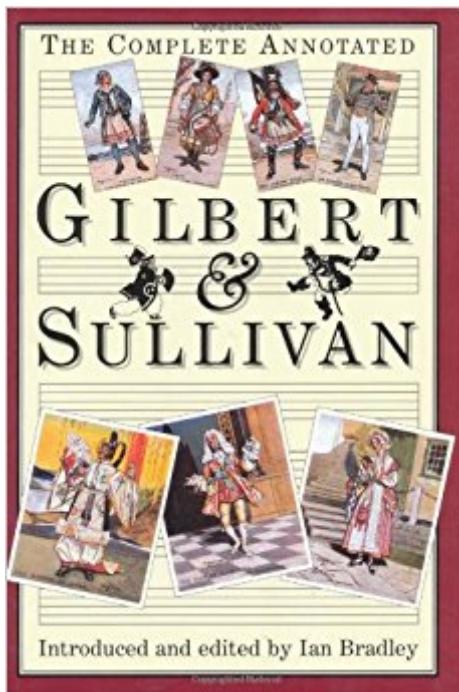


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The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan



Synopsis

The comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan are a performing arts phenomenon. Wildly popular when first produced, they are if anything even more popular today. The Savoy Operas are available on records and compact discs, on audio and video tapes, on television, film, and radio, as well as through the more traditional medium of stage performances by both amateur and professional companies. Indeed, the works of Gilbert and Sullivan are produced more frequently than the plays of Rodgers and Hammerstein or any other musical partnership. The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan provides the complete text of all thirteen Gilbert and Sullivan operas still performed today, from Trial by Jury and The Sorcerer to Utopia Unlimited and The Grand Duke, and including all their greatest triumphs--H.M.S. Pinafore, The Pirates of Penzance, and The Mikado. No other book provides such extensive commentary on the texts of the Savoy Operas. Each work is thoroughly annotated, with the text, including stage directions, given on the right-hand page, and the notes on the left (keyed by line numbers). The annotations provide a wealth of information--everything from the identity of real-life people mentioned in the opera, to clear explanations of obscure words and phrases (such as legal terms) and other literary references, to comments from first-night critics, and much more. In addition, Bradley has written a marvelously informative introduction to the book as well as superb introductions to each piece, describing the genesis of the work, its performance history, and other fascinating tidbits (for instance, Sullivan wrote the music for H.M.S. Pinafore while wracked with pain from a kidney stone, and he wrote the score of The Pirates of Penzance while living at 45 East 20th Street, in New York City). A goldmine of information on the most popular light operas in the repertoire, The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan will delight the hearts of Savoyards everywhere.

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Customer Reviews

Gilbert and Sullivan, librettist and composer, were classically Victorian gentlemen whose comic operas for the Savoy Theater under impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte have endured down to the present day despite the disappearance of the British imperial world which they lampooned. Theirs was a happy combination of Sullivan's cheerily catchy tunes and Gilbert's witty lyrics which captured the comedy of universal human nature. Ian Bradley, annotator of an earlier Gilbert and Sullivan collection, completes and updates the record with the inclusion here of the last collaborations of the two, and new introductions to the operettas that reflect modern interpretations.

Lovers of Gilbert and Sullivan will be in heaven with the publication of these two books, which nicely complement each other. Stedman (English, Roosevelt Univ., Chicago) offers an outstanding study of this playwright and his often overlooked works, with much of its value deriving from its study of Gilbert without Sullivan. The author is a recognized expert on Gilbert as well as the Victorian time period, and she shows him to be a complex and interesting man who often found himself at odds with his time. Stedman highlights his contribution to Victorian theater as a forerunner of Wilde and Shaw. She also exposes some of the myths about Gilbert (and his relationship with Sullivan) that have been perpetrated by earlier writers. The index and bibliography are excellent. The annotated collection serves a dual purpose: Readers can now sing along with any Gilbert and Sullivan song and know all the words, and they will understand everything the song was meant to convey. This volume combines two previously published paperbacks from Penguin and adds the libretti to *The Grand Duke* and *Utopia Limited*. All notes are on the left page, and the actual song texts (complete with stage directions) are on the facing right page. There are also new introductions to each opera, a new introduction to the volume, and corrections to the original text. Print and text layout are very good. Both titles are recommended for public and academic libraries, as well as libraries with theater holdings. Susan L. Peters, Emory Univ., Atlanta, Ga. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

