

**Mr. D'Oyly Carte's "D" Company  
February 23rd to May 9th 1885 and  
July 27th 1885 to 2nd January 1886**

***Week commencing 23 February.***

LYCEUM THEATRE, EDINBURGH. Six nights, *Princess Ida*.

Last night D'Oyly Carte's company commenced a short engagement at the Lyceum Theatre, when the "Princess Ida" was produced. This, the most recent of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas, has most of the features which have led to the previous productions of these talented coadjutors taking such a high place in the public estimation. The story is naturally and pleasantly worked out, the libretto, if not brilliant, is never dull or commonplace, and the music is pretty and invariably tuneful. As presented by the present company the entertainment is a very enjoyable one. As "Princess Ida," Miss Ethel M'Alpine acted with dignity and grace, sometimes being perhaps a trifle too stiff and unbending. Her singing of the aria which introduces her to the piece "I built upon a rock" [*sic*] was very pleasant, and her address to the women of the college was well and forcibly delivered. Lady Blanche has an admirable representative in Miss Fanny Edwards who won much favour by her expressive singing and good acting. Miss Minna Louis made a decided hit as Lady Psyche, her singing of "The ape and the lady" securing a well-deserved recall. The part of Melissa was adequately filled by Miss Young. Of the male characters the parts of King Gama and Florian were well filled by Mr. David Fisher, jun., and Mr. Federici. The latter has good baritone voice, which was heard to much advantage in the trios with Messrs. Pounds and Rowan, who acted Prince Hilarion and Cyril. The mighty sons of Gama were vocally somewhat weak, and the choruses were frequently rather light. The mounting of the piece is very good. The dresses are artistic, and the spectacular effects both in the garden scene and in the concluding act in the courtyard of the castle are bright and telling. [*Edinburgh Evening News*, 24 Feb. 1885, p. 2.]

LYCEUM THEATRE.—Proprietors, Messrs. Howard and Wyndham; Acting-Manager, Mr. Sam H. S. Austin.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Princess Ida* company commenced their tour at Edinburgh on Monday, when a goodly audience assembled to enjoy the sparkling dialogue and tuneful music of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's popular work. The company is in a large measure the same that appeared at the Princess's last October, but Miss Ethel M'Alpine now takes the place of Miss Esme Lee as Princess Ida. Miss M'Alpine's performance was brilliantly successful. [*The Era*, 28 Feb. 1885, p. 16.]

***Week commencing 2 March.***

Her Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen. Six nights, *Princess Ida*.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE  
PRINCESS IDA.

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan have styled this their last operatic production that has been presented to us "a respectful perversion of Tennyson's 'Princess,'" and in most respects it fully justifies its name. Of course it takes for basis the Laureate's well-known poem, and in the development of so much plot as is necessary to comic opera follows more or less closely the familiar story. The irresistible flow of Mr. Gilbert's humour, however, bursts the barriers of precedent with its customary impetuosity; and as a result presents us with one of the characteristic and inimitable burlesques that none but he can produce. As may be presumed, the resemblance

between the "Princess Ida" of Mr. Gilbert and "The Princess" of Tennyson is about as close as that between the doings of the crew of H.M.S. Pinafore and the daily routine of an ironclad in the Royal navy, or between the pursuits of the Pirates of Penzance and the mode of earning a living pursued by the proprietors of a Chinese pirate junk. Mr. Gilbert, however, has skilfully availed himself of the many openings for comic treatment afforded by the story, and turns all its serious notions upside down with his habitual freedom. The various striking and effective situations that occur in the course of the piece are all evolved naturally out of the original, and what Mr. Gilbert frankly calls "perversion" is simply the ordinary liberty taken by all parodists.

The music that Dr Sullivan has composed is quite of the same light and catching order that we have now grown wont to expect from him. There are no particularly striking effects, and we find several suggestions of bygone favourites. The solos are, perhaps, the least attractive numbers of the present work; for, while there are a good many effective trios and not a few excellent choruses, the songs are by no means of the first order. An amusing number, something on the lines of the songs of the "Sorcerer," the "Judge," and the "Heavy Dragoon," is Gama's solo, in which "he can't think why" his amiable efforts to tread on everybody's toes are not properly appreciated; and the finale of the first act is a decidedly lively and effective bit of scoring. The Princess' aria in the second act seems hardly to have the effect designed by the composer, and on the whole falls rather flat, the interest not being aroused to any great extent till the trio between Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian, after they have arrayed themselves in woman's garb. Number 15, by Lady Psyche, with Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian, is a sprightly and amusing item, and evidently found much favour with the audience, who accorded it a persistent encore. Cyril's "Kissing Song," though not excessively musical, also commended itself greatly, its dramatic merits and setting being mainly responsible for the success it achieved. The finale of the second act is skilfully and elaborately scored; and forms perhaps the most taking feature of the opera. The third act is a short one, but contains a pretty song by the Princess, and one or two rather fetching choruses.

"Princess Ida" is perhaps more of a distinct hit dramatically than musically. The situations are very effective, and the opportunities afforded for skilful and well-worked stage pictures are numerous. There is much room for mirth afforded by the burlesque on Tennyson's poem, which itself is permeated by a scarcely concealed humorous and satirical element. King Gama is the chief vehicle of Mr. Gilbert's satire, and his speeches and songs are amongst the most effective elements in the production of the generally ludicrous effect. The staging of the opera was admirable; the scenery was fresh and new, the distance scene in the first act being a specially nice piece of painting. The dresses were very rich and appropriate, and this in a piece depending so much as "Princess Ida" does on *mise en scène*, is a most important matter. We may safely say that we have seldom seen a production in which the armour, dresses, and properties had been more carefully and thoroughly attended to. The histrionic powers of the company, taken generally, were quite equal to their vocal qualifications, more especially on the part of the leading gentlemen and the ladies impersonating Lady Blanche, Melissa, and Lady Psyche. King Gama (Mr. David Fisher, jun.), Florian (Mr. F. Federici), and Cyril (Mr. C. Rowan) demand special mention. Miss Ethel M'Alpine sang the music of the Princess Ida very pleasantly, but her acting was hardly so good, and Hilarion's performance was less satisfactory from a purely histrionic point of view than it might have been. King Hildebrand (Mr. Fred. Billington) was deserving of every commendation in make-up, voice, and acting, and the chorus was full and efficient. It is matter for regret that the orchestral department

does not receive its due in the production in the provinces of the Gilbert-Sullivan operas, for, while Mr. Mackay and his band may be relied on to do their very best, they cannot, either in point of numbers or of practice, be expected to do full justice to the score of these pieces; but we fear that so long as communication with the north is so tardy, and the patronage of first-class musical performances in Aberdeen so cautious and hesitating, we must rest content under imperfections such as these. On the whole, however, we may safely assert that visitors to the theatre this week will enjoy a decided treat both musical and dramatic, while the accessories possess a completeness that has seldom been excelled in a production of the kind. [*Aberdeen Journal*, 3 Mar. 1885, p. 4.]

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.—Lessee, Mr. W. M'Farland; General Manager, Mr. H. M. M'Farland.—*Princess Ida* has at length come our way, and the lovers of English comic opera are this week enjoying the happy conceits of Mr. Gilbert and the tuneful music of Sir Arthur Sullivan. The opera has been well received. The principals are Misses M'Alpine and Edwards, Mr. David Fisher, Mr. Rowan, and Mr. Billington and the opera obtains careful rendering. It is put on the stage in most attractive form, Mr. H. Brook looking after the interests of Mr. D'Oyly Carte in this important matter. [*The Era*, 7 Mar. 1885, p. 16.]

***Week commencing 9 March.***

THEATRE ROYAL, DUNDEE. Six nights, *Princess Ida*.

