Dorothy.**

*June is haytime,*

**Sir George.**

*Seize the daytime,*

**Sir G, Lady V, Dorcas.**

*Fa la la!*
*Carol now the birds of spring!*
*Let our hearts in chorus sing!*

**Chorus.**

*Ere the golden day is pale,*
*Dawns the silver orb of night;*
*Sweetly trills the nightingale,*
*"Earth was made for man's delight!"*

**Sir George.**

*When the leaves of autumn sigh,*
*"Nearer death and further birth!"*
*Time enough for hearts to cry,*
*"Man was only made for earth!"*

**Lady Vernon.**

*Youth is pleasant,*

**Dorothy.**

*Grasp the present,*

**Sir George.**

*Moons are crescent,*

**Sir G, Lady V, Dorcas.**

*Fa la la!*
*Time enough for hearts to sigh!*
*Now the noonday sun is high!*

**Chorus.**

*Day in cloth of gold is gay,*
*Robe of silver wears the night;*
*All creation seems to say,*
*"Earth was made for man's delight!"*

The opening number is very long, but it is subdivided into four contrasting parts and therefore the audience can follow the structure easily (s. Table 3). Due to the length of the number, the analysis of the lyrics and of the score will be combined.
The instrumental prelude sounds like a lively and cheerful country dance and is set in an ABA-structure. The chorus announces the arrival of a bridegroom and therefore a wedding—a popular element of popular musical theatre. Appropriately, the music

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 30 | 6/8 | (b) - E | orchestra | prelude (aba) |
| | 31 - 48 | | E - B | orchestra & SATB | "Today, it is..." |
| | 38 - 48 | | B - B | orchestra & SATB | "Today, our mistress..." |
| | 49 | | B | orchestra | interlude |
| | 50 - 64 | | E - E | orchestra & SATB | "Today, it is..." |
| | 64 - 109 | | E - E | orchestra | interlude (abaca) |
| part B | 110 - 112 | 6/8 - C | (e) - D♯ | orchestra | interlude |
| | 113 - 121 | C | (d♯) - G♯ | orchestra & Dorcas | introduction |
| | 121 - 123 | | c♯ - G♯ | SATB | echo Dorcas |
| | 124 | 12/8 | c♯ | orchestra | interlude |
| | 125 - 141 | various | c♯ - G♯ | orchestra & Dorcas | stanza song |
| | 141 | 12/8 | G♯ | orchestra | interlude |
| | 142 - 149 | C | b♭ - D♭ | orchestra, Dorcas & SATB | refrain |
| part C | 150 - 157 | 3/4 | D♭ - D♭ | orchestra | interlude |
| | 158 - 172 | | D♭ - B | orchestra & SATB | "Hail to..." |
| | 173 - 177 | | B - G♯ | orchestra | interlude |
| | 178 - 194 | | G♯ - B | orchestra & SA | "Nor violet..." |
| | 195 | | B | orchestra | interlude |
| | 196 - 204 | | B - B | orchestra & SA | "And never a chaplet..." |
| | 205 | | B | orchestra | interlude |
| | 206 - 218 | | B - E | orchestra & SATB | "In lieu of the lily..." |
| | 219 | | E | orchestra | interlude |
| | 220 - 262 | | E - E | orchestra, soloists & SATB | "Dear playmates..." |
| | 263 - 266 | | E - E | orchestra | interlude |
| part D | 267 - 275 | 3/4 - *alla breve* | f♯7 - D7 | orchestra & Sir George | recitative |
| | 276 - 278 | *alla breve* | D7 - (d) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 279 - 294 | | G - D | orchestra & soloists | Madrigal, solo part |
| | 295 - 313 | | G - G | orchestra & SATB | Madrigal, choral part |
| | 314 - 328 | | G - G | orchestra | postlude |

Table 3: Structure of *Haddon Hall*—Chorus with Solos.

retains its bright and positive character. The melody is similar to the very beginning of the opera, the first few bars of the *Introduction* (s. Figure 10, compare Fig. 6).

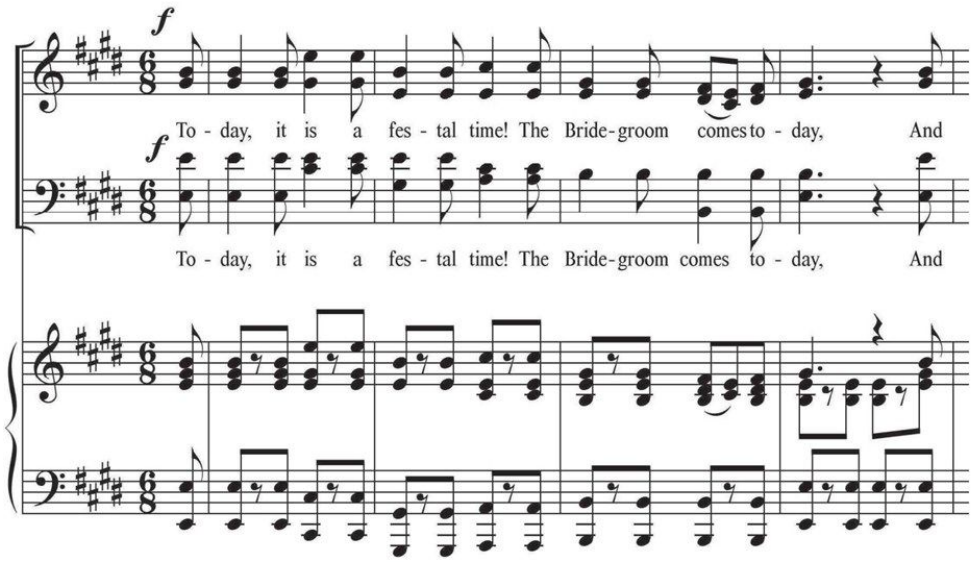


Figure 10: *Haddon Hall*—Chorus with Solos (bars 31 - 34)

Although most of this first choral section is a homophonic setting in four parts in the usual manner (the sopranos sing the melody, the other voices accompany them and contain many prime intervals), Sullivan's score includes some rhythmic shifts and other alterations, like solo verses and an imitation, that make the number interesting to listen to. The instrumental ending of part A revisits and enhances the introduction.
The enthusiastic excitement of the servants, represented by the choristers, is easy to understand: The extraordinary circumstances of the day do not only mean variety, but most likely also many amenities like special food and beverages or even entertainment like dancing. Furthermore, an extraordinary situation like this meant that otherwise strict rules concerning social interactions between different classes or between men and women were regarded less rigorously. The function of the chorus is to prepare the background for the soloists by announcing them.

Part B is subdivided into two parts—an introduction and a song (No. 1a). Both are sung by Dorcas, a maid at Haddon Hall and therefore a character that belongs to the same group as the characters represented by the choristers. The introduction is very short, it is used as a bridge between parts A and B which Sullivan uses to prepare the audience for something new, the music is decidedly different as illustrated in Table 3. With regards to

content, Dorcas introduces something new as well: She implies that there is something wrong in spite of the cheerful atmosphere by using the metaphor of "a dainty dormouse, and an unattractive snail"—obviously, she has her doubts about the wedding. This kind of fable was very popular in Victorian times, and had been employed frequently in Savoy opera previously.[328]

The song includes several changes of time signature (which the audience probably does not notice because of the steady rhythmical pattern played by the orchestra). It consists of two stanzas, the refrain is repeated afterwards together with the chorus in four parts to stress its importance. The sopranos do not simply double Dorcas's part, at first they have to sing a different part, sometimes clashing with Dorcas's part in minor and major seconds to enhance the despair felt by the "dormouse" (s. Figure 11).[329]

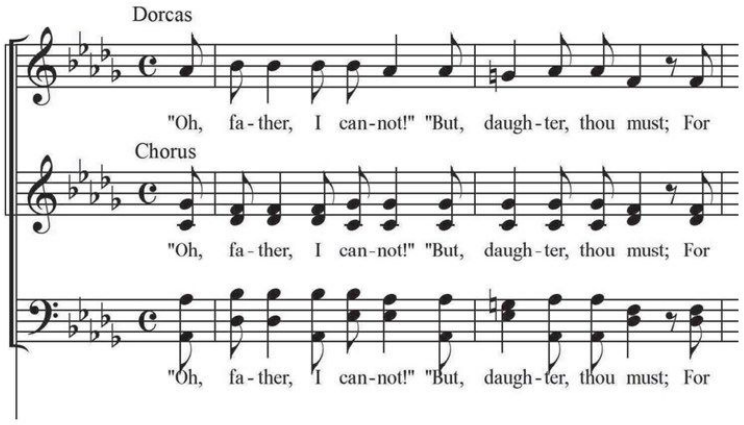


Figure 11: *Haddon Hall*—Chorus with Solos (bars 142 - 143)

In part B, the "dormouse" tells her father that she does not want to marry the snail although they are poor and "he has a house". The audience does not know yet, but Dorothy (the "dainty dormouse"), the daughter of the family who lives in Haddon Hall, has been persuaded by her father to marry a man she does not love (Rupert Vernon, her cousin, the "unattractive snail"). Her father believes that Rupert's political influence will be helpful for the family in the future although he does not agree with him politically. Furthermore, Dorothy is in love with John Manners, a young man without any fortune, who is also featured in Dorcas's song as "a gallant young squirrel". In the song, the "dormouse" and the "squirrel" elope, so Dorcas foreshadows the progress of the plot.

[328] cf. Horst Dölvers: "The librettos in context. Gilbert's 'fables in song"', in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, pp. 85ff.

[329] G and g♭ are both notated in the piano reduction as well as in Dorcas's and the sopranos' part, so it is obviously not a mistake, but a dissonance used on purpose.

This character is a typical example of a female servant who is the confidante of her mistress. The chorus gets the last say in part B: They want to know who is behind the metaphor of the "dormouse" and the "snail", thus probably asking what the audience has been wondering during the song. However, the question is not answered.
Part C consists of several subsections. The interlude preceding the entrance of Lord and Lady Vernon, the owners of Haddon Hall, and their daughter Dorothy sounds like a pompous announcement with its somewhat heavy crotchets interrupted by flashy scales upwards in demisemiquavers. Thus, the music illustrates that they are no ordinary people. The chorus enters to greet and praise them in a simple homophonic setting in four parts, thereby introducing three major characters. In the third verse, the key shifts radically from D♭ major to f♯ minor to put a special emphasis on Dorothy, the romantic lead, who is described as the "fairest flower of all the country side!" in this verse (bars 169 - 174). In the interlude to the simple song that follows, the sweet melody of the flutes creates a musical image of Dorothy's beauty and innocence.
The song "Nor violet"[330] is constructed in an aba' structure. The servants represented by the female choristers bring flowers and praise as a wedding gift for Dorothy. The simple melody mainly set in crotchets is most fitting for the situation; the orchestra plays mostly *colla parte* or an accompaniment which enhances the sweet and simple nature of this song. Subsequently, Dorothy and Lady Vernon welcome the well-wishers cordially; Sir George joins in later. Adequately to their higher social position, the melodies they sing are much more ambitious and contain melismatic elements. Part C introduces the warm and likewise respectful atmosphere that characterizes the household in which everybody obviously knows his and her proper place and behaves accordingly. This idealized example of a traditional aristocratic English household catered to the audience's need for reassurance in times of social changes and insecurity.
Part D consists of a preliminary recitative by Sir George and a madrigal about the transience of youth and the beauty of life in general; the text does not contribute anything to the plot. It uses a lot of popular metaphors comparing nature to human life (e. g. spring and youth). The rather complex rhyme scheme and the alternating singers, as illustrated in Table 3, result in an interesting and varied structure. There are a lot more short melismatic elements than before which make the madrigal stand out as something special. The number also contains some short *a capella* sections: when the soloists sing together for the first time (bars 293 - 295), and when the chorus repeats the last verse "Earth was made for man's delight!" (bars 311 - 315) in augmented note values. This

[330]The song is not labelled with any name in the vocal score, this is simply the beginning of its text to make it easier to refer to it.

verse is the same in both of the stanzas. The repetition *a capella* and the augmentation of the note values stresses the positive and harmonious atmosphere, in spite of the problem concerning the imminent wedding as indicated by Dorcas's song. Letellier praises the madrigal as "among the best of Sullivan's efforts in this genre".[331]
*The Times* describes the beginning of *Haddon Hall* as follows:

> "[...] the choral prologue in the overture, sung before the rising of the curtain to stanzas addressed to the 'stately homes of England,' the introductory chorus, and a rather pointless little ditty in which a serving-maid relates the position of affairs, under the guise of a parable concerning the loves of a dormouse, are of course gracefully written, but not until the chorus of greeting to the Vernons, with its pretty trio of flutes in the introduction, do we find any trace of the composer's wonted charm. A so-called 'Madrigal' is cast in the form that has now become conventional, and the specimen is of the same quality as its predecessors [...]"[332]

While this description echoes the general assessment of the work as given above and is naturally subjectively perceived, it is nevertheless interesting to read a nuanced contemporary appraisal of the opening number(s).
Despite its length, the structure of the number is typical for popular musical theatre. There are several parts featuring different soloists and the chorus. The function of the number is to introduce four main characters, the heroine's family and their maid, and their good relationship with the people who live in and around Haddon Hall, represented by the chorus, who are little more than living scenery and prepare the background for the soloists by announcing them. The choral setting is not overly complex, but requires experienced singers nevertheless. Furthermore, Dorcas introduces the plot which revolves around the upcoming marriage announced by the chorus in the beginning of the number, so the spectators have a pretty good idea of what will happen, although they are not familiar with the details. This makes it easier for them to understand all the scheming and twists that will necessarily follow. To conclude, this number contains a lot of information, which is not typical for first numbers in late Victorian popular musical theatre at all and might partly be due to the length of the number, partly to the genre of the work—original light English opera, not comic opera.

[331] cf. Letellier 2015, p. 930.
[332] "Savoy Theatre." *The Times*, 26 Sept. 1892, p. 11. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS184735546/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=0c89d9e4. Accessed 7 Nov. 2020.

## 3.4 *Morocco Bound*

The musical farcical comedy *Morocco Bound* by Frank Osmond Carr with a libretto by Arthur Branscombe and lyrics by Adrian Ross was premiered at the Shaftesbury Theatre on 13 April 1893 and ran for 295 performances.[333] Branscombe stated that his libretto was the first of this new genre;[334] however, the work is usually not mentioned when discussing the very first musical comedy (s. chapter 2.2) The plot of *Morocco Bound* deals with cultural influence in the British colonies, in this case an attempt to install English music halls in Morocco, therefore the work provides ample opportunity to include various musical numbers and dances that do not have to be related to the plot at all. This aspect is included in Gänzl's description of the work:

> "*Morocco Bound* caught the mood of the moment precisely. It was jolly, bright, topical, totally digestible and, while figuring to satirise music hall and the current craze, supplied in its parodies material which was sufficiently like the real thing to satisfy the most fashionable craving. [...] The show marked a definitive turning point towards a light and easy-going form of musical theatre which would soon lead into what would be loosely classed as 'musical comedy'. [...] In true music-hall fashion the 'bill' was changed frequently and after seven months an official second edition saw large alterations made in the show's score."[335]

*Morocco Bound* is another attempt at giving the audience what it wanted (in this case, music-hall entertainment) in a more respectable location, although on a different level than Savoy opera, while at the same time being self-ironic. These aspects are also typical for musical comedy, as are the alterations made during the run (s. chapter 2.2). The review in *The Times* comments on the genre and structure of the work:

> "Burlesque has lately taken a new departure : no longer is it necessary for its admirers to transport themselves in imagination to distant lands or periods, for modern fashionable costumes, with scarcely a modification, is now the vogue [...] In *Morocco Bound*, a 'musical farcical comedy,' [...] the new methods are adopted, and throughout the first act we seem to be assisted at a remarkably pointless comedy of modern life, interspersed with songs and dances. [...] As may be imagined, there is as slight a thread of plot as can be trusted to bear the weight of illustrations. [...] Mr. Carr's music, while seldom rising to great heights of originality, is taking, appropriate, and often graceful; [...]"[336]

[333] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 486.
[334] cf. Platt 2014, p. 25.
[335] Gänzl 1986, pp. 468f.
[336] "Shaftesbury Theatre." *The Times*, 17 Apr. 1893, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS201906321/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=9218efbd. Accessed 2 Nov. 2020.

The review highlights *Morocco Bound* as one of the first works in which the performers were clad in "modern fashionable costumes", which might be worn by the spectators on special occasions, instead of costumes that were obviously theatrical and were not acceptable in any other context. The newness of this approach is emphasized by the fact that it is mentioned in the very first sentence of the review. The "remarkably pointless comedy of modern life" was apparently nevertheless acceptable reasonable enough for the audience, as was the merely "appropriate" music. According to this review, it is evident that the spectators did not flock to Shaftesbury Theatre because of the quality of the plot or the score, but because of the possibility to enjoy music hall numbers in a more respectable environment. To this study, the work is particularly interesting because of its in-between stage in the development of the new genre musical comedy.
The first number is preceded by the following stage directions:[337]

> SCENE.—
> Mokeleigh Hall (exterior) Country residence of Squire Higgins, old English mansion set from R. C. down stage to 2 R, massive portice, marble columns, double entrance-doors shewing, when open, perspective hall-backing, massive marble steps leading down L. to carriage drive. Wing of mansion extending up stage to R. C. and down stage to 2 R., shewing R. and L., large 17th Century windows, transparent semi-coloured glass. Back-cloth-upper portion sky allowing for sunset effect, lower portion perspective extension landscape - practicable river running at back, steps leading down to river, bulrushes - water lilies, punt with pole, swans, ducks; flower beds, evergreens etc. under windows R. and L. bordering gravel ground-cloth; creepers over house; entrance to coloured and tastefully draped marquee showing L. extending from P. E. up stage, at R. angles, to 2 or 3 L. overhead foliage over whole - Chinese lanterns; garden seat by tree L. 3. camp stools, etc.
>
> SCENE opens with Chorus - as Curtain rises servants etc. are discovered picturesquely grouped from C. down stage R. and L. - two powdered footmen, in gorgeous livery, on steps by columns R. and L.

The stage directions describe a scenery which can easily be recognized as British, probably English countryside. The depicted mansion locates the setting more specifically in an aristocratic or upper class milieu, which might not be what the audience expected from a work called *Morocco Bound*. Works featuring British aristocracy were usually popular for several reasons: First, the setting demanded a certain degree of opulence concerning

[337] Branscombe, Arthur. *Morocco Bound*. ADD MS 53523 E, p. 3. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

costumes and scenery and therefore catered to the audience's desire for prosperity. As pointed out in chapter 2.2, the changes concerning social classes caused anxiety, and popular musical comedy was one way of dealing with this issue. Second, a setting in an aristocratic milieu furthermore seemed to allow the spectators a glimpse of a world that was otherwise not accessible for them and thus satisfied their curiosity.
This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions):[338]

*England is diversified by eligible mansions,*
*Suitable for families of commoner or peer,*
*Situated healthily in pleasure ground expansions,*
*Elegantly dotted with domesticated deer-*
*It's a royal sport to hunt domesticated deer!*
*Some are new and comfortable, some are old and stately,*
*With the ivy veiling their dilapidated wall,*
*But unless our judgment [sic!] is mistaken very greatly,*
*None can hold a candle to our noble Mokeleigh Hall!*

*Then hey down derry, boys,*
*Let us all be merry, boys,*
*Pour the port and sherry and the Squire will pay for all!*
*This is now our holiday,*
*Let it be a jolly day,*
*For the happy household of the Mokeleigh Hall!*

*The stately homes of England*
*Have most of them been sold*
*To those who made by means of trade*
*Enormous sums of gold.*
*The haughty English nobles*
*Have let them long ago,*
*And in a flash have blued the cash*
*At merry Monaco.*
*And so a former coster*
*Has heard the hammer fall*
*That made him squire of half a shire,*
*And lord of Mokeleigh Hall.*

*Then drink down faster, boys,*
*Charm away disaster, boys,*
*For our coming master is this festival,*
*Wish him joy and plenty now,*
*He is one-and-twenty now,*
*He will be the happy lord of Mokeleigh Hall!*

> During last strains of chorus MUSKET ENTERS from doors C. and stands watching proceedings, on portico; at conclusion of chorus descends steps and takes stage C.- observed by chorus "leader" shouts "three cheers for Mr Musket" which are loudly given.

The first part of the opening chorus (first stanza and refrain) more or less illustrates what can be concluded from the scenery: The work is set in an idealized British aristocratic milieu. Everything seems to be very harmonious, the Squire even pays for his servants' beverages on their day off. The venerable character of the mansion and the social system it represents is emphasized. The second part, however, presents a different view—more topical, but in a negative way. "The haughty English nobles" have lost their traditional

[338] Branscombe, Arthur. *Morocco Bound.* ADD MS 53523 E, pp. 3f. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

homes by acting irresponsibly; as a result, "a former coster" managed an impressive social ascension from working class to upper class and is now "the happy lord of Mokeleigh Hall". The servants, represented by the choristers, try to "charm away disaster" by getting drunk, they obviously have their doubts about their "coming master['s]" ability to run the mansion properly (which were probably shared by most of the spectators regardless of their class affiliation). *Morocco Bound* both ridicules and honours the contemporary social and political changes, "the decline of the English aristocracy, arguably the most recognisable signifier of English cultural insecurities at this time and a pervasive theme in all forms of English culture".[339] This opening number is most unusual for popular musical theatre because it includes a summary of previous events to explain the initial situation. Furthermore, the lyrics indicates future trouble. Thus, while focusing on the present situation, the first number also deals with past events and even adumbrates a possible future.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 15 | 2/4 | (b♭) - E♭ | orchestra | prelude |
| | 16 - 47 | | E♭ - B♭7 | orchestra & SATB | 1st stanza |
| | 48 - 73 | | B♭ - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 73 - 75 | | E♭ - E♭ | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 76 - 101 | | E♭ - B♭7 | orchestra & SATB | 2nd stanza |
| | 102 - 127 | | B♭ - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 127 - 131 | | E♭ - E♭ | orchestra | postlude |

Table 4: Structure of *Morocco Bound*—Opening Chorus. Mokeleigh Hall.

As Table 4 shows, the number is structured very clearly into two stanzas with a refrain, framed by a short instrumental prelude and an even shorter instrumental postlude. The irregular structure concerning the number and length of the verses, the rhyme scheme and the different text of the two refrains make the simple structure more interesting. Carr uses a lot of chromaticism in the instrumental introduction, maybe to hint at the exotic setting of the second act (s. Figure 12).

The lyrics of the first verse of the second stanza, "The stately homes of England", is very similar to the beginning of *Haddon Hall*, "Ye stately homes of England"; both works are set in a venerable English mansion. However, the music is completely different, apart from the fact that both verses begin with a dotted rhythm (compare Figures 9 and 13). The homophonic setting in four parts alternates occasionally with verses sung only by the female or male voices, or with verses sung in unison, which are used to highlight the

[339] Platt 2014, p. 25.

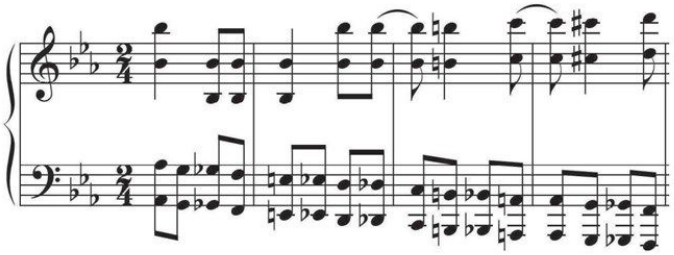

Figure 12: *Morocco Bound*—Opening Chorus. Mokeleigh Hall. (bars 12 - 15)

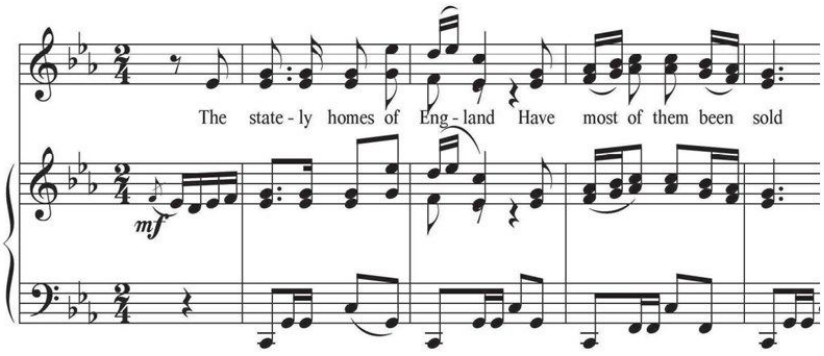


Figure 13: *Morocco Bound*—Opening Chorus. Mokeleigh Hall. (bars 76 - 80)

beginning of the refrain. As customary, the choral setting is rather dense; the sopranos sing the melody accompanied by the other voices, which are often set in prime intervals. Interestingly, the orchestra usually plays an ornamented accompaniment and only sometimes *colla parte*, the low-pitched instruments provide the harmonic and rhythmic background. The part of the sopranos is not easy to sing, especially a short section of the first refrain, where they have to sing sevenths repeatedly.

Like most numbers in this study, *Morocco Bound* begins with a monologue by a group, represented by the choristers. There is hardly any information about the plot in the opening chorus, only allusions that there might be problems caused by the new owner.

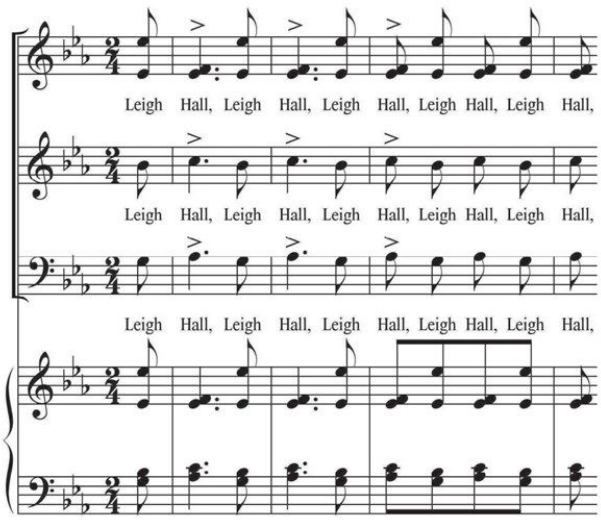


Figure 14: *Morocco Bound*—Opening Chorus. Mokeleigh Hall. (bars 65 - 67)

## 3.5 *Utopia Limited*

The comic opera[340] *Utopia Limited or The Flowers of Progress* by Arthur Sullivan with a libretto by William S. Gilbert premiered at the Savoy Theatre on 7 October 1893 and ran for 245 performances.[341] Taylor categorizes it as "'meta-Savoy Opera"' because it includes a lot of parodic elements used in earlier Savoy operas.[342] The setting is a fictitious tropical island called Utopia; Princess Zara returns from Britain, where she has been educated, and brings with her several advisors who help to reform the island into a company. The plot is basically "a parodic version of the colonial encounter" with an "absurd reversal of colonial resistance"[343] because the colony desperately wants to become as English as possible and happily abolishes its own culture. This glorification of imperialism emphasizes British superiority.

The work is furthermore concerned with "philosophical and material paradoxes of incorporation and limited liability",[344] which is an immensely relevant issue for the production of (musical) theatre because it deals with a lot of aspects theatre managers have to deal with as well. *Utopia Limited* also "makes the explicit argument that an alliance of capitalism and bureaucracy is the driving force behind empire", Williams even calls it "an

[340]The vocal score published by Chappell & Co. in London does not include any term concerning genre, Gänzl chose to label it a 'comic opera' in his chronicle.
[341]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 490.
[342]Taylor 2018, p. 117.
[343]Williams 2011, p. 325.
[344]ibid., p. 6.

anti-colonist, anti-capitalist comic opera".[345] The setting on a tropical island raises the expectation of experiencing 'exotic' Otherness in this opera, but instead, British culture and customs like the drawing room are presented on stage. However, stage setting and costumes display native Utopian culture in the first act and cater to the audience's expectations in that regard, and creates a great contrast to the second act during which the Utopians wear British clothes and the throne room has been remodelled after a British example. As Oost has pointed out, the staging was accompanied by several product placements: The audience could read in the programme which jeweller had created the ornaments that were part of the costumes displayed by the female performers, and spectators interested in improving their home could employ the very same artisan that had laid the parquet floor in the second act.[346] Additionally to the political topic, *Utopia Limited* also highlights gender issues, especially the proper behaviour of young women—a highly relevant issue for Victorian society, which is ridiculed in this comic opera. Of course, British education is the model of perfection which Utopians try to mimic. Therefore, Princess Zara has been sent away to Girton, the first British college which admitted female students, whereas her two younger sisters, the twins Nekaya and Kalyba, are home-schooled by a British Governess, Lady Sophy. She publicly presents their perfectly trained behaviour in certain situations as an example for other Utopian young women. Oost claims that *Utopia, Limited* is "an extended meditation on how to live moderately with the bounty proffered by British commercial success",[347] because the princesses (and the audience) learn by Goldbury that their artificial behaviour is not at all typical for young British ladies, who according to him effortlessly combine indulgence in leisure activities and extravagant commodities with impeachable morals—of course, it is questionable whether this might not only be wishful thinking on his part.

Interestingly enough, *Utopia Limited* is one of very few examples which features actual marriages between British men and women and foreigners.[348] In this work, there is not only a match between a British man and an 'exotic' woman (Captain Fitzbattleaxe and Princess Zara), but also between a British woman and an 'exotic' man (Lady Sophy and King Paramount). This was highly unusual, but maybe the fact that the Utopians tried so desperately to look and behave British made a mixed couple less scandalous and therefore acceptable for the audience.

The work was the first collaboration of Gilbert and Sullivan after the infamous disagreement known as the 'carpet quarrel'; a report about the ongoing rehearsals is evidence of

[345] Williams 2011, p. 325.
[346] cf. Oost 2016, pp. 68f.
[347] ibid., p. 123.
[348] Williams 2011, pp. 338ff.

the public interest in the work as well as the immense anxiety of everyone involved.[349] Wren argues that both composer and librettist were struggling to get along and therefore unable to criticize each other and extensively revising the work in progress like they used to, resulting in a piece inferior and more superficial in comparison to its predecessors. He states that *Utopia Limited* "has funny lines and nice tunes, but is almost nonfunctional as an opera."[350] Before, Gilbert and Sullivan had worked together to create a complex multilayer opera, now Sullivan simply set Gilbert's words to music without engaging in the process of planning the plot and characters. In his opinion, one of the weaknesses of the plot is that Gilbert chose a topic he was not willing to criticize harshly—British society as a whole, which he rather depicted on stage quite accurately instead of presenting a satire. There are frequent allusions to former works, so the audience might feel like it had seen the opera before rather than experiencing a new one. According to Wren, the music, similar to the plot, is not as complex and cohesive as it had been in the works of the 1880s.[351] Ainger assesses the joined effort as follows: "Gilbert produced his share of clever lyrics and Sullivan wrote his share of bright melodies; but the two did not always come together."[352]

Although the review published by *The Times* declares *Utopia Limited* to be "one of the best of the set",[353] Gänzl points out that "Gilbert's writing had returned to the less flexible style of translated farce [...] and early comic opera", resulting in "a brittle and sometimes petulantly satiric libretto from which the joyous bubble and harmless if pointed mockery of earlier works were missing", he adds that "the general tone of *Utopia (Limited)* was [...] somewhat bilious"; combined with a score that was in his opinion far from Sullivan's best.[354] Wren remarks that it becomes evident as early as in the opening chorus that the music does not match the text as well as it did in the 1880s Savoy Operas, concerning both accentuation and imagery.[355] Yates, on the other hand, confirms what he calls "local colour" in the first number, although *Utopia Limited* becomes more and more British—inhabitants as well as the music.[356]

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[349]"A Rehearsal at the Savoy. How the new Opera is prepared." *The Westminster Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1893. V&A Archive, THM-73-27-13. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the page number.

[350]Gayden Wren: *A most Ingenious Paradox. The Art of Gilbert and Sullivan*, Oxford 2001, p. 243.

[351]cf. ibid., pp. 241ff.

[352]Ainger 2002, p. 346.

[353]"Savoy Theatre." *The Times*, 9 Oct. 1893, p. 6. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS101112137/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=962ce039. Accessed 25 Oct. 2020.

[354]Gänzl 1986, pp. 461f.

[355]cf. Wren 2001, p. 252.

[356]cf. Yates 2009, p. 138.

Shaw, on the other hand, is quite in favour of the new work, but indicates that it might not be as popular with the audience. He especially praises the accompaniment as being "charmingly humorous", and compares it occasionally to Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. However, he criticizes sharply that Sullivan (like Verdi and Gounod) focused entirely on the uppermost part of each singer's vocal range. In contrast to Wren, Shaw applauds Gilbert's approach to pleasing the audience by highlighting "the superiority of the English race"; and for the glimpse into the drawing room at St James's Hall presented on stage.[357]

Gänzl also provides some insight into the creation of the production: *Utopia Limited* had a public dress-rehearsal, a very odd measure for late Victorian times, but obviously deemed necessary by its creators in order to gauge the audience's reaction to the result of the renewed collaboration which could, with few exceptions, no longer rely on the experienced and well-loved principals of the former Savoy ensemble.[358]

There is no overture included in the vocal score; however, usually an instrumental section from the second act is used as an introduction. The stage directions for the opening number are as follows:[359]

> SCENE. A Utopian Palm Grove in the gardens of KING PARAMOUNT's Palace, showing a picturesque and luxuriant Tropical landscape, with the sea in the distance. SALATA, MELENE, PHYLLA, and other Maidens discovered, lying lazily about the stage and thoroughly enjoying themselves in lotos-eating fashion.

From the moment the curtain rises, *Utopia Limited* fulfils the audience's desire to experience faraway, 'exotic' places in order to escape the hardships of everyday life, but also to be reassured of British superiority through the exquisite stage design and costumes. Furthermore, the focus on the female performers right at the beginning of the opera confirms their importance for the audience and the success of the work. It allows every spectator to observe their favourite female chorister clad in a beautiful costume in a beautiful scenery (s. Figure 15)[360]—a proceeding that would be called 'fan service' today, although it would probably be much more eroticised through provocative clothing (or the lack thereof).

This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions):[361]

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[357] cf. Bernard Shaw: *Music in London. 1890 - 94, Volume III*, London 1949 (revised and reprinted), pp. 59ff.

[358] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 464.

[359] Bradley 1996, p. 975.

[360] V&A Archive, THM-73-24-12—NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION!!!

[361] Bradley 1996, p. 975ff.

Figure 15: *Utopia Limited*—female choristers

**OPENING CHORUS.**

*In lazy languor - motionless,*
*We lie and dream of nothingness;*
*For visions come*
*From Poppydom*
*Direct at our command:*
*Or, delicate alternative,*
*In open idleness we live,*
*With lyre and lute*
*And silver flute,*
*The life of Lazyland!*
*In lazy languor - motionless,*
*We lie and dream of nothingness.*

**SOLO - PHYLLA** *with* **CHORUS.**

*The song of birds*
*In ivied towers;*
*The rippling play*
*Of waterway;*
*The lowing herds;*
*The breath of flowers;*
*The languid loves*
*Of turtle doves.*

**CHORUS.**

*The song of birds, etc.*
*These simple joys are all at hand*
*Upon thy shores, O Lazyland!*

Basically, the Utopian women, represented by the female choristers, enthuse about the fact that they do nothing at all. They refer to Utopia using the term 'Lazyland', which must have sounded like paradise at least for the hard-working part of the audience. On the other hand, this might have been meant as an accusation—the prejudice that people from southern regions are lazy is still widespread today. The behaviour and probably the looks of the Utopian maidens would have been both shocking and exciting to the Victorian spectators belonging to the middle and upper classes; the fact that they were colonized in the course of the opera (and that they were just being lazy instead of actively misbehaving) made their presence acceptable to the high moral standards of Victorian society and confirmed their view of the world and their superiority at the same time.
One of the women, Phylla, describes the island using South Seas clichés like birds, water and flowers, probably all to be found in the scenery of the original Savoy Theatre staging. These words are used to enhance the effect of costumes and scenery.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 19 | 3/4 | (a) - D | orchestra | prelude |
| | 19 - 42 | | D - D | orchestra & SA | 1st stanza |
| | 43 - 46 | | D - B | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 47 - 62 | | B - A | orchestra, SA & Phylla | 2nd stanza |
| part A' | 63 - 69 | | D - D | orchestra, SA & Phylla | reprise 1st stanza |
| | 70 - 72 | | D - D | orchestra | postlude |

Table 5: Structure of *Utopia, Limited*—Chorus (Girls only) & Solo (Phylla).

As Table 5 shows, *Utopia Limited* begins with a typical chorus number constructed in ABA'-structure, which includes a solo for a minor character who belongs to the group the female choristers represent, Utopian women.[362] The prelude of the unusually slow opening number (*Andante espressivo*) begins with a fanfare, a typical musical element to precede an important announcement (s. Figure 16). This fanfare sounds three times—but strangely, nothing but the Utopians idleness and praise for "Lazyland" follows.
Additionally to the fanfare, the prelude anticipates a motif that is sung later on slightly modified by the chorus (compare Figures 16 and 17). This *legato*-motif conjures up images of softly swaying palm leaves or hammocks; the rapid movement in semiquavers as seen in Figure 17, commencing as early as bar 15 and accompanying the first stanza, can be heard as a musical realization of the hot shimmering air or the sunlight reflecting in the sea. Thus, the instrumental prelude sets the dreamful mood of the opening chorus.

[362]The voices are denominated 1st and 2nd sopranos.

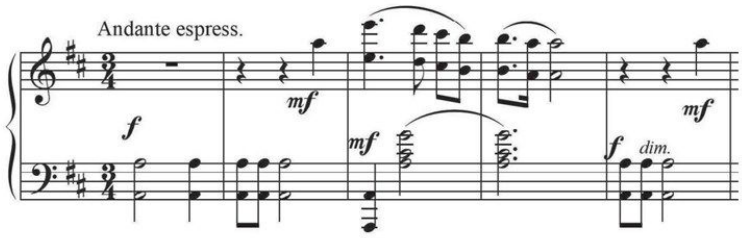


Figure 16: *Utopia, Limited*—Chorus (Girls only) & Solo—(Phylla) (bars 1 - 5)

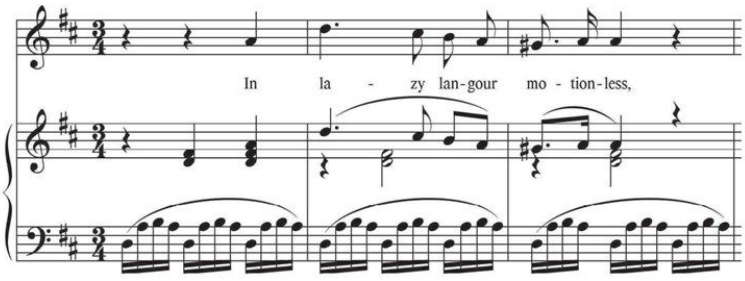


Figure 17: *Utopia, Limited*—Chorus (Girls only) & Solo—(Phylla) (mm. 19 - 21)

In the first stanza, the choristers sing mainly in unison, and although their melody is very simple and easy enough to sing, they are supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*, with the exception of verses 6 and 7, which are sung in parallel thirds to emphasize the perfect harmony described in the text. However, the irregular structure of the text with its unusual rhyme scheme including short and long verses and the necessary irregular musical structure corresponding to the length of the verses prevents this stanza from being boring. The first two verses are repeated—the 10th verse ended on the dominant to stress the exclamation mark; the attached two verses return to the tonic, the repetition of the second verse now has a closing rather than an opening character.

After a short instrumental interlude maintaining the character of part A, Phylla enters for her solo (part B). Although tempo and metre do not change, the music is completely different than before (s. Figure 18). The orchestra does not play *colla parte* any longer, the accompaniment is still in semiquavers, but uses another motif. Phylla's melody is characterized by noticeably leaps. To increase the contrast, part B is set in B-Major, even if the general accidentals do not change. The second stanza consists of regular short verses; however, Sullivan always combines two verses as seen in Figure 18 with the exception of verses 5 and 6—he maintains an irregular structure.

The chorus repeats the first half of the second stanza in unison, Phylla the second half, ending after a tiny melisma on "turtle" on a", the highest note in the number. While she

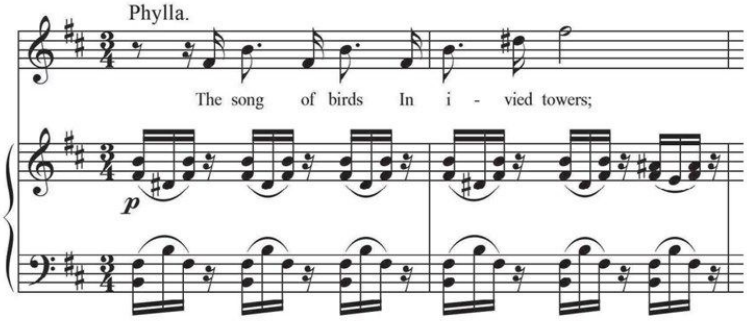


Figure 18: *Utopia, Limited*—Chorus (Girls only) & Solo—(Phylla) (bars 47 - 48)

is still maintaining the final note of part B, the chorus enters with the melody from part A, although the text has changed (part A'). The exclamation "O Lazyland!" is repeated several times. Because of the rather low pitch (d♯'-b') and the downward direction of the melody, it does not sound like a climax, but more as if the Utopian maidens are sinking down to recover from the exhaustion of this hymn-like praise (s. Figure 19).

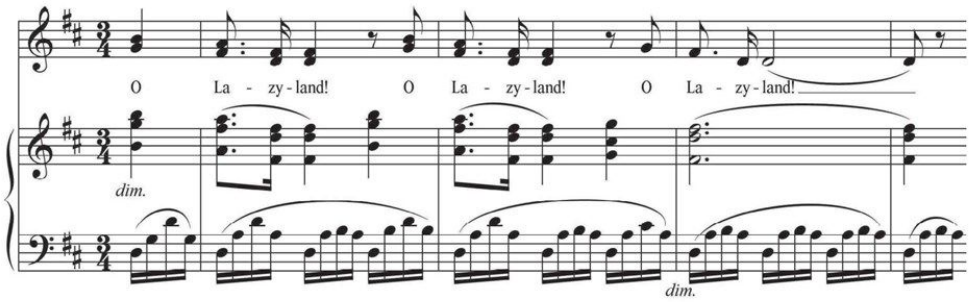


Figure 19: *Utopia, Limited*—Chorus (Girls only) & Solo—(Phylla) (bars 67 - 69)

As the analysis has shown, Sullivan employs several musical techniques to create and enhance a relaxed and gentle atmosphere for the beginning of the opera. The function of the chorus is to represent a group character that is exemplary for the inhabitants of the fictitious South Seas island Utopia, the focus is clearly on introducing the setting—not only a country, but a society that is obviously very different from late Victorian Britain and therefore needs to be described in detail. Thus, the opening chorus prepares the stage for the main characters. As customary for Savoy opera, the spectators do not learn anything about the plot or the main characters yet, Phylla is just a member of the group character. The melody sung by the chorus is not very demanding, but nonetheless effective to characterize the Utopian maidens.

## 3.6 *A Gaiety Girl*

The musical comedy *A Gaiety Girl* by Sidney Jones with a libretto by Owen Hall[363] and lyrics by Harry Greenbank premiered at the Prince of Wales Theatre on 14 October 1893, was later transferred to Daly's Theatre and ran for 413 performances collectively.[364] According to Macpherson, it is quite close to "burlesque aesthetics";[365] it is one of the first (if not the first) examples of the new genre and therefore still closely connected to formerly dominant traditions. *A Gaiety Girl* is the very first work that has been *labelled* a musical comedy.[366] The libretto was Owen Hall's first work for the theatre, apparently the former critic had claimed that he could easily outdo Adrian Ross and James T. Tanner, who had written the libretto for the very successful *In Town* (1892), and Edwardes took his word for it. It was to be the first of many more to follow, another example of Edwardes's good instincts. The opening night of *A Gaiety Girl* was preceded by an article in *The Sketch*, which describes the rehearsal and enables the readers to catch a glimpse of the routines of a theatre.[367] This article is evidence of the extent of public interest in the upcoming debut performance, and the awareness of its novelty. Gänzl describes the result as follows:

> "The leading roles were shared out more equitably than usual, the characters were allowed some genuine depth and the dialogue was written in a clear and incisive style with no attempts at word-play or blatant popular references. Owen Hall had written neither a burlesque libretto nor a comic opera book but a light dramatic play which more than justified his boast to Edwardes. [...] The piece did not follow precisely any of the established forms of musical, but it combined the best elements of several of those forms with a simply and sincerely told modern story, literate and even dramatic dialogue, music ranging from the straight ballad to the music-hall ditty, all allied with the impeccable staging and casting for which George Edwardes could be relied upon."

However, Owen Hall had managed to offend "the church, the bar, the army and unmistakable individuals" in his script, so amendments had to be made before the debut

[363]'Owen Hall' is Jimmy Davis's pen name, many sources explain it as due to the fact that he was constantly 'owing all'.
[364]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 491.
[365]Macpherson 2018, p. 66.
[366]cf. Lamb and Snelson 2001.
[367]"'A Gaiety Girl' at Rehearsal." *The Sketch*, 11 Oct. 1893, p. 579. V&A Archive, THM-LON-PRI 1893.

performance. *A Gaiety Girl* was also the first full-length work for Sidney Jones, who had made a name for himself beforehand as a conductor and song-composer.[368]
In the quote above, Gänzl mentions several aspects that eventually would become key elements of the new genre musical comedy as it evolved from earlier traditions: a plot that concentrated on modern characters living in a modern world, a variety of musical numbers written in popular forms, a lavish staging on the verge of the spectacular and a talented cast attracting a large and loyal audience.
The review in *The Times*, after discussing the matter of censorship at length, describes the work thus:

> "Apart from its questionable characterization *A Gaiety Girl* is undoubtedly entertaining. Its satire, directed against the Bench, the pulpit, the Army, and social usages in general is more than incisive. The one institution spared is the theatre, and above all the 'Gaiety Girl,' the heroine of the story [...] In the matter of costume the management have availed themselves advantageously of the usages of the Savoy, the skirt of every-day life being discarded only in the bathing scenes, and there in moderation. The nature of the story rendered the long skirt, indeed, indispensable, and it is curious to note how effective in the hands of the costumier modern costume, even in a spectacular production, may become."[369]

The emphasis put on the criticism of distinguished institutions involved in the libretto of *A Gaiety Girl* makes clear that the work was not at all perceived as merely escapist by contemporaries—contrary to the common accusation of superficiality against the whole genre. The comment on the costumes was caused by its unusualness for a work that was supposed to be close to burlesque, which always featured scantily dressed actresses as a main attraction (s. Figure 20 for an example),[370] and an attempt to point out the respectability of the work. The music is only mentioned in one short nondescript praise, this is quite informative concerning its significance when reviewing a debut performance.

In this work, whose run was accompanied by many articles featuring pictures or drawings of the performers in their costumes, the modern 'Gaiety Girls' are opposed to female members of the traditional aristocracy,[371] or, as Davis puts it, "society women's

[368]Gänzl 1986, pp. 476f.
[369]"Prince Of Wales's Theatre." *The Times*, 16 Oct. 1893, p. 14. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS235198800/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=56a5615e. Accessed 25 Oct. 2020.
[370](a) "The 'Gaiety Girl' Company." *The Sketch*, 12 Sep. 1894, p. 365. V&A Archive, THM-LON-PRI 1893—NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION!!!
(b) [untitled page] *The Sketch*, 13 Dec. 1893, p. 361. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1893—NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION!!!
[371]cf. Platt 2004, p. 42

(a) (b)

Figure 20: *A Gaiety Girl*—musical comedy (a), *Don Juan*—burlesque (b)

hypocrisy is contrasted to Gaiety Girls' compassion".[372] The work is "a study of Society's changing mores"[373] and stresses the superiority of the female choristers in many aspects. In this musical comedy, modernity triumphs completely when Lady Virginia, a typical 'harridan'-like character seen in many musical comedies,[374] is happy to accept the 'Gaiety Girl' Alma as her future niece and she and her aristocratic companions begin to take part in a modern lifestyle and way of thinking. *A Gaiety Girl* emphasizes that members of the aristocratic upper class need to embrace a modern lifestyle and cultural changes if they do not want their class to become obsolete.[375] Macpherson points out the similarities of *A Gaiety Girl* and its predecessor *In Town*, which is also about a love-story between an actress and an aristocrat.[376]

This work is especially interesting because it seems to allow the audience a glimpse of the actresses everyday life—their adorers take them out to excursions (Act 1), which seems to be close enough to reality.[377] Kent emphasizes that

[372]Davis 1991, p. 159.
[373]ibid., p. 158.
[374]cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 77.
[375]cf. Platt 2004, p. 45, p. 88.
[376]cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 19.
[377]cf. Hyman 1975, pp. 96f.

> "to Victorians the profession of actress, like that of governess, had a symbolic importance as an occupation for women that transcended mere numbers. It offered striking opportunities for independence, fame, and fortune, and even for those outside it the stage incarnated fantasies, providing vicarious release in the notion that here was an area of special dispensation from the normal categories, moral and social, that defined woman's place."[378]

Victorian women probably had very ambivalent feelings about actresses: On the one hand, they were frowned upon because of their supposed immorality, on the other hand, they were (secretly) admired because of their public display of talent and beauty that obviously enabled them to marry advantageously and even allowed them a life in abundance as single women—the situation of actresses was featured in detail and in varying degrees of truthfulness in newspapers and magazine. However, their reputation was slowly changing from dubious to somewhat respectable, and works like *A Gaiety Girl* were proof of that development as well as contributing to this shift.
Platt sees the work as the very first musical comedy, stating that the refreshingly new elements of the work cannot be found in the music, but in the libretto, and especially in the way the songs and the play were interconnected. Particularly the dialogues were a novelty: They were modelled on everyday life and included a titillating salaciousness, but did not jeopardize the respectability of the work as a whole.[379] The dialogues often mock British institutions like the army, a feature adopted from the Savoy operas.[380]
The text and stage directions for the opening chorus are as follows:[381]

> SCENE: The Cavalry Barracks at Winbridge. Back cloth landscape with Windsor Castle in distance. Foliage ground row.

The first act of *A Gaiety Girl* has a military setting—the libretto is quite accurate and specifies the Cavalry Barracks at Winbridge.[382] As already indicated, this setting is in best Savoy opera tradition. It appealed to the audience's national pride by presenting the cavalry in a positive light, which was only enhanced by the moderate mockery. Seeing handsome actors in dress uniform probably delighted female spectators who most likely shared the admiration so openly declared by the young women in the opening chorus.

[378]Christopher Kent: "Image and Reality. The Actress and Society", in: *A Widening Sphere. Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, Martha Vicinius (ed.), Bloomington 1977, p. 94.
[379]cf. Platt 2004, p. 44.
[380]cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 19.
[381]Hall, Owen. *A Gaiety Girl*. ADD MS 53535 I, pp. 2f. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.
[382]Strangely enough, there are no barracks of that name. However, the Cavalry Barracks in Hounslow are close to Windsor Castle—probably the name was changed in order to avoid any direct references to the soldiers stationed there, although the audience most likely knew which barracks were meant anyway.

**GIRLS**

*When a masculine stranger goes by*
*Array'd in a uniform smart,*
*The appeal to the feminine eye*
*Takes effect on the feminine heart.*
*The policeman's a duck and a dear*
*By the side of the sober civilian,*
*But dearer the brave volunteer,*
*And dearest the lad in vermilion.*

**SOLDIERS**

*We're delighted to hear you confess*
*You are fond of the regular's dress.*
*It is perfectly clear*
*That we've nothing to fear*
*From the p'liceman in blue*
*or the brave volunteer*

**GIRLS & SOLDIERS**

*When a good-looking soldier goes by etc.*

(GIRLS go L.)

