



## **Gilbert and Sullivan at Worcester Polytechnic Institute:**

### **A Victorian Stage and Orchestra Pit for Alden Hall**

Interactive Qualifying Project

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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## **Abstract**

Gilbert and Sullivan: a Stage and Orchestra Pit for Alden Hall combined various educational approaches and research strategies to uncover and assemble information that will provide suggestions and recommendations for an historically informed production of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan at WPI. The project presents informed suggestions and resources for collaborations between Worcester Polytechnic Institute's musical theatre organization VOX and the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society's Gilbert and Sullivan as they may be staged in the Great Hall of Alden Memorial.



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The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The overall goal of this project:

To prepare the stage of the Great Hall of Alden Memorial and suggest guidelines for the construction of an orchestra pit for future Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations with VOX and the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society, and suggest techniques to enhance an historically informed performance.

This overall goal can be broken down into three sub-goals. First, the goal of this project was to suggest ways that modern audiences might have an appreciation for Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, by researching how they may have been produced during the Victorian era in London. As there are many facets and areas of research pertaining to Victorian stagecraft, it was decided to focus on one main area – the orchestra pit, its design and layout, and the make-up of the orchestra that would have been used for Gilbert and Sullivan’s original productions.

Second, the goal was to understand the theatrical conventions present at the time. One example of a prevalent convention that is distinct from our culture today was the use of librettos, a small booklet that contained all of the dialogue and words to the songs in the performance. To accommodate this convention, Victorian theatres, unlike modern venues, had enough lighting in the house so that these pamphlets could be read during a performance.

Third, the goal was to document this information so that it may be useful for all upcoming productions of Gilbert and Sullivan at WPI in collaboration with the SASS. In addition, documenting the first attempts at other areas of Victorian stagecraft may inspire and guide future students who will hopefully continue this research. Some of these stage techniques

might include: wave machines; French fabric flats; and other stage effects such as rain, wind, thunder, and other sound effects.

In the fall of 2012, Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) will be producing a Gilbert and Sullivan show in the Great Hall of Alden Memorial. This project provides information for transforming Alden's stage for this production, and a resource which contains a record of Victorian stagecraft elements and possible routes of implementation. For this production, VOX, the WPI musical theatre society, will be working with the assistance of the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society (SASS), a group that supports the revival, restoration, and performance of the works of Sir Arthur Sullivan.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review covers the stagecraft, stage dimensions and functionality, and orchestra pit dimensions of theatres during the end of the Victorian era, when Gilbert and Sullivan were actively producing. For brief biographies of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, see Appendix J.

Some well-known stage productions from the era include *The Mikado* (1885), *Patience* (1881), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Gondoliers* (1889), *Charley's Aunt* (1892), and *Our Boys* (1875) (Parker, 1981). All of these theatrical ventures were important, as they ran for 500 consecutive performances during their initial presentation in London, signifying their great popularity with their audiences. Although not impressive by today's standards, where shows may have a run of over 2,000 performances, these are staggering statistics for their day.

This paper focuses on three well-known light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan that are in consideration for production at WPI in collaboration with the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society (SASS). For purposes of research related to this paper, please note that all of these works contain boats and water.

- *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878);
- *The Gondoliers* (1889); and,
- *Pirates of Penzance* (1880)

For a synopsis of each of these light operas, see Appendix I.

## 2.3 The Savoy Theatre

Richard D'Oyly Carte built the Savoy Theatre for the purpose of producing Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations. D'Oyly first met Gilbert and Sullivan when he was renting the Royalty Theatre. He put up *The Sorcerer*, *Pirates of Penzance*, and *H.M.S. Pinafore* at the Opera Comique. After these productions, he decided that instead of renewing the lease at the Opera Comique that he would build a new theatre instead. The Savoy Theatre was constructed in 1881, and opened with Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* (Matthew Lloyd).

The Savoy Theatre was the first theatre of its time to use electrical incandescent lighting, replacing gas lighting. At the time, as electric lighting was not considered to be reliable, gas lighting was often adjacently installed to ensure illumination in case the power went out (Tarence Rees, 1978).



Figure 3a: The Stage in the original Savoy 1881

The Savoy Theatre had a potential capacity of 1,300 viewers, with a stage that was 60 feet wide and 52 feet deep. A renovation of the theatre occurred in 1929, due to its need of

meeting modern standards. The capacity of the new Savoy Theatre was 1,138 viewers and the stage was now 29 feet, 4 inches wide and 29 feet, 6 inches deep. The theatres potential capacity currently is 1,158, with the stage dimensions the same as from the renovation of 1929. The seating was decreased at the time of the renovations due to the addition of a heating and ventilation system (Matthew Lloyd).



Figure 3b: The Exterior of the Savoy, 1881.



Figure 3c: The audience banks in the Savoy, 1883.

## 2.4 The Opera Comique

The Opera Comique, located in East Strand of London, was constructed by Sefton Parry in 1871 and demolished in 1902. It was referred to as the, “Tunnel Theatre Royal”, as its three entrances were all located at the end of long tunnels.

The theatre was controversial in its early years due to its foreign name and the non-British repertoire that it originally produced. D’Oyly began his partnership with Gilbert and Sullivan when the theatre changed management from Perry to D’Oyly Carte, and put on several of their productions. These included H.M.S. Pinafore and Pirates of penance. H.M.S Pinafore saved the rest of the theatre when it proved itself very successful running for 571 performances.

D’Oyly left The Opera Comique when the lease expired and built the Savoy Theatre. The theatre the lay empty for several years until it was demolished in 1902 to make room for the Aldwych Theatre and the Kingsway Theatre. (Sir Arthur Lloyd, 2011)

## 2.5 Collaborations

The performances of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas exist in two formats – autographs and editions. The first is an autograph, the actual handwritten manuscript of the specific work jotted down by the composer’s hand. Autographs are an important insight into the composers’ and librettists’ original intentions. Editions are peer-edited compilations of all known sources that are used to produce scores suitable for performance, and many other resources exist to help understand the early performances of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. *The First Night: Gilbert and Sullivan*, by Reginald Allen, is an excellent resource for the opening night libretto, and also contains useful ephemera pertaining to opening night performances.

Each performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas was different. The libretti for each performance were constantly in flux as was necessary to update the list songs, also known as patter songs, to be reflective of topical issues or members of the audience. This tradition is often used in modern productions of Gilbert and Sullivan. For a list of first nights for the collaborations of Gilbert and Sullivan from 1877-1889, see Appendix K.

## **2.7 Stagecraft**

Technology during the Victorian era was going through a period of resurgence, and the advances in performances showed a change of pace from the monotony of the past 200 years. Innovation from this time happened with what we now consider simple materials, some of which elements are still in use today. In Appendix F, the various elements of stagecraft will be covered that will be useful to the Gilbert and Sullivan production coming to WPI in the fall of 2012.



## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Goals:

In order to accomplish the goals outlined in the introduction, the project team researched source materials to find out information about the Gilbert and Sullivan history, along with the dimensions and specifications of the Savoy Theatre. In addition, the project team saw numerous theatrical performances. Although it is possible to measure a stage, it is impossible to determine how practical a stage is until there is a performance on it.

Kolb said in his paper about experimental learning, “In grasping experience some of us perceive new information through experiencing the concrete, tangible, felt qualities of the world, relying on our senses and immersing ourselves in concrete reality” (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001); he explains the significance of experience as a learning tool. This shows how producing a Gilbert and Sullivan performance would be beneficial to those involved.

The two specific questions that needed to be answered were: What are the dimensions of the original Savoy? What technical aspects of Victorian theatre will be best suited for the WPI Alden stage? The general approach was to identify experts in the field of Victorian theatre production such as: directors, producers, and owners of Victorian theatres, and ask them about their experiences or specific questions about how to modernize Victorian stagecraft. This approach is appropriate because their first-hand insight provided us with a valuable and personable resource.

### 3.2 Timeline

Attached in Appendix E is a calendar that shows a schedule for when the project team completed these tasks.

### 3.3 Interview information

The information collected for this project was gathered through interviews with experts within the field interest. These interviews were important to the project, due to their firsthand insight into the field, and their experience with Victorian stagecraft. People considered experts in this field are: designers, directors, producers, and theatre managers. The project team gathered information through the process of observation. The overall intent was to see a variety of shows, and to witness how theatres accomplish the same effects that others intend to duplicate.

### 3.4 Contacts

The project team intends gathered information from individuals at each of the following:

- The Normansfield theatre
  - Lesley Alabaf
- Wilton's Music Hall
  - Employ
- Sir Arthur Sullivan society
  - Robin Gordon-Powell
  - William Parry
- Experts
  - Peter Kenny

At each of these locations, interviews were held with designers, directors, conductors, and producers who have worked with Victorian stage equipment, and a manager or an owner of a theatre.

These persons were identified as potential subjects through suggestions from a faculty member at SASS, William Perry, and a search for Victorian theatres located in London. All of the theatres are located in Britain, and are of interest because they either produce Victorian theatre, or own Victorian period stage equipment.

The interview was recorded so that a recording will be available for future reference. Additionally, notes and a transcript were made from the recording and included in Appendix D. First, an attempt to establish a set of relevant background information about the interviewee was made. Next, inquiries about their current work in their field were held. Finally, the project team asked questions that pertained specifically to the topics addressed in this paper.

These are examples of interviews that were used during the information gathering process. Each interview was individually tailored to each interviewee so as to acquire the desired data:

## **3.5 Sample interviews**

### *3.5.1 Directors*

#### Part 1: Establish Background

1. What was your motivation to become a director?
2. What types of theatre are you most interested in directing?
3. How did you come about working at this theatre?

#### Part 2: Current Work

1. What is the most recent production you have worked on?
2. What was the last Victorian piece you worked on?

3. What did you do specifically to make it a Victorian piece?

### Part 3: Conclusions

1. Why do you think it is relevant to a modern audience to use adaptations of a Victorian stagecraft in modern productions?
2. What aspects of Victorian theatre is the most important to preserve? The size of the orchestra, the technology, the lighting?
3. Could you recommend any more theatres that might be relevant to the research for this project?

### *3.5.2 Producers*

#### Part 1: Establish Background

1. What was your motivation to become a producer?
2. What types of theatre are you most interested in producing?
3. How did you come about working at this theatre?

#### Part 2: Current Work

1. What is the most recent production you have worked on?
2. What was the last Victorian piece you worked on?
3. What did you do specifically to make it a period piece?
4. Do you have any equipment from the Victorian Era that you still use?
  - a. Is there a use for it?
5. What does the rigging set up that you use look like?
6. What lighting equipment do you use?

7. What sound equipment do you use?

### Part 3: Conclusions

#### 3: Conclusions

1. Why do you think it is relevant to a modern audience to use adaptations of a Victorian stagecraft in modern productions?
2. What aspects of Victorian theatre is the most important to preserve? The size of the orchestra, the technology, the lighting?
3. Do you think it would be worthwhile to use period technology for true authenticity, or because the equipment is unseen is it not worth it?
4. Could you recommend any more theatres that might be relevant to the research for this project?

#### *3.5.3 Theatre Managers/Owners*

##### Part 1: Establish Background

1. What was your motivation to own a theatre?
2. What other things do you do for a living if any?
3. What kinds of theatre do you like to see your theatre put on?
4. How did you come about owning this theatre?

##### Part 2: Current Work

1. What are you currently doing as a theatre owner?
2. What goals do you have for your theatre?
3. What weight do you carry at this theatre?

4. Who decides what shows are put up?
5. Have Victorian shows been produced here?
6. What is the last Victorian show that was put up?
7. Do you have any equipment from the Victorian Era that you still use?
  - a. Is there a reason why you haven't upgraded to modern technology?

### Part 3: Conclusions

1. Do you think that doing period pieces from the Victorian era is important?
2. Do you make more profit from doing modern shows or doing shows from the Victorian era?
3. Could you recommend any more theatres that might be relevant to the research for this project?

### **3.6 Interview Analysis**

Interview information was synthesized by reviewing the notes and tape; highlights and pertinent quotes from interviews have been pulled and included in this paper. Interviews are completely transcribed and included in Appendix D.

### **3.7 Performance Analysis & Observation:**

Another way research was conducted by observation was by viewing Victorian stagecraft being used in current productions in London. 40 performances, including plays, operas and instrumental performances, including those of Gilbert and Sullivan, were observed during the time spent in London. A post-analysis journal that contains remarks on shows by the members of the project team was made, and can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.8 Theatre photo documentation:

Photographs of the stage equipment from researched theatres have been taken and included in Appendix B for visual reference.

The following was documented by photography:

- Orchestra pit
- Lighting
- Wing space
- Rigging and fly space
- Backstage
- Machinery
- Seating configurations

In addition to photographing the space, a considerable effort was made to find blueprints or schematics of the theatres that are researched. To view these blueprints, please refer to Appendix F.

## Chapter 4: Results, Conclusions & Recommendations

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Stagecraft

The primary research goal was to find the original dimensions of both the stage and orchestra pit of the Savoy theatre. Secondly, the goal was to find information about the elements of stagecraft such as waves, wind, thunder, seagulls, foot lights, French fabric flats, boats and flying scenic elements. A machine that creates the illusion of waves on the stage exists. A very prominent actor named Peter Kenny mentioned to the project team that the Old York Theatre in York still has a working wave machine. The machine is based upon the concept of an Archimedes screw.

Additionally, during the Victorian era, technology that allowed for projection, utilizing lime or electric lighting, was invented. When visiting the Normansfield theatre, Lesley Alabaf, the owner and manager of the theatre, showed off a large collection of stage machinery that the theatre still had in existence. In addition, she showed the project team a “Magic Lantern” as the book “Lighting in the Age of Gas” refers to it. The theatre still had its original rope rigging that is present in the theatre; the French fabric flats that slid on and off the stage, and a gas lighting system. The pipes used to light the theatre are located below, in addition to a large main light that would illuminate the hall during the production. The book “Lighting in the Age of Gas,” located in the bibliography, contains more information about the mechanics and how a Magic Lantern would have worked. Information about the gas lighting and the way in which the theatre would be piped and how the main light works is located in the book “Lighting in the Age of Gas.”

Lastly, the French fabric flats were wooden frames with canvas stretched over them and then painted. They would stretch to the grid, or to a point on the ceiling, where they would be



anchored. They would slide on wooden tracks that the flats fit into. These flats, as seen below, would be slid in and out to change scenes, or they would cascade which would provide an illusion of depth. This technology is still common in many theatres today. (Predue, 1938)

#### **4.1.2 The Imitation of Moving Water**

##### *4.1.2.1 Wave Machines*

Wave machines were a device created to produce the illusion of water or waves. There were several varieties depending on the effect one wanted. Many possible types of waves existed. The following is a list:

- Sliding wave
- Violent wave
- Column wave
- Upstanding wave

The upstanding wave was specifically used to create the illusion of a sea parting. The different effects created by each of these waves would portray the illusion of water to the audience, so that they would believe that there was water present on the stage (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001).

### 4.1.3 Rain

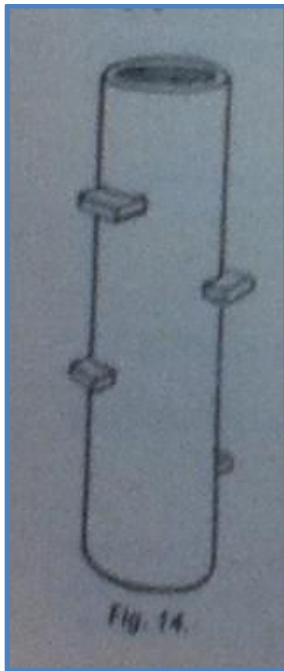


Figure 4.1.3.1 Depiction of a rain canister.

A common way to replicate the sound of rain was to fill a metal canister  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  full of small objects, cover the ends, and gently tilt the canister for the desired effect. However, there is a way for which this method can be improved upon further. One would take, instead of the metal canister, a cardboard tube of approximately 3' long, with slots punched relatively equidistantly down the sides. After this has been done, two slabs of cardboard would be taken, less than the diameter of the cylinder, and placed inside. Afterwards, a good amount of dried peas would be poured in, and both sides sealed. The desired effect would then be achieved via tipping the entire apparatus at an angle, where the angle that the tube was tipped would change the ferocity of the rain. (Kenneth S, 1948).

#### 4.1.4 Thunder

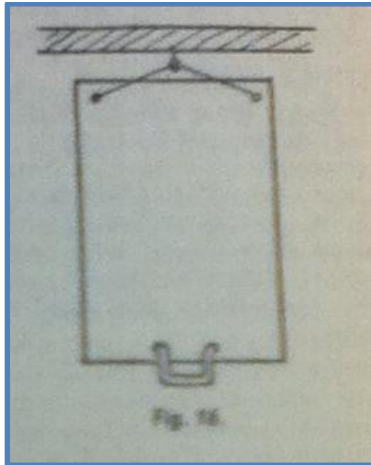


Figure 4.1.4.1 Depiction of a suspended thunder sheet.

For thunder, a sheet of metal was taken out by a stagehand and shaken, creating the rumble of thunder. In some cases, the sheet of metal was hung from the ceiling, and a rope was attached and pulled when the desired effect was needed. In this way, the sound was directional and would have a more convincing effect. (Kenneth S, 1948).

#### 4.1.5 Wind



Figure 4.1.5.1 Depiction of a man-powered wind machine.

Wind machines were utilized to produce the howl of wind. The following is an excerpt from *The A.B.C. of Stagecraft*, explaining how it was built and how it works.

“Two circular pieces of wood, about a foot across, are mounted in a cradle.

They are pierced in the centre and, by means of a spindle and handle, are made to revolve (as a grindstone), Thin laths are tacked at regular intervals round the circumference of the disc.

“Over the top of this hollow drum is laid a piece of canvas or watered silk. One end of this is fixed to the base of the machine, the other, weighted, is allowed to hang free. When the handle is turned, the drum revolves and the laths, striking against the silk or canvas, produce the moaning of the wind. A low moan is obtained by turning the handle slowly, but as the speed increases so the notes rise until, when the drum is spun rapidly, a high shriek is produced.” (p. 53, Allen, Kenneth S.).

This machine had to be handled delicately, else... “it may suddenly come to pieces with unexpected effects.” (p. 53, Allen, Kenneth S.).

#### **4.1.6 Seagulls and other Pit Effects**

To accomplish the sound effect that was capable of mimicking seagulls, a member of the orchestra pit would take a flute or recorder and then blow into it violently, creating the shrieking sound of seagulls. This information was gathered from an expert in the field, Peter Kenny.

#### **4.1.7 Stage Dimensions**

Research was conducted to determine the specifications of both the Savoy Theatre and the Opera Comique. Alden Hall may be altered by raising and raking the stage so that the both

the stage and the depth of the orchestra pit will be historically accurate. The orchestra will also be organized in the same way they would have been in a Gilbert and Sullivan production.

Table 1: Victorian Theatre Dimensions

<b>Theatre</b>	<b>Width of proscenium opening (ft. in.)</b>	<b>Height of Proscenium opening</b>	<b>depth from Proscenium Wing to Back wall</b>	<b>distance between side walls</b>	<b>Distance between fly rails or Girders</b>	<b>Height from stage to "grid"</b>	<b>Depth from under fly platform to stage</b>	<b>depth under stage (or height of stage)</b>	<b>height to take cloths up out of sight</b>	<b>approx. seating capacity</b>
<b>Alden Memorial</b>	29, 6	25, 0	25, 5	58, 6	N/A	>25,0	N/A	3, 0	N/A	500
<b>Savoy Theatre (second)</b>	29, 4	23, 6	29, 6	60, 0	29, 6	56, 0	24, 0	9, 6	24, 0	1,138
<b>Savoy Theatre (original)</b>	30, 0	30, 0	27, 0	62, 0	40, 0	52, 0	19, 0	7, 0	24, 0	986
<b>Normansfield</b>	25, 0	~30,0	25, 0	33, 0	N/A	~30,0	~30,0	4, 6	N/A	150

The data in this table came from either measurements taken by the project team, measurements made by Lesley Alabaf or from the book *Who's Who in Theatre*. Two copies of *Who's Who* were used; one copy of the book was from 1912, and the other copy was from 1981. The records in these two versions provided the first and second accounts of the Savoy Theatres dimensions, or before and after the renovation of the original Savoy Theatre.

Both Helga Perry and Robin Gordon-Powell, experts in Sir Arthur Sullivan orchestration, assisted the project team in determining the most accurate placement and quantity of the

instruments in the pit. For diagrams of the orchestra pits suggested by Robin Gordon-Powell, please refer to Appendix F.

## 4. Conclusions

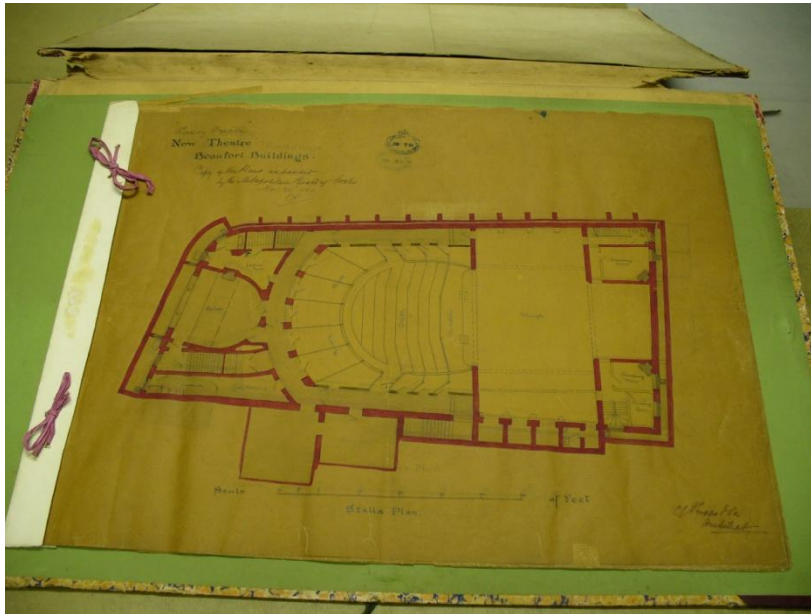


Figure 4.: This image is an architect's sketch of the original Savoy Theatre from a top down view.

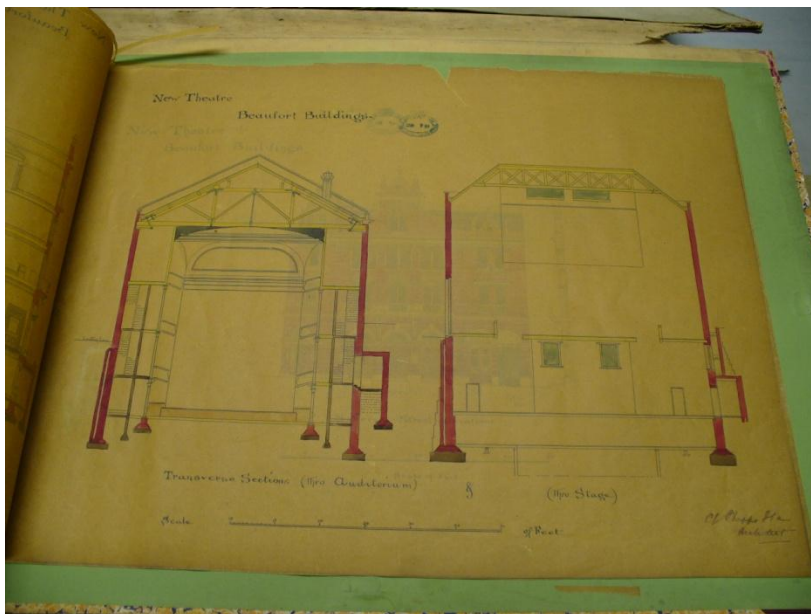


Figure 5.1.2: This image is an architect's sketch of the original Savoy Theatre from a front view.