There may be doubts in the mind of some as to whether "Princess Ida" is the best of the celebrated Gilbert-Sullivan series of comic operas. There can be none, we think, as to its being one of the most delightful, picturesque, and interesting comic operas that have visited Dundee. It is musically equal to "Pinafore," and if it lacks the pungent political satire that gave such relish to that piece, it has more delicate satire of its own none the less enjoyable because its source and inspiration is Tennyson. For a thorough enjoyment of "Princess Ida" we recommend preliminary perusal of Tennyson's "Princess." It will help to a clearer comprehension of the plot, and will add to one's respect for Mr. Gilbert in the deft use he makes, for comic purposes, of the material he found in the Laureate's magnificent poem. Mr Gilbert's version is a very "respectful perversion" of the original. The main lines and leading thoughts of the poem are well adhered to, and where any departure takes place the hint for such departure will in nearly every case be found in the poem. The characters are the same, the scenery is the same, and the plot is the same. It is in the rampant spirit of fun and caricature that the perversion is most observable, an excellent example of which is the deliciously absurd address of the Princess on the superiority of woman to man, where one listens with a droll feeling of amusement to an echo of the original, the speech being throughout Tennyson *plus* Gilbert. The characters naturally divide themselves into groups of three. There are the Princess and her two chief Professors in the Female College—Psyche and Blanche. The complement of these are found in Prince Hilarion and his two friends Cyril and Florian. Then as contrasts we have the bluff, fiery King Hildebrand, and the cynical, disagreeable King Gama, who, with his three comical, warlike sons, complete what may be regarded as the leading characters. Surrounding these are numerous lady members of the College and soldiers of the two Kings, who form the chorus. In the presentation of these characters the company is one of sterling merit, and so equally is this merit distributed that it would be quite invidious to select any one for special commendation to the exclusion of the others. The company in all its members has been trained to great proficiency, giving a smoothness to the whole which is most agreeable, and whose only drawback was the long waits between the

acts. The songs are numerous, and are distributed with an impartial hand. Everybody has something good both to say and sing, and when it is noted that almost every song was encored last night it will be understood that they were thoroughly appreciated. We note here a few of the most pleasing and popular:- Hilarion's "Twenty years ago" and "Why should I wish to live?" Gama's "Such a disagreeable man" and "Nothing to grumble at;" Psyche's "The Ape and the Lady;" Cyril's "Kiss me, kiss me," which received a double encore; and Princess Ida's, "I built upon a rock." Among the concerted pieces there are some that fall upon the ear with singular sweetness, such as the trio "Expressive glances;" the two-part chorus, "Mighty Maiden with mission"; the quartette, "The world a broken toy;" the quintette, "Woman of the wisest wit;" the duet, "Now, wouldn't you like to rule the roast?" and the chorus, "Merrily ring the luncheon bell." There is a decided echo of former melodies by the same composer in several of the songs and concerted pieces, but the opera, notwithstanding, is tuneful, melodious, bright, and sparkling throughout, and has less in it that would bear excision than any of the same author's previous productions. The three set scenes are pleasing and effective. The dresses are magnificent, yet chaste, and the groupings are arranged with a fine eye to effect. The band, twelve in number, played remarkably well, and the general feeling of the large audience seemed to be one of high satisfaction with the entire work. It deserves and will doubtless receive crowded houses every night, and if the suggestion of matinee could be carried out it would give an opportunity to many who could not otherwise be present to see one of the most chaste and delightful comic operas that has come to this town. [*Dundee Evening Telegraph*, Tuesday 10 March 1885, p.2.]

#### "PRINCESS IDA" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

Last night Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Company, for the production in the provinces of the latest Gilbert and Sullivan Opera, began a six nights' engagement at the Theatre Royal, and if their success is proportionate to the merits of the piece, and of its performance, crowded houses will be the rule. The opera has been long in finding its way to Dundee, for it is now more than a year since its production in London, and it did not seem to have excited in the musical community of Dundee the interest which it merits. The evident enjoyment, hearty laughter, and frequent encores of the audience last night, however, prove that the success of the partnership of Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan is not declining. While formed much on the same plan as its predecessors, "Princess Ida" contains sufficient freshness in subject to be interesting and piquant, and if the score wants something of the rollicking and catching airs of "Pirates" and "Patience," it gains in purity and elegance of style. The libretto, as we mentioned yesterday, is a "respectful operatic perversion" of Tennyson's "Princess," a subject which must have been unusually tempting to a humorist of the quaint proclivities of Mr Gilbert. The comicality of the situation is made apparent at the very outset, since Princess Ida is betrothed "at the extremely early age of one" to Prince Hilarion, a bridegroom twice her age. This lamentable disparity in age becomes, however, less formidable by the time the Prince is 22 and claims his bride. She meantime has taken up with the new idea of female education, has become the head of a women's university, in which she endeavours to inculcate the inferiority and positive uselessness of the male sex. The scheme soon turns out a failure, for the surreptitious entrance within the academic walls of Prince Hilarion and two companions overturns all the theories of the pretty students, the principal herself at last succumbing, and acknowledging that she had made a mistake. Such is an outline of the story which Mr. Gilbert has told with all his wonted humour and grotesque fancy. Sir Arthur Sullivan's music is throughout bright and melodious, sometimes

rising to heights worthy of classic opera, as in Ida's song, in the second act, "I built upon a rock," and in a charmingly quaint minuet-like duet in the first act sung by Melissa and Lady Blanche. The chorus writing is free in melody and full and rich in harmony, and will, we are sure, disclose new beauties on further acquaintance. Of the performance we have not space to say much. The principals of the company, many of whom are new to Dundee, were all admirable, both as to their vocal and histrionic powers. Miss M'Alpine, who as Princess Ida has a great deal to do, sustains her part with remarkable fitness, happily combining the dignity of a principal with the grace of a princess. Miss Edwards, whom we have heard before, as Lady Blanche, was most formidable and awe-inspiring with her "Abstract Philosophy"; while Miss Beatrix Young as Melissa was charming in the scene with Florian. Our old favourite, Mr. David Fisher, jun., as King Gama deserves first mention among the gentlemen of the company. His singing and acting are equally clever. Mr Courtice Pounds as Hilarion made a favourable impression on the audience; he has a tenor voice of fine quality and good range. The singing and acting of King Gama's three gigantic sons were very droll, and their get-up excessively comical. The chorus was not quite up to the average of D'Oyly Carte's companies, and could be augmented with advantage, as also might the orchestra. The costumes are very beautiful, and the grouping of colour and general stage effect very telling. [*Dundee Courier*, 10 Mar. 1885, p. 5.]

***Week commencing 16 March,***

GRAND THEATRE, GLASGOW. Six nights, *Princess Ida*. [*Glasgow Herald*, 16 Mar. 1885, p.9].

Mr. Charles has been fortunate to secure a visit of one of Mr. Carte's companies with *Princess Ida*, to which his excellent stage staff has done every justice in the way of mounting. The orchestra, too, is all that could be wished. The cast of this charming and popular work is, with one exception, the same as on former visits to another local theatre, the exception being the substitution of Miss Ethel M'Alpine for Miss Esme Lee, a change with which no fault can be found, Miss M'Alpine being an artist whose ability in comic opera has long since been proved. The performance, which is most complete, meets with warm approval at the hands of large audiences. [*The Era*, 21 Mar. 1885, p.16.]

***Week commencing 23 March.***

THEATRE ROYAL, BRADFORD. Six nights, *Princess Ida*.

A six nights' return visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, with *Princess Ida*, was commenced on Monday evening last, when an exceedingly appreciative audience assembled, and the popular opera was received with most flattering marks of approval. The company is, in the main, identical with the one which visited the town last October. [*The Era*, 28 Mar. 1885, p.16.]

***Week commencing 30 March.***

PRINCE'S THEATRE, MANCHESTER. Six nights, *The Sorcerer* followed by *Trial by Jury*. No performance on Friday (Good Friday) [*Manchester Courier*, 28 Mar. 1885.]