**GIRLS (Looking off)**

*But see what glorious visions come this way*
*We girls ideals have and these are they.*

(Enter SOLDIERS in full dress uniform. Those already on the stage are in undress uniform only)

**SOLDIERS (In full dress)**

*When a soldier on parade* (Advance)
*In his grandeur is display'd,*
*Opposition is compell'd to hide its puny form,*
*For there's nothing can compare*
*With the concentrated glare*
*Of a military regimental uniform.*

(The GIRLS, attracted by the new arrivals, begin gradually to forsake their old admirers)

**GIRLS**

*When in stiff and stolid style*
*You arrive in double file*
*To an operatic air of light and tuny form*
*You compel us to adore you,*
*For you carry all before you*
*In your military regimental uniform.*

(Close Order - March - Sections R. and L. turn - March. By this time all the GIRLS have left the SOLDIERS in undress uniform and have surrounded those in full dress)

**CHORUS - GIRLS AND SOLDIERS - BASSES retire**

*Now here's a delightful surprise*
*Defeat and disaster averted;*
*For Venus in penitence flies*
*To Mars whom she lately deserted;*
*For Corporal merits the cup,*
*For thanks to his tact and decision*
*The motion for making it up*
*Is carried without a division.*

*Then here's to his health,*
*Promotion and wealth,*
*We hope that he soon will be*
*Commander in chief*
*For, stated in brief,*
*A jolly good corporal he!*

(Dance of in couples - Exeunt)

The lyrics of the opening number revolve around female admiration of men in uniform. Strangely enough, the young women, represented by the female choristers, let the soldiers, played by the tenors, know how much they are attracted to men in uniform—in direct and straightforward words. That *A Gaiety Girl* was considered a respectable form of entertainment is proof of a distinct relaxation in the formerly rigid moral codex of Victorian society. Naturally, the soldiers are "delighted" about the female attention; however, they soon suffer the consequences of such a perfunctory admiration, which is by no means directed at them personally, but simply at the uniforms they are wearing (and everything the uniform implies as a symbol of male power). The women sure enough turn their backs on the soldiers in 'undress' uniforms, as soon as others in even more attractive 'dress' uniforms arrive, represented by the basses. Thus, the number criticizes the fickleness and superficiality of female admiration, and men's naivety in believing in its sincerity easily, by exaggerating and ridiculing it. Furthermore, the number can be seen as a reminder that more than a smart uniform is necessary to form a lasting attachment, and as a warning about hasty decisions—on both sides.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 25 | 6/8 | (d) - A | orchestra | prelude |
| | 26 - 41 | | (a) - b | orchestra & SA | 1st stanza |
| | 42 - 52 | | (b) - A7 | orchestra & T | 2nd stanza |
| | 54 - 61 | | (a) - D | orchestra & SAT | reprise 1st stanza |
| | 62 - 68 | | (d) - D7 | orchestra & SA | vocal interlude |
| | 69 | | D | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 70 - 73 | | G - (d-c) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 74 - 88 | | (d) - (b) | orchestra & B | 3rd stanza |
| | 89 - 105 | | (b) - G | orchestra & SATB | 3rd & 4th stanza |
| | 106 - 113 | | G - A | orchestra | interlude |
| part A' | 114 - 129 | | (a) - A | orchestra & SATB | reprise 1st stanza, 3rd stanza |
| part C | 130 - 142 | | A - D | orchestra & SATB | 5th stanza |
| | 142 - 156 | | A - (d) | orchestra | postlude |

Table 6: Structure of *A Gaiety Girl*—"When a Masculine Stranger Goes By."

As Table 6 shows, the number is rather complex and consists of several contrasting parts. The instrumental introduction creates a cheerful atmosphere, the tempo is fast as is usual (*Allegro moderato*). The cue of the chorus is prepared and announced by the orchestra with *tremolo* and an escalating melody. The first stanza (8 verses) is sung by the female chorus only, as customary denominated 1st and 2nd sopranos. The setting is very simple:

Both voices sing mainly in unison (with the exception of verses 5 and 7, sung in thirds or sixths), all verses have the same length, the melody is predominated by quavers (with few exceptions in the upbeat and last note) and seconds, the orchestra plays *colla parte* or contributes the harmonic and rhythmic background. The tenors enter with a slightly shorter second stanza (6 verses) that is set in a similar vein, but a little more varied: The verses do not have the same length, Jones adds interjections played by the orchestra to maintain regular phrases consisting of two bars. The accompaniment is akin to the first stanza. Verses 5 and 6 are set as a musical unit (3 bars). This results in a slight contrast between the stanzas which makes it easy for the audience to follow the structure of the number. The vocal section of part A is constructed in an internal aba'-structure and ends with a repetition of the first four verses, there are minor modifications in words, but not in meaning. At first, the tenors echo the melody sung by the first sopranos, while the second sopranos sing mainly prime intervals; the same kind of accompaniment is maintained (s. Figure 21). The voices conclude verse 4 together, Jones uses a setting in four parts for the first time in this number.

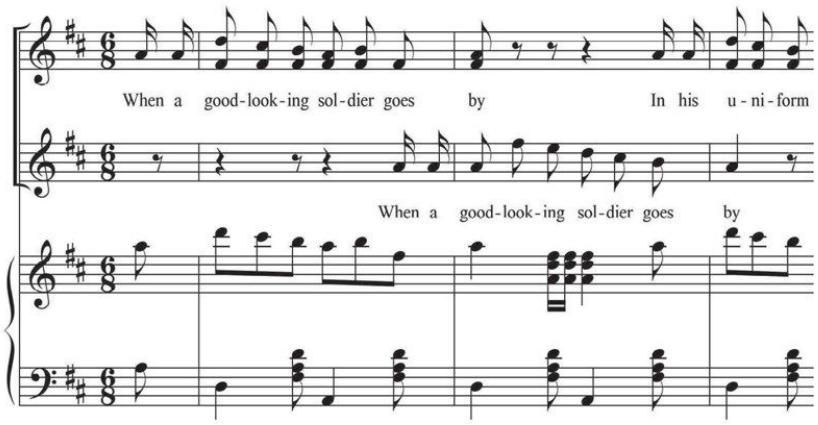


Figure 21: *A Gaiety Girl*—"When a Masculine Stranger Goes By." (bars 54 - 55)

The next two verses, sung by the female chorus, are an interlude which prepares the cue of the soldiers in dress uniform. The girls express their delight in seeing the soldiers ("But see...") singing in thirds, using no longer mainly quavers, but longer notes. After a short instrumental interlude already in the style of the new part (B), the basses enter with the third stanza (6 verses). As in the first stanza, the melody is quite simple and supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*; the harmonic structure is also very basic. The choppy rhythm illustrates the march of the soldiers in verses 1-3. The structure of the text (two short verses, one long verse) is adopted by the music (s. Figure 22).

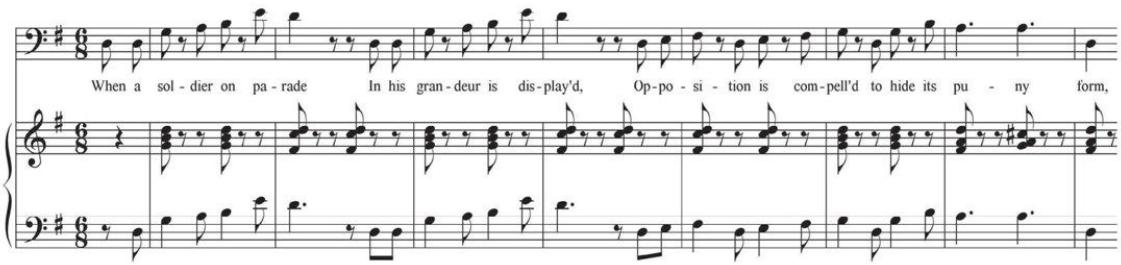


Figure 22: *A Gaiety Girl*—"When a Masculine Stranger Goes By." (bars 74 - 81)

Verses 4-6 are sung to a different, but related melody, there are no more pauses during the verses. The soldiers no longer sing about the parade, therefore a musical illustration of marching soldiers is no longer fitting. Subsequently, the sopranos enter with the fourth stanza (6 verses), while the tenors and basses repeat the third stanza to a different rhythm and melody, set in three parts. The orchestra plays *colla parte* with either the tenors or the sopranos and provides the rhythmical and harmonic background (s. Figure 23). This complex setting is strongly reminiscent of the chorus numbers in the Savoy operas in which the male and female chorus often represented opposed groups—illustrated by Sullivan with different melodies linked to each group that were at first presented separately, but combined later in that number.

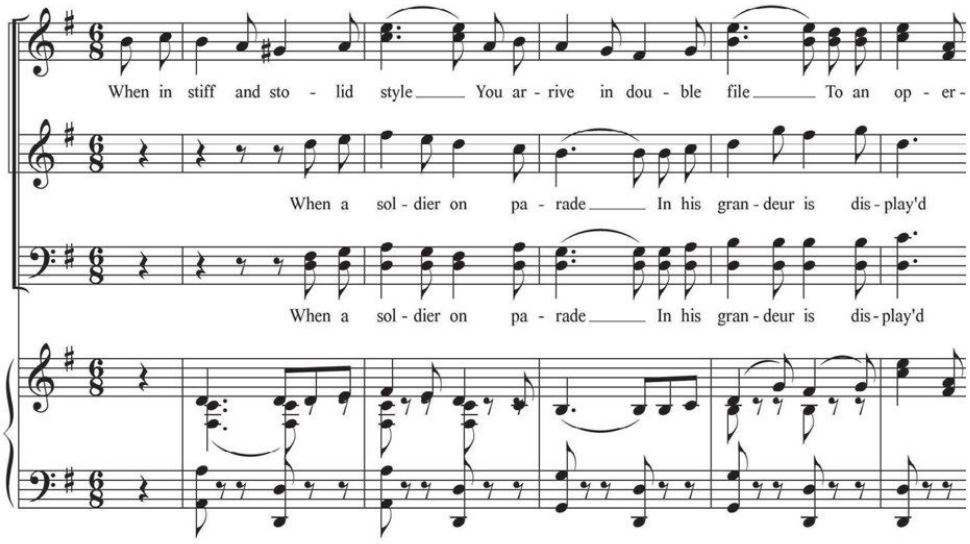


Figure 23: *A Gaiety Girl*—"When a Masculine Stranger Goes By." (bars 90 - 94)

All voices end together, in unison and temporarily *a capella*, on "regimental uniform" in G-major, followed by a general pause which clearly marks the end of part B. Thereafter, the key changes back to D-major and Jones reprises the beginning of the number: First, there is an instrumental interlude similar to the instrumental introduction, but much shorter; then the tenors echo the sopranos singing the slightly altered first verse "When a masculine stranger goes by", while the basses repeat once more the third stanza. Apart from the changed text and the addition of the basses, the beginning of this part (A') is exactly the same as section a' in part B (s. Figure 21). After four verses, the tenors join the bases instead of echoing the sopranos.
The fifth stanza (6 verses, part C), a toast to an unknown, but obviously popular corporal ("Then here's to his health"), is a homophonic setting for four parts, all voices but the first sopranos sing mainly prime intervals, the orchestra plays *colla parte* all the time. Verses 4 - 6 are repeated in D-major instead of G-major in an exuberant emphasis, enhanced by a constantly high pitch of the first sopranos' melody. The opening chorus ends with an instrumental postlude, and thus provides the necessary music for the choristers' danced exit, as indicated in the libretto.

As mentioned above, this number is highly reminiscent of the chorus numbers of the Savoy operas, especially in the temporarily complex setting consisting of two opposed groups. *A Gaiety Girl* is one of the first examples of the new genre musical comedy and therefore still quite close to its predecessor. This opening chorus introduces the military background of the setting, focusing on the girls' admiration of men in uniform; the female and male choristers each represent a group character and thus prepare the background for the protagonists. This superficial and a little ridiculous, but common behaviour was in all likelihood most familiar to the spectators, so they could easily relate to the action presented on stage. The setting suggested all kinds of romantic and/or comic entanglements and thus promised an entertaining plot. As usual, there is no information about either the plot or any main characters. The meaning of the title is yet to be explained. As the analysis has shown, the number is mostly easy to sing, however, the more complex parts demand at least experienced singers.

## 3.7 *His Excellency*

The comic opera *His Excellency* by Frank Osmond Carr with a libretto by William Schwenck Gilbert premiered at the Lyric Theatre on 27 October 1894 and ran for 161 performances.[383] Although this run was rather short in comparison to the Savoy operas, the work is nonetheless interesting for this study because it was Gilbert's second collaboration with another composer than Sullivan after the infamous 'carpet quarrel'. Alfred Cellier, composer of *The Mountebanks*, had died shortly before the opening night, so Gilbert was obliged to find a new partner. Carr had been very successful with *In Town* (1892) and *Morocco Bound*, and was therefore a highly suitable choice.
*His Excellency* is about a governor who loves to play tricks on pretty much everyone, but is outsmarted by a superior, resulting in the usual announcement of marriages. Gänzl describes the comic opera as close to Gilbert's prior successes concerning the libretto; interestingly, most of the musical numbers include an ensemble of several soloists instead of just one. However, although Carr's score was appreciated, he could not replace Sullivan, whose musical humour would have improved the work in the opinion of the public. Former Savoy principals also had a hand in making *His Excellency* a success by attracting loyal spectators. Gänzl concludes that

> "on the whole, *His Excellency* showed proof of an unfashionable artificiality in its fun and a lack of colour in its story and incidents when looked at alongside such current favourites as *A Gaiety Girl* or *Morocco Bound*."[384]

This assessment is reflected in the low number of performances. The review in *The Times* is full of praise for Gilbert's libretto, which includes several characters that have been especially created for former Savoy principals, and acknowledges Carr's score as follows:

> "In setting Mr. Gilbert's words, the composer has wisely attempted to imitate [...] the Sullivanian methods and mannerisms, rather than to cast his work in that more vulgar mould in which he has found favour with the purveyors of variety entertainments. If his music is seldom distinguished, it at least adheres closely to the model chosen.[385]"

"[T]hat more vulgar mould" obviously refers to the musical farcical comedy *Morocco Bound*. The author commends Carr's decision to contribute a score in Sullivan's style,

[383] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 532.
[384] Gänzl 1986, pp. 515ff.
[385] "Lyric Theatre." *The Times*, 29 Oct. 1894, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS202431325/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=81945913. Accessed 10 Nov. 2020.

but it is apparent that they do not think of the music as anything special. However, Carr could evidently 'deliver' what was expected of him. The review in *The Sketch*, complete with several drawn impressions of the performance, devotes three-quarters to a detailed summary of the plot before likewise praising the libretto as

> "one of the brightest, most whimsical and fascinating of the wonderful series that will render the author of the 'Bab-Ballad' immortal. Dr. Carr is forced into comparison with Sir Arthur Sullivan, and it is unfortunate and unfair. Taking his music without any pretence at comparison one finds gaiety, freedom from vulgarity, excellent workmanship, and sometimes charming melodic invention."[386]

Of course it was inevitable for the collaborators, but especially for Carr, to avoid comparison with the former successes at the Savoy Theatre. While this comment clearly classifies the score as clearly inferior to Sullivan's works, it also emphasizes that it is sufficient for the purpose of entertainment.
The first number is preceded by the following stage directions:[387]

> SCENE. Marketplace of Elsinore. The townspeople, led by Mats Munck, the SYNDIC, are assembled to congratulate ERLING SYKKE on the completion of the statue of the Prince Regent of Denmark, which occupies the center of the stage. Colours flying, bells ringing, cannons firing, and general symptoms of rejoicing.

The comic opera is set in Elsinore,[388] Denmark, which was probably highlighted by stereotypical costumes and scenery—the obligatory flags hissed in such a situation would be quite unmistakable. Settings in foreign countries were always sure to please the audience because they allowed for the display of costumes and traditions that were different from their own. Thus *His Excellency* enabled the spectators to experience 'Danish' culture without the strenuousness of an actual journey, while at the same time being reassured of the superiority of their own customs. A festivity as an opening scene was a popular choice as well because its exceptional circumstances meant that deviations from the strict rules that dominated everyday life were possible and less likely to have severe consequences. Furthermore, a festivity always provided entertainment, so the people on stage and the audience were in a similar situation.
This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions), according to the libretto:[389]

[386]"The Play and its Story. 'His Excellency,' at the Lyric Theatre." *The Sketch*, 31 Oct. 1894, p. 7. V&A Archive, THM-LON-LYSA 1894.
[387]Gilbert, William Schwenck. *His Excellency.* https://gsarchive.net/gilbert/plays/excellency/his_excellency.html
[388]Elsinore is the English name for the Danish city Helsingør, close to castle Kronburg, where Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is presumably set.
[389]Gilbert, William Schwenck. *His Excellency.* https://gsarchive.net/gilbert/plays/excellency/his_excellency.html

**[Chorus.]**

*Set the merry bunting flying,*
*Fire the cannon ring the bells*
*La La La...*
*Our great townsman glorifying,*
*Who with sculptorskill undying,*
*All competitors excels.*

*He with his artistic spells,*
*So the stubborn marble quells,*
*That, to all intents elastic,*
*It assumes, in manner plastic,*
*Shapes heroic shapes fantastic,*
*As his mighty will compels!*
*La La La ...*

**Mats Munck.**

*Chosen from his fellow creatures*
*By our King - 'twas wisely done*
*To perpetuate the features*
*of the Regent Prince his son*
*Then created by a penmark,*
*At our gracious King's decree,*
*Sculptor to the Court of Denmark,*
*And the Royal Familee! [sic!]*

**[Chorus.]**

*Sculptor to the Court of Denmark,*
*And the Royal Familee! [sic!]*
*Leisure take* Festina lente
*You have time before you, plenty,*
*When at only two-and-twenty,*
Nemine dissentiente
*Your created with a penmark,*
*Sculptor to the Court of Denmark*
*And the Royal familee! [sic!]*

**Erling.**

*Most worthy Syndic and all kind friends assembled*
*I thank you for your kind and cordial greeting,*
*But when you sing my praises,*
*Oh remember how many worthier brethren pine and perish*
*For lack of that sunbeam of Royal favour,*
*Which, by sheer April chance, has fallen on me,*
*And warm'd my budding powers into blossom!*

**[Chorus.]**

*No, no, no!*
*No April chance is here*
*Thine art hath no compeer*
*It triumphs all completely*
*And, sooth to say, 'twere well*
*If Royal sunbeams always fell*
*So wisely, so discreetly!*

*So scatter flow'rs at his feet,*
*Sing him songs of jubilation,*
*And the king of sculptors greet*
*With a rosy coronation.*

*Raise him on our brawny shoulders*
*Cynosure of all beholders*
*Hail him, scholar hail him, gownsman*
*As your worthiest fellow townsman!*
*Hail him, dunce and ignoramus,*
*For his fame will make you famous!*
*Hail him great, and hail him small,*
*Hail him one, and hail him all!*

**Erling.**

*My pretty one, why silent and alone?*
*Why sit you thus in pensive meditation?*
*Has melancholy mark'd you for her own,*
*Or sad disaster check'd your heart's elation?*
*I pray reply!*

**Christina.**

*Good sir, although I sit apart all day,*
*I am no prey to grief or sad disaster,*
*Truth is, I cannot tear myself away,*
*From this fair form-*
*Thy work, oh, mighty master!*
*I'll tell you why!*

*I see with a silent awe,*
*In this faultless form allied,*
*The exquisite grace*
*Of a royal race,*
*And the glory of knightly pride.*
*No blemish, or fault, or flaw,*
*But perfect in all is he,*
*I've learnt, in fine,*
*What a god divine*
*A chivalrous knight may be.*

*As gentle as lover's lay,*
*Or the dawn of a sweet Mayday,*
*Yet cast in the knightly mould*
*Of the glorious days of old!*

*My eyes are open'd at last*
*I see What he*
*who would win my heart must be!*

*Why look at the men we've known*
*Their mouths will open and close*
*They're ears likewise,*
*And a couple of eyes,*
*And the usual nubbly nose;*
*Each has a head of his own,*
*They're bodies, and legs and feet,*
*I'm bound to admit*
*That in every whit*
*The catalogue's quite complete:*

*But where is the godlike grace*
*That lights that marvellous face?*
*Where is the brow serene?*
*Where is the lordly mien?*
*Ah, dullards and dolts are all I've known,*
*Compared with that marvellous matchless stone!*

The lyrics of the first choral section illustrate the festivity and also explain its occasion, which is to honour a local sculptor. Mats Munck, obviously a local dignitary, announces him to be "Sculptor to the Court of Denmark, And the Royal Familee!", echoed by the assembled townspeople, who praise and describe him further. Subsequently, Erling, the sculptor, addresses the public with a speech of thanks, but at the same time attributes the honour to coincidence, which is vehemently disputed by the locals. So far, the lyrics

represent a festivity like this in a realistic manner; the benevolence of the "Royal Familee" is highlighted especially. The importance of the festivity seems to be a little exaggerated for the occasion, as the recipient of the honours seems to think as well. However, this might also be due to the fact that this is an opening number of a comic opera, which requires a certain degree of spectacle. The enthusiasm for the royal house is definitely something the spectators shared and could relate to.
The next part of the opening number is very different from the beginning: Slightly away from the hustle and bustle of the festivity, Erling addresses Christina, who seems to be troubled. Thus, the sculptor is introduced not only as modest, but also as empathic—even during a festivity in his honour he cares for his fellow human beings. The story Christina relates seems to indicate a plot inspired by Pygmalion, a topic with which Victorians were familiar due to their enthusiasm for antiquity.
As the text already indicates, the opening chorus is quite long (275 bars) and consists of several contrasting parts (s. Table 7). The analysis will focus on parts A - C because of the chorus's involvement; parts D and E will only be considered with regards to content.

The opening chorus begins with an instrumental introduction introducing the rhythmic motif of the chorus in a fanfare-like motif that is played three times as if to announce the beginning of the opera, or the beginning of the festivity on the marketplace of Elsinore (s. Figure 24). Subsequently, Carr uses tremolo (low pitch) and scalic movements in semiquavers (high pitch) to attract the audience's attention.

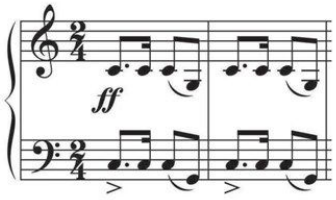


Figure 24: *His Excellency*—Opening Chorus (bars 1 - 2)

The first choral section is set in a simple manner, the numerous prime intervals sung by the contraltos, tenors and basses and the "la la la" in verse 3 are reminiscent of a folk song. This supports the impression of a folk festival, which is described by the lyrics and displayed on stage. The orchestra plays *colla parte* in all verses but verse 3, during which it revisits the tremolo and scalic movements from the instrumental introduction, while the chorus breaks out in a short polyphonic phrase consisting mainly of scalic imitations. Carr follows the rather irregular structure of Gilbert's text, setting all rhyming verses in

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 22 | 2/4 | C - G7 | orchestra | introduction |
| | 23 - 36 | | C - A | chorus SATB & orchestra | “Set the merry...” |
| | 36 - 39 | | e - A | orchestra | interlude |
| | 40 - 62 | | A - C | chorus SATB & orchestra | “He with his...” |
| | 62 - 66 | | C - (e) | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 66 - 80 | C | a - C | Mats Munck & orchestra | “Chosen from...” |
| | 81 - 84 | | C - C | chorus SATB & orchestra | “Sculptor to...” |
| | 85 - 92 | 2/4 | D7 - G | chorus SA & orchestra | “Leisure take...” |
| | 93 - 104 | | D7 - a6 | chorus SATB & orchestra | “Leisure take...” |
| | 105 - 108 | C | C - C | | “Sculptor to...” |
| part C | 109 - 121 | C | a6 - G | Erling & orchestra | recitative (solo) |
| | 121 - 144 | C - 6/8 | G - G | chorus SATB & orchestra | “No, no, no!...” |
| | 144 - 160 | 6/8 | G - G | | “So scatter...” |
| | 160 - 161 | C | G - G | orchestra | interlude |
| | 162 - 180 | | C - C | orchestra & chorus SATB | “Raise him on...” |
| | 180 - 189 | | C - C | orchestra | interlude |
| part D | 191 - 191 | | (c) - a | orchestra | interlude |
| | 192 - 201 | | a - E | Erling & orchestra | recitative (solo) |
| | 202 - 210 | | a - E | Christina & orchestra | recitative (solo) |
| part E | 210 - 213 | | E - a | orchestra | interlude |
| | 214 - 228 | 3/4 | a - D7 | Christina & orchestra | Ballad, 1st stanza |
| | 228 - 241 | C | D7 - A | | Ballad, 2nd stanza |
| | 241 - 243 | | A - F | orchestra | interlude |
| | 244 - 259 | 6/8 | F - D7 | Christina & orchestra | Ballad, 3rd stanza |
| | 260 - 272 | C | D7 - A | | Ballad, 4th stanza |
| | 272 - 275 | | A - C | orchestra | postlude |

Table 7: Structure of *His Excellency*—Opening Chorus

the same manner. The words "ring the bells" are separated by pauses, thus imitating the sounds of tolling bells (s. Figure 25).

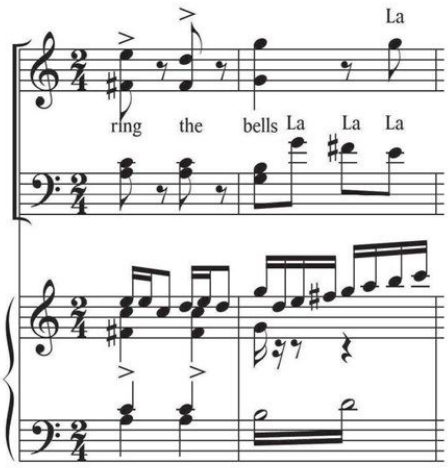


Figure 25: *His Excellency*—Opening Chorus (bars 26 -27)

Carr used a more complex setting for the next part of the choral section ("He with his artistic spells..."). The first two verses are sung only by the basses in A-Major, then the sopranos and contraltos imitate them in unison in G-Major. The melody of these verses is a little more challenging to sing because it includes chromaticism, but the singers are supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*. Verse 5 is sung in unison and stresses the word "fantastic" by stretching it over two and a half bars. This element is revisited in verse 6 on "will com(pels)". The effect is quite peculiar and somewhat mismatched. Part A end with a short instrumental postlude (which is at the same time an interlude to part B).

Verses 1 to 6 of part B, sung by the soloist representing the syndic Mats Munck, sound like a recitative due to the frequent prime intervals and the sparse harmonic accompaniment provided by the orchestra. The announcement "Sculptor to the Court of Denmark, And the Royal Familee!" (verses 7 - 8) is set in a quite different manner, the singer's line is more melodic and the accompaniment more dense and embellished by several triadic movements in quavers. Subsequently, these verses are echoed by the chorus in four parts; the sopranos repeat the soloist's melody and the orchestra retains the same accompaniment. In the following choral section ("Leisure take..."), Carr uses a simple setting with a lot of prime intervals in the lower voices, supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte* and embellishments of the melody (s. Figure 26). Verses 7 and 8 of this section are another repetition of Mats Munck's announcement, a clear conclusion for part B.

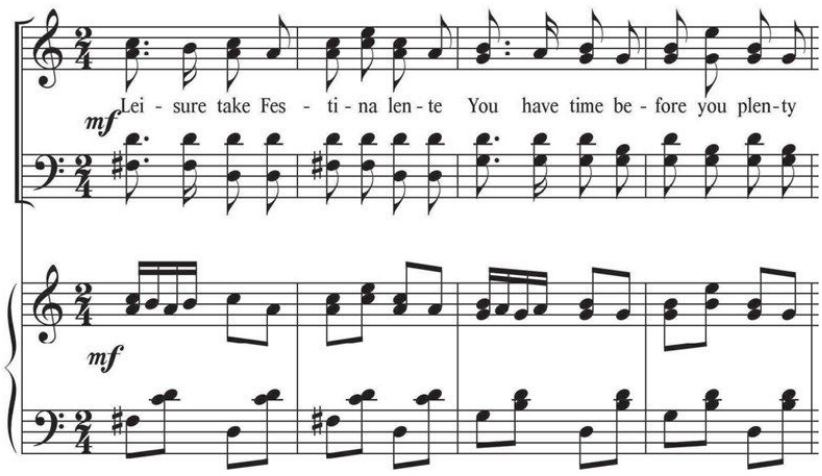


Figure 26: *His Excellency*—Opening Chorus (bars 93 - 96)

Part C follows a similar structure: It begins with a recitative for a soloist, the sculptor Erling Sykke, followed by a large section sung by the chorus. Erling modestly states that he is unworthy of all the praise and attention, but the chorus disagrees decidedly (s. Figure 27). The number switches to 6/8-time in the next bar, the orchestra accompanies the chorus with an a-minor chord that is repeated on each quaver during verses 2 and 3 to illustrate the agitation of the attendant crowd. This effect is enhanced by the female and male voices singing alternately in the first four verses of this section and by the leaps in the melody. Carr returns to a homophonic setting in verses 5 and 6, the crowd seems calmer because of the longer note values sung by the chorus, however, the steady quaver pattern in the orchestra continues. "So wisely" (verse 7) is repeated several times, female and male voices alternating, to emphasize the wise decision of the "Royal familee". The orchestra plays *colla parte*, but maintains the agitation through the use of tremolo.
Subsequently, the chorus continues to praise Erling; Carr uses a polyphonic setting in accordance with the text "scatter flow'rs at his feet" (s. Figure 28).[390] This creates an effect of exuberant praise, the next verse actually describes what the chorus is doing at this very moment: "Sing him songs of jubilation". This praise continues for the rest of this part in a simple homophonic setting in four parts, occasionally female and male voices alternate.
This number actually includes a great deal more information than the usual opening chorus: It introduces not only the setting, but as well three main characters and the plot (mainly in parts D and E). The Danish setting is introduced by scenery and costumes,

[390]Unfortunately, the vocal score is not very clear on the text to be sung by the contraltos in bars 146f.

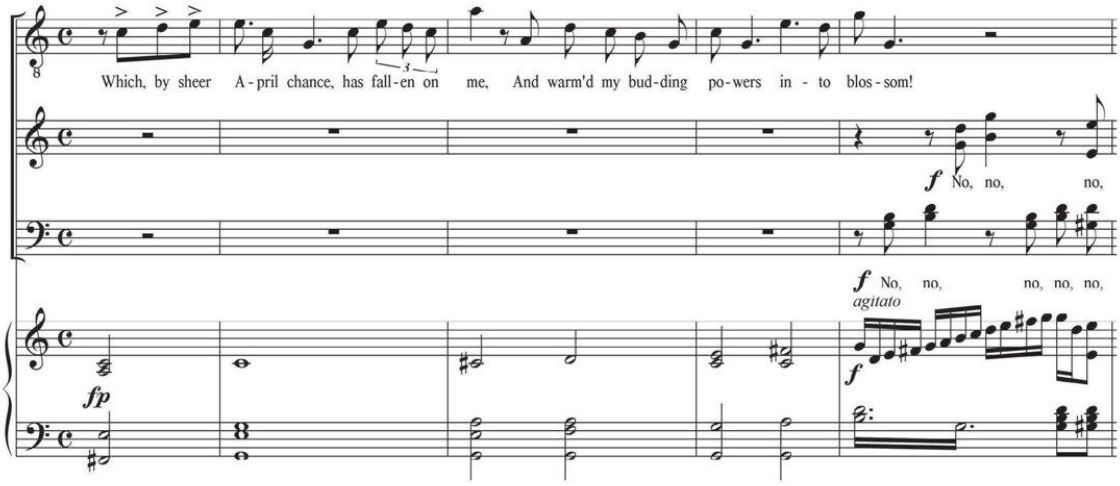


Figure 27: *His Excellency*—Opening Chorus (bars 118 - 121)

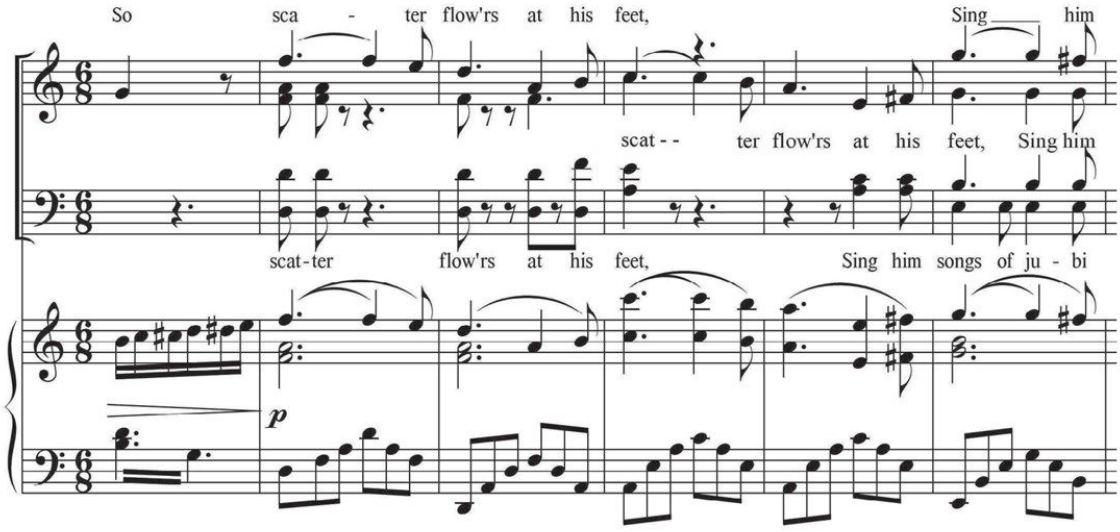


Figure 28: *His Excellency*—Opening Chorus (bars 145 - 149)

but the festive atmosphere is mainly created by the music, as this analysis has shown. The chorus is used as a realistic living scenery (as are the 'speakers' Mats Munck and Erling Stykke)—most of the singing on stage in parts A to C would be sung as well at a real folk festival in honour of an artist, quite a rare occasion in popular musical theatre. Furthermore, the chorus also represents a group character that comments and reacts on the 'speech' made by the sculptor. The difficulty of the chorus ranges from very simple to advanced, experienced singers are a necessity.

## 3.8 *The Shop Girl*

The musical farce *The Shop Girl* by Ivan Caryll with additional numbers by Adrian Ross and Lionel Monckton and words by Harry J. W. Dam premiered at the Gaiety Theatre on 24 November 1894 and ran for 546 performances.[391] The opening night was followed by detailed summary of the plot and long interviews with Dam, Caryll and Tanner, the producer[392]—the length of the summary and the interviews show the immense interest in the new production. During its long run, several alterations were made, sometimes due to the necessity of finding new performers to replace an indisposed member of the ensemble, ultimately resulting in a 'second edition' in 1895.[393] The critics saw the piece as the direct successor of *A Gaiety Girl*, with whom it shares the modern setting and storyline, but also the special style in which the dialogues were written.[394] Gänzl elaborates that "Dam's dialogue was neither particularly clever nor humorous but it had the merit of keeping a brisk rate of action going",[395] which was clearly a characteristic feature of the new modern style. A further similarity to *A Gaiety Girl* is the social standing of the main character's occupation: Shop girls were regarded as immoral and indecent women,[396] the situation was even worse for actresses in general who "were often viewed as little more than prostitutes".[397]

Lamb emphasizes the attempt of "continuity with earlier burlesque by stressing its 'variety show' aspect", and states that the work "established the formula for the Gaiety musical

[391] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 533.
[392] cf. "'The Shop Girl,' at the Gaiety Theatre." *The Sketch*, 28 Nov. 1894, p. 215ff. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1894.
[393] cf. Gänzl 1986, pp. 522f.
[394] cf. Platt 2004, p. 46.
[395] Gänzl 1986, p. 519.
[396] cf. Christopher P. Hosgood: "'Mercantile Monasteries'. Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain", in: *Journal of British Studies* 38 (1999), p. 338.
[397] Macpherson 2018, p. 14.

comedy [...] with its sumptuous contemporary dresses, youthful cast, romantic plot and catchy tunes",[398]—it was a significant steppingstone for the new genre. Scott points out that *The Shop Girl* is "the first musical comedy to have a full chorus line of modern Gaiety Girls." Additionally, the work features a "scantily clad burlesque troupe of women from the Frivolity Theatre", probably to enhance the respectability of the more decent female choristers at the Gaiety Theatre.[399] According to Hyman, the libretto is much better than the one of its predecessor,[400] but he does not elaborate why he thinks so. The work is usually referred to as a musical comedy, I could not find any contemporary sources explaining why it was labelled a musical farce, maybe it is because of its variety elements. However, the reason for this term might also have been the management's calculation that it would attract more spectators than a musical comedy[401]—the genre was still very young and therefore the term did not have any advertising appeal yet. Dam uses the term 'lyrical comedy' in an interview with *The Sketch*, but this was without consequences for the future of the genre.[402] The review published in *The Times* also elaborates at length on the genre of the work:

> "Judged of as a variety entertainment, *The Shop Girl*, which has taken its place in the bill of the Gaiety Theatre, might be found wanting; but it aspires to be something other than that, something which might be comic opera if the songs were not of the music-hall order and if the cast did not embrace principals who dance a great deal better than they sing. Mr. H.J.W. Dam and Mr. Ivan Caryll, with the assistance of Mr. Adrian Ross and Mr. Lionel Monckton, have contrived a hybrid entertainment which may best be described as musical farce, but which yields nothing to conventional Gaiety burlesque in the matter of colour, brightness, or 'female interest' of a kind. *The Shop Girl* is distinguished broadly from the variety entertainment by having a coherent action, not particularly dramatic or amusing in character, but boasting at least a beginning, a middle, and an end."[403]

These lines show that their writer took great care in trying to determine in which category the work should be placed. It is questionable whether the precise genre was really that important for the ordinary spectator, who probably just wanted to be entertained, but

[398]Lamb and Snelson 2001.
[399]Scott 2018, p. 482.
[400]cf. Hyman 1975, p. 68.
[401]cf. Scott 2020, p. 248.
[402]cf. "'The Shop Girl,' at the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Dam, the Author." *The Sketch*, 28 Nov. 1894, p. 215. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1894.
[403]"Gaiety Theatre." *The Times*, 26 Nov. 1894, p. 4. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS69524346/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=5f14d314. Accessed 24 Oct. 2020.

it is evident that the critic, as someone who was involved with popular musical theatre on a professional level, considered *The Shop Girl* as something new which amalgamated several very different traditions—"a hybrid entertainment".

The plot is a Cinderella-like love story about the eponymous shop girl, who works at the Royal Stores and turns out to be a rich heiress. Bailey points out that a department store was an interesting setting for several reasons: the audience knew it well, the goods were promoted in a way that was pretty similar to the staging of (musical) theatre,[404] and, last but not least, the context of the department store made proper social interactions between classes and between men and women possible.[405] Furthermore, tourists and middle class citizens living in the suburbs often combined visits to the department stores and the West End theatre in a trip to central London, so a connection between both leisure activities would have been perceived as self-evident to most of the audience.[406] Macpherson adds another aspect, emphasizing that *The Shop Girl* "plac[es] the young protagonist specifically within the *public* sphere of commerce and consumerism, rather than the private sphere of domestic family life", which was traditionally considered the centre of a respectable female life. Bessie Brent is actually quite the opposite of the usually modest and naive Cinderella-character, the dialogues show that she is a self-assured young woman who knows what she wants and how to get there.[407]

In *The Shop Girl*, the contrast between modernity and tradition is shown by pairing up Bessie Brent, the shop girl who inherited a fortune made in a mining enterprise in the USA, and Charles Appleby, a medical student from an impoverished aristocratic family.[408] His mother, Lady Appleby, is presented in an extremely negative way (she purloins money from a beneficial purpose without feeling remorse), in general, "the traditional aristocrat was imaged as corrupt and beyond redemption", "aristocracy is also characterized by its dissipation and irresponsibility."[409] This depiction of aristocracy is similar to *A Gaiety Girl*, where Lady Virginia Forest was presented in the same way as Lady Appleby (just as in Savoy opera, the libretti of musical comedies often included elderly women that were depicted very unfavourably). John Brown on the other hand, a man with so-called new money, is shown in a good light.[410] With this representation, *The Shop Girl* also ties up to its predecessor, *A Gaiety Girl*, which similarly states the

[404]cf. Platt *et al.* 2014, p. 6.
[405]cf. Bailey 1996, pp. 41f.
[406]cf. Erika Diane Rappaport: *Shopping for Pleasure. Women in the Making of London's West End*, Princeton 2000, p. 181.
[407]Macpherson 2018, pp. 67ff.
[408]cf. Platt 2004, p. 42.
[409]ibid., pp. 88f.
[410]cf. ibid., p. 89.

importance of accepting cultural and social changes for members of the aristocracy to survive as a class in late Victorian times. However, by portraying aristocrats far worse than in *A Gaiety Girl*, this statement becomes much more explicit. Maybe the former work was used to test public reactions to this delicate issue and therefore somewhat tame in its criticism, whereas when staging *The Shop Girl*, the producers could gauge the audience's (and the Lord Chamberlain's Office's) reaction far better and knew they could be harsher when dealing with the upper classes.
The first number is preceded by the following brief stage directions:[411]

> SCENE:- The Mantle Department of the Royal Stores.
>
> (Curtain discovers MALE and FEMALE CHORUS as shopmen and shop girls with customers elegantly dressed behind them)

These stage directions determine the setting, which has already been discussed at length above. This setting was enlivened by background actors representing "customers elegantly dressed"—probably resulting in something very close to a fashion parade on stage. This abundance of modern fashionable attire on a musical theatre stage was new and therefore bound to be exciting for the spectators. The choristers were clad in costumes that specified the occupation of the characters they represented. As shopmen and shop girls, they also enlivened the setting, albeit in a much less glamorous way than the background actors.
This is the text of the opening number (excluding most repetitions):[412]

[411]Dam, Harry J.W. *The Shop Girl.* ADD MS 53562 B, p. 4. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.
[412]ibid., pp. 4f.

*This noble institution*
*Of financial evolution,*
*Is the glory of our British trade,*
*It's the wonder of the nation*
*As a mighty aggregation,*
*Of all objects grown or made.*
*Ev'ry product of the planet*
*Since geology began it,*
*In our mile on mile of floors,*
*From a cat to a cucumber*
*If you only have a number,*
*We will sell you at the Royal Stores.*

*The Stores, the Stores,*
*The loyal Royal Stores,*
*A daily dress rehearsal,*
*A daily dress rehearsal*
*You'll find, you'll find*
*At the Royal, loyal Stores*
*You'll find at the Royal Stores.*

*Dress goods, tinned foods,*
*Bricabric and parrots,*
*Piperacks, redwax,*
*Fishing rods galore,*
*Fresh eggs, wooden legs,*
*Caramel and carrots,*
*Hair dyes, pork pies,*
*Any number more.*

*China ware and cheese, Oh!*
*Pottery and peas, Oh!*
*Spring lamb, York ham,*
*Music in variety,*
*Papers, inks and pens, Oh!*
*Cochin-China hens, Oh!*
*Saveloys, German toys,*
*Warranted to go.*
*Greeting you by dozens and by scores,*
*Reaching from the ceiling to the floors,*
*At the Stores, the Royal Stores.*

*The Stores, the Stores,...*

(At finish of CHORUS, GIRLS sit down and read novelettes MEN read papers etc.)

The opening chorus describes "the glory of our British trade" and emphasizes the fact that they sell every imaginable product at the Royal Stores. This catalogue number is meant to spark the audience's imagination and to impress with the overwhelming amount of available goods. The commodities listed in the lyrics probably evoked a feeling of national pride in the spectators, because they represented the success of the British Empire concerning areas like international trade and colonialism, but also industrial and agricultural improvements. On the other hand, the seemingly random enumeration of goods in sometimes very weird combinations is highly absurd and thus the comical element of the number. Furthermore, the refrain contains a theatrical reference comparing the routine at the department store with "a daily dress rehearsal". This glorification probably added a touch of glamour to the hard working conditions in late Victorian department stores in the eyes of the theatre-loving audience; which by no means implies that working in a Victorian theatre was all sunshine and roses. However, denouncing bad working conditions by recreating them on stage in a realistic fashion was not the way of musical comedies.

| section | mm. | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 8 | 2/4 | (d) - D7 | orchestra | prelude |
| | 9 - 24 | | (d) - D | orchestra & SATB | 1st stanza |
| | 25 - 40 | | D - G | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| part B | 41 - 62 | | C - d7 | orchestra & SATB | 2nd stanza |
| | 63 - 79 | | d - G | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 79 - 84 | | G - G | orchestra | postlude |

Table 8: Structure of *The Shop Girl*—Opening Chorus. "The Royal Stores."

As Table 8 shows, the number is structured very clearly, it consists of two stanzas with a refrain. The short instrumental prelude introduces a motif used in the refrain. Due to the low pitch and the chromaticism, this introduction sounds rather dramatic and dark and therefore forms a strange contrast to the up-beat character of the rest of the number. The key is not clear in the introduction because of the b-flat-accidental used in the chromatic part which is played in unison (s. Figure 29). However, the prelude ends in a seventh chord on D-major, indicating G-major as the tonic.

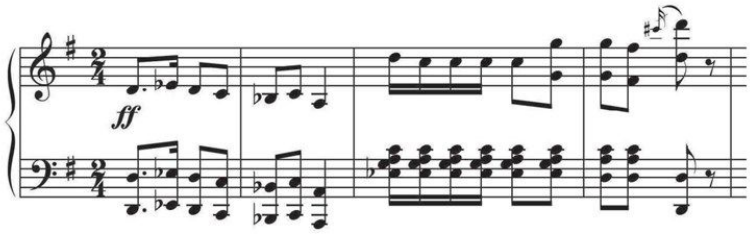


Figure 29: *The Shop Girl*—"The Royal Stores." (bars 1 - 4)

The number is quite similar to the very popular patter songs because of the short note values and the rather fast tempo (s. Figure 30).

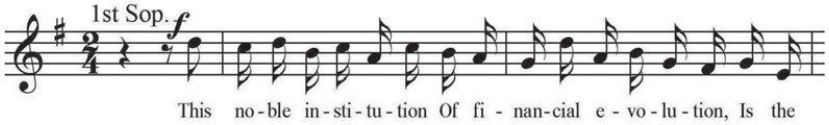


Figure 30: *The Shop Girl*—"The Royal Stores.", 1st Sopranos (bars 8 - 10)

The phrases often start in even semiquavers and in unison, maybe Caryll wanted to make it easier to understand the text and therefore did not want to begin the phrases set in

four parts. The phrases end in four or even five parts, which makes the first stanza interesting and diversified. The musical structure follows the structure of the text: Two short verses are followed by a long verse. The tonic G-major can be heard at the end of the first phrase in bar 12 for the first time.
Concerning melody and rhythm, the refrain is pretty similar to the first stanza. The dotted motif starting with a rising fourth at the beginning of the refrain marks the new section quite clearly and makes the beginning of the refrain very recognizable throughout this number (s. Figure 31). The refrain is set in two or three parts and repeated slightly varied.

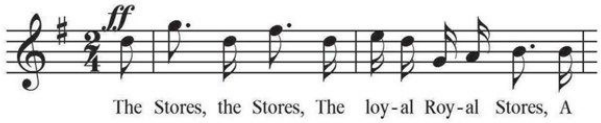


Figure 31: *The Shop Girl*—"The Royal Stores.", 1st Sopranos (bars 25 - 26)

The second stanza is decidedly different from the first stanza. Only the female voices set in two parts enter at first. The melody and the structure of the text are different as well, all the verses are of the same length now. There are more quavers than semiquavers in the second stanza, resulting in the impression of a slower tempo. The male voices enter after a few verses, but the rest of the second stanza is more diversified that a homophonic setting in four parts and includes a short passage when the male voices echo the last few words sung by the female voices. Thus, Caryll creates variety without being too complex. The chorus sings *tutti* again for the last verse of the second stanza, ending on a seventh chord on D-minor. Thus Caryll gradually builds up suspense, culminating once more in the refrain. The refrain is repeated almost identically; of course the last verse is altered because it now marks the end of the number, not only of a section. The brief instrumental postlude repeats and enhances the motif of the refrain.
The orchestra usually plays *colla parte* in this number and thus supports the first sopranos, who sing the melody, and sometimes other voices as well. There is a steady quaver-pattern in the bass instruments. During long note values sung by the chorus at the end of a phrase, there are sometimes musical ornaments in the orchestra. As usual for musical comedies, second sopranos, tenors and basses have to sing a lot of prime intervals; the number clearly focuses on the first sopranos's melody.
As already discussed above, the function of this number is to introduce the setting, a fashionable department store in London. The chorus prepares the background for the soloists as living scenery, it belongs to the same group as the major character who enters

shortly after the opening chorus. The number is like a colourful painting of the setting brought to life in a simple, but diversified setting with a cheerful and energetic atmosphere. It focuses on the present and does not include any information about the plot or any of the characters involved.

## 3.9 *The Chieftain*

The original comic opera *The Chieftain*, a remake of *The Contrabandista* (1867), by Arthur Sullivan with a libretto by F. C. Burnand premiered at the Savoy Theatre on 12 December 1894 and ran for only 97 performances.[413] This revision, mainly of the entirely new second act, was made because the Savoy Theatre was in desperate need of a new successful show after the 'carpet quarrel' had temporarily put an end to the collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan.[414] Gänzl describes the work as follows:

> "The sparkle of Sullivan's music was undeniable, the story was almost droll enough to be a burlesque of the old comic opera style rather than a serious effort at comic opera, and Carte had Florence St John, Rosina Brandram, Courtice Pounds and Walter Passmore to present the material, but *The Chieftain* was little more than a patched-up, old-fashioned curiosity and had very little chance from the start."[415]

A good score and libretto plus talented and popular performers were obviously not enough to make a work a success, and *The Chieftain* clearly was such a case, mainly due to its perceived outmoded style in a time when Savoy opera itself was no longer considered modern by many contemporaries. The review in *The Globe* sees the libretto clearly as inferior to the score, although Burnard created new roles for the popular Savoy principals:

> "The libretto, not a remarkably strong one even for its day [...] but it has the merit of never letting the action flag [...] The slight changes made in the first act have enabled Sir Arthur Sullivan to retain much of his original music. How charming this is must have come as a surprise to many of the audience. Its style is much more delicate than that of the composer's later work, and though the influence of Mozart, Bennett, and Mendelssohn

[413] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 535.
[414] cf. Christopher M. Scheer: "A Statutory Creation? *The Grand Duke* and Intertextuality in the Performance of the Savoy Operas", in: *Musical Theatre in Europe 1830 - 1945*, Michela Niccolai and Clair Rowden (eds.), Lucca 2017, pp. 215f.
[415] Gänzl 1986, p. 517.

> is constantly felt, features distinctive of the composer are are always showing themselves. The new portions of the first act are hardly equal to the old."[416]

The verdict on the score is especially interesting and proves the difficulty of reviving and modernising an old work for financial reasons. The low number of performances shows that the audience was not interested in the rare opportunity of experiencing one of the composer's earliest works for the stage, notwithstanding the overwhelmingly positive predictions made in the reviews in *Punch, or The London Charivari* and *The Daily Chronicle*, which even pronounces the work to be "one of the brightest and merriest productions Mr. D'Oyly Carte has been fortunate in securing for the Savoy stage."[417] The opera is preceded by a note specifying the setting in weird accuracy:[418]

> The scene of the First Act is laid in the wild mountainous region (vide Black's "Geographical History of the Moors in Spain") between Santiago de Compostela and Leitariegos in the N.W. of Spain. "Santiago" or "Compostela" has, at different times, been called "Campus-Stellae," "Campostella," and "Giacomo Postulo" contracted into "Compostelo." During the Peninsular War it was pretty generally known among the English as Compostello (Major Monsoon's "Story of the Commissariat in the Peninsula," edited by Captain C. O'Malley), which spelling and punctuation, as more consistent with the tone and character of the ordinary tourist, has been adopted throughout this Opera.