Above, provided by Robin Gordon-Powell, is a set of architect's plans for The Beaufort Theatre, the tentative name of the Gilbert and Sullivan venue that was eventually called The Savoy theatre. On the top image, there is a sketch for the hall and the stage with a scale. The width of the orchestra pit, according to this scale, would have been approximately 33-34 feet wide and between 6 and 10 feet deep, depending on one's interpretation of the plans. There is also a plan that depicts both the transverse section of the stage and the auditorium. From this drawing, it is possible to infer that the difference in height between the stage and the floor of the pit is between 7 and 14 feet, depending on one's interpretation of the drawings. These findings are important, but a chance exists that they are inaccurate.

A firsthand account exists that provides information in regards to the number of musicians present in the Savoy Theatres orchestra pit.

"...On either side of the stage opening (which is 30 feet wide and 32 feet high) are three private boxes on each of the three levels...These boxes are richly upholstered in hangings of gold-coloured brocaded silk. The orchestra is in front of the stage, and is of sufficient capacity for a full band of twenty-seven or more musicians." (p.100, footnote).

This quote allows for the project team to make an assumption on the total capacity of the orchestra pit present at the Savoy Theatre. When making a suggestion for the layout of the orchestra pit, one should limit the total number of musicians present to be no more than 30.

As for the placement of the members of the pit, here is a picture reference from the Ann Ronan picture library, provided by David Lovell. This indicates that the members of the orchestra appear to be paired off and situated to either side of a centered and forward facing conductor.



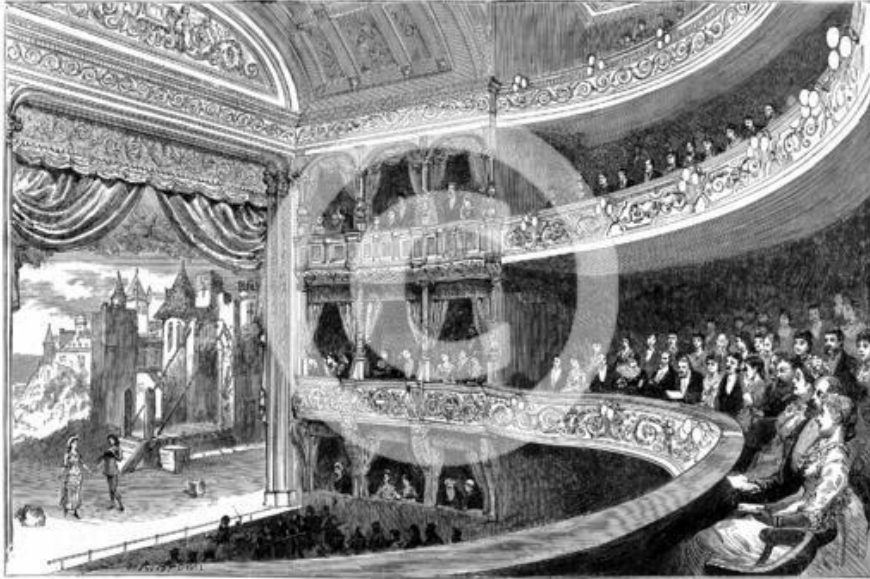


Figure 5.1.3: A picture reference from the Ann Ronan picture library.

In addition, there is a picture that many of the experts that were interviewed, including Helga Perry, Robin Gordon-Powell, and Will Perry, made reference to, which implies that all the string instruments would be positioned to the left of the conductor, and that the wind and procession would be positioned to the right. They claimed that this picture was what used by the film director Mike Leigh when he set up the Savoy orchestra pit in his movie *Topsy-Turvy*. They also noted that he was wrong in his interpretation, and had the sides of the pit switched.

Below is a picture of a record that depicts the numbers of musicians that would have been present in the band of The Opera Comique. This photo was also provided by Robin Gordon-Powell. It shows that there would have been the following instruments present:

- 4 First Violins
- 4 Second Violins
- 2 Violas
- 2 Cellos
- 2 Basses
- 2 Flutes
- 2 Clarinets
- 1 Oboe
- 1 Bassoon
- 2 Cornets
- 2 Horns
- 2 Trombones
- 1 Drummer
- 1 Conductor

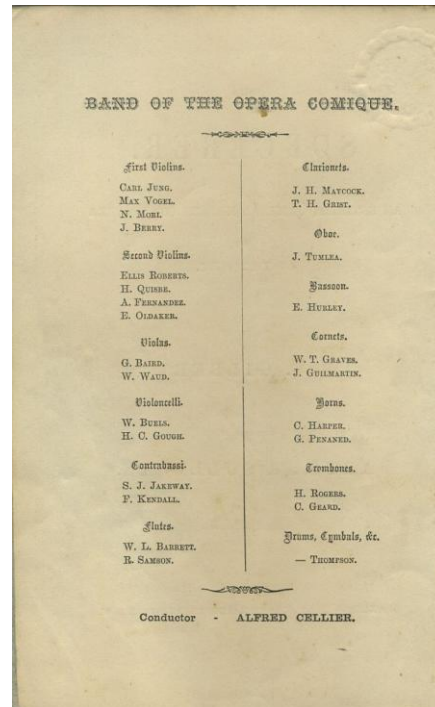


Figure 5.1.4: A picture of a record that depicts the numbers of musicians that would have been present in the band of The Opera Comique.

From all of this information and consultation with Robin, the project team created several suggestions for orchestra pit layouts that are optimal in case of any of the shows getting picked. The following image is a digital representation of the placement of the musicians in the flanked layout. The other layouts are present in the Appendix F.

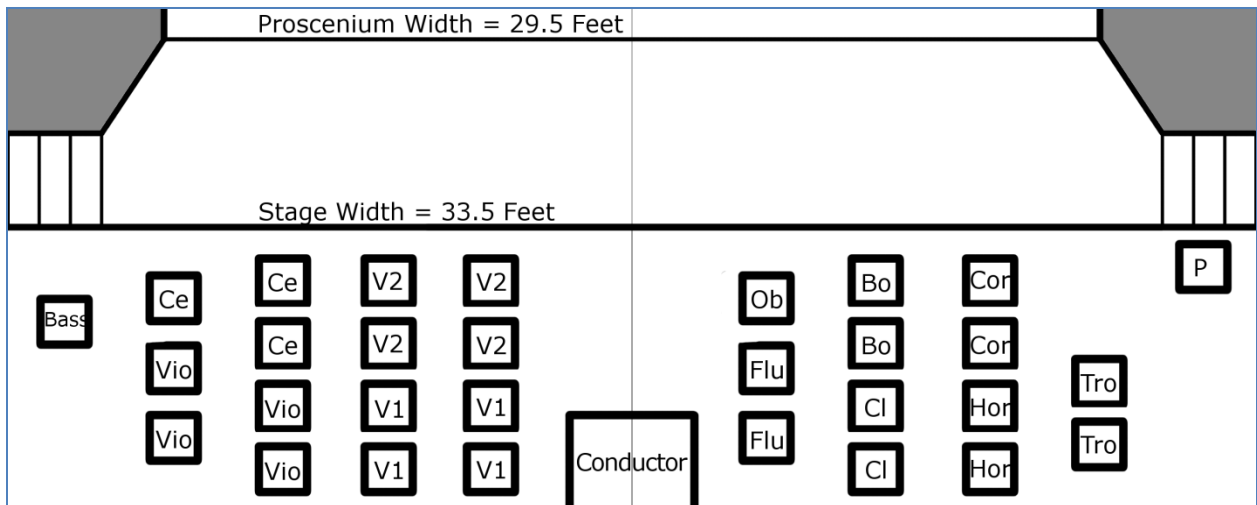


Figure 5.1.5: Suggested Orchestra layout for the fall of 2012.

To conclude the suggestions that the project team would like to implement in the 2012 production of *Pirates of Penzance*, it is suggested that modifying the stage to the dimensions listed above and having the orchestra set up as depicted in *Figure 5.1.5* would make the production historically informed.

In addition to the changes the project group suggests for the structure of The Great Hall in Alden Memorial and for the orchestra pit, it is suggested that the 2012 production attempts to incorporate a program style that is similar to the first night programs located in Appendix K. Additionally, to incorporate as many elements of stagecraft as possible, all of which are located in the research section and Appendix M.

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# Appendixes

## Appendix A – Reviews

**The Children’s Hour** (07 May 2011)

### Alex’s Review

Starring Keira Knightly, Elisabeth Moss, Ellen Burstyn, and Carol Kane, this story about the malicious effects of rumors and lies shows the story of two boarding school teachers that are accused of being lesbians during a time in which being a lesbian is not an acceptable life style.

This rumor started by one of their students that has a particular distain for them caused a panic in the school and lead to the two teacher’s boarding school being ruined. At points the plot reminded me of that *The Crucible*.

The set consisted of a large proscenium stage with the wings covered in walls that appeared to be made of wood and stretched all the way to the grid in addition to a wall on the back of the stage that that also stretched to the grid. The stage had a door on the back wall and a door on the audience right. The stage floor was a worn in wood floor, on it was a couch, several tables and chairs and a rug that transitioned between two settings by covering aspects of the set with covers or by removing rugs.

The lighting design was very impressive the entire time it had a very organic feel and was light as if the sun were lighting the set through a window. Additionally lights from other rooms bleeding through doors gave the set a very authentic feel. It seemed like people were walking into other rooms. The lighting was potentially accomplished by having lights shown through a large opaque window that allowed for a uniform light cover and also with the use of bright colors the natural light may have been created.



I was impressed by the set dressing and the blocking. They were very fluid and never seemed to stop. The action always kept moving and felt very real. The part of the blocking that was most impressive was that the entire stage always seemed to be filled and never seemed to be unbalanced and further more even from last row seats viewing the show from almost a bird's eye view the show still seemed natural and was an amazing performance.

The program was excellently designed with very good use of bold and non bold names. It had an incredibly professional look and was a piece of art all by itself. I strive to reach this level of professionalism in all my future programs.

Ways that we could apply aspects of this performance to our project are by taking tips from how they lit the show and to ensure to make the lighting appear to be organic. Additionally the blocking having constant movement should remind us to avoid stagnant blocking.

### **Beth's Review**

#### Plot Summary:

Mary Tilford (Byrony Hannah), a troublemaker in a girl's boarding school, starts a rumour to her grandmother, Mrs. Amelia Tilford (Ellen Bustin), that two female school teachers, Karen Wright (Kiera Knightley) and Martha Dobie (Elisabeth Moss), are having an affair. Mrs. Tilford, filled with an appropriate concern for the 1930's and thus waiving Mary's troublemaking history, calls in Karen's fiancé to her home, Dr. Joseph Cardin (Tobias Menzies), in order to personally break to him the shocking news. Karen and Martha burst in uninvited, suspecting something is going on once all the girls from their school had been sent home. After hearing the charges against them, they decide to sue Mrs. Tilford for libel and slander. Karen and Martha lose the case, in part due to Lily Mortar (Carol Kane) – Martha's silly older aunt who works at the school

alongside Karen and Martha – and her failure to testify at their trial. After turning Mrs. Mortar out for what Martha hoped to be for good, and in addition after Karen officially breaks things off with Dr. Cardin, Martha admits to truly having lesbian feelings for Karen, even though the entire accusation was sheer speculation. Karen does not return Martha's feelings. Martha then exits the stage and commits suicide by shooting herself in the head. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Tilford enters and tells Karen that it turns out the whole thing was indeed a lie, and offers both public apology and monetary compensation. Karen's response is, "My friend is dead and you are trying to fix it all with an **apology** so that way you can rest your head easy at night?", ensuring that Mrs. Tilford will, from now on, indeed do the opposite. The curtain's close with Karen alone, staring out the window at the dawn.

#### Immediate Reaction:

Sitting in the back row furthest farthest away from the stage, looking almost straight down at the actors, the blocking was eye-appealing and helpful to the point where it felt like it was made to be seen from a bird's-eye view. There were slight problems distinguishing the expressions on the actors' faces, but this was to be expected from the seats that were bought (no binoculars were brought or purchased throughout the production). The more impressive performances, acting-wise, were those done most notably by Elisabeth Moss, whose emotional transitions were perfect while she all the while kept the elements of a glamorous yet internally tortured, Elizabeth Taylor-esque, misunderstood woman; Ellen Burstyn, who was very regal yet full of love, feeling and great responsibility, where the only out-of-character fluke on her part was her easy breakdown and succumbance to Karen at the end of the play; and Byrony Hannah, whose poignant performance gave a distinct flavor to Mary's part, enigmatically suggesting an imminent mental breakdown.

Most surprising – and unfortunately, most disappointing – was Kiera Knightley’s performance, in part due to her almost nonexistent transitions from perfectly fine to screaming like a siren. In addition, her stage American accent was not initially good and was inconsistent throughout the show. All in all, the play was deserving of an, ‘A-’, if you will, for being slightly overhashing of a mere few key trigger points, for its slightly dark and out-of-period theme which was intended to illicit a different reaction from a different audience than that of today’s more tolerant society, and from Kiera Knightley’s below the standard curve of deviation’s performance. However, it was well-worth seeing for the price of £25 (approximately \$40 at the time of this review) – though one would probably not go again for the price and the performance allowed should it not have been closing night, despite the all-star cast.

Applications to the project:

The two most notable aspects of this production that the project team learned first-hand are the seating banks and the audience’s attire. The seating banks were very much of a Victorian style and feel, not commonly seen, if at all, in US theatre. Crawling up the walls and going so high into the ceiling, one sitting in the project team’s seats – the very last row of the center balcony – would feel as if they were looking nearly straight down at the performance area. However, the stage was pleasantly blocked so that way viewers of all angles could equally enjoy and benefit from the production. Each seating bank was additionally equipped with binoculars, which one could rent for a mere £1 (approximately \$1.67 at the time of this review). These slight nuances unique to UK theatre harken back to operettas and other similar performances that such theatres are famous for.

Theatre-going attire, the second most notable aspect of the project team's first performance, was primarily evening attire, a custom of dress not often adhered to in United States' theatres. In addition, much of the audience casually sipped on various alcohols – a good percentage of them wines and other higher brow liquors – whilst casually chatting with other members of the show they were previously acquainted with, turning the production into a more social event. However, this sort of chatter only ensued during the prelude to the show and during the intermission. During the performance itself, the drama onstage was so absorbing even the expectedly chatty European audience was so quiet one could hear a proverbial pin drop.

As for the stagecraft, the lighting was a bit soft at some points for one to feel they could see the stage accurately, however the scenery remained simple and uncumbersome, only varying between two sets throughout the entire show. The scenery was changed during soft music, as traditional mini-intermissions between the scenes, as opposed to incorporated into the show. Overall, stagecraft was at an expected level for this kind of production, but nothing was of any spectacular value.

### **Hamlet (10 May 2011)**

#### **Alex's Review**

This performance at the glove theatre was remarkable. We saw an afternoon performance and the effect of natural lighting had a great effect on the shows atmosphere. It provided me with a sense of involvement because not only could I see the actors very well but I knew that that could see me. Not only could they see me but before the performance started they began to interact with the front row groundlings and make conversation. Additionally action occurred in the audience,

after hamlet puts on his production the king in rage storms through the audience as if he was also watching the show. It was an excellent touch that made the audience feels even more involved.

The show was put on by a traveling group that was touring with their version of Hamlet. The production contained an amazing amount of music. That when I walked into the production I was not expecting at all. During the scenes sound effects were provided with the use of violins and other percussion instruments including a making that created a fun thunder sound (it was a long spring attached to a tube with a membrane on it). Also they provided music to enhance the mood like long violin drones during tense moments.

The costumes were great. Each costume had a layered aspect of it which allowed for the feel of character development and change. Hamlet himself without having to actually do many scene changes went through many outfits just by taking off and putting on aspects of his layered costume. It felt very real and authentic. Also this layered aspect allowed people to play multiple characters easily. The costumes seemed like a mash up between traditional Shakespearian clothing and a WWX military fatigue style.

The set was versatile. It consisted of only about 8 elements and was used in many ways. The way things were staged and re staged was fantastic and always seemed subtle due to the fact that action was always happening somewhere else on stage.

I think that aspects of the stage being so transient and the incorporation of music in the way it was is something that I want to take away from this play. And utilize for our project.

## **Beth's Review**

Plot Summary:

Hamlet (Joshua McGuire) is a brooding young man due to the untimely death of his father, the former Danish king – and also named Hamlet. His mother, Gertrude (Amanda Hadingue), has hastily remarried to his uncle, Claudius (Simon Armstrong). Through his father's ghost, Hamlet discovers that Claudius, now king of the Danes, was his father's murderer. Upon hearing this, he swears his father's revenge. Although being in love with Ophelia (Jade Anouka), Hamlet's neurotic behavior, a result of keeping this terrible family secret, twists him so he eventually retorts to her affections with his famous line, "get thee to a nunnery!", turning Ophelia mad. At one point during the play, Hamlet does have the opportunity to exact his revenge upon Claudius, but ceases from killing him at that moment because he is in prayer, and assumes that this would send him straight to heaven. Instead, Hamlet accidentally kills Ophelia's father, Polonius (John Bett), driving Ophelia beyond a point of repair and eventually committing suicide. Horatio (Ian Midlane), Hamlet's close friend, is eventually trusted with the terrible secret before Hamlet and Claudius duel. Hamlet's mother unintentionally drinks from his chalice and then dies from poisoning. Hamlet and Claudius fight to the death, neither surviving. The play ends with Hamlet naming Fortinbras (Tom Lawrence) as the new King of Denmark, forcing a suicidal Horatio to remain alive after his impending death, as he is the only survivor of the whole ordeal who can accurately retell the entire situation.

#### Immediate Reaction:

Being the project team's first time at the Globe Theatre, it was certainly a fascinating experience in itself. For £5 tickets, one got, "front row" seats – standing in the yard, leaning against the stage – where the actors were so close that Hamlet epically fell to his death right before a member of the project team's eyes. Although the set was simple, it was what was needed for the

play with so few people, each having effectively four parts, to run effortlessly. In fact, for much of the performance, actors that were not active during certain scenes merely sat off to the side, as opposed to offstage – adding a new element of selective awareness that the audience was encouraged to follow. The stage already being built and decorated as part of the theatre, and the cast being a travelling one, little was done to take away from the ‘natural’ beauty of the stage, and the focus was more on the actors. Among the minimalistic stage additions there was a curtain, draped across the two pillars, used for the accidental killing of Polonius, and several benches used throughout the play. During the, ‘play within a play’, there was a fake stage setup with many whimsical, cheap touches – appropriate for the scene. All in all, the set in itself was not spectacular, but its function left the audience screaming for more.

Application to the project:

The energy displayed throughout the show brought a zeal that excited and engaged the audience. This energy, coupled with a relaxed take to any mistakes that may have happened during the performance (i.e., birds flew in during the performance and minimally made an unplanned interruption during the show, however the cast took it in stride and it only added to the audience’s then-rising hilarity), made the performance as a whole something no one could forget, and ended with a raucous applause, heartily deserved.

Should our project focus more on audience reaction as opposed to mimicry of the original Victorian stagecraft, the reactions elicited from the Globe today were an inspiration to many attention-seekers everywhere. If the goal should be to have the audience leave flush-faced from the exhilaration of the performance, then the actors should not act historically accurately per se, but in a manner relevant to a modern audience.

However, even should WPI's fall 2012 production of a Gilbert and Sullivan show not be dependent upon audience reaction in general, that is not to say that the actors must be so rigid in their reenactment that they should not, at some level, appease a 21<sup>st</sup>-century audience. Or should they? It all comes down to original intent ; however, if it was originally intended for the play to make the audience feel good by the end of the show in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, would the show be considered a historical success if the audience felt good by the end of it, although the same reactions were drawn out by non-historically sound methods? More research will shed more of the proverbial light on this topic, but as of this point in the research, there is little to conclude on the topic.

## **Les Miserables**

### **Alex's Review**

This show was about the relations that evolve and develop throughout the French revolution. Although I don't plan on going into a summary because I believe that most people already know the play I think that it was done clearly and well although there were times that I was not engaged and felt that it was a little dry and ran a bit long and lost my interest.

At first I was unimpressed by the technical elements of the show, but as it progressed I was shocked on many occasions by how amazingly the set was designed. The show opens to an empty set with what appears to be slaves doing work in rhythm to music. In this setting the set was just a very detailed and artistic revolve made to look like cobble stones or a street that one would find in a town and other than just using simple scrim lighting and fun effects with for projecting and back lighting to see people through images the set was not impressive. Although the unimpressive set soon shocked me when two giant constructions that made up different parts



of a bad shambled neighborhood rolled out onto the stage on sets of tracks that intersected the revolve and then once the two structures were on the revolve, they then began to revolve with it. To top it off the two structures were then joined by a bridge that was flown in from the grid, and all of this was completely incredibly involved and probably stood no less than 20 feet tall and 15 feet wide. They were composed of this that appeared to be wheels and barrels and stairs and grates. Not to mention the fact that these structures were incredibly I thought that this was going to be the biggest wow factor in the show until act two came along and showed me that I was wrong. The two structures were rolled out and then hydraulically and silently entirely rotated to form the barricade used by the French. IMAGINE huge structures flawlessly flitting together like two puzzle pieces.

The lighting was good but not amazing. It heavily used moving lights and very simple gobos and gobo rotators. The lighting seemed very college, if that. Additionally I know that it can't be helped but the idea of shadows going in different directions for different characters. Especially when the scene takes place outside bothers me far too much. I feel as if a Broadway caliber show could have better lighting than this.

This show is an example of how a theatrical revolve can be used write, as long as the concept of revolving people isn't the only wow factor located in the show the revolve can be used to a very high potential. Additionally I think that making sets and floors look real and broken in was something that this show did very well and I think that it is an aspect of set building that seems to be over looked a lot at WPI. The texture that the stage revolve had been the best part of the stage revolve. It had hundreds of uniquely shaped and painted cobble stones added to the set.

Ways that aspects of this show should or could be beneficial for our show is to remind us that we always have to have the stage shock the audience at least once in each act and that in little intricacies of the set are potentially the most important part.