Though one or other of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas are often to be seen and heard Manchester, it is a long time since *The Sorcerer*, one of their earliest and best, has been given; but the comparatively good audience the Prince's Theatre, last night, showed clearly that its comicalities, its extremely quaint and out of the way humour, and, above all, its great tunefulness, were not forgotten. The whole plot is

certainly ridiculous in the extreme, but there is so much of the matter-of-fact about it, so skilfully combined with such an abundance the absurd, that it never fails to amuse, and also, when performed by one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's companies, to charm. It seldom happens that any star appears in his companies, but all taking part are generally so thoroughly masters of their work, and so much attention is paid to detail, that the result is almost invariably satisfactory. The performance last night was good, and the frequent encores and almost constant applause testifies to the pleasure it gave. As Lady Sangazure Miss Fanny Edwards was excellent, and Miss Ethel M' Alpine as Aline, if she would only sing the words a little more distinctly, would be equally effective. The Mrs. Partlet of Miss Ada Doree also deserves a hearty word of commendation. Miss Evelyn Carstairs in the part of Constance was, with one slight exception, satisfactory. Mr. David Fisher, jun., as John Wellington Wells, was scarcely as happy as we have heard him in some other characters, though he succeeded in pleasing the audience very much by his delineation of the commercial traveller. Mr. Fred Billington was in every way good as the Vicar of Ploverleigh, and Mr. Federici, as Sir Marmaduke, both acted and sang with his usual ability. Mr. Charles Rowan as Alexis was capital, but in the second act sang slightly out of tune, and the little that Mr. Leonard Roche as the Notary had to do was also good. The chorus deserves every praise, and the band, though not perfect, possesses the excellent merit of not drowning the singing. It is hardly necessary to say that the dresses and all the accessories were, as they always are when Mr. D'Oyly Carte has the management, in every way satisfactory. *The Sorcerer* was followed by a good performance of *Trial Jury*. Both will be repeated to-night and the three following nights. [*Manchester Courier*, 31 Mar. 1885, p. 8.]

The production of the "Sorcerer" and "Trial by Jury," the two earliest works of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, drew, as might have been expected, a large house to the Prince's Theatre. It is now some years since "Trial by Jury" was given at a Manchester theatre, and the announcement that the pioneer opera of the Gilbert-Sullivan series was once more to be produced caused pleasurable expectations. On its first performance it came upon the public like a revelation, and at once opened a new field of enterprise. But since then the joint creators have educated their public to a more finished standard. "Trial by Jury" is perhaps as grotesquely humorous as any of the series, but it lacks the scenic beauty of the "Pirates of Penzance," or the musical power of "Patience" or of "Pinafore." Still it is a marvellously clever production both from the author's and composer's point of view. Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company is principally composed of old faces and favourites, and a very fair rendering was given of both operas. The "Sorcerer," which was given first, went merrily from beginning to end, and all the principal *morceaux* were determinedly encored. Miss Ethel M' Alpine as Aline was vocally efficient, and entered fully into Mr. Gilbert's eccentric humour. Miss Fanny Edwards was a most courtly Lady Sangazure, and sang her music with excellent skill and spirit, and Miss Ada Doree and Miss Carstairs were satisfactory as the pew opener and her daughter. Mr. David Fisher, jun., was very happy as the commercial sorcerer, and sang the patter song with immense success, whilst Mr. Federici as Sir Marmaduke, Mr. Rowan as Alexis, Mr. F. Billington as the vicar, and Mr. L. Roche as the notary, completed a strong cast. In "Trial by Jury" Mr. F. Billington made a capital judge, Mr. C. Pounds a good defendant, Miss Minna Louis a charming plaintiff, and Mr. Federici in the small part of the counsel did excellent work. [*Manchester Evening News*, 31 Mar. 1885, p. 2.]

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company with *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* has made a successful appearance here, the length of time that has elapsed since these early

efforts of the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration were last heard here giving them all the charm of novelty. The company is practically the same as that which last played *Princess Ida* in Manchester. Unstinted praise may be awarded to Mr. Fred Billington for his excellent characterisation and vocal qualifications for the part of Dr. Daly. Miss Ethel M'Alpine as Aline, Miss Fanny Edwards as Lady Sangazure, Miss Doree as Mrs. Partlet, Miss Carstairs as Constance, and Mr. Federici as Sir Marmaduke also acquitted themselves satisfactorily on Monday night, and Mr. Rowan and Mr. David James, junr., also played satisfactorily. In *Trial by Jury*, Mdlles. Louis and Gaston, and Messrs. Billington, Federici. Pounds, Poole, and Hendon were good representatives of the various characters. [*The Era*, 4 Apr. 1885, p. 18.]

***Week commencing 6 April.***

THE GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN. Six nights, *Princess Ida*.

Last evening the "Princess Ida" was produced before a crowded audience at the Gaiety Theatre. The work is one which has well established its place in the popular estimation. It is not the best of Sullivan and Gilbert's works, but it has many of the chief merits of their great achievements in the same direction. Of course it has passed out of its very youthful days when it had the charm of novelty, and one might perhaps not inappropriately be inclined to wish for something new in Dublin at this particular time, but the "Princess Ida," in the absence of a novelty, is, after all, attractive enough, even after frequent repetition, to fill up a week, and those who have not seen and heard it have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the work, full of sweet music, rich in the quaint melodies of Sullivan, wedded to the wonderful text of the author of the Bab Ballads. The company who appeared last night have already won popularity in Dublin, and the cast was in almost every essential particular the same as before. Miss Ethel M'Alpine, who as Patience made so good an impression, sang very nicely as Princess Ida; and Mr. David Fisher makes a model King Gama, the only objection to be found in this regard being that the character affords him such a small opportunity for the display of his ability. Mr. Billington is a capital Hildebrand, and Mr. Pounds, Mr. Rowan, and Mr. Federici, in their respective parts, sing and act very well indeed. The many charming numbers of the opera were given with excellent effect; the scenery and dresses are admirable, and the opera in every detail is put on the stage most admirably. [*Freeman's Journal*, 7 Apr. 1885, p. 7.]

***Week commencing 13 April.***

THE GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN. Six nights, *The Sorcerer* followed by *Trial by Jury*.

On Monday evening Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company commenced their second week with a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Sorcerer," The house was crowded in every part. It is not necessary to commend this triumph of music and fun to the public. The attendance showed that they know enough of it to be ready to rush eagerly to hear it when they get the chance. There is, certainly, no happier specimen of the art of the writer and the composer who between them have burlesqued every operatic situation, and mingled the pathetic, the humorous, the awful, and the comical with such consummate skill as to make the work quite a type of its kind. On this occasion additions recently made by the composer were introduced, namely, a new instrumental introduction to the second act, and a new tenor song from the hero, Alexis. The performance was on the whole an excellent one, the leading parts being well brought out, while the choruses, and what may be described as the minor details of the operatic performance, were at all events vigorously and accurately dashed in.

The scenery and stage details were quite up to the mark. Of course the source, spring, and centre of all the fun is John Wellington Wells, and the peculiarities of the part came out with the utmost effect through Mr. David Fisher, junior, who kept the audience in a continual laughter. Indeed, when he sings the now famous song that bears his name, one is apt to be so taken with the fun of it as not to see that technically, owing to the changes of time and the risings and fallings of key, it is a very trying bit of vocalism. Mr. Fisher surmounted the difficulties well. The part and music of Aline were very effectively rendered by Miss Ethel M'Alpine. Mr. Federici was Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, and Mr. Charles Rowan was a sprightly and vigorous Alexis. Amongst the points most effectively brought out were the incantation scene, the quintette in the first act, and the finale. Mr. Fred Billington is to be commended for the dignified elegance and comical solemnity which he threw into his portraiture of the vicar, Dr Daly. The evening's performances closed with an excellent representation of "Trial by Jury," in which the part of the Judge was taken by Mr. Fred Billington, that of the Plaintiff by Miss Minna Louis, of the defendant by Mr. Courtice Pounds, of the Counsel for the Plaintiff by Mr. Federici, of the Foreman by Mr. H. Poole, and of the First Bridesmaid by Miss Jessie Gaston. We venture to think it would be well if, before the engagement is over, another performance or two of the "Princess Ida" were given. [*Freeman's Journal*, 15 Apr. 1885, p.7.]

***Week commencing 20 April.***

ROYAL COURT THEATRE, LIVERPOOL. Monday to Wednesday, *Princess Ida*. Thursday to Friday, *The Sorcerer* followed by *trial by Jury*.