OMG, this book is vast, and a treasure trove for anybody interested in the period. I was a little stunned when it arrived. It is huge, with the text on one side and commentary on the other, "en face"

as we intellectual folk say. In the introductions Sullivan comes through as a cool dude. I really liked it that when he finished frantically reworking *Pirates of Penzance* after losing the original music en route here to the USA, he was very pleased with the outcome; in a letter home to Mom he judged *Pirates* "tunier" than anything he had written before. "Tunier" is not what Puccini would have said of *La Boheme*--or would he?

Ok, full disclosure: I am a G & S fanatic, have been since I played Ralph Rackstraw in *Pinafore* in the 8th grade, and produced (directed, accompanied) *Pirates* and *Mikado* in summer camps, and sang a super potpourri from *Mikado* in the New York All-City High School Chorus 60 years ago. All the librettos are here with useful annotations, especially for Americans for whom many of the references draw a blank - Gilbert's references to topical events and contemporary persons, and words which were sometimes rare even then, and Sullivan's to Handel, Verdi, &c. There is also much material on the development of the operettas, different versions, the inspiration for a song. Finally, it's helpful in catching all the words of the patter songs which rattle along sometimes faster than one can hear. It's all wonderful stuff and makes one yearn for a counterpart to satirize today's Washington circus.

Bradley's annotations contain lots of historical material on variations to the currently published libretti, and these can be useful, but I find myself wishing that there were more entries on archaic or unusual words that Gilbert used and what they would have meant to a Victorian audience. There are plenty of such notes already, but there's still a lot they don't cover. That would mean a much larger volume, of course, and the combined annotated edition is already pretty bulky. Maybe new editions of each operetta with more detail is the solution, but is there a market?

The book nicely provides the (almost) complete librettos with detailed notes on, among other things, the various versions from preproduction onward to twentieth century changes, the origins, the inspirations, and the meaning of words Bradley thinks are obscure. He is much more likely to explain reasonably familiar words than to assume too much. The introductions nicely trace the history down to the most recent productions. Those who have seen the current movie *Topsy-Turvy* will find the notes helpful in seeing some of the actual events depicted in the movie. The one omission is *Thespis*, the first collaboration. The libretto, but not the score, survived. Two areas of omission are exhaustive treatment of either the major performers or recordings. However, this is an excellent source for lovers of G&S.

For the Gilbert and Sullivan lover, this is an excellent volume. It provides a brief but informative introductory section for each operetta, the complete lyrics and opposite them, helpful annotations where appropriate (read them or not). It's huge and it weighs a ton--well, you get your money's worth. It's especially valuable to read it before going to a performance, or to follow along with a pre-recorded performance. Know the words and sing along!

This is the only book for a true Gilbert and Sullivan fan, especially since it literally is the only complete collection of their works available today for purchase. Luckily, it's a good one: it includes all of their Savoy operettas as well as their lesser-known later works such as Utopia Ltd. The real jewels of the collection, however, remain their best operas: HMS Pinafore, The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance, The Sorcerer. This book is especially helpful because it contains all of the lyrics to all of the songs, and most CD recordings of the operas do not come with the lyrics (for many of the songs, it is impossible to catch all of the words simply by hearing them). Ian Bradley's notes, printed off to the side, are also interesting and help shed light on obscure words and phrases. Enjoy!

Every G&S fan needs this books. Librettos for every opera--so if you've forgotten the words or never quite gotten them all in the first place, this is the answer.

Totally appreciated by the person for whom it was given as a gift. Detailed. Apparently some info you won't easily find elsewhere.

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