## **Beth's Review**

### Plot Summary:

Young man (find name & actor) is incarcerated for stealing bread from a church for his starving sister, escapes after ten or so years in prison; however is caught again and has to do another years, escapes again and has been on the run ever since. Young woman (find name and actor) is forced into prostitution in the slums of (find exact city name), is injured by a potential client because she refuses him. The young man - now older by this point - sees her, falls in love with her, and takes care of her in a very Good Samaritan-esque way. She is dying, but she has a child which she leaves in his care to treat as if a daughter (find name & actor). She is currently slave to a woman (name & actor) who supposed to be taking care of her, but obviously favors another girl (name & actor here). He rescues her from the woman and her male companion (name & actor) of indeterminate romantic position for a price of (some odd pounds). The play then quickly switches to approximately 10 years in the future, where the girl of the woman he loves, now safely in his custody as a man of standing in the community, is 18. She falls in love - and he with her - with the man of her childhood rival's dreams, who now is living in a slum with him. After much battle and search of identity, the rival dies in the love of her life's arms, the old convict finally dies in prison, and the young starstruck couple end up happily married.

### Immediate Reaction:

The musical in itself was not spectacular with regards to acting or song; however nearly every person ended up walking away, 'singing the set'. It was apparent that most of the funds for the production were poured into the scenery and set design, of which was of such fantastical proportions that there was a point during the show where a bridge was formed - before the audience's eyes - automatically, much like an over-water bridge reconnects with itself after a barge goes through. In addition to this, the set was mostly a revolving wheel, which ingeniously incorporated stage play into its changing of scenery, at times. Overall, the set was the most fantastic part of the show, whereas the rest was not nearly as memorable

### Applications to our project:

The fall 2012 production of G&S show will most likely not incorporate a revolving stage or even any other highly complicated 21st century stage machinery; however we can most likely learn from the essence of what they used on their stage. The incredible, awe-inspiring effect was an obvious flashiness of the mechanical knowledge of our time; if it is possible for us to do the same with the 2012 production - to brandish the flairs of 19th century technology to a 21st century audience, and essentially make them go, 'wow'- the historical interest of those partaking of the performance would surge, and perhaps an overall interest in Victorian theatre (at least in the Worcester) would pique. One can only hope.

### **H.M.S. Pinafore (Explicit version)**

#### **Alex's version**

The classic Gilbert and Sullivan story of the love across classes, when a naval officer's daughter falls for a meager sailor whilst being forced to marry the head of the British navy against her will, through song and dance she finds a way a way to make it all work. This show is a modern adaptation and a even more light hearted and humorous take on this story.

The show begins with a rag tag group of sailors running onto the stage, and all of them are only wearing underwear. I could already tell this was going to be a fun show. The sailors then break in to song and with fantastic choreography and an incredible amount of energy they instantly hooks the audience and never lets them go. The venue was small and the show was accompanied by only a piano. But despite lacking the flourishes of an east end show it had enough energy and personality to compete with the best. As the show continues a common theme of gay innuendo is present.

The costuming was done with the primary sailor costume being spandex British flag underwear. When "his sisters and his cousins and his aunts" bound onto the stage they are clad in satin red dresses with a bit of a stretch and a side slit all the way up to their ribs. The entire show had small budget but the atmosphere was always fantastic.

The aspects of this show that would be beneficial to keep in mind when ever doing shows in the future is that incredibly precise and stunning choreography, even if it isn't that technically difficult can be amazing. Furthermore this show is a great reminder that despite a small budget and small venue you can still have a very big show.

### **Beth's version**

Plot Summary:

(for a summary of the plot of the original HMS Pinafore, see Review # 12 - HMs Pinafore; Plot Summary)

The Pinafore, renowned ship of the high seas, enjoys a renovated reputation of being both the most hardworking and the most eager ship to jump into everybody's pants.

Although still bearing many similarities to the original version, there are several crucial changes to the plot line. For instance, Adm. Joseph, after breaking off his engagement with Josephine, was originally intended to marry his cousin ("not really his cousin") in the original production. However, the modern version performed replaced an assumedly female cousin with a male Dick Deadeye; notwithstanding the homosexual pairing that audiences at the time of the original opera's date de naissance would have not stood for, Dick Deadeye himself was modified from being, 'triangular', to, 'effeminate', and in order for the pairing to commence (which technically need up being a threesome between them and yet another shipmate), the lines of the cousin at the end of the opera were taken from the role and added to the part of Dick Deadeye. Overall, although the performance was not something audiences back in the day would have enjoyed, much less tolerated, the modern take on the performance was refreshing and revitalizing to the audience of today.

Immediate reaction/applications to our project:

The performance, although apparently of a low budget and with little to even call a stage, had one remarkable aspect, besides its energy (a common theme in most of the productions the project team has observed to be of a unanimously, "good" quality) - it's choreography. The synch

between all of the perforate in this modernized version of the classic light opera was of a grade typically only seen in professional dance circles. If WPI were to do this same production during the fall of 2012 (even if they were not going to), this choreography would greatly benefit the eyes of the audience - and the stress-relief of the producers.

### **Even Song**

#### **Alex's review**

Thursday afternoon we went to Westminster abbey and enjoyed the end of day serves performed every day by the religious schools boy choir that is associated with the abbey. There is the culture of having a 5pm even song every day of the week as almost an end of the day ceremony. The mass was short; it ran only about 30 minutes. It was very calming and a great way to take a breath and reflect and enjoy music.

### **Handel's Messiah**

#### **Alex's review**

Handel's Messiah was an incredible experience, we were invited to perform this piece with 600 other chorus members a baroque orchestra and four soloists. At noon we began rehearsing for the day, at around 5 we got a quick break for lunch and then at 7:30 the show went up.

On a side note I guess it's too much to ask to have a quiet cup of coffee in a quaint little coffee shop. Even in London annoying four year olds and their temper tantrums can ruin a perfectly good Americano.

But back to the Messiah it was an excellent production and the music was absolutely amazing but as a participant of this performance it's hard to be subjective.

The Hall that we performed in was the new music performance hall in London and was beautiful. The show wasn't sold out but the hall was about 70 percent full. In my mind the best part of singing the Messiah is such large numbers is the ability to meet people that share the strong bond of singing and their love to sing. In my personal experience this bond is something special, the best friends I have are people that I sing with. I guess it's just a state of mind, or maybe we're all just tuned to the same frequency.

### **Priscilla Queen of the Dessert**

#### **Alex's review**

The following is a brief summary of Priscilla Queen of the Dessert. Three drag queens ride across the Australian dessert facing a lack of acceptance, hair spray, and knowledge of bus engines. The entire time that they are making their way towards Alice, Australia, each of them with their own reasons: some are going to perform a show, one is going to meet his son for the first time, and another is going to climb the tallest mountain in Australia in full drag.

The show was charming in a very flamboyant way. Every single surface was covered in either peacock feathers or glitter, and that's what made this show great it wasn't scare to appear over the top in any way. The costumes ranged from a dress made entirely from pink and orange flip-flops to an outfit built to look like a giant cup cake. Throughout the show for certain numbers three women were flown in to assist with songs and remind the audience that the drag shows they were doing were frequently done to a recording.

The set was painted pink and for most of the show had a mid-stage tinsel curtain that was flown in from the grid to allow for things to be rotated in and out along a track. This show wouldn't be about three drag queens on a bus without a bus. So once they hit the road Priscilla the fantastic

bus made her first appearance. The bus had one wall that acted almost like a garage door and retracted so that scenes could occur inside the bus. The buses wheels, slightly raised from the ground, rotated which gave it the appearance of driving even when standing still. The bus, originally silver, gets covered in graffiti saying “GO HOME FAGGOTS” and then the main characters plowing forth emotionally gave Pricilla a makeover and cover her in hot pink paint. This effect was accomplished by lighting the LED’s hidden under Pricilla’s transparent plastic coating and turning her pink. The bus’s layer of LED’s with a full range of color was used from this point forward very frequently during dance numbers to add lighting effects such as moving patterns.

Near the end of act two an uncalled for second intermission occurred because the show (I believe the LED display on the bus was having issues) had technical difficulties. They announced that there were technical issues and following a rehearsed announcement, the audience was asked to hold tight and once they “lubricated” the situation the show would start again.

The aspect of this show that was impressive was the constant notion that in all areas of theatre, whether it is costuming or set, the boundary must always be pushed even if it’s in small ways. Unfortunately, as a result of pushing the envelope one always faces the risk of having problems throughout the show this can be seen in many modern shows such as the recently opened production of *Spider Man*. This is a reminder to the 2012 production that encase of an emergency a plan for all possible problems should exist. For example in the case of a fire or a fire alarm, an announcement of what actions the audience should take should already be made.

## **Chicago**

### **Alex’s review**



This show is about the music, sex, violence, crime, and drugs of Chicago during the twenties. The show was incredible. The actors were fantastic and the plot was amazing as always. The only significant change was the age of the actors. In the NYC production the entire cast is on average 10 years older.

The set was comprised of a raked orchestral pit that resides on stage. This leaves an area in front of the pit that is fifteen feet deep; there are also strips of space on each side of the pit and with a set of stairs up into the pit. Other than this the only areas that people were able to act were two ladders that swung in from each side of the stage. The pit was incorporated into the blocking because actors went up into the pit in order to interact with the conductor and to use the exit that was located in the center of the raked pit. The only other aspect of set existed was bent wood chairs that were brought out for scenes and a tinsel curtain that was lowered for the last scene.

The most impressive technical element present in Chicago was the costuming. Although it was comprised of no more than various corsets and assorted fishnet and 5 inch stilettos, the atmosphere that it provided was remarkable. Because it was so different than the everyday apparel, it dissociated the viewer and allowed them to become even more engrossed in the show. Additionally the costuming made sure that the theme of dark, jazzy, and sexy Chicago was never off the audience's radar.

The choreography for this show was amazing, although it wasn't too technically complex the overall appeal was fantastic. The shows dance numbers consisted of primarily a jazzy dance style with a large amount of small motions that the cast knew incredibly well. The show also had aspects of tap dance sprinkled in to the choreography. The two aspects of the choreography that really stood out was how sharp and simple everything was.

Lighting was done very well it had a flashy feel with gelled Par4's in the wings of the stage made visible to the audience. Other specials they had were the sparkle of rotating disco balls during the song "razzle dazzle".

Aspects of Chicago that could be utilized for the 2012 production are the focus on costumes and choreography. It is very important that when choreographing the show it is kept in mind that the ensemble can never be too in sync. And that costumes can make or break the atmosphere of a show.

### **Beth's review**

#### Plot Summary:

A lady shoots her lover (despite having a husband as well), after about three dancing numbers somewhat related to the plot line, and gets arrested for first-degree murder. During her stay in prison, she is introduced to the murderesses of Murderer's Row (described by yet another number, performed by the femme fatales themselves), and also to a lawyer who seems to be in the business not necessarily for holding up the law. Her arrival effectively dethrones the most recent 'Queen of the Row' and with the help of her hapless husband, who all his life has been starved for attention, manages to acquire enough funds to have the devious lawyer direct her path to fame and glory, with the help of a few additional shady characters - such as a man impersonating a 'goody-goody' woman. However, what goes up must come down, and after barely escaping the death penalty (after another woman was not so fortunate - the first to be killed in 46 some odd years), all of her fame and glory leaves her, and she is right back where she started, her dreams deflated after getting a good airing, and with her husband, of whom she does no longer love.

Immediate reaction:

The musical in itself was incredibly interesting for several reasons: first of all, everyone was scantily clad in practically their underwear throughout the entire show, so the sexual stimulation in the audience was, ahem, evident. Second of all, the dancing was, of course, magnificent. Third of all, how the play itself creatively broke the fourth wall - saying, 'this is act is blah blah blah'.

Applications to our project:

Although the show was well-worth the ticket, there were not many elements of either the performance or the stagecraft that could have applied to our project, unfortunately. Being set almost 100 years ahead of when the last Gilbert and Sullivan production exhausted its debut route, the stagecraft - and, indeed, the type of show - was built for a different generation (yet again different than ours, but at least closer to ours), and thus for another time.

In so many words, this and the performance before it were both not incredibly relevant to our project... Unfortunately...

## **Pygmalion**

### **Alex's review**

One of the best shows I've seen since I've been in London. This show tells the story of a poor flower girl who is subjected to an experiment to make her proper, taken in by two speech specialists she is taught how to correctly speak and behave. They are attempting to make her pass as a high class woman in just 6 weeks and succeed. The story follows her through this process and shows

the pain she feels being seen as an experiment or a subject and not as a real person. This show is what *My Fair Lady* is based upon.

The set consisted of a stage covered in black and red tiles with a constructed background that was in a way that it could fold together to become sets of book cases that were incredibly detailed and could fold out to form an elegant sitting room scene. The scene changes were amazing because when transitioning to the office the two halves of the desk area would roll out on tracks from each side of the stage each occupied by a man sitting on a chair on their respective halves. When the scene transitioned to the sitting room scene the desk area would split and take them with it. Then a set of servants would roll out several chairs tables and lamps all attached together and on castors. This allowed for quick easy and fool proof scene changes. The set was designed with marble that was painted onto wood; it was painted in a way that made it appear modern.

At the beginning of the show there was a rain effect that intended to portray poor weather but instead just looked like light moving vertically on the stage. The effect would have been more convincing with just a sound effect and no light effect at all. The lighting for the show other than the rain effect was good there was a very dramatic scene between the two leads at the end of the show and there was excellent use of silhouette light projections used. Each of them were positioned on opposite sides of the stage and there as a light on each of them that cast a silhouette on the center of the back wall making it appear that large versions of them were talking to each other in addition to their actual conversation. This was a clever effect.

Aspects of this show that should be kept in mind when putting on the 2012 production are that scene transitions should be made easier whenever possible. The effort the spent on attaching a

sitting room table set together and putting it on castors made the scene changes fast and not distracting. The effort that was made in this production to have a very detailed set was very apparent and appreciated so it no level of detail will go unnoticed on our set.

## **Beth's review**

### Plot Summary:

Eliza Doolittle is a common flower girl on the streets of London, with no parents or no family to report. Just by luck, she so happens to run into a pair of famous linguists - one cocky, but so good that he can determine accents as close as to within two streets away in London; and one gentle, yet not as vastly knowledgeable as his counterpart - who decide to 'take her in'; that is, to teach her how to speak like a high-born woman in order to fool the court at some bake 6 months hence. After a montage of training, with the hiccup or two of a new lover in Eliza's life... much to the chagrin of the haughty linguist... Eliza blows away the court without anyone suspecting a thing, and the two linguists pat THEMSELVES on the back (not at all Eliza, who was the one who had to go through the ordeal). Eliza, heartbroken and dreams broken, runs to the linguist's mother (of whom she knows will take care of her), not knowing what her fate will be. When the duo of linguists send the police after her in yet uncommunicated affection for her, the mother - perhaps a little late in the linguists life - gives her son a hearty dose of manners (which the audience, by this point, laps up like a dog because he is just so foul), after which revealing that Eliza is, in fact, there with her. The unfavoured (actually they mutually romantically favor each other) linguist yells at Eliza for a time, where she, for perhaps the first time, defends herself and what she will be doing with her life. She tells him, a supposed confirmed old bachelor, that she will be marrying the man who loves her, much to his chagrin, and proceeds to. The play ends

with her taking a flower out of her wedding bouquet, giving it to the exasperated linguist, and then running off happily with her wealthy, aristocratic, and loving husband.

## **An Actors Life for Me**

### **Alex's review**

There is not much to say about this show other than that it was a waste of 20 pounds. The show was less of a show and more of a dialogue between two 65 year old, washed up actors that were taking just one more victory lap. The show was entirely read from a script and although there was great stage presence it didn't make up for them reading directly from scripts. The stories that they told were about the finer points of an actor's life and consisted of tales about the tragedies that occurred on stage during their hay day and both the good and bad reviews they received.

The set consisted of two chairs, a table, a plant, two glasses of water, and a reading light. The set didn't change and just served as a place them to sit while they told the audience about their grand tales of being an actor.

The lighting was very poorly done because the only lighting present was foot lighting and because the actors were holding binders that contained their scripts large shadows were consistently cast on their faces.

Other than bad acting, poor light, an overly simple set, and a lack of a plot there isn't much to really talk about when it come to *An Actors Life for Me*.

### **Beth's review**

Plot Summary :

Not much of a plot, basically these two much older actors came up on stage and regaled on the many stages of life for an actor - with their scripts in hand. The stage was brightly lit, so there was little problem in hearing them... However most of the plot summary was essentially them reading a number of quotes from a binder, going from the stage of the child actor to that of the one dying at the foot of the stage.

Immediate reaction:

Despite the great amount of relevance to our project, essentially due to the set, the show was far from entertaining, and there were many moments when the members of the project team were on the verge of falling asleep. There was a man and a woman onstage...in respect for their great age (around their 70's or 80's), all they were required to do was to read from the binder and add that specific acting quality to their voice. The gentleman of the duo seemed to get the memo, but the lady did not. In spite of all this the scenery was quite beautiful, and of the time period which we are pouring into our research.

Relevance to our Project:

Nothing which the actors were doing, reading or were a part of onstage had anything to do with our project. However, the entire set around them is exactly what we were sent downtown the UK for. The Normansfield theatre will be talked about in another section in our paper, since we went out of our way to go see it and interview someone on it.

**Much Ado about Nothing (24 May 2011)**

## **Beth's review**

### Plot summary:

Senor Benedict and Lady Beatrice hate each other's guts, perpetually in a battle of wits despite never having met until the first scene. Upon meeting, their contempt for each other is cleverly volleyed in front of an audience consisting of their friends (and the actual audience), afterwards Senor Benedict imparts gems of egotistical wisdom advising no man to marry, or even to fall in love with a woman. Subsequently, his buddy () tentatively imparts that he is much in love with Hero, Beatrice's female companion, setting Benedict on edge and into a diatribe about the female persuasion.

### Immediate reaction:

At first, I was unable to enjoy the show due to illness. Therefore my first impression, decidedly Shakespearean now that I think about it, was not a very good one of the play – surprising because usually Globe plays are the ones I most enjoy, despite being the ones I pay the least for. However, after repairing to the local Starbucks and eating a warm club sandwich and downing a steaming hot English Breakfast tea, my hacking subsided and by the end of the performance, I was thoroughly pleased with the show as I only am with the born-and-bred Shakespearean productions that I find only at the Globe.

During the first scene, as a large group of gentlemen ascended the stage via the stairs next to me, one of the men handed me a fake couple of red flowers. How awesome! Despite their fakeness :P Anyways, I was thoroughly impressed with the male lead especially in this production – although the productions at the Globe are always both amazing and engaging, their male lead parts could have stood to have a little more verve – who in this performance did bring the verve



that the play deserved. The secondary lady was timid before she was able to show her verve, however – leaving me slightly less impressed with her performance initially, but that was also intentionally written into the script.

One performance that really grabbed the interest of the entire audience was that of the examiner, I believe he was called. A short man with an unimpressive appearance, he managed to captivate the audience when after every third sentence (or sometimes word) he would interject with a very strange, “Wooooauhhh” that would just add an element of seemingly (although it is not) unintentional element of humour that is not even really related to the performance, but had the audience every time he left the stage – even if it was in the middle of a scene – clapping due to his raucous reception.

As for the stage elements (which John wants me to write more about), there were orange vines (?) hanging about the stage, the floor was ingraven with blue-painted pools of water – often used as elements in the production – and there was the use of a ladder throughout the production that helped to enhance the performance (Benedict was atop it hidden away eavesdropping onto two mens’ conversation about him (intentional), and was hanging onto the orange picker after it was taken away from him, where he eventually and haphazardly fell to the stage, much to the amusement of the audience. (during Beatrice’s snooping scene, a washline was drawn across the two pillars – a common stage element in plays at the Globe (the rope drawn across the stage, not necessarily a washline) - where she moved the one sheet around in a very obvious fashion – a cute interpretation albeit most likely not believable in real life. But that’s the theatre, isn’t it?) All in all, it was a great production, with very interesting stagecraft and even more interesting stage play, ending with a sensual/animalistic/playful/cute (???? It worked, that’s all that matters) dance/bow of all the actors at the end, again just another element of a play at the Globe Theatre.

## **Macbeth**

### **Alex's review**

This show was done at the scoop in London with is an outdoor performance location that contains no stage. There are just a concrete circle of seats around a performance space. This aspect of doing a show in a unconventional location changed the environment of the show because it had to be staged in a different way.

When the sunset and there wasn't enough light to see the actors the technical crew brought out 10000 lumen flashlights and manually lit the show. This was effective enough for the audience to see the action taking place on the stage but it was not sufficient enough for anyone hard at seeing. Another interesting use of lighting in the show was that as a replacement for torches they were holding black flashlights with the bulb exposed. To depict one person lighting another person's torch they would touch bulbs and the person with the unlit torch would turn on their flashlight.

The show followed the plot but was done in an unconventional way. The Three witches instead of being old witches they were depicted as young children who didn't have a sense of right or wrong and would be cruel for fun. The three witches played a much larger role in the show they normally would have because during most scenes even if they didn't have any lines they would be present in the background of the action.

Costuming was also very unconventional; Lady Macbeth was clad in a full dominatrix suit and had a much more commanding personality than she has in more conventional productions. The Three witches were dressed in childish clothing that was brightly colored and stood apart from the rest of the casts clothing.

Props and set pieces were kept off stage and were brought on when needed. The show began with a large red bin being brought out. The bin marked with “Xmas decorations” was filled with props and instruments. The cast each, one after another, grabbed an instrument and started the show with music.

Not many aspects of this show would be applicable for an authentic Gilbert and Sullivan production but this production is a constant reminder that shows can be done in new and unconventional ways. By doing a show outside or in a black box theatre it forces one to look at a show in a different way.

## **Spring Awakening**

### **Alex’s review**

This show was written in 1891 and is the story of a generation’s sexual revolution during severe the oppression of their parents. Set in Germany the story follows several youths that are starting to wonder about themselves as they go through the hardships of being an adolescent.

The set was comprised of a large tree set along the back wall flanked by two stair cases. In front of the tree was the pit and in front of the pit hung six swings. The swings ropes extended out of site and were attached to the grid. To either side of these were three sets of extended cubes that were originally set but as risers at a 45 degree angle on each side of the stage. The benches were covered in a brick pattern and topped with wood. Throughout the show these were moved and manipulated to create several different scenes including a classroom, the woods, and a graveyard, and many different houses. The transitions between scenes was very fluid and involved members of the cast come on and move them or up write them to create an effect.

The lighting was satisfactory, nothing stood out as being unique or original except for a stage teaser that was instead of being a curtain it was made out of about a hundred incandescent lights that were all different colors. The teaser would pulse with the music during particularly intense scenes but instead of being in sync with the music they just pulsed and didn't line up. Although it was a nice effect, it detracted because it was not in time with the beat of the music. Beyond the light curtain, there was not much else going on the way of lights. The stage was well illuminated and contained no noticeable dark spots. And the coloring of the lighting throughout the show represented the show's emotions well.