Whilst the newest work of Gilbert and Sullivan, "The Mikado," is being played with remarkable success in London, its predecessors in the excellent line of operas which began with "Trial by Jury" are obtaining similar success in the provinces. In the course of an artistic peregrination, one of the companies bearing the name of Mr. D'Oyly Carte has reached Liverpool, and on Monday its members gave at the Royal Court Theatre, in the presence of a large audience, an excellent performance of "Princess Ida," a work which is not the least attractive of the attractive group to which it belongs. "Princess Ida" is to be repeated this evening, and on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings "The Sorcerer" and "Trial by Jury" are to be presented. The revival of "The Sorcerer" and "Trial by Jury" is especially welcome. The accessories of "Princess Ida," as is always the case at the Court, are most picturesque. [*Liverpool Mercury*, 22 Apr. 1885, p. 7.]

Gilbert-Sullivan operas, interpreted by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, have been the potent and prominent attractions to the "Court" during the past week. *Princess Ida* was selected for representation on Monday, and the cast was as good as that furnished at any previous Liverpool performance. Mr. David Fisher, jun., again distinguished himself as King Gama, Miss Ethel M'Alpine being one of the most charming Princesses which could be imagined, and other parts were given to Mr. F. Billington, King Hildebrand; Mr. C. Pounds, Hilarion; Miss Fanny Edwards, Lady Blanche; Mr. C. Rowan, Cyril; and Mr. F. Fererici, Florian. *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* were promised as the very strong bill of fare on the last three evenings of the week. [*The Era*, 25 Apr. 1885, p. 17.]

***Week commencing 27 April.***

PRINCE'S THEATRE, BRISTOL. Monday to Wednesday & Saturday, *Princess Ida*. Thursday & Friday, *The Sorcerer* followed by *Trial by Jury*. [*Western Daily Press*, 27 Apr. 1885, p.4.]



“PRINCESS IDA” AT THE PRINCE’S THEATRE.—The reception of Gilbert and Sullivan’s “Princess Ida” when it was produced here last autumn by Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s Company was so enthusiastic that the return visit of the company was anticipated with great pleasure by local playgoers. When the work was first produced in London some of the criticisms passed upon it were not favourable, but for what reason it is difficult to understand, and the great success which has attended its production the provinces, as well as the lengthened run it enjoyed at the Savoy, should be sufficient to silence adverse opinion. The libretto is very smartly written, and the score abounds in attractive melodies, while the orchestral music also written in Sir Arthur Sullivan’s best style. On the occasion of its first production here we stated that in our recollection there was no comic opera which a British audience had taken more kindly to on a first night; and certainly its reception last night by a large audience was equally enthusiastic, and the encores were even more numerous. No doubt much of the success was due to the excellent manner in which the opera was produced. The stage appointments were highly effective, and a prettier scene than the gardens of Castle Adamant it would be difficult to conceive; the dresses were superb; the orchestra was efficient, as usual, and last, but not least, have never had a stronger comic opera company in Bristol. With the exception that Miss Ethel McAlpine succeeds Miss Esme Lee the title role, the cast is substantially the same as on [the] last occasion. King Hildebrand could not be entrusted to better hands than Mr. Fred Billington, and Hilarion has a very able exponent in Mr. Courtice Pounds, who possesses a very pleasing tenor voice; while in Cyril and Florian Mr. Charles Rowan and Mr Federici have capital parts, of which they make the most. Mr. D. Fisher’s King Gama is characteristically good, and his three sons, Arac, Guron, and Scynthius. have suitable representatives in Messrs. George Gordon, A. Hendon, and Leonard Roche. Miss McAlpine makes a charming Princess, and her clear and rich vocalisation was much admired. Miss Fanny Edwards is excellent in Lady Blanche, but she was suffering from a cold last night, and her voice was not heard at its best. Lady Psyche and Melissa have very pleasing representatives Miss Minna Louis and Miss Beatrix Young, and other characters are efficiently filled by Miss E. Castairs, Miss L. Monmouth, and Miss Louisa [*sic*] Henri. “Princess Ida” will be repeated tonight, tomorrow, and Saturday, and on Thursday and Friday “The Sorcerer” (which has not been heard in Bristol for several years) and “Trial by Jury” will be produced. [*Western Daily Press*, 28 Apr. 1885, p.3.]

PRINCE’S THEATRE. - This evening Gilbert and Sullivan’s “The Sorcerer” and “Trial by Jury” will constitute the programme at the Prince’s Theatre. The former has not been heard in Bristol for about five years, and its representation by Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s excellent company is expected to attract a large house. The cast will be as follows:-Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, Mr. F. Federici; Alexis, Mr. C. Rowan; Dr. Daly, Mr. F. Billington; Notary, Mr. L. Roche; John Wellington Wells, Mr. D. Fisher, jun.; Lady Sangazure, Miss Fanny Edwards; Aline, Miss McAlpine; Mrs. Partlet, Miss Ada Doree; Constance, Miss E. Carstairs. The characters in “Trial by Jury” will be filled by Mr. Billington, Mr. Courtice Pounds, Mr. Harold Poole, Mr. A. Hendon, Miss Minna Louis, and Miss Jessie Gaston. [*Western Daily Press*, 30 Apr. 1885, p. 3.]

After a lapse of four years Gilbert and Sullivan’s comic opera, “The Sorcerer,” was produced last evening at the Prince’s Theatre, and the programme also included the successful dramatic cantata, by the same author and composer, “Trial by Jury.” As had been anticipated, there was a large audience, and the complete success of the programme should ensure another good house for this evening, when the same pieces are to be repeated. “The Sorcerer” was one of the earliest comic operas produced by

those eminent collaborators Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, but although its first representation took place in 1877, it was not until May, 1881, that it was brought to Bristol. Then, as now, it was played by one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's companies, but Mr. Fred Billington was the only member of the present company included in the cast on that occasion. As four years have elapsed since the previous representation in Bristol, it may be well to give a short sketch of the plot, which hangs upon a certain "philtre" or "love potion," those who taste of which become enamoured instantly of the first person they meet. The scene opens in the gardens of Sir Marmaduke Poindextre where the peasantry are assembled to celebrate the betrothal of Alexis, the baronet's son, with Aline, the daughter of Lady Sangazure. Alexis has heard something about "the patent oxyhydrogen love-at-first-sight philtre," advertised by Messrs. Wells and Co., and he determines not only to make sure of Aline's enduring affection by inducing her to taste of the elixir; but, from philanthropic motives, he distributes it amongst the villagers. Alexis' ambition is to induce the world to "break down the artificial barriers of rank, wealth, education, age, beauty, habits, taste, and temper, and to recognise the glorious principle that in marriage alone is to be found the panacea for every ill," and for this purpose he is anxious that men and women should be coupled in matrimony without distinction of rank. He obtains the assistance of Mr. John Wellington Wells, obtains a sufficient quantity of the elixir and distributes it among the assembled inhabitants, with the result, of course, that no one loveth the proper person. Aline's affections are transferred to the Rev. Dr. Daly, the vicar; Sir Marmaduke Poindextre falls in love with Mrs. Partlet, a venerable pew opener, whose daughter Constance becomes enamoured of the notary; and Lady Sangazure makes a dead set at the Sorcerer, who, not having partaken of the potion, does not return her affection. As the only remedy for the general embarrassment, the Sorcerer offers to die, and having made his disappearance in the usual manner through the trap, the newly formed attachments are exchanged for the old ones and the curtain falls on general rejoicing. The libretto is written in Mr. Gilbert's usual racy style, and the music, though not so attractive as some of Sir A. Sullivan's later compositions, is nevertheless tuneful throughout, and some of the numbers are of a very high order. There are several very effective concerted pieces, and in many instances the parts written for the orchestra are strikingly beautiful. The vicar's song "Time was when love and I were well acquainted," is a popular one; then there are the attractive duet for Sir Marmaduke and Lady Sangazure, commencing "Welcome joy, adieu to sadness;" the song for Alexis "Love feeds on many kinds of food;" the Sorcerer's patter song, "My name is John Wellington Wells;" and the quintet for Alexis, Aline, Sir Marmaduke, Mrs. Partlet, and Dr. Daly, "I rejoice that it's decided," &c., and other taking numbers calculated to put the audience in a good humour. The opera was cast as follows:- Sir Marmaduke Poindextre, Mr. Federici; Alexis, Mr. C. Rowan; Dr. Daly, Mr. F. Billington; Notary, Mr. L. Roche; John Wellington Wells, Mr. D. Fisher, jun.; Lady Sangazure, Miss Fanny Edwards; Aline, Miss McAlpine; Mrs. Partlet, Miss Ada Doree; Constance, Miss E. Carstairs. The piece was capitally played all round, and at the end of the first act all the principals were recalled, and there was another recall at the close of the opera. Where all did so well it is rather invidious to make selections, but special mention ought to be made of Mr. David Fisher's impersonation of the Sorcerer, which was really an admirable bit of acting, Mr. Federici's Sir Marmaduke, and Mr. Billington's Dr. Daly were also excellently acted. The acts have been rearranged since the last visit, and the new introduction to the second act is a welcome addition to the humour of the piece. Most of the numbers mentioned were encored, and among others received with special favour were Alexis'