These are the text and stage directions of the number (excluding most repetitions):[419]

> SCENE.—Mountain pass between Compostello and Seville. A splendid summer afternoon. SANCHO discovered watching R., JOSE, L. Ladrones about, partially hidden by rocks, and appearing from time to time unexpectedly.

Similar to *The Mountebanks* by Cellier (and Gilbert), *The Chieftain* is set in a romanticized brigand-milieu in a remote region of Spain. As pointed out before, this setting caters to the audience's desire to experience faraway, 'exotic' places as well as the longing to leave the both strict and restrictive rules of Victorian society behind, only to be reassured in the end that Victorian culture is, after all, superior.

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[416]"Savoy Theatre." *The Globe*, 13 Dec. 1894. V&A Archive, THM-73-28-15. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.

[417]"A 'B. and S.' at the Savoy." *Punch, or The London Charivari*, 22 Dec. 1894, p. 292; "'The Chieftain' at the Savoy." *The Daily Chronicle*. V&A Archive, THM-73-28-15. Unfortunately, the latter newspaper cutting does neither include a date nor the number of the page.

[418]Burnand, Francis Cowley. *The Chieftain*. https://www.gsarchive.net/sullivan/chieftain/chieftain_home.html

[419]ibid.

**Sancho.**

*Hush!*

**José.** (to him, angrily).

*Hush!*

**Sancho.** (louder).

*Hush!*

**José.** (louder, and more angrily).

*Hush!*

**Sancho.**

*Not a step,*
*not a sound*
*Can I hear*
*Far or near,*
*With my ear*
*To the ground.*

**José.** (remonstrating with SANCHO).

*Any stranger while you talk*
*Might, close by, unheeded walk.*

**Sancho.**

*Take my orders, sir, from you!*
*Ridiculous! Pooh! pooh!*

**José** *(aside).*

*Him with iron heel I'd crush!*

**Sancho.** (aside).

*Trusty knife,*
*Take his life!*

**José & Sancho.**

*Now, one blow!*
(They approach, turn, meet, hide their knives.)
*Hush! Hush! Bah! my rage I can't conceal,*
*Crunch him, scrunch him with my heel!*
*Sharpen, whet the gleaming steel!*
*No! my vengeance he shall feel!*

**Men.**

*Hush! hush!*
*Tush! tush!*
*To the Queen we will appeal!*

(The women, led by ZITELLA, appear coming down rocks. Some urging SANCHO and JOSE to fight.)

**1st Sop[rano]s.**

*Coward! traitor! Weapons handy!* (pointing)
*Coward! traitor! Words don't bandy.*
*Would you strike? then Strike, then strike!*
*Be they pistol, sword, or pike.*

(Some other women, led by JUANITA, urging SANCHO and JOSE to put down their weapons.)

**2nd Sop[rano]s.**
*Brother! brother! Words don't bandy!*
*Do not strike! Oh do not strike!*

**Men.**

*To the Queen we will appeal!*

(The tumult is at its height when a pistol-shot is heard. All the men cower.
INEZ, pistol in hand, appears on rock above.)

**Inez.**

*Ladrones! Braggarts! Bullies! Rapparees!*
*Down! down! and beg my pardon on your knees!*

**1st Sop[rano]s.**

*Down! down!*

**Men.** (humbly)

*We pardon beg!*

**2nd Sop[rano]s & Juanita.**

*They pardon beg!*

**Inez.**

*The pardon beg of all these fair ones too!*
*Roused from their beauty sleep*

**Men.**

*We do!*

**Women.**

*They do!*

**José & Sancho.**

*One word -*

**Inez.**

(producing second pistol and pointing one at SANCHO and the other at JOSE.)

*Not one! Would you my temper try?*

**[Chorus.]**

*They wish to say -*

**Inez.**

*Obey! obey! The closure I apply!*

(INEZ replaces the pistols in her girdle, descends from the rock and comes down amongst them.)

**[Chorus.]**

*Viva la Reina!*

As can be seen from the text, the first number of *The Chieftain* was not a typical chorus number. It is called *Duet & Chorus "Hush! Not a Step."*, the title indicates that the chorus is involved, but does not take centre stage. Like in many of Sullivan's collaborations with Gilbert, Burnand splits the chorus into a female and male chorus that disagree; he goes even further and splits the female voices in two groups that represent different opinions (1st and 2nd sopranos). Those groups are involved in the conflict between José and Sancho (the duet quickly becomes a duel), a conflict that is forcibly ended quickly afterwards by Inez (s. Table 9 for the structure). The number is another case of (mem-

bers of) the chorus trying (and failing) to be stealthy in order to achieve a comic effect (s. chapter 2.2), but here, this failure leads to a conflict. The quick escalation and the vociferous participation of men and women alike corresponds to a behaviour which is expected from brigands, and was bound to emphasize the superiority of Victorian culture and manners. Spanish words and phrases are used to illustrate the setting.
The opening number is preceded by a rather short overture (27 bars) called introduction, the first number follows immediately afterwards.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 17 | C | D - A | orchestra | introduction |
| | 17 - 52 | | A - A7 | orchestra, José & Sancho | Duet (dispute) |
| | 53 - 79 | | A - (d - g♯) | + chorus TB | TB try to pacify |
| part B | 79 - 91 | | G7 - E♭ | + chorus SA | SA interfere |
| part C | 92 - 110 | C - 2/4 | E♭ - (f) | + Inez & Juanita | Inez interferes |
| | 110 - 114 | 2/4 | (c) - B♭ | orchestra | postlude |

Table 9: Structure of *The Chieftain*—Duet & Chorus "Hush! Not a Step."

The instrumental introduction anticipates the music used as an accompaniment for José's and Sancho's first lines. Its cheerful melody is somewhat at odds with the dramatic actions on stage, it emphasizes the comic character of the number. The music makes sure that both characters, however serious they might feel about their business of keeping watch, are not taken seriously by the audience (s. Figure 32).

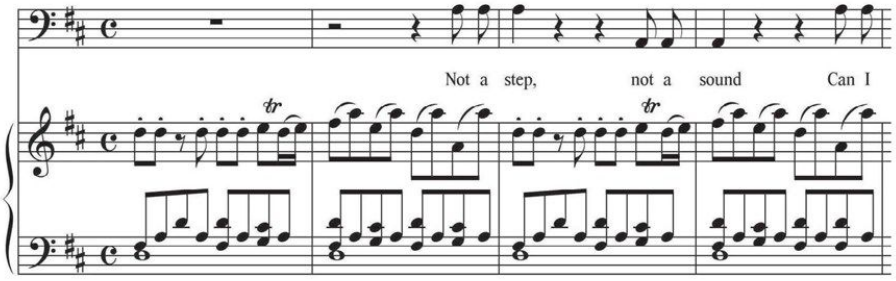


Figure 32: *The Chieftain*—"Hush! Not a Step." (bars 22 - 25)

José reprimands Sancho for talking and therefore disregarding his duty—this is, of course, a justified remark; however, the only reason for Sancho to talk in this manner is that he is a character in an opera and hence describes what he is doing to make the situation intelligible for the audience. The conflict between the two men is distinctly audible both in the text and the music: Sancho's verses are short, José's long, José does not sing the

same melody as Sancho—he sings prime intervals or triadic movements, whereas Sancho sings scalic movements (s. Figure 33).

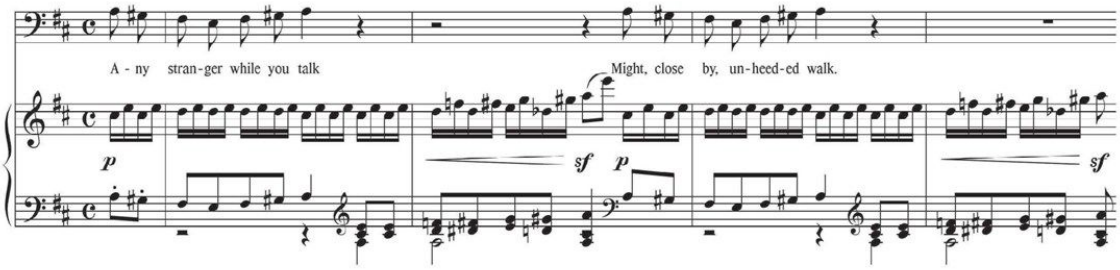


Figure 33: *The Chieftain*—"Hush! Not a Step." (bars 34 - 36)

The motif sung by Sancho in bars 34ff. (s. Figure 33) is revisited by both characters (bars 42ff.), but this does not necessarily mean that they agree now, not even when they sing the motif in unison (bars 53ff.) and in thirds (bars 61ff.). The tenors and basses at first try to de-escalate the situation by interjecting "hush! hush!" or "tush! tush!" after each verse, and since this does not have any effect, they threaten José and Sancho: "to the Queen we will appeal", joining in the soloists' somewhat menacing motif consisting of a scalic chromatic movement upwards reminiscent of the orchestra's interjections in bars 35 and 37 (compare Figures 33 and 34). The agitation is enhanced by the orchestra's continuous chords in quavers (high-pitched instruments) and tremolo-like semiquavers (low-pitched instruments).

The conflict increases when the 1st Sopranos enter (at the beginning of part B), because they goad José and Sancho further (maybe on the basis of their experience that they will not attack each other anyway). The tenors and basses try to pacify them as well, assisted by the 2nd Sopranos who are more eloquent than "Hush! hush!" and sing longer note-values than the other voices to enhance the calming effect.
The announced Queen finally enters in bar 92 after a general pause; her importance is accentuated further by her *a capella* exclamations, followed by chords played by the orchestra. She demands adamantly that the agitators "beg [her] pardon on [their] knees", a request followed instantly by the tenors and basses, although they tried to settle the conflict. José and Sancho try to exculpate themselves, but are rigorously silenced, as well as the rest of the attendant crowd. The function of the recitative-like part C is to demonstrate Inez's absolute power. This section ends with the twofold praise "Viva la Reina!", accompanied by an instrumental interlude *a la Habanera* leading seamlessly to the following number.

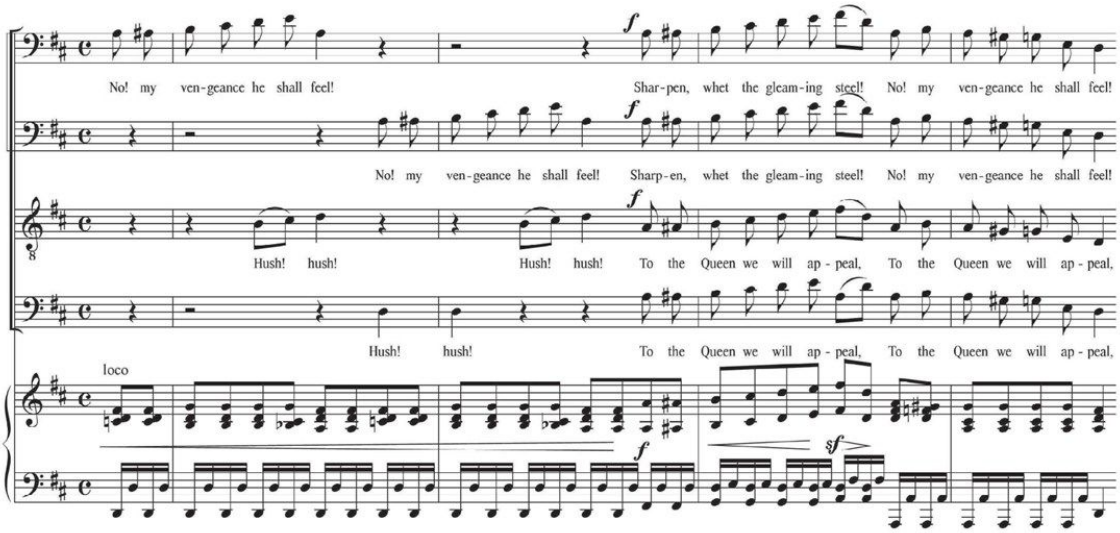


Figure 34: *The Chieftain*—"Hush! Not a Step." (bars 65 - 68)

This number is unusual for several reasons: First and most obviously, it is not merely a chorus number, but prominently features several soloists. The chorus is more than living scenery; it represents not one, but three different group characters and therefore takes a very active part in the plot, as stated in the analysis. Second, there *is* a noteworthy plot going on right from the start, which is why the number focuses on the present. The spectators are pitched in the events without further ado and little introduction except from what they can deduce from scenery and costumes. There are no clichés about either the Spanish locale or the romanticized brigand-setting in the lyrics as customary for opening numbers. Instead, two minor and a major character are introduced. Because of the sometimes polyphonic setting required by the group characters the chorus represents this number depends on experienced singers.

## 3.10 *An Artist's Model*

The comedy with music *An Artist's Model* by Sidney Jones with additional numbers by Henry Hamilton, Paul Lincke, Frederick Rosse and Joseph and Mary Watson, a libretto by Owen Hall and lyrics by Harry Greenbank premiered at Daly's Theatre on 2 February 1895 and ran for 392 performances.[420] Later on, it transferred to the Lyric Theatre because Edwardes had agreed to a contract to make Daly's Theatre available to its previous owner, Augustin Daly, for a certain period, after which *An Artist's Model* returned to its original venue.[421] Despite of this obvious success, a critic calls the work in retrospect an "atrociously bad specimen[] of [its] class"[422] without further elaborating this assessment. Platt states that it "was perhaps the first musical show to establish lavishness as a key marker",[423] further remarking that *An Artist's Model* set a trend regarding elaborate and extremely expensive stage settings. In this aspect it continues the Savoy opera tradition—the management expected that the enormous initial costs would be covered by a long run as pointed out above (s. chapter 2.1). Gänzl points out that in addition to the opulent staging, which somewhat backfired because the scenery for the second act was delivered so late that it was not part of any rehearsal, "the most fashionable writers of the hour [...] and a cast of the most appealing kind" were the key elements of *An Artist's Model*'s success.[424]
Hyman conveys an anecdote about the opening night:

> "[T]he first night went very badly indeed. At the end the Guv'nor [George Edwardes' nickname] walked on to the stage and asked the audience what they thought of it.
> 'Half and half,' shouted the gallery.
> 'Well, come back again in five or six weeks and I'll have the other half put right,' he assured them.
> Next day he called in Owen Hall and Sidney Jones and they reconstructed the entire piece."[425]

This anecdote, whether true or false,[426] is an example of the usual proceeding during a run of a musical comedy; the pieces were always adapted and improved to ensure maximal success. Forbes-Winslow, on the other hand, claims that *An Artist's Model* "hit

[420] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 562;
Forbes-Winslow states even 405 performances (cf. Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 33).
[421] Gänzl 1986, pp. 545f.
[422] "Music." *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 Oct. 1899, p. 300. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.
[423] Platt 2004, p. 33.
[424] Gänzl 1986, pp. 541f.
[425] Hyman 1975, pp. 77f.
[426] However, the same anecdote (in slightly different words) is told by James Jupp (cf. Jupp 1923, p. 198f.), so it seems to be probable.

the bull's eye of popular taste" and praises "the Guv'nor's perfect casting and production",[427] but considering the long run of the piece he might not have remembered its initial shortcomings, which are confirmed by *The Illustrated London News*, calling the musical comedy "a work which doubtless in a week will be charming, but at present is decidedly wearisome." While the author praises Jones's as "excellent—gay in the comic measures, graceful, if somewhat over-sweetened in the sentimental ballads" and acknowledges Greenbank's lyrics, they criticise Hall's libretto harshly.[428] However, he seems to be perfectly convinced that not only those shortcomings will be eliminated within a short time, but also will the creators of *An Artist's Model* get the chance to improve the work without the risk of closing the production for financial reasons. Gänzl too remarks that the opening night "turned out to be a little sour and, when the curtain fell at the end of the evening, George Edwardes was a worried man"—apparently, the performance had lasted four hours, and the negative reaction of the spectators had been quite obvious. He blames the libretto for the initial disappointment of the work, but also relates the reason for its shortcomings: After Hall had finished his original libretto called *A Naughty Girl*, Edwardes had insisted on an additional role for Marie Tempest, who had just returned to London. The result was a second plot revolving around a second couple that was only loosely connected with the original plot, and a lot of dialogue was deemed necessary to explain the situations—obviously much more than the audience cared for.[429]

An article in *The Sketch* confirms the assumptions concerning the accomplished improvements a few month later and sums up the production as follows: "Lively music, pretty women, clever playing, lovely dresses, and handsome scenery, achieve a success as genuine as surprising." However, this author does not approve of the libretto either, stating that it is "irritating to an acute extent." They praise Jones's score as "excellent" and "charming", but cannot help but wonder: "are we musical enough for it to support the book successfully?" Thus, he alludes to the old issue of Britain as the 'Land ohne Musik' and therefore people without (or with insufficient) musical taste and education. In the end, he reasons that the reason for the success of the work must be "the strength of the company", for whose members he has nothing but praise.[430] The importance and the weighting of a good libretto and/or score for a work and the influence of these aspects on the success is a very interesting question which is touched in several of the analyses.

[427] Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 33.

[428] "The Playhouses." *The Illustrated London News*, 9 Feb. 1895, p. 186. V&A archive, THM-LON-DAL 1894-95.

[429] Gänzl 1986, pp. 542f.

[430] "Theatrical Notes." *The Sketch*, 5 June 1895. V&A archive, THM-LON-DAL 1894-95. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.

Gänzl gives detailed insight into the process of alterations:

> "By the Monday night's performance large portions of the dialogue had disappeared and more followed. The whole of the considerable role of Archie Pendillon [...] was wiped out within a fortnight and the emphasis tilted towards the more satisfactory Adèle/Rudolph story.[431] Marie Tempest's role was expanded [...], and the full houses began to give more satisfactory responses to the show. [...] The waltz song 'Sei nicht Bös' (Don't Be Cross) from Carl Zeller's *Der Obersteiger* was the newest song in town, so Edwardes annexed it, [...] and as 'Music and Laughter' it was added to Jones' score [...] until a protest from the owners forced its withdrawal. Within five weeks of its opening *An Artist's Model* was a very different piece to that which had provoked so many unfavourable notices. Large advance bookings and the reputation of Edwardes and his artists had seen the show through a period which might have been fatal under other circumstances."[432]

This report addresses several interesting issues. First, the alterations made to the plot after the premiere could be drastic, and, in order to please the audience as fast as can be, dialogue was cut out almost at once. Second, the management did not hesitate to make changes that shifted the importance of a role and the balance between the roles immensely—it would be interesting to know how Yorke Stephens, the performer who represented the role that was discarded, reacted and if and how he was compensated. The influence of popular performers on the success of a work was great, but since there are many occasions of works that were considered a failure in spite of the participation of celebrated performers, this was by no means a guarantee. It would also be interesting to find out if the changes were made because Marie Tempest was the most famous artist, or because the plot revolving around her character was indeed better than the original one, or because the audience liked this kind of plot better—the answer is probably a mixture of all aspects mentioned. Next, the inclusion of a 'hit'-song taken from a Viennese operetta is another prove of the lively cultural exchange between both cities,[433] and of the rising need for effective copyright laws. This is an example for Edwardes giving the spectators what they obviously wanted to hear. Furthermore, it is most astonishing that Daly's Theatre had managed to work up such a reputation with just one predecessor, *A Gaiety Girl*, that it was (financially) possible to improve a work with such blatant deficiencies as the first version of *An Artist's Model* during its run, adapting it to the taste of the audience and, eventually, turn it into a success. If given the opportunity,

[431] This was the plot added for the participation of Marie Tempest.
[432] Gänzl 1986, p. 545.
[433] cf. Platt *et al.* 2014.

there were certainly works quickly buried in oblivion that had initially been much better; so it is quite obvious that the libretto cannot have been the most important aspect of a successful musical comedy. As in the Savoy Theatre a decade before, Edwardes had succeeded in establishing an ensemble of popular artists and a form of entertainment which resulted in a circle of loyal spectators who believed in the ability of the management to cater to their desire for amusement and who were lenient concerning initial shortcomings in an astonishing extent.

As customary, the costumes worn by the female performers were considered a huge success; *The Sketch* dedicates several pages to photos of the performers in their costumes as usual and describes them in a detailed article including four drawings in the section 'Our Ladies' Pages', introducing the matter as follows:

> "For once realisation has come up to, and, in fact, exceeded expectation, for the rumours as to the magnificence of the costumes to be displayed by 'An Artist's Model' and her feminine colleagues at Daly's Theatre have proved that they have good foundation, so much so, that women should accord a vote of thanks to the management for providing them with such a feast of gowns to admire, to talk about, and, above all, to copy."[434]

This statement allows several conclusions: Obviously, preceding the opening night, there had been "rumours" about the dresses presented on stage. In all probability, this information was brought into circulation on purpose by the theatres to increase the public interest in their latest work, and to keep the theatre in the potential spectators' minds during the period necessary for rehearsal. This advertising strategy, which seems to have been customary for works staged at Daly's Theatre (and for works produced by Edwardes in general), continues an approach that had already been successful for the Savoy operas: D'Oyly Carte made sure that activities related to his theatre(s) were constantly released by the journals and newspapers (s. chapter 2.1). The same applies in case of Daly's Theatre and the Gaiety Theatre as well; there were several articles and interviews, mostly including photos and drawings, throughout the run of every production. Furthermore, this article attests the importance of fashion for the genre, as stated in chapter 2.2, and sheds light on the details: "rumours" beforehand, in-depth reports afterwards. It also acknowledges the influence of the costumes worn on stage on high society (female) fashion. Everett points out that the setting in the artistic milieu "offers insights into what could be termed 'high' and 'low' art and the cultural competition between Paris and London."[435]

[434]"Our Ladies' Pages. The Gowns for 'An Artist's Model."'*The Sketch*, 6 Feb., p. 98f. V&A archive, THM-LON-DAL 1894-95.

[435]Everett 2017, p. 231.

This makes *An Artist's model* especially interesting, since creators and producers of popular musical theatre in London were anxious to distance their works from Offenbach's *opéra bouffe* and its successors. The ongoing public discourse about "what could be termed 'high' and 'low' art" was always especially focussed on popular musical theatre, as various comments in the reviews of many works included in this study show.
A critique in *The Sketch* summarizes the plot of *An Artist's Model* as follows: "[A] tale of [a] girl who preferred gold to love, who wedded and buried the rich man and came back to offer herself and his money to the man of her contemptible heart"[436]—the same story was a huge success only ten years later in Franz Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*.
This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions):[437]

[436]"'An Artist's Model,' at Daly's Theatre." *The Sketch*, unknown date, p. 64. V&A archive, THM-LON-DAL 1894-95.
[437]Hall, Owen. *An Artist's Model*. ADD MS 53567 I, Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library. The number is not preceded by stage directions.

**[Chorus.]**

*With brush in hand and palette gay*
*Our varied talents we display,*
*And some for art and some for fame*
*Are working hard to make a name;*
*But since as artists all agree*
*Its best to work for L. S. D.,*
*We paint to please the vulgar throng,*
*For life is short and art is long.*

**[Male voices.]**

*The student plays a pleasant part,*
*Who worships at the shrine of art.*
*And gets a chance as artists do*
*To study lovely woman too.*

**Soprano & Alto.**

*In graceful pose on canvas white*
*Her form and features we delight*
*As sinner sweet or charming saint*
*To cath with aid of brush and paint.*

**[Tutti.]**

*With brush in hand and palette gay*
*Our varied talents we display,*
*And some for art and some for fame*
*Are working hard to make a name.*

**Maddox, Carbonnet & Apthorpe.**

*From the Bois de Vincennes we return,*
*A really artistic community;*
*The beauties of nature we learn*
*At every fresh opportunity.*

**Carbonnet.**

*It's excessively pleasant to toddle*
*Through the cool of the forest and greenery,*
*Coqueting with nice looking model,*
*Or quietly sketching the scenery.*

**Violet, Rose & Laura.**

*Though at present we're models unwedded,*
*If the future to fortune should carry you*
*With our characters sober'd and steadied*
*We shall all be delighted to marry you.*

**Chorus.**

*Here you will find in agreeable variety*
*Every shade of artistic society;*
*Light hearted students of art and its mysteries,*
*Innocent models and models with histories,*
*Artists whose drawing a spoiling of paper is,*
*Embryo Leightons who revel in draperies,*
*Artists who paint from the naughty and nudey O*
*All can be found at this popular studio.*

*The lazy, lucky artists who*
*Have really nothing else to do*
*But picnic in the woods away,*
*Delight at painting thus to play.*
*But those who duty never shirk*
*Remain at home and stick to work,*
*For honest labour holds the keys*
*Of fame and fortune, bread and cheese.*

Unfortunately, the libretto submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office does not include the usual description of the initial setting or any stage directions other than the entry of the six soloists. However, the vocal score denominates the setting of the first act as "[a]n Artist's Studio in Paris". As the lyrics indicate, the opening chorus does not introduce the plot or characters, but focuses on the setting, or, to be more precise, on the milieu. It includes many keywords like "brush", "palette", "canvas" or "sketching" that, complemented by stage props and scenery, created a lively image of the more practical aspects of the artistic milieu in the spectators' minds.[438] Additionally, the lyrics also refer to the more objectionable aspects the audience most likely connected with this milieu: The artists are "coqueting with nice looking model", there are "artists who paint from the naughty and nudey", and the women as well admit openly that their "characters [need to be] sober'd and steadied" before they can think of matrimony, which is used as the equivalent to a respectable lifestyle. On the other hand, the number stresses in the first few verses that the artists presented on stage are "working hard to make a name", and the penultimate verse emphasizes that "honest labour holds the keys", almost as if to make amends for the slightly immoral setting. The mention of the "Bois de Vincennes" clarifies that *An Artist's Model* is set in or near Paris—in Victorian times, a French and especially Parisian setting was the perfect excuse for anything considered indecent or even scandalous. These justifications were obviously necessary for a theatre which considered itself respectable (and was considered thus by its spectators). Interestingly, although the models are aware of their current immoral lifestyle (and obviously seem to enjoy it), their ultimate goal is to marry, preferably someone who is wealthy. They seem to think of their present situation as temporary and their return to respectable society as possible.

As Table 10 shows, the number is set in an ABA'-structure, beginning with a short instrumental introduction. Repeated chords in a noticeable rhythmic motif (quaver, two semiquavers, two quavers) stretch out over four bars, the strange fact that the number starts on a dominant seventh chord was maybe a technique to demand the audience's attention. The subsequent arpeggiated movements in semiquavers seem to lighten the somewhat tense atmosphere created by this energetic beginning.

The entry of the chorus immediately confirms a bright and cheerful atmosphere, the dotted rhythm illustrates the optimistic energy spread by the characters on stage. Whereas the altos and basses (and partially the tenors as well) are set mainly in prime intervals,

[438] However, an article in *The Sketch* ("'An Artist's Model,' at Daly's Theatre." *The Sketch*, unknown date, p. 64. V&A archive, THM-LON-DAL 1894-95) mentions "the utter failure in the first act to give an idea of a Parisian studio or artist life" with disgust.

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 10 | 2/4 | E7 - E7 | orchestra | prelude |
| | 11 - 29 | | E7 - (c♯ - e) | orchestra & SATB | "With brush in hand..." |
| | 29 - 32 | | (c♯ - e) - A | orchestra | interlude |
| | 33 - 47 | | E7 - E | orchestra & TB | "The student plays..." |
| | 47 - 48 | | E - A | orchestra | interlude |
| | 49 - 64 | | E7 - E | orchestra & SA | 3rd "In graceful pose..." |
| | 64 - 65 | | E7 - E7 | orchestra | interlude |
| | 66 - 74 | | E7 - A | orchestra & SATB | "With brush in hand..." |
| part B | 75 - 91 | 6/8 | D - f♯ | orchestra & male soloists | "From the Bois..." |
| | 91 - 99 | | H7 - A | orchestra & female soloists | "Though at present..." |
| | 100 - 107 | 12/8 | D - E | orchestra & SATB | "Here you will find..." |
| | 108 - 109 | | E - (e) | orchestra | interlude |
| part A' | 110 - 126 | 2/4 | (e) - A | orchestra & SATB | "The lazy, lucky..." |
| | 126 - 131 | | A - A | orchestra | postlude |

Table 10: Structure of *An Artist's Model*, Opening Chorus "With Brush in Hand"

the sopranos' melody is striking and not easy to sing because of the chromaticism and the leaps. The orchestra plays *colla parte* and provides the harmonic and rhythmic background (s. Figure 35). The uniform length of the verses is reflected in the uniform length of the musical phrases (2 bars) with the exception of the slightly augmented repetition of verse 8.

The interlude consists of a scalic movement upwards, after which the orchestra introduces an accompanying motif (4 semiquavers, 2 quavers) that opens both the sections sung by the male and the female soloists. This is the element which connects those two sections; otherwise they are very different: Whereas the melodic 'male section' is quite similar to the refrain and the stanza sung by the chorus (s. Figure 36), the 'female section' is decidedly different (and much easier to sing) because of the longer note values and the lack of chromaticism, which can now be found in the accompaniment (s. Figure 37). This section is treated like a solo-section, it is not supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*. Part A is concluded by a repetition of the refrain, this time with a distinctly audible conclusion in A-Major and a clear caesura marked by a general pause and a change of metre and key (s. Table 10).

Part B forms a considerable contrast to part A: The accompaniment is less dense, partially even sparse, and simply provides the harmonic background on the stressed beats. Thus, the soloists automatically take centre stage. They sing scalic or triadic motifs no longer characterized by chromaticism and a dotted rhythm that had been so dominant in part A. The next section sung by the chorus uses a quite unusual metre, 12/8. The orchestra

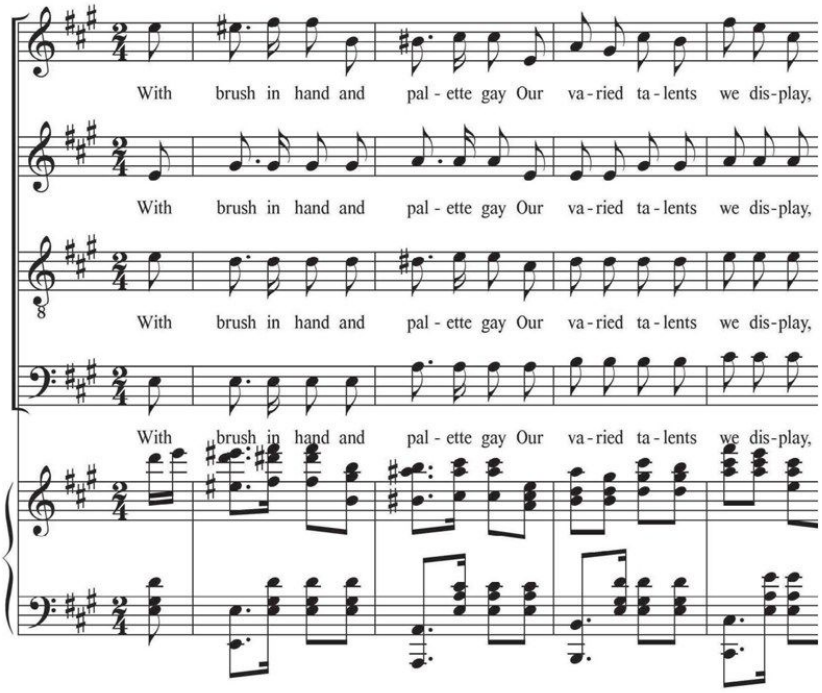


Figure 35: *An Artist's Model*—"With Brush in Hand." (bars 11 - 14)

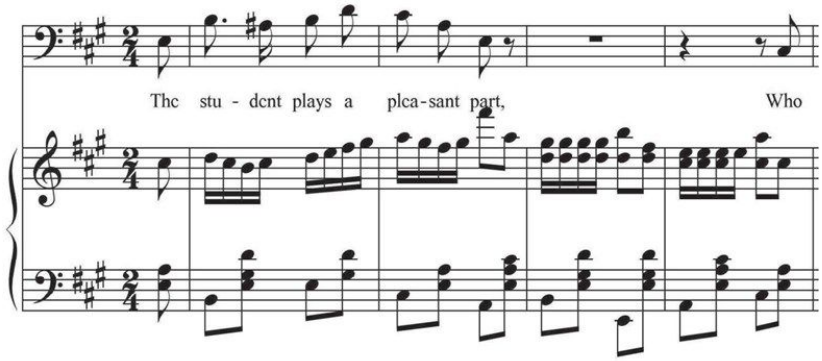


Figure 36: *An Artist's Model*—"With Brush in Hand." (bars 33 - 36)

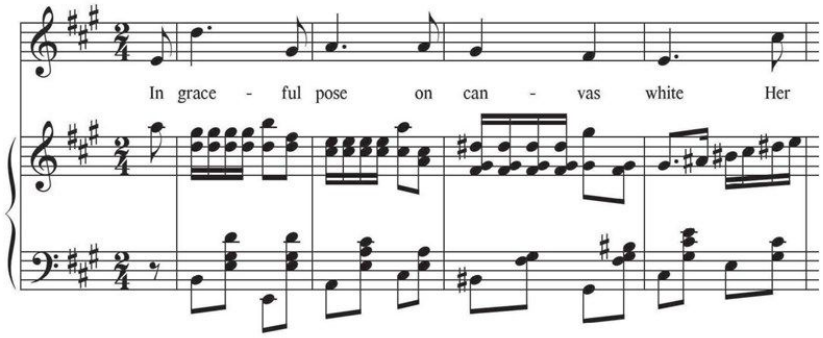


Figure 37: *An Artist's Model*—"With Brush in Hand." (bars 49 - 52)

maintains the sparse accompaniment, the four-part setting of the chorus is distinguished by even more prime intervals than usual, partially even sung by the sopranos, and a rhythm consisting of steady quavers. This part is highly reminiscent of a *stretto* usually found in a finale, but nonetheless effective in the penultimate sections of this opening number (s. Figure 38).
The interlude to part A' revisits the dotted rhythm that was such a distinguishing feature of part A, and a scalic movement upwards that Jones often used as an interlude between sections. Thus, even before the changes of metre and key back to as they were in the beginning, the atmosphere of part A is restored. Verses 1 to 6 are musically almost identical with part A, verses 7 and 8 form a different and more final ending on A major.

In the opening chorus of *An Artist's Model*, Jones uses the typical well-tried elements: A complex structure involving soloists and the chorus, sometimes split into two groups, but easy to follow for the audience because of the contrasting sections. As customary, the sopranos sing the melody, whereas the other voices have to sing a lot of prime intervals. The function of this opening number is, as pointed out above, to introduce (and to justify) the setting (mainly through the lyrics) and the atmosphere (mainly through the music) of the musical comedy, with a clear focus on the present. The chorus and the six soloists (we only know them to be soloists because they are denominated as such in the vocal score, otherwise they might as well be part of the chorus) involved are little more than living scenery. Although the choral setting is not overly complex, the opening number is quite demanding for the choristers because of the chromaticism and the leaps.

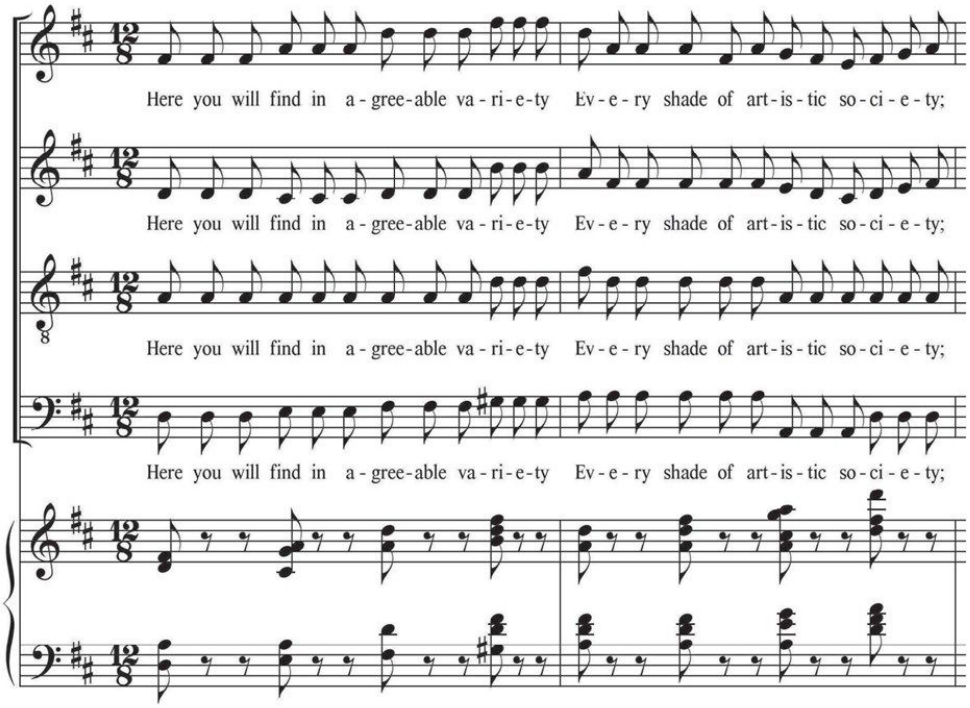


Figure 38: *An Artist's Model*—"With Brush in Hand." (bars 100 - 101)

## 3.11 *Shamus O'Brien*

Charles Villiers Stanford's romantic comic opera *Shamus O'Brien*, op. 61, with a libretto by George H. Jessop after the well-known poem by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu premiered at the Opera Comique in London on 2 March 1896 and ran for 82 performances.[439] It is especially interesting for this study because it is an approach to comic opera from a composer of high reputation and motivation, but little experience in this specific genre. According to Rodmell, "the work exists halfway between the two genres which dominated this aspect of the late nineteenth century theatre i.e. (full-blown) opera and operetta."[440] Despite the relatively few performances in comparison to the other works included in this study, *Shamus O'Brien* was considered a success.[441]

The plot of the opera takes place in Ireland in the end of the 18th century, shortly after a rebellion against England. Therefore it contains many elements that were seen as a reaction to the 'Homerule'-movement, Irish-patriotic songs that were sung by the title

[439]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 614.

[440]Paul Julian Rodmell: *The Operas of Sir Charles Stanford*, Diss. University of Birmingham, 1995, p. 159.

[441]cf. Jeremy Dibble: *Charles Villiers Stanford. Man and Musician*, Oxford 2002, p. 273.

role. The English army is looking for Irish rebels who are to be hanged. One of those rebels is the protagonist, Shamus O'Brien, who is very popular in his village, Ballyhamis. However, there is someone who hates him: Mike Murphy is in love with Nora, Shamus's wife. In order to get rid of Shamus, he betrays him to the English soldiers. There is a trial, Shamus is found guilty, but the priest Father O'Flynn helps him to escape shortly before the execution.

Gänzl remarks that "as a dramatic piece, [...] *Shamus O'Brien* suffered irreparably from a lack of content which had been imposed on the writer by his choice of source", although he emphasizes that "Jessop nevertheless succeeded in creating a bright and varied set of characters and found much that was attractive in dialogue and lyric". He praises that Stanford "wisely refrained from allowing the music to become heavy or academic or the scoring too weightly and, even in the frankly emotional and dramatic moments of the story, the piece was never allowed to echo grand opera or melodrama."[442] Furthermore, he points out that

> "*Shamus O'Brien* was, however, the best example of its kind to have been produced in the English language since the days of Balfe, Wallace and Benedict, and for the public which interested itself in such works it was an undisputed success. For the patrons of the Gaiety and the Prince of Wales if offered little attraction, but there were plenty of more serious-minded music-lovers around [...]"[443]

The review in *The Sketch* has a slightly different point of view, but clearly belongs to the group of "serious-minded music-lovers" Gänzl mentions, as does the author of the critic published by *The Times*.[444] While praising the libretto and the score, the author of the former review especially criticizes some of the lyrics:

> "Really, without wishing to be unkind, one must say something about such fearful doggerel. It is a pity, for Mr. Jessop has written an effective, if not brilliant, book, and, with the aid of a poet, might have produced that rarity, a meritorious libretto. However, I did not mean to speak against 'Shamus O'Brien,' for I really enjoyed the comic opera—it was not uninteresting as a drama, and it was delightful as music; while the performance, if uneven, was, on the whole, admirably. Villiers Stanford has shown surprising skill in hitting exactly the right tone for his work—in producing the mean between mere ballad opera and grand

[442] Gänzl 1986, p. 575.
[443] ibid., p. 577.
[444] cf. "Opera Comique Theatre." *The Times*, 3 Mar. 1896, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS201776739/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=bd87d618. Accessed 23 Oct. 2020.

> opera. His work may please the melody-lover without offending any save the most austere of the anti-conventionalists. [...] 'Shamus O'Brien' begins most happily what I hope and almost believe will be a revival of a charming form of art [...]"[445]

We know today that, concerning the last point, the author was very wrong indeed. He belonged to a small group of people wishing for comic opera instead of musical comedy—I think Stanford and Sullivan, too, would have loved to contribute more works to this genre, as Stanford's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1901) and Sullivan's non-Gilbertian works in the 1890s show, but these works were not what the majority of spectators wanted to see, as the number of performances clearly indicate. Stanford, despite (or maybe because) of his enormous reputation as a 'serious' composer, was always struggling to have any of his operas put on stage; and the public's reaction to *Haddon Hall* and *The Beauty Stone* (1898) demonstrated without a doubt that Sullivan was expected to deliver more works in the traditional Savoy style. While comic opera might be "a charming form of art", it was certainly not a genre that induced the masses to flock in the theatres, and therefore definitely not where money was to be made—a fact that everybody involved was painfully aware of.

The opening number of *Shamus O'Brien* is preceded by the following stage directions:[446]

> The village of Ballyhamis. Evening.
>
> On the right, in front, is the house of SHAMUS O'BRIEN. The villagers are gathered in groups, anxiously discussing some piece of news.

The vocal score includes these slightly different and more detailed stage directions:[447]

> **Scene.** Village of Ballyhamis, in the mountains of Cork.
> **Time.** Immediately after the suppression of the Rebellion of 1798.
> The poor village street of Ballyhamis. Shamus' cottage set 1. Door practicable. Other cabins on drop, and mountain road winding off r. c. A few set trees and other features.
> (The Chorus is in two parts, which reply to each other and then come together.)

The stage design depicts the rural setting of the opera, some details of the decoration probably specified it as Irish. Life in the country was sentimentally idealized in late

[445] "'Shamus O'Brien,' at the Opera Comique." *The Sketch*, 11 Mar. 1896. V&A archive, THM-LON-OPQ 1896.
[446] Jessop, George H. *Shamus O'Brien*, p. 5. British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d. (1930?)
[447] Shamus O'Brien, Pianoforte Arrangement by Myles B. Foster. Published by Boosey & Co., London 1896, p. 8.

Victorian Britain, especially the supposedly good old days of the past. *Shamus O'Brien* somehow fits that description with a rural setting at the end of the 18th century; however, the recreation of a "poor village street" might be more depressing than picturesque, greatly depending on the degree of poverty implied by costumes and scenery. The setting furthermore promised a display of Irish traditions and customs—depending on the spectator's attitude towards the so-called 'Irish Question', this could incite either sympathy and enthusiasm or condescension and contempt. This is probably the reason why Irish settings are extremely rare in popular musical theatre.[448]

This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions), according to the libretto[449]—it "warn[s] the audience they were not in for a modern musical comedy or even a comic opera in the *Manteaux Noirs* line":[450]

[448]Unlike Irish-born Stanford, Sullivan, who had Irish roots as well, never encouraged a libretto with an Irish setting.

[449]Jessop, George H. *Shamus O'Brien*, pp. 5f. British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d. (1930?)

[450]Gänzl 1986, p. 575.

**Chorus**

*It's bitter news*
*It's wicked news*
*It's cruel news we're hearing*
*Spake up avick*
*And tell us quick*
*What trouble ye are fearing!*
*Too soon, faith, ye'll know*
*Whence is coming the blow.*
*The murder, the terror, the pillage.*
*They'll hunt him with dogs*
*Thro' the mountains and bogs*
*Our darlint, the pride of our village!*
*Here's the father!*
*Sure, he'll tell us what's the matter.*
*Trust the priest to know the news.*

**Solo Father O'Flynn**

*Peace be with you, peace be with you!*
*Little peace, but heavy tidings.*
*There's a blight upon our village,*
*and a price on Shamus' head.*
*There are wicked men would sell him,*
*though I know, good souls, you love him,*
*and would guard him, and protect him,*
*for you know the man he is!*

*I'll give ye to next Michaelmas to name us*
*A gossoon so presentable and famous,*
*So loved in all the neighbourhood as Shamus*
*Faith, ye wouldn't find his match in twice as long.*
*At hurling, it's give in he bates the devil,*
*He'll lep ye either high or on the level*
*He's the fairest, hardest drinker at a revel,*
*And an illigant performer at a song.*

**Chorus**

*If Romulus and Ramus*
*Had lived along with Shamus*
*They'd be like two puppy jackals with a lion:*
*Spake up now, can you blame us,*
*If the boys of Ballyhamis*
*Shout "Faugh a ballagh" Shamus The O'Brien!*

**Solo Father O'Flynn**

*Ah! The colleens swear there ne'er was such a dancer,*
*No lawyer ever shook him for an answer;*
*In coort, one day, bowld counsellor McCann, sir,*
*Give him up and fairly owned he had him bet.*
*He wouldn't drop his eyes in front of Nero,*
*Nor thremble if the cowld was down to Zero;*

*He's the moral and the model of a hero.*
*He's the making and the shaping of a Pet.*

**Chorus**

*If romulus and Ramus... etc.*

**Solo Father O'Flynn**

*He never left a friend that wanted treating,*
*He never quit a foe that needed bating,*
*He never kept a boy or girl awaiting,*
*Whether kisses or shillelaghs was the play.*
*He's a footfall like the red deer on the mountain,*
*An eye like a young salmon in the fountain,*
*He's away of going straight and never counting*
*How many or how few in his way!*

**Chorus**

*If Romulus and Ramus... etc.*

Already the first few lines are very unusual for a comic opera: By including the negative adjectives "bitter", "wicked" and "cruel", these verses form a striking contrast to the customary cheerful opening numbers of other examples of popular musical theatre. The chorus, representing the rural population as a group character, introduces the main conflict of the plot and the protagonist together with a soloist playing Father O'Flynn, the parish priest. The double threat described in the lyrics—Shamus will be hunted *and* betrayed—creates a threatening atmosphere; but, on the other hand, the villager's solidarity and their obvious admiration for Shamus, resulting in an unquestionable loyalty to him, leaves the impression that they will be able to overcome any kind of difficulties. Especially Father O'Flynn's song evokes an optimistic spirit. Irish words like "Faugh a ballagh" and "shillelagh" further emphasize the setting.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 9 | C | A♭ - f | orchestra | prelude |
| | 10 - 18 | | (c) - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | "It's bitter news..." |
| | 19 - 26 - | | g - D♭7 | orchestra & B | "Too soon, faith..." |
| | 26 - 33 | | D♭ - f | orchestra & SATB | "They'll hunt him..." |
| | 33 - 37 | | f - F | orchestra & SATB | "It's bitter news..." (reprise) |
| part B | 37 - 39 | 6/8 | F - d | orchestra | interlude |
| | 39 - 44 | | d - C | orchestra & SATB | "Here's the Father!" |
| | 44 - 49 | | B♭ - C | orchestra | interlude |
| | 49 - 62 | 2/4 | (c) - (f) | orchestra & soloist | recitative |
| | 62 - 64 | C | f - f | orchestra & SATB | "It's bitter news..." (reprise) |
| | 65 - 70 | | d7 - g | orchestra & soloist | "There are wicked men..." |
| part C | 70 - 73 | 3/4 | g - F | orchestra | interlude |
| | 73 - 84 | | B♭ - F | orchestra & soloist | song, 1st stanza |
| | 84 - 92 | | F - g | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 92 - 94 | | g - F | orchestra | interlude |
| | 95 - 105 | | B♭ - F | orchestra & soloist | song, 2nd stanza |
| | 105 - 113 | | F - g | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 113 - 115 | | g - F | orchestra | interlude |
| | 115 - 125 | | B♭ - (f) | orchestra & soloist | song, 3rd stanza |
| | 125 - 135 | | F - F | orchestra & SATB | refrain & ending |
| part D | 1 - 6 | C | (c) - g | orchestra | prelude |
| | 7 - 15 | | (a♭-c) - f | orchestra & SATB | "Let the army..." |
| | 15 - 20 | | f - (f) | orchestra | postlude |

Table 11: Structure of *Shamus O'Brien*—Chorus "It's Bitter News."

The chorus number, called "a capital opening number, words and music being both taking and appropriate" by *The Times*,[451] is very complex and consists of several contrasting parts, as Table 11 shows. In part A, the villagers are confused and shocked about a rumour they heard. Polyphony is used to create the effect of a crowd standing together and talking agitatedly to each other, a motif that has been anticipated in the prelude is varied and expanded (s. Figure 39).

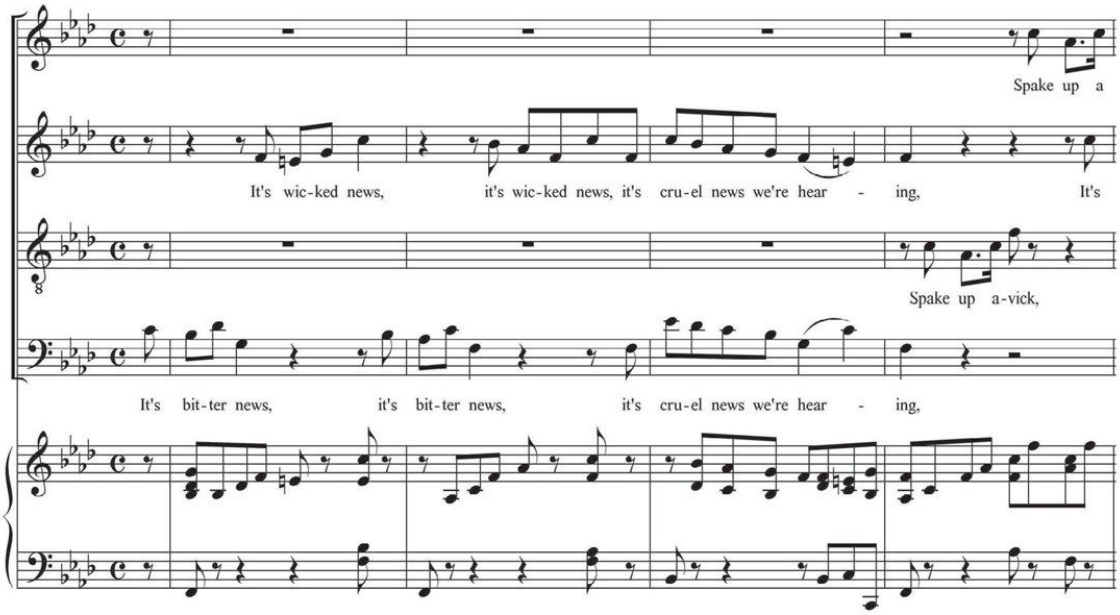


Figure 39: *Shamus O'Brien*—"It's Bitter News." (bars 10 - 13)

Subsequently, one person, represented by the basses, rises to speak about the rumour (bars 19ff), stating that "he" will be hunted mercilessly, while the other villagers listen silently. This is accompanied by a motif which is picked up again throughout the whole opera (s. Figure 40).

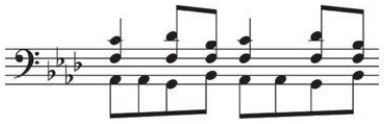

Figure 40: *Shamus O'Brien*—"It's Bitter News.", bass line (bar 19)

[451] cf. "Opera Comique Theatre." *The Times*, 3 Mar. 1896, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS201776739/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=bd87d618. Accessed 23 Oct. 2020.

Shamus's name is not mentioned yet, he is affectionately called "our darlint, the pride of our village!" (bars 24ff). Stanford uses homophony and a high pitch level (especially in bars 29ff.) to stress Shamus's importance for the people, and their agitation because they are worried for him (s. Figure 41).