The costuming consisted of three separate genres, the school boys, the school girls, and the adults. The boys were wearing uniforms that were comprised of vests and pants of a matching pattern. These outfits provided a school/boarding school environment. The girls were wearing dresses that were very reminiscent of night gowns with a splash of color. The light weight dresses helped reinforce the innocence of the girls and as the girls lost their innocence they began to change costume. For example Wendla once she developed an attraction for Melchior she began wearing darker cloths and that were less accessible. And lastly the adults were wearing clothes that were very concealing and reserved which reinforced the idea that they are repressing the youths present in the story.

The choreography was amazing, although there were very few numbers that had all the members doing the same thing at the same time the choreography has such a contiguous pulse everyone always felt together. Additionally all the characters had phenomenal body language they showed their angst incredibly well through the way they held themselves and the way that they moved. Also the choreography gelled with the rock opera style of music very well. The choreography contained similar elements that would expect a punk band to be doing on stage of a concert.

Aspects of this show that could benefit the 2012 production are the energy that was present in the production. The reason that this production stands out from all the others that are present in this review section is the energy that it contained was just that much more than the others. Its technical elements were not better and in some cases worse than that of the other shows in this review section but the difference was the incredible amount of energy present in this production.

## **Yesterday**

### **Alex's review**

Yesterday is a ballet that was choreographed based upon a summary of Jasmin Vardimon's work with her own company over the past ten years that they have been working together.

The show starts with a black stage that has a slow fade up to being illuminated. There are about two dozen white streamers that extend from the up-stage grid and connect to the front of the stage behind some down stage technology. Positioned in the center of the stage is a woman standing on another individual's feet who is lying on his back with his feet up in the air.

Technically this show was amazing. The streamers were disconnected and retracted to join a ribbon curtain that was located down stage. As the show progresses scene changes occurred by having a sliding projector screen slide from one side of the stage to the other. There were moving and shuttered projections of white noise on this screen. The screen was presumably moved by people standing behind the screen. As the screen passes in front of people the people disappear and the characters for the new scene appear. The timing and precision needed to move this screen in time with the programmed projector was truly impressive

Live feed cameras in concert with projections and live projection were heavily used throughout the production. At first they were used to depict a woman drawing on herself, this imagery was projected on the ribbon curtain that hung upstage. Utilizing a close up shot the area of the woman being projected moved from her face to her chest to her arms down to her hand and the viewable area continued to change as she drew on herself. Next to the camera that was capturing her was a video monitor so that she could see what was being projected which allowed her to correct if she was in the wrong space.

Once this scene ended there was a man who was wearing a business suit jacket and he comes on stage and starts dancing using the jacket and the process of taking it on and off as the focal point of his choreography. This transitioned to a scene that was strictly side-lit. During the scene many other dancers come on stage flanking the original man and facing up stage, in order to portray that the scene was occurring in a bathroom at urinals, the lighting at this point was unique because the shirtless dancers had shadows cast on the natural valleys that were located on their backs and butt. This effect led itself to the feel that the new dancers in the scene had very primal attributes. The man in the jacket eventually conformed to the scene and began to undress and dance with them. Once the group was shirtless black light was shown on them revealing the black light paint present on their backs that spelt out the title of the show “Yesterday.”

Following this there was a scene that was choreographed to imply a fight scene. In the scene a prop pillow was used in the choreography. The two dancers present in the fight were tossing each other and flipping each other with the pillow. The scene had a large amount of flow, the dancers felt very fluid. Once the fight between the man and the woman with the pillow was resolved the woman grabbed the pillow and stood still facing the audience holding the pillow in front of her, a projection that was shown on the pillow depicted an x-ray. The woman with

shuttered x-ray projection then began to move the pillow up and down her body exposing different areas of her skeleton. The way in which projection was used in this scene was so amazing.

The next scene was of an angry woman killing her lover with a handgun. A flat was brought out onto the stage and as she shoots him he poses on the flat and a bright flash of light is triggered in time with the gun shot. The flash of light causes the flat to glow and when the man moves away his silhouette is left in black. Other dancers then come on the stage and with purple LEDS positioned on a spray-paint can graffiti the flat. This cycle happens several times.

Other than the constant reminder that choreography should always be in sync it is hard to find parts of this show that would benefit the 2012 production.

## **A Delicate Balance**

### **Alex's review**

This show by Edward Albee follows the story of an upper-class couple in their 60's. They have the wife's alcoholic sister living with them. The couple's daughter is in the process of getting a divorce and returns home to be with her family in her time of need and throughout the show receives differing responses to her situation. The show had incredible writing and is classified as an absurdist drama.

Although, the show technically was not complex, one technical aspect that stood out the most was the costuming and set dressing. Both were able to solidify the period in which the show took place before a single word was spoken from an actor. The costumes were all from the 60's and

the set was designed with reference to a compilation of photographs that were taken from authentic 60's upper-class houses.

The set consisted of a wooden floor and several pieces of furniture. The stage was made to look like the sitting room of an upper class American family during the 60's. The room had a bar and an extensive collection of different spirits this was used very frequently and also solidified the time period of the show. Throughout the show no scene changes occurred, but on the back wall of the stage near the grid was a LED light board which had captions which contained all the lines of the show.

The lighting was standard and didn't seem to change much during the first two acts of the show and only in the third act when the time of day changed did the lighting. The large bay window located stage left was illuminated from behind which gave the illusion of an early morning sunrise, the effect did not have a great effect however. The light source that was used to shine through the window was very white and didn't seem organic enough to accurately portray natural sunlight. The one impressive lighting effect that was used during the show was when at the end of the show several of the cast members left through the front door of the house a very convincing beam of light show on to the stage.

One unique element of the show was that it was a captioned performance. The Libretto of the show was displayed on the top of the black wall of the stage. Although at the beginning of the performance it seemed like a distraction, as the performance continued it became an excellent reference. If a line was missed all an audience member would have to do is glance up and the last 4 lines would be displayed. After the show there was a discussion with the cast and the assistant director and during this discussion the captioning was discussed. Some members of the audience



viewed it as a distraction and others were incredibly grateful because it allowed for deaf individuals to view the performance. One deaf individual spoke during the discussion and expressed her incredible gratitude for the ability to see the performance.

Aspects of the show that could contribute to the 2012 production are the use of captioning. They allow the production to be both more understandable and accessible to a larger audience. Ways that WPI could implement this is either by purchasing a LED light board or by having a projector show the lines onto the wall. Having the board or the projections fall just above the proscenium arch would be an ideal scenario.

## **Two Boys**

### **Alex's review**

The show *Two Boys* tells the story of the attempted murder of a twelve year old child. At first the story seems simple one boy kills another, but upon further examination the relationship between the two boys was more than it appeared. The show follows a detective who is trying to solve the crime, and shows her struggles along the way. She eventually discovers that the younger of the two boys is manipulating the older by with the help of the internet and spins webs of lies the older becomes engrossed in.

The set consisted of 6-8 large blocks that were approximately 8 feet wide and twelve feet long. These blocks extended to the grid and were covered in a grey scrim which was projected on to depict different environments. These blocks were on castors and were able to slide out on the stage and form walls, buildings, streets, doorways, and rooms. To help the illusion of what the blocks represented dim images of furniture or wallpaper to suggest a bed or living room were projected on to the blocks. Inside each block was a stairwell that extended to the grid. The stairs

were only visible when lit from the inside. These stairs were used as locations for the chorus, holding laptops, to stand or sit to depict the community of the internet.

To set scenes furniture was also used. In the boys bedroom there as a bed and a desk, in the detectives office there was a coat hanger and a desk with papers, and in her home there were several chairs and a TV. All of this furniture was moved on and off depending on the scene that was taking place.

The projections for this show were impressive. The projections of rooms to add to the scene were subtle and dark. The effect was possibly created by taking images of the environments and changing them to grayscale and then removing the color of the grey scrim so that only darker and lighter shades were projected. If the project team were to experiment with scrim projection the effect could possibly be replicated.

Lighting was dark and effectively set the mood for a serious and provocative subject. Rooms were minimally lit and spots were used to highlight characters. No one was ever without illumination and the action was always visible. The lighting also appeared as monochrome. It seemed to lack the color in what seemed to be an attempt to make the environment seem harsh, impersonal and sterile, and it achieved this effect.

The show was captioned and it was incredibly necessary. If the show would have been uncaptioned the majority of the words would not have been understood. This is not because people were not well amplified but because they way in which they sung at times and the number of people that were singing at times prevented the audience from understanding. The captions were displayed on a LED light board and were present above the stage in front of the teaser.

Aspects of this production that could benefit the G&S show in the fall of 2012 are the use of captions. Because both this show and the show that will be done in 2012 are operas the threat of the audience not always being able to understand the dialogue or lyrics is a possibility. This can be prevented by having captioning. The use of captioning will also open the production up to a larger audience and make it available to those who are deaf, in addition to suggesting the use of a libretto.

## Appendix B – Photos

### B.1 Normansfield theatre



Figure b.1.1: Stage of the Normansfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.2 Outside of the Normansfield Theatre.





Figure b.1.3.1 Rear of the Normansfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.3.2 Rear of the Normansfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.4 Left-hand side of the Normansfield Theatre.





Figure b.1.5.1 Original actor flat from the Savoy production of *Ruddigore*.



Figure b.1.5.2 Original actor flat from the Savoy production of *Ruddigore*.



Figure b.1.5.3 Original actor flat from the Savoy production of *Ruddigore*.



Figure b.1.5.4 Original actor flat from the Savoy production of *Ruddigore*.





Figure b.1.5.5 Original actor flat from the Savoy production of *Ruddigore*.



Figure b.1.5.6 Original actor flat from the Savoy production of *Ruddigore*.



Figure b.1.6 Pictures of the restored original backdrops to the Normansfield Theatre.





Figure b.1.7 Original gas lighting system for the seating banks.



Figure b.1.8 Aerial view of the Normansfield stage from the balcony.





Figure b.1.9 An original limelight projector converted to electric power.



Figure b.1.10 Electric lights present in the Nornansfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.11 The original main gas house light fixture in the theatre.





Figure b.1.12 The original rope rigging system used at the Normasfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.13 The original rope rigging system used at the Normasfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.14 The original gas pipes that were part of the gas lighting system at the theatre.



Figure b.1.15 This is a ladder used to access the rigging of the Normasfield Theatre.





Figure b.1.16 These are the french fabric flates present at the Normansfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.17 These are the french fabric flates present at the Normansfield Theatre.



Figure b.1.18 These are the french fabric flates present at the Normansfield Theatre





Figure b.1.19 This is an image of the footlights used at the Normasfield Theatre



Figure b.1.20 This is a door that goes back stage.



Figure b.1.21 These are the stairs used to get onto the stage located both right and left of the stage.



Figure b.1.22 This is the clock that is located at the back of the Normansfield Theatre



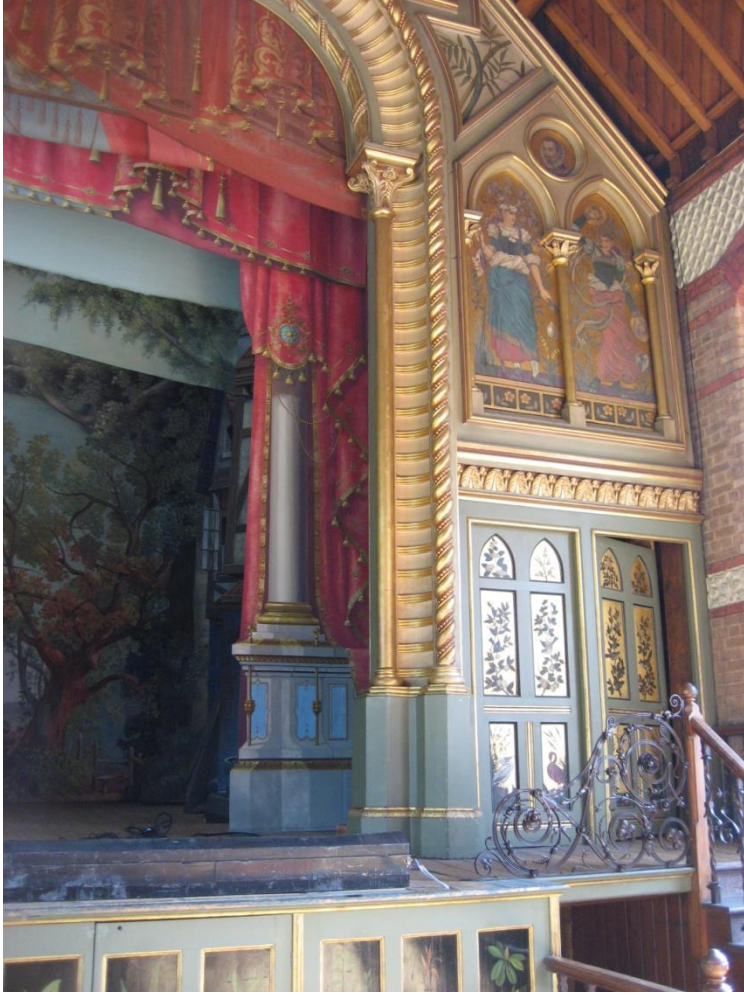


Figure b.1.23 This is the right side of the stage at the Normansfield Theatre

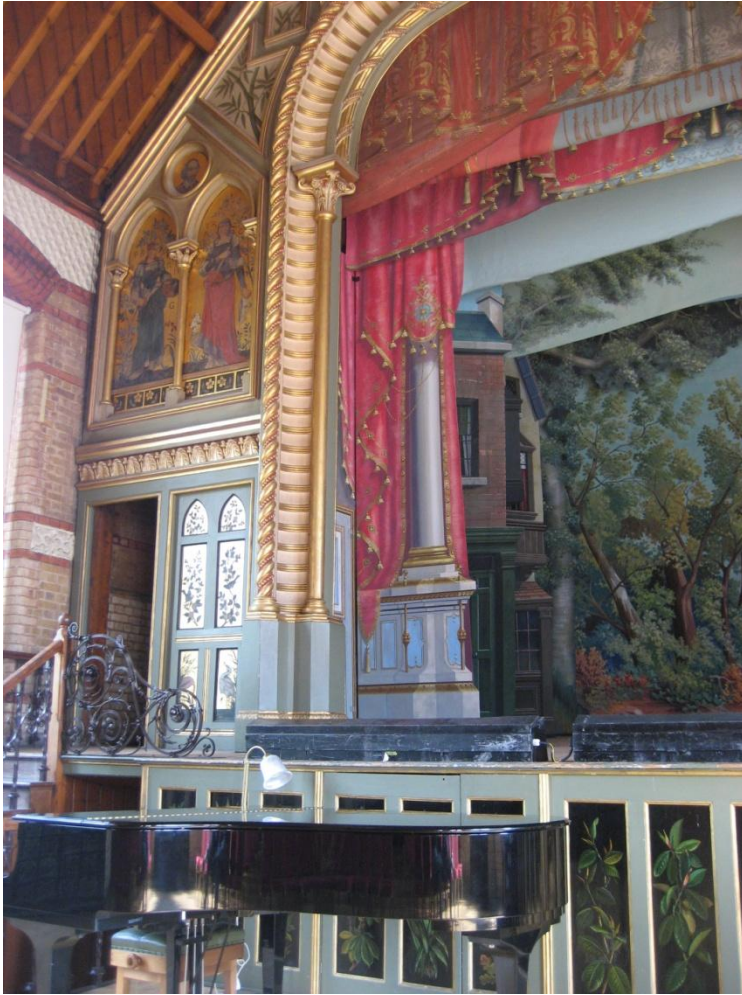


Figure b.1.24 This is the left side of the stage at the Normansfield Theatre

The following is a conglomerate of assorted photos from Pollock's Toy Museum:





Figure b.2.1 A miniature Victorian play theatre from 1834.



Figure b.2.2 A miniature Victorian play theatre, with two separate pieces for actors.



Figure b.2.3 A miniature Victorian play theatre name, 'Adelphi'.



## Appendix C – Scans

The following is a conglomerate of scans for various sections:

### Programs

First night programs:

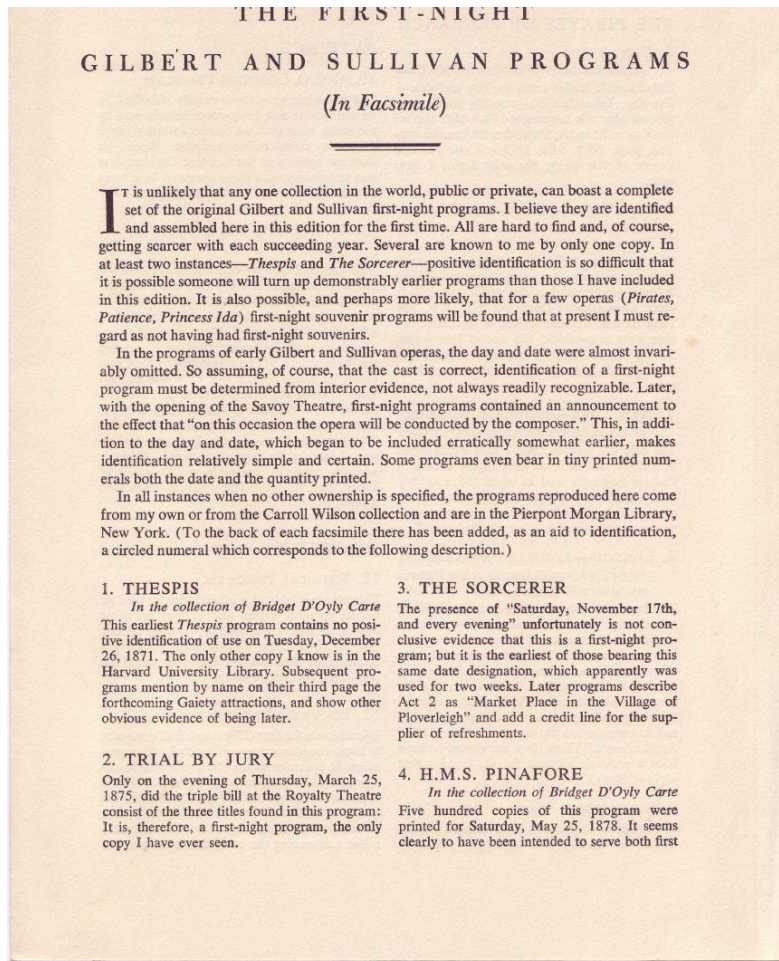


Figure C.2.1 The First-Night Gilbert and Sullivan (in facsimile).

## THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

### 5. PAIGNTON

*In the collection of Bridget D'Oyly Carte*  
This handbill leaflet bears the day and date—Tuesday, December 30—showing that it was printed after the larger-size bills which carried the date as Monday, December 29 (see illustration, page 101). Miss D'Oyly Carte has two copies of this rarity, the only copies I have seen.

### 6. NEW YORK—REGULAR PROGRAM

*In the Theatre Collection of Harvard University*  
This is the first Gilbert and Sullivan first-night program to carry the information that Arthur Sullivan would conduct the performance. It is dated unmistakably December 31, 1879. The Fifth Avenue Theatre regular programs at this time were near-tablet size and of four pages. This Harvard Library example lacks pages three and four, but it is the only copy I have seen.

### 7. NEW YORK—SOUVENIR PROGRAM

*In the collection of Bridget D'Oyly Carte*  
The only silk program that I have encountered in Gilbert and Sullivan first nights occurs in deep plum-purple and in white. Miss D'Oyly Carte has an example of each. This souvenir is a simple affair, made up like a newspaper advertisement, printed as a small silk handbill.

### 8. LONDON—REGULAR PROGRAM

*In the Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London*  
The key to identifying this program is the word "Production" on the front cover. In the theatre parlance of those days, "production" meant "first performance." Except for this subtle clue there is no date, no mention of Sullivan conducting (which he did), in short no positive means of identification. The Enthoven copy of this program bears the ink notation of the original first-nighter on its cover—"3 April 1880 Amphitheatre." There does not appear to have been a souvenir program for the London first night of *Pirates*.

### 9. INDULGENCE SLIP

In the Enthoven program is an undated printed notice of management apology, popularly

## PATIENCE

### 10. OPÉRA COMIQUE PROGRAM

The first-night program is readily identified by its red border and front-cover initials, and by the notice on page three that on Saturday, April 23, there would be no forepiece. Again, no mention appears of the fact that the composer was to conduct, and there seems to have been no souvenir program for the first night.

### 11. OPENING OF THE SAVOY THEATRE

This unmistakable yet oddly modest first-night program contains all the points one could desire for its identification; the day, date, description of the occasion, and—for the first time in a London Gilbert and Sullivan first-night program—an announcement, "On this occasion the Performance will be conducted by the Composer." It seems curious that there was no souvenir to dress the Savoy Theatre that evening. Perhaps one will turn up, but there is no press mention of any and no example is in the D'Oyly Carte files or in the Enthoven Collection. Later in the run, there was a *Patience* souvenir program, complete with a motif of Savoy electric light bulbs in its decorative scheme.

## IOLANTHE

### 12. REGULAR PROGRAM

This was available in a ribbed pink as well as ribbed greenish paper, and perhaps in other shades. It carries the day and date—Saturday Evening, November 25—as well as the announcement that the performance would be conducted by the composer.

### 13. SOUVENIR PROGRAM

*Iolanthe* was the first Gilbert and Sullivan opera to have a souvenir program for its London première. It is similar to the electric-light-bulb design of the late-run *Patience* souvenir, but with appropriate figures of the Fairy Queen and the Lord Chancellor. It features the day and date—Saturday Evening, November 25—and also a line announcing the composer as conductor.

Figure C.2.2 The First-Night Gilbert and Sullivan (in facsimile, continued).