song in the second act, "Thou hast the power thy vaunted love," another song by the vicar, "Oh, my voice is sad an low," the aria for Constance, "Dear friends take pity," and two or three of the solos for Aline. The beautiful choruses were admirably given; the orchestral music was finely rendered, and the dressing and staging of the opera left nothing to be desired. "Trial by Jury" followed, and was admirably played by Messrs. F. Billington, Courtice Pounds, H. Poole, A. Hendon, and Mesdames Minna Louis, and Jessie Gaston. [*Western Daily Press*, 1 May 1885, p.6.]

***Week commencing 4 May.***

THEATRE ROYAL, CARDIFF. Monday to Wednesday, & Saturday matinee, *Princess Ida*. Thursday to Saturday, *The Sorcerer* followed by *Trial by Jury*. [*Western Mail*, 4 May 1885, p.1.]

It is now rather more than a year since this charming work was first given in Cardiff, and a second hearing only confirms our previous impression that it is undoubtedly the most pleasing of the Gilbert-Sullivan operas. There are those who profess themselves somewhat weary of the author's habit of looking at life through distorting lenses, and others who go even further, and think his peculiar vein of humour to be well-nigh exhausted. In "Princess Ida," however, he is seen at his freshest and best - shall we say a metaphor, and say in Tennyson's *Princess* he discovered a rich seam, and did not fail to work upon it to the best advantage? The composer, too, has here given us some of his most dainty and piquant melodies, and has clothed his ideas with more than his usual musicianly skill. There are several changes in the cast since the opera was first played here, and the whole performance has become accentuated - in parts unduly so, we think - but the "business" of the piece, it must be admitted, has been considerably strengthened, and the *ensemble* is, if anything, better than ever, Miss Ethel McAlpine follows Miss Dysart in the *title rôle*. She gives a more robust rendering of the part, but her skilled singing, well-trained voice, and expressive acting make her more than acceptable. The duenna *Lady Blanche* finds an entirely capable representative in Miss Fanny Edwards, and Misses Miriam [*sic*] Louis, May Carroll, and Evelyn Carstairs make a charming trio as the lady undergraduates, *Psyche*, *Melissa*, and *Sacharissa*. Mr. Fred Billington is excellent as *King Hildebrand*, and Mr. David Fisher's *King Gama* has been strengthened in point and humour. Mr. Courtice Pounds is thoroughly effective as *Hilarion* and Mr. Charles Rowan as *Cyril* won an enthusiastic encore in the well-known "Kissing Song." Mr. George Gordon, Mr. Arthur Hendon, and Mr. Leonard Roche are thoroughly grotesque as this warriors Arac, Guron and Scynthius, and their acting is conceived in the true spirit of burlesque. The band and chorus, under the baton of Mr. P. W. Halton, did full justice to the composer's score, and the beauty of the stage pictures was much enhanced by the three really fine scenes painted for the occasion by the resident, artist, Mr. G. F. Warde. "Princess Ida" will be played to-night and to-morrow, and on Thursday the bill is to be changed, and the Cardiff public will have the opportunity of judging the merits of "The Sorcerer" and "Trial by Jury," the first works written by the clever *collaborateurs*. There was a large and most appreciative house last evening, and nearly every member came in for the honour of an encore. [*Western Mail*, Tuesday 5 May 1885, p.3]

On Thursday evening the two earliest works of those famous jesters, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, were performed for the first time in Cardiff, and a brilliant audience affixed to both the unmistakable seal of approval. It is now ten years ago that the dramatic cantata, "Trial by Jury," first saw the light at the little theatre in Dean-street, Soho, and it has since been followed by a large number of brothers and

sisters, all bearing a distinct family likeness to the first offspring. The fortunate authors followed up their initial success a couple of years or so afterwards with “The Sorcerer,” and now their names are known throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the production of anything new from their pens is always accounted one of the chief events of the London dramatic season. They have not always been equally successful it is true, and we very much doubt whether either of the later operas contains more of what is generally acceptable to the public than the two whose names stand at the head of the present notice. In the “Sorcerer” Mr. Gilbert’s love of the absurd, passion for the incongruous, and delight in the marvellous and bewildering find ample scope and free vent. The composer has also worked *con amore*. We see all through how perfectly of accord he is with his coadjutor. There is no struggle between them for pre-eminence. Each works for, and with, the other, and as the situation demands so the wit and fancy of the author, or the grace and humour of the composer, are brought most prominently into notice. The “Sorcerer” opens in orthodox style with a chorus of villagers, who joyously he announce the approaching marriage of *Alexis*, eldest son of *Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre*, with *Aline*, the lovely daughter of *Lady Sangazure*. *Alexis* is a social reformer. He desires that the whole village shall marry and be given in marriage, without distinction of age, rank, or wealth, and to further his plans he calls in to his aid a celebrated necromancer, *Mr. John Wellinton Wells*, by whom a love philtre is prepared and administered. The direst results follow. *Sir Marmaduke* falls in love with *Mrs. Partlet*, the pew-opener; her pretty daughter, *Constance*, with a deaf old *Notary*; *Lady Sangazure* with the dealer in magic; and, worst of all, *Aline* with *Dr. Daly*, the vicar. It is this last catastrophe which brings about the *denouement*, for *Alexis* is frantic at the loss of his beloved, and compels *Mr. Wells* to remove the spell. This can so only be done by sacrificing a life to *Ahrimines*, and the curtain falls as *Mr. Wells* is seen descending to the shades below, while the rest of rest of the *dramatis personæ* are happily united to the first objects of their choice. It would by difficult to find a more thoroughly comic character than this same *J. W. Wells*, as played by Mr. David Fisher. His intensely business-like way of performing the works of necromancy and his startling changes of manner from the heights of mock tragedy to the depths of common-place are conceived in the true spirit of pathos, and the audience fairly roared with laughter again and again. Mr. Frederick [*sic*] was seen to much advantage as the old gallant *Sir Marmaduke*, and the duet between him and Miss Fanny Edwards (*Lady Sangazure*) was a thing to be remembered. Mr. Fred Billington was a capital *Dr. Daly*. Make-up and acting were alike excellent, and his fine voice made the most of the music allotted to the part. Mr. Charles Rowan looked a handsome *Alexis*, and sang in good style and with careful expression. Miss Ethel McAlpine was the *Aline*, and achieved a marked success, which her fine voice and cultivated method fully justified. Miss Ada Doree contributed a really humorous sketch as *Mrs. Partlet*, and Miss Evelyn Carstairs found in *Constance* fitting opportunities for showing off her bright and winsome ways. The opera was practically heard twice, as nearly every member was encored, and the curtain fell at last amidst the loudest acclamations of delight. In the breach of promise case that brought the entertainment to a conclusion Mr. Fred Billington again scored, and the *Learned Judge* became at once a great favourite. Mr. Courtice Pounds and Miss Minnie [*sic*] Louis also contributed the success of the trifle which sent the audience home in entire good humour. Both operas will be played this Saturday afternoon and this evening, “Princess Ida” being shelved in favour of the earlier, but [*illeg.*] more popular work. [*Western Mail*, Saturday 9 May 1885, p.3.]