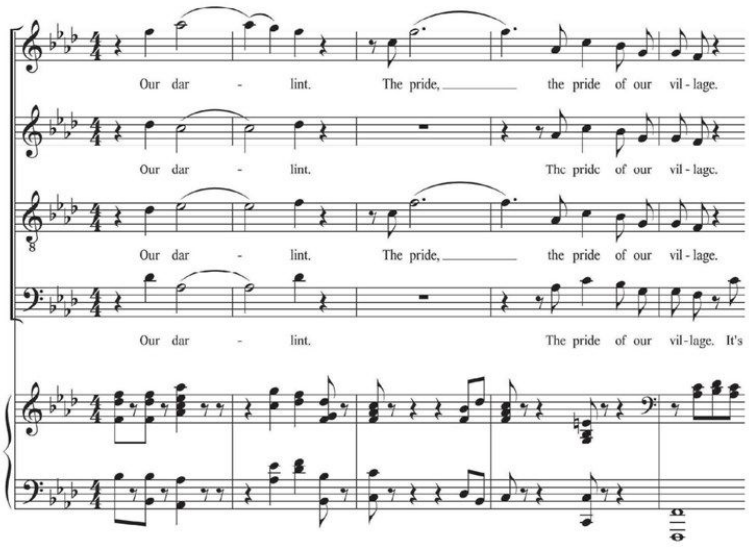


Figure 41: *Shamus O'Brien*—"It's Bitter News." (bars 29 - 33)

After a stretto of the "It's bitter news"-motif, part A, set in f-minor, ends in F-major; maybe in anticipation of a happy end.
The melody of the interlude to part B sounds Irish, partly because it is set in 6/8-time, although it is most likely not an authentic Irish tune. Father O'Flynn's arrival is announced by the chorus one voice after another, obviously the people rely on the priest to be both well-informed and willing to share his knowledge about their current problem. Shortly before the soloist's entrance, the beginning of an authentic Irish melody can be heard: the tune Father O'Flynn (s. Figure 42).[452]

Figure 42: *Shamus O'Brien*—"It's Bitter News.", bass line (bars 44 - 45)

When the soloist starts singing (in mm. 49), there is a general pause in the orchestra. Because of this pause and the noticeable introduction, the audience realizes at once that Father O'Flynn is a very important person. In a recitative-like section he confirms the

[452]cf. Rodmell 1995, p. 165.

villagers' fears, mentioning Shamus's name for the first time. Stanford emphasizes the bad news musically with dissonances (s. Figure 43).

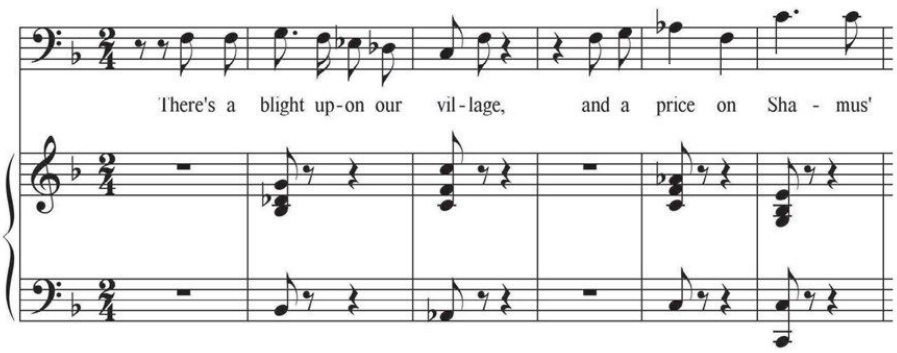


Figure 43: *Shamus O'Brien*—"It's Bitter News.", Father O'Flynn (bars 56 - 62)

The chorus comments the news with a reprise of the polyphonic passage. In part C, the patter song, Stanford uses the most common approach in British opera at that time, the identical setting of each stanza.[453] The refrain ("If Romulus and Ramus") is set homophonically or in unison to emphasize the solidarity of the villagers; it ends with an Irish battle cry and Shamus's name, but in g-minor, the tonic parallel. The use of the tonic parallel instead of the tonic can often be seen in Irish music. After the second stanza, the refrain is repeated identically; after the third stanza, the accompaniment changes. The last words, "The O'Brien", are repeated, and finally the refrain ends in the tonic.
After a spoken dialogue, there is another short homophonic chorus section in which the villagers state their will to help Shamus escape the soldiers (part D). This section is a reprise of the motif sung as a solo by the basses in the first part (in bars 19ff). It is set homophonically and in unison to emphasize the solidarity of the villagers again, who are basically stating that the English soldiers will have a hard time catching Shamus:[454]

*Let the army come on*
*With its sword and its gun*
*To harry and burn Ballyhamis*
*A man has to creep*
*To catch weasels asleep*
*They'll as soon catch a weasel as Shamus.*

As already mentioned in the analysis of the lyrics, one of the functions of the number is to introduce the protagonist, Shamus O'Brien, and his position: He is the most

[453]This is the only time in this opera he uses this approach.
[454]Jessop, George H. *Shamus O'Brien*, pp. 5f. British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d. (1930?)

popular man in Ballyhamis, a lot of people love him and are willing to fight for him, but obviously, there is also someone who might betray him. Furthermore, the character Father O'Flynn is introduced as a person the villagers rely on for support and information. By explaining the situation to the villagers, he elucidates the initial situation to the audience at the same time—a common narrative device. The villagers as well as the audience also hear about the conflict, the impending treachery resulting in a death sentence for the protagonist. Compared with the other examples included in this study, the opening number of *Shamus O'Brien* provides by far the most information. In a way, it is similar to *Haddon Hall*, to which it is also quite close concerning genre. Additionally, the Irish setting is introduced by using Irish tunes, (fake) Irish dialect and a famous Irish battle cry.

## 3.12 *The Grand Duke*

The comic opera[455] *The Grand Duke or The Statutory Duel* by Arthur Sullivan with a libretto by William Schwenck Gilbert premiered at the Savoy Theatre on 7 March 1896 and ran for 123 performances.[456] It is the last work they created together and commonly perceived as a failure. The reasons given for the comparatively few performances were the revival of the extremely popular *The Mikado* at the same time, in combination with a libretto that is in general described as rather poor.[457] Jacobs even calls the libretto "the most heartless and mechanical of all Gilbert's works for Sullivan".[458] Williams adds that the humour sometimes appeared quite old-fashioned and was similar to former works like *Thespis* (1871) or *The Mikado* (1885), but although it had been perceived as up to date then, it was no longer fresh and appealing to the audience at that time.[459] Gänzl agrees that "resemblances to the very first of the Gilbert/Sullivan works [*Thespis*] were there, not textually, but in style and subject", and adds that Gilbert's "principal model" was "Tito Mattei and H. B. Farnie's comic opera *The Prima Donna*, itself based on the *Blackwood's* magazine story 'The Duke's Dilemma'."[460] The review in *The Times*, already quite remarkable because of its considerable length in comparison to other reviews, is optimistic about the future of the work despite its obvious shortcomings:

[455]The vocal score does not include any term concerning genre; Gänzl chose to label it a comic opera.
[456]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 614.
[457]cf. Parry 2009, pp. 28f.
[458]cf. Jacobs 1992, p. 371.
[459]cf. Williams 2011, p. 349.
[460]Gänzl 1986, p. 577.

> "This time the libretto is very 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 thoroughly grasped, and some of the jests are beaten out terribly thin. [...] Though there are next to no topical allusions, the dialogue has a considerable number of whimsical ideas, and when these have been brought nearer to each other by the compression of much that makes the first act and the latter part of the second seem a little tedious, their effect will, no doubt, be increased."[461]

While the review praises Sullivan's score and most of the performers, it criticizes Gilbert's libretto explicitly. Nevertheless, the reviewer was sure that *The Grand Duke* was not beyond repair and trusted in the revisions that were normal after a debut performance in that genre. In this case, however, they did not succeed.

Oost points out that while the opera includes some of the familiar aspects that characterize the genre like the passing mention of fashionable commodities in the dialogues foreshadowing present-day product placement, it noticeably lacks another, more important aspect: Respectable middle class characters who resolve the problems of the plot by adhering to middle class ethical values.[462] Although one might argue that the social criticism implied by the fact that the one character connected to the middle class decides to do nothing rather than solve the chaos produced by "the foolishness of the acting company and the ugliness of the aristocrats"[463] and that the happy ending of the opera is induced simply by coincidence, it was definitely the wrong piece for a success at the Savoy Theatre. The seemingly weird balance between the roles was at least partly due to consideration of the ensemble;[464] of course Gilbert wanted to involve all of the former principals because they would attract their numerous admires to attend the production and were therefore considered vital for the success of the opera.

The extremely complicated plot of *The Grand Duke* revolves around a strange law in a fictitious German country, the so-called "Statutory Duel". The story line includes a *coup d'état*, a lot of confusion and, of course, several marriages. Settings in fictitious small countries were pretty popular in operetta,[465] so maybe the work can be seen as close to that genre. Gilbert decided to stage the work in the Savoy Theatre and not in the Lyric

[461]"Savoy Theatre." *The Times*, 9 Mar. 1896, p. 7. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS118414953/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=d5624c0e. Accessed 20 Oct. 2020.
[462]cf. Oost 2016, pp. 129f.
[463]ibid., p. 130
[464]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 579.
[465]cf. Klotz 1997, p. 139.

Theatre as originally planned after he and Sullivan had reached an agreement to revive their collaboration once more, and therefore, Scheer argues, Gilbert had to change the genre from musical comedy to Savoy opera—a decision that entailed many difficulties. Gilbert also added the aspect of topsyturvydom to the libretto, "no longer caring if [it] functioned comically or dramatically, hoping [its] presence would be enough to engender success"[466]—and was proven to be wrong when the work failed. In other words, it is not enough to include all the formerly popular elements in a plot, but it is almost as important (if not even more important) how they are combined and made into a convincing libretto. Scheer therefore describes *The Grand Duke* as "a desperate attempt to capitalise on elements of the formula that yielded success in the 1880s."[467]

Wren points out that similar to *Utopia Limited*, Gilbert and Sullivan hardly ever criticized each other during the process of creation and therefore could not fabricate a work that was as consistent and complex as the 1880s collaborations. He adds that many scenes in the libretto are not logical, but not on purpose to achieve a comical effect, as had been the case in former works, but due to lack of revision. Another weak point of the libretto is its disappointing ending regarding the couples and the unforeseeable solution to the statutory duels.[468] In addition to the deficiencies of the original libretto, *The Grand Duke* was poorly revised during its run.[469] However, Wren also points out that *The Grand Duke* can be seen as an experiment to try something new rather than a work in continuation of the successful 1880s formula. Most strikingly, it emphasizes metatheatrical aspects (for example by comparing managing a theatre company to running a country), a feature quite novel in late Victorian times.[470] Williams remarks "that *The Grand Duke* becomes an allusive collection of genres and styles, anthological in its scope, but like a grab bag in its feel"[471], partly due to the focus on a theatre company and the numerous references to various theatrical genres. However, Williams sees *The Grand Duke* as "a great example of parodic recollection taken to the *n*th degree" because "it is stuffed full of material—overstuffed, in fact, like a huge Victorian sofa."[472] This makes the work extremely interesting for scholars, but quite exhausting for (especially the less informed) spectators who simply wanted to be entertained. Allusions to other works and genres had always been typical for Savoy opera (s. Chapter 2.1), but maybe Gilbert overdid it in the libretto of *The Grand Duke*.

[466]Scheer 2017, pp. 217f.
[467]ibid., p. 218.
[468]cf. Wren 2001, pp. 260ff.
[469]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 580.
[470]cf. Wren 2001, pp. 263ff. and Williams 2011, p. 344.
[471]Williams 2011, p. 345.
[472]ibid., p. 350.

The parody of one genre is particularly noticeable because the actors and actresses are preparing for a performance of *Troilus and Cressida*: classical extravaganza.[473] There is a second genre, to be more precise, a particular work that Gilbert and Sullivan aim to mimic in *The Grand Duke*, and that is the Parisian *opéra bouffe*, especially Jacques Offenbach's *La grande-duchesse de Gérolstein*.[474]

According to Williams, Sullivan follows Gilbert's lead: Similar to the librettist's references to several former popular genres, the score "represents a magnificent summation by Sullivan of international styles in nineteenth-century music, like an anthology compiled on the very eve of modernism."[475] This sounds as if they both created *The Grand Duke* with a very retrospective, if not even nostalgic idea in mind instead of trying to compete with the modern musical comedy.

The opening number *Chorus (with Solos) and Duet (Lisa & Ludwig)* is preceded by an overture, as typical for Savoy operas. Scheer sees the number "clearly in the tradition of previous Savoy works", pointing out that it "is musically energetic and effectively sets the scene, but there is too much text and the choral passages become both a diction and comprehension nightmare."[476] Among some other numbers, Lawrence thinks *The Grand Duke* is "memorable for its wedding chorus"[477]. Wren calls the number "Offenbachian" and lists it among others as "some of his [Sullivan's] most charming work".[478] He also points out that *The Grand Duke* is the only work by Gilbert and Sullivan that is enframed by the same number in the opening chorus and the finale.[479]

The number is preceded by the following stage directions:[480]

> SCENE. Market-place of Speisesaal, in the Grand Duchy of Pfennig Halbpfennig. A well, with decorated ironwork, up L.C. GRETCHEN, BERTHA, OLGA, MARTHA, ELSA, and other members of ERNERST DUMMKOPF's theatrical company are discovered, seated at several small tables, enjoying a repast in honour of the nuptials of LUDWIG, his leading comedian, and LISA, his soubrette.

The setting in a fictitious German town was probably indicated by typical architectural features of the stage design. Although not really 'exotic', this locale fulfils the audience's

[473]cf. Williams 2011, pp. 347ff.
[474]cf. ibid., p. 350
[475]ibid., pp. 351f.
[476]Scheer 2017, p. 220.
[477]cf. Arthur Lawrence: *Sir Arthur Sullivan. Life Story, Letters and Reminiscences*, New York 1980, p. 196.
[478]Wren 2001, pp. 271f.
[479]cf. ibid., p. 273.
[480]Bradley 1996, p. 1087.

desire to experience foreign places and cultures in order to emphasize British superiority over the culture represented in this opera by ridiculing its customs. The presence of the choristers, probably clad in festive attire, adumbrates the festivity which is specified as a wedding by the lyrics. A festivity always implied excitement because it stands for extraordinary circumstances, an exception from everyday life, which was exactly what the spectators longed for.
This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions), according to *The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan*:[481]

**Chorus**

*Won't it be a pretty wedding?*
*Will not Lisa look delightful?*
*Smiles and tears in plenty shedding-*
*Which in brides of course is rightful.*
*One could say, if one were spiteful,*
*Contradiction little dreading,*
*Her bouquet is simply frightful-*
*Still, 'twill be a pretty wedding!*
*Oh, it is a pretty wedding!*
*Such a pretty, pretty wedding!*
*Such a charming wedding!*

**Elsa.**

*If her dress is badly fitting,*
*Theirs the fault who made her* trousseau.

**Bertha.**

*If her gloves* are *always splitting,*
*Cheap kid gloves, we know, will do so.*

**Olga.**

*If upon her train she stumbled,*
*On one's train one's always treading.*

**Gret.**

*If her hair* is *rather tumbled,*
*Still, 'twill be a pretty wedding!*

**Four Girls.**

*Such a pretty, pretty wedding!*

**Chorus.**

*Such a very, very pretty wedding,*
*Won't it be a pretty wedding ... etc.*

*Here they come, the couple plighted-*
*On life's journey gaily start them.*
*Man and maid for aye united,*
*Till divorce or death do part them.*

The first part of the opening number introduces the initial situation of the opera, a wedding. However, the lyrics reveal that the wedding guests, represented by the chorus, have their doubts if they will really attend "a pretty wedding"—they express their concern (or rather their scepsis) openly. The function of the chorus (including the four small solo parts) is to prepare the background for the soloists representing Ludwig and Lisa, whose

[481] Bradley 1996, pp. 1087ff.

entrance they announce in the last four verses. The female choristers are in the limelight in this number because it involves four soloists—maybe this was an attempt to take advantage of the popularity of 'chorus girls' as the musical comedies had successfully demonstrated.

**Ludwig.**

*Pretty Lisa, fair and tasty,*
*Tell me now, and tell me truly,*
*Haven't you been rather hasty?*
*Haven't you been rash unduly?*
*Am I quite the dashing* sposo
*That your fancy could depict you?*
*Perhaps you think me only so-so?*

(*She expresses admiration*)

*Well, I will not contradict you!*

**Chorus.**

*No, he will not contradict you!*

**Lisa**

*Who am I to raise objection?*
*I'm a child, untaught and homely-*
*When you tell me you're perfection,*
*Tender, truthful, true, and comely-*
*That in quarrel no one's bolder,*
*Though dissensions always grieve you-*
*Why, my love, you're so much older*
*That, of course, I must believe you!*

**Chorus.**

*Yes, of course, she must believe you!*

*If he ever acts unkindly,*
*Shut your eyes and love him blindly-*
*Should he call you names uncomely,*
*Shut your mouth and love him dumbly-*
*Should he rate you, rightly - leftly-*
*Shut your ears and love him deafly.*
*Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!*
*Thus and thus and thus alone*
*Ludwig's wife may hold her own!*

The second part of the opening number introduces two of the major characters, Ludwig and Lisa, and clarifies their relationship to each other. They seem to be an example of Victorian matrimony: The husband was usually much older than the wife and in every way superior to her. Again, the lyrics of the chorus are very explicit about their opinion on the unhappy future that is in store for this couple.

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 13 | C | E - E | orchestra | prelude |
| | 14 - 33 | | E - E | orchestra & SATB | 1st stanza |
| | 34 - 37 | | E - E | orchestra | interlude |
| | 37 - 58 | | (e) - E | orchestra, soloists & SATB | 2nd stanza |
| part B | 58 - 74 | | E - E | orchestra & SATB | 3rd stanza |
| | 75 - 76 | C | A - E | orchestra | interlude |
| part C | 76 - 79 | 3/4 | (e) - (e) | orchestra | interlude |
| (Duet) | 79 - 114 | | (e) - G | orchestra, Ludwig & SATB | stanza Ludwig |
| | 115 - 116 | | passing tones | orchestra | interlude |
| | 117 - 153 | | e - (g) | orchestra, Lisa & SATB | stanza Lisa |
| | 154 - 197 | | (g) - C | orchestra & SATB | stanza chorus |
| | 197 - 200 | | C - C | orchestra | postlude |

Table 12: Structure of *The Grand Duke*—Chorus and Duet.

The number is clearly divided into two sections, as indicated in the vocal score: The first section is sung by the chorus, including small solo parts for some of the female choristers, whereas the second section consists of stanzas sung by Ludwig, Lisa and the chorus (s. Table 12). Part A is subdivided further into several sections. The instrumental prelude introduces the motif sung by the first sopranos later on and enhances this motif. It creates a cheerful and spirited atmosphere, although dissonances express tension, indicating a conflict or, at least, agitation. Two stanzas with a refrain follow. As usual, the first sopranos sing the melody in the first stanza and in the refrain. They enter one bar later than the other voices (s. Figure 44). The male voices and, for the first six bars, the second sopranos as well, sing nothing but syllabic quavers and prime intervals, whereas the first sopranos sing a different rhythm. This is most extraordinary for Savoy operas which usually consist of homophonic chorus numbers. The melody stresses the second beat of the bar, which is rather uncommon as well and therefore ensures the audience's attention. All of the voices are supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*. These contrasts result in a very intricate and irregular structure and make it very interesting for the audience to listen to the number. However, the steady rhythmic pattern sung by the male voices and the second sopranos sounds so much like an accompaniment that it is very easy to make out the first sopranos' melody and understand the text.

The refrain is basically a repetition of verse 8, "Still 'twill be a pretty wedding" (bars 25ff.), in several variations, with a huge emphasis on the word "charming" (bars 54ff.). The stanza sung by the soloists is a variation of the first stanza sung by the chorus. The

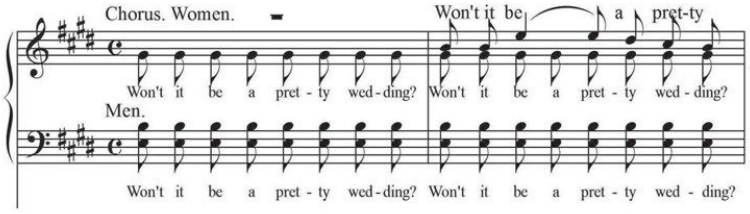


Figure 44: *The Grand Duke*—Chorus (bars 14 - 15)

orchestra plays *piano* and does not play *colla parte* in the first four verses, so the soloists are clearly the centre of attention.

Part B begins in unison and is therefore a contrast to the intricate setting of Part A. The high-pitched instruments play *colla parte*, whereas the low-pitched instruments continue the steady quaver pattern. Verses 3 and 4 are set in four parts, the melody as usual sung by the first sopranos. Those verses are repeated, the words "divorce" and "part" are emphasized with long note values—obviously, the chorus does not think that the wedding is a very good idea. Verse 1 is repeated to announce Ludwig and Lisa directly before their entrance. This time, Sullivan uses a noticeable dotted rhythm to attract the audiences attention. The short instrumental interlude between parts B and C is quite similar to the one used between the stanzas in part A.

Part C, labelled "No. 1a" in the vocal score, starts with a fanfare (bar 76f.) to announce the couple's entrance again. This part is very different from the first two parts, as Table 12 illustrates. Furthermore, the tempo changes to *tempo di valse*, so Sullivan makes it easy for the audience to follow the musical structure of the number. Scheer praises this section as "a clever and charming waltz" that enhances the enticing mood.[482] It takes a while for the new tonic to become obvious because of the prominent f♯ in Ludwig's melody (s. Figure 45).

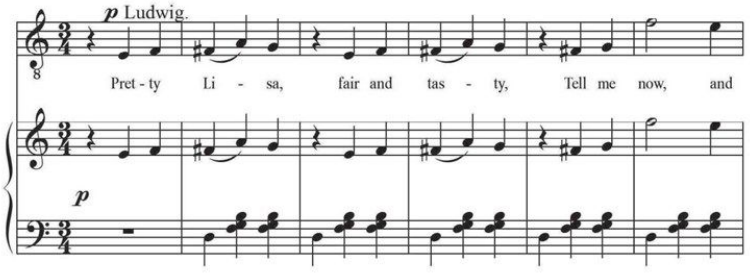


Figure 45: *The Grand Duke*—Duet (bars 79 - 84)

[482]Scheer 2017, p. 220.

Sullivan uses a lot of chromaticism in this section, in Ludwig's stanza there are a lot of accidentals (♯). He expresses his worries that his bride might think him rather dull. The chorus adds an audible exclamation mark to his concern by repeating his last verse in a quite high position with an ascending scale (s. Figure 46).

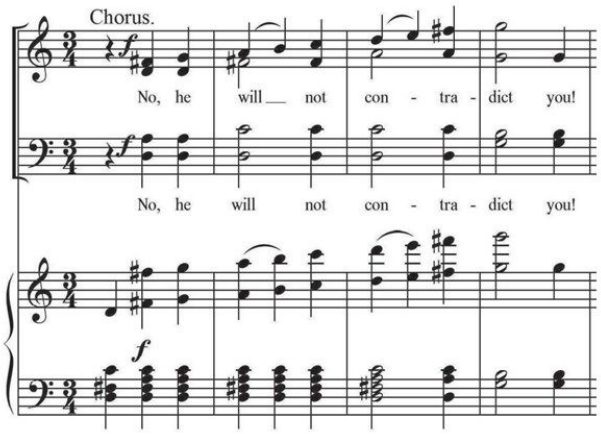


Figure 46: *The Grand Duke*—Duet (bars 111 - 114)

Lisa's stanza is very different from Ludwig's. Harmony, melody and orchestral accompaniment are dissimilar, in her stanza Sullivan uses flat instead of sharp accidentals. However, there are some motifs that are quite alike, but most definitely not identical to those Ludwig used. The music shows their disparity quite clearly—at least tempo and time signature do not change, so their differences might not be unconquerable. Again, the chorus adds an exclamation mark by repeating the last verse, but the emphasis is not as strong as in Ludwig's stanza because of the lower position and the static melody (bars 149ff.).
The chorus has the final say in this number. They have some 'advice' for Lisa, about which they sing in four parts. Basically they state that her only possibility to be happy is to ignore all of Ludwig's faults. As in part A, the first sopranos enter one bar later than the other voices and sing a different rhythm in the first four verses. The melody is a variation of Ludwig's stanza, the last two verses are repeated and therefore emphasized.

As already pointed out in the analysis of the lyrics, the function of the number is to introduce some of the major characters, Lisa and Ludwig, and a subplot, their future wedding. This subplot is the catalyst for the conspiracy against the Grand Duke, the main plot, so the first number can be seen as the initial point of the plot rather than an

introduction. The audience does not learn much about the setting which is only introduced by the costumes and the stage design. This was probably done because the setting is not very 'exotic' and therefore does not require a lengthy introduction, so the focus in this opening number is different than in other Savoy operas. However, the number does not introduce the group character represented by the chorus in regard of occupation as in, for example, the opening chorus of *H.M.S. Pinafore* (s. Chapter 4.1). In case of *The Grand Duke*, the occupation of the group characters as members of a theatrical company would have been particularly interesting (especially for an audience in late Victorian times that was extremely interested in the performers and their occupation in general), but for some reasons Gilbert chose to focus on their function as wedding guests instead.

## 3.13 *The Geisha*

Sidney Jones's extremely successful Japanese musical play[483] *The Geisha or A Story of a Tea House* with additional numbers by Lionel Monckton and James Philip, a libretto by Owen Hall and lyrics by Harry Greenbank premiered at Daly's Theatre in London on 25 April 1896 and ran for 760 performances.[484] A review in *The People* declares it to be "a distinct advance in the series of musical pieces given us by the trio responsible for 'The [sic!] Gaiety Girl' and 'An Artist's Model"', further elaborating that

> "some may object that it is a trifle too serious in tone compared with its predecessors, but the authors have obviously discarded the musical farce and the medley for the more legitimate form of light opera".[485]

These observations, which are seconded by reviews in *The Sketch*[486] and *The Daily Telegraph*,[487] back up the assessment made in Chapter 2.3 concerning the differences between musical comedy and musical play, and the review in *The Times* is likewise full of praise:

[483] As pointed out before, *The Geisha* is supposedly the first work to be called a musical play (s. chapter 2.3).
[484] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 619.
[485] "Daly's Theatre Last Night." The People, 26 Apr. 1896. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[486] cf. "'The Geisha,' at Daly's Theatre." The Sketch, 29 Apr. 1896. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[487] cf. "'The Geisha' at Daly's Theatre" The Daily Telegraph, 27 Apr. 1896. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.

> "One has come to associate these collaborators with flimsy works of a too familiar type, in which 'the play' was the last thing dreamt of, all semblance of a connected story being sacrificed for the benefit of individual singers and dancers; and although in *The Geisha* the majority of the songs have little or no connexion with the plot, there yet remains a plot, perhaps of rather an attenuated kind. The efforts of both authors and composer to produce a piece of a higher order of artistic merit are deserving of great praise, and it seems well within the bounds of possibility that these writers may develop from the ashes of the glorified variety show a form of dramatic entertainment similar in most respects to the real light opera [...]"[488]

All critics seem to agree that there was a distinct development to be seen in popular musical theatre, and they were unanimously enthusiastic about these changes. Gänzl comments the review in *The Times* as follows:

> "What *The Times* and all the other writers who constantly bewailed the lack of 'real light opera' failed consistently to recognize was that the public were not, in great numbers, interested in seeing 'real light opera'. *The Geisha* with its felicitous blend of songs and pretty ballads provided, musically, precisely what they wanted to hear, and the story—attractive and simple and providing plenty of opportunity for their favourites to make them laugh—was also aimed at just the right level."[489]

While he is certainly right that the majority of the spectators did not attend Daly's Theatre because they expected to see a production with a coherent plot, it is also true that the success of *The Geisha* surmounted that of its predecessors—not only in London, but also international. Although a coherent plot was obviously not even close to the top priority for the larger part of the audience, they surely did not like the work less if it actually had some consistency; and this might have been the crucial aspect that attracted even more patrons and ensured the worldwide success.

The immense popularity of *The Geisha* on a global level can be compared to *The Merry Widow*, it was "receiving more performances in Germany than any contemporary native work."[490] An article in *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* published three years later in 1899 acknowledges *The Geisha* to be the best of its genre in the 1890s.[491] According to Forbes-Winslow, the librettist wanted "to break new ground" with this work—"I

[488]"Daly's Theatre." The Times, 27 Apr. 1896, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/ CS202432155/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=024d466b. Accessed 16 Oct. 2020.

[489]Gänzl 1986, p. 585.

[490]Lamb 2001b, p. 711.

[491]"Music." *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 Oct. 1899, p. 300. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.

don't see why a play shouldn't be just as rational with music as without", Owen Hall supposedly said in an interview.[492] This is certainly true, one of the most frequently uttered criticisms concerning musical comedies and plays alike was that the plot was often far-fetched and inconsistent. Furthermore, "the smart society tone which had pervaded *A Gaiety Girl* and *An Artist's Model* was largely abandoned and the dialogue of *The Geisha* was much more natural and uncomplicated."[493] The language had been adapted to suit the audience's taste; this might make the libretti interesting subjects for research on linguistic change in the 1890s. Obviously, "lessons had been learned from the experience of *An Artist's Model*",[494] which had been revised extensively after its premiere (s. Chapter 3.10).

The work "started a Japanese craze in London: there were Geisha hats for women, Geisha ties for men and all kinds of goods sprang up in the night with the brand name of 'Geisha"'[495]; this phenomenon is similar to the merchandise that followed the premiere of Lehár's *Merry Widow* about ten years later. As customary, the run was accompanied by frequent articles containing pictures of the performers in their costumes, like the the detailed commentary on the dresses in *The Sketch*.[496] One reason for the success of *The Geisha* might be the "manic, infectious energy"[497] of the musical numbers; the opening number definitely fits that description. According to Lamb, this work "retained much of the comic opera tradition of Sullivan";[498] Baranello, on the other hand, states that "*San Toy* and *The Geisha*, were both exercises in empty exoticism—*The Mikado* without the political satire."[499] The opening numbers of the former works clearly belong to a different genre than *The Mikado* (1885), there are few similarities (s. Chapter 4.1); but it is quite possible that other numbers or aspects of the works are much closer to Savoy opera than the opening number.

As already mentioned, the Japanese setting was the same as in the Sullivan's *The Mikado*, which was still very popular not only for amateur theatrical societies, but also revived on the Savoy stage in the 1890s; and in *The Geisha*, "the Japanese characters [...] sing melodies which are parodic of Sullivan in their style and flow."[500], However, as Scott has pointed out, "the foreign in *The Geisha* is a source of entertainment, rather than

[492]Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 55f., unfortunately the author does not name any sources.
[493]Gänzl 1986, p. 586.
[494]cf. ibid., p. 585
[495]Hyman 1975, p. 81.
[496]"Our Ladies' Pages. Fashions as they are." *The Sketch*, 29 Apr. 1896, p. 41f. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.
[497]Baranello 2014, p. 183.
[498]Lamb 2001b, p. 711.
[499]Baranello 2014, p. 183.
[500]Macpherson 2018, p. 125.

an allegoric means by which members of the audience recognize their own follies and prejudices",[501] as it had been the case in *The Mikado*. Another reason for the success of this musical play might be the elaborate and costly stage setting which let the audience experience the West End version of Japan, involving some effort to make the show more realistic by including a choreography inspired by Japanese dancing and original Japanese costumes.[502] However, the inclusion of real Japanese music was discarded because Sidney Jones thought that "Japanese music, pure and simple would not be quite acceptable to a British audience."[503] He was probably right, the audience did not expect to be educated, they attended Daly's Theatre to be entertained—authenticity was not required.
The plot is a typical example of 'western soldier meets eastern beauty': It is set in a Japanese tea house where the British sailor Fairfax falls in love with the head geisha Mimosa. The local Governor, Marquis Imari, is in love with Mimosa, too. Mimosa loves the Captain of the Governor's Guard, Katana, whereas Juliette, the French interpreter associated with the tea house, loves Marquis Imari. Fairfax is engaged to Molly, who is supposed to wait for him back home, but decides to join him in Japan instead. In the end, everybody marries. In this musical play, a contrast between "'native' girls from a 'primitive' culture [and] wealthy fashionable English women"[504] is shown, thus strengthening the audience's belief in the superiority of British culture by experiencing the 'exotic', seemingly inferior culture on stage (although the presented culture is by no means authentic). On the other hand, Macpherson emphasizes that "[a]ll the Japanese characters speak immaculate English",[505] in contrast to Chinese characters often portrayed with an accent as in the number *Chin Chin Chinaman*—"Chinaman no money makee Allo lifee long!"[506] Obviously, not everyone was happy with this representation of Chinese characters on the late Victorian stage, as contemporary comments on *San Toy* show (s. Chapter 3.17). The contrast between Britain and Japan is especially emphasized by the portrayal of female characters in *The Geisha*: Whereas Japanese women were dismissed as pretty, but unimportant decoration, English women were seen as respectable people who had to be taken seriously.[507] Here we can see a distinct development concerning the situation of Victorian women; Molly's behaviour is the exact opposite of the passive angel in the house that had been idealized for decades.

[501]Scott 2020, p. 247.
[502]cf. Platt 2004, p. 33, p. 66, cf. Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 55.
[503]quoted from Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 57.
[504]cf. Platt 2004, p. 43.
[505]Macpherson 2018, p. 125.
[506]Vocal Score, p. 149, cf. Macpherson 2018, p. 126.
[507]cf. Platt 2004, p. 72.

Some aspects of Japanese culture are presented as barbaric and scandalous to the civilized English mind.[508] However, Macpherson points out that Japanese characters sometimes have "very 'British' configurations", he names "striking similarities" concerning "hierarchy and social structure" as a possible reason.[509] Of course, the creatos of *The Geisha* did not aim to portray authentic Japanese characters, therefore this assessment is not really surprising (but nevertheless correct).
The first number is preceded by the following stage directions:[510]

> The SCENE represents the exterior and grounds of the Tea House of "Ten Thousand Joys" in Japan. From left a tea house in two storeys extends obliquely up stage to almost the middle. There is an approach L.C. form a bridge and on left down a tree. The distance shows a Japanese landscape with mountains, etc
>
> (On curtain rising the ATTENDANTS and GUESTS of the tea house are on stage. There is a clatter with tea things and business indicative of trade prospering and tea girls busy with their guests. There are also discovered FOUR PRINCIPAL GEISHAS, or singing girls with samisens (Musical instruments) attended each by a MOUSME (Tea girl))

The initial scene fulfils the expectations raised by the title and subtitle at once: There are geishas on stage, and a tea house is the most prominent feature of the stage design. Although certainly cliché-ridden, the portrayed scene was bound to please the audience and catered to their desire to experience faraway places, or at least a theatrically processed version of such a locale. There were certainly people in the audience who considered themselves experts on Japanese culture, as the interest in exhibitions and the frequency of Japanese settings in (popular) culture indicates, but Edwardes made sure that the production was authentic enough to satisfy these patrons, without scaring off the pleasure-seekers with a too accurate (and therefore too foreign) reproduction.
This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions), according to the libretto handed in to the Lord Chamberlain's Office:[511]

[508] cf. Platt 2004, p. 72.
[509] Macpherson 2018, pp. 125f.
[510] Hall, Owen. *The Geisha*. ADD MS 53600 B, p. 2. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.
[511] ibid., pp. 2f

**Chorus, Tutti**

*Dawns the day in Eastern sky*
*Here we hasten pitter patter*
*Where the tiny teacups clatter;*
*Mounts the golden Sun God high*
*Shaded from his fury heated*
*Still at tea you'll find us seated;*
*Passes day towards the west,*
*Comes the night and calls to rest*
*Then we leave with sigh and sorrow*
*No more tea until tomorrow.*

*Happy Japan,*
*Garden of glitter!*
*Flower and fan*
*Flutter and flitter;*
*Land of bamboo,*
*(Juvenile whacker)*
*Porcelain too,*
*Teatray and lacquer.*
*Happy Japan, Happy Japan.*

(GOLDEN HARP, CHRYSANTHEMUM, BLOSSOM and LITTLE VIOLET FOUR GEISHAS, carrying musical instruments come forward)

**THE FOUR GEISHAS.**

*Shall we sing you while we bring you*
*Tea or coffee, Sirs*
*Dainty lyric panegyric*
*Of the gentlemen*
*We've a solo touching polo*
*For the officers*
*And a rondo rather fond,*
*O sentimental men,*
*Of a hymn in praise of women*
*Are you fanciers,*
*Or a sonnet to a bonnet*
*Supercilious?*
*We've a ditty of the city*
*For financiers*
*And a ballad of a salad*
*For the bilious!*

*Merry little geisha we!*
*Come along at once and see*
*Ample entertainment free,*
*Given as you take your tea.*

**Chorus, Tutti**

*Charming little geisha they!*
*Come along and hear them play;*
*All of it is free they say*
*Nothing in the world to pay.*

(CHORUS retire up stage during repeat following)

*Happy Japan, ... etc.*

(At end of Opening Chorus the FOUR GEISHAS remain down stage with FOUR ATTENDANTS behind them; rest of CHORUS distribute themselves about stage)

The lyrics match the cliché-ridden stage design by including key words connected with Japanese culture like "fan" and "bamboo". The stanza sung by the chorus is a flowery and

vague description of everyday life in a tea house; the mention of a "Sun God" adumbrates the foreign culture, whereas the importance of tea seems surprisingly British. The stanza sung by the four geishas lists songs dealing with various and absurd subjects, which are, however, somewhat reminiscent of the subjects of songs in musical comedies—an element of self-irony which was probably very amusing to the spectators who were familiar (and fond of) with songs like that despite their seemingly random topics. The lyrics show the geishas' eagerness to please their customers by meeting their wishes, but they also present the tea house as an innocent and respectable form of entertainment that had nothing to do with what some of the spectators might have suspected when hearing the term 'geisha'. Thus a connection is created between the entertainment provided at the tea house and the musical play at Daly's Theatre to make the audience feel involved.
The varying metre and rhyme scheme predetermine the structure of the number, as the analysis will show.

| **section** | **mm.** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 25 | 3/4 | (a-c) - d | orchestra | prelude |
| | 26 - 71 | | d - D | orchestra & SATB | stanza chorus |
| part B | 72 - 92 | | D - D | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| part C | 93 - 95 | 2/4 | (d) - (d) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 96 - 127 | | G - D | orchestra & soloists | stanza soloists |
| | 128 | | D7 | orchestra | interlude |
| | 129 - 137 | | G - D | orchestra & soloists | "Merry little geisha..." |
| | 138 | | D | orchestra | interlude |
| | 139 - 152 | 2/4 - 3/4 | G - A | orchestra & SATB | "Charming little geisha..." |
| part B | 153 - 175 | | D - D | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 175 - 183 | | D - D | orchestra | postlude |

Table 13: Structure of *The Geisha*—Opening Chorus. "Happy Japan."

This number is quite long, but as Table 13 shows, Jones structured it very clearly, so it is easy for the audience to follow. The instrumental introduction creates an 'exotic' atmosphere at once. The striking fanfare-like motif from the beginning is used again as an accompaniment during the stanza sung by the chorus. The tonic d-minor is very dominant both in the instrumental introduction and the beginning of the stanza. Jones makes it sound more 'exotic' by using c♯ instead of c quite often—harmonic minor instead of natural minor. Throughout this number, the voices sing in unison very often, or in thirds or sixths. The orchestra plays a waltz-like accompaniment which forms an interesting contrast with the 'exotic' sounding harmonic minor. In bars 56ff., there is a small solo for the sopranos—they sing a d-harmonic-minor scale downwards, but start

and end on f, which makes it sound even more strange and exotic. Jones uses a lot of chromaticism and dissonances to emphasize the text ("sigh and sorrow") (s. Figure 47). In the beginning, male and female voices alternate, but the whole chorus repeats the last line in unison as an affirmation, this time ending in D-major.

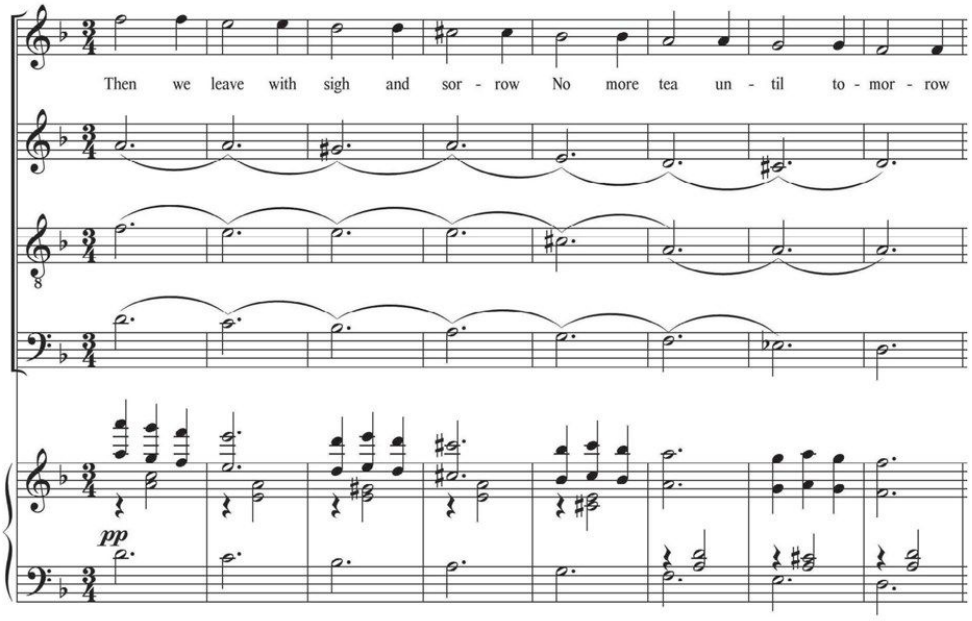


Figure 47: *The Geisha*—"Happy Japan" (bars 56 - 63)

The refrain "Happy Japan" (part B) is set in D-major, and again, the tonic is very dominant. It is subdivided into very regular phrases consisting of two bars. Cymbals are used on every first beat, creating a more grandiose and energetic atmosphere than in part A. Sopranos and basses have to sing a lot of large intervals, which make their parts quite ambitious (s. Figure 48), whereas there are many prime intervals in the alto and tenor parts.

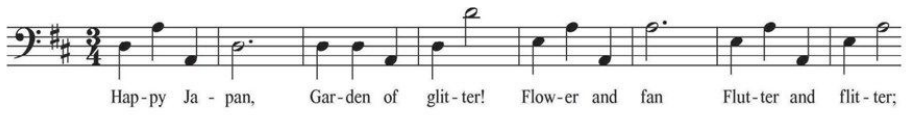


Figure 48: *The Geisha*—"Happy Japan", basses (bars 72 - 79)

After the refrain, the short instrumental interlude anticipates the motif sung by the soloists later on. The music is very different from the pompous refrain, as Table 13 illustrates. Part C starts *piano* and with the accompaniment of only a few instruments, so there is a considerable contrast to part B. Again, the music is subdivided into regular

phrases consisting of four bars. The melody contains some large intervals for the sopranos and is therefore quite demanding; the voices are mainly set in thirds or in unison (s. Figure 49).

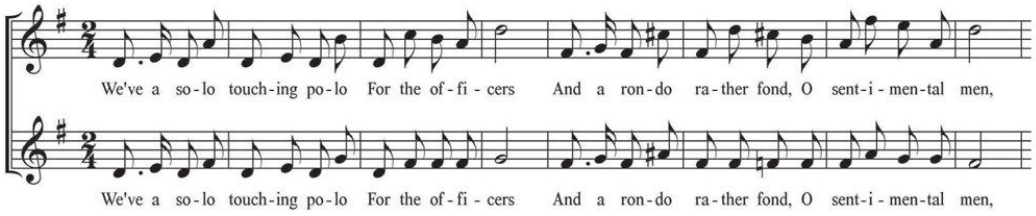


Figure 49: *The Geisha*—"Happy Japan", sopranos & altos (bars 104 - 111)

After a brief interlude, the whole chorus joins in and develops the melody sung by the soloists as an enhancement before the refrain, part B, is repeated identically.
The function of the number is to introduce the Japanese setting. This is achieved by various elements in the lyrics and music, as the analysis has shown. The opening number is pretty much a sung and danced elaboration of the stage design. The chorus provides the background for the soloists representing the four geishas, who were probably sung by choristers. Thus, the female singers take centre stage in this number—another prove of their extraordinary popularity. Thus, the opening chorus provided the spectators ample opportunity to admire their favourite 'chorus girl' clad in a kimono. The lyrics contain no information at all about the plot or the characters involved. The text focuses entirely on the comic aspect like the title "Happy Japan" suggests. In enumerating goods commonly connected with Japanese culture like fans, bamboo, tea and lacquer, the number is reminiscent of the opening number of Sullivan's *The Mikado*; but the structure, music and function are completely different.

## 3.14 *The Circus Girl*

The musical play *The Circus Girl* by Ivan Caryll with additional numbers by Lionel Monckton, lyrics by Harry Greenbank and Adrian Ross and a libretto by James Tanner and Walter Palings premiered at the Gaiety Theatre on 5 December 1896 and ran for 494 performances.[512] Due to the immense success of its predecessor, *The Shop Girl*, the box-office sold an unusual amount of tickets in advance.[513] Evidently, the ensemble

[512]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 627.
[513]cf. ibid., p. 606.

had already attracted a loyal circle of patrons who trusted the Gaiety Theatre to create another production that would suit their taste. A review in *The Times* describes the work as follows:

> "*The Circus Girl* [...] is decidedly a favourable specimen of a form of entertainment which is very far from being the highest—that form, in fact, which is known in print as "musical play", and colloquially as "variety show." Some of the six persons concerned in the manufacture of the piece [...] have, it would seem, become aware that the time has come when the public will no longer be satisfied with that entire absence of plot which has for so long amazed all lovers of dramatic art in the successes of recent years. They have accordingly adapted the main incidents of a German farce, *Eine tolle Nacht*, to fit the taste of the time, in such a manner that the second and third of the four scenes in which the action passes have a certain cohesion and interest on their own account. As a natural result these scenes seem likely to make the success of the piece, even though they are composed of such familiar materials [...] Mr. Caryll's music is of that sort which is so far from being original that it is pronounced "tuneful" by the unmusical part of the audience; a spice of something like distinction is imparted in the numbers for which Mr. Monckton is responsible [...]"[514]

This is another example of a review focusing on an aspect that, according to the success of prior works, was not as important to the audience than to the critics: the libretto, or, to be more precise, the incoherence of the plot. While most certainly most spectators of the Gaiety Theatre would call themselves "lovers of dramatic art", it is questionable if the majority was actually yearning for a more coherent libretto, as the critic seems to believe. As the comment about Caryll's score shows, the work was created to suit the taste of the general public and to provide entertainment; a purpose for which originality and coherence were only marginally necessary. *The Circus Girl* is one of the examples of the cultural exchange between London and Berlin. As the article quoted above has pointed out, the idea is based on the German work *Eine tolle Nacht* (1895) (with which it does not have a lot in common concerning plot and musical numbers); after it's successful run in London it was restaged in Berlin again, from where it relocated to Budapest and Vienna.[515] According to Gänzl it "was brimful of good songs, bright dialogue and genuine fun, the whole performed by the cast of the most loved musical artists in the country"[516]—again, the performers had a significant influence on the attractiveness of

[514]"Gaiety Theatre." *The Times*, 7 Dec. 1896, p. 12. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS202432391/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=6a82053b. Accessed 15 Oct. 2020

[515]cf. Platt 2014, p. 30.

[516]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 608.

the work for the audience and therefore on the success of the production.
As usual, the long run was accompanied by several newspaper articles featuring pictures of the performers in the costumes and announcing changes made concerning performers or numbers because "these 'second edition' have a knack of 'catching second wind"' and attracted spectators anew.[517] However, an article published almost a year after the debut performance emphasizes that "unlike some works of its class that have enjoyed long runs, 'The Circus Girl' has not required constant renovation."[518] This was most certainly due to the fact that the creators and the ensemble profited much from the experience gained in the prior works of the young genre.
Unfortunately, the libretto of *The Circus Girl* is not included in the Lord Chamberlain's Plays collection in the British Library, so in this case the vocal score is the only source available. The musical play begins with an opening chorus called "Mi-Carême", a special kind of carnival celebrated in France. As described above, the festivity as a setting makes many favourite aspects of the genre seem natural and was therefore a popular choice: Elaborate or even opulent scenery, decoration and costumes; dancing, and public interactions between genders and classes were considered normal or even necessary for a festivity. The situation shown on stage is explicitly not part of everyday life, but a rare exception, and therefore a lot of otherwise unthinkable circumstances are considered acceptable on this special day.
This is the text of the first number (excluding most repetitions):[519]

[517]"Gaiety.", *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 Dec. 1897. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1897. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[518]"'The Circus Girl' up to Date.", *The Sketch*, 17 Nov. 1897. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1897.
[519]Caryll, Ivan. *The Circus Girl*. Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, 1897, pp. 1ff.

**[Chorus.]**

*We're taking advantage of Mi-Carême,*
*And everybody will do the same!*
*The people who pose as propriety's pinks,*
*Today are indulging in highest of jinks;*
*For just when existence gets rather tame*
*Comes Mi-Carême!*

**Blanchisseuses.**

*We blanchisseuses have won the prize,*
*The envy of unnumbered eyes!*
*A frock so neat, a style so smart,*
*Must win a way to ev'ry heart!*
*For hard to please their tastes must be,*
*Who venture to deny that we,*
*In cap and apron snowy white,*
*Present a most bewitching sight!*

**Artists's Models.**

*The sweetest and smartest of models by far,*
*Designed for an artist by nature we are;*
*Perfection of features and beauty of form*
*Take masculine creatures completely by storm!*

**Students.**

*With cap in air, the gayest of the gay,*
*We students go our mad and merry way;*
*An empty purse, a life without a care,*
*And heart aflame at sight of woman fair!*

**Commissaire of Police.**

*Now gentlemen and ladies,*
*My duty, I'm afraid, is*
*To caution you and move you on,*
*Or else my occupation's gone!*

**[Chorus.]**

*Or else his occupation's gone!*

**[Commissaire of Police.]**

*On license when you border,*
*Remember I keep order!*
*You graceless, idle, rowdy lot!*
*Now am I here, or am I not?*
*Be careful how you dare*
*Annoy the commissaire!*
*Each indiscretion I will spot,*
*For am I here, or am I not?*

**[Chorus.]**

*Be careful how you dare etc.*

[...]

*We're taking advantage of Mi-Carême etc.*

The lyrics describe the Gaiety version of a medieval French festivity and include French words, mostly names (*Mi-Carême*) and occupational titles (*blanchisseuses*, *commissaire*), that illustrate the setting in a yet undefined French locale and excite associations of a French and therefore probably frivolous entertainment in the spectators' minds. The participants of the festivity, represented by the choristers, are quite candid about their activities during *Mi-Carême*: They are "taking advantage" of the special circumstances;

this means that they consciously behave in a way that would usually be considered indecent or just wrong (by others as well as by themselves), and that they happily use the carnival as an excuse for transgressions. Furthermore, they know that their actions during that period will have no consequences since "everybody will do the same!"—the attitude that a behaviour must be alright because many people adopt it is a social phenomenon that can be observed in many cultures and that seems to be timeless. These lyrics are another indicator for the strict unwritten laws and conventions of late Victorian society[520] which were perceived as restrictive and burdensome by most of the population. Situations that allowed a temporary slackening of rules and expectations were therefore a welcome relief from the hardships of everyday life. In short, *Mi-Carême* a phenomenon called 'Ventilsitte' or moral holiday that is embraced by "everybody". Of course, this phenomenon has a lot of aspects in common with the escapism musical comedies were always accused of providing: An evening at the Gaiety Theatre promised to "indulg[e] in the highest of jinks" if only as a spectator, and it was possible to show situations on stage that were considered indecent in reality, even if most of them were resolved at the end of a show, when order was restored.