Figure C.2.3 The outside cover of the first night program for *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

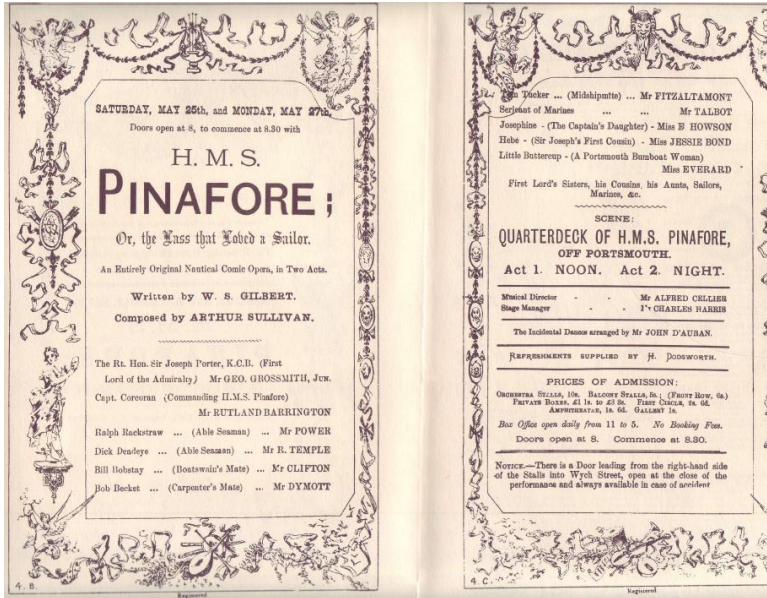


Figure C.2.4 The inside cover of the first night program for *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

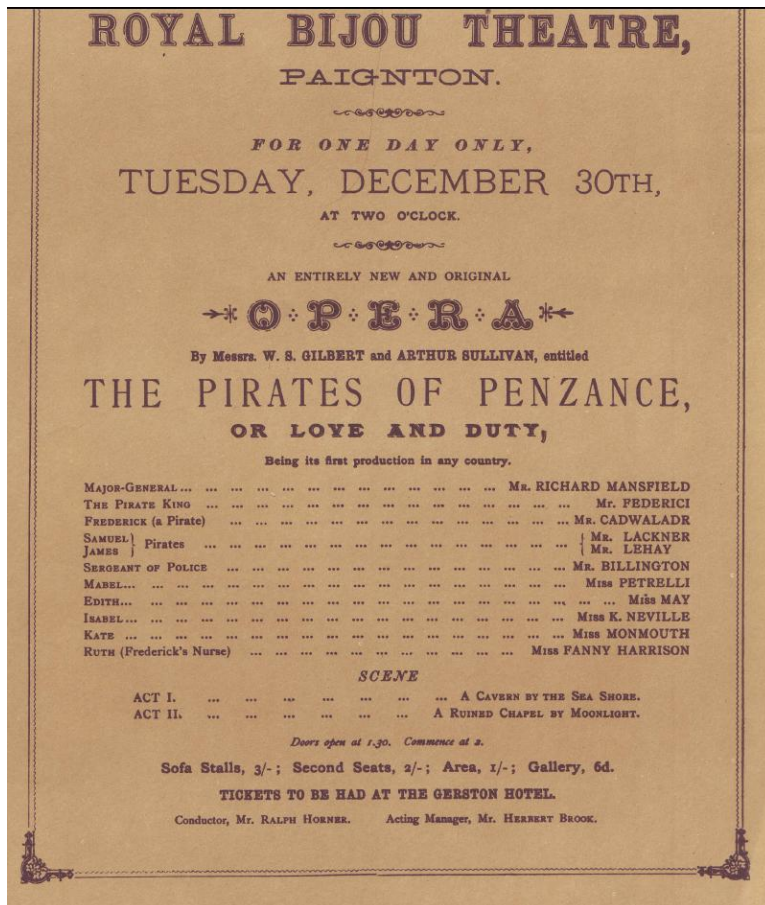


Figure C.2.5 The front cover of the first night program for *Pirates of Penzance*.

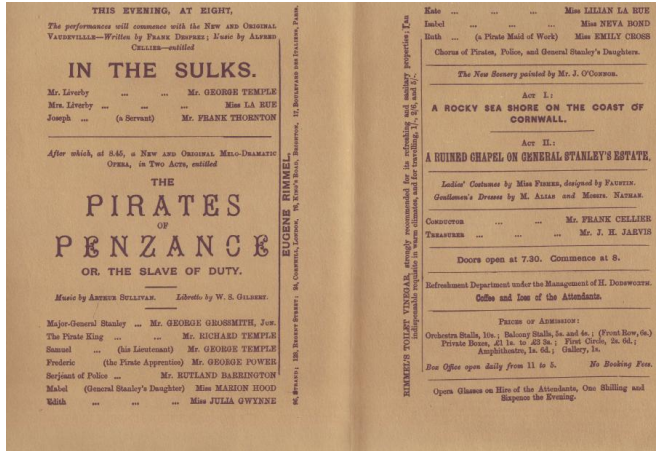


Figure C.2.6 The inside cover of the first night program for *Pirates of Penzance*.

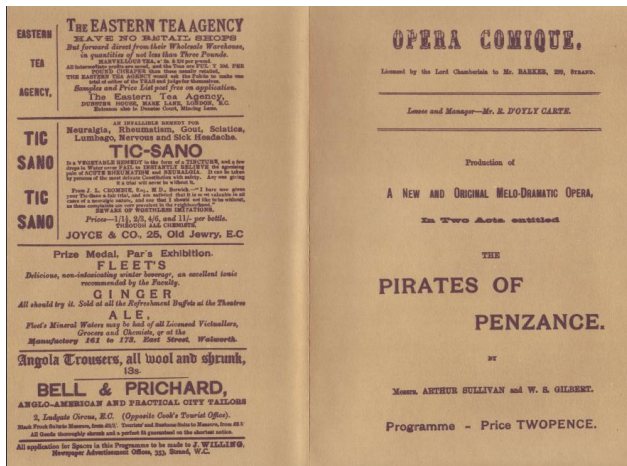


Figure C.2.7 The outside cover of the first night program for *Pirates of Penzance*.

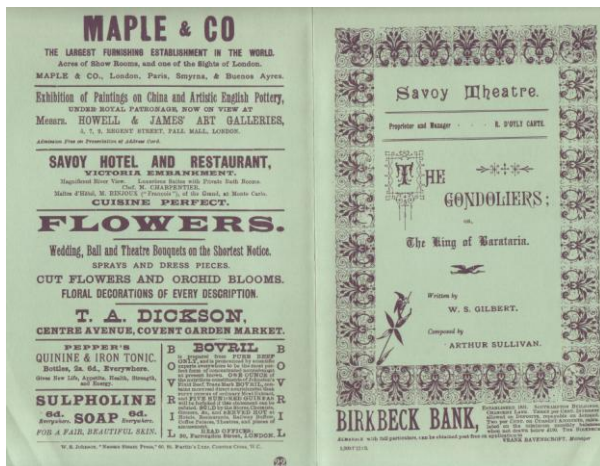


Figure C.2.8 The outside cover of the first night program for *The Gondoliers*.





## Other scans

*Savoy Opera*

A list of the various Operas played under the management of RICHARD and HELEN D'OYLY CARTE, at the Royalty, Opéra Comique, and Savoy Theatres, London.

*Produced at the Royalty Theatre*

TRIAL BY JURY . . . . .	25th March, 1875
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*Produced at the Opéra Comique*

THE SORCERER . . . . .	17th November, 1877
H.M.S. PINAFORE . . . . .	25th May, 1878
THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE . . . . .	3rd April, 1880
PATIENCE . . . . .	23rd April, 1881

*Produced at the Savoy Theatre*

PATIENCE ( <i>Transferred from Opéra Comique</i> ) . . . . .	10th October, 1881
IOLANTHE . . . . .	25th November, 1882
PRINCESS IDA . . . . .	5th January, 1884
<i>The Sorcerer (1st revival) and Trial by Jury</i> . . . . .	11th October, 1884
THE MIKADO . . . . .	14th March, 1885
RUDDIGORE . . . . .	22nd January, 1887
<i>H.M.S. Pinafore (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	12th November, 1887
<i>The Pirates of Penzance (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	17th March, 1888
<i>The Mikado (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	7th June, 1888
THE YEOMAN OF THE GUARD . . . . .	3rd October, 1888
THE GONDOLIERS . . . . .	7th December, 1889
THE NAUTCH GIRL . . . . .	30th June, 1891
THE VICAR OF BRAY . . . . .	28th January, 1892
HADDON HALL . . . . .	24th September, 1892
JANE ANNIE . . . . .	13th May, 1893
UTOPIA, LIMITED . . . . .	7th October, 1893

11

Figure C.3.1 This is a record of the shows performed in the Savoy Theatre.

MIRETTE . . . . .	3rd July, 1894
THE CHIEFTAIN . . . . .	12th December, 1894
<i>The Mikado (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	6th November, 1895
THE GRAND DUKE . . . . .	7th March, 1896
<i>The Mikado (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	11th July, 1896
HIS MAJESTY . . . . .	20th February, 1897
<i>The Yeoman of the Guard (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	5th May, 1897
THE GRAND DUCHESS . . . . .	4th December, 1897
<i>The Gondoliers (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	22nd March, 1898
THE BEAUTY STONE . . . . .	28th May, 1898
<i>The Gondoliers (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	18th July, 1898
<i>The Sorcerer (2nd revival) and Trial by Jury</i> . . . . .	22nd September, 1898
THE LUCKY STAR . . . . .	7th January, 1899
<i>H.M.S. Pinafore (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	6th June, 1899
THE ROSE OF PERSIA . . . . .	29th November, 1899
<i>The Pirates of Penzance (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	30th June, 1900
<i>Patience (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	7th November, 1900
THE EMERALD ISLE . . . . .	27th April, 1901
<i>Iolanthe (1st revival)</i> . . . . .	7th December, 1901
<i>The Yeoman of the Guard (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	8th December, 1901
<i>The Gondoliers (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	22nd January, 1902
<i>Patience (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	4th April, 1902
<i>Iolanthe (2nd revival)</i> . . . . .	11th June, 1902
<i>The Mikado (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	28th April, 1903
<i>H.M.S. Pinafore (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	14th July, 1903
<i>Iolanthe (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	19th October, 1903
<i>The Pirates of Penzance (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	1st December, 1903
<i>The Gondoliers (4th revival)</i> . . . . .	18th January, 1909
<i>The Yeoman of the Guard (3rd revival)</i> . . . . .	1st March, 1909

Figure C.3.2 This is a record of the shows performed in the Savoy Theatre (continued).

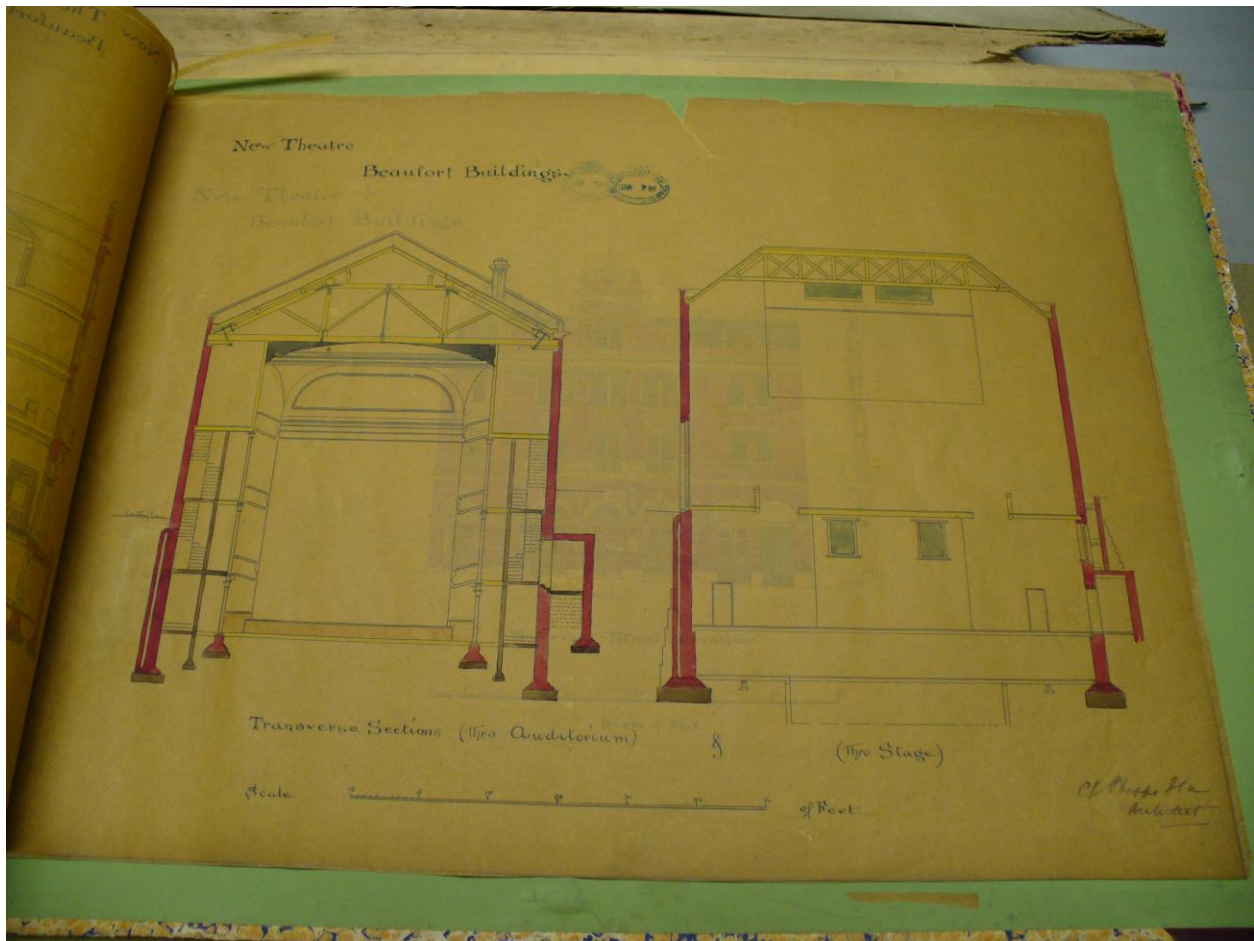


Figure C.3.3 This is a frontal view and a transection of the original Savoy Theatre.



## Appendix D –Interview Notes

The following are notes that were taken during an interview with Robert Gordon-Powell and Will Parry:

How and when did you initially become interested in G&S specifically? (Will & Robin)

Will: In my early teens, I bought a recording of The Gondoliers so to listen to them in the car... and I fell in love with it

Robin: Gondoliers also...my high school often produced G&S. I got into chorus; during a show conductor last minute got ill... pulled in to conduct & now does it alot

When and how did you decide to get involved with the SASS? (W & R)

Robin: a long time afterwards... school in s. africa... 10 yrs later came back to england... discovered sass... became interested in non-g&s society

Will: boght cd 1992 had detals on back of cd, so wrote to them & that was that. got more involved tan iniially though

What areas of involvement have you had experience in? (Essentially, what role do you play?) (W & R)

Will: look after finances... had no money when we started... relies on generosity of others... also writes quite a lot.... lots of paraphernalia (passion of his)

Robin: got dragged into official capaci by will :P person who lookd after archives lost interst and resigned, took over 10 yrs ago. Looks over physical holding of society. Official role.

Will (on Robin): he also generates formal performable material on Sullivan's work. A lot stuff no longer exists (creates authentic manuscripts). there are now scores that are easil accesible to people all over the world

What are you currently working on with SASS or what is your next project? (W & R)

Robin: latest project to record sullivan,s last completed opera - Beeauty stoned (1898-revived). I'm creating a new set of material from the atographd manuscript. new everything for music...

Will: very exciting because everythign was auctioned off so now we have access to the score and are teh frst people to go look at it and interpreate it. So very exciting thing!

Beauty stone was a Savoy opera, there survives a complete set of costume designs for it. Very beautiful. However no record of the set design, very few photographs of it left.

When we do pirates, what edition?

Dover edition

If you were to conduct a G&S show, what quantity of musicians and what arrangement would you want for the pit? (Robin) (assume we are doing Pirates; ask very specifically)

Depends, if wanted to be as authentic as possible:

? players at the time, easy to find out (will says no more than 30)

4 3 2 2 1, maybe 4 4 2 2 1 (translate via John later)

Set up:

If we could find out how Sullivan had then...otherwise just standard...hav strings on the left, and around to meet middle n front... (get rrest from itnerovew)

We've been here 4 weeks... contacted the Savoy, contacted Helga, Peter Parker...do you know the orchestra pit dimensions for the original Savoy Theatre, or any good way to get them? (Will, Robin will chime in)

Will speak to Peter Joselyn... book called, 'lost theatres of London' (can find in British library)

What can you tell us about librettos? (W & R)

Will: whole different theatrical experience.... libretto would not often completel reflect what was going on because each night would be different (very fluid); DID pay a shilling or something for the libretto... program would have been free however

G&S got royalties on librettos.... enormous indust h

Robin:

Desk vs. podium? Sitting vs. standing? Etc..

Sit during dialogue...

Podium

White gloves... we'll see

(Allow for questions from John)

As you prepare for coming to WPI, are there any things you would like us to research for you?

Will: Best places to eat & drink :P .... no orchestra pit; could have seen Gilbert a foot above the stage

Robin: Bowing depends on individual's technique

Extra notes:

Will: Look at extra press reviews online for 1881

Robin: Might even be able to find dimensions online. Manders and Metroson book - theatre historians. Their collection is now housed in Bristol

British Library - anything to see there?

Autographed manuscripts

The following is both notes on the interview conducted with Helga Perry and the transcription of the recording.

### **Helga pre-interview notes**

Casual conversation notes:

Roberta Moral – the director of the gondoliers that Helga was just in. She originally worked with the D'Oyly carte company.

Ruddigore has three endings

The first one was rejected by the audience because all the ancestors came back to life and stayed alive, offending sensibilities

It was re written so that only one of them remained alive

A revision was made by Jeffery Toy and some material was taken out by Jeffery toy. The original second ending was

This was done because the overtures were medially overtures (compiled of songs in the show) and they had to re write the overture because some of the songs were taken out.

The reason why they play a review of songs in the overture is so that you have a preview of the show and can get a taste of the show. It's so get the audience excited.

Historically there are stand-alone shows that done have overtures there are interesting musical history elements of having an overture in a show. *The Underworld* has every song in the overture

Mark Sheppard would be a great contact. (Helga has micro films of Sullivan's diary)

Presentation notes:

Change the name of Terence Rees to have an *e* instead of an *a*.

Look for the 1884 revival of trial by jury with the red fire it would really be able to show off the stage craft.

We might be able to find a libretto from Bruce's collection for the 1884 version of *Trial by Jury*

Helga also directed us to the website [Savoyoperas.org.uk](http://Savoyoperas.org.uk) – this is her site ant it contains the reviews of the original production of the Gilbert and Sullivan shows

In the presentation change importance to relevance on slide 8

With data collection look at the [SAVOYOPERA.org.uk](http://SAVOYOPERA.org.uk)

Read through the review to put things in context

## Helga Interview Notes

Interview:

How would you have laid out a pit at a G&S show specifically including the numbers and placement of the players?

Orchestration – including Mikado; with the exception of Trial by Jury – 2 flutes, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets, one bassoon, 2 french horns, 2 cornets, 2 trombones, 1 percussion, 1<sup>st</sup> violins, 2<sup>nd</sup> violins, violas, cellos, double bass. (2 double basses if you could get them)

How could we research # of players for strings? (John)

Sullivan was essentially scoring for chamber orchestra. After Mikado from then onwards, he added a 2<sup>nd</sup> bassoon & a 2<sup>nd</sup> trombone. Changes versatility, amount of pit + players... during original American tours of Utopia (for increased orchestration), also performed Patience. In NY public library, 2<sup>nd</sup> bassoon part of Patience, because of union rules when that opera was being performed. Extra parts created to keep players occupied.

4 a part then?

These days, lots of productions where they can't have the whole orchestra due to space or cost reasons. Cello & bass would share (often paired this way & was written this way). They wrote the parts on linked staves.

Violas? 2? 4?

2, 2, 1 1 1 usually in the productions she's played in. Tends to be 3, 2, 2, 1 for the strings. (as a conductor would be happy with this).

Pictures? Photographs?

Don't really know.

Pit:

Starting from left to right, line up wind across the back

Strings as in a regular chamber orchestra

Conductors left: all strings

Conductors right: all woodwinds

Perpendicular to stage facing each other

IN topsy-turvy, the picture they took from was flipped so orchestra is all backwards in movie

Reduced orchestra (1 flute, 1 piccolo, 2 clarinets, 1 bassoon, 1 longhorn, 2 cornets, 1 trombone)  
last time performed (only ever one percussion, mistake made in trying to reconstruct HMS  
Pinafore's 3 endings, really need 4 percussion for it to work, but can't fit it in) – Helga rewrote it  
for them.

Cornets vs. trumpets – USE CORNETS

Because trumpets used in G&S's day were based on battle trumpets, not really meant for an  
orchestra

Cornets were more tuneful and blended better with the human voice (since these are light operas)

Look into instrument manufacture, if trying to be incredibly accurate

Unfortunately in America, not too many people who can play cornets well

Look into Holy Cross's productions with WPI (keeps mentioning Holy Cross... research this)

Francois Celliae did most of the conducting

Desk as opposed to stand (was a rehearsal so... probably not what they would have done in a real  
performance)

Used white gloves & ebony batons due to the lighting on the stage

Pits were not generally refurbished... could look into those

Molvin (research)

Doing Victorian shows – conducting

Doesn't see a difference



Most experience?

Playing in a pit... some experience conducting... some editing G&S operas... helped to reconstruct missing material from HMS Pinafore

more specific

Bruce Miller, got involved with editing, 1998 were looking through old manuscript orchestra parts used in D'Oyly cart productions, discovered original act 1 #6 of HMS pinafore

How it happened

in 1999, (eventually will be doing HMS), at the time because HMS pinafore was originally had no overture, the overture that does exist was not written by S, some debate as to when got attaché dot the opera. (ask about why no overture), which has an overture? Looked into which of the three different act 2 finales were in there... were internationally calling... then Bruce said “go back to act 1... look at 9/8 over bright blue sea, what #?” “it’s #7” There was a #6 on previous page that hadn’t been seen before – ended up being missing #6.

Couple of days later, book fell out & opened where she saw pages stuck together. Peered between& saw Mt. Ararat. Also found only surviving music from act 2 Mt. Ararat. (find story on CD rom)

First go interested in G&S?

When child, 4 or 5 b-day given highlights from Mikado. Loved it & loved music, etc. Dad played them on piano (interested at a young age). Did Patience, pretty pretty maiden at parties. Dad played at local brass band, so got involved that way. (mostly influenced by dad).

How did you first get involved with SASS?

Through Bruce. Her dad started it, Bruce kick-started it.

Connections w/ savoynet?

Used to, not anymore.

Facebook group

New England Sullivan Society

Donald Smith – MIT (will send us contact details)

Another woman (get from recording) to contact

In Boston area lots of ppl (again will put us in touch with them)

Seagull effects? (Peter done with a recorder)

Never been involved in a production using seagull effects... most people now just use sound files to accomplish these effects (were probably just done the way that Peter had done them, very crudely)

Other effects used by the orchestra in a show?

Trial by jury – defendant tuning guitar, violin is doing the ‘tuning notes’, concert master, person next to is fiddling around to make the peg slipping sound (use a ratchet to make effect)

Sound effects would be coming from the orchestra as opposed to backstage

Orchestra chime – striking B natural 10 (not actually in original percussion aprt)

Nowadays use the bass symbols & then chimes and then bass symbols

Yeoman of the guard – bell (stage effects rather than in the orchestra)

Judy Neil; in her days in NY, sent down in the orchestra pit to play the bell (nearly caused a strike except convinced them that it was an effect that they wanted there) Stops int eh wrong place, not really in the percussionist’s part (shouldn’t be anywas)

Nowadays throw things in the orchestra – back then not so much

Onstage and offstage band

Pit of the orchestral instruments as opposed to military band pit

High pitch was a 4/45 as opposed to 4/40

Yet to be international establishment of pitch not till 1940 or so  
If want to be incredibly authentic use peashooter trumpets :P

Will do cornets (promise)

Last questions

Fee free to email more questions

What types of things has she been working on recently?  
Check dvd on gondoliers (only G&S done in recent times)

Most energies taken up doing things other than musical theatre and opera

Works for NHS

Other music: play in one of best brass bands in the country, Jaguar band (sponsored band), take part in major competitions, were in Chicago in 2006 runner up in brass band championships

Used to be a trombone player, now only does percussion

In brass brands, only cornets (no trumpets)

Sullivan's father was a military band master

Will edit the Sorcerer...