The lovers of Gilbert-Sullivan opera have this week had their tastes highly gratified by the annual visit to our theatre of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's No. 1 company, and the management may be more than congratulated on the very brilliant and crowded audiences that had assembled to listen to *The Princess Ida*, *Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury*, the latter for the first time in Cardiff. Miss Ethel McAlpine was in charmingly good voice as the Princess, and Messrs. Courtice Pounds, Charles Rowan, and F. Federici, as Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian, were in especially good form. The Gama of Mr. David Fisher, jun., is the best bit of character acting we have witnessed for some time, and those Anaks [sic], sons of the King, were strongly represented by Messrs. George Gordon, Arthur Hendon, and Lionel Roche. Miss Fanny Edwards sang the lines allotted to Lady Blanche with her usual ability, and the less prominent parts most ably filled by the remainder of this strong company. [*The Era*, 9 May 1885, p.17.]

**Week commencing 27 July:**

BRIGHTON. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 25 July 1885, p.6]

Gilbert and Sullivan's latest Savoy Theatre success *The Mikado; or, the Town of Titipu*, has been a great attraction during the week, and its visit has resulted in crowded houses. Represented by one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera companies, the beauties of this popular work have been splendidly brought into relief. Mr. Federici was an admirable Mikado, and his song "A more humane Mikado" has been nightly encored. Mr. C. Rowan as Nanki-Poo was praiseworthy. Mr. George Thorne's Ko-Ko has improved with each night's performance. His keen sense of humour and his inimitable drolleries have evoked the heartiest laughter and many encores. Mr. Fred. Billington was highly effective as Pooh-Bah. His clear enunciation made every line distinct, and his vocalisation was excellent. Mr. Charles Richards lent valuable assistance as Pish-Tush. The three wards, Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo, were represented by Miss Josephine Findlay, Miss Effie Mason, and Miss Emily Wallace respectively. The charming style and graceful singing of Miss Josephine Findlay and Miss Mason have made them both great favourites, and no small share of the great success of the opera here is due to their sparkling vivacity. Miss Fanny Edwards—a great favourite with Brighton audiences—was an admirable Katisha, and has elicited enthusiastic applause by her artistic singing and clever acting. The entirely new scenery, painted by Mr. Tom Pilbeam, has been much admired. The comfort of the crowded audiences has been thoroughly ensured by the very effective arrangements and courteous attention of Mr. Thomas J. Phillips, the acting- manager. [*The Era*, 1 August 1885, p. 17.]

**Week commencing 4 August:**

ROYAL COURT THEATRE, LIVERPOOL. Six nights. (Saturday mat. & Eve.) *The Mikado*. [*Liverpool Mercury*, Friday 31 July 1885, p.1.]

It was in the old Amphitheatre that some of Mr. Carl Rosa's greatest triumphs were scored years ago, when, with his opera company, he was paving the way to that reputation which he so deservedly has won, and it was in a happily devised order of things that he should have, a few years later, become the sole owner of the most famous old dramatic house in Liverpool. We have not on the present occasion to allude to any actual work done by Mr. Rosa as operatic *entrepreneur* on his own stage; but it is pleasant to recall the past while reviewing the present in which enterprise such as has been always exhibited still commands, as it ever must, public sympathy and support. During the past few weeks, under the direction of Mr. Rosa's

able lieutenant Mr. M'Laren, preparations have been made for the production of the latest Savoy success, and nothing has been left undone in the way of scenic display to give full effect to the picturesque side of the opera. What may be termed a commercial or fiscal reform has also been carried out, and a large section of the public will rejoice in the opening of a shilling pit. This most popular part of every theatre may fitly be associated with the most popular coin of the realm, and the power of what, not altogether perhaps euphemistically, has been termed the "British Bob" last night was made apparent at the Court Theatre, when an immense audience assembled to witness the first Liverpool performance of the latest Gilbert-Sullivan production. The "Mikado" is funny; this, by the way, goes pretty well without saying, and it fitly fills up a holiday gap; but it is not an opera which will appeal as strongly to our insular sympathies as others of the repertoire to which it belongs. Mr. Gilbert can reel off verses by the league, and of these there is at least the normal quantity in the "Mikado." Given the above, music more or less appropriate is sure to follow from Sir Arthur Sullivan's pen; but neither in words or music do we perceive those striking traits of individuality which lifted "Princess Ida," "Patience," "Pinafore," or "The Sorcerer" far out of the realm of the commonplace. In the "Mikado" we have a novelty in the form of what might pass for genuine Japanese tune in the overture, and again in the second act; but beyond this, much of the music might have stepped bodily out of one or other of Sir Arthur's former operas. There is the conventional patter song of the *Lord High Executioner*, with its suggestion of a coming catch word, "I've got 'em on the list," and a couple or so of other chattering numbers; there is a reproduction, or something very like it, of the Bridesmaids' Chorus from "Trial by Jury;" choruses of men suitable alike to Japan or the military-*cum*-aesthetical "Patience" a graceful chorus of girls at the opening of the second act; a sort of old English ballad "Tit Willow," the well-worn madrigal and glee, and a big finale to the end of the first act. Wisely foreseeing the rush for bonnets and hats at the end of the opera, the second finale has been devised on the smallest possible scale, and the curtain comes down almost before the conventional scramble for the doors has had time to begin. The best numbers of the opera are given to *Katisha*, and the old English reminiscences are pleasant, as they invariably are. There is also throughout much of the music of the "Mikado" a certain vein of bustle and life which keeps the attention of the hearer well on the alert, not the least interesting effects being, as usual in the Sullivan operas, created by clever orchestral tricks. The-whole, however, beyond doubt suffers in comparison with other kindred works, possibly because the standard thus set up has been, perhaps, unduly high. As stated before, the mounting of the piece was excellent, and everything in the way of brilliant scenery, glittering dresses, and incessant action was to the front in last night's production the scenic artist of the theatre (Mr. Robson) coming in for special applause. The band, under Mr. A. Cellier, was fairly good, and the chorus strong and of good quality. Of the principal characters, that of the *Lord High Executioner* comes most irresistibly to the fore in the person of the inimitable Mr. George Thorne, who as usual, was the life and soul of his every scene. The *Mikado* of Mr. Federici was full of comic dignity; as was also the portrayal of the holder of every office in the Japanese Cabinet, *Lord High Everything Else*, Mr. F. Billington, Mr. C. Rowan, the love-sick *pseudo* ballad singer, and Mr. C. Richard's *Pish-Tush*, a noble lord, completed this portion of the cast efficiently. Miss Josephine Findlay uses a rather weak voice nicely, and made an attractive *Yum-Yum*, the heroine of the piece; and the two other "little maids from school" were equally well represented by Misses Effie Mason and Emily Wallace. The *Katisha* of Miss Fanny Edwards, however, takes the palm all round for excellence of singing and

voice. The “Mikado” will doubtless during its brief stay in Liverpool attract large audiences, but afterwards we fear it will soon be chronicled among things which have been. [*Liverpool Mercury*, Tuesday 4 August 1885, p.6.]