Next, three groups of people are introduced: the *blanchisseuses*, the artist's models and the students.[521] The *blanchisseuses*, though obviously easy on the eye, belong to the working class, whereas the artist's models were probably regarded as of dubious morale like actresses. The students, on the other hand, belonged at least to the upper middle, if not to the upper class. The discrepancy in social hierarchy between the male and female characters is obvious; however, it was very common that young men of the upper classes sought out young women socially 'beneath' them for their amorous adventures—and a festivity like *Mi-Carême* when social interactions between members of different classes were less frowned upon seems like a promising time to do so. This is emphasized by the text: Whereas the *blanchisseuses* and the artist's models sing mostly about their physical attractiveness to the (male) gaze (and their awareness of an 'audience'), the students are described as 'Cherubinos'—happy-go-lucky young men who fall in love "at sight of woman fair". The desired outcome of the encounter is obvious, although of course left to the imagination of the spectators.

To prevent "indiscretion[s]", however, the *commissaire* now appears on stage. He is presented with benevolent mockery—in best Savoy tradition. It is quite obvious that his attempts to "keep order" will be easy to avoid and therefore pose no real threat to the

[520] Although set in France, the society in *The Circus Girl* was of course meant to represent late Victorian London.

[521] The artist's models and the students were an allusion to the extremely popular musical comedy *An Artist's Model*—both groups had been prominently featured there.

aspirations of the pleasure-seeking crowd. This becomes apparent when the refrain is repeated once more directly after his entry—his presence is of no consequence, the festivity continues without any visible and audible disturbance. However, his function is all the more important, because his mere presence allows the illusion that order will be maintained and that there are certain limits to "the highest of jinks".

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 14 | 6/8 | (g) - (g) | orchestra | prelude |
| | 15 - 54 | | C - C | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| part B | 55 - 58 | 2/4 | C7 - C7 | orchestra | interlude |
| | 59 - 74 | | (c) - C | orchestra & soloists | *Blanchisseuses* |
| | 75 - 83 | 2/4 - 3/4 | C - F | orchestra & SATB | repetition |
| part C | 83 - 86 | | F - (f) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 87 - 102 | | (f) - g7 | orchestra & soloists | Artist's Models |
| | 103 - 118 | 3/4 - C | (g♭) - B♭ | orchestra & SATB | repetition |
| part D | 118 - 121 | | B♭ - B♭7 | orchestra | interlude |
| | 122 - 129 | | B♭7 - E♭ | orchestra & soloists | Students |
| | 130 - 138 | | g7 - (e♭) | orchestra & SATB | repetition |
| part E | 138 - 141 | C - 2/4 | B♭7 - (d) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 142 - 161 | 2/4 - 6/8 | D7 - G | orchestra, soloist & SATB | *Commissaire* |
| part A' | 161 - 164 | | (a) - (g) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 165 - 184 | | C - C | orchestra & SATB | refrain |
| | 184 - 192 | | (f♯) - (c) | orchestra | postlude |

Table 14: Structure of *The Circus Girl*—Opening Chorus. "Mi-Carême."

In the typical manner of a musical comedy opening chorus, the number is structured quite clearly into several parts enframed by a refrain ("We're taking advantage of Mi-Carême"), a short instrumental prelude and even shorter ending respectively, as Table 14 shows. The frolicsome and optimistic spirit of the instrumental introduction, constantly oscillating between major seventh and tonic, is kept up in the (harmonically more complex) refrain. The entry of the chorus is announced by a G major scale upwards played in unison over four octaves, otherwise there is no interruption or change of mood between introduction and refrain. The refrain is sung by the whole chorus[522] in four parts with one short exception. Its repetition emphasizes the joyous atmosphere of the text which is further enhanced by the music.

Part B introduces the *blanchisseuses* and is separated from the beginning by a general pause and further changes illustrated in Table 14—all these signals indicate that some-

[522]As customary, there are no altos mentioned in the score; instead, the sopranos are noted in two voices.

thing entirely new is about to follow. The short instrumental interlude maintains the cheerful atmosphere that reflects the light-hearted mood of the *blanchisseuses*. They are sung by sopranos, probably by some or all of the so-called 'big eight' (s. Chapter 2.2). Whereas the change of metre makes them sound a little sturdier than general 'festive crowd' of the refrain, the melody is by no means simple, as Figure 50 shows.

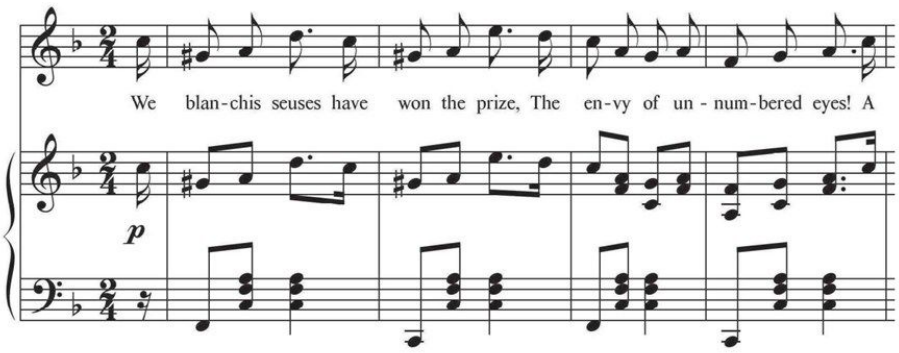


Figure 50: *The Circus Girl*—"Mi-Carême" (bars 59 - 62)

The artist's models are characterized by a very different kind of music (part C): The vocal score indicates *Tempo di Valse*, and there are other changes concerning several parameters, as Table 14 shows. The slower tempo, the association of the waltz and the ascending chromaticism of the melody create a sensual atmosphere that forms a distinct contrast to the 'innocent' gaiety of the former sections.

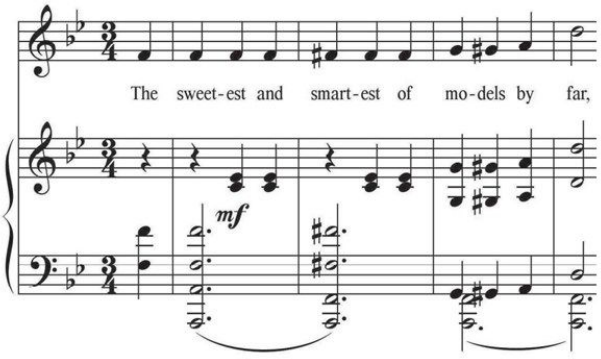


Figure 51: *The Circus Girl*—"Mi-Carême" (bars 87 - 90)

This might reflect the difference between the hard-working, but respectable *blanchisseuses* and the artist's models that were perceived as close to the immoral, but nevertheless (secretly) alluring *demimonde*. However, according to the vocal score, both groups sing the

repetition together, joined by the whole chorus. Apparently, members of both groups could participate as equals in the festivity.
The entry of the students, part D, is announced by another distinct change of atmosphere created by the music as Table 14 illustrates, furthermore, the tempo is now indicated as *Tempo di Marcia*. After a fanfare-like instrumental interlude, the students (sung by tenors) enter with a melody that represents their idle, but good-humoured strolling. Again, the repetition is sung by the whole chorus, including the *blanchisseuses* and artist's models.
After another general pause, the music mimics an alarm signal to herald the *Commissaire* (part E). The melody is reminiscent of the patter-songs that had been popular among others for characters belonging to the police or military in the Savoy operas. By using the same singing style, the audience knew that this policeman was not to be taken seriously—just as the similar characters in the Savoy operas. Again, the whole chorus joins him for a repetition of the last four verses, this enhances the impression that he is part of the festive group rather than in opposition to it. The number concludes with a repetition of the refrain and a short instrumental ending in the same joyous atmosphere of the beginning.

The number is constructed in the typical manner of the musical comedy—a dense setting in four parts with several solo parts and several musically contrasting sections. The function of the opening chorus is to introduce the setting and mood rather than to explain specifics about the place, time, plot or main characters. By setting *The Circus Girl* in France and not in London, the librettists ensured that any objections concerning the decency of the plot would be excused by its setting. Thus they exploited the notoriety of French immorality while at the same time indirectly stressing British superiority. As pointed out above, the setting during a festivity is advantageous for the genre and was therefore a popular choice.

## 3.15 *A Runaway Girl*

The musical play *A Runaway Girl* by Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton with lyrics by Harry Greenbank and Aubrey Hopwood and a libretto by Seymour Hicks and Harry Nicholls[523] premiered at the Gaiety Theatre on 21 May 1898 and ran for 593 performances.[524] It is a somewhat special case because it features not one, but two exotic settings: The first act takes place in Corsica, the second act is set in Venice in the carnival season. *The Globe* comments the opening night as follows:

> "[...] All that is wanted is opportunity for the scene-painters, the costumiers, the composers, the performers, the stage-manager, to shine. [...] Genuinely attractive, too, is the bewildering succession of dresses—Corsican, Venetian, and English—presented in the course of the evening. This culminates in a concourse of persons attired in fanciful fashion in preparation for a water-fête on the Grand Canal. Here we have an ensemble full of varied colour and vivacious movement, unsurpassed by anything yet submitted at the Gaiety."[525]

This excerpt proves the significance of fashion in the genre: Possibly, the relocation to Venice in the second act was a conscious decision because it allowed the presentation of costumes in a third style. Also, the order in which the different professions contributing to the success of the production are listed (and which are not mentioned at all—the authors) is quite remarkable and indicates a very different weighting from what would be expected today. The review in *The Illustrated London News* is even more explicit:

> "[...] She [the *Runaway Girl*] is but the mere occasion of a variety entertainment, and her inventors [...] have done no more than fit popular favourites with new costumes and familiar business. It may be just worth while declaring that the two scenes of the new Gaiety play are laid in Corsica and Venice (both give fine opportunities for stage pictures and fancy dresses) [...]"[526]

This seems to have been exactly what the audience wanted, and obviously this description which openly points out the shortcomings of the work did not prevent the spectators to attend the theatre. The "pleasant machine-made story", as the critic subsequently put it, was apparently not seen as a shortcoming by the patrons of the Gaiety Theatre. However, the critic writing for *The Times* presents a very different opinion and states that

[523] Both authors were actually actors, Hicks even at the Gaiety Theatre.
[524] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 692.
[525] "A Runaway Girl", *The Globe*, 23 May 1898. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1898-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[526] "The Playhouses. 'A Runaway Girl,' at the Gaiety.", *The Illustrated London News*, 28 May 1898, p. 796. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1898-99.

> "Messrs. Seymour Hicks and Harry Nicholls have provided a perfectly reasonable plot for their amusing piece, and not merely a peg on which a number of irrelevant performances can be hung. If they sometimes yield to the conventionalities that have become established in recent years, they keep their main thread in view throughout, and it may be said at once that many less carefully constructed pieces have before now assumed the more ambitious title of 'comic opera."'[527]

As customary, the run of *A Runaway Girl* was accompanied by several articles featuring pictures of the performers in their costumes.

The heroine Winifred runs away from her school in Corsica to live with a group of 'wandering minstrels' to avoid a marriage her guardians have arranged for her without asking her consent. She meets (and falls in love with) her fiancé to be by chance without knowing who he is, and when everything is finally cleared up, she enthusiastically accepts the future her guardians had chosen for her. As Macpherson emphasizes, she recognizes in the end that her behaviour was wrong, and the proper and traditional way of life is restored in a manner that was probably meant to reassure the more conservative spectators.[528] However, the fact that it was possible to include such improper behaviour, temporary or not, in an entertainment considered morally impeccable is proof enough that perspectives were changing in late Victorian times.

Macpherson characterizes Winifred as a modern young women who "consciously transgresses—moving from virgin daughter to a 'fast', morally suspect New Woman—a 'confusion of boundaries' that is reinforced by a lyrical paean to the pleasures of smoking", referring to the song *The Sly Cigarette* and pointing out the significance of a young woman deciding to smoke in late Victorian times. He furthermore states that "[s]he moves very quickly from an image of a 'virgin' convent girl to that of a socially transgressive 'whore"'.[529] However, it is not only Winifred who decides to smoke (and according to the lyrics not for the first time), but all the school girls.[530] Macpherson's notion is an extreme contrast to contemporary sources who more or less considered the genre as a decent form of entertainment that could be attended by the whole family, as shown above in Chapter 2.2, so probably Victorian society did not perceive Winifred's misconduct as shockingly indecent as Macpherson thought they would—or they were applying double standards

[527]"Gaiety Theatre." *The Times*, 23 May 1898, p. 10. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS168747703/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=6ca34695. Accessed 10 Oct. 2020

[528]cf. Macpherson 2018, pp. 74f.

[529]ibid., pp. 71f.

[530]cf. Hicks, Seymour and Nicholls, Harry. *A Runaway Girl.* ADD MS 53660 O, pp. 7ff. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

when regarding a situation on stage in comparison to the same situation in reality. An article in *The People* refers to the number in question as a "light little ditty",[531] obviously seeing no harm in it.

The protagonist, Winifred, is at first enthusiastic about the 'wandering minstrels' to whom she runs away, but when she finds out they and their lifestyle are rather perilous and not as flowery as presumed, she is scared and appreciates her native country and fellow English people with a new esteem.[532] Macpherson points out that "Winifred's decision to join the minstrels represents a *desire* for independence rather than a rejection of respectability or gentility."[533] She feels helpless and powerless because a decision concerning her whole future life is taken away from her, so the wandering minstrels' offer to join them is a last resort for her, accepted out of desperation rather than real conviction. Furthermore, he argues convincingly that "'gypsy' characters [...] often embody this sense of transition between 'old' and 'new' in popular culture" because their way of life was perceived as one of several aspects of what was remembered as the good old rural past. This issue is certainly applicable for *A Runaway Girl*, but this work furthermore displays "a specific sense of womanhood in transition between a traditional (Victorian) past and a more modern, liberal, present and future", as the example of the heroine shows.[534] In the typical topsy-turvy manner of the genre, this desire to leave the traditional way of life behind and enjoy the freedom of a less restrictive society is shared by her fiancé to be, who runs away with what he believes to be a poor singing girl rather that marrying the rich heiress his aunt and uncle have chosen for him.[535] So it is not only the heroine who feels restricted by the severe moral norms and rules of late Victorian society, but the male protagonist as well—this is not a specifically female issue, but one which may concern the younger generation of the whole society.

As Gänzl has pointed out, Hicks and Nicholls had to consider characteristic roles for the principals of the Gaiety's ensemble when they wrote the libretto. Although the production was an immediate success, it was frequently enhanced by the addition of new songs and other minor and major modifications during its long run to satisfy the audience's constant hunger for new entertaining details in their recurring visits, ultimately resulting in a production that was announced as a 'second version';[536] *The Sketch* praised the changes and addition in a brief article that focuses especially on the performers.[537]

[531]"Gaiety Theatre Last Night.", *The People*, 22 May 1898, p. 9. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1898-99.
[532]cf. Platt 2004, p. 64.
[533]Macpherson 2018, p. 74.
[534]ibid., p. 50
[535]cf. ibid., pp. 49f.
[536]cf. Gänzl 1986, pp. 663ff.
[537]"'A Runaway Girl' Brought Back.", *The Sketch*, 13 Sep. 1899. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1898-99.

The first number is preceded by the following stage directions:[538]

> SCENE: An almond orchard near the Convent of St Pierre in the mountains of Corsica. Early spring, blossoms of pink and white. In the distance the convent itself. Slung from bough to bough some hammocks.
>
> (As the CURTAIN rises several YOUNG LADIES, pupils at the convent are DISCOVERED lying under the trees, on the banks, etc.)

The description of the stage design paints a very idyllic and picturesque rural scene. The lush vegetation and the mountains in the distance create an atmosphere that is both relaxing and 'exotic', catering to the audience's desire to experience faraway places and to escape the hardships of everyday life on a miniature holiday in the theatre. The female choristers are already on stage as the curtain rises, their presence is a significant part of the first impression created. The admirers of the immensely popular 'Gaiety Girls' were treated to their sight right at the beginning of the work. As already discussed in the analysis of *A Rose of Persia*, the initial situation was a display of mild eroticism, depending on the exact poses struck by the performers on stage. In *A Runaway Girl*, the focus was likewise on presenting beautiful young women who were certainly alluring, but without any explicitly vulgar tendencies.
This is the text of the first number (excluding most repetitions), according to the libretto included in the Lord Chamberlain's Plays:[539]

Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.

[538]Hicks, Seymour and Nicholls, Harry. *A Runaway Girl.* ADD MS 53660 O, p. 1. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

[539]ibid., pp. 1f.

OPENING CHORUS (Of a dreamy character)

*Breathe soft, wind of the South,*
*Blossoming branches are bending and listening,*
*Breathe soft, pursing thy mouth,*
*Drink from the cups where the dew-drops are glistening.*
*Seas moan, soothing and slumberless,*
*Bees drone, drowsy and numberless,*
*Booming along as they murmur the song,*
*Of a dreamy lullaby.*

(ALL rise)

*In convent educational,*
*Routine is not sensational*
*And pastime recreational*
*A very pleasant ploy.*
*We like to taste its quality*
*In mirth and fun and jollity,*
*For a picnic means frivolity*
*And that's what we enjoy.*

(Bring hampers down and start unpacking etc.)

*The wonderful things our hampers contain,*
*The greediest girl could scarcely complain;*
*With chickens and tongues, and even champagne,*
*There's plenty to drink and to eat.*
*When we all sit round the cloth we spread on the gras*
*A stranger might guess - who happened to pass -*
*From the click of the plate and the clink of the glass*
*That the schoolgirls are having a treat.*

*Click, clack! Click, clack!*
*Rattle the knives and the forks,*
*And hark to the pop of the corks,*
*While ev'ryone chatters and talks.*
*Click, clack! Click, clack!*
*musical melody rings,*
*While everyone jabbers - and laughs - and sings!*

The text of the first stanza enhances the idyllic impression created by mentioning the sea and the gentle breezes. The lyrics conjure up a vivid image of a warmer climate in the audience's minds by describing not only visual, but also aural impressions. The first stanza serves only as a verbalization and ornamentation of the setting, whereas the other three stanza introduce the school girls at the convent—the initial situation of the plot. Especially the second stanza includes several key words like "pastime recreational", "pleasant", "mirth and fun and jollity", and even "frivolity", that could as well be used to describe an evening at the Gaiety Theatre. The spectators are in anticipation of the expected entertainment, as are the school girls on stage. This similarity creates the pleasant feeling of being involved, of being a part of the show.

The Gaiety Girls literally take centre stage at the beginning of this musical play. The school girls they impersonate are characterized as a merry, pleasure-seeking, noisy and carefree group—pretty much average school girls. The scene was probably designed to evoke fond memories for the well-off adult female spectators, whereas it allowed everyone else to catch a glimpse of a usually privileged and secluded situation in (female) life.

The opening chorus is remarkably short (109 bars) with a remarkably short musical in-

troduction (8 bars). However, despite of its brevity, the number succeeds in creating a lively picture that conveys the initial setting convincingly.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 8 | 6/8 | F - (c-e-g♯-b♭) | orchestra | prelude |
| | 9 - 30 | | F - F | orchestra & SA | 1st stanza |
| | 30 - 32 | 6/8 - 2/4 | F - F | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 33 - 36 | | (f) - (f) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 37 - 52 | | (f) - B♭ | orchestra & SA | 2nd stanza |
| part C | 53 - 60 | 6/8 | B♭7 - (b♭) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 61 - 77 | | E♭ - (b♭-e♮) | orchestra & SA | 3rd stanza |
| | 77 - 92 | | F7 - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | 4th stanza |
| | 93 - 109 | | E♭ - E♭ | orchestra | postlude |

Table 15: Structure of *A Runaway Girl*—Opening Chorus.

The obvious changes of the rhyme scheme and and metre between each stanza indicate at once a number consisting of several parts, representing different aspects of the initial scene. The opening chorus is constructed in the usual manner and consists of several contrasting parts (s. Table 15). The prelude adumbrates the swaying melody that is variegated by the sopranos in the first stanza; the tremolo that accompanies the introduction is highly reminiscent of the shimmering hot air in the summer. 6/8 time and a slow tempo (here *Andantino*) are often used for 'ruritanian' settings; the music focuses on the relaxed atmosphere rather than the 'holiday'-aspect invoked by the scene. Sopranos and contraltos are mostly set in thirds, further enhancing the idyllic mood generated by the aforementioned elements. However, the scoring of verses 7 and 8 deviates from the simple setting by including chromaticism and even a short polyphonic passage reflecting the enjambement connecting these verses and maybe interpreting the "dreamy lullaby" (s. Figure 52).

Parts A and B are distinctly separated by a general pause and the changes illustrated in Table 15. The more lively tempo (*Allegretto*) matches the lively chatter of the school girls; the cheerful and energetic mood is a manifest difference to the dreamy atmosphere of part A. Part B is set in the manner of a patter song: Sopranos and contraltos sing quavers (apart from a few exceptions) and mainly in unison, the music is regularly structured in small segments (2 bars per verse). As Figure 53 shows, the chromaticism and the large intervals are not particularly easy to sing, so the singers are supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*.

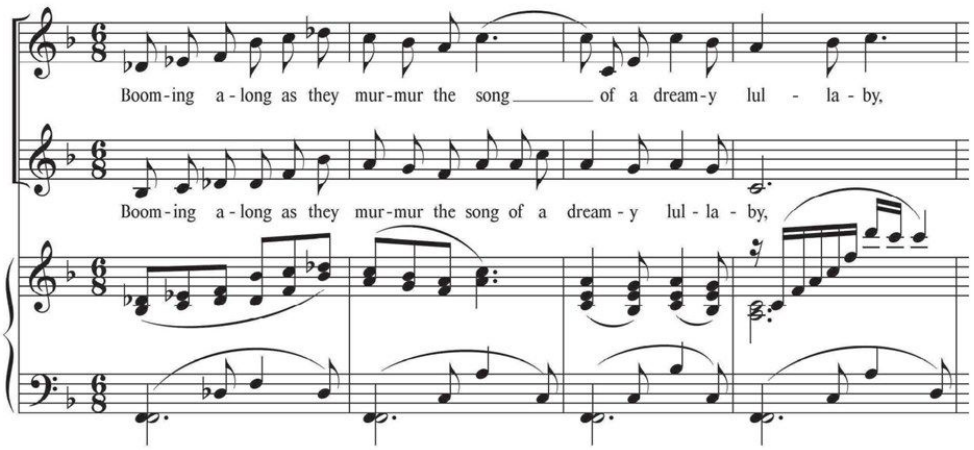


Figure 52: *A Runaway Girl*—Opening Chorus (bars 21 - 24)

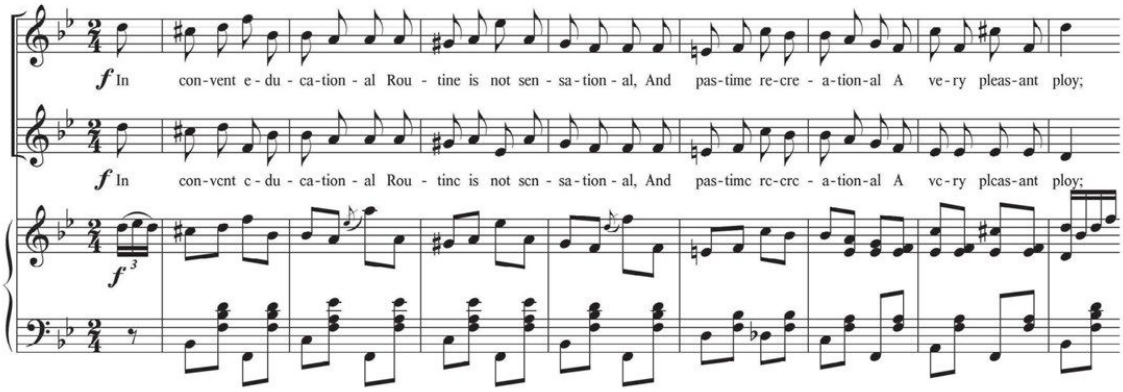


Figure 53: *A Runaway Girl*—Opening Chorus (bars 37 - 44)

Part C is subdivided into two sections because it consists of the last two stanzas which are each set individually, but in a quite similar manner. Again, parts B and C are distinctly separated by a general pause and the changes illustrated in Table 15. Part C begins with an instrumental interlude (8 bars, quite long for this short number—the text suggests that the performers unpack their picnic baskets, so maybe the music was needed to bridge the time they needed to move). The setting is still very similar to a patter song, sopranos and contraltos sing in unison, accompanied by the orchestra playing *colla parte* or a very rhythmical pattern. Part C is not structured as regularly as part B: Verse 7 is interrupted by two fermatas, verse 8 contains a fermata as well, the last note is held for one and a half bar and clearly marks the end of a (sub)section. However, the orchestra links the two subsections of part C by increasing tempo, volume and a bass line leading upwards, as Figure 54 shows.

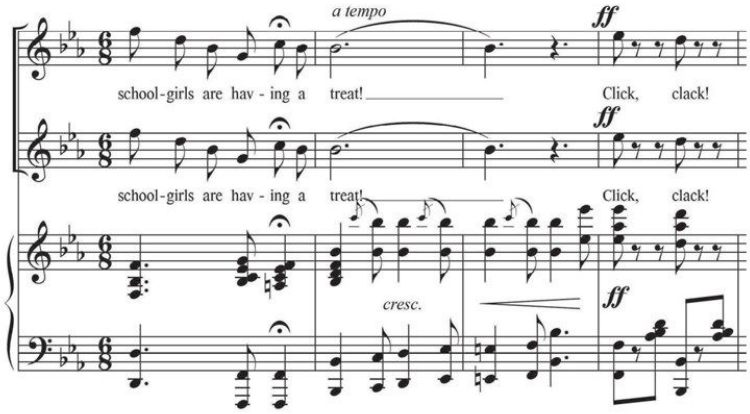


Figure 54: *A Runaway Girl*—Opening Chorus (bars 75 - 78)

The second subsection extends the irregular structure. Verses 1, 2, 5 and 6 begin on the downbeat, verses 3, 4 and 7 on the upbeat; there is no 8th verse, but the 7th verse is longer than the others because another adjective is included ("While ev'ryone jabbers, and laughs, and sings!"). This supports the impression of a lively group of chattering schoolgirls musically. The number is concluded by an instrumental ending (16 bars), providing opportunity for a short dance, as the vocal score indicates.

As pointed out in the analysis of the stage directions and lyrics, the opening chorus focuses on introducing the milieu, a boarding school, and the cheerful mood rather than giving information about the plot or any characters involved. The location of the setting is only vaguely adumbrated as a Mediterranean region, the exact position, Corsica, is not important. The female choristers act as a homogeneous group that is a living part

of the scenery; the main character belongs to the same group—another function of the chorus is to prepare the background for the soloist's entry which follows subsequently. The setting in a boarding school for girls provides the perfect opportunity (or rather excuse) to present a large group of attractive 'Gaiety Girls' on stage.

## 3.16 *A Greek Slave*

The musical comedy *A Greek Slave* by Sidney Jones with additional numbers by Lionel Monckton, lyrics by Harry Greenbank and Adrian Ross and a libretto by Owen Hall premiered at Daly's Theatre on 8 June 1898 and ran for 349 performances.[540] Despite of this obvious success, *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* calls the work in retrospect an "atrociously bad specimen[] of [its] class";[541] whereas Gänzl sums it up as "more of the same wrapped up in an entirely different package" in conjunction with *The Geisha*, its extremely successful predecessor.[542] *The Daily Telegraph*, however, disagrees decidedly and praises the work enthusiastically:

> "[...] here we have an example of a new departure in the art of entertaining with which no fault whatever can be found. Harmony in tone and colour, beauty of design, grace in form and dress, fun never strained or forced, music soothing and melodious, and an artistic company led by Hayden Coffin, Rutland Barrington, and that best of light opera singers, Marie Tempest, what can the exacting playgoer demand more? [...] in the 'Greek Slave' we have the most perfect thing of the kind ever attempted on the modern stage."[543]

The plot takes place in ancient Rome and revolves around the Persian soothsayer Heliodorus, his daughter Maia, who poses as an oracle, and their slaves. After the usual schemes and a lot of confusion sparked by an intrigue involving a princess falling in love with a statue that has supposedly been brought to life,[544] the "right" couples marry—"farcical narratives [...] formulaic for musical comedy".[545] As customary, the plot was created to suit the various talents of the Daly's principals because they were sure to

[540] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 694.
[541] "Music.", *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 Oct. 1899, p. 300. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.
[542] Gänzl 1986, p. 668.
[543] "Daly's Theatre.", *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 Oct. 1898. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[544] Like Franz von Suppé in his one-act operetta "Die schöne Galathée" (1865, Berlin); Owen Hall chose a popular subject: the ancient *Pygmalion*-myth.
[545] Macpherson 2018, p. 94.

attract a large audience.[546] An article covering the premiere of its successor, *San Toy*, condemns *A Greek Slave* with these words:

> "It certainly is most astonishing that pieces, such as *A Greek Slave*, which do not deserve a month's run, are yet made by Mr. George Edwardes to fill his handsome theatre in Leicester square for some twelve or eighteen months at a stretch."[547]

Gänzl, however, emphasizes that "the music was less tripping and bright and more ambitious", at least the contributions of Sidney Jones.[548] Everett praises the piece for "its well-crafted and varied score",[549] claiming that it "leans more toward the operatic than any of his other scores for Daly's", that "Jones frequently employs his lyrical idiom to add a sense of sophistication to the show's overall aesthetic",[550] and further "for the insights it provides into cultural attitudes of the 1890s towards Antiquity, gender and social class"; is rather a 21st-century scholarly point of view than testimony of "a highpoint in 1890s musical theatre", as he put it.[551] Antiquity was quite in vogue in late Victorian (musical) theatre, as the amount of staged works set in ancient Greece or Rome shows.[552] This was "attributable to the parallels that could be drawn between the current imperial ideologies and identity politics of empire", and the setting in "the Ancient Roman equivalent of London" therefore provided an interesting mixture of reassuringly familiar and excitingly different elements.[553] However, those works were usually meant to entertain, not to educate, as *The Illustrated London News* clarified in very straightforward words: "[...] who cares for the objections of antiquarian faddists? All that is wanted is a picturesque background."[554]

*A Greek Slave* features the popular role of a female slave (the ancient equivalent of a working class girl) that easily influences her mistress; furthermore the female characters in the show are the ones that set things in motion,[555] which is quite typical for musical comedy. The male title role, the slave Diomed, is rather passive, but succeeds in forming

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[546] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 668.
[547] "Music.", *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 Oct. 1899, p. 300. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.
[548] Gänzl 1986, p. 669.
[549] Everett 2017, p. 227.
[550] ibid., p. 231.
[551] ibid., p. 227.
[552] cf. ibid., p. 231 and Simon Goldhill: *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity. Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity*, Princeton 2011.
[553] Macpherson 2018, p. 94.
[554] "Music.", *The Illustrated London News*, 18 Jun. 1898. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[555] cf. Everett 2017, pp. 237f.

an advantageous marriage with Maia, his former master's daughter. This is rather unusual for a musical comedy: Typically, social mobility was featured by a female working or lower middle class character marrying into aristocracy. There is another uncommon outcome in *A Greek Slave*: Heliodorus, a powerful Roman, marries his Ethopian slave, so the work actually ends with an interethnic marriage.[556] *A Greek Slave* received the usual alterations during its run, resulting eventually in a 'second edition'.[557]
Macpherson described the opening chorus sarcastically as "the requisite chorus of scantily clad slave girls singing of 'masculine muscle' and 'feminine taste"'.[558] The number is divided into three main parts; however, those parts are not structured as clearly as in other works included in this study. This makes it difficult for the audience to follow.
The first number is preceded by the following stage directions:[559]

> SCENE: - The Palace of Heliodorus on the heights of Rome. Interior of the Reception Hall of the Necromancer. A sculpture gallery R. or L.C. with curtains hanging over it. General appearance of wealth and magnificence with a certain Oriental character to scene and accessories, An altar in good view. Also pedestals and vases and other things with mystical symbols.
> (SLAVES of any nationality but Roman discovered resting.)

The stage directions indicate that society's predilection for Antiquity as described before had been taken into consideration when designing the scenery of the initial scene. The stage reproduction of a Roman palace with it typical architectural features and the characteristic furniture and ornamentation clarify the setting at first glance. *A Greek Slave* does not only enable the audience to experience a faraway place, but also bygone times. By thus adding another layer of alienation onto the well-known plot elements, they become different enough for the audience to be fresh and interesting once more. The opulence of the palace was bound to be appealing to the audience's desire for wealth and a luxurious lifestyle, and the "mystical symbols" hint at the occult aspects of the plot—spiritualism was a subject which fascinated late Victorian society, especially women, but was rarely included in musical comedy.
This is the text of the first number (excluding most repetitions):[560]

[556]cf. Everett 2017, p. 238 and Macpherson 2018, p. 94.
[557]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 672.
[558]Macpherson 2018, p. 94.
[559]Hall, Owen. *A Greek Slave.* ADD MS 536620 O, p. 3. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.
[560]ibid., pp. 3f.

**FEMALE SLAVES**

(Resting plaintive)
(Holding out left hand)

*On the dial*
*Shadow's finger*

(Point with first finger
of R. hand to palm of L.)

*Marks the time of noon!*
*Toil and trial*
*Though they linger,*
*Come to claim us soon.*
*Though delaying*
*From our labour*
*Soon we must awake,*

(Stretching, rubbing eyes, etc.)

*Touching, playing*
*Pipe and tabor*
*For our owner's sake.*

(Slowly back to first positions)
(Livelier - getting up)

*Though in lovely youth,*
*We're a weary - chorus,*

(Raising hands and heads)

*Slaves who serve the soothsayer*
*Heliodorus!*
*But till he is come,*
*We can dream we're lying*
*In Elysium,*
*Heroines undying!*

(Hands slowly raised
then slowly down)

(All rise)

*Or, if that's too far,*
*Down in happy Hades,*
*We'll pretend we are*
*Noble Roman ladies!*

(Dignified attitudes)

*Each with maidens fair*
*Round her toilet tripping*

(Some move round those seated
imitating toilet dressing)

*If they pull a hair,*
*Won't they get a whipping!*

(Imitating manner of noble ladies)
(Those in C. cross and recross)

*"What a pretty stola, dear!*
*Is it not too warm?"*
*"I suppose you've come to hear*
*All these slaves perform?"*

(Reverting to their own manner -
Lute players ready)

*We are not so rude as they,*
*So we will be mute -*
*Hither come the girls who play*
*On the dainty lute!*

(Change groups to L. and R.)

(Enter the LUTE PLAYERS
in dance movement)

**LUTE PLAYERS**

*Touch the string, step and sing,*
*All in dancing measure,*
*Life is hard, sings the bard,*
*Vain is worldly pleasure.*
*Human circumstances*
*Are the sport of chances.*

**CHORUS**

*Never mind, Fate is kind,*
*Leaves us songs and dances!*

(MEN SLAVES on at back bus.
they see HELIO: approaching)

**LUTE P-**

*Jarring gods work at odds,*
*Fix the why and wherefore,*
*Give them toys, griefs or joys -*
*What is that to care for?*
*Laugh and dance the faster,*
*Never fear disaster,*
*Fortune saves lowly slaves,*
*Strikes the lordly master!*

(MALE SLAVES run in, carrying vases,
articles of furniture, arranging them)

**MALE S-**

*Come, bustle up, won't you? We know if*
*you don't you'll all be hung up by the thumbs,*
*If things are not ready the master has said he*
*will give it you hot when he comes!*
*And Jupiter, save us, he'll pillory Davus and*
*Syrus will sit in the stocks -*
*Or I shouldn't wonder, he'll strike us with*
*thunder he keeps in the Oracle box.*

(SLAVES bring on chair and table, etc.)

**CHORUS**

*Oh, busily bustle, with masculine muscle*
*and feminine quickness and taste;*
*It won't be a matter for frivolous chatter*
*there isn't a moment to waste!*
*For torments await us if each apparatus is*
*not where it ought to belong -*
*Unfortunate for us if Heliodorus should*
*find there is anything wrong.*
*For he is a terrible man - He is!*

(Movement - step forward then back)

*A horror abroad and at home,*
*And nobody can escape from the ban*
*Of the wickedest wizard in Rome!*
*He rules with his majical dome*

(Pointing to chair)

*The earth and the air and the foam -*
*The rich and the great come here for their fate*
*To the mightiest wizard in Rome.*

(Enter NEPIA, who goes to the table
then down L. At the conclusion of the
opening CHORUS, enter MELANOPIS)

The libretto of *A Greek Slave* includes quite a lot of stage directions to be executed by the choristers during the first number, thus passing on more details about the production than usual. The lyrics describe the everyday life of the slaves represented by the chorus, emphasizing the hard work and the cruel treatment they have to endure. The female choristers dream about being "Noble Roman ladies" while at the same time criticizing their impolite behaviour. This situation is the antique equivalent of young working or lower middle class women dreaming of climbing the social ladder, and of the young heroine who is morally superior to young aristocratic ladies despite (or maybe rather because of?) her humble birth.

The song of the lute players gives more details about the culture depicted on stage: Obviously, the slaves believe in powers like "Fate" and "Fortune", and they try to escape every day hardships by singing and dancing. This song foreshadows the rite of Saturnalia which reverses social classes featured in the beginning of the second act. The urge to forget the difficulties of the daily grind is one of the main elements of popular musical theatre, especially of Viennese operetta. The genre itself is a means to that end. The third and last part, set in motion by the male choristers who have kept silent until now, revisits the issues introduced in the first part and focuses on the horrible consequences awaiting them if their work does not satisfy their masters.

The opening chorus of *A Greek Slave* does not only introduce the antique setting, but also one of the main characters, Heliodorus. The lyrics reflect all three aspects already included in the stage directions: antiquity, opulence and occultism. The last two verses even mention the crucial plot element: "The rich and the great come here for their fate". The first number contains several elements that are rather uncommon for the usually cheerful genre: the cruel punishments feared and obviously familiar to the slaves, and the supernatural aspect represented by "the mightiest wizard in Rome."

As Table 16 shows, the musical structure reflects the three parts pointed out in the analysis of the lyrics. The prelude introduces a dotted motif (s- Figure 55) similar to the motif the female voices enter with, but the interval is different.

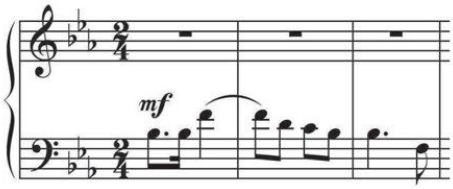


Figure 55: *A Greek Slave*—"On the Dial." (bars 1 - 3)

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 23 | 2/4 | (b) - B♭7 | orchestra | prelude |
| | 24 - 44 | | E♭ - B♭ | orchestra & S | "On the dial..." |
| | 45 - 47 | | B♭ - (b♭) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 48 - 80 | | D♭7 - E♭7 | orchestra & S | "Though in lovely..." |
| | 81 - 84 | | f7 - E♭7 | orchestra | interlude |
| | 85 - 104 | 2/4 - 6/8 | A♭ - A♭ | orchestra & S | "'What a pretty..."' |
| part B | 104 - 113 | | (c) - f | orchestra | interlude |
| | 114 - 135 | | f - f | orchestra, S & Luteplayers | "Touch the strings..." |
| | 136 - 138 | | (f) - (f) | orchestra | interlude |
| part C | 139 - 154 | 6/8 | (f) - F | orchestra & TB | "Come, bustle up..." |
| | 154 - 170 | | F7 - B♭ | orchestra & SATB | "Oh, busily bustle..." |
| | 170 - 171 | | B♭ - (b♭) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 172 - 192 | | (b♭) - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | "For he is..." |
| | 192 - 194 | | E♭ - E♭ | orchestra | postlude |

Table 16: Structure of *A Greek Slave*—Opening Chorus. "On the Dial."

The dotted rhythm and the rather large ascending intervals attract the audience's attention at once; the high-pitched instruments create further suspense by playing scalic or triadic movements in semiquavers. The function of the prelude is to announce the choristers' entry and to allow the spectators to settle down and take in the scenery. The soprano's melody is quite ambitious because it contains several large intervals (s. Figure 56). The orchestra does not play *colla parte*, the high-pitched instruments play triads in semiquavers, whereas the low-pitched instruments support the harmonic structure in longer note values. This first section is subdivided into several irregular phrases.

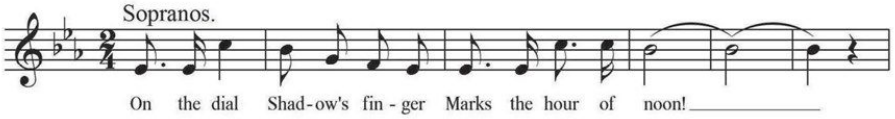


Figure 56: *A Greek Slave*—"On the Dial." (bars 24 - 29)

An instrumental interlude lasting three bars suggests a new section, but neither key nor time signature change. The tempo increases slightly (*poco piu mosso*). The melody is quite different from before: it still contains many large intervals, but the rhythm is no longer dotted. The accompaniment is completely different as well, there are no more regular semiquavers, but there are quite large intervals. There are a lot of accidentals, the harmony strays to D-flat major. This section of the number ("Though in lovely...") is structured in more regular phrases than the first section.

Another interlude prepares the change to A♭ major in m. 85, which clearly marks the beginning of a new section. The tempo decreases to Tempo I, this creates the impression of a caesura. The melody is completely different, but it still contains many large intervals. Harmonically, there is nothing unusual in this section. It is subdivided into regular phrases consisting of bars, except for the last one, which is extended to 4 and a half.
Bar 104 marks the beginning of part B quite clearly, as Table 16 shows. Jones chose a simple melody in six-eight time to depict the sound of the lutes musically in the interlude. Subsequently, the lute players sing a song with two identical stanzas in an aba' structure (the a-parts are repeated). The song's melody is a variation of the melody the "lutes" played before and contains a lot of fourths. The chorus repeats part a' for emphasis. The orchestra plays chords and some accompanying elements, supposedly mimicking lutes.
The next interlude consists of fourths only whose signalling effect announces part C and musically reflects the admonition of the male slaves to hurry up. The male voices sing in unison at first. Some low-pitched instruments play *colla parte*, whereas the rest of the orchestra provides the harmonic foundation. The melody mainly consists of quavers and seconds and is structured in regular phrases consisting of 4 bars. Because of the regular quavers it is quite similar to the popular patter songs. After two of these phrases, the male voices are set in four parts. Usually one of each of the voices accompanies the other's melody with prime intervals, so the choral setting is fairly easy. The orchestra no longer plays *colla parte*, but provides a scarce harmonic accompaniment. Intelligibility of the lyrics is thus given top priority.
In bar 154, the female voices enter and the chorus sings *tutti* for the first time in this number. The sopranos repeat the melody the male voices have sung before, the other voices are mainly set in prime intervals—again, a simple choral setting. The last verse is repeated to emphasize the importance of Heliodorus, "the mightiest wizard in Rome!"
To recap, Hall uses this number to introduce the setting and the aforementioned aspects in detail. Some of the characters are introduced as well: the slaves directly and the antagonist Heliodorus indirectly. Thus, the chorus prepares the background for the soloist as a group character The plot is at least adumbrated, which is rather unusual for the genre. Due to the fact that the female choristers were extremely popular in late Victorian times, they are quite exposed in this number, the male voices enter as late as bar 139. The rather long number is not structured as clearly as customary for the genre, especially in part A with its irregular beginning, but obviously the audience did not mind as long as they could enjoy the elaborate scenery and the attractive performers in 'Roman' costumes.

## 3.17 *San Toy*

The Chinese musical comedy *San Toy or The Emperor's Own* by Sidney Jones with a libretto by Edward Morton and lyrics by Harry Greenbank and Adrian Ross premiered at Daly's Theatre on 21 October 1899 and ran for 778 performances.[561] The opening night had been preceded by many difficulties: Harry Greenbank, who had been responsible for the lyrics at Daly's Theatre, died in February, so Adrian Ross had to fill his shoes. Furthermore, Letty Lind had left the ensemble, and Ada Reeve, the new addition, immediately engaged in a 'diva-off' with Marie Tempest, the reigning principal. After a troublesome period of rehearsal, Reeve gave up the role of Dudley to Gracie Leigh, and order was restored—but not for long: only a few weeks after the premiere, Marie Tempest left Daly's Theatre (and the genre); but her successor, Florence Collingbourne, was equally popular, as the long run demonstrates.[562]

The press gave much attention to the work throughout its run, there are several articles including drawings and photos covering the production itself, but also articles about the performers' everyday life or lyrics of a song. These articles contributed to the prolonged public interest in *San Toy*, and therefore probably also to the long run. As before, this continuing news coverage was most likely deliberately used for promotional purposes by the managers of the theatre, as were give-aways like souvenir programmes or of an 'engagement book' (s. Figure 57).[563] Another article confirms the code of practice of including new songs during the run.[564]

The Chinese setting obviously wants to cater to the great popularity of everything considered to be Japanese, enlivened by Sullivan's *The Mikado* and Jones's *The Geisha*—Chinese was probably close enough to Japanese in the opinion of late Victorian society to pique the audience's interest, but the little difference also offered all the variety needed for a work only three years the successor of *The Geisha*.[565] The scenery and costumes are praised for their splendour,[566] as was customary for the genre. In this work, Chinese culture and politics are ridiculed or presented as barbaric in order to emphasize the superiority of British culture and thus justify the dominant position of the British Empire.

[561] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 726.
[562] cf. ibid., pp. 706ff.
[563] V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99—NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION!!!
[564] "Daly's Theatre." *The Illustrated London News*, 24 Nov. 1900. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[565] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 707.
[566] cf. Forbes-Winslow 1944, p. 67.

Figure 57: *San Toy*—'Engagement book'

On the other hand, Chinese women are presented as appealing and interesting partners for English men because of their 'Oriental' features.[567]
The critic of the *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* was obviously not very fond of *San Toy* or musical comedy in general, as the following harsh lines taken from an article published shortly after the premiere show:

> "One of the most curious facts in connection with the musical comedies produced by Mr. George Edwardes at Daly's Theatre is that they rise superior to all criticism, and do not depend for their success on the intrinsic merits of the book, or the captivating quality of the music. There is not in *San Toy* a really witty line which clings fast to the memory: the majority of the music is pleasing without being in any way remarkably catchy; the plot is a meagre kind of a stream that meanders in and out the rocky defiles of extraneous incidents in an irresponsible manner, and at times becomes so shallow that, but for a suspicious moisture, we should scarcely know such a thing existed; and yet, in spite of all its drawbacks, *San Toy*, we are inclined to think, will almost rival in popularity *The Geisha*."[568]

Like the author predicted, *San Toy* became indeed very successful, and neither this crushing review nor another article that followed several days later made any difference.

[567] cf. Platt 2004, pp. 72ff.
[568] "Music." *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 28 Oct. 1899, p. 300. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.

This other article was illustrated by several caricatures depicting the performers in their costumes and criticized the disregardful way in which China and its inhabitants are displayed in *San Toy*, especially the 'pigeon-English', but also observed resignedly "I will not dwell upon drawbacks which are not felt or upon points lost which are not missed." The audience did not attend Daly's Theatre to be educated, but to be entertained, and did not care how realistic the situations on stage were as long as they were amusing. The author furthermore states that "there is no doubt that the story interests and pleases its public and will be more interesting and more pleasing still when some of its redundancies have been got rid of." This remark is another proof of the customary procedure of improving a work after its opening night, which usually mostly concerned the dialogue, as some of the other analyses have shown. Also, the author laments that some of the numbers "have so evidently been written [...] that this or that artist should sing them than that the plot requires them", but observes rather snobbishly that the audience obviously did not think so, or at least did not mind. In addition to some of the songs, he praises that "the dances have go, and the choruses have character; here apparently the composer has had more freedom, and certainly shows more dash and originality than we find in some of the songs of the principals."[569]

The work also includes a lot of popular cross-dressing scenes: The main character, San Toy, has been brought up as a boy to avoid the mandatory military service that has to be fulfilled by every girl born into nobility,[570] resulting in several instants alluding to same-sex elements because there are love scenes on stage when she is still in her male disguise. However, those scenes were apparently not considered shocking or offensive, but quite normal for musical comedy; probably because the spectators were aware that one of the performers was female.[571] After the usual confusion, San Toy can be married to the British Naval Captain Bobby Preston—other than *The Geisha*, *San Toy* actually ends with a marriage between nationalities.

[569] "Our Captious Critic. 'San Toy"' *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 4 Nov. 1899, p. 329. V&A Archive, THM-LON-DAL 1896-99.

[570] This element of the plot is reminiscent of Jacques Offenbach's once-act *opéra bouffe L'île de Tulipatan* (1868, Paris). There are no obvious musical similarities.
Gänzl also points out that the libretto was quite similar to James Tanner's *Transit of Venus*. (cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 707).

[571] cf. Platt 2004, p. 112.

In the libretto submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office, the first number is preceded by the following stage directions:[572]

> The SCENE represents the exterior of the British Consulate. L. arms and flags over porch. Verandah [sic!] on two sides of the house. Open French window L. leading into house second window L. Up stage pagoda decorated with bells and lanterns - the lanterns are lighted towards the end of the Act. Joss-house R. from which issue at intervals CHINAMEN. OTHERS seen inside joss-house burning joss-sticks. A deck chair is placed conspicuously outside verandah L.
>
> (The Curtain rises on a bustling scene: FORTUNE-TELLERS, LETTER-WRITER, STREET DENTIST, STREET GAMBLERS, GOLDFISH DEALER (with fish in bowls), STREET BARBER. An impatient interested GROUP has gathered about the BARBER's stool. LI is seated on the stool with his back to the audience - the BARBER is engaged in plaiting his pig-tail - the audience gets a glimpse only of back of the figure when the CROWD opens)

According to these stage directions, the scenery of the initial scene is dominated by an (almost) overwhelming amount of decorations designed to support the 'exotic' Chinese atmosphere. This instantly catered to the audience's desire to experience faraway places and Other cultures. Of course, these elements were simply meant to be entertaining and spectacular rather than to educate the spectators, so the producers probably utilized many clichés without confirming if they were correct. This effect is increased by the performers on stage as the curtain rises; they, their costumes and their behaviour are part of the scenery and enliven it. At the same time, the scenery includes a British Consulate, complete with "arms and flags". The presence of these well-known items created a kind of 'home away from home' on the otherwise (maybe even frighteningly) 'exotic' stage. The audience could be sure right from the beginning that there would be characters on stage that shared the same cultural background and moral values. In almost the same manner as its predecessors like *The Mikado* (1885) and *The Geisha* (1896), *San Toy* was a demonstration of the superiority of British culture.
This is the text of the opening number (excluding most repetitions):[573]

[572]Morton, Edward. *San Toy or The Emperor's Own.* ADD MS 53694 H, p. 2. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.
[573]ibid., pp. 2f.