Needs more transcription of American productions of G&S productions (can help her out there), currently doing translations by hand, but technology exists to do it with software

Good at editing... going into conversation about setting up other IQP's (a lot could be done over the internet)

SWOT (strength weaknesses opportunities and sweat)

Is interested in incorporating what we do into the SASS, into her site, etc. (once it is published)

Still need to know basic dimensions of a Victorian stage... will we be able to find an exact

answer to? Might need to be conjectured... (Will says that he knows but does he really)

Contact Royal Academy of Music (19<sup>th</sup> century performance practiced)

Photos topsy turvy used....?

Seen photo somewhere... published in a book... can't think where ... got it from Bruce & Mark

## Appendix E – Timelines

Projected timeline for the Victorian Stacecraft project team over the course of the next four weeks:						
Week 1						
Mon. May 30th	Tues. May 31st	Wed. June 1st	Thurs. June 2nd	Fri. June 3rd	Sat. June 4th	Sun. June 5th
Finish rough draft of paper	Begin Interviewing process				Incorporation of edits into draft; rework of paper	
Week 2						
Mon. June 6th	Tues. June 7th	Wed. June 8th	Thurs. June 9th	Fri. June 10th	Sat. June 11th	Sun. June 12th
Compilation of data gathered from interviews		Submission of 2nd draft	Continuation of interviewing process			Compilation of data gathered from interviews
Week 3						
Mon. June 13th	Tues. June 14th	Wed. June 15th	Thurs. June 16th	Fri. June 17th	Sat. June 18th	Sun. June 19th
Incorporations of edits into draft; rework of paper		Final submission	Preparations for final presentation	Final Presentation		
Week 4						
Mon. June 20th	Tues. June 21st	Wed. June 22nd	Thurs. June 23rd	Fri. June 24th	Sat. June 25th	Sun. June 26th
				Visit & tour York Theatre		

Figure e.1 Project teams updated timeline



## Appendix F – Stage Dimensions and Blueprints

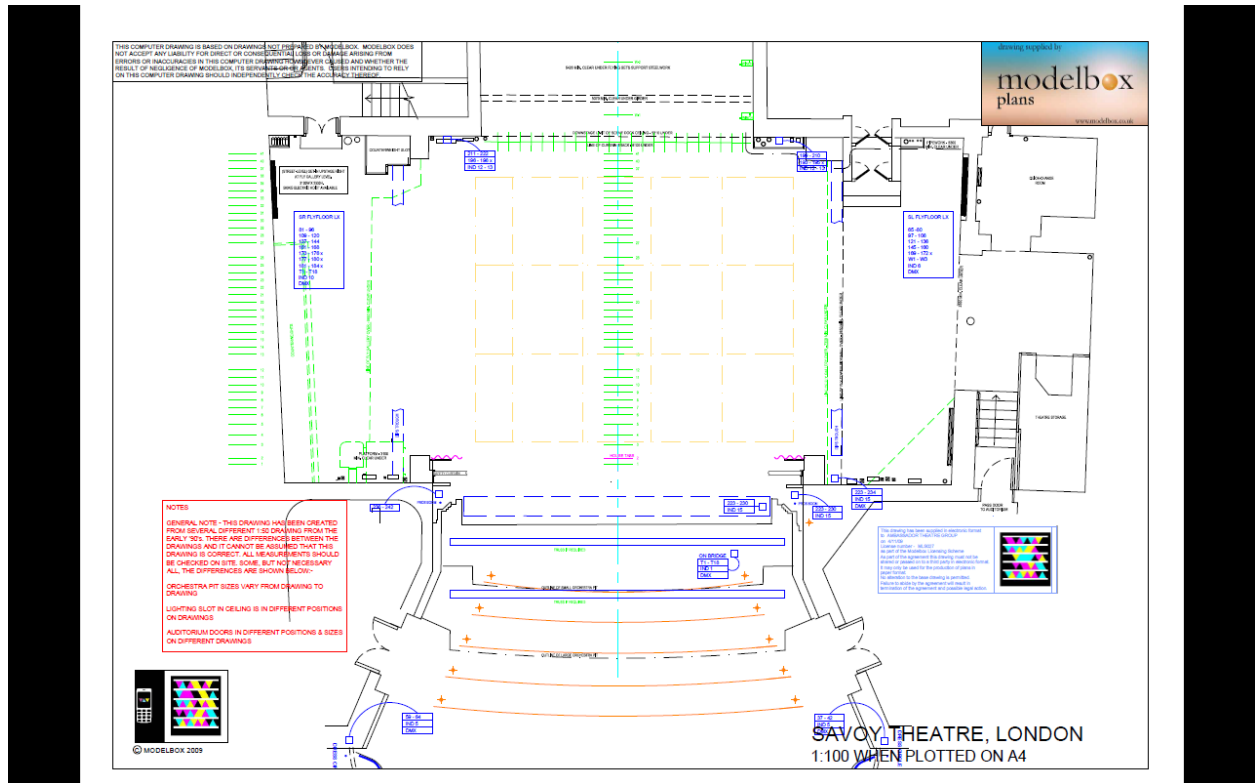


Figure f.1.1 Modern Savoy Theatre Blueprint

Table f.1.1 Table of stage dimensions that were collected by the project team

Theatre	Width of Proscenium opening (ft. in.)	Height of Proscenium opening	Depth from Proscenium Wing to	Distance between side walls	Distance between fly rails or Girders	Height from stage to "grid"	Depth from under fly platform to stage	Depth under stage	Height to take cloths up out of sight	Approx. seating capacity
<b>Alden Memorial</b>	29	25	25	58	N/A	25	N/A	3 0	N/A	500
	6	0	5	6		0+				
<b>Savoy Theatre (second)</b>	29	23	29	60	29	56	24	9 6	24	1,138
	4	6	6	0	6	0	0		0	
<b>Savoy Theatre (original)</b>	30	30	27	62	40	52	19	7 0	24	986
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	
<b>Normansfield</b>	25	~30	25	33	N/A	~30	~30	4 6	N/A	150
	0		0	0						



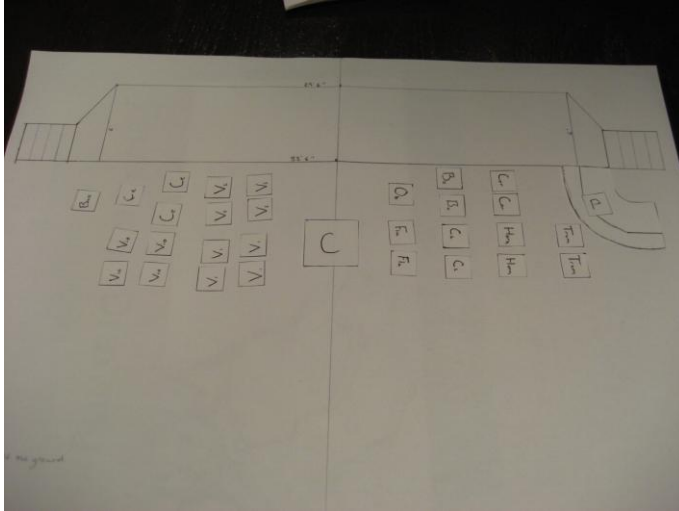


Figure f.1.2 Layout of the orchestra in which musicians are perpendicular to the stage

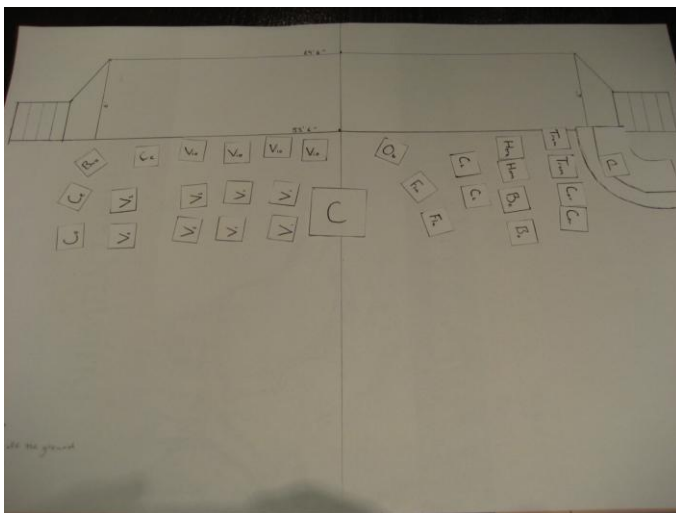


Figure f.1.3 Layout of the orchestra if *The Gondoliers* were the show picked.

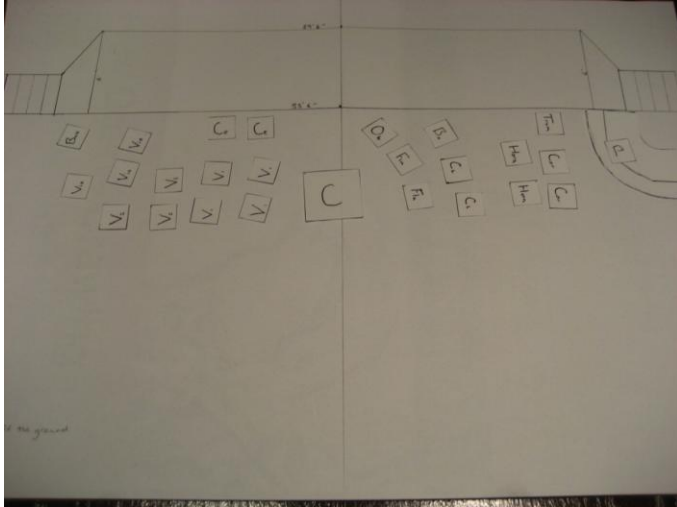


Figure f.1.4 Layout of the orchestra if *H.M.S. Pinafore* or *The Pirates of Penzance* were the show picked.

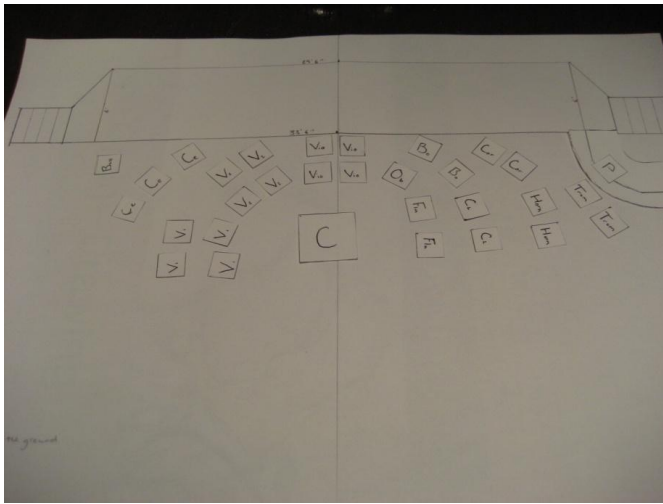


Figure f.1.5 Layout of the orchestra in which musicians are curved around the stage.

## Appendix G – Important Email Correspondence

### G.1 Steve Wentworth

Hi Fred

Thanks for your email - it sounds like an interesting project.

We do have a recently updated CAD drawing of the Savoy which we license professional users to have. We do not normally let non-professionals have access to our files as we have no way of safe-guarding the files.

However as a one off, I am willing to let you have a copy of it (plan and section) in AutoCAD format for a one off fee of £50+vat. There will be some restrictions on its use which I will detail in a License form which will need signing, if the fee is acceptable to you. Payment will have to be made via PAYPAL prior to my releasing the file.

Steve Wentworth

**From:** Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

**Sent:** 03 June 2011 13:12

**To:** [info@modelbox.co.uk](mailto:info@modelbox.co.uk)

**Subject:** Savoy Model

I am student performing a research project about Victorian stagecraft and stage magic, specifically my school is attempting to put on a Gilbert and Sullivan production in the most authentic way possible. I am trying to modify the dimensions of our schools Theatre

to match that of the original Savoy including making the placement of the instruments that would have been in the pit be placed in the correct locations.

I was wondering if there was a cad version of either the modern or the original Savoy in existence?

Alex "Fred" Rock

BioBiotech 2013

## G.2 Lesley Alabaf

Excellent!!!!

we have information about the Normansfields stage in case we cant find about the savoy. I'll add it to our data base.

Alex

---

From: Lesley Alabaf [Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk]

Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2011 8:22 AM

To: Rock, Alexander Edward

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

That's approximately 4 1/2 feet.

Lesley

-----Original Message-----

From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

Sent: 31 May 2011 01:20

To: Lesley Alabaf

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Hi Lesley,

Thank you so much, but do you also happen to know the difference in height between the theater floor and the stage.

Alex

---

From: Lesley Alabaf [[Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk)]

Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2011 3:16 AM

To: Rock, Alexander Edward

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Hi Alex

I'm so sorry I haven't had a chance to come back to you. The stage is approximately 25 feet x 25 feet (between the flaps and backdrop - if we use the whole stage - ie no backdrop and no flaps its another 4 feet either side.

The height of it I don't know but would say it's approximately 30 feet to the lights.

I hope that helps.

Regards

Lesley

-----Original Message-----

From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

Sent: 30 May 2011 02:43

To: Lesley Alabaf

Cc: Ruffa, Elizabeth Carmela; Rock, Alexander Edward

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Hello Lesley,

Not to be a bother, but I was wondering if you received the e-mail that I sent prior to this one? If the Stage dimensions are not available that is quite alright, I was just wondering?

Gratefully,

Alex "Fred" Rock

-----Original Message-----

From: Rock, Alexander Edward

Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2011 8:52 AM

To: Lesley Alabaf

Cc: Ruffa, Elizabeth Carmela

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Hello Lesley,

I was wondering if by any chance you knew any of the dimensions of the Normasfield Theatre and specifically its stage?

The three numbers I'm looking for are the height of the stage from the ground, the width of the proscenium, and if all possible the distance from the stage to the top of proscenium opening. If you have these numbers I would be incredibly appreciative but I understand if you do not.



Thankfully

Alex Rock

---

From: Lesley Alabaf [Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk]

Sent: Friday, May 20, 2011 3:59 AM

To: Rock, Alexander Edward

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Thanks Alex

Yes we won't be posting out the tickets - I just need a UK address for you.

See you tomorrow.

Lesley

-----Original Message-----

From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

Sent: 20 May 2011 07:14

To: Lesley Alabaf

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Hello Lesley,

My I am living on Manresa rd in Chealsea. I am staying in a building called IES it is a dorm complex for students that study abroad.

Alex Rock

IES Rm 323

Manresa Rd London SW3 6NA

Thanks so much. I am picking the tickets up Saturday right?

Alex

---

From: Lesley Alabaf [Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk]

Sent: Thursday, May 19, 2011 9:16 AM

To: Rock, Alexander Edward

Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

Hi Alex

I've just received your tickets form. Can you please confirm your UK address.

Thanks

Lesley

-----Original Message-----

From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

Sent: 17 May 2011 11:44

To: Lesley Alabaf

Subject: Re: Show and Theatre information

Hello Lesley,

That's perfect. See you then.

Alex

On May 17, 2011, at 11:11 AM, "Lesley Alabaf" <[Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk)> wrote:

> Hi Alex

>

> Morning will be better for me. Shall we say 10am?

>

> See you then.

>

> Kind regards

>

> Lesley

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

> Sent: 17 May 2011 11:04

> To: Lesley Alabaf

> Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

>

> Hello Lesley,

>

> I am free the entire day, so is there anytime that would be best for us to show up?

>

> Alex

>

> \_\_\_\_\_

> From: Lesley Alabaf [[Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk)]

> Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2011 5:54 AM

> To: Rock, Alexander Edward

> Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

>

> Hello Alex

>

> I'm attaching a map (our nearest train station is Hampton Wick - bus routes are listed as well). What time will you get here?

>

> Regards

>

> Lesley

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

> Sent: 17 May 2011 10:50

> To: Lesley Alabaf

> Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

>

> Hello Lesley,

>

> As always thank you for your quick reply,

>

> Friday appears that it would be an excellent option. Unfortunately being new to London and bound by public transit, is there a bus that makes its way towards the theatre or will I

have to call a cab? Currently I have a zone one and two travel pass, I just don't know the best way of going about getting to you.

>

> Additionally if you hear about that other venue I would be incredibly interested to know about it.

>

> Alex Rock

>

> \_\_\_\_\_

> From: Lesley Alabaf [Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk]

> Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2011 3:53 AM

> To: Rock, Alexander Edward

> Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

>

> Hello Alex

>

> Thanks for your email.

>

> Please call 0845 230 0372 to order tickets

>

> No I'm afraid I don't know where the other venue is. I've only heard that there is another one. I could try and find out for you but it wouldn't be for a few days

>

> Our theatre is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (but it is booked out for several events and is used by drama groups on most afternoons.) I will be here on Saturday for a lot of the day but it will be used for rehearsals so I wouldn't be able to arrange a visit then. If you are free on Friday, it's free all day as I'll be setting up as well.

>

> Kind regards

>

> Lesley

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

> Sent: 17 May 2011 12:55

> To: Lesley Alabaf

> Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

>

> I am definitely planning on attending the show this weekend and will be getting tickets shortly. I am very excited to see a show performed in this venue.

>

> Also you mentioned another theatre that has original working Victorian period equipment. Do you happen to know the name of the other theatre?

>

> Lastly, would it be possible to arrange to see the theater sometime this weekend, possibly the day of the performance. I would understand if its not possible because of the

hectic nature of performances. If not then is there a time that would work best for you or who ever would be showing us the facilities?

>

> Alex

> \_\_\_\_\_

> From: Lesley Alabaf [Lesley.Alabaf@downs-syndrome.org.uk]

> Sent: Monday, May 16, 2011 6:53 AM

> To: Rock, Alexander Edward

> Subject: RE: Show and Theatre information

>

> Hello Alex

>

> Thank you for your email. Yes there are tickets available for the 21st May performance. If you call me on 0845 230 0372 or confirm by email if you'd like to purchase any. We can also arrange a visit to see the theatre - if you contact me when you're interested in visiting I can arrange that for you. We are also one of only 2 theatres that still have the original workings of the Victoria era on the stage, so it should be interesting.

>

> Kind regards

>

> Lesley

>



>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Rock, Alexander Edward [<mailto:alex.rock@WPI.EDU>]

> Sent: 16 May 2011 09:32

> To: Lesley Alabaf

> Subject: Show and Theatre information

>

> Hello, I am a student from the United States and I am doing a summer in London to perform research on Victorian stagecraft and during my research and during interviews with some people I was referred to the Normansfield Theatre as authentic Victorian theatre.

>

> First, I was wondering if tickets were still available for the show on the 21st? and second I was wondering if a tour for the theatre exists or if there is anyone who could show up around so that we could see what the theatre looks like and possible take some pictures for our paper. Lastly, I was wondering if there was any Victorian era specific stage equipment still present in the theatre.

>

> Alex

Once Beth Ruffa joined the project group the following e-mail was sent to the sponsors and their responses:

(1) Hello!

My name is Beth Ruffa, and I am the newest member of the WPI IQP group in collaboration with Alex Rock and John Delorey. Let me take a minute to introduce myself. I am a double major in Management (concentrating in Law), and Drama/Theatre; I am also planning to minor in Nautical Ballistics. I am incredibly excited to be working with you on this project and to become immersed in-depth into the various and fascinating aspects of Victorian theatre.

Since our group has now expanded, we have made a mailing list in the case you would like to reach all three of us at once (Alex, John Delorey and I) at [victorians@wpi.edu](mailto:victorians@wpi.edu). If you would like to reach me individually, you can contact me at [ecruffa@wpi.edu](mailto:ecruffa@wpi.edu).

We have also been discussing making an international call to talk with you more in-depth about the project. John Delorey has a phone in his office capable of making international calls; what times are you available? We will soon collaborate and send you our available times as well.

I'm excited to be working with you!

Thank you and God bless,

*Elizabeth C. Ruffa*

(2) Dear Elizabeth,

I look forward to meeting you all. I hope I can in some way be of assistance but I must warn you in advance that I am in no way an expert in Victorian theatre but will do my best to assist with your research.

Are there any particular aspects of this type of performance that you would like to study in depth? With a little forewarning I may be able to pull some things together for you in advance.

Best wishes

Peter Kenny

(3) Hi Beth,

Sounds like things are really starting to take off with your project.

It'll be great.

We have a 5-hour time difference (we're 5 hours ahead of you). Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays after 1pm your time (6pm my time) are generally good if you want to phone. My cellphone/mobile number is +44 796 816 4242

Nautical Ballistics - there's a G&S quote for that: HMS Pinafore Act 1 number 6 (new numbering) or number 7 (original numbering): "Bang, bang the loud nine-pounders go."

ciao

Helga

The following is an e-mail from John F. Delorey to Helga Perry a resource of the project groups informing him that we of our project and her response.

(1) Dear Helga,

Hope all is well - you've been quiet for a while and things here have been crazy!

I am writing this email as an informal introduction to one of my students who will be in London this summer, Alex Rock.

He will be researching the possible use of Victorian Stagecraft in our next GandS production in the Fall of 2012 (Pinafore, Pirates or Gondoliers).

He has some specific questions - if you have the time and or inkling, and help would be appreciated. I have told him that you are the bastion of all G and S knowledge - particularly the musical end, but he has many questions in many fields!

More soon about my arrival - have a great group this summer - excellent musicians and theatre folk!

Peace.

JFD

(2) Yo John! Hi there Alex! Look forward to seeing you guys in London in the near future. Will try and answer questions and put you in touch with appropriate people.

Am actually playing in the pit for a production of Gondoliers this week in the Swan Theatre in Worcester - I would definitely recommend you do that for your next G&S production. Conductor is Donald Hunt, formerly director of music at Worcester Cathedral. I'll get you a DVD of the show - it was recorded on Thursday evening.

I've been very busy working on a medical IT project, see <http://eepd.org.uk> so haven't had a lot of time for much else. Pity you and my partner in crime, Rupert Fawdry, never managed to make contact with each other regarding London student projects, so hopefully next time...

More very soon - am off to Worcester shortly to play in matinee and evening performances.

Luv & peace etc.

Helga

The following is an e-mail from John F. Delorey to Peter Kenny a resource of the project groups informing him that we of our project and his response.

(1) Dear Peter,

I am writing this email to introduce you to one of my students who will be with us in London this summer, Alex Rock.

He is doing his Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) on Victorian Stagecraft.

I told him that you may have some answers to particular questions he may have about his journey and research in London.

Any help or guidance you may provide would be most appreciated.

Thanks for your time and help with our WPI students!

Peace.

John Delorey

(2) Dear John and Alex

I will be delighted to assist in any way with your research... I just hope I have the right answers! I look forward to seeing/meeting you both over the next few months.