The untiring zeal and fixed determination of Mr. Rosa to furnish the best of everything in connection with his popular proprietary of the Court were again forcibly illustrated on Monday evening, when the most recent of the Gilbert-Sullivan operas—*The Mikado; or, the Town of Titipu*—was performed for the first time in this city. No more acceptable holiday fare could have been provided for the musical section of the numerous holiday-makers, who very properly showed their appreciation of managerial enterprise and thoughtfulness by patronising the theatre most numerous. The London success of what is perhaps the most attractive of the operas of the celebrated “two” connected with “the Dual Control” was affirmed and even emphasised by its first representation in Liverpool. If Mr. Carl Rosa ever deserved unstinted praise for the effective staging of any piece, he certainly merits it in the highest and truest sense in this instance. Although *The Mikado’s* stay at the Court only extends over a fortnight (with the addition of two *matinées*), no expense was spared in the scenic department, and Mr. W. F. Robson must be congratulated on the production of two pictures—Ko-Ko’s Official Residence and Gardens—which aroused the most enthusiastic admiration of the large audience on Monday. They were marvels of artistic beauty, and the setting does infinite credit to all concerned in the stage-management of Mr. Carl Rosa’s elegantly appointed and admirably controlled theatre. There cannot be two opinions as to the excellence of Gilbert’s libretto and Sullivan’s music. The former possesses all the thoroughly original humour which has done so much to popularise English comic opera since the first performance of *Trial by Jury*; and Sir Arthur Sullivan, with that readiness of musical talent which gives so much consistency of colouring to the Gilbertian lines, has again in this instance displayed undiminished adaptability, and furnished a score which is full of catching melodies and splendidly arranged choruses. Adopting cricketing phraseology, it may fairly and justly be asserted that Mr. George Thorne made the “top score” of the “first innings” on Monday evening. He is a comedian of the best school, and although he cannot boast of a very superior voice, he can certainly lay claim to the one special musical merit of being able always to sing in perfect tune. His Lord High Executioner was pregnant with irresistibly comic vitality, and his cordial reception proved that talent in this instance did not go without fitting recognition. The Mikado of Mr. Federici had two prominent excellences—characteristic force and vocal power. Mr. F. Billington’s Pooh-Bah was a most meritorious impersonation, and Mr. C. Rowan very happily hit off the weaknesses of the love-sick Japanese Wandering Minstrel. Of course, Mrs Fanny Edwards, as she always does, commanded the full approbation of the entire audience by her artistic singing and acting, the rôle of Katisha suiting her admirably. Miss Josephine Findlay (Yum-Yum) made the most of the part, and sang her share of the music with artistic taste and finish; Miss Effie Mason fully displayed her capability for even better parts by the frequent way in which she impersonated Pitti-Sing; and Miss Emily Wallace gave a portraiture of the “other little maid from school” Peep-Bo, which possessed many features of true excellence. The efficiency of the cast of characters was well sustained by Mr. Charles Richards, whose Pish-Tush was a really clever character sketch. Mr. A. Cellier conducted the generally satisfactory performance with ability. The introduction of the new shilling pit arrangement gave universal satisfaction to the patrons of this particular section of the house. [*The Era*, 8 August 1885, p.18.]

**Week commencing 10 August.**

ROYAL COURT THEATRE, LIVERPOOL. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 8 August 1885, p.6.]

*The Mikado* has proved a genuine success at the Court. Changes have been made in the cast since our last notice, consequent upon the departure of Mr. George Thorne, Mr. Federici, and Miss Josephine Findlay for America for the purpose of giving the initial performance of the opera in New York, in order to secure the authors of the opera the exclusive privilege of performance in the States. This change was made on Saturday, when the part of the Lord High Executioner was taken by Mr. David Fisher; the Mikado by Mr. James Danvers; and Yum-Yum by Miss Ethel Pierson. The patronage continues to be of a most satisfactory kind; and Mr. Rosa must be congratulated on the success of a production which, while interesting in itself, shows how greatly the proprietor strives to cater properly for his patrons. [*The Era*, Saturday 15 August 1885, p.18.]

**Week commencing 17 August.**

GRAND THEATRE, LEEDS. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 15 August 1885, p.6.]

The latest contribution of Sir Arthur Sullivan and Mr. Gilbert to comic opera was produced for the first time at the Grand Theatre, Leeds, last night, with complete success. It might have been supposed that the vein which the talented authors have worked so successfully, and from which they have produced such veritable nuggets as, "Patience," "H.M.S. Pinafore," and "The Pirates of Penzance," would by this time have been exhausted. That there are, some signs of approaching exhaustion in "The Mikado" is not to be denied; for it is not in the power of any human being to keep up the freshness of a particular kind of production after it has ceased to be novel. Nevertheless no one need be afraid of being bored by the piece which was produced before a Leeds audience last night. If here and there it irresistibly suggests memories of the former works of its authors, there is quite enough that is new in it to prevent any feeling of weariness on the part of the spectator. The music is as bright and sparkling as ever; the songs are always amusing, whilst also free from any approach to coarseness, and the fun is even better than in some of the more recent productions of these talented *collaborateurs*. No doubt, in part the novelty is due to the fact that Mr. Gilbert has selected Japan as the scene of his play. We no longer have to do with æsthetic English maidens or fantastic English Peers of the nineteenth century. We are transported to the far East, and to a land which has a quaint humour of its own. The result is that the two scenes which are set upon the stage are probably among the prettiest and most effective ever produced in Leeds; whilst the costumes of the numerous performers have the double advantage of being artistically beautiful and historically accurate. There is yet another advantage in placing the scene of the play in Japan, of which Sir Arthur Sullivan and Mr. Gilbert have made full use. To the majority of Englishmen Japanese manners and customs and Japanese attitudes are only known through those specimens of the art of the country which come to us in the shape of pictured vases and tea-trays. It need hardly be said that, if these sources of information are correct, there is a certain grotesqueness in all the actions and attitudes of the people of Japan. The grotesque has been cultivated with great success in the arrangement of "The Mikado" for the stage. The figures seem to have walked from the surfaces of the fans and vases with which Japan supplies us, and in their gestures and attitudes the performers are careful to reproduce the quaintness which is characteristic of the people whom they represent. There is thus an additional



element of humour imported into “The Mikado” apart from that connected with the music and the words, and the audience can have many a hearty laugh over the gait and the antics of the performers as well as over their songs and their dialogue. There is no need to describe at length the plot of “The Mikado.” It is somewhat complicated—like the laws of the country in which the scene is laid. We have, however, the usual array of Gilbertian figures. The comic victim, who at the outset is destined to become the husband of the heroine; the virtuous youth whom fortune oppresses until within a few moments of the fall of the curtain, but who is made happy in the end; the heroine and her attendant maidens; the shrewish female who in the end becomes the bride of the victim instead of the lovely maiden on whom his heart was set; the humorous rascal and all the other familiar figures are reproduced in “The Mikado,” whilst there are the usual chances and changes in the plot. It must suffice to say that there is quite enough of incident to keep the interest alive throughout, and that the dialogue is sufficiently funny to move the laughter of the house. The music, as we have said, went exceedingly well last night. There is no single air that is likely to win the popularity gained by some of those in “Patience;” but there are many very pretty songs, and one or two that are quite up to the standard of Sir Arthur Sullivan. That they were fully appreciated last night was proved by the number of *encores* demanded and responded to. A quartet, “Brightly dawns our wedding-day,” and a comic trio, “Here’s a how-de-do,” seemed to be specially popular; whilst the song of Yum-Yum, the-bride, was a great success. The whole performance went well, and the curtain fell amid loud applause. We have spoken of the admirable manner in which the play was put upon the stage. The scenery and dresses, indeed, left nothing to be desired. Mr. David Fisher jun., as Ko-Ko, the principal figure in the piece, was very humorous without being too extravagant; Mr. Charles Rowan, as the lover in distress, both sang and acted with cleverness and taste whilst Miss Ethel Pierson, as the heroine, Yum-Yum achieved a complete success. [*Leeds Mercury*, Tuesday 18 August 1885, p.8.]

The latest production of the partnership which has given us half a dozen or so of the best comic operas of the day was performed the Grand Theatre last evening. Of course the house was well filled, as is invariably the case when Messrs. Gilbert & Sullivan’s works make their first appearance in Leeds. It seems but the other day that we were anxiously looking forward the visit *Princess Ida*, and scarcely have the strains of that opera ceased tingling in our ears before our curiosity concerning *The Mikado* has been satisfied. Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan appear to have discovered inexhaustible mine from which they can draw rich treasures at will. It may be that there is a danger of a surfeit of this class of opera. But in this, as in other matters, the law of supply and demand must be the prime regulator; and so far, at all events, there seems to be no signs of a diminished demand, or, on the other hand, of an insufficient supply. Besides, if these two collaborateurs did not meet the craving somebody else would endeavour to do so with probably less satisfactory results, and we should have no end of weak productions on the stage; whereas the works of the joint authors of the opera under notice do possess a certain amount of solidity interwoven with an element of lightness and grace which at once impress upon them a mark of refinement. In this respect *The Mikado* is not a whit behind the other pieces from the same source. It has obviously been cast from the same model, though the similarity is in general outline rather than in detail. In fact both author and composer, and more especially the former, have departed from the old lines more distinctly than in any previous effort. Hitherto the leading character has been a British judge, a British Lord of the Admiralty, a British Major-General, or British Lord Chancellor.