**[Chorus.]**

*On China's empire shining bright*
*The moon will reach its full tonight.*
*Tonight a gay and festive throng*
*Will keep the feast in Pynka Pong!*
*Ten thousand lanterns over head,*
*Will sparkle yellow, blue and red,*
*And cast their twinkling lights a long*
*The radiant streets of Pynka Pong.*
*Tonight the greatest and the least*
*Will keep the yearly Fullmoon Feast,*
*With drink and dance, and sup and song,*
*When midnight falls on Pynka Pong.*
*Tonight we'll pass the mooncakes round,*
*Tonight with music's merry sound,*
*With tinkling bell an [sic!] clashing gong*
*We'll fête the moon in Pynka Pong.*

**Dentist. Soli.**

*Before you sit down to the feasting tonight,*
*The dentist should see your teeth are all right;*
*There isn't a tooth*
*Of age or of youth*
*That ever resisted my pincers uncouth.*

**Fortune Teller.**

*When China makes holiday bus'ness is slack,*
*And then I am ready to finger my pack;*
*For people you see,*
*come flocking to me*
*To know what their fortunes are going to be!*

**Rice Seller.**

*Though sharks' fins and birds' nests are all very well*
*For health and for strength there is nothing like rice!*
*It's wholesome and light*
*And tasty and white,*
*So purchase a bowl for your supper tonight.*

**Barber.**

*Oh, come and be shav'd for the Feast of the Moon!*
*On festive occasions a barber's a boon.*
*I shave on the spot*
*With water that's hot,*
*My methods are rough but my razors are not.*

**[Chorus.]**

*No wonder a lot*
*Of custom he's got,*
*His razors are sharp and his water is hot.*

*In ev'ry corner street and square*
*From dawn to sunset we prepare*
*By doing nothing all day long*
*To keep the feast in Pynka Pong.*
*But when the welcome darkness comes*
*Then light your lanterns, beat your drums-*
*With tinkling bell and clashing gong,*
*Acclaim the moon in Pynka Pong!*

The lyrics of the opening chorus include detailed descriptions of the setting that address the audience's sensory perception on several levels: optical (moon, lanterns, colours), acoustical (bells, gongs, the cries of the merchants) and maybe even olfactory (the food sold at the market). The text also explains the initial situation of *San Toy*, there is a festivity going on: the "Fullmoon Feast". By listening to the lyrics, the spectators are

able to receive a pretty detailed impression of the traditions connected with this festivity. As already explained in the analysis of *The Circus Girl*, festivities were a favoured setting in popular musical theatre because they are a situation allowing many exceptions that would not be acceptable in everyday life—combined with the 'exotic' setting, this gives a lot of leeway for the plot.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 32 | 2/4 | (e) - (e) | orchestra | prelude |
| | 33 - 41 | | A - E | orchestra & SATB | "On China's..." |
| | 41 - 42 | | E - (c-f♯) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 43 - 52 | | (diminished chord on d♯ - A) | orchestra & SATB | "Ten thousand..." |
| | 52 - 54 | | A - A | orchestra | interlude |
| | 55 - 75 | | A - A | orchestra & SATB | "Tonight the..." |
| part B | 75 - 76 | 6/8 | (a) - (a) | orchestra | interlude |
| | 77 - 84 | | G - A | orchestra & soloist | solo Dentist |
| | 85 - 92 | | (b) - D | orchestra & soloist | solo Fortune Teller |
| | 93 - 100 | | F7 - (f-a-e♭-g) | orchestra & soloist | solo Rice Seller |
| | 101 - 108 | | (f-a-e♭-g♭) - D | orchestra & soloist | solo Barber |
| | 109 - 112 | | D - E | orchestra & SATB | chorus echoes Barber |
| | 113 - 114 | 6/8 - 2/4 | E - (e) | orchestra | interlude |
| part A' | 115 - 123 | 2/4 | A - B | orchestra & SATB | "In ev'ry corner..." |
| | 123 - 138 | | B - A | orchestra & SATB | "But when the..." |
| | 138 - 148 | | A - A | orchestra | postlude |

Table 17: Structure of *San Toy*—"We'll Keep the Feast in Pynka Pong."

As Table 17 shows, Jones resorts to the popular ABA'-pattern for the opening chorus. The harmony can be described as strikingly colourful for a musical comedy—this was a popular way of making the music sound 'exotic'. Right at the beginning, Jones contrasts octaves on e in imitation of a bell and/or gong with a seventh-chord on f in the low-pitched instruments, while the high-pitched instruments play semiquavers on notes belonging to an entirely different key (s. Figure 58). The result is a beginning that immediately catches the audience's attention and enhances the 'exotic' atmosphere of the setting musically. The octaves are a recurring motif that is used as a signal throughout the number: They can be heard right before the chorus enters, and as part of the interludes between the different parts. As customary, the instrumental introduction creates suspense, here by a steady semiquaver movement in the high-pitched instruments and dense chords (mainly A-major and f♯-minor alternating) in quavers in the low-pitched instruments.

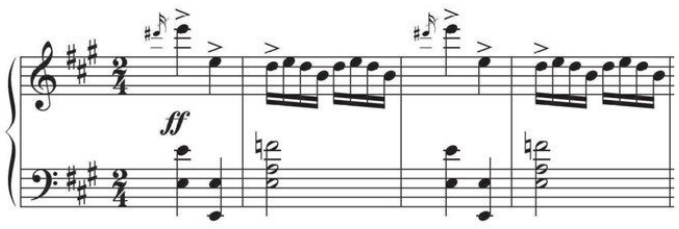


Figure 58: *San Toy*—"We'll Keep the Feast in Pynka Pong." (bars 1 - 4)

Throughout the whole number, the choral setting is homophonic in four parts. As usual, the 1st sopranos to sing the melody, whereas the other voices consist mainly of prime intervals and occasional seconds. Jones uses chromaticism (and consequently dissonances) to enhance the 'exotic' atmosphere, especially in bars 55 - 75 (s. Figure 59). The setting of the chorus seems a little breathless because there are never any pauses between the verses; the monotonous quavers are rarely varied. This creates the impression of excited chatter between the participants of the festivity. The low-pitched instruments focus on providing the rhythmic and harmonic background, which may or may not be coincidental with playing *colla parte* with the 2nd sopranos, altos and tenors, as Figure 59 shows. The high-pitched instruments mainly engage in ornamentation in semi-quavers.

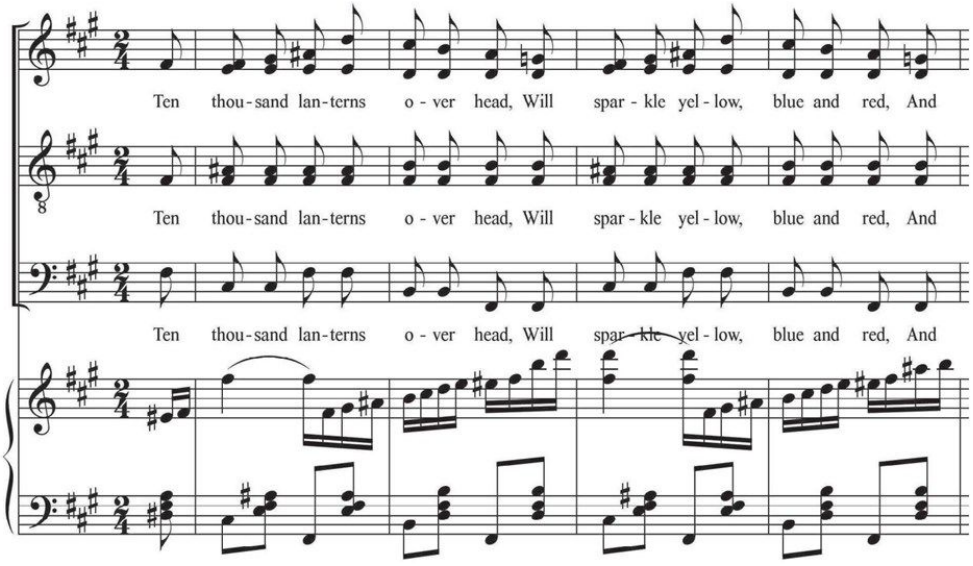


Figure 59: *San Toy*—"We'll Keep the Feast in Pynka Pong." (bars 43 - 46)

As usual, part B forms a contrast to part A because of a change of key and metre (s. Table 17). The four short solos do not introduces any characters, but simply serve as

further illustration of the festivity and therefore the setting. Most likely they were sung by choristers. All of the solos are rhythmically identical, but otherwise constructed in a different manner with rising complexity: The sparse accompaniment provided for the solo of the Dentist is reminiscent of a recitative, the Fortune Teller is accompanied by *legato*-movements in broken triads, and the almost identical solos of the Rice Seller and the Barber are characterized by extreme chromaticism (s. Figure 60).[574] The chorus is only involved in the last solo, which it comments using partially the same text modules, but a different melody—Jones uses the same four-part setting as before, scalic movements with chromatic elements in the 1st sopranos (and tenors!), mainly prime intervals in the 2nd sopranos and basses in steady quavers. This 'choral comment' can be seen as an interlude back to part A' because it revisits the musical elements used in part A.

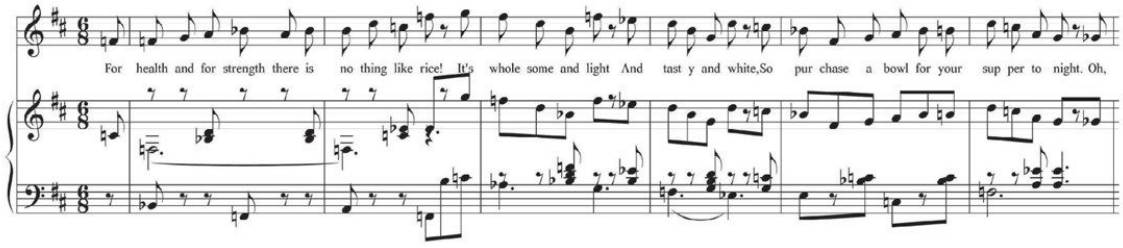


Figure 60: *San Toy*—"We'll Keep the Feast in Pynka Pong." (bars 95 - 100)

Part A' is an identical repetition of bars 55 - 75, excluding the end (bars 133ff.)—the last verse is augmented to ensure that the audience realizes the opening number is coming to an end, the instrumental postlude quietens the mood (and the volume) down to *ppp*.

As the analysis has shown, the function of this opening number is to introduce the setting of *San Toy*—it pictures a busy and almost overwhelming scene laden with clichés. Jones enhances the effects produced by costumes, scenery and lyrics by adding 'exotic' musical elements as described above. Just as costumes, scenery and lyrics are not supposed to be authentically Chinese, but interesting, colourful and entertaining, so is the music. The opening chorus does not contain any information or hint about the plot or the characters involved. The chorus and the soloists participating in this number are merely living scenery, maybe in order to avoid sensory overload and a feeling of being overextended. This number was created to be enjoyed like a moving *tableaux vivant* with music.
The partially extreme use of chromaticism makes the number demanding to sing, especially for the 1st sopranos and the soloists. Although the other voices are comparatively

[574] The discrepancies between the soloists and the right hand of the piano in bars 97 are in the vocal score.

easy because of the many prime intervals, the occasionally unusual harmony requires experienced singers. In terms of respectability, the lyrics of the opening chorus are absolutely unproblematic.

## 3.18 *Florodora*

Leslie Stuart's musical comedy *Florodora* with a libretto by Owen Hall and lyrics by Ernest Boyd-Jones and Paul Rubens premiered at the Lyric Theatre on 11 November 1899 and ran for 455 performances.[575] Similar to *The Geisha*, it became an enormous international success. Stuart had previously only contributed individual songs to works by other composers, this is the first musical comedy. This was probably the reason why *Florodora* was staged at the Lyric Theatre, not at the Gaiety or Daly's Theatre. The plot features the usual love story delayed by several confusions, but ending in three marriages. The first act is set on a fictitious island in the Philippines called "Florodora", where the popular homonymous perfume is fabricated by a British manufacturer. Most of the characters are British, there are only a few local characters represented by the female choristers. The second act is set in Wales, where all of the characters meet again after six months.The critic for *The Times* describes the premiere thus:

> "If strict conformity to a well-recognized type can ensure success, we need not doubt that the run of *Florodora* [...] will be a long and brilliant one. The piece, in fact, manages to conform to several types at once, so that it should not fail to please alike those who enjoy love-scenes between an Englishman and a picturesquely dressed foreigner and those who prefer a complete change of locality between the first act and the second. [...] Mr. Owen Hall's libretto cannot be blamed for lack of plot, although the plot is highly improbable and is kept so carefully in the background that many points that might be important are not cleared up. [...] Mr. Leslie Stuart's music reaches a higher level than the average attained in productions of this kind; and if it is never very original, and seldom brings forward any catchy tune that is at the same time fresh, it is graceful and workmanlike in structure, and the composer has a pleasing taste in out-of-the-way rhythms."[576]

This review includes several interesting points concerning contemporary taste. The libretto of *Florodora* contained certain elements that were common for musical comedy

[575] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 727.

[576] "Lyric Theatre." *The Times*, 13 Nov. 1899, p. 9. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/ CS151315821/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=27208de7. Accessed 4 Oct. 2020

because they suited the spectators' predilection, and were therefore bound to assist with the work's success. Obviously, the coherence and details of the plot were not as important as the mere existence of such elements as an 'exotic' setting featuring a romantic liaison. The libretto seems to be only a means to an end: to give the audience what it wanted to see. In this way, it is evocative of the burlesque, and seems to foreshadow the revue—in both genres, the scenes were only loosely connected.

An interview with Owen Hall published in *The Sketch* ten days prior to the opening night as well as photos of the performers in their costumes a week later[577] prove the public interest in the new work as well as the utilization of a marketing strategy that was based on constantly keeping the production in the potential audience's minds. In the interview, Hall's answers confirm the presumption that for most musical comedies, the setting was the most important feature of a work. Before giving a few details about the plot, the librettist is asked to characterize the setting and describes it as

> "[...] a paradise in point of climate and vegetation—indeed, you breathe the very atmosphere of flowers [...] Its inhabitants exhibit all the alluring characteristics of face, form, and grace attributable to a race half Javanese, half Spanish."[578]

An idyllic location that featured attractive 'exotic' characters was obviously considered to be the aspect that would attract many spectators. Subsequently, Hall explains his reasons for not saying anything about the plot before the premiere and begins his introduction of the characters by emphasizing the excellence of the performers who were also an important factor of any work's success. Stuart's music is briefly praised, as are the abilities of both manager and stage-manager, before pointing out that *Florodora* is a "'Society' piece, more on the lines of 'A Gaiety Girl"'—Hall makes sure that potential spectators know exactly what to expect. Although the emphasis of the given aspects is influenced by the fact that Hall was the one interviewed, not Stuart, his statements tell us a lot about what was thought to be the most interesting aspect of a musical comedy for the audience—the setting and the performers.

Another review is much more critical with *Florodora*:

> "Defects it had in plenty, but it has the saving grace of being amusing, and that factor granted it is little enough the average play-goer cares for any lapses there may be from the artistic standpoint. And he is quite right. If we have no one now who can give us a

[577] "'Florodora,' at the Lyric Theatre." *The Sketch*, 8 Nov. 1899, p. 107. V&A archive, THM-LON-LYSA 1899-1900.

[578] "A Chat with the Author of 'Florodora."' *The Sketch*, 1 Nov. 1899, p. 80. V&A archive, THM-LON-LYSA 1899-1900.

> real good opera, it is far better to banish pretentiousness and come direct to a lower form of entertainment which does lie within the reach of our librettists and composers. Mr. Owen Hall is by no means a brilliant author, but a long and varied experience of "smart" journalism has given him the facility of writing impertinences which pass for wit, and as this provokes the ready laughter of the unreflecting—and who cares to reflect, when sitting through a performance of a musical comedy?—we may take it for granted that Mr. Hall has accomplished all he set out to do. Mr. Leslie Stuart's music is agreeably melodious without being characterized by much originality, and a word of praise is due to him for the neat manner in which the numbers are orchestrated. [...] The plot is not bad of its kind, but much more stress has evidently been laid on the incidental numbers and 'business.' [...] *Florodora* is elaborately mounted, and is really a bright and entertaining piece of its kind."[579]

The critic misses the point of musical comedy when he bemoans the fact that *Florodora* is not a comic opera, but raises the correct question (albeit with an erroneous verb): "who cares to reflect, when sitting through a performance of a musical comedy?" I doubt that many people in the audience except for him felt like they were "sitting through" the evening because they expected to be entertained in a lighthearted manner; many of them probably would not have enjoyed a comic opera after the critic's taste as much as they enjoyed *Florodora*. This article is in some aspects the counterpart of the one published in *The Times* by emphasizing the deficiencies of the work rather than its assets, but in the end reaches the same conclusion. It also confirms the presumption that the plot was not as important as the "incidental numbers" and therefore the setting, as the following analysis will show.

In addition to the reviews, the opening night is followed as customary by a detailed description of the costumes in the popular column "Our Ladies' Pages",[580] and the run is accompanied by many short articles or pictures to remind the readers of the production or to announce revisions made to attract them to see the musical comedy once more. The review in the popular column "Our Captious Critic" is embellished by several caricatures of the performers as usual; it reflects on the questions "What is the secret of success for musical comedy? Must the new pieces be so like the old ones that they might be mistaken for each other [...]?"[581] The fact that the works in that genre were so popular

[579]"Music." [...] News, 18 Nov. 1899. V&A archive, THM-LON-LYSA 1899-1900.
Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does neither include the page but the full name of the newspaper; it was most likely taken from either *The Illustrated London News* or *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*—it seems to be in the style of the critic of the latter.

[580]"Frocks and Furbleflows." *The Sketch*, 22 Nov. 1899, p. 201f. V&A archive, THM-LON-LYSA 1899-1900.

[581]"Florodora." *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 23 Dec. 1899, p. 639. V&A archive,

despite their obvious similarity is evidence of their function—to reaffirm the spectators in their conviction and their superiority in a time when many traditions were challenged by new developments.

Platt notices somewhat astonished that the libretto is "a complex formulation, highly suggestive of *fin de siècle* concerns, interests, prejudices and fantasies." He continues that it is indeed "escapist", but also deals "with fundamental issues about modernity".[582] *Florodora* features a contrast between tradition, represented by members of the aristocracy like Lady Holyrood and Lord Abercoed, and modernity, represented by the successful modern businessman Cyrus Gilfain, the proprietor of the perfume factory.[583] The interesting point about this line-up is the outcome: The modern entrepreneur is identified as the antagonist. He managed to obtain the rightful properties of both protagonists illegally; one of them is an aristocrat in disguise, Lord Abercoed, who in the end not only gets his castle back, but also marries the girl the antagonist had destined to be his future wife. The representative of modernity, however, goes away empty-handed. However, Platt notices rightly that Gilfain, the antagonist, is American in contrast to the British (Welsh, to be more precise) protagonist, who is a shining example of aristocracy embracing the modern way of life.[584] Due to the Welsh lineage of this major character, the issue of the fraught correlations between the British Empire and Wales is broached in this musical comedy, however marginally.[585] Another aspect dealt with in the plot are "the exploitative effects of modern commerce on more 'innocent' cultures and [...] its destructive effects on tradition."[586] In 1899, the superiority of modernity was firmly established in the minds of the audience, making it possible for Hall to indicate mild criticism in the libretto. Because of the Boer War, the new songs introduced into *Florodora* during its long run included a patriotic number;[587] foreshadowing the supportive role the genre would play during the First World War.

The first number *"Flowers a-blooming so gay."* is preceded by the following stage directions:[588]

> SCENE:- A small island of the Phillipine [sic!] group. Down stage to Left are Offices, warehouses and private laboratory of Cyrus Gilfain, manufacturer and inventor of Florodora; a world-renowned perfume. Stretching out as far as can be seen one way is the flower farm,

THM-LON-LYSA 1899-1900.

[582]Platt 2004, p. xii.
[583]cf. ibid., p. 42.
[584]cf. ibid., p. 48.
[585]cf. Macpherson 2018, pp. 44f.
[586]Platt 2004, p. 47.
[587]cf. Gänzl 1986, pp. 713f.
[588]Hall, Owen. *Florodora*. ADD MS 53695 N, p. 4. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

> a beautiful picture of hydrangea-coloured blossoms, palms, etc. There is also the sea and a small creek or landing-place from which a boat can go away.
>
> (As the Curtain rises a few Attendants, Spanish type, and NEGROES are engaged in packing fugitive blossoms into big baskets. There are packing-cases at the side with the name 'Florodora', Cyrus Gilfain, Proprietor, printed on them. The name is also on the doors of Offices, warehouses, laboratory, etc.)

The initial setting of *Florodora* takes advantage of several popular 'exotic' elements included in the scenery (lush tropical fauna, the sea) and also represented by the performers' costumes and make-up as "Attendants, Spanish type, and NEGROES". This portrayal of colonial routine, considered downright racist today, reflects the imperialistic ideology of late Victorian Britain and was generally not questioned in popular musical theatre. The 'exotic' setting caters to the audience's desire to experience faraway places and Other cultures, if only from the safety of their seat in the theatre. These displays were designed to reaffirm the spectators' feeling of superiority over the depicted Other culture and therefore to enhance the sense of belonging to the dominant class of the British empire. This aspect is emphasized further by prominently featuring a successful company dealing with colonial luxury goods made available for consumers in the constantly growing range of items sold by department stores. Buildings and items for commercial purposes are part of the scenery as symbols of the British Empire's prospering trade, the laboratory is a symbol of its immense scientific progress and achievements in many fields, directly concerning and vastly improving the everyday life of everybody in the audience. All in all, the initial setting of *Florodora* is indirectly aiming at appealing to the audience's national pride.

This is the text of the opening chorus (excluding most repetitions), according to the libretto included in the Lord Chamberlain's Plays:[589]

[589]Hall, Owen. *Florodora*. ADD MS 53695 N, pp. 4f. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

*Flowers a-blooming so gay*
*Roses on ev'ry tree*
*Sweet as words that lovers can say*
*Fair as the whisp'ring sea*
*Roses softly blooming*
*To your sweet perfuming*
*Say "good-bye"*
*Fragrancy distilling,*
*Willing or unwilling never die*

*So should we maidens too,*
*Heed the hours that fly away, away,*
*For of flow'rs or maid 'tis true*
*That life alas is but a day*

*And through the day*
*'Tis thus we wander dreaming, dreaming,*
*'Mid the flowers*
*With visions soaring widely, widely,*
*To that faery land,*
*That only maids discover,*
*Wand'ring hand in hand,*
*With Cupid for lover.*

*Flora! Florodora,*
*Of all perfumes divine,*
*As goddess we adore her,*
*In her flow'ry shrine,*
*Her gifts on our island bestowing*
*There lies in this flow'r gaily blowing,*
*A fortune ne'er ending*
*To maids that are tending,*
*The shrine of our Saint Florodora.*

*So dance once again,*
*The gay Caballero,*
*And sing a bolero, refrain,*
*Gay castagnetting to lovers coquetting*

(As Chorus finishes enter LEANDRO, overseer of the employees. GIRLS come forward)

The number deals with the everyday life of the employees involved in the production of the perfume "Florodora". However, from today's point of view it is painfully obvious that this description does not reflect realistic working class conditions, neither in Britain nor in the colonies, where the workers and slaves were treated much worse. It seems almost absurd that the Victorian audience was really so naive as to believe this extremely idealistic narration of life in the colonies. For the most part, the lyrics create the impression that the employees face no hardships at all: Their work consists of wandering through the picturesque countryside, dancing and "tending the shrine of [their] Saint Florodora", whatever that implies in practice. The glorification of a luxury good as a saint or even a goddess illustrates the importance of trade and consumption in late Victorian society on an alarming level—however, the tendency to turn a blind eye to the horrifying working conditions innumerable people were forced to endure whereas a very small percentage of the population indulges in an extravagant lifestyle at their expense is not exactly a behaviour unknown nowadays. The life described in the lyrics reflects probably what

consumers wanted to belief about the working conditions, perhaps even more so because the product in question is something as beautiful and alluring as a perfume. In spite of everything, the extent of naivete is overwhelming; even if a critical and realistic representation was not only most unlike in that time and genre, but also probably impossible because of governmental censorship conducted by the Lord Chamberlain's Office.
There is, however, a faint indication of trouble in paradise: The roses have to say goodbye to their "sweet perfuming", they will be processed to perfume without their consent and any chance of resistance. In the vocal score, which probably represented the version actually sung on stage, the expression "never die" has been replaced with "ye must die"; thus the lyrics emphasize the cruel and ruthless treatment of the flowers. Flowers and especially roses are traditionally used as symbols of beloved women; but to clarify matters, this comparison is included in the verses that follow directly after "die": They describe the transience of life and the importance to seize every moment. It is hard to say if this was meant as well-hidden criticism on the inhumane treatment of workers and slaves in the colonies. This unusually gloomy and serious issue for an opening chorus of a musical comedy is discarded quickly, as the subsequent verses show, which revisit the cheerful and idyllic narration. It will be most interesting to analyze if and how the music reflects the contrasting scenarios conveyed by the lyrics.

| **section** | **bars** | **time** | **key** | **instrumentation** | **function** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 8 | 6/8 | E♭ - d | orchestra | prelude |
| | 9 - 20 | | g - D | orchestra & SATB | "Flowers a-blooming..." |
| | 21 - 24 | | passing tones - A | orchestra & SATB | "Roses softly..." |
| part B | 25 - 32 | | D - A7 | orchestra & SATB | "So should we..." |
| | 33 - 40 | | (f♯) - D | orchestra & SATB | repetition |
| | 41 - 44 | | D - F7 | orchestra | interlude |
| part C | 45 - 76 | 3/4 | (d) - B♭ | orchestra & SATB | "And through..." |
| part D | 77 - 100 | | B♭ - B♭ | orchestra | interlude (dance) |
| part E | 101 - 131 | | E♭ - B♭ | orchestra & SA | "Flora! Florodora..." |
| | 132 - 164 | | B♭ - B♭ | orchestra & SATB | repetition |
| | 165 - 191 | | B♭ - B♭ | orchestra & SATB | "So dance..." |
| part B' | 192 - 222 | | (g) - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | "So should we..." |
| part E' | 223 - 259 | | E♭ - E♭ | orchestra & SATB | "Florodora!" |
| | 259 - 267 | | E♭ - E♭ | orchestra | postlude |

Table 18: Structure of *Florodora*—Opening Chorus. "Flowers a-blooming so gay."

The rather long number is subdivided into several parts, but structured very clearly, so that the audience can follow easily (s. Table 18). The short instrumental prelude

allows the audience to take in the stage design and all the fashionable costumes the choristers are wearing. The melody played by the low-pitched instruments anticipates the "Florodora"-motif used later on in part E, whereas the high-pitched instruments play semiquavers alternating between two notes, creating an illusion of tropical, glimmering air that enhances the 'exotic atmosphere of the setting (s. Figure 61).

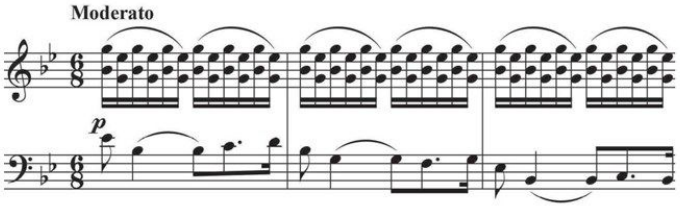


Figure 61: *Florodora*—"Flowers a-blooming so gay." (bars 1 - 3)

Table 18 shows a rare harmonic measure for a musical comedy: The prelude ends in a minor key, the subsequent section begins in a minor key as well and is characterized by dissonances (s. Figure 62) Maybe Stuart took those extraordinary harmonic measures to indicate that matters were not as cheerful as the lyrics declare, maybe this was just his way of making the music sound 'exotic'. The four-part setting of part A is rudimentary polyphonic, which is rather unusual for the genre. For example, the basses sing verse 2 as a counterpoint consisting of prime intervals in short note values (which can be heard as threatening), while the altos and tenors repeat the first verse in a variation of the original melody (s. Figure 62). For a musical comedy, the choral setting is quite intricate and demanding. However, there are often two voices singing in unison, and the orchestra supports the singers by playing *colla parte* most of the time.

In bars 21ff., the music changes and the polyphony becomes more obvious. The orchestra does not play *colla parte* any longer, but provides an independent accompaniment reminiscent of the prelude. The male voices sing the melody while the female voices sing a counterpoint quite similar to the one sung by the basses in Figure 62—first in unison, then in two parts. But the male voices sing only verse 5 and 7, whereas the female voices sing the complete text (verse 5 - 10) (s. Figure 63). This distribution of the lyrics is extremely uncommon and demanding for a chorus number in a musical comedy and is in combination with the aforementioned slightly threatening character of the counterpoint, the dissonances and the tremolo played by the high pitched instruments a clear expression of unrest and trouble.

In contrast, part B is set in four parts, sometimes in six parts, and is almost always homophonic. Most of the time, the orchestra plays an independent accompaniment. The short word "so" links parts A and B with regards to content; however, despite the gloomy

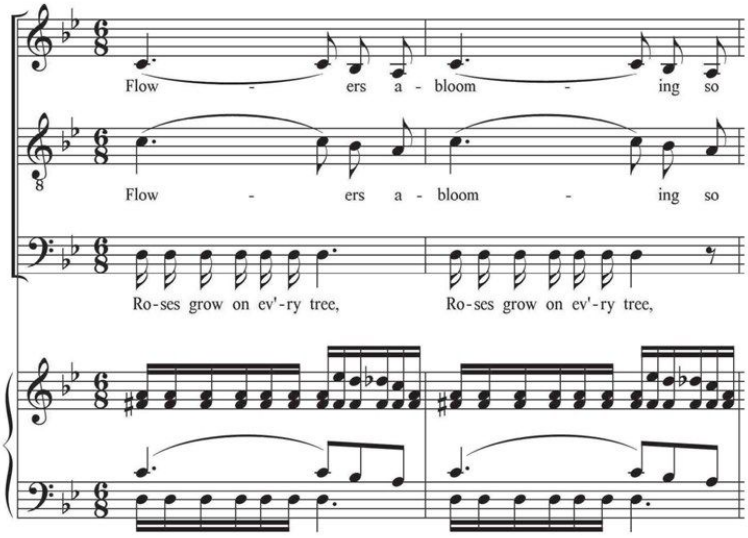


Figure 62: *Florodora*—"Flowers a-blooming so gay." (bars 13 - 14)

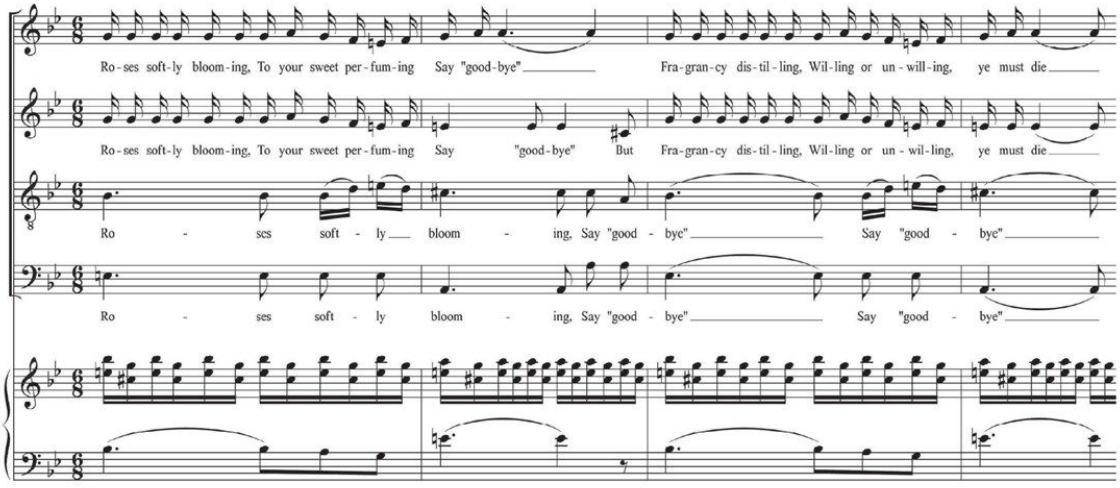


Figure 63: *Florodora*—"Flowers a-blooming so gay." (bars 21 - 24)

subject dealt with in the lyrics, the music is spirited and cheerful—the focus is clearly not on the grim prospect of inevitable death, but on enjoying every moment of life. The lyrics are repeated for emphasis, further enhanced by the orchestra playing *colla parte* in the last two verses.

In the waltz-like part C, the note values are much longer than before, mainly crotchets and minims, resulting in the impression of a much slower tempo, although it actually stays the same. In combination with the changes shown in Table 18, Stuart creates a contrast between parts B and C while at the same time maintaining an ornamented homophonic setting in four parts. Verses 1 - 6 are made up in pairs in a similar pattern; the odd verses stress the first beat of the bar and lead over to the even verses with quavers leading upwards (s. Figure 64). The high-pitched instruments accompany the chorus mostly with scalic or triadic movements in quavers, therefore forming a contrast to the longer note values sung by the chorus, and does not play *colla parte* at all. Verses 5 and 6 are almost identical to verses 1 and 2; in verses 7 and 8 the female voices hold the notes similar to the male voices, and with the addition of a *crescendo*, a climax is achieved at the end of part C.

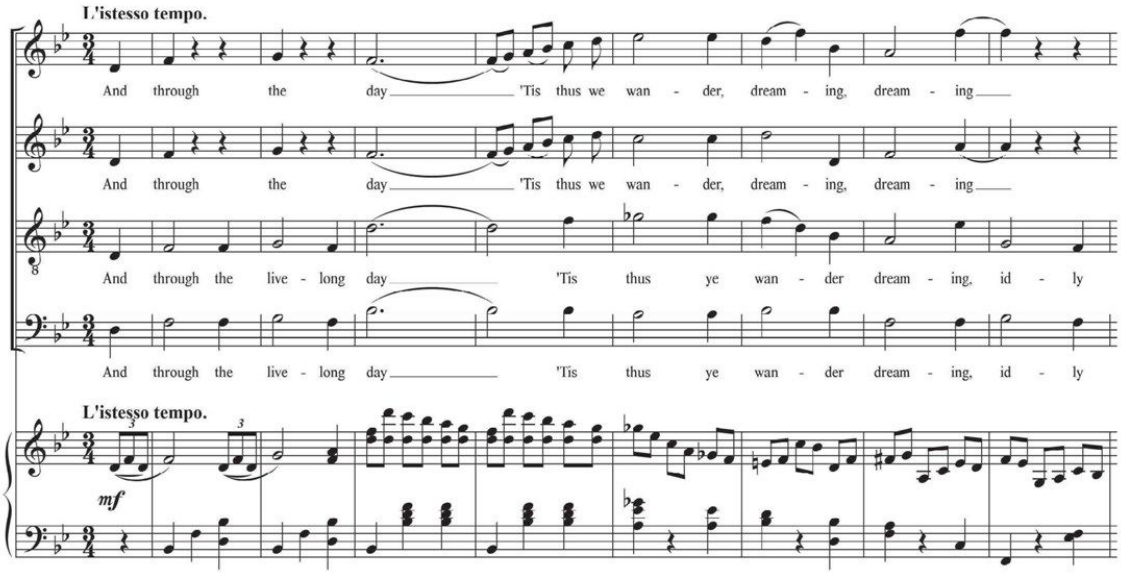


Figure 64: *Florodora*—"Flowers a-blooming so gay." (bars 45 - 52)

The vocal score and the libretto both mention the "Entrance of Spanish Girls" at the beginning of the instrumental part D, but nothing more. In all likelihood, there was a dance on stage in this section, displaying the flashy costumes and dancing skills of the performers representing the Spanish Girls.

Part E feels a little like a refrain. There are no changes in time signature, key or tempo, but the music is decidedly different than in the instrumental part D: the function of the orchestra is not to provide an accompaniment consisting of regular melodic and rhythmic patterns to the choristers' melody instead of being the musical centre of attention. Part E begins with the "Florodora"-motif that has been anticipated in the introduction. The 9 verses of the "refrain" are sung by the female voices, at first in unison, then in parallel thirds. The irregular number of verses is a result of the rhyme scheme: four alternate rhymes, followed by two couplets, followed by a tail rhyme. The orchestra does not play *colla parte* in the first 4 verses, but embellishes the vocal line with ornamental quavers during its long note values. The verses of the refrain are repeated by the whole chorus; the female voices are set almost identically as before, during the first six verses the male voices sing a counterpoint with a different text than the chorus girls (s. Figure 65).

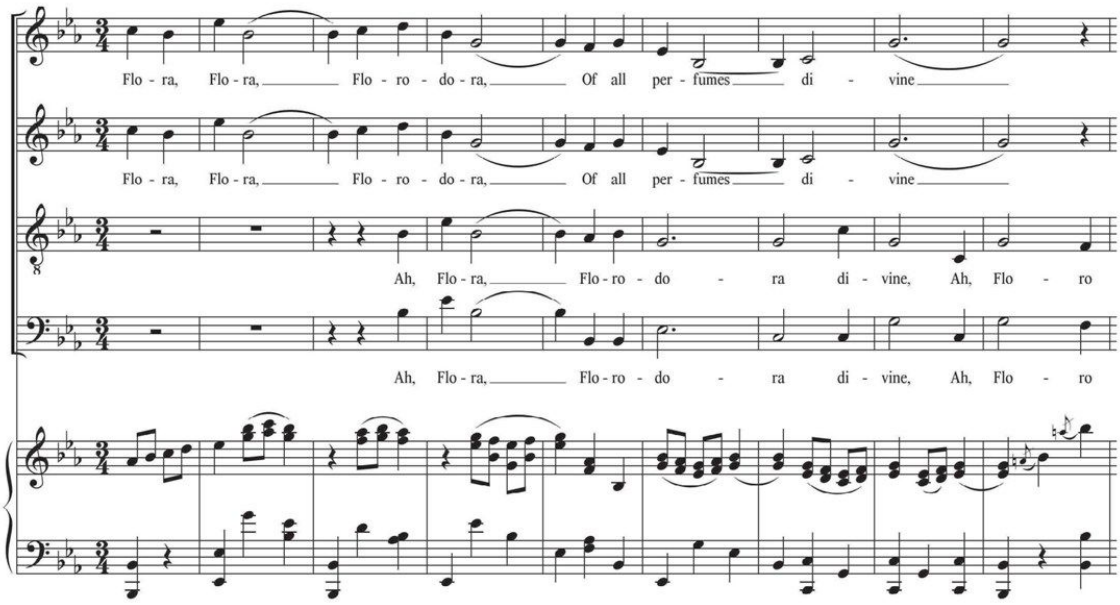


Figure 65: *Florodora*—"Flowers a-blooming so gay." (bars 132 - 140)

In bar 165, a new quite extraordinary subsection begin. The music draws on the music used in the first subsection of Part E, so there is no real caesura. The text is very irregular, there is no rhyme scheme. In this subsection, Stuart combines homophony and polyphony in a setting in four or five parts. Not all the voices sing each of the verses, and two verses are even combined to a new one. For example, in bars 181ff., the altos and basses sing one word belonging to verse 2 set in long note values and moving in contrary motion, whereas sopranos and tenors sing verse 4, set in crotchets and moving

in contrary motion as well (s. Figure 66). This free and varied treatment of the text is most unusual and intricate for a chorus number in a musical comedy. The orchestra usually plays *colla parte*, adding some ornamental quavers on the long note values.

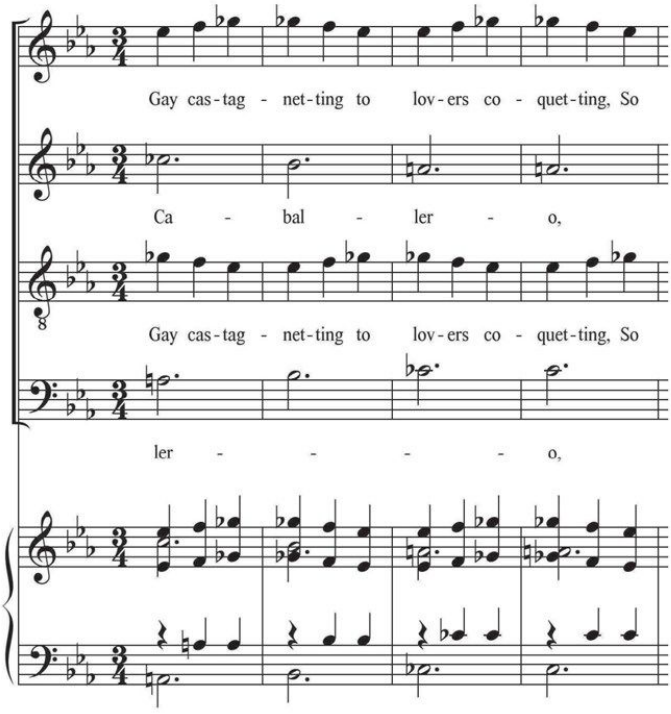


Figure 66: *Florodora*—"Flowers a-blooming so gay." (bars 181 - 184)

Subsequently, part B is repeated twice, converted into the new key and time signature, re-introducing the aspect of transience into the otherwise very cheery first number before the last part of the opening chorus begins. It is a variation of part E, here both subsections are combined in a homophonic setting in up to six part. The name of the musical play (and of the perfume manufactured in the story), "Florodora", is repeated frequently and thus fixed firmly in the audience's minds before the number ends with a short instrumental postlude.

As customary for musical comedy, the first number of *Florodora* does neither introduce the plot nor any main characters, but focuses on the setting by describing every day life on the island, as discussed at length before. Staging and costumes help to create the atmosphere of a tropical island. The number also introduces the topics love and beauty, two main issues of the genre. Therefore, the function of the chorus is to prepare the background for the soloists as a kind of living scenery.

Musically, Stuart combines the usual and the unusual. The number is complex, rather long and consists of several contrasting parts which are structured clearly by changes of key, time signature and / or tempo—this is what a lot of first numbers in popular musical theatre at that time and place look and sound like, as the previous chapters have shown. But additionally, Stuart also uses polyphony to create even stronger contrasts between the different sections, and this is a technique rarely used. The number is quite demanding and definitely requires experienced singers. Maybe one of the reasons why the audience liked *Florodora* so much is because of its really diversified music that is more intricate than standard musical comedy fare.

## 3.19 *The Rose of Persia*

Sullivan's comic opera *The Rose of Persia or The Story-Teller and the Slave* with a libretto by Basil Hood premiered at the Savoy Theatre on 29 November 1899 and ran for 213 or 220 performances.[590] It was considered a success, although its popularity cannot be compared to his earlier works in collaboration with Gilbert in the 1870s and 1880s. The critic for *The Times* comments the opening night as follows:

> "It is a long time since a success like that of *The Rose of Persia* has befallen the management of this theatre [...] An extremely well-contrived libretto, in which various motives from the 'Arabian Nights' are combined with excellent effort by Captain Basil Hood, has been set by Sir Arthur Sullivan with all the spontaneity and refinement of his earlier years, and the result is an entertainment that yields to none of its predecessors in charm or brightness. [...] the verses and dialogue are really funny and original, and the Gilbertian standard in regard to the kind of social satire with which the patrons of the theatre were formerly more familiar than they are now has been fully maintained."[591]

Despite the enthusiastic praise for both librettist and composer, it is obvious that *The Rose of Persia* is measured by the prior 'Gilbert & Sullivan'-successes. Instead of analysing and valuing the new work, comparisons seem to be inevitable, and the former works seem to be perceived as the ne plus ultra.
In contrast to his other pieces in the 1890s, *The Rose of Persia*, according to Jacobs, is

[590] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 730.
[591] "Savoy Theatre." *The Times*, 30 Nov. 1899, p. 8. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS135062910/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=e3a0e428. Accessed 1 Oct. 2020

"*worked*, in a way that had eluded him [Sullivan] for a decade", and the critics agreed with his assessment.[592] Silverman calls this comic opera "an Iranian variation of *The Mikado*",[593] indirectly accusing Hood of a lack of ideas. However, this cannot have been the reason for the relatively short run, as the success of works with much more similar libretti like *The Geisha* and *San Toy* shows. Wren states that *The Rose of Persia* "doesn't show Sullivan at his best" and calls the music "only adequate" with a few exceptional numbers; he also sees musical similarities to *The Grand Duke*.[594]

Gänzl, however, describes Sullivan's score as "light in character but highly accomplished and, if it lacked somewhat the jokey quality of some of the earlier works, it retained a dignity which had humour always just beneath the surface". He explains the 'short' run with the altered taste of the spectators who now preferred musical comedy to comic opera.[595] Tastes had indeed changed in the 1890s; but perhaps not only the audience's favourite entertainment, but also Sullivan's preferred genre of musical theatre was afflicted by change. Even if the grand opera *Ivanhoe* (1891) is classified as a unique exception, works like *Haddon Hall* and *The Beauty Stone* are of a decidedly different style (and genre) than his earlier works.

The comic opera takes place in Persia and revolves around the rich merchant Hassan and his 25 wives. He often invites poor people into his house for dinner and is therefore thought of as eccentric or even mad. His ambitious first wife Dancing Sunbeam and the priest Abdallah conspire to get rid of him and inherit his fortune. Meanwhile, the sultana Rose-in-Bloom sneaks out of the palace with three slaves, disguised as dancing girls. The sultan, the grand vizier and the physician-in-chief investigate the matter – in disguise as well. After almost everyone has been threatened with a death sentence, Hassan is able to outwit the sultan, and there is the inevitable happy ending. Interestingly, the main character and the *Barbier von Bagdad* have the same name: Abul Hassan. The *komische Oper* by Peter Cornelius (premiered in 1858) is regarded as influential for Sullivan's operatic works. The 'oriental' setting of both works refers to the popular collection of stories called *Arabian Nights* or *The One Thousand and One Nights*. Musical similarities will be pointed out following this analysis. The name goes even further back: Carl Maria von Weber composed a comic opera titled *Abu Hassan* that premiered in 1811—however, apart from the setting and the name, there are no similarities.

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[592] Jacobs 1992, pp. 396f.

[593] Richard Silverman: "The operas in context. Stylistic elements - the Savoy and beyond", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan*, David Eden and Meinhard Saremba (eds.), Cambridge 2009, p. 82.

[594] Wren 2001, pp. 280f.

[595] Gänzl 1986, pp. 717f.

*The Rose of Persia* begins with a march-like overture called "introduction", the following opening number will be analysed in detail. These are the stage directions and the text of the number, according to the libretto:[596]

> SCENE.- Court of HASSAN's house. Entrance to house on left. At back and on right view of streets.
>
> HASSAN is seated contemplating the view over the city. He is surrounded by his wives, who are lying on divans. It is a beautiful moonlit night.

These stage directions, however brief, contain many aspects (regarded as) characteristic of 'oriental' settings: First of all, there is only one man surrounded by many women; a polygamous household. The scenery features typical furniture—divans are explicitly mentioned, but there were probably many more ornamentations that further enhanced the impression of Otherness, like architectural elements or costumes. Moreover, the scene takes place outdoors and at night, indicating a warm climate. All of these elements, which are of course cliché-ridden and meant to entertain, not to educate, cater to the audience's desire to experience faraway places and escape the hardships of their everyday life; resulting usually in a feeling of cultural superiority because the displayed Other was mostly perceived as culturally inferior and shockingly indecent. The setting at night might be just a reference to *Arabian Nights*, but there is another aspect that makes such a setting especially interesting for popular musical theatre: During the night, a time that is often associated with secrets of all kinds, situations and actions are possible (and sometimes even acceptable) that would be considered scandalous in broad daylight. Overstepping the boundaries usually implies romantic rather than criminal activity in this genre, so a night-time-setting indicates a secret rendezvous. This aspect caters to the audience's desire to experience love and romance. Thus, the initial setting of *The Rose of Persia* gives two 'excuses' at once for certain moral transgressions; this setting was bound to be exciting and interesting for the spectators. Furthermore, the position of the performers (the women lying on divans) was most certainly at least mildly erotic, depending on the costumes and the exact poses. The Savoy Theatre's anxiety for its morally immaculate reputation was simply aiming at the display of alluring, but decently apparelled female beauty without further enhancing the erotic aspect of the setting (s. Figure 67).[597] Nevertheless, this view was on all accounts appreciated by the audience, especially by the

[596]Hood, Basil. *The Rose of Persia or The Story-Teller and the Slave.* https://gsarchive.net/sullivan/rose/, accessed 14 Oct. 2020.
[597]V&A Archive, THM-73-25-12—NOT AUTHORIZED FOR PUBLICATION!!!

ardent admirers of the female performers, and was therefore an effective measure to attract (male) spectators.

Figure 67: Picture of the original Savoy Production

This is the text of the number (excluding most repetitions):[598]

**CHORUS of WIVES.** (addressing HASSAN.)

*As we lie in languor lazy,*
*Lounging on a low divan.*
*Flood of interesting chatter*
*Flows behind each dainty fan:*
*"Is our husband going crazy?*
*Neighbours call him 'Mad Hassan!'*
*Not an unimportant matter*
*For the wives of any man!*

*Hassan! Hassan! Hassan!*
*Inform us if you can!*
*Irresponsible and hazy,*
*Unconventional and mazy*
*Seem your actions - are you crazy?*
*Are you crazy, O Hassan?*

[598]Hood, Basil. *The Rose of Persia or The Story-Teller and the Slave.* https://gsarchive.net/sullivan/rose/, accessed 14 Oct. 2020.

(HASSAN turns round on his seat,
and faces the audience.)

**SONG. - HASSAN.**

*I'm Abu'l Hassan;*
*I'm neither sick nor sad:*
*A most contented man,*
*Though foolish persons think me mad!*
*The laziest of lives*
*I live in peace and plenty,*
*Surrounded by my wives*
*Who number only five-and-twenty!*
*You'll find that five-and-twenty*
*Are practically plenty,*
*If you've a craze*
*To make your days*
*A* Dolce far niente!
*Another wife*
*Might spoil my life,*
*Because, you see*
*('Twixt you and me),*
*She might have tricks*
*That would not mix*
*With* dolce far niente!

*It may occur to you*
*That only twenty-five*
*Are singularly few -*
*To that, of course, I'm quite alive!*
*My wealth is so immense*
*Their number I could double;*
*I do not fear expense*
*So much, you see, as extra trouble!*
*I smoke my hubble-bubble,*
*And calculate the trouble;*
*The trouble I've*
*With twenty-five*
*Twice twenty-five would double!*
*A simple thumb*
*And finger sum -*
*It's rule of three*
*It seems to me;*
*Our Arabic*
*Arithmetic*
*Would prove the trouble double!*

**CHORUS (to one another).**

*Another wife, etc.*

**CHORUS (to one another).**

*A simple thumb, etc.*

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 13 | C | D - D | orchestra | prelude |
| | 14 - 27 | | D - D7 | orchestra & SA | "As we lie in languor..." |
| | 28 | | various | orchestra | interlude |
| part B | 29 - 30 | 6/8 | D - D | orchestra | interlude |
| | 31 - 62 | | D - D | orchestra & Hassan | song Hassan |
| | 63 - 70 | | (a) - D | orchestra & SA | echo chorus |
| | 70 - 72 | | A7 - D | orchestra | postlude |

Table 19: Structure of *The Rose of Persia*—Chorus of Girls.

The opening number is sung by the female chorus, mostly in unison, and a soloist, Abul Hassan. It is not a very complex number, as Table 19 shows. The structure is made very clear because each part has a different time signature and tempo. The short instrumental introduction anticipates the almost pentatonic melody sung by the chorus and thus introduces a calm and 'oriental' atmosphere. The wavy melody and regular quavers mimic the movement of the fans mentioned in the lyrics and executed by the performers (s. Figure 68).

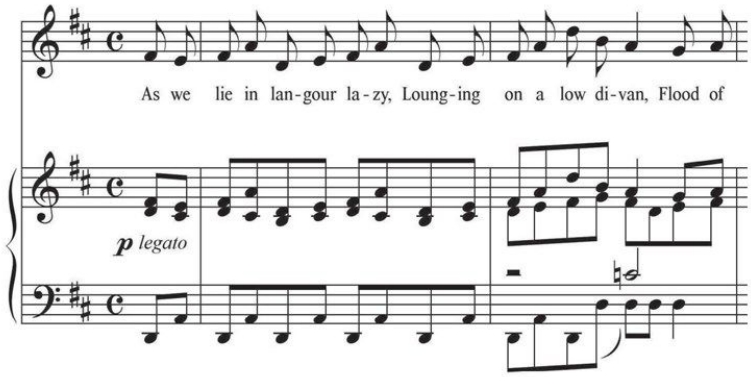


Figure 68: *The Rose of Persia*—Chorus of Girls (bars 14 - 15)

The choristers represent Hassan's wives who in the first four verses simply state their current actions: relaxing and gossiping "behind [their] dainty fan[s]". They are questioning their husband's sanity, worrying about what the neighbours think about him and what consequences this might have for him—and for them as his wives. Therefore, they ask him directly: "Are you crazy, O Hassan?"