Best wishes

Peter Kenny.

The following is an e-mail response from Robin Gordon-Powell

Dear Beth and Alex —

This is the website that I was thinking of, last evening - the Savoy and Opera Comique entries are not as informative as I had hoped they might be, but at least we have the name of the architect! <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/SavoyTheatre.htm>

I hope this is of interest, at least —

See you tomorrow!

ROBIN

The following are the two responses from both Robin Gordon-Powell and William Parry.

Dear Alex,

It is excellent to hear from you! We hugely look forward to welcoming you to the UK and helping you with what sounds like an extraordinarily interesting piece of work.

I sense that an important part of laying the groundwork for your visit may be to pre-arrange some meetings/tours of relevant sites, and also to pre-arrange to view relevant collections held in museums over here. Not all of these places are open to all, and some

may need a private view. You are likely to find people exceptionally helpful, but the more notice that you can give of any required access, the better.

Off the top of my head, it is bound to be worth looking into visiting some Victorian theatres in the UK, and perhaps finding out in advance which have any element of their original stage machinery/features intact. Robin Gordon-Powell has already mentioned the Normansfield Theatre in this context, and this is a truly exceptional place, having more or less being mothballed for years.

The Citizens Theatre in Glasgow is an exceptional example of a theatre with *working* stage machinery of the Victorian era. I'd be more than happy to take a couple of days away from work to take a trip up to Glasgow with you to see some of this in action (it's an amazing city on any level!). Her Majesty's Theatre in London also has some of its original bits intact under the stage.

In terms of other London theatres, Wilton's Music Hall and the Richmond Theatre are very different but equally outstanding examples of Victorian theatres still in use (the latter was used as the Savoy in the G&S film *Topsy Turvy* – do watch this if you haven't already; it gives a wonderful sense of what Victorian theatres might have been like in front of and behind the stage).

The V&A Museum in London has an enormous theatre collection with a very helpful curator (I can supply details if you need them). She may be able to point you in some useful directions as far as this collection is concerned. Much of the collection is off-site in Barons Court and has to be viewed by arrangement, so, again, best to make as many arrangements up-front as you possibly can.



You've probably done this already but I can vouch for the below two books as very useful introductions.

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/Art-Victorian-Stage-Notes-](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Art-Victorian-Stage-Notes-Recollections/dp/0554760282/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1300709266&sr=8-4)

[Recollections/dp/0554760282/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1300709266&sr=8-4](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Art-Victorian-Stage-Notes-Recollections/dp/0554760282/ref=sr_1_4?ie=UTF8&qid=1300709266&sr=8-4)

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/Cambridge-Companion-Victorian-Companions-](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Cambridge-Companion-Victorian-Companions-Literature/dp/0521795362/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1300709266&sr=8-1)

[Literature/dp/0521795362/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1300709266&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Cambridge-Companion-Victorian-Companions-Literature/dp/0521795362/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1300709266&sr=8-1)

If there is anything on a practical level that we may be able to help with, do please ask.

Sincerest good wishes,

William Parry

Hello Alex -

Good to hear from you! I am very happy to be able to help you, although not being a Victorian, myself, might be a slight handicap... You are welcome to contact me in any way that you please - my cellphone number is 07881 934 165 (once you are in UK) and email you have.

There is a tiny, but perfectly working Victorian Theatre that has recently been 'rediscovered', at Teddington, near to Hampton Court; this might be of special interest to you. I just searched for 'Normansfield Theatre' on google.co.uk, and came up with pages of results, some of which might be useful.

Hear from you presently -

All the best

ROBIN

The following is the original e-mail sent to the sponsors introducing the project team and the project

Dear Sponsor,

I would like to introduce myself as the WPI student who has been chosen to work with you and your colleagues at Sir Arthur Sullivan Society to develop strategies to implement Victorian stage craft on WPI's Alden stage. I am very enthusiastic to be working on this project and I am just beginning the preliminary background research. I bring a diverse set of skills to the project. I am both a Biochemistry major and a Theatre major. I have had lots of experience with modern theatre and have participated in most elements of theatre giving me a great breath of knowledge in the area. Although I have less knowledge in Victorian theatre I am very excited to jump head first into my research and cannot wait to work with you on the project.

As I begin our research, I anticipate that I may need to contact you for clarifications and additional information. Would it be best if we do this via e-mail, or would you prefer to communicate over the phone?

If you would like to reach me at any time feel free to contact me through my e-mail [alex.rock@wpi.edu](mailto:alex.rock@wpi.edu). Professor Dominic Golding will be helping me to prepare for the

project in his class ID2050. John Delorey will be advising me this term and next. You can contact him via e-mail at [jfd@wpi.edu](mailto:jfd@wpi.edu) if ever you need.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this project and to meeting you shortly.

Sincerely,

Alex Rock

The following is a e-mail from John F. Delorey informing the project group that they have a sponsor in the SASS

Dear Alex and Dominic,

I just talked with Robin Gordon-Powell on the phone and he would be more than honored to act as liaison for SASS until Alex arrives in London.

Robin Gordon-Powell

[Mail@amber-ring.co.uk](mailto:Mail@amber-ring.co.uk)

This will avoid mail getting lost at SASS.

His phone is:

01144 7881 934 165

Once you have made email contact, he would be happy to talk with you directly. You may use my office phone at any time for calls to UK.

I have emailed him your syllabus and he is thrilled with all aspects and feels that SASS can be a great help in your research as we prepare for them to visit us in the US.

Peace.

JFDelorey

The following e-mail correspondence is a set of responses between John F. Delorey and Alex Rock beginning the planning steps for the London E term project

Give me until 3.30pm - I'll call you then!

JFD

On 1/27/11 12:47 PM, "Rock, Alexander Edward" <[alex.rock@wpi.edu](mailto:alex.rock@wpi.edu)> wrote:

>How does 3pm sound

>

>My number is 508-654-8464

>

>

>

>On Jan 27, 2011, at 12:43 PM, "Delorey, John F." <[jfd@wpi.edu](mailto:jfd@wpi.edu)> wrote:

>

>> Name a time and give me a number!

>>

>> JFD

>>

>> On 1/27/11 12:41 PM, "Rock, Alexander Edward" <[alex.rock@wpi.edu](mailto:alex.rock@wpi.edu)> wrote:

>>

>>> Tentatively, no. I still have a bit of a fever (or I did last night).

>>>

>>> I don't want to get you sick.

>>>

>>> Do you want to have a phone meeting?

>>>

>>>

>>>

>>> On Jan 27, 2011, at 12:15 PM, "Delorey, John F." <[jfd@wpi.edu](mailto:jfd@wpi.edu)> wrote:

>>>

>>>> Alex,

>>>>

>>>> Yes, I have TOO MANY ideas - but we need to talk in person.

>>>>

>>>> Can we meet at 5pm in my office? Or 4pm? Or 3pm? I teach until

>>>> 3pm today, then rehearsal at 6.30pm, as you know.

>>>>

>>>> Peace.

>>>>

>>>> JFD

>>>>

>>>> On 1/26/11 11:49 AM, "Rock, Alexander Edward" <[alex.rock@wpi.edu](mailto:alex.rock@wpi.edu)>

>>>>wrote:

>>>>

>>>>> Personally the main reason I want to go to London is so that I can

>>>>>see so much theatre and experience the theatrical culture in

>>>>>London.

>>>>> Unfortunately I don't know how that could be incorporated into an

>>>>>IQP.

>>>>>

>>>>> Do you have any idea's.

>>>>>

>>>>> I'm not unwilling to work with the concept of streamlining an

>>>>>archiving process I just know that it will take lots of research

>>>>>that I am fine with doing. It's just daunting to run head over

>>>>>heels into something that I have no experience with

>>>>>

>>>>> -----Original Message-----

>>>>> From: Delorey, John F.

>>>>> Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 11:45 AM

>>>>> To: Rock, Alexander Edward

>>>>> Subject: Re: IQP

>>>>>

>>>>> The archiving will be the LEAST of the work load, and you can

>>>>>excise it from the project if you want without a concern.

>>>>>

>>>>> We can form this into a project that is educational, but also

>>>>>catering to your desired areas of research.

>>>>>

>>>>> SO - there's the question - what do YOU want to walk away from

>>>>> this with as pertains to the Arts.

>>>>>

>>>>> Keep me posted.

>>>>>

>>>>> JFD

>>>>>

>>>>> On 1/26/11 11:27 AM, "Rock, Alexander Edward" <[alex.rock@wpi.edu](mailto:alex.rock@wpi.edu)>

>>>>> wrote:

>>>>>

>>>>>> So I've been thinking about it and I am excited by the concept of

>>>>>>being in London but the IQP is sort of daunting because I have no

>>>>>>experience with music archiving. I understand that this project

>>>>>>it all about branching out and learning things that you don't

>>>>>>necessarily have any experience with but I felt like I had to

>>>>>>express this worry.

>>>>>

>>>>> Additionally will I have to sign up for ID 2050 D term???

>>>>>

>>>>> -----Original Message-----

>>>>> From: Delorey, John F.

>>>>> Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 4:02 PM

>>>>> To: Rock, Alexander Edward

>>>>> Subject: Re: IQP

>>>>>

>>>>> Alex,

>>>>>

>>>>> We can design your IQP to your exact needs/desires, but it will

>>>>> look something like one of the two or a combination.

>>>>>

>>>>> However, yes, you can see as much theatre as you like. Some is

>>>>>cheap, some is expensive, but none as expensive as NYC (most

>>>>>expensive tix right now in London are £60 which is about \$90US -

>>>>>that's for front row seats in the orchestra. There will be lots

>>>>>of shows for £10 (or you can get day tix at the theatre for £20),

>>>>>and there is a TKTS in Leicester Square.

>>>>> I would mostly encourage you to visit those alternate theatre

>>>>>spaces (Southwark, Pub Theatre, etc.) to get a sense of the

>>>>>vastness of the theatre scene in London. It's amazing.



>>>>>

>>>>> Your IQP would look like this:

>>>>>

>>>>> 1. Sir Arthur Sullivan Society. You will be doing a very  
>>>>>traditional research IQP with them. They just updated their  
>>>>>website, have inherited a large collection of music (still in  
>>>>>boxes), and have a start at a virtual tour of Sir Arthur's  
>>>>>London. Through a series of interviews, meetings, archival  
>>>>>research, etc. you will be prepare a report with suggestions for  
>>>>>the Society as to how technology might better serve them.

>>>>> You will not need to create any websites, etc., but you will need  
>>>>>to document with tactful suggestions how they may improve their  
>>>>>Society through technology.

>>>>> The grunt work would involve setting up a system for archiving  
>>>>>their newly acquired library (meaning a manual showing someone  
>>>>>how to archive

>>>>> - you will not be expected to actually archive it!). You would  
>>>>>probably only meet with the group (two plus members) four times,  
>>>>>but would probably spend some time with Robin Gordon-Powell who  
>>>>>is the archivist.

>>>>> He is only a bus ride away. We might also use this time wisely  
>>>>>to pick their brains about our next Sullivan Show!?!?!

>>>>>

>>>>> 2. Document the project (in PPT format) that you are doing with  
>>>>> Sir Arthur for a killer presentation about WPI and the Arts in  
>>>>> London featuring our work with the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society  
>>>>> and the HUA Program. Obviously, this would also include  
>>>>> documentation (PPT) of the HUA Requirement Program, and explore  
>>>>> the possibilities of expanding this program to include Musical  
>>>>> Theatre and Art Installations as Practicums, based on the  
>>>>> research that I have started. This would give you the impetus to  
>>>>> get out and see concerts, theatre, lectures, museums, etc. I  
>>>>> have an itinerary all ready to go for you on this - it would be a  
>>>>> fantastic opportunity.

>>>>>

>>>>> So, the first week you will be working with me one-on-one (with  
>>>>>the HUA students tagging along), as we set up appointments and  
>>>>>get to know the city.

>>>>>

>>>>> A day might look like this for you:

>>>>>

>>>>> 8am Up

>>>>> 10am IQP Research/Writing at Museum/Library or meeting with  
>>>>>Delorey 12noon lunch 1pm Concert at Trafalgar Square (free and  
>>>>>one every day at one of the  
>>>>> churches)

>>>>>> 2pm IQP Research/Writing at Museum/Library OR meeting with

>>>>>> sponsor 4pm Concert at St. Paul's/Westminster Abbey/Cathedral

>>>>>>(free and one every day at ALL of the churches) 6pm Dinner

>>>>>>7.30pm Theatre/Concert

>>>>>>

>>>>>> That schedule includes four hours per day of

>>>>>>reading/writing/researching which is right on target. Wednesdays

>>>>>>will be a tour day (included in the

>>>>>> fee) which will get you out of London to the best of the tourist

>>>>>>sites.

>>>>>> You can always skip that and stay in the city if you like.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> Your final project will be a presentation to the Sir Arthur

>>>>>>Sullivan Society (PPT) and a paper outlining the background,

>>>>>>research, methodology (there will be surveys involved), mostly

>>>>>>based on the work that you will be doing in ID 2050, ending with

>>>>>>conclusions, results and suggestions.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> Let me know if this makes any sense to you - I'm not sure of your

>>>>>>work style - we can adjust to make this work for you.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> Peace.

>>>>>>

>>>>> JFD

>>>>>

>>>>>

>>>>> On 1/25/11 3:04 PM, "Rock, Alexander Edward" <[alex.rock@wpi.edu](mailto:alex.rock@wpi.edu)>

>>>>> wrote:

>>>>>

>>>>>> What would my iq be?

>>>>>>

>>>>>> Will I be able to go see shows or will it be very expensive?

>>>>>>

>>>>>>

>>>>>>

>>>>>>

>>>>>>

>>>>>>

>>>>>>

>>>>>> On Jan 25, 2011, at 2:18 PM, "Delorey, John F." <[jfd@wpi.edu](mailto:jfd@wpi.edu)>

>>>>>> wrote:

>>>>>>

>>>>>>> Alex,

>>>>>>>

>>>>>>> Don't mean to bother you when you are sick, but we need to

>>>>>>> start talking about London, as we need to secure a space for

>>>>>>>you as soon as possible if you are making this commitment

>>>>>>>(which I hope you are!).

>>>>>>>

>>>>>>> You have said that you have some questions - anything we can do

>>>>>>> by email?

>>>>>>>

>>>>>>> Looking forward to "meeting" with you.

>>>>>>>

>>>>>>> Peace.

>>>>>>>

>>>>>>> JFDelorey

>>>>>>>

>>>>>

>>>>

>>

## Appendix H – Glossary of Terms

The following is a list of theatre terms used throughout the paper, listed in alphabetical order:

**Audience Left** – The right side of the stage.

**Audience Right** – The Left side of the stage.

**Baton** – A metal bar used for hanging lights or flown set pieces. Attached to the grid and rigged in a way that allows all attached objects to be raised and lowered.

**Blocking** – The pre-decided movements that occur on stage by the actors.

**Cat walk** – A walk way located near the ceiling of the theatre in which lights crews can hang and adjust lights.

**Down Stage** – The area on the stage toward the audience.

**Follow Spot** – A lighting element that is either programmed into a lighting board or manually operated and is a source of light that follows action on the stage.

**Grand drape** – The forward most curtains on a stage.

Masking - Flats or draping that frames the stage and restrict the view of the back stage.

**Proscenium Arch** – The gateway to the stage from the audience.

**Proscenium Theatre** – A theatre that has a large arch as a gateway to the stage.

**Raked Stage** – A Stage that has a higher elevation upstage than down stage.

**Revolve** – a revolving circle that can carry set pieces or people to accomplish many effects. They are usually flush with the stage.

**Rigging** – The technology located in the grid that allows for set pieces or lights to be flown, the technology of rigging was originally implemented by sailors and taken as a concept from the

rigging found on boats.

**Stage** – The location in which the action during a play take place.

**Stage Left** – The left side of the stage.

**Stage Right** – The right side of the stage.

**Thrust** – An area on the stage that thrusts out from the proscenium or from the stage into the audience.

**Tracks** – Groves that flats of set pieces are able to slide along or be pulled along to allow for precise and rapid set changes. They are located in the stage.

**Up Stage** – The area on a stage away from the audience.

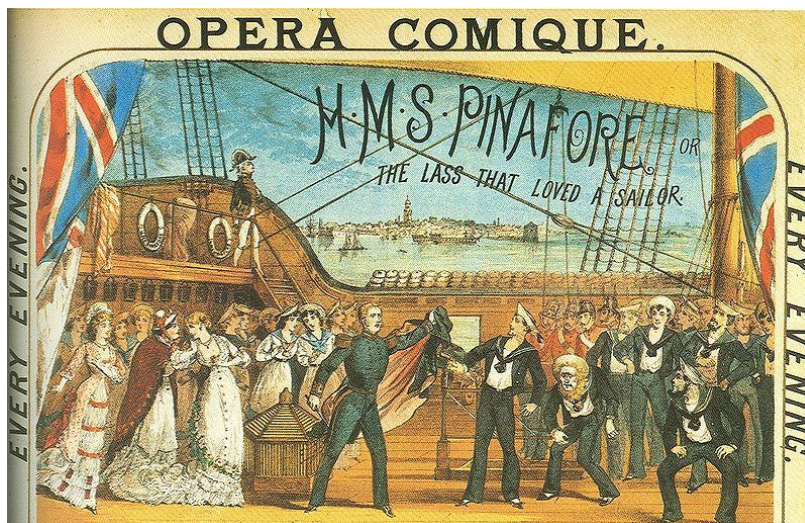
**Wings** – The space on either side of the stage.

## Appendix I – Gilbert and Sullivan’s Operettas

The operettas in the running for the fall of 2012 are: *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *The Gondoliers*. These were chosen by VOX for their continued popularity over the course of time. Synopses of the three works follow.

### I.1 *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Subtitled *The Lass that Loved a Sailor*, *Pinafore* tells the story of two star-crossed lovers of the “wrong” class – Josephine, the daughter of the captain of the H.M.S. Pinafore, Capt. Corcoran, and a sailor of lower social station, Ralph Rackstraw, who serves under the Captain. Josephine has already been promised to an admiral, the Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter. Ralph declares his love to Josephine, but due to their difference in class and her already engaged status, she at first puts up a front and refuses him. However, when Ralph threatens suicide, Josephine tosses aside her façade and confesses the truth to him and the other sailors. There is also a background romance between Cpt. Corcoran and Buttercup, again complicated by disparity in class. Corcoran, much like his daughter, makes no show of his true emotions to Buttercup, and leaves her feeling bitter and unresolved.



A program from an early production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, or *The Lass that Loved a Sailor*

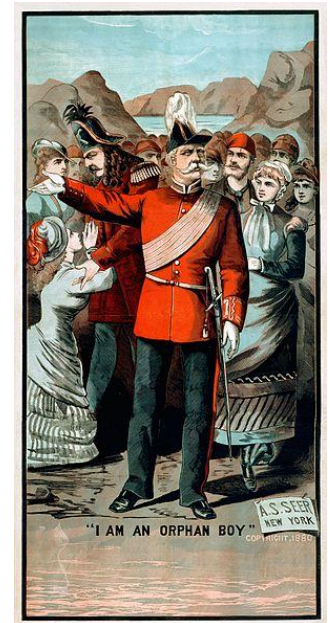
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/2/22/Pinaforeplaybill.jpg>



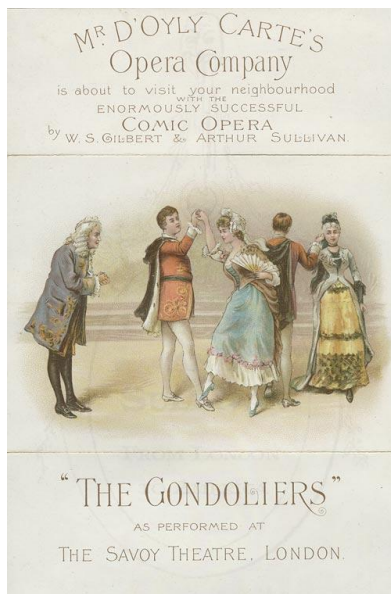
Throughout the opera, tension builds as other characters make their way through the operetta, such as Dick Deadeye, a somber and grotesque sailor who later becomes crucial to foiling Josephine and Ralph's plot to elope before her wedding to Adm. Porter. In the end, class ranks turn out to be different than previously assumed - a common 'topsy-turvy' theme in Gilbert and Sullivan productions – and the opera ends with three happy pairs: Josephine and Ralph, now the Captain of the Pinafore; Buttercup and Corcoran, now a lowly sailor under Ralph; and Adm. Porter and his cousin Hebe.

## I.2 Pirates of Penzance

A sailor, Frederic, who is contractually bound to a band of pirates until his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, begins this tale in love with the only woman he's ever seen. The woman is 47-year's old, and also a part of the crew. However, once Frderic is allowed ashore and sees women closer to his own age, he abandons his future plans with Ruth in order to chase after younger women. He eventually settling on a girl named Mabel. After acquainting himself with her and others girls who have stumbled across the Pirates of Penzance's lair, the named pirates themselves come out and propose matrimony to the hapless ladies, only to be saved by their father, a Major-General. The Major-General declares that he is an orphan – a fatal weakness of the not-so-ruthless pirates – and leaves with his girls and Frederic in tow. His contract to the Pirates having expired on noon of that day, Frederic joins Mabel's father in carrying out long-awaited plans to eradicate the famous band of Pirates. However, the pirates bring him back to service due to a loophole in their



contract – Frederic was actually born on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February during a leap year, and although being 21 *years* of age, the contract specifically states that he is free after 21 *birthdays*, of which he has technically only had 5. Once this has been revealed, Frederick feels duty bound to his former colleagues, and reveals what he has learned from close contact with Mabel’s father – the Major-General is not in fact an orphan. Ruth and the other pirates are murderously enraged. After a confrontation following the revelation between the pirates and Frederick’s men, it is further disclosed that the Pirates of Penzance are in fact not pirates at all, but noblemen. The performance ends with the previous pirates happily engaged to the Major-General’s many daughters, and all hard feelings between the characters utterly dissipated.



### 1.3 The Gondoliers

Also known as *The King of Barataria*, this opens with a group of women who are awaiting the marital choice of a pair of reckless gondolieri, Marco and Giuseppe Palmieri.

Concurrently, the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro, a Spanish territory, go to Venice in search of the heir to the throne of the King of Barataria so that way he may officially claim their daughter’s hand, Casilda, to whom they were secretly married to at birth. Casilda is in torment because she is in love with

another young man, Luiz, an attendant of her father. Later, Marco and Giuseppe, blindfolded, make their romantic choice of Gianetta and Tessa, respectively. The Duke and Duchess, after a long and unrewarding search, stumble upon the two gondolieri. According to their knowledge, one of them is the rightful heir to Barataria’s throne. Forcing them away from their wives, of whom they have been married to barely an hour, the Duke and Duchess bring the gondolieri back

to the land of their reign, and agree to a concurrent reign until the business of who is the rightful heir becomes straightened out. However, it quickly becomes evident that the pair is more interested in parties than politics. After several months of waiting and no contact with their wives, Gianetta and Tessa make their way in to see the pair, only to be told to keep their distance. Finally, after much commotion and many tears on the ladies' part, the only woman who can identify the heir, the prince's foster-mother, is finally found after many months' search. She is brought in to determine the rightful heir to the throne, and consequently, which gondoliers' earlier marriage will be voided. In the end, it turns out Luiz is the rightful heir to the throne, and all of Luiz and Casilda's previous affections for each other are allowed to be preserved. On the previous page is a photo of the traveling poster.

## Appendix J – Biographies of Gilbert and Sullivan

### J.1 W. S. Gilbert

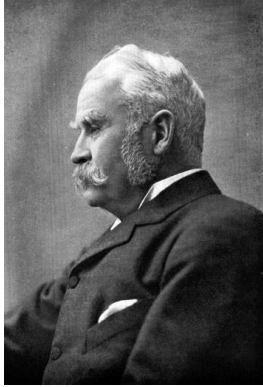


Figure 1: W.S. Gilbert in 1885

William Schwenck Gilbert, born November 18<sup>th</sup> 1836, was one of the most influential theatrical writers of the Victorian era (Figure 1). He began his education at the Great Ealing School, and later completed his education at King's College in London. His professor at King's College, Tom Robertson, taught Gilbert the art of stage direction.. His writing career started as a journalist for *Fun*. Soon after, he wrote his first piece, *Uncle*

*Baby*, which ran for seven weeks at the Royal Lyceum theatre in 1863. As his career developed, his style changed, evolving from a more dramatic and serious style to that of a more restrained writer, focusing on humor and lighthearted themes. His intent was to show people that entertainment was more than just farce and burlesque, the overriding themes of most popular entertainment at the time.

Gilbert then began to direct his own works in the way that he had imagined them. His methods were revolutionary, being the first to put projections on the stage. However, after initial success, he began to write variations on the same operetta and attempt to make money on recycled plots. He was the first director to have subtitles run during his productions. Gilbert not only brought a new aspect of stagecraft to theatre, but he also changed the overall content of performance in the Victorian era, making it more relatable to middle class theatre-goers. Before his lighthearted comedic musicals, the majority of theatre was either highly dramatic or racy.

More fame came to Gilbert when he started to collaborate with Arthur Sullivan. Their first collaboration, which “proved profitable” (10 Andrew Crowther), was *Trial by Jury*. As Gilbert began to work with Sullivan, he found his own independent career started to fail. This led

the creativity of his writing to take a downward turn. Later in his career, he began to recycle already existing plots. In Gilbert's old age, he made the decision to write without simply a monetary focus which led to the only successful drama in his career, *The Hooligan*. Gilbert died in 1911 at the age of 74, after diving into the water to try and save a woman whom he was trying to teach to swim. (10 Andrew Crowther)

## J.2 Arthur Sullivan



Figure 2: Photo of Arthur Sullivan in 1885

Arthur Sullivan was born on June 24<sup>th</sup> 1842. Sullivan's father, a band conductor, recognized his son's musical talent at a young age, and sought to enroll him in school to help further his talent (15 David Howland). Sullivan won the Mendelssohn Scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music (5 Reginald Allen), and the Conservatory in Leipzig (15 David Howland). Sullivan was not considered to be the most rigorous student, according to a letter sent to his mother, but through

hard work he eventually was able to prove himself. In addition, he won the Mendelssohn scholarship a second year, and afterwards winning a scholarship to attend the Conservatory in Leipzig (5, 7 Reginald Allen). Due to his experience at the Royal Academy, where he was required to compose something at least once a week, he found that composing yielded a more lucrative lifestyle than that of a conductor (5 Reginald Allen). Some of Sullivan's earlier compositions were: *The Music to Shakespeare's Tempest*, originally a work of a composer named Leipzig; *Idyll*, *Concerto in D*, *Duo Concertante*, all were written for the cello; and *Thoughts*, *Day Dreams*, and *Twilight*, all were written for the piano (11 Reginald Allen). In 1877, his friend Fred Clay introduced him to W.S. Gilbert, and they started collaborating together on their first piece, *Thespis*. They continued to collaborate, producing a total of 15 operettas together. After both achieving successful careers, it was after an argument over a debt of £500 and a rug when the two parted ways and never spoke again. Arthur Sullivan took this break in their relationship to attempt composing more serious classical music, yet was never truly satisfied with his work. Despite this, Sullivan experienced a higher amount of independent success than his former partner, Gilbert. Five years after his last composition, *King Arthur*,

opened, he died in 1900 at the age of 58. Having lost most of his money to gambling, Sir Arthur Sullivan died in debt (15 David Howland), and according to Prof. John F. Delorey, it was rumored that the cause of death was syphilis.

## Appendix K – First Night Productions of shows at Respective Theatres

### Produced at the Royalty Theatre

Trial by Jury .....25<sup>th</sup> March, 1875

### Produced at the Opera Comique

The Sorcerer .....17<sup>th</sup> November, 1877

H.M.S. Pinafore .....25<sup>th</sup> May, 1878

The Pirates of Penzance .....3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1880

Patience .....23<sup>rd</sup> April 1881

### Produced at the Savoy

Patience .....10<sup>th</sup> October, 1881

Iolanthe .....25<sup>th</sup> November 1882

Princess Ida .....3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1884

The Sorcerer and Trial by Jury .....11<sup>th</sup> October, 1884

The Mikado .....14<sup>th</sup> March, 1885

Ruddigore .....22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1887

H.M.S. Pinafore (1<sup>st</sup> revival) .....12<sup>th</sup> November, 1887

The Pirates of Penzance (1<sup>st</sup> revival) .....17<sup>th</sup> March, 1888

The Mikado (1<sup>st</sup> revival) 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1888

The Yeoman of the Guard .....3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1888

The Gondoliers .....7<sup>th</sup> December, 1889

The Nautch Girl .....30<sup>th</sup> June, 1891

The Vigar of Bray .....28<sup>th</sup> January, 1892

Haddon Hall .....24<sup>th</sup> September, 1892

Jane Annie .....13<sup>th</sup> May 1893

Utopia, Limited 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1893

Mirette .....3<sup>rd</sup> July 1894



The Chieftain .....	12 <sup>th</sup> December, 1894
The Mikado (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival) .....	6 <sup>th</sup> November, 1895
The Grand Duke .....	7 <sup>th</sup> March, 1896
The Mikado (3 <sup>rd</sup> revival).....	11 <sup>th</sup> July, 1896
His Majesty .....	20 <sup>th</sup> February, 1897
The Yeoman of the Guard (1 <sup>st</sup> revival) .....	5 <sup>th</sup> May, 1897
The Grand Duchess.....	4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1897
The Gondoliers (1 <sup>st</sup> revival).....	22 <sup>nd</sup> March, 1898
The Beauty Stone .....	28 <sup>th</sup> May, 1898
The Gondoliers (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival) .....	22 <sup>nd</sup> March, 1898
The Sorcerer (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival) and Trial by Jury.....	22 <sup>nd</sup> September, 1898
The Lucky Star.....	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 1899
H.M.S. Pinafore (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival) .....	6 <sup>th</sup> June, 1899
The Rose of Persia .....	29 <sup>th</sup> November 1899
The Pirates of Penzance (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival).....	30 <sup>th</sup> June 1900
Patience (1 <sup>st</sup> revival) .....	7 <sup>th</sup> November 1900
The Emerald Isle .....	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1901
Iolanthe (1 <sup>st</sup> revival).....	7 <sup>th</sup> December, 1901
The Yeoman of the Guard (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival).....	8 <sup>th</sup> December, 1906
The Gondoliers (3 <sup>rd</sup> revival) .....	22 <sup>nd</sup> January, 1907
Patience (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival).....	4 <sup>th</sup> April, 1907
Iolanthe (2 <sup>nd</sup> revival).....	11 <sup>th</sup> June, 1907
The Mikado (3 <sup>rd</sup> revival).....	28 <sup>th</sup> April, 1908
H.M.S. Pinafore (3 <sup>rd</sup> revival) .....	14 <sup>th</sup> July, 1908
Iolanthe(3 <sup>rd</sup> revival) .....	19 <sup>th</sup> October, 1908
The Pirates of Penzance (3 <sup>rd</sup> revival) .....	1 <sup>st</sup> December, 1908
The Gondoliers (4 <sup>th</sup> revival).....	18 <sup>th</sup> January, 1909

The Yeoman of the Guard (3<sup>rd</sup> revival) .....1<sup>st</sup> March, 1909

## Appendix L – Gas Lighting

Theatrical lighting is one of the most dynamic technologies in the theatre world. Before the Victorian era, candles were the most widespread method of conventional theatre lighting. Although it was ubiquitously employed, it was an expensive method of lighting. The development of gas and electric lighting is an example of how technology allowed theatre to flourish during this time. The stage could now be lit in a much more effective way than before, where it was lit entirely by candlelight (Tarence Rees, 1978).

“The house is lighted by glass chandeliers in from of each circle; 270 candles are consumed in them every night, three hundred patent lamps light the stage and scenery and nearly as many more are fixed in the corridors and staircases.”

(Stockdale, 1810)

In addition to the high cost of materials, there was also a high labor cost lighting theatres with candles and oil lamps, another method of theatre lighting used during this era. A full time ‘illuminator’ (see Appendix H for a list of theatre terms), or team of illuminators had to be hired to maintain the theatres lighting. Each day, all the glass lamps needed to be cleaned to remove soot from the previous day, along with any soot found on theatrical reflectors. At the end of each night, all the candles or lamps needed to be snuffed out. While these practices were common, the process of coal or wood gas lighting was invented.

At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, gas lighting made its debut in both Britain and France. The first public presentation of gas lighting occurred in 1807, in celebration of King George III’s birthday, when a structure was, “...made on the wall which separated the mall in St. James’s

Park from Carlton House Gardens.” (Theatrical Gloucester, 1890) At the time, this lighting technology was innovative.

Gas lighting was fueled by gas produced from either burning coal or saw dust. This production of gas was then piped through a series of specially punctured tubes, where the flame could be directed where they wished. These tubes worked similarly to modern stoves; however, they were only intended for illumination. Similar to neon lights, the shape of the metal tubes could be utilized to make the flame into shapes, and form designs of spell out words. During the technology’s debut in 1807, many shapes, such as spirals and curves, were present. (Tarence Rees, 1978)

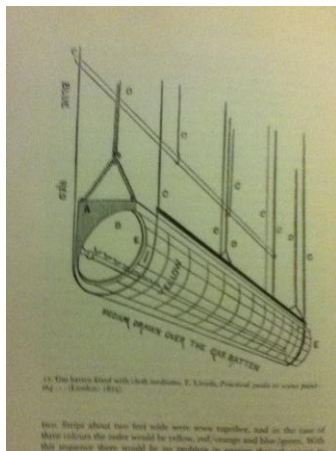


Figure 3: Gas baton

A gas baton is a form of lighting where the pipe that is carrying the gas is piped through a tube of colored fabric and then hung using a rigging system. The flame is centrally located in the fabric tube. In more complicated arrangements, fabric would be independently hung and moveable so that one could shift the fabric and have the light change colors.

By 1829, the benefits of gas lighting were too great to ignore, with all but one of the major theatres in London using gas lighting to light their stages. Some continued to use candle and lamp lighting in house for aesthetic value, but had converted to gas lighting for stage illumination. Throughout the Victorian Era further development was made, and lime lights were invented they became regularly used along with carbon filament or magnesium lights. In November of 1825, the first major trial of lime lighting was initiated. It was 37 times more intense than a regular argand lamp and was able to be seen 66.25 miles away (Tarence Rees, 1978). An argand lamp is a type of oil lamp that burns 6x brighter than a candle. Lime lighting quickly became the “hot” form of lighting and was widely implemented in theatrical work. By the 1850’s most theatres were using lime lighting.



The photo above is a magic lantern, also known as a projector, that was found in the Normansfield theatre. Originally, it was powered with limelight, and then it was converted to electric power. A lantern such as this would have been used to project still, rotating, or moving images. It is presumed that Gilbert and Sullivan used these to project the librettos onto the stage.

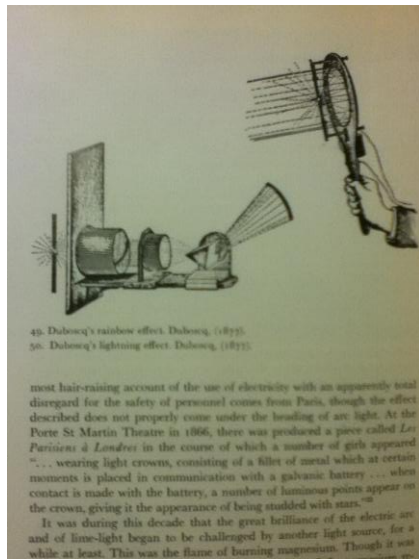


Figure 4: Using prisms to make color

Lights were frequently projected through prisms in order to create a colored light. The effect could be un-shuttered and used to make a rainbow effect or could be shuttered and only one color would be shown. (Tarence Rees, 1978)

One interesting ambient aspect of lighting during the Victorian period was that the audience was not in darkness. Rather, the theatre was well-lighted so that patrons could follow along the show with their copy of the libretto, a common practice during the Victorian era. The prevalence of this practice was so accepted at the time, that Gilbert and Sullivan intentionally typeset their librettos in order to avoid a raucous interruption of page turning throughout the show, a common problem with the audience following along in this manner.

## Appendix M - Programming and House Environment

In order for a show to run smoothly, there needs to be more than actors and a stage. It is essential to have atmosphere, which is where hospitality and house environment comes in. In this next section, we will be talking about librettos, seating, programs, and much more.

### M.1 Librettos

Librettos were publications that included all the words present in a performance. Frequently, audience members would follow along with them during a performance. Either they would bring their own, or buy them at the theatre. When Gilbert and Sullivan were producing librettos for people to follow with, they would typeset the librettos in a way that there would be page turns at convenient times, and did not interrupt scenes or songs. For a further description of the use of Libretto's, see Lighting.

Creating a libretto was a difficult task because there were so many different version of each play. For example, in the light opera *Pirates of Penzance*, there are three possible endings, a pattersong for each act, and multiple versions of the operetta.

### M.2 Programs

Programs from Gilbert and Sullivan's time were different than those of today. There were no biographies for the show; programs were much shorter and ornately designed with little information, including the titles of the shows and the producers, along with various other information. Refer to Appendix B for examples of opening act programs.

### M.3 Seating


Below is a seating chart depicting the setup of the Savoy Theatre. Seating banks in both the 19<sup>th</sup>

century and modern day consist of a large auditorium that frequently has a raked ground, balconies and box seats. These all existed so that a larger seating capacity was possible.



## Appendix N – Final Presentation PowerPoint Slides

Elizabeth C. Ruffa  
Alexander E. Rock



Advisor:  
Prof. John F. Delorey

Sponsor:  
Sir Arthur Sullivan Society

Liaisons:  
Will Parry  
Robin Gordon-Powell

# Gilbert and Sullivan at WPI: A Stage and Orchestra Pit for Alden Hall

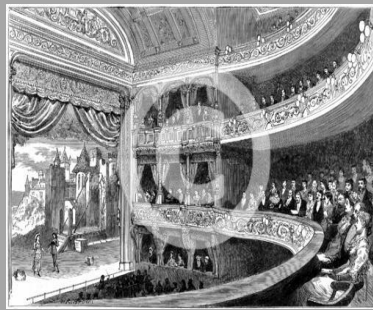
1

### Overview of Presentation

- Relevance of Stage and Pit
- Literature Review and Background
- Methodology
- Suggestions for the show
  - Orchestra pit layout and dimensions
  - Libretto
  - Additional Stagecraft Techniques
- Continued goals

#### Overall goal:

*To prepare the stage of the Great Hall of the Alden Memorial and suggest guidelines for the construction of an orchestra pit for future Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations with VOX and the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society and suggest techniques to enhance an historically informed performance.*



Introduction

Methodology

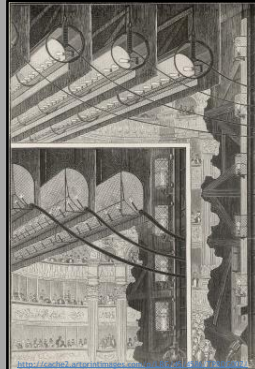
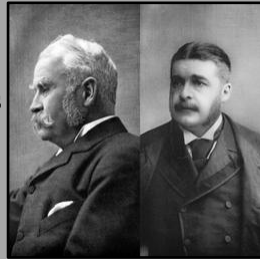
Analysis

Conclusions

2

## Victorian Stagecraft

- Understand the original production environment
  - Gilbert & Sullivan (G&S)
- Understand 19<sup>th</sup>-century theatrical conventions
  - Stage and Orchestra Pit Dimensions
- Implementation at WPI
  - Orchestra Pit and Seating
- Possible Victorian Stage Techniques for inclusion
  - Libretto
  - Additional Effects



3

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## Relevance of Victorian Stagecraft

- Benefits to Cast, Musicians, Crew and Production Team:
  - Performance Techniques
- Benefits to Audience
  - Historical Performance
- Historical authenticity to G&S production at WPI



4

Introduction

Methodology

Analysis

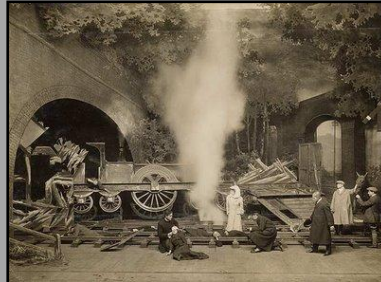
Conclusions

# Research Methods

- Data collection
  - Interview experts
  - View performances
  - Prepare G & S Lit Review
  - Observe period theatres and equipment



<https://www.4stateshopper.com/BillResources/UMBRELLA%20COP%20LRC>



[http://74-media.tumblr.com/tumblr\\_113zbbwGM1qz5csto1\\_400.jpg](http://74-media.tumblr.com/tumblr_113zbbwGM1qz5csto1_400.jpg)

Introduction

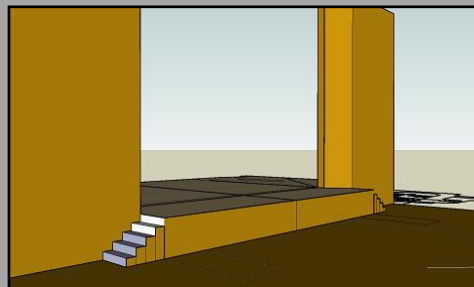
Methodology

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# Data: Stage and Orchestra Pit

- Stage
  - Savoy
  - Comedy
  - Normansfield
  - Alden Hall
  - Wilton's music hall
  - Haymarket
  - Drury Lane
  - Duke of York
  - Apollo
- Orchestra Pit
  - Savoy
  - Comedy
  - Normansfield
  - Alden Hall



*The letters and small figures in the various columns refer to footnotes*

Theatre	Width of Proscenium Opening		Height of Proscenium Opening		Depth from Fly System to Stage		Distance between Fly Rails or Grids		Height from Fly System to "Grid"		Depth from Fly System to Stage		Height to Top of Fly System		Height to Top of Fly System
	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.	in.	ft.
ALHAMBRA	36	0	27	0	40	0	16	6	18	0	18	0	18	0	1,100
ALHAMBRA	31	10	30	0	30	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	1,100
AMBASSADE	34	0	27	10	30	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	800
APOLLO	30	0	24	0	24	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	800
ARTE	30	10	24	0	24	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	800
CARLTON	30	0	24	0	24	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	1,200
CASINO	40	0	30	0	30	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	15	0	1,200
DRURY LANE	31	0	24	0	24	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	1,200
DUKE OF YORK	30	0	24	0	24	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	1,100
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE	30	0	24	0	24	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	10	0	1,200

(Parker, 1981)

Introduction

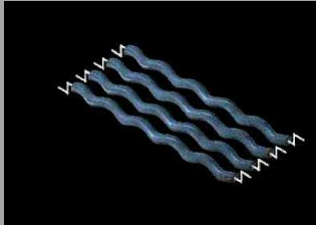
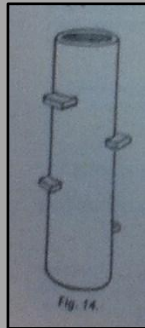
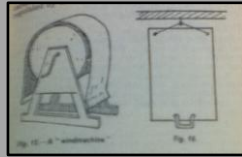
Methodology

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# Victorian Libretto and Stage Effects

- Libretto
- French fabric flats
- Wave machine
- Lighting
  - Footlights
- Thunder
- Sound effects
- Rain
- Wind



<http://www1.appstate.edu/~cgs2/pages/act67/How/ePages/Sabb4WaveSymIso.html>

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# Suggestions

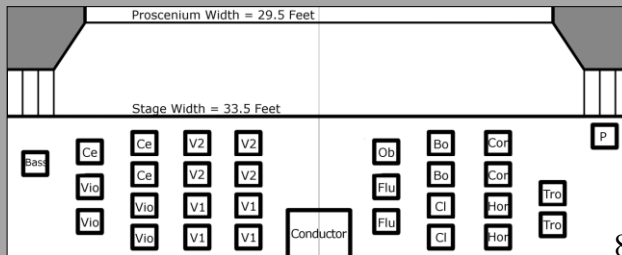
- Orchestra pit should be 34 feet wide and 10 feet deep
- Players arranged in sets perpendicular to the stage
- Thirty musician maximum
- Strings placed to right of conductor, woodwinds and percussion to the left.

Savoy Theatre



*“The orchestra is in front of the stage, and is of sufficient capacity for a full band of twenty-seven or more musicians” (pg. 100 Savoyard)*

Alden Hall



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## Looking Ahead

- Goals for the next year
  - Synthesize additional data
  - Continue research with the SASS
  - SASS at WPI:
    - Identify Needs
    - Suggest Solutions
    - Aid in implementation



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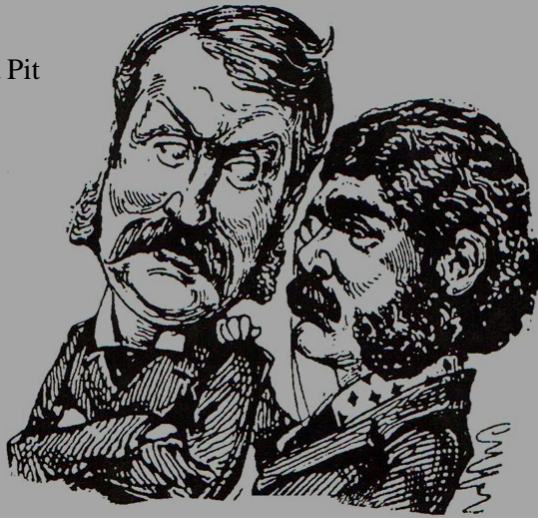
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Conclusions

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## Review

- Summary of the project
- Collection of Data
- Existing Data
- Relevance of Orchestra Pit
- Goals for the next year



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## Questions?

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