Part A and especially the lyrics are interesting in several aspects. First, it allows the audience to sneak a peek at a private situation in a Persian household—although the setting does not exactly feature a *harem*, it is close enough to be equally delightful and scandalous for the audience. However, what the women are doing might as well happen in any British drawing room (notwithstanding that most Victorian women would probably have objected indignantly): gossiping. Even though the wives are concerned about Hassan's mental health, they do not seem to care about him as a person: They are worried that his reputation will suffer, and theirs as well as a consequence. While this might strike us as odd, unfeeling and therefore negative today, this kind of behaviour was probably quite acceptable in late Victorian times when women where almost completely dependent not only on their husbands' income, but also on their reputation and conse-

quence. 'Madness' was a term that was hastily employed whenever a person's behaviour seemed inexplicable, especially if it disregarded the conventions and complex unwritten laws of society; although the affected were usually female. Therefore, the public accusation that a man was 'mad' was quite severe, and his wives' concern well-founded.
The choristers' melody has quite a large ambitus (d' – a"), contains some large intervals and is therefore not very easy to sing, but the orchestra supports them by playing *colla parte*. The highest note a" is used to emphasize the word "crazy" and makes the wives sound a little hysterical; Sullivan thus adds another layer of meaning to Hood's lyrics (s. Figure 69). In other respects, the composer follows the lyrics closely: The sung section of part A is subdivided in regular 2-bar-phrases, but the last four bars form one phrase because of the enjambments in the text.

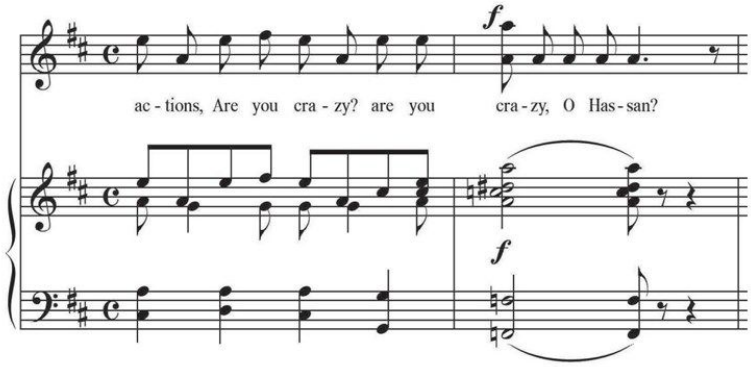


Figure 69: *The Rose of Persia*—Chorus of Girls (bars 26 - 27)

In part B, the music is dominated by a rhythm that sounds dotted in contrast to the regular quavers characteristic for part A. Again, the musical structure follows the text: Two 2-bar-phrases are followed by a 4-bar-phrase consisting of two verses because every fourth verse contains two to three syllables more than the other verses and/or because of enjambments (s. Figure 70).
The function of this number is to introduce the setting and inform the audience about Hassan's initial situation—he is very content with his life as it is, but his wives are worried. The focus is clearly on the present, the spectators do not get to know the reason for the accusations yet. However, the opening number already deals with the conflict that will lead to the conspiracy and is therefore part of the plot, not merely an introduction. The introduction of the setting has already been commented at length; the 'exotic' atmosphere is supported by the use of some keywords in the beginning of the number ("divan", "fan") and enhanced further by the music. The number also introduces one of the main characters, Hassan, in detail; the function of the choristers is to provide the

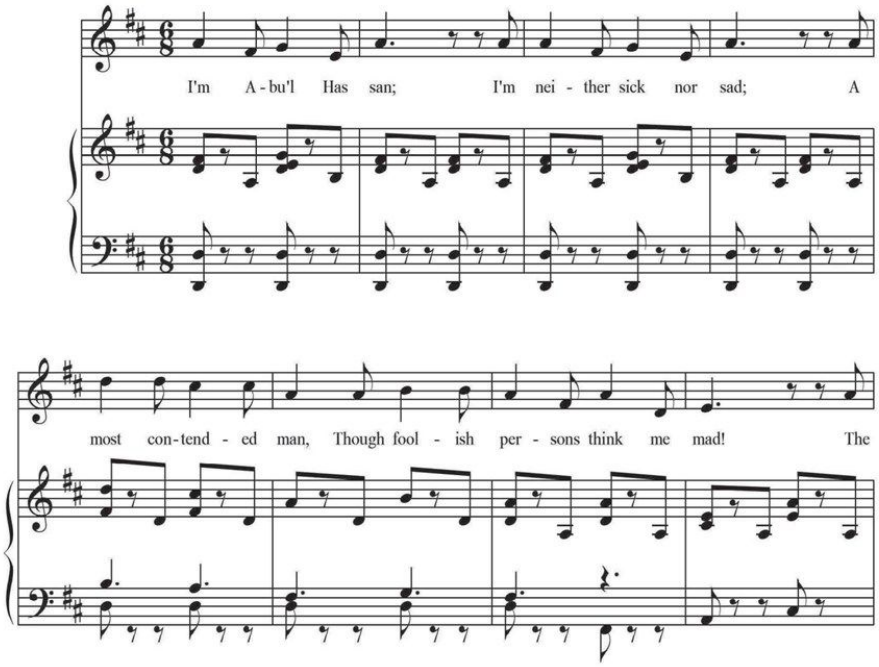


Figure 70: *The Rose of Persia*—Chorus of Girls (bars 31 - 38)

background for the soloist—they even directly prompt him to explain himself and thus trigger his song.

There are some slight similarities between the opening choruses of *The Rose of Persia* and *Der Barbier von Bagdad*. Both operas begin with a setting that emphasizes calmness and feature a divan as a symbol of 'oriental' furniture. However, the reasons for that calmness are quite different—Hassan's wives simply relax, whereas Nureddin's servants mourn their masters current state of health. Both opening numbers show a main character surrounded by subordinate members of his household who worry about him (although the extent of the worry differs greatly).
The music, besides its calm beginning, is not very similar; however, there are resemblances in the general structure: Both numbers begin with an instrumental introduction that sets the mood, followed by a section that is sung by a chorus formed of only one gender. Cornelius's four-part-setting for an all male chorus is much more complicated then Sullivan's female chorus in unison. The next section introduces one of the main characters, Hassan and Nureddin respectively. Again, the interaction between soloist and chorus is much more intricate in *Der Barbier von Bagdad*, there is no strophic structure and the chorus's function is not to simply repeat the soloists text and melody, but

to comment on his utterances musically independent. Whereas Sullivan might have been inspired by Cornelius's work in general, it cannot be said that the beginnings of these two works are closely related.

## 3.20 *The Messenger Boy*

The musical play *The Messenger Boy* by Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton with lyrics by Percy Greenbank and Adrian Ross and a libretto by Alfred Murray and James T. Tanner premiered at the Gaiety Theatre on 3 February 1900 and ran for 429 performances.[599] The plot revolves around two men who want to marry the same woman, the title role has to deliver a letter to the lady's father, who is currently stationed in Egypt, and the rest of the characters end up chasing him due to a network of intrigues, misunderstandings and confusion. In the end, two couples marry and another one is reunited.
As customary, the whole run of the production was accompanied by various articles in newspapers and journals, starting even before the premiere. This was presumably part of a deliberate promotional strategy initiated by the management to constantly keep *The Messenger Boy* in the awareness of the public. An article in *The Sketch* shortly after the opening night declares it to be "probably the prettiest, brightest, and most entertaining of the long run of Gaiety pieces", and remarks further that "by changing the customary Gaiety Girl into the unwonted Gaiety Boy, the Gaiety has not lost its luck".[600] Apparently, the title of the musical play was supposed to be *The Messenger Girl* at first to keep up the tradition of a female title role and the word 'girl' in the title, but both role and title were altered due to the development of the Gaiety ensemble.[601] A few days later, *The Illustrated London News* praises the work as follows:

> "In happy contrast to the ordinary custom, the first night of the new Gaiety piece, 'The Messenger Boy', was not the usual dress rehearsal, at which only possibilities of future entertainment are seen, and the audience has to be content with but a few moments of genuine delight. This latest 'musical play' [...] is consistently bright and merry from first to last. [...] Fortunately Mr. Ivan Caryll and his colleagues have rarely invented more tuneful or sprightly melodies, and so, with all these advantages of song and dance and fun,

[599] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 740.
[600] "'The Messenger Boy,' at the Gaiety." *The Sketch*, 7 Feb. 1900, p. 94. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1900.
[601] cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 732.

'The Messenger Boy' proves the best of all recent Gaiety musical farces."[602]

This excerpt contains two interesting details about the genre. First, it refers to the fact that, as several examples above have shown, usually a lot of improvements *after* the opening night were necessary to make the work a success. *The Messenger Boy* seems to have been a rare exception, although some alterations were made here as well. While this might be purely coincidental, it might also be due to the fact that the young genre now had a few years' experience to benefit from—every necessary or reasonable step involved in the creation and staging of a new work had been undertaken several times now, resulting in an experienced ensemble. Second, the article refers to *The Messenger Boy* first as a musical play and later as a musical farce; this is further prove of the assumption that a lot of those terms were used synonymously in late Victorian times.
An article ten months later informs that Edwardes had decided

> "to have the last act strengthened and remodelled, to eliminate practically the sentimental element, and to transfer his merry company bodily to the naughty delights and picturesque accessories of the Paris Exhibition. [...] by this bold course, he has contrived to pack all the sprightliest numbers of the former whole act into one half the space they once occupied, and has so been able to find ample room for a fresh and delightful mélange of song, dance, and spectacle."[603]

These rather drastic measures, which are praised extensively in the article, probably resulted in a renewed interest in *The Messenger Boy* and brought spectators back to the theatre to see the altered production. Although a lot of time, work and money were necessary for the rearrangement, this scheme was probably still less stressful and less risky than the production of a new work from scratch and therefore a brilliant marketing strategy that had already been tried out in former productions, as pointed out in the respective analyses. The remake also included a number that ridiculed the extremely successful double sextette "Tell me, pretty Maiden" from the musical comedy *Florodora*[604]—the spectators probably loved the reference. Furthermore, this is an example of operetta-like self-irony.
*The Messenger Boy* features characters from Egypt, Britain, France and Germany; the first edition is set in London (Act I, Scene I), Brindisi (Act I, Scene II) and at several

[602]"The Playhouses." *The Illustrated London News*, 10 Feb. 1900, p. 177. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1900.
[603]"The Playhouses. 'The Messenger Boys's' Second Edition at the Gaiety." *The Illustrated London News*, 22 Dec. 1900. V&A Archive, THM-LON-GAI 1900. Unfortunately, the newspaper cutting does not include the number of the page.
[604]cf. Gänzl 1986, p. 735.

locations in Egypt (Act II), therefore the production provides ample opportunity to experience and interact with the 'exotic' (or not so 'exotic' European) Other. As Platt has pointed out, especially the French and German characters are ridiculed in order to enhance the superiority of the English characters. This might have been motivated by a displeased society caused by the Second Boer War, which was met with refusal on the continent, the situation might have increased the need for (and popularity of) superior British and inferior continental characters on stage.[605]
Platt calls the opening chorus number an "initial celebration of the British world mission".[606] The setting is a charity bazaar where stall holders try to sell overpriced goods for a beneficial purpose. The vendors interact with the attendees who exclaim their astonishment about the extremely high fees, possibly reflecting the audience's thoughts.
The opening chorus is preceded by the following brief stage directions:[607]

> SCENE. Hotel Cecil. Charity Bazaar in aid of the "Nile" Fund.

The briefness of the stage directions may be due to the fact that Hotel Cecil was a well-known luxurious hotel at the Strand in proximity of the Gaiety Theatre, so the spectators were familiar with the building (at least from the outside). It had opened in 1896, featured 800 rooms, three restaurants and a ballroom called "Palm Court"[608]—in short, it amazed the Londoners not only by its splendour, but also by its sheer magnitude. A setting in a hotel like the Cecil meant not only an opportunity to indulge in the habitual lavish scenery, but to recreate a location on stage which had a special meaning to the audience. To the less affluent, it was a place where they longed to be or were at least curious about, so this visit to the theatre enabled them to catch a glimpse of its opulence; whereas to the well-to-do spectators, Hotel Cecil was like a status symbol and therefore confirmed their way of life (when shown in a favourable light as was the case here). "The Nile Fund is to improve the Nile",[609] as explained (not very helpfully) in a dialogue that follows the opening chorus; but later on the characters on stage and the audience find out that the fund is meant to support the construction of a dam. Charity bazaars were frequently organized by women of the Victorian upper class, so this aspect of the setting falls in the same category as Hotel Cecil: The less affluent's curiosity about upper class

[605] cf. Platt 2004, pp. 63f.
[606] ibid., p. 68.
[607] Murray, Alfred and Tanner, James T. *The Messenger Boy.* LCP 1900/1, p. 3. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.
[608] cf. Oliver Smith: "The fascinating story of London's lost palace of luxury", *The Telegraph*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/united-kingdom/england/london/articles/hotel-cecil-london/, accessed 14.11.2020.
[609] British Library, Lord Chamberlain's Plays, LCP/1900/1, pp. 4ff.

lifestyle is satisfied, while upper class spectators are reassured of their conventions. This is the text of the opening number (excluding most repetitions):[610]

*To the Charity Bazaar,*
*Come and buy! buy! buy!*
*From a shopman to a Czar,*
*Low or high, or high,*
*You'll be smiled upon and petted*
*By a beauty coronetted;*
*It's a Charity Bazaar,*
*That is why! That is why!*

*At the Charity Bazaar*
*Any man, any man*
*Can acquire a crackle jar,*
*Or a fan! Or a fan!*
*Or a titled lady palmist,*
*Will allure the very calmest,*
*At a Charity Bazaar,*
*That's the plan! That's the plan!*

*To our Charity Bazaar,*
*Come and buy! buy! buy!*

*At present we're not very, very clear*
*What all our pretty, pretty show's about;*
*It's understood there's something good*
*The secretary knows about,*
*To feed the blacks with perfect, perfect stacks*
*Of dainties never, never nigger ate.*
*For such an end you'll gladly spend...*
*Five shillings for a cigarette!*
*Five shillings! Five shillings!*
*I'm sure it's cheap enough*
*And... just another half-a-crown*
*to start it with a puff!*

*You drink a cup of coffee, coffee up,*
*And pay an eighteen penny, penny rate;*
*By acts like these the Soudanese,*
*Will soon become regenerate,*
*A decent dress his life, his life will bless,*
*No more, no more he'll bolt his mutton whole;*
*For such an end you'll gladly spend...*
*A guinea for a buttonhole!*
*A guinea! A guinea!*
*The lowest we can quote!*
*And another half-a-guinea,*
*And we'll pin it in your coat!*

*To the Charity Bazaar,*
*Come and buy! buy! buy!*
*From a shopman to a Czar,*
*Low or high, or high,*
*Come and buy!*

The text of the opening chorus emphasizes the purpose of the occasion with several

[610]Murray, Alfred and Tanner, James T. *The Messenger Boy.* LCP 1900/1, pp. 3f. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

repetitions: "Come and buy! buy! buy!", even if the items for sale are ridiculously expensive, as the reactions indicate, and even if "at present we're not very, very clear what all our pretty, pretty show's about". Nevertheless, both vendors and buyers do not hesitate to participate in the charity bazaar and do their best to meet social expectations, which are clearly ridiculed in this number. The lyrics also give the reason for the success of this concept: The vendors are female, pretty and upper class, the buyers are usually male and apparently willing to pay exorbitant prices if they are only "smiled upon and petted".

The initial situation of *The Messenger Boy* includes several popular elements that were featured in the works discussed above as well. First, the charity bazaar is a (somewhat unusual) commercial situation as in *The Shop Girl*. This means that "any man" can approach the women who participate in the bazaar and interact with them in public, providing that he can afford the prices (which most definitely excluded a "shopman"). A situation otherwise frowned upon (social interaction between the sexes (and, theoretically, classes) without being introduced) is acceptable due to the special circumstances. Second, the splendid surroundings have the effect that the atmosphere is reminiscent of a festivity; this supports the aforementioned circumstances. Most likely, Hotel Cecil was *the* place to host a fashionable charity bazaar and sure to attract many wealthy patrons, even if nobody seems to know (or to care) what exactly the "Nile Fund" is. Next, an event of this scale was most likely held in the ballroom, the Palm Court—although the first scene is set in London, there is already a hint of the more 'exotic' settings featured in *The Messenger Boy* that created further interest. This is supported by the lyrics which include words like "Soudanese".

The text contains words that are considered very offensive today, but were common in late Victorian times and reflected colonial ideology. It was intended to emphasize the superiority of British over Sudanese culture, which is meant exemplary for probably any African (or even non-European) culture.

As Table 20 shows, Caryll uses an ABA'-structure for the opening chorus. The short instrumental prelude sets the cheerful mood and creates suspense by mostly scalic movements in semiquavers with a splash of chromaticism ending on a high-pitched trill lasting two bars to announce the entrance of the chorus. Due to the different metre of the lyrics, the first stanza is subdivided into two sections, following the structure of the text (verses 1 - 4 and verses 5 - 8). During the first section, the sopranos and contraltos sing the melody in unison, whereas the tenors and basses sing mostly prime intervals. The simple setting is supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*. The second section is set in four parts and ventures to faraway g♯-minor, as Figure 71 shows.

| section | bars | time | key | instrumentation | function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| part A | 1 - 13 | 2/4 | C - C | orchestra | prelude |
| | 13 - 29 | | C - g♯ | orchestra & SATB | 1st stanza |
| | 29 - 45 | | g♯ - e | orchestra & SATB | 2nd stanza |
| | 45 - 59 | | C - C | orchestra & SATB | reprise 1st stanza, v. 1 |
| part B | 59 - 64 | | E7 - E7 | orchestra | interlude |
| | 65 - 89 | | A - A | orchestra & S(ATB) | 3rd stanza: S solo |
| | 89 - 94 | | E7 - A | orchestra | interlude |
| | 95 - 119 | | A - A | orchestra & S(ATB) | 4th stanza: S solo |
| | 120 - 127 | | (a) - C | orchestra & SATB | reprise 4th stanza, v. 9 - 10 |
| part A' | 127 - 145 | | C - C | orchestra & SATB | reprise 1st stanza, v. 1 - 4 |
| | 145 - 159 | | C - (c) | orchestra | postlude |

Table 20: Structure of *The Messenger Boy*—Opening Chorus

The second stanza is likewise subdivided into two sections. The first section is sung by the female voices in unison; the male voices echo verses 2 and 4, while the female voices hold d♯" or f♯".[611] This rudimentary polyphony creates the impression of a dialogue between women and men as it would happen at the bazaar. The second section is set first in three, then in four parts. In verse 6, the "very calmest" is represented in the music: The rhythm is no longer dotted, and the melody of the female voices is limited to thirds at most (s. Figure 72, although the harmony could be calmer). These slight variations structure the number and make it more interesting for the audience.
Subsequently, the first two verses are repeated, followed by numerous repetitions of the plea "come and buy"—this plea is enhanced by varied musical means: high pitch, rudimentary polyphony, singing in unison (octaves), long note values, playing in thirds and sixths, a scalic movement upwards, droning basses, dynamics (crescendo, *ff*), tremolo, accents and a fermata (s. Figure 73).
This ending is followed by a general pause; part B begins with a short instrumental interlude that introduces the new key, A major, and tempo, *moderato*, and provides the singers opportunity to breathe after their stamina was challenged at the ending of part A. In part B, the female singers take centre stage; sopranos and contraltos sing in unison except for the last three verses of each stanza. As Figure 74 shows, the melody is not easy to sing because of the leaps, but the high-pitched instruments support the singers by playing *colla parte*, while the low-pitched instruments provide the rhythmic and harmonic background. The male singers simply echo the prices given by the female singers

[611] The contraltos sing f♯' instead.

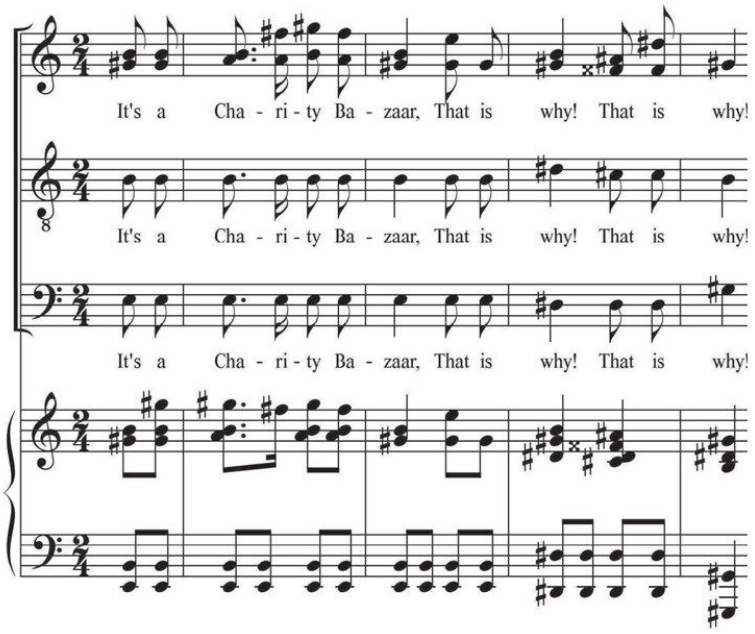


Figure 71: *The Messenger Boy*—Opening Chorus (bars 25 - 29)

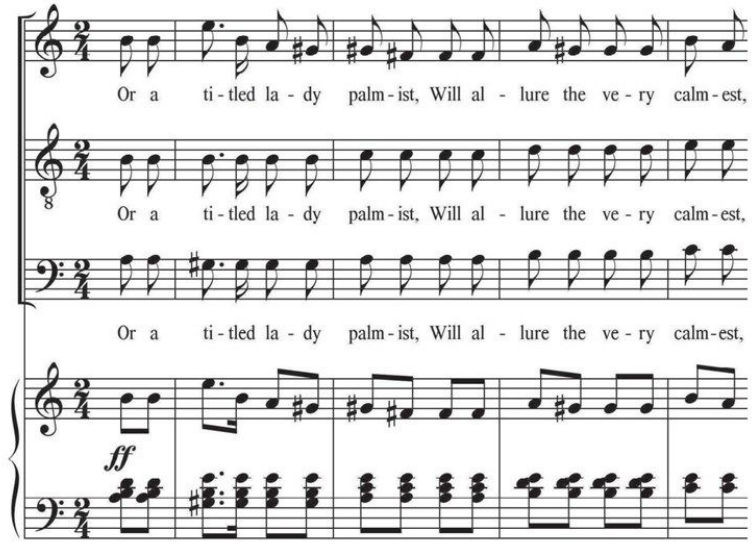


Figure 72: *The Messenger Boy*—Opening Chorus (bars 37 - 41)

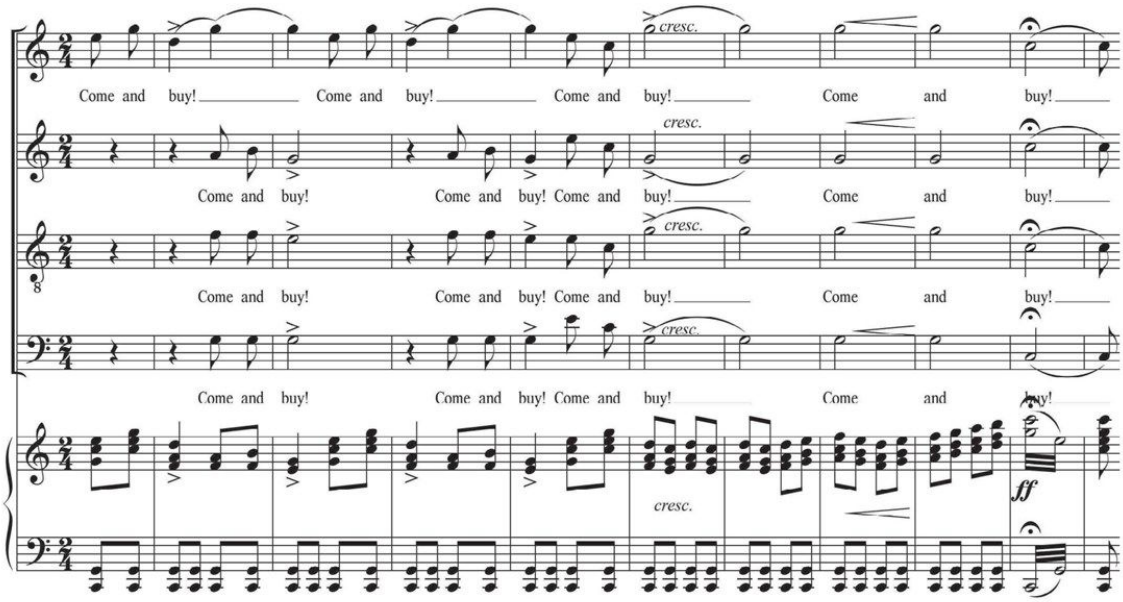


Figure 73: *The Messenger Boy*—Opening Chorus (bars 49 - 58)

in astonishment, causing the female singers to repeat and elaborate. The instrumental interlude between the first and the second stanza is musically identical to the one between parts A and B; the second stanza is musically identical to the first. Part B is concluded by a repetition of verses 9 and 10 in four parts, followed immediately by part A' (s. Table 20).

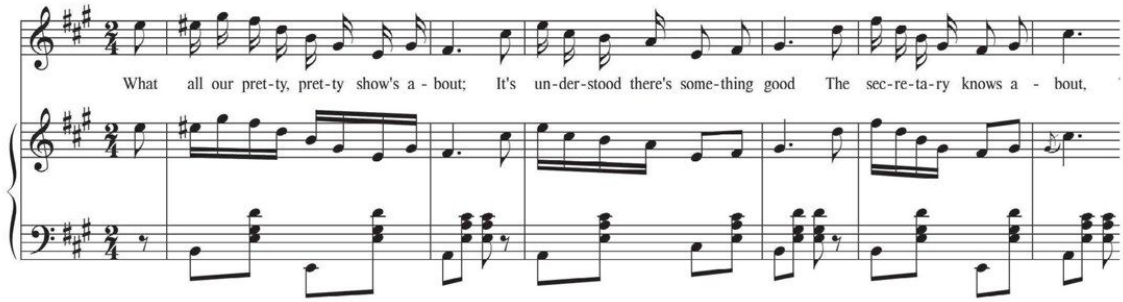


Figure 74: *The Messenger Boy*—Opening Chorus (bars 67 - 72)

Quite unusual for a musical play, the function of this opening chorus is to introduce the initial situation, the charity bazaar, rather than the setting, Hotel Cecil, which is sufficiently represented by its recreation on stage. In contrast to other works, there is no need to introduce the setting in detail in a separate number, because it is not only a British, but specifically a London setting, and therefore the audience was adequately familiar with the location. The number does not introduce any characters, but in *The*

*Messenger Boy*, the plot actually starts directly in the opening number. The confusion about the reason for the bazaar uttered by the choristers is revisited by the characters involved in the following dialogue.

Whereas the parts for the male voices are mostly very easy to sing due to the dominance of prime intervals, the female voices are more demanding, as the analysis has shown, and therefore experienced singers are required. The lyrics are absolutely unproblematic in terms of respectability.

## 4 (Continental) Prototypes

Of course there were continental influences on the development of popular musical theatre in London between 1890 and 1900. The early works of Gilbert and Sullivan were most likely inspired by Offenbach's *opéra bouffe* and the works of his contemporaries and successors like Hervé, Charles Lecocq and Robert Planquette, which were very successful not only in Paris, but in Berlin and London as well.[612] Both Jacques Offenbach's works and contemporary Viennese operettas had been performed in London in the 1860s and 70s, but, as Cannadine summed it up, "the libretti were often poorly translated, the music was badly performed and the tone of the productions was vulgar, slapdash and risqué."[613] Therefore it is interesting to compare the first numbers of popular musical theatre on the continent to those analysed in this study. Naturally, the focus will be on the works that were staged in London as well. In order to understand the British development of popular musical theatre better, the early comic operas by Arthur Sullivan will be taken into consideration as well. Therefore, the following aspects will be considered:

- function of the number—introducing setting, plot and/or characters?
- function of the chorus—group character, living scenery and/or background for a (main) character?
- structure—complex or simple?
- instrumentation—chorus, soloists or both?
- choral setting—complex or simple?
- content—focus on the past, present or future?

[612] cf. Linhardt 2014, p. 49.
[613] Cannadine 1992, p. 14.

## 4.1 British Comic Opera in the 1870s and 80s

*Trial by Jury* (1875) begins with an opening number for chorus and two soloists that is clearly subdivided into three contrasting parts: a section for the chorus, a 'song' for the Usher consisting of three stanzas and a recitative for the Defendant. Furthermore, the sections differ in key, time and/or tempo. The choral setting is quite simple, the sopranos sing the melody accompanied by the other voices, which sing prevalently prime intervals. The choristers represent the people attending the trial as a group character and provide a kind of refrain for the Usher's song by repeating his last two verses, which are the same in each stanza, while he tries to silence them by the exclamation "Silence in court!", and they interact with the Defendant. The number introduces the setting, a British courthouse, and is at the same time the beginning of the plot. The focus is distinctly on the present.

*The Sorcerer* (1877) begins with an opening number for chorus only in an ABA'-structure. The "Chorus of Villagers",[614] thus denominated in the *dramatis personae*, introduces two main characters, Alexis and Aline, by announcing their betrothal; it is rather living scenery than a group character with its own agenda. The choral setting mostly in fifths and sixths in part A is reminiscent of bells ("Ring forth, ye bells"), the choristers sing in unison in part B, when male and female voices almost seem to tumble in the attempt to tell the news first—the setting is not very demanding, but this ensures a good intelligibility of the lyrics. Thus, this opening number also focuses on the present.

*H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) begins with an opening number in ABA'-structure for chorus (male voices only) that explicitly introduces the setting: a ship anchoring at Portsmouth. Again, the choral setting is quite simple, the choristers sing mostly in unison, therefore the lyrics are very intelligible. The chorus also introduces itself as a group character by pointing out their duties and especially their dependability, however, in this number, the chorus is merely living scenery. One of the main character, Ralph Rackstraw, belongs to the same group as the chorus. Again, the number focuses on the present.

*The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) begins with a number for chorus (male voices only) and Samuel, Lieutenant of the Pirate King. The choristers sing in unison all the time and alternate with the soloist in a simple structure as befits the drinking song they sing in honour of Frederic, who is "out of his indentures." Thus, the number introduces the present situation of one of the main characters and the pirate-milieu in which the opera is set. The choristers back up Samuel, who belongs to the same group, as a living part of the scenery.

[614] Bradley 1996, p. 42.

*Patience* (1881) begins with a number denominated *Chorus of Maidens*, obviously for female voices only. This opening number is quite unusual for a comic opera because the maidens represented by the choristers complain bitterly about their situation: unrequited love. Two soloists belonging to the chorus elaborate on their sad fate in two stanzas, the chorus emphasizes their hopeless state by interjecting "Ah, miserie!" [sic!] after each verse. The setting is very simple, the choristers sing in unison or, for a brief passage, in thirds. This accentuates their joint sorrow. The number does not introduce the setting or the plot, it focuses on the present situation of the group character, the lovesick maidens. This exaggerated lamentation is ridiculed later on.

*Iolanthe* (1882) begins with a number denominated *Opening Chorus of Fairies* for female voices only that introduces the fairies as a group character focusing on the present. The number also includes two solos, probably sung by choristers, who each sing a stanza elaborating on the characteristic traits of the fairies. The function of the number is furthermore to introduce the supernatural element of the setting, the chorus is at this moment little more than living scenery and prepares the entry of the fairy queen and Iolanthe following afterwards. This number is longer than the opening choruses of the earlier operas, the structure can be described as ABA'CA". 1st and 2nd sopranos sing mostly in thirds, sixths or in unison.

*Princess Ida* (1884) begins with a chorus number in ABA'-structure also involving a soloist. The number is the beginning of the plot and explains the present situation: The characters on stage are awaiting the return of King Gama and his daughter, Princess Ida, who is betrothed to Hilarion, son of King Hildebrand. Thus, it introduces all the major characters, albeit indirectly. The people represented by the choristers belong to King Hildebrand's court as well as Florian, with whom they interact in this number. For some reason the audience does not know yet, there seems to be some doubt whether Ida will be true to her word, so the atmosphere is not as cheerful as might be expected in a comic opera. The choral setting is quite simple and mostly in two parts or in unison. The chorus emphasizes Florian's insecurity by interjecting "Who can tell?" in response to his questions concerning the future.

*The Mikado* (1885) begins with a short chorus number (male voices only), followed by a short recitative leading to the next number. The number introduces the Japanese setting and emphasizes its Otherness, the choristers represent courtiers as living scenery who prepare the background for Nanki-Poo, the major character who sings the recitative and the subsequent number. The choral setting is simple, at first the choristers sing in unison, only the very last verses are set in four parts.

*Ruddigore* (1887) begins with a number in ABA'-structure denominated *Chorus of Bridesmaids*, obviously for female voices only. The number also involves a solo section which was probably sung by a member of the chorus. The bridesmaids introduce the initial situation: They await the marriage of Rose Maybud, one of the main characters whose beauty they praise, and have therefore dressed up as bridesmaids every day for seven months now. This number is one of the rare exceptions which actually refers to the past, although the focus is clearly on the present. The chorus is set in up to three parts, there are some passages sung in unison as well.
*The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888) does not begin with a chorus number, but with a short song in two stanzas in which Phoebe, one of the main characters, introduces her initial sad situation—her beloved has been sentenced to death. This is another example of a comic opera that does not begin in a cheerful mood.
*The Gondoliers* (1889) begins with a complex and long number consisting of several contrasting parts for chorus and multiple soloists. The number introduces the Venetian setting by including a whole section in Italian. Furthermore, it introduces the two Gondolieri, Marco and Guiseppe, and their brides, Tessa and Fiametta. The male and female choristers form two somewhat opposing groups in this opening number, a feature often found in Savoy opera, but usually not right at the beginning. The female choristers (and Tessa and Fiametta) represent *contadine*, countrywomen, as a group character; the male choristers (and Marco and Guiseppe) play gondoliers who want to marry them. Those group characters interact with the multiple soloists involved in the opening chorus. The number is also the initial situation of the plot, due to its length it is only natural that it combines several functions. The choral setting varies throughout the number, but it is quite demanding for the singer due to the sheer length and the rapid exchange with each other and the soloists.

Interestingly, these opening numbers are quite different from most of the numbers included in this study. With some exceptions, they do not introduce the setting, or at least this is rarely the focus. Only the works with a (more) 'exotic' setting, like *The Mikado* and *The Gondoliers*, put some emphasis on introducing some aspects of the locale. Since considerably more works in the 1890s have an 'exotic' setting, this function is found more often in that decade than before. Most numbers in the earlier works either announce some details about the initial situation or are the beginning of the plot; consequently, this is rarely the case in the later works. Therefore, there has been a distinct shift considering function and content of the opening number in these years, although most of them clearly focus on the present.

Usually, one or more soloists belong to the same group as the group character represented by the choristers. Quite often, this group character introduces itself in the opening number. Solos included in this number are often sung by members of the chorus. In the numbers in which the setting is introduced, the chorus is usually living scenery, although it can evolve into a group character with its own agenda in the course of the work. These aspects have not changed in the later works. There are quite a few numbers in which only one group of the chorus is involved, however, in the earlier works numbers for male voices only are quite as frequent as numbers for female voices only. This is a big difference to the works in the 1890s, which definitely favour opening numbers for female voices only. This is probably due to the immense popularity of the 'chorus girls' in this decade.
Opening numbers in popular musical theatre have become longer and their structure has become increasingly complex; *The Gondoliers* is, albeit quite an extreme example, a forerunner for the works in the 1890s. However, the complexity of the choral setting has not changed much; if anything, it has become more complex because numbers sung by only either the male or the female voices of the chorus were slightly more common in the earlier works—therefore the number of parts was reduced, resulting in a less complex choral setting. However, in all those works the melody is sung by the sopranos, whereas the other voices accompany them frequently sing prime intervals.

## 4.2 French Popular Musical Theatre

### 4.2.1 Jacques Offenbach

Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* were extremely popular on London stages, although they were not as quick to include his works in their repertoire as the theatres in Vienna. But by the early 1870s, there was a regular Offenbach-craze in London. Among the theatres staging Offenbach's works in London the Gaiety Theatre, which Andrew Lamb considered the "natural home" of the *opéras bouffes*, was probably the most important for the British success of the genre.[615] It is especially interesting concerning the development of popular musical theatre that the institution that was considered the "home" of musical comedy in the 1890s had likewise been "home" to Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* 20 years earlier.
The first theatre that D'Oyly Carte had rented to stage the Savoy operas in the 1870s was the Opera Comique. This venue had formerly been another significant theatre for

[615]For a detailed breakdown of the history of Offenbach's success in London, cf. Andrew Lamb: "Offenbach in London", in: *Offenbach und die Schauplätze seines Musiktheaters*, Rainer Franke (ed.), Laaber 1999, pp. 183ff.

*opéras bouffes* in London, for this reason D'Oyly Carte felt he needed to emphasize that the works produced by him were quite different. Although *opéra bouffe* was extremely popular, the genre was always thought of as indecent and therefore its performances could not be attended by people who worried about propriety.[616]

Sullivan's earliest stage works like *Cox and Box* (1866) or *The Contrabandista* (1867) were created to be performed in close proximity to Offenbach's works,[617] implying on the one hand that they were considered to be of a quite similar kind, and on the other that Sullivan was obviously intimately acquainted with Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* because he was able to create works in a related style. Porsch points out that Sullivan did not simply copy Offenbach's style, but adapted it and created his own kind of musical theatre.[618] Gilbert had translated Offenbach's *Les Brigands*, so he was very familiar with the *opéras bouffes* as well.

As well as Sullivan, Jones and Caryll, Offenbach too revised his works after the opening night and adapted them to match the taste of the audience.[619] Another similarity between British popular musical theatre and Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* is the importance of a lavish stage design and splendid costumes, which some considered to be the main attraction.[620] When a new work no longer lived up to Offenbach's (financial) expectations in 1873, he revived his former successes like *Orphée aux enfers* and spend enormous sums on opulent costumes and scenery[621]—the revision of previously popular works was also tried as a last resort at the Savoy Theatre in the 1890s, first when Gilbert and Sullivan had suspended their collaboration and later on when their works were no longer as successful as they used to be, like *The Grand Duke*. However, the investment of huge amounts of money on the staging of a work (and therefore the extreme financial risk) had been customary in the heyday of their success (s. Chapter 2.1), maybe Offenbach set an example in that aspect.

The following brief statements about the opening numbers of Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* will allow a comparison to the works included in this study. Only full-length works[622] beginning with a chorus number that were staged in London will be regarded in order to keep the works comparable. The works will be examined in chronological order, the

[616]cf. Oost 2016, p. 48.
[617]cf. Lamb 1999, p. 191.
[618]cf. Porsch 2002, p. 28.
[619]cf. John Kenrick: "French Operetta. Offenbach and Company", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, p. 23.
[620]cf. Ralf-Olivier Schwarz: *Jacques Offenbach. Ein Europäisches Porträt*, Köln 2019, p. 96, p. 204.
[621]cf. Bernard Grun: *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*, München 1961, pp. 183f.
[622]For Offenbach, this usually means three acts, whereas the British works included in this study consist only of two acts.

determining factor is the date of the debut performance. All of them begin with an overture, followed by the numbers discussed below. A detailed analysis of the opening numbers of Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* would go beyond the scope of this study and is therefore left for future research in this area.

*Orphée aux enfers* (1858) does not begin with a chorus number, although there is a chorus in this *opéra-bouffon*. Instead, the opening number is a *chanson* sung by Eurydice.

*Geneviève de Brabant* (1859/67) begins with a number that is subdivided into a *chœur d'introduction*, followed directly by *couplets de bourguemestre*. Obviously, this is a number consisting of several parts including both chorus and soloists, some of them (in the first part) belonged probably to the chorus. The number does not introduce the setting, but focuses on the initial situation of the plot and the (main) characters involved; so information about place and time were provided otherwise, for example by programmes and libretti, scenery and costumes. The spectators learn that about the present situation of the characters on stage, who are in anticipation of the duke, who is absent for unknown reasons. The *bourguemestre* declares several measures to be taken in the near future. So, quite comparable to the situation of the audience, the characters are focused on the present and the near future; past events that led to the current situation are not taken into consideration. The function of the chorus is to provide a background for several soloists, in addition the choristers portray a group character who interacts with the other characters. Most sections of the opening number are easy to sing, for example the refrain is (with small exceptions in the basses) sung in unison, and the orchestra plays mostly *colla parte*. The sections who are set in four parts contain many prime intervals. However, the interlude to the *couplets* consists of leaps which are quite demanding to sing, especially because of the recently changed key and the sparse instrumental accompaniment. During the *couplets*, the chorus partially echoes the *bourguemestre* and thus confirms his statements.

*Le pont des soupirs* (1861/68) is an extremely interesting case for this study because the overture contains a short section (20 bars) sung by the chorus behind the curtain. The first number, simply denominated *chœur*,[623] repeats this section after a very different instrumental prelude, sung *dans la coulisse*, so the chorus remains hidden. The main content of this very brief section is the beauty of Venice, where the *opéra bouffon* is set, so if it introduces anything at all, it is the setting. Since the chorus is not visible for the spectators, it does not really portray any kind of character(s); it simply supports the atmosphere created by the stage design and by the orchestra in the instrumental

[623] In the second version (1868), the first number includes the *barcarolle* which was listed as the second number in the original version (1861).

sections. The section is set in five parts, the tenors are divided. The sopranos sing the simple melody, supported by the flutes playing *colla parte*, whereas the other voices sing mainly prime intervals—the setting is simple, but effective (s. Figure 75).

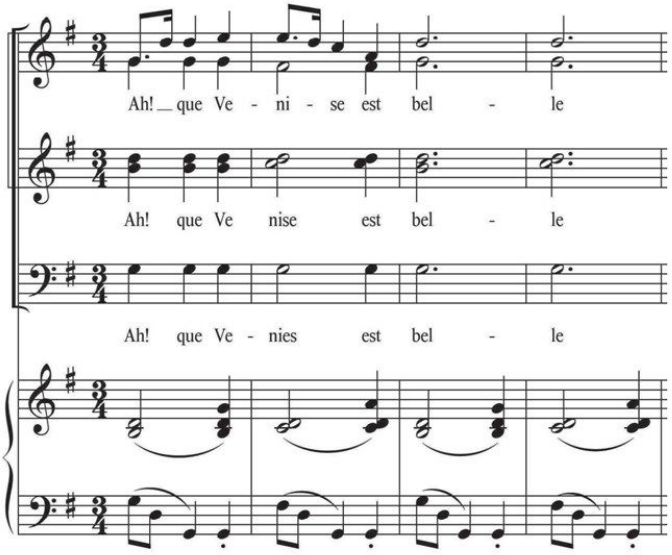


Figure 75: *Le pont des soupirs*—Chœur (bars 11 - 14)

*Bavard et bavarde*[624] or *Les bavards* (1862/63) begins with a number denominated *introduction, chœur et scène*; a number in ABA' structure including the chorus, representing several creditors, and a soloist, representing Roland, who is on the run from them. Actually, despite of the title, this number does not introduce anything, the *opéra bouffe* begins in the thick of the action—the spectators have no idea who the creditors are searching, and why (exactly). Therefore, the focus is strictly on the present. However, the audience is not completely in the dark, the Spanish setting has been musically introduced in the overture, and, furthermore, probably by the stage design. The choristers represent a group character who initiates and dominates the actions taken in this scene. Due to the rapid tempo, the number is quite challenging to sing. This is somewhat absorbed by the orchestra playing *colla parte*, some sections sung in unison and scalic movements, but brief 'contrapuntal' sections and leaps make it a demanding number for the choristers.
The opening *chœur* of *La belle Hélène* (1864) with its soli sung by choristers and its contrasting juxtaposition of a male and a female chorus seems in many aspects like a direct antetype for Sullivan's Savoy operas. The structure is rather complex and consists of several parts, the setting of the chorus is at times polyphonic and usually not

[624] This is the title of the one-act version staged in Bad Ems in 1862, the number regarded here is included in the two-act version staged in Paris in 1863, *Les bavards*.

supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*. By making an offering to Jupiter as a group character, probably in stereotype scenery and costumes, the opening chorus focuses strictly on the present. It introduces the setting rather than the plot, and thus prepares the audience for a work set in ancient times. Later on in this *opéra bouffe*, there are other elements that can also be found in British popular musical theatre; the two most remarkable being the self-referentiality of the chorus when announcing the kings and the seemingly spontaneous relocation of the setting from the palace to the beach in the third act which allowed a whole new scenery and costumes to amaze the audience. Although there is a chorus in *Barbe-bleue* (1866), this *opéra bouffe* does not begin with a chorus number, but with a recitative followed by a short duet.

*La vie parisienne* (1866/67/73) begins with a chorus number in ABA' structure denominated *introduction*. In this number the chorus represents workers of a railway company, they list the multiple stations approached by their trains and their tasks at the company in the manner of a catalogue song, focused on the present. Thus, they introduce the setting of the first act, the *Gare de l'Ouest* in Paris, by recreating the bustling activity of a station on stage. Their enumeration of cities is highly reminiscent of the announcements heard at a station, the monotonous intonation is enhanced by prime intervals, especially in the passage when the cities are listed. The function of the chorus is to create the background for the soloists who enter afterwards. This opening number is quite similar to those of the early musical comedies included in this study: They, too, try to recreate a lively image of the setting, as the analysis has shown. Furthermore, the modern setting (a train station) is another aspect which is characteristic for musical comedy. In addition, there is a section in the finale of the first act where the chorus enumerates the various nationalities of the travellers they are portraying, again similar to a catalogue song.

*La Grande-duchesse de Gérolstein* (1867) begins with a long number consisting of three contrasting parts, denominated *Chœur—Chanson et Valse—Piff, Paff, Pouff*. The first part is a chorus number, whereas the chorus simply supports and enhances the soloists in the refrain of the second and third part. In the first part, the chorus is mainly set in five parts; however, it is not very demanding to sing due to the simple rhythm and great quantities of prime intervals. The function of the number is to introduce the setting, but it also introduces three main characters, Fritz, Wanda and Général Boum in the solo sections. Therefore, the chorus creates the background for the soloists and is basically living scenery. The focus is on the present, although the characters except Général Boum openly admit that they try very hard not to think of the (possibly unpleasant) future.

*La Périchole* (1868) begins with a number denominated *A: chœur de fête. B: chanson des 3 cousines.*; a number in ABA' structure that introduces the setting of the work with

a clear focus on the present, a festivity in Lima, Peru, in honour of the Viceroy's birthday. The orchestra supports the choristers by playing *colla parte* most of the time, and in some sections some parts consist mainly of prime intervals, so the difficulty for the chorus parts varies. The chorus is more or less living scenery and provides the background for the soloists, the three cousins, who each sing their stanza in the *chanson*, introducing their tavern and therefore elaborating the setting further. They are part of the living scenery as well. The number is full of variety, there are homophonic choral sections with up to five parts, imitations, and sections sung in unison—Offebach creates a lively scene which is based on a realistic turbulent celebration.

The *opéra comique Vert-Vert* (1869) does not begin with a chorus number, although the chorus participates in it. The rather long number is subdivided in two parts and denominated *A: introduction et couplets. B: oraison funèbre de Vert-Vert.*; it does not introduce the setting, but begins with a rather strange situation involving two main characters: a funeral for a parrot. Therefore it is the initial point of the plot. The function of the chorus is to support the soloists by joining them in the refrains or echoing them in a very simple setting. The reason for the unusualness of this number is most likely the genre: *Vert-Vert* is not an *opéra bouffe*, but an *opéra comique*, and is therefore part of a different tradition.

*La princesse de Trébizonde* (1869) begins with a chorus number consisting of three contrasting parts, denominated *A: chœur de saltimbanques. B: chœur de la lotterie. C: boniment.* This number introduces the setting, but also some of the characters, and is at the same time the initial point of the plot. The chorus represents several characters, some in small solo parts; its function is both living scenery (as members of the travelling carnival) and interacting group characters, therefore the complexity and difficulty of its setting varies.

*Les brigands* (1869) begins with a long number consisting of several contrasting parts, denominated *introduction. A: chœur des brigands. B: couplets des jeunes filles. C: couplets de Falsacappa. D: strette.* Due to the length of the number, it does not simply introduce the setting, but also some of the characters, and it is even the initial point of the plot. Throughout the number, the degree of involvement of the chorus (and therefore the complexity and difficulty of its setting) varies; however, there is no section that does not involve soloists. The chorus portrays a group character who interacts with the different characters represented by the soloists.

*Le roi Carotte* (1872) begins with a long number for three soloists and chorus in five parts denominated *scène et chœur.* Although there are no clearly marked parts as in, for example, *La princesse de Trébizonde*, the number is nevertheless subdivided into several

sections, distinctly audible by changes in metre, key, instrumentation and/or tempo, like the opening numbers of the musical comedies included in this study. The complexity of the setting ranges from very simple (*unisono*, many prime intervals, orchestra plays *colla parte*) to demanding (polyphony, leaps). The chorus represents several group characters that interact with each other and the characters played by the soloists as a kind of living scenery with a clear focus on the present. The function of the number is to introduce the setting, not the plot or characters.

*La jolie parfumeuse* (1873) begins with a very short chorus number, simply denominated *chœur*, that is to be sung *dans la coulisse*. The opening chorus briefly introduces the initial scene and the main character by stating that this is her wedding. The five-part setting is very simple and includes a lot of prime intervals, but it is sung *a capella* after a short prelude anticipating the beginning of the melody sung by the sopranos. Although the chorus represents a group character, the wedding guests, they are not seen and therefore their (inter)actions are not known to the audience. They provide the background for the soloists by 'illustrating' the wedding vocally.

*Madame l'archiduc* (1874) does not begin with a chorus number, but with a *quatuor bouffe* sung by four soloists.

*Whittington* (London 1874) begins with a very long number denominated *chœur des acheteurs (Shop Chorus)* that involves the chorus and two soloists. Again, there are no clearly marked parts, but the number is nevertheless subdivided into several sections, distinctly audible by changes in metre, key, instrumentation and/or tempo, like the opening numbers of the musical comedies included in this study. Throughout the number, the spectators get to know many characters, furthermore, the setting as well as the initial situation of the plot are introduced. The chorus is living scenery by providing the chatter of potential buyers in a shop and represents a group character by interacting with Fitzwarren, one of the characters; the focus is clearly on the present. The setting in five parts is usually very simple and includes a lot of prime intervals, but also some imitations and short polyphonic sections.

*Le voyage dans la lune* (1875) begins with an opening *chœur* that includes short solos sung by choristers. The mostly simple setting in five parts is not very demanding to sing due to the numerous prime intervals or the setting in thirds, but it introduces and illustrates the festive mood of the initial scene effectively and with a clear focus on the present. The ceremonial atmosphere is further enhanced by a correspondent instrumentation. Therefore, the function of the number is to provide the background for the characters played by the soloists as living scenery.

*La fille du tambour-major* (1879) begins with a number in ABA' structure denominated *A: Chœur des Pensionnaires B: Chanson du Fruit défendu.*—part A is sung by the (female) chorus alone, the stanzas of the chanson are sung by a soloist who is supported by the (female) chorus in some sections. The number introduces the setting of the *opéra comique*, a convent, and its main character, Stella. The female chorus represents a group character, the *pensionnaires*; Stella belongs to that group as well. The choristers prepare the background for the soloist as living scenery in part A, a simple stanza set in two parts reminiscent of a hymn, mostly supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte.* They interact with Stella in the recitative-like interlude (which is as long as the 'hymn') and back up the final lines of her stanzas by singing along with her. Both parts have a clear focus on the present.

As this perfunctory analysis has shown, there is, of course, not just one formula for opening numbers that Offenbach repeated again and again, but a multitude of different approaches. Most of them focus on the present and are not very demanding to sing—they are nevertheless effective, but it is not their musical difficulty that impresses the audience, but their rousing energy. In this respect, some of them are quite similar to the early musical comedies included in this study and might therefore have been influential. However, the function of the opening numbers in Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* is usually not (only) to introduce the setting by a chorus that is deployed as living scenery and conjures up vivid images in the spectators' minds by including many clichés in the lyrics in combination with appropriate costumes and scenery. Instead, many of them rather introduce the (main) characters and the plot; the group character(s) represented by the choristers often take an active part in the initial scene and interact with the characters played by the soloists, who often belong to the same group and are therefore associated with them. The setting in five parts was a French tradition that can be traced back to the music of Jean-Baptiste Lully and Jean-Philippe Rameau as Petra Kindhäuser told me in a conversation; so the French composer usually followed these musical conventions in the 19th century as well.

### 4.2.2 Charles Lecocq and Robert Planquette

The *opéra comique La fille de Madame Angot* by Charles Lecocq (1872) begins with a long number for chorus in five parts and two soloists. It consists of four contrasting parts, denominated *A: Chœur et Scène. B: Couplets de Ponponnet. C: Entrée de la Mariée. D: Romance de Clairette.*—although the work is not an *opéra bouffe*, the opening number is highly reminiscent of the genre. In part A, the chorus introduces the initial situation,

a wedding, rather than the setting. As wedding guests, the choristers represent a group character who provides the background for the soloists, two main characters who each sing their solo section, Ponponnet and Clairette. However, they are both called on stage by the chorus, who almost seems to control the action in this number. Clairette's character and beauty is praised by the chorus in part C, so the chorus does not only prepare her entrance by calling her, but introduces her character beforehand and therefore emphasizes her importance. In both solo sections, the choristers provide a kind of refrain after each of the two solo stanzas; they agree with Ponponnet by repeating his last verses, but they comment Clairette's statements by praising her. After a short dialogue in recitative, part A is revisited. The number has a clear focus on the present; the choral setting is simple as customary (first sopranos sing the melody, many prime intervals in the other parts, setting in thirds, orchestra usually plays *colla parte*). It is quite interesting how the function of the chorus expands during this number: At first, it seems to be merely living scenery, singing and vaguely describing the celebration. Then, it takes control of the action by calling Ponponnet, and, after his *couplets*, even rigorously silence him to prepare the entrance of Clairette, thereby establishing their opinion on the importance of those characters.

The *opéra bouffe Giroflé-Girofla* (1874) also begins with a long number for chorus in five parts and several soloists. Some of them play minor characters and probably belong to the chorus, whereas two of them, Paquita and Bolero, sing a solo section. The number is denominated *A: Chœur. B: Ballade. C: Couplets.*; there are interludes including recitative-like dialogues between the parts. Again, the structure of the opening number is highly reminiscent of *opéra bouffe*.[625] In Paquita's *ballade*, the chorus echoes the final verses of each stanza in affirmation; Bolero's *couplets* are followed by a reprise of the beginning. In part A, the chorus introduces the initial situation—there are preparations for a wedding. However, the festive mood is slightly clouded because pirates pose a threat, especially to young women. Paquita further elaborates the danger in her *ballade*. Ultimately, Bolero expresses his joy about seeing his twin daughters married, while at the same time mocking the behaviour of young women. Therefore, the number is the initial point of the plot as it does not only introduce the initial situation of the wedding (present) but also a possible complication (future). The choral setting is simple as customary; when the chorus is not supported by the orchestra playing *colla parte*, the voices are usually set in unison.

[625] It would be very interesting to examine the differences between both genres (if there are any), but this would go beyond the scope of this study.

The *opéra comique Les cloches de Corneville* by Robert Planquette (1877) begins in the same manner as *Giroflé-Girofla* (chorus in five parts, several soloists). The number is denominated *A: Introduction. B: Couplets des On dit.*, the first verse of the chorus actually is "C'est le marche de Corneville"—the choristers directly state the setting of the initial scene, and by exchanging the latest gossip (part B), they furthermore introduce several characters by talking about their present situations and by pointing out possible future trouble. The lively conversation is depicted by small solos, probably some of them sung by choristers, and interjections by the chorus. Serpolette, one of the main characters, participates in the *couplets*, but she is by no means the dominant party—the (female) choristers quarrel with her until they are silenced by the entry of another soloist, the notary. After his short announcement, part A is briefly reprised. In this number, the chorus is much more than living scenery: Although it provides the background for the soloist, Serpolette, it interacts with her as a group character on a level playing field. In general, the choral setting is simple (many prime intervals, orchestra playing *colla parte*); however, the interjections and repartee make the number quite demanding for the chorus. In two of those non-Offenbach French examples, Lecocq's *La fille de Madame Angot* and Planquette's *Les cloches de Corneville*, the position of the chorus is strikingly powerful, in a manner not encountered before in this study. In all three examples, the opening numbers introduce the initial situation and possible complications rather than the setting, although the settings of all three works would have provided ample opportunity for picturesque illustrations and/or superficial, but widespread clichés. Therefore, in terms of content, the works above are very different from some of the British works analysed in this study. However, the simple choral setting is quite similar, apart from the fact that the French works are usually set in five parts, whereas the British are set in four.

### 4.2.3 André Messager

Shaw was very enthusiastic about André Messagers *opéra comique La Basoche* (1890), which had its London premiere in 1892 at the Royal English Opera House where it followed Sullivan's only attempt at grand opera, *Ivanhoe* (1891). The *opéra comique* was staged right at the time when Savoy opera was struggling. Shaw claims somewhat frustrated that "La Basoche is exactly what Ivanhoe ought to have been", achieving a sort of middle ground, "that happy region which lies between the pity and terror of tragic opera and the licentious stupidity and insincerity of *opera bouffe*."[626]

[626]Shaw 1949a, p. 76.

*La Basoche* begins with a long number for chorus in four parts and several soloists, denominated *Chœur, Chanson et Scène.* The long number is subdivided into several contrasting parts; it does not introduce the setting, but briefly explains the initial situation in a section for chorus (*a Parisian student guild named* "La Basoche" will elect their new king—the information in italics is not explained in the lyrics). Both candidates introduce themselves in a solo section, subsequently a decree is read out loud, followed by a reprise of the chorus section. The number does not really spend a lot of time on explaining anything; but the plot begins directly. Again, the choral setting is not very demanding (often in unison, many prime intervals, the orchestra usually plays *colla parte*), but nevertheless effective and convincing since the choristers represent students expressing their opinion vociferously.

*Mirette* by Messager (1894) is another very interesting work. It had been commissioned by D'Oyly Carte for the Savoy Theatre in an attempt to generate a new success and to find a worthy replacement for Gilbert and Sullivan in case that another quarrel occurred. Shaw claims that both Messager as well as his librettist Albert Carré have been instructed by D'Oyly Carte to create a work as English as possible, and although they included all the elements that were supposed to please an English audience, the result was not convincing.[627] Messager himself was not satisfied with the work and explicitly prohibited a staging in Paris.

The work begins with a number for chorus in four parts and several soloists, denominated *Chorus with Solos (Zerbinette, Francal & Bertuccio).* The number introduces the 'gypsy' setting and some of the minor characters in the typical manner of a British musical comedy: The lyrics are laden with clichés and powerful images. The chorus is mostly living scenery, the soloists belong to the same group as the choristers. Although the number has a clear focus on the present, it also hints at possible future complications: The 'gypsies' see themselves as equal to nobility because they are all "the sons of Adam", and therefore they are (in their opinion) allowed to rob them. Unquestionably, the chorus will become a quite active group character in the later numbers. The choral setting is mostly as described before, however, the included chromaticism and leaps require experienced singers. The opening number definitely includes aspects characteristic for British works, like the chromaticism in the choral setting and the clichés in the lyrics.

[627] cf. Shaw 1949b, pp. 258ff.

### 4.2.4 Edmond Audran

Edmond Audran's *La Poupée* (1896) was popular in London, where it was staged at the Prince of Wales Theatre a year after its Parisian debut performance. Therefore, it is an especially interesting example for this study. The *opéra comique* begins with a long chorus number for two major characters and chorus (male voices only) consisting of several contrasting parts denominated *Chœur des Moines et Rondeau du Novice.* As the title already indicates, there are two main sections in this number; those are further subdivided by the customary changes of key, time and/or instrumentation. The characters represented by the soloists involved in this number, Père Maximin and Lancelot, the Novice, belong to the group character represented by the male choristers, the monks; the function of the chorus is to emphasize the position of the soloists by singing along with them, often in unison. The number introduces the present situation of the characters involved in detail, focusing on their dire financial situation. In the rondeau, Lancelot describes his difficulties in talking to beautiful young women; thus the future romantic entanglements are adumbrated. *La Poupée* is another example of an opening chorus that introduces rather the milieu (a monastery) than the setting; so far, there are no hints of the geographic position. All in all, the number is clearly part of the French tradition.

## 4.3 German-language *Komische Oper* and Viennese Operetta

In the following, the most interesting German-language works have been chosen for a perfunctory analysis, and, subsequently, a comparison to the British works included in this study. Sullivan had spend some time in Germany as a student and was therefore acquainted with the genre *komische Oper*; Lortzing and Cornelius are frequently named as influential for his operas. Silver Age Viennese operetta will not be regarded, because it is an era in the early 20th century and therefore not in the evaluation period. While an analysis of if and how late Victorian popular musical theatre influenced Silver Age operetta would be most interesting, it would go beyond the scope of this study.

### 4.3.1 Komische Oper—Lortzing and Cornelius

The *komische Oper Zar und Zimmermann* (1837) by Albert Lortzing begins with a long chorus number denominated *Introduction*. It consists of several contrasting parts for chorus (male voices only) and the two eponymous major characters. The structural similarity to the British opening numbers, especially those by Sullivan, is striking, as a few short comments will demonstrate: The opening number is preceded by an overture, it begins with a brief instrumental introduction that sets the mood. The number is subdivided into several parts that differ in instrumentation, key, metre and tempo; sometimes Lortzing uses instrumental interludes. In this number, the male choristers represent the carpenters as living scenery, both major characters are part of that group. The carpenters do not interact with the major characters at all, they only introduce the milieu, a carpenter's workshop in a shipyard, not the location in the Netherlands. Furthermore, they back up the major characters by singing along with them. The homophonic choral setting is usually in four parts, considering that there are only male choristers involved, this is rather unusual, and simple as befits singing craftsmen.
*Der Wildschütz* (1842) by the same composer begins with a long chorus number denominated *Introduction*. It consists of several contrasting parts for chorus and two major characters, Baculus and Gretchen, in the same manner as described above. The vocal score specifies the instrumental prelude as a dance. The number does not introduce the setting at all, it is the initial point of the plot. The chorus represents a group character, guests at the espousal of Baculus and Gretchen, who celebrates the couple in a simple four-part setting. After a guest requests a song, all of them invite Baculus to think of a new one right on the spot—they join in at the refrain. Once more, this is an example of a chorus actively shaping its own opening number. The next section introduces a

complication, the poaching mentioned in the title; subsequently, the chorus reprises its celebration from the beginning of the number.
*Der Barbier von Bagdad* (1858) by Peter Cornelius is often referred to as influential for Sullivan's Savoy operas.[628] The work begins with a number for chorus (male voices only) and the major character denominated *Erste Scene*. The structure of the opening chorus is as described in the first example. The chorus is very important in the opening number of *Der Barbier von Bagdad*, it is musically independent and comments Nureddin's daydream about his beloved Margiana as a group character, representing his servants, without echoing his text or melody. Furthermore, it can be (and was probably) used as a kind of living scenery that illustrates the 'oriental' setting with stereotype costumes.
It is very interesting that in all of the examples above major characters participate in the opening number, whereas this is hardly ever the case in the opening numbers of the British works included in this study. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the chorus was one of the main attractions in the British works, whereas the German audiences were mainly focused on the soloists. For more conclusive results, however, a more detailed analysis of much more works would be necessary; obviously this would go beyond the scope of this study.

### 4.3.2 Golden Age Viennese Operetta

According to Baranello, "Viennese operetta, more than its French or English counterparts, was marked by a tension between the demands of high and popular art", resulting in attempts to justify the works by their creators which often enough produced the opposite effect.[629] The distinguishing mark of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was its cultural and ethnic diversity, an endless source of inspiration for both composers and librettists. As Feuerzeig has pointed out, clichés were employed to illustrate cultural discrepancies, but there was always an decidedly Austrian undertone to reassure the audience and to inspire optimism. Another important influence were prior local genres of (musical) entertainment as the *Volkstheater*, which was often created by collaborations between writers and composers. Parodies of existing plays and operas were especially favoured by the audience.[630] Operetta plots almost always followed a predictable and similar pattern—"the

[628] cf. for example Saremba 2009, p. 58.
[629] Micaela K. Baranello: "The Operetta Factory. Producing Systems of Silver-Age Vienna', in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, p. 189.
[630] cf. Lisa Feuerzeig: "Viennese Golden Age Operetta. Drinking, Dancing and Social Criticism in a Multi-Ethnic Empire", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B.

authors' skill was demonstrated in the use and development of these conventions", not in coming up with something radically new and different.[631] Baranello mentions that fashion and (women's) costumes were commented in Viennese newspapers, but this aspect seems to have been less important than it was in London. Staging an operetta became a more and more hazardous venture in the 1920s due to higher expectations concerning scenery and costumes, making a long run and additional sources of income like tours and sheet music sales a necessity. Prompt books including extensive comments to reproduce the original stage productions were also available, but apparently rarely used,[632] very different to the approach of the Savoy Opera Company, which insisted upon meticulous recreations of the original stage productions.

Interestingly, the state of affairs was otherwise pretty similar in the British Empire: The cultural and ethnic diversity of the colonies peaked the Victorian society's interest, as the popularity of 'exotic' settings shows. However, the Austro-Hungarian Empire made an effort to create a sense of unity and equality between all its inhabitants, whereas the British (or maybe one can even say English) superiority over the colonies was hardly ever questioned (at least not by the British/English side); the structure of the empires was decidedly different. Both attitudes are reflected on the popular musical theatre stage. Parodies were equally successful and influential in London, as the countless productions of works like *Faust up to Date* show. The analysis of the British works has revealed that clichés were likewise effective means to depict foreign cultures; at the same time, the works promoted the notion of British superiority. Many musical comedies followed a similar story line (s. Chapter 2.2); Cinderella-plots were especially popular. The financial situation described by Baranello for the 1920s equals the late 1890s in London, where audiences were used to sumptuous stage productions as early as the 1880s Savoy operas; the shabbiness of the contemporary Viennese works in terms of scenery and costumes is often commented with great astonishment by theatre managers or performers who visited a production in the Austrian capital.

Whereas the works composed in the Golden age were staged in London in the 1870s and 80s and therefore probably were one of several inspiring aspects for the English Savoy operas and musical comedies, Linhardt points out that the second period of Viennese operetta was influenced especially by musical comedy,[633] which was extremely popular in Vienna at that time (for example Sidney Jones's *The Geisha* (1896)); so the influencing worked the other way round at the turn of the century. Comparable to proceedings

Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, pp. 33ff.

[631] Baranello 2020, p. 194.

[632] cf. ibid., pp. 196ff.

[633] cf. Linhardt 2014, p. 54.

in London, the creation and staging of operettas "had developed into an industry with its own economy and division of labour" around 1900.[634] Since the exchange of artists and works throughout the continent prospered, strategies concerning the most efficient workflow in the theatre were probably also discussed among those involved in the process.

In the following, some examples have been selected for a brief analysis similar to those in the previous chapters to be able to draw comparisons. All of these opening numbers are preceded by overtures. It is sometimes hard to say anything concrete about both structure and content because there usually are numerous revised versions and adaptations of the score and the libretto, so the statements here are even more perfunctory than in the previous chapter. However, it is possible to get a general idea of the operettas.

*Die schöne Galathée* (1865) by Franz von Suppé begins with a short number denominated *Introduction* consisting of a section for chorus followed by a solo section. The choral section is set in four to five parts; the female voices sing the melody in unison or in thirds or sixths accompanied by the humming male voices. The number introduces the antique setting by including the names of Greek goddesses and gods in the lyrics and by describing a ritual in praise of Venus—actually, the soloist sends the chorus to perform said ritual without him, reducing it to living scenery. Thus, the number focuses on the present and the near future.

*Indigo und die 40 Räuber* (1871) by Johann Strauss begins with an opening chorus denominated *Introduction. Chœur de Bayadères.* It focuses on the present and introduces the setting, an idyllic and 'exotic' island, as well as the initial situation of the characters represented by the chorus, who are members of a harem. Thus, the first number includes two popular elements that were also featured frequently in the British works of this study: an 'exotic' setting and an all female chorus. The voices are sometimes set in unison, sometimes in two parts; the number also includes small solos that were probably sung by choristers. The choral setting is, although only in two parts, quite intricate for the genre.

*Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss (1874) does not begin with a chorus number; in fact, the chorus does not appear at all in the first act.

*Fatinitza* (1876) by Franz von Suppé begins with a number denominated *Introduction* involving a soloist and the chorus focusing on the present. The number introduces the setting, a Russian military camp in winter, by including many military terms in the lyrics. The Russian element is featured by pointing out that Russians like the cold; however, they are freezing as the *glissandi* on "brrrr" demonstrate verbally and musically.

[634]Baranello 2020, p. 189, cf. Baranello's complete article for more particulars about the process.

The chorus represents a group character, the cadets, who make fun of the guard and overpower him in a snowball fight. The number is constructed more like a duet than a chorus number, the chorus sings in unison most of the time. The 'battle' is illustrated musically: Soloist and chorus alternate sometimes after each note or sing different texts simultaneously; so despite the very simple setting, the number is quite demanding to sing for the choristers.

*Boccaccio* (1879) by Franz von Suppé begins with a long chorus number denominated *Introduction* focusing on the present. It consists of several contrasting parts: Small solo sections for two of the characters with choral interjections sung behind the scenery, a mainly homophonic section for chorus in a simple four-part-setting with a short passage in which a second chorus, representing different characters, revisits the first section, another solo section, and the final section is sung by all choristers and soloists together. In fact, the number and especially the end of the number is highly reminiscent of finales because of the culmination in the last section. The number does not introduce the setting (Florence), but rather the initial situation (a local festivity). In addition, it introduces one of the main plot elements: A student is on his way to his beloved, a married woman cheating on her husband. The chorus mostly represents celebrating citizens and is therefore used as living scenery.

*Der Bettelstudent* (1882) by Carl Millöcker begins with a chorus number denominated *Introduction* focusing on the present. It consists of three contrasting parts for chorus and three soloists representing minor characters. In the first part, the group character represented by the female choristers describes its initial situation: The women demand to see their husbands, who are imprisoned at the moment. In the second part, they negotiate with Enterich, the prison guard; in the third part, the wives and husbands enjoy their temporary reunion, while the prison guards enjoy the confiscated wine and food. The function of the number is not to introduce the setting, but the initial situation and some minor characters; the number is part of the plot which begins directly. The choral setting is of varied difficulty, it ranges from homophonic or even *unisono* sections to polyphonic imitations.

*Eine Nacht in Venedig* (1883) by Johann Strauss begins with a long chorus number denominated *Introduction* consisting of several contrasting parts—a homophonic chorus in four parts, small solos for minor roles probably sung by choristers as well, and subsequently a song in which one of the major characters, Pappacoda, introduces himself, his last verse is echoed by the chorus. The function of the number is to introduce the setting, Venice, the chorus is used as living scenery. The lyrics contain many clichés and key words like "Lido", "Kanal", "Gondel", and the names of famous sights to create a vivid

image in the spectators' minds. This number is very similar to the opening numbers of British musical comedy, which usually focus on introducing the setting by using clichés and key words.

*Gasparone* (1884) by Carl Millöcker begins with a chorus number without any designation, although most productions begin with a solo number instead. The long number consists of several contrasting parts for chorus and two soloists; it does not introduce the (local) setting, but the milieu (smugglers) and is furthermore the beginning of a subplot. The chorus represents the smugglers as a group character that interacts with the soloists representing Massaccio and Benozzo, who are part of the group or associated with it respectively. The mainly homophonic choral setting is demanding concerning the pronunciation due to passages with rests between each note, but otherwise rather simple.

*Der Zigeunerbaron* (1885) by Johann Strauss begins with an opening chorus denominated *Introduction* in ABA'-structure. Part A is sung by the chorus as living scenery and compares a "Kahn auf schwankender Bahn" with love resulting in marriage, emphasizing the importance of trust. Of course the operetta features several couples that have to overcome many obstacles before they can be united in marriage, so this part can be seen as a foreshadowing of the end of the operetta, or even as the quintessence of the genre in general. The basses sing short interjections suitable to the "Schifferknechte" the chorus represents, whereas the other voices sing a melody that is reminiscent of a folk song in unison. Part B introduces an element of the plot, the search for a long-lost treasure. Interestingly, this number does not introduce the setting at all, but the general issue and a detail concerning the plot. In the dialogue during the instrumental interlude between parts B and A', the initial situation and the characters involved are explained.

*Der Vogelhändler* (1891) by Carl Zeller begins with an opening number denominated *Introduction* focusing on the present. It consists of several contrasting parts—a homophonic chorus section in five parts in aba'-structure with small solos for choristers in part b, followed by a short recitative-like section for soloist and chorus, and a song for another soloist in two stanzas, each followed by a short dialogue-like section involving both soloists and the chorus. The number is not really an introduction, but rather the beginning of the plot; it explains the initial conflict between the rural population and the authorities and its solution—bribery. The chorus represents the population as a group character that interacts with the mayor and backs him up in the conflict with the baron. The choral setting is quite varied and ranges from *unisono* to more intricate passages: The four lower voices provide the harmonic background in a homorhythmic setting consisting mainly of prime intervals, whereas the sopranos sing the melody slightly rhythmically shifted. Therefore the number is quite demanding for the choristers.

*Der Obersteiger* (1894) by Carl Zeller begins with an opening chorus denominated *Introduction* focusing on the present. It consists of three main parts, a chorus section and two sections for two soloists and chorus. The chorus section is at times rather demanding; the male voices (divided in four parts) imitate the female voices (three parts). The first part of the number introduces the initial situation rather than the setting and focuses on local problems in an urgency quite unusual for operetta: "Man möchte wohl verzweifeln hier, vergnügt ist Niemand hier". Subsequently, the plot is set in motion by the arrival of a guest. The number also introduces the two characters involved as well as the eponymous "Obersteiger", who is referred to in the second part. The chorus represents a group character, the local population, who interacts with both characters involved: Strobel, the innkeeper, is treated with familiarity because he is a part of the same group, whereas the villagers and Strobel treat the unknown guest with the utmost respect.
*Der Opernball* (1898) by Richard Heuberger does not begin with a chorus number, but with a duet.
Similar to the situation in France and Britain, there is not just one formula for the construction of an opening chorus—this is hardly surprising considering the rather long period of time covered by the examples: 30 years. Some of the works are especially close to musical comedy, like *Indigo und die 40 Räuber* and *Eine Nacht in Venedig*; others are completely different and are the initial point of the plot rather than an introduction. This option seems to be more common in Golden Age Viennese operetta than in Savoy opera or musical comedy.

## 4.4 American Musical Comedy

American musical comedy is a genre that became an increasingly important influence on British composers in the beginning of the 20th century. However, in the 1890s, genuinely American musical comedy was still in its infancy, and there were only very few works that were perceived as a success in London and which are therefore interesting for this study. On that account this chapter will be very brief. On the other hand, British works, Savoy operas and musical comedies alike, were usually quite successful in Broadway theatres and hence influential in the development of a typically American form of popular musical theatre. Apparently many American spectators set great value on entertainment that was respectable and for that reason preferred Savoy opera to more suggestive forms of musical theatre, including Offenbach's *opéras bouffes*.[635]

[635]cf. Katherine K. Preston: "American Musical Theatre before the Twentieth Century", in: *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (eds.), Cambridge [3]2017,

Broadway productions transferred to West End theatres were usually not very successful in comparison to British works in the 1890s. There was, however, one exception: Gustave Kerker's *The Belle of New York*, which Knapp describes as "a kind of middle-ground between the London and Viennese types".[636] The musical comedy premiered in 1897 at the Casino Theatre in New York with a subsequent run of only 56 performances. It was the original ensemble that presented the work a year later at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London, where it ran for 697 performances during the next two years.[637] Gänzl describes the reason for its success in London as follows:

> "Its most obvious advantages were twofold and both feminine. In the role of Violet [...] was featured a young American performer called Edna May and with her the London public fell wholeheartedly in love. They also fell for the Casino Theatre chorus line, a collection of buxom, bouncing and vigorous young women as different as could be form the superior and elegant 'girls' of the Gaiety or of Daly's. These transatlantic girls, bursting with obvious health, didn't stroll, pose and daintily step, they worked, and London flocked to see them fling themselves into the vigorous routines of the American light musical theatre."[638]

This assessment is further evidence of the importance of the performers, and especially the female performers, for the success of a work. Gänzl mentions neither music nor libretto, which were obviously inconsequential in comparison. The review published in *The Times* has the same focus, but briefly describes the other aspects as follows:

> "In point of construction *The Belle of New York* is built on a less regular plan than our latest types of of musical comedy. It approximates more closely to the go-as-you-please class of burlesque elaborated some years ago [...] In short, *The Belle of New York* is a highly entertaining *olla podrida* which ought to be relished by a public enamoured of 'musical comedy' and burlesque. It contains all the popular elements of this class of performance, including a considerable sprinkling of ballet. The 'book' is an ingenious compilation to which no sort of episode or interlude comes amiss [...] Mr. Kerker's score is lively, if not marked by much originality [...]"[639]

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p. 43.

[636] Raymond Knapp: "Camping along the American Operetta Divide (on the Road to the Musical Play)", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Operetta*, Anastasia Belina and Derek B. Scott (eds.), Cambridge 2020, p. 126.

[637] cf. Gänzl 1986, pp. 662f.

[638] ibid., pp. 662f.

[639] "Shaftesbury Theatre." *The Times*, 13 Apr. 1898, p. 4. The Times Digital Archive, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS68477581/TTDA?u=suf&sid=TTDA&xid=510b3977. Accessed 19 Oct. 2020

It is particularly interesting that the work was an enormous success despite an old-fashioned structure and its mediocre music, although the last aspect was also frequently criticized in British musical comedies.

The first number of *The Belle of New York* is constructed in a very similar manner as the opening numbers of British musical comedies. Of quite considerable length, *Introduction & Opening Chorus—"When a Man is Twenty One"* consists of several contrasting parts involving the chorus and a soloist representing Harry Bronson, the romantic lead. As customary, a new part is distinctly made audible by changes in key, time signature, and/or tempo. The number does not introduce the setting at all, but focuses on introducing the main character, who is obviously a carefree and hedonistic young man man-about-town—and to be married later that day. The male choristers prepare his entrance by singing about the joyous life led by young men mostly in unison; these lyrics probably conjured up fond memories in every male spectator who did no longer belong to that group. Later, the male choristers back up the soloist by repeating words or whole verses. The female choristers, on the other hand, enter as housemaids to chide "naughty Mister Bronson" in unison, later joined by the male chorus in a setting in four parts. The following section is a variation of "And he's a jolly good fellow" in up to four parts with a focus on Harry's alcohol use; the number ends with a short reprise of the section sung mainly by the protagonist (also focusing on his alcohol use).

But while the structure of the number and the juxtaposition of the male and female choristers are quite similar to British musical comedy or Savoy opera respectively, it is quite obvious that the content of the lyrics is not even close to be possible in a respectable form of entertainment as aimed for at the Savoy, the Gaiety and Daly's Theatre. Furthermore, the 'interludes' between the different sections do not segue from one section into another, but mostly just abruptly change into another style. Judging from the first number only, the popularity of *The Belle of New York* cannot be explained by its score, and it also aimed for a very different target audience.

# 5 Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to return to square one and revisit the question raised at the beginning of this study: How does popular musical theatre in late Victorian Britain begin? What exactly happens, when the curtain rises, and who is (not) involved?
Of course, there is no simple answer to these questions. Despite their similarities, the analysed works deal with many contemporaneous issues, are set in various locations, and even belong to slightly different genres. Although the audience arguably wanted to see productions that were very similar to their favourites and therefore exactly suited to their taste, too blatant repetitions would most definitely not have been appreciated, and so the creators—performers, librettist, lyricist, composer, stage manager, costume and stage designers, to name only the most important—had to walk a fine line between new and old, if they wanted their work to be successful. This contrast between new and old is actually one of the main issues addressed in popular musical comedy, as will be discussed later on—for while there is no simple answer, there clearly are certain tendencies as a result of the analyses.
The first observation might seem trivial, but is nevertheless very important: All works included in this study begin with a chorus number, and the common term 'opening chorus' used in contemporary reviews and suchlike is evidence that it seemed almost unthinkable to begin popular musical theatre with a number that was *not* a chorus number. Chapter 4 shows that this is not a specifically British phenomenon: There are only very few works of popular musical theatre included in that chapter which do not begin with a chorus number. This raises the first question that will have to be adjourned to future studies: Is the beginning with a chorus number specifically linked to the comic genre? Therefore, a survey of earlier (for example Rossini's *opere buffe* or Auber's *opéras comiques*) and posterior works (for example Silver Age Viennese operetta or the development of the musical (comedy) in the 20th and 21th century) seems to be necessary, as well as analogues studies concerning *opere serie* and the succeeding genres.
Subsequently, the focus will be on the content of the opening numbers. The assumption that it is necessary to introduce the plot by familiarising the audience with the initial situation in detail, especially if the plot is as complicated as customary for the comic genre, seems to be natural. However, when analysing the opening numbers, it became more and more apparent that actually not very many fulfil that function. In the following, it will be reflected if there is a connection between an introduction of the plot in the first number and the genre of the work. Furthermore, it will be regarded how exactly the plot is introduced in these numbers. Following this, the other works will be taken into

consideration. If their first numbers do not introduce the plot—which was not urgently required because the audience could consult the programme or the libretto, or had read about the plot in the review—what else do they deal with? Finally, a comparison with the works included in chapter 4 seems to be in order.

Almost half of the works *do* introduce the plot in the first number, but in varying degrees of information density. Some works only hint at the plot in the opening chorus, like the comic opera *The Grand Duke*. The number focuses on introducing the initial situation, a wedding, and the relationship of the characters involved in detail; this will be the catalyst for the conspiracy that makes up the main plot, but so far, the audience does not learn anything about that—in fact, the eponymous Grand Duke is not even mentioned. The musical comedy *A Greek Slave* focuses on introducing the setting, but includes a reference to the main element of the plot in the opening chorus: Influential people have their fortunes told by Heliodorus, who is presented as the antagonist. However, the emphasis of this opening chorus is not to introduce the plot, but the setting of the work.

In other works, the first number relates the background as a kind of prologue: In the comic opera *The Mountebanks*, a member of the Tamorras explains why they decided to form the secret society around which the plot revolves, whereas in *Morocco Bound* the audience is informed that Mokeleigh Hall, the "stately home" in which the musical farcical comedy is set, has recently been bought by "a former coster".[640] Thus, the number adumbrates a conflict resulting from the extreme social climbing of the newly made squire, who is probably utterly unfamiliar with the many (unwritten) laws and customs of high society. These two works are the only ones with a significant time reference to past events; most of the works mainly focus on the present or the near future.

The light English opera *Haddon Hall*, the comic operas *His Excellency*, *The Chieftain* and *The Rose of Persia*, the romantic comic opera *Shamus O'Brien* and the musical play *The Messenger Boy* all concentrate on the initial situation of the plot in the first number. This summary indicates that there is indeed a connection between an introduction of the plot in the opening chorus and the genre of the work: Whereas there is only one comic opera that does *not* introduce the plot at all (*Utopia Limited*), there are only a few musical comedies (and plays) that actually do so; and those tend to have a lower degree of information density concerning the plot, because the focus lies on introducing the setting instead.

How do the works focusing on the initial situation introduce the plot? *Haddon Hall* has an extended and complex introduction consisting of several numbers and parts, as the anal-

[640] Branscombe, Arthur. *Morocco Bound*. ADD MS 53523 E, pp. 3f. Lord Chamberlain's Plays, British Library.

ysis has shown. Fist, it introduces the setting (the location, England, but the emphasis is on the milieu, landed gentry) in a separate number. Subsequently, the current cheerful situation is introduced—a wedding is expected to take place soon. However, immediately afterwards, one of the main characters addresses a complication that puts a damper on the merry spirit induced by the pleasant anticipation of the festivity to come. In the following, Dorothy, the bride, her parents and their situation are introduced—naturally, Dorothy is the centre of attention on her wedding day. The madrigal concluding the first number revisits the calm and elevated picture painted in the introduction; this part does not contain any information of the plot.

The beginning of *His Excellency* is quite similar in length and complexity. First, a festivity in honour of the "Sculptor to the Court of Denmark"[641] takes place on stage and introduces the setting (the location, Denmark, is only introduced very indirectly; the focus is on the milieu—a combination of small-town atmosphere and a courtly setting with its dignitaries) as well as the characters involved in the festivity. Subsequently, another character, Christina, introduces herself and confides her infatuation with the regent (or rather with the celebrated statue of the regent) to Erling, the sculptor—this is another element of the plot.

The beginning of *The Chieftain* is the most action-packed of the works included in this study. Without any explanation of the background, a quarrel that almost leads to a knife combat breaks out. Thus, the number introduces the setting with a clear focus on the milieu, a camp of brigands, whereas the location is only adumbrated. Furthermore, one of the main characters is introduced by ending this conflict.

*The Rose of Persia* likewise focuses on the introduction of the milieu, a Persian household consisting of many women and only one man, rather than the actual location. The conflict is addressed directly by broaching the abnormal behaviour of one of the main characters, who subsequently characterizes himself and his attitude to life in a song.

In *Shamus O'Brien*, the conflict and the detailed indirect introduction of the eponymous protagonist are the main issue addressed by the group character represented by the choristers and a main character in the opening number. This combination is only natural since the conflict revolves around Shamus's past as a rebel. Furthermore, the number introduces the rural Irish setting and the village priest as a local authority.

The opening number of *The Messenger Boy* is a vivid illustration of a charity bazaar. Thus, it focuses on introducing the milieu, London's high society, and only adumbrates the location. The purpose of the bazaar, which is currently unknown to audience and group character involved alike, is a main element of the plot. This number is the only

[641] Gilbert, William Schwenck. *His Excellency.* https://gsarchive.net/gilbert/plays/excellency/his_excellency.html

one introducing the initial situation, but no characters at all—this is probably due to the fact that the work is a musical play, not a comic opera.

Interestingly, all of the aforementioned numbers focus on introducing the milieu rather than the location of the setting, although some of them, like *The Chieftain* or *The Rose of Persia*, have a rather 'exotic' locale. The emphasis of these works, which are mainly comic operas, is on the plot and the characters involved, the location seems to be of minor importance insofar as it is not significant for the plot.

In contrast, the focus of musical comedies (and plays) is usually on introducing the location rather than the milieu of the setting. This is the case in *The Geisha*, *The Circus Girl*, *San Toy*, *Florodora* and *Utopia Limited*; the latter is a comic opera and therefore an exception to the rule. This does not mean that the first numbers of these works do not introduce the milieu at all; in fact, it is hard to decide in which category *The Circus Girl* falls, but the focal point is on the location. Some of the other musical comedies, *A Gaiety Girl* and *The Shop Girl*, are set in London, which makes an introduction of the location unnecessary because the audience was intimately familiar with it, and therefore the opening numbers of these works focus on introducing the milieus instead: military barracks and a department store respectively. *An Artist's Model* also focuses on introducing the milieu rather than the location, however, similar to *The Circus Girl*, both are amalgamated in the Parisian art scene that is illustrated. Interestingly, both cases which are hard to decide have a French setting, which is most likely merely a coincidence. *A Runaway Girl* is the odd one out—although the first part of the work is set in Corsica, which definitely qualifies as an 'exotic' location, the emphasis of the opening number is on introducing the milieu, an all-female boarding school; the location is only roughly characterized as Mediterranean. None of the works mentioned in this paragraph introduce any major characters in the opening chorus, but some of them feature some small solos that were probably sung by choristers. Therefore, the opening chorus of a musical comedy usually has a monologic structure, whereas dialogic elements are typical for opening numbers of comic operas. Since the first numbers in musical comedies only introduce the setting it is obvious that the exposition of musical comedies comprises at least the opening chorus and the following dialogue, if not one or more of the following numbers. Analysing and comparing the beginnings of (popular) musical theatre beyond the first numbers and thus learning more about the structure of the expositions of these works is another interesting task that has to be adjourned to future studies.

As pointed out above, the same applies to Sullivan's earlier comic operas: Only those with a more 'exotic' location, like *The Mikado*, include an introduction that makes allowances for the locale of the plot. However, in the 1890s, the only comic opera for which this

pertains is *Utopia Limited*, whereas the others focus on the plot notwithstanding their locale. Arguably, there has been a shift of focus. In Offenbach's *opéras bouffes* and the other French examples, the same tendencies as in 1890s comic opera can be observed: Many of the first numbers introduce the plot and furthermore some of the characters involved. In Golden Age Viennese operetta, however, there are examples of both kinds: Some works begin with a first number that introduces the setting with a focus on representing an 'exotic' location as in musical comedy, whereas others have opening numbers that are closer to comic opera with a clear emphasis on the plot and the characters.
Another interesting aspect connected to the plot is the significance of the libretto for the success of a work, or, to be more precise, of a *good* libretto, whatever that is supposed to mean. It is fascinating to read how contemporary critics assessed the libretti, and how many lines of the review were usually devoted to dialogue and lyrics in contrast to the music, which was mostly treated very briefly and the remarks typically revolved around how the music suited the performers. Critics were quick to blame the libretto whenever a work was not successful, some reviews even create the impression that the score was almost irrelevant for the success of a work. Libretto research is still a relatively new field of research, so naturally there is much and more work to be done in that area.
As pointed out on various occasions throughout chapter 3, the contrast (and conflict) between traditional and modern ways of life are a very important issue that was addressed in many works. This is evidence of the ambivalent attitude towards modernity most late Victorians felt: On the one hand, they were excited about the new possibilities resulting from new inventions that led to significant changes in sectors like transport, communication and commerce, to name only a few. These changes had a distinctly discernible impact on their daily routines and were therefore highly relevant for almost everyone. On the other hand, many Victorians were sceptical or downright frightened of a rapidly changing world that might solve some problems, but simultaneously led to many new issues that had to be dealt with.
The traditional social system was also affected by many changes. Two of the most significant were the emergence of new job opportunities for men and women at shops or in offices which had no place in the class system, resulting in thousands of people who found themselves in a position that was somewhere in between; and rising insecurities and public awareness of possible trouble concerning the future of colonialism and the British Empire in its current form. Many Victorians felt overwhelmed and threatened by these developments. Especially musical comedy, but also comic opera addressed these issues in various ways and thus helped the spectators in dealing with this new world and finding their position in a changed society. Therefore the genre was an important

contribution in the development of a modern and specifically urban identity. Naturally, people also longed for a few hours during which they could forget their problems and the feeling that they did not belong anywhere—not only did the theatres provide entertainment and thus a way to escape the often unkind reality, they also managed to create a place where the audience felt welcome, understood and almost at home. Another effect of all these changes was a wave of nostalgia and sentimentality concerning the idealized good old days and rural life. By including certain plot elements, many of the works in chapter 3 also fulfilled this need. Popular musical theatre arguably offered reassurance, sympathy and guidance for an audience that felt increasingly disoriented ant threatened by an ever-changing world.

The function of the chorus is another key element of this study. Does the genre of the work have any influence on how its creators used the chorus in the opening number, on if and how the choristers interacted with each other and/or with soloists? While there is no definite answer, there is a clear tendency as a result from the analyses: In all of the British musical comedies and plays, the main function of the chorus is to enhance the impression created by costumes and stage design as a kind of living scenery. The chorus was supported by background actors, for example by the so-called 'show girls' described in chapter 2.2. All of these numbers are very striking, they resemble a brightly coloured poster depicting the setting of the work. Maybe there is a parallel to Art Nouveau posters which were among other things employed to advertise them.[642] Those posters were used to draw the audience's attention outside of the theatre, while the overture and first number do the same within the theatre. The term 'spectacle', which was sometimes applied to the (opening number of) early musical comedies in the 1890s, seems appropriate for some of the works discussed here, especially for *The Geisha* and *San Toy*—the main goal was to entertain and impress the audience with an opulent scenography enlivened by beautiful performers clad in lavish costumes including sparkling jewellery.

In the comic operas, on the other hand, the choristers usually represent a group character that interacts on a level playing field with the (major) characters involved in the first number. However, there is a greater variety in comparison with the musical comedies and plays which all use the chorus in a similar way—this is not the case in the analysed comic operas. In *Utopia Limited*, the comic opera which resembles musical comedy/play with regard to content as pointed out above, the chorus is also used as living scenery in the first number. In *Haddon Hall* and *His Excellency*, the chorus is likewise little more than living scenery, but these works both feature (major) characters that are the centre of attention in the opening number.

[642] cf. Bailey 1996, pp. 52f.

In the considered French works, the function of the chorus is similar to that which can be observed in British comic opera in the 1890s—with few exceptions, the choristers represent a group character, and the opening number features interaction between the chorus and one or several soloists. The German-language works included in chapter 4.3 exhibit both functions, living scenery (usually without any soloists involved) and group character (usually in interaction with soloists); as do Sullivan's earlier works. There seems to be a connection between the function of the chorus and the participation of soloists—further studies are necessary to survey whether this is also true for chorus numbers in another position than the beginning of a work, in other periods of time and/or other genres than popular musical theatre. Additionally, it would be worthwhile to examine if and how the function of the chorus changes throughout a work, and if there are different tendencies in musical comedy and comic opera.

Interestingly, there do not seem to be significant differences between comic opera and musical comedy/play concerning the structure of the opening numbers: They are meant to be easy to understand for the audience, therefore the structure is made very clear by changing musical aspects like tempo, time signature and sometimes key, and by creating contrasting sections. Some numbers are rather short and therefore less complex like in *Utopia Limited*, other are very long and consist of several contrasting parts like in *Florodora*, but there seems to be no direct link to the genre, neither in the British works analysed in chapter 3 nor in the mostly continental examples regarded in chapter 4. Some observations can be made concerning favoured time signatures: Musical comedy/play clearly favours 2/4 time (six out of eleven works), closely followed by 6/8 time (four out of eleven works, there is only one work beginning in a different time signature). The time signatures used for the beginning of comic operas are of greater variety. No similar observations can be made regarding keys.

The complexity of the choral setting varies greatly from work to work; however, it is evident that most numbers require at least experienced singers. In general, the chorus numbers needed to be rather simple because of the frequent amateur productions, especially of Savoy opera, following in the subsequent years, as Derek Scott told me in a conversation. Those amateur theatrical societies, which could be found throughout the whole English-speaking world, were an extremely interesting market for sheet music, so the publishing houses would be especially interested in the profit to be made there. However, if the chorus numbers included in those works were too complex for the choristers in the amateur societies, the works could not be staged by them, and this meant less sales of sheet music. Maybe the composers kept this aspect in mind when using a rather simple choral setting throughout their works.

Another main element of this study is the development of one (or two?) new genres during the 1890s: musical comedy and musical play. A distinction between those two cannot be achieved by simply comparing the first numbers which are arguably pretty similar in structure and content as the results above show, despite the different labels. It is questionable whether there actually are any differences in the 1890s, but again, this issue will have to be adjourned for future studies. However, several contemporary newspaper articles quoted throughout chapter 3 seem to indicate that the formation of this form of entertainment was a well thought-out and carefully planned process which involved constant improvements, not only before the debut performance, but even during the run of a work. This process is highly reminiscent of the formation of Savoy opera more than a decade earlier, discussed in detail by Goron.[643] As the reviews of the work suggest, opening nights went more smoothly and less improvements were necessary to prune the dialogues and correct other defects that did not suit the audience's taste after George Edwardes and his ensembles at the Gaiety and Daly's Theatre could draw on the experience of one or two successful runs. During the 1890s, there was already a discernible progress between the first attempts in a new genre, like *A Gaiety Girl*, and an established form of entertainment, like *The Geisha*—a progress which had only required very few years. The main goal of this new form of entertainment was to achieve financial success by giving the audience exactly what it wanted.

But what kind of entertainment precisely *did* the audience want? The question is of course very difficult and perhaps even impossible to answer, because the exact composition of the audience at the Savoy, the Gaiety or Daly's Theatre seems to be hard to determine, and furthermore there are very few sources allowing confirmed conclusions on that matter. However, there are two highly contradictory terms that are usually mentioned when describing popular musical theatre in the 1890s: the first is respectability, and the second is 'Naughty Nineties'. How is it possible that these two terms are used to describe the same form of entertainment? While this is certainly a question that should be discussed at length in a future study, the detailed analysis of late Victorian culture and society, and of the formation of both Savoy opera and musical comedy/play, left the impression that it is very hard to gauge what exactly was considered 'respectable' in the 1890s from our point of view today. Arguably, in late Victorian society (or rather, in some circles of late Victorian society which need to be determined more precisely) a certain degree of 'naughtiness', which was naturally very different for men and women, was considered very fashionable and therefore desirable. However, crossing an indeterminable line was apparently not acceptable and could have dire consequences, especially

[643] cf. Goron 2016.

for women. For the vast majority, it seems to have been more important if something was *considered* respectable by others rather than what they thought themselves on that matter; and if the supposedly respectable entertainment allowed them to (secretly) indulge in otherwise forbidden pleasures while at the same time maintaining an impeccable reputation, this made the said entertainment all the more attractive, and therefore successful. Thus, one of the reasons for the enormous popularity of the genre was the fact that its creators put a lot of time and effort in evaluating if and how to walk that fine line between 'naughtiness' and respectability, arguably resulting in a form of entertainment that was more than what its audience dared to wish for aloud.

# Sources

## Vocal Scores

Many of the vocal scores do not include a publishing date. Those have been sorted chronologically by the year of the debut performance of the work, the year has been added in brackets for more clarity.


Lortzing, Albert. *Zar und Zimmermann.* Vocal Score, arr. Gustav F. Kogel, Leipzig, C.F. Peters, n.d. (1837?)

Lortzing, Albert. *Der Wildschütz oder Die Stimme der Natur.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d. (1842?)

Cornelius, Peter. *Der Barbier von Bagdad.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, n.d. (1858?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *La princesse de Trébizonde.* Vocal Score, arr. Léon Roques, Paris, Brandus et Dufour, n.d. (1859?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Les bavards.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Brandus, n.d. (1863?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *La belle Hélène.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Heugel, n.d. (1864?)

Suppé, Franz von. *Die schöne Galathée.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Leipzig, Aug. Cranz, n.d. (1865?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Geneviève de Brabant.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Heugel, n.d. (1867?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Le pont des soupirs.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, E. Gerard, n.d. (1868?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Les brigands.* Vocal Score, arr. Léon Roques, Paris, Colombier, n.d. (1869?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Vert-Vert.* Vocal Score, arr. L. Soumis, Paris, E. Heu, n.d. (1869?)

Strauss, Johann. *La reine Indigo.* (= *Indigo und die vierzig Räuber*) Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Heugel, n.d. (1871?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Le roi Carotte.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Choudens, n.d. (1872?)

Lecocq, Charles. *La fille de Madame Angot.* Vocal Score, arr. Henri Nuyens, Paris, Brandus, n.d. (1872?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *La jolie parfumeuse.* Vocal Score, arr. Ch. Constantin, Paris, Choudens, n.d. (1873?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Madame l'archiduc.* Vocal Score, arr. Léon Roques, Paris, Choudens, n.d. (1874?)

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Lecocq, Charles. *Giroflé-Girofla.* Vocal Score, arr. Léon Roques, Paris, Brandus, n.d. (1874?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *Le voyage dans la lune.* Vocal Score, arr. Léon Roques, Paris, Choudens, n.d. (1875?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *Trial by Jury.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, n.d. (1875?)

Planquette, Robert. *Les cloches de Corneville.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Joubert, n.d. (1877?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Sorcerer.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Metzler, n.d. (1877?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *H.M.S. Pinafore or The Lass that Loved a Sailor.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Boston, Oliver Ditson, n.d. (1878?)

Offenbach, Jacques. *La fille du tambour major.* Vocal Score, arr. C. Genet, Paris, Choudens, n.d. (1879?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Pirates of Penzance or The Slave of Duty.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, n.d. (1879?)

Suppé, Franz von. *Boccaccio oder Der Prinz von Palermo.* Vocal Score, arr. C.F. Konradin, Hamburg, Aug. Cranz, (1879?)

Suppé, Franz von. *Fatinitza.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Boston, Oliver Ditson, 1879

Sullivan, Arthur. *Patience or Bunthorne's Bride.* Vocal Score, arr. Berthold Tours, London, Chappell, n.d. (1881?)

Millöcker, Carl. *Der Bettelstudent.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Hamburg, Aug. Cranz, n.d. (1882?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *Iolanthe or The Peer and the Peri.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, n.d. (1882?)

Hervé. *Mam'zelle Nitouche.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Heugel, n.d. (1883?)

Strauss, Johann. *Eine Nacht in Venedig.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Hamburg, Aug. Cranz, n.d. (1883?)

Millöcker, Carl. *Gasparone.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Hamburg, Aug. Cranz, n.d. (1884?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *Princess Ida or Castle Adamant.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, n.d. (1884?)

Strauss, Johann. *Der Zigeunerbaron.* Vocal Score, arr. A. Oehlschlegel, Leipzig, Aug. Cranz, n.d. (1885?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Mikado or The Town of Titipu.* Vocal Score, arr. George Lowell Tracy, London, Chappell, n.d. (1885?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *Ruddigore or The Witch's Curse.* Vocal Score, arr. George Lowell Tracy, London, Chappell, n.d. (1887?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Yeomen of the Guard or The Merryman and his Maid.* Vocal Score, arr. J.H. Wadsworth, London, Chappell, n.d. (1888?)

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Gondoliers or The King of Barataria.* Vocal Score, arr. J.H. Wadsworth, London, Chappell, n.d. (1889?)

Messager, André. *La Basoche.* Vocal Score, arr. André Messager, Paris, Choudens, n.d. (1890?)

Zeller, Carl. *Der Vogelhändler.* Vocal Score, arr. Carl Zeller, Leipzig, Bosworth, 1891

Cellier, Alfred. *The Mountebanks.* Vocal Score, arr. Alfred Plumpton, London, Chappell, 1892

Sullivan, Arthur. *Haddon Hall.* Vocal Score, arr. King Hall, London, Chappell, 1892

Carr, Frank Osmond. *Morocco Bound.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Joseph Williams, 1893

Sullivan, Arthur. *Utopia Limited or The Flowers of Progress.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, n.d. (1893?)

Jones, Sidney. *A Gaiety Girl.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Hopwood, n.d. (1893?)

Carr, Frank Osmond. *His Excellency.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Joseph Williams, 1894

Caryll, Ivan. *The Shop Girl.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Hopwood, n.d. (1894?)

Zeller, Carl. *Der Obersteiger.* Vocal Score, arr. Carl Zeller, Leipzig, Bosworth, 1894

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Chieftain.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Boosey, 1895

Jones, Sidney. *An Artist's Model.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Hopwood, n.d. (1895?)

Stanford, Charles Villiers. *Shamus O'Brien*, op. 61. Vocal Score, arr. Myles B. Foster, London, Boosey, 1896

Sullivan, Arthur. *The Grand Duke or The Statutory Duel.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, 1896

Audran, Edmond. *La poupée.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, Paris, Choudens, 1896

Jones, Sidney. *The Geisha. A Story of a Tea House.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Hopwood, 1896

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Caryll, Ivan. *A Runaway Girl.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Chappell, 1898

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Stuart, Leslie. *Florodora.* Vocal Score, arr. unknown, London, Francis, Day & Hunter, 1899

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The exact issue and date of the newspapers will be given in the footnotes whenever a newspaper article is quoted.

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