Here, however, we are transported to the Land of the Rising Sun and introduced to an imposing State dignitary whose rank is unknown to the British Constitution—the Lord High Executioner of Titipu, clad dazzling robes befitting a quondam cheap tailor who is now “a personage of noble rank and title, whose functions are particularly vital.” Then have the familiar plethoric female, who mysteriously makes her appearance at the wrong moment; she is, however, no good-natured bumboat woman or austere Lady Jane, but a sentimental dame named Katisha, who, jilted by Nanki-Poo, son the Mikado of Japan, “in silent lives alone” until an opportunity for revenge presents itself. This Nanki-Poo, dreading the fate which would bind him to Katisha, escapes from his father’s court, and travels in disguise as minstrel. Whilst “second trombone in the Titipu town band,” he meets and falls in love with Yum-Yum, one of three sisters who are wards of Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner, to whom Yum-Yum is betrothed. That functionary receives message from the Mikado, who, struck with the fact that no executions have taken place in Titipu for year, intimates that some one is not beheaded within month the office of Lord High Executioner shall be abolished, and the city reduced to the rank of a village. To avoid this personal and civic misfortune Ko-Ko tries find a victim, and, seeing Nanki-Poo about commit suicide because he is unable to marry Yum-Yum, persuades him to be “beheaded handsomely at the hands the executioner.” Nanki is permitted to marry Yum-Yum, who at the end of the month will be a widow, and will then able to marry Ko-Ko. The arrival of Katisha in search her beloved leads to a scene of general disturbance, ending with her threats of vengeance, at the close the first act. The second act commences with the preparations for Yum-Yum’s wedding, and her alternate expressions of joy at her approaching union with Nanki-Poo, and its threatened termination the end of the month. Her ecstasies are interrupted by Ko-Ko reminding the lovers that according to the law the widow of a man who is beheaded is condemned to be buried alive. Nanki-Poo is thus in a dilemma; if he insists on his marriage with Yum-Yum, he dooms her to a horrible death, if he relinquishes her she becomes at once the wife of Ko-Ko. The despairing lover then threatens to perform the “happy despatch.” The Mikado arrives to ascertain if his orders have been carried out, previous to which it has been arranged that an affidavit shall be drawn up falsely certifying that Nanki-Poo has really been executed. When it is discovered that Nanki-Poo is the son of the Mikado he is reprieved. Nanki has in the meantime been married to Yum-Yum, and the Lord High Executioner has be content with the hand and heart of Katisha.

Of the composer’s share of the work it is needless to say that it is at least tuneful and pleasing. At times it rises to a dramatic level, notably towards the close of the first act, where Katisha comes to claim the fugitive. At the very opening of the overture there is a suggestion of Japanese music, no doubt more technically correct than melodious, which is sparingly introduced to give local colour to the opera. But the music on the whole is exactly of that class which we have become accustomed to expect from Sir Arthur Sullivan. In spite of the fact that it is at times very remindful of something we have heard before, there a freshness about some of the numbers which is pleasing in the extreme. Encores were numerous and enthusiastic last evening, particularly in the second act, which is replete with exquisite airs and choruses. It is in the first act that the gem of the piece occurs. This is the trio, “Three little maids from school are we,” sung by Miss Ethel Person, makes a charming Yum-Yum, Miss Effie Mason (Pitti-Sing), and Miss Emily Wallace (Peep-Bo). To Miss Fanny Edwards, as Katisha, fall one or two pretty ballads, in which she uses her fine contralto voice with good effect, notably the song “Hearts not break.” Mr. David

Fisher, junior, as the Lord High Executioner, has a part in which fairly revels. His quiet drollery is at times intensely funny, and he shows himself a master of burlesque acting. His patter song, in which he alludes by inference to a number of political and other celebrities "who never would missed," creates roars of laughter. Nanki Poo has a satisfactory representative in Mr. Charle Rowan, who, along with Miss Pierson, sings one or two pleasing duets. Mr. James Danvers gives an excellent rendering of the part the Mikado, and struts across the stage in what we suppose is true Japanese fashion. Mr. Edward Clowes labours under the disadvantage of weak voice, but otherwise is an efficient exponent of the part of an official whose multifarious duties secure him the title of Lord High Everything. What little Mr. Charles Richards does Pish-Tush he does well. In addition to the numbers already named should be mentioned a prettily-harmionised quartet, "Brightly dawns our wedding day," and a quaint and original duet between Nanki-Poo and Ko-Ko, beginning "The flowers that bloom in the spring."

The spectacular displays are exceedingly effective, the scenery, painted by Messrs. L. Edouard and F. Fox, forming the background to a series of striking pictures, brightened by gorgeous dresses of brilliant hues and novel designs. A morning performance is announced for next Saturday. [*Yorkshire Post*, Tuesday 18 August 1885, p.4.]

The long expected *Mikado* has been performed here during the past week to very large audiences, a matinée being also announced for Saturday. Judging from the applause and the frequency of encores, we imagine this opera will become as popular as any of those that have preceded it from the same prolific brains. The touches of political satire and other, witticisms applicable to our own nationality were readily recognised by the audience, and duly acknowledged. Two superb sets have been painted by Messrs Louis Edouard and F. Fox for this production. The courtyard of Ko-Ko's official residence in the first act, and his garden in the second were most realistic, and were triumphs of scenic art. The manners and customs of the Japanese appear to have been thoroughly studied by the numerous and admirably trained chorus, who were perfect in their department. As part of the original provincial company have gone to America, changes in the cast have been necessary. It now includes Mr. James Danvers as the Mikado, Mr. Edward Clowes (Pooh-Bah), and Mr. David Fisher, jun. (Ko-Ko). As the Lord High Executioner the latter gentleman was fully master of the position, and his patter song was greatly relished. Mr. Danvers was a capitally humorous Mikado, and as Pooh-Bah Mr Edward Clowes was in all respect equal to the requirements of the rôle. Mr. C. Rowan, as Nanki-Poo, sung the tenor music of the part with great care and discretion. The warmest praise is due to Mr. Charles Richards for his characteristic performance of the noble lord, Pish-Tush. The "three little maids from school" were Miss Ethel Pierson, Miss Effie Mason, and Miss Emily Wallace. The two former are great favourites in Leeds, and the latter was greatly admired in her part of Peep-Bo. They sang the trio in the first act charmingly, and were encored. Miss Fanny Edwards, as Katisha, had a character that exactly suited her peculiar style, and used her fine contralto voice with good effect. She was rapturously encored after her singing of "Hearts do not break." It is almost needless to add that the magnificent dresses and appliances were done in the usual style of correct completeness generally associated with the production of the Sullivan and Gilbert operas. Mr. Alfred Cellier, the conductor, kept the large chorus well in hand, and the full and admirable local band were well up to their part of the business. The

performance on Monday went off without a single hitch. [*The Era*, 22 August 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 24 August.***

THEATRE ROYAL, MANCHESTER. Six nights. *The Mikado*. The Mikado of Japan, Mr. James Danvers; Nanki-Poo, Mr. Charles Rowan; Ko-Ko, Mr. David Fisher, un.; Pooh-Bah, Mr. Edwd. Clowes; Pish-Tush, Mr. Charles Richards; Yum-Yum, Miss Ethel Pierson; Pitti-Sing, Miss Effie Mason; Peep-Bo, Miss Emily Wallace; Katisha, Miss Fanny Edwards. Musical Director, Mr. Alfred Cellier. New Scenery, specially painted by Mr. W. F. Robson. [*Manchester Courier*, Tuesday 18 August 1885, p.1.]

The collaborations of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan are now as familiar to the majority of Englishmen and, indeed, of all English-speaking nations, as the commonest of "household words," and, though it is only a very few years since the first of the well-known series made its appearance, the various numbers of which it is composed seem as much an institution and a part of our musical literature as though they had been called into existence 100 ago. The farcical mysteries of *The Sorcerer*, the wonderfully heroic naval sentiments of *Pinafore*, the travesties on æstheticism in *Patience*, and the equally humorous characteristics of the rest of the operas are thoroughly grafted in the memories most people. The plots have been drawn from many sources, and not an uninteresting speculation is as to where the next will come from, or where the scene will be laid. Mr. Gilbert's range is apparently unlimited, and is bringing magic and sorcery within common lines of trade and commerce, or poking pungent but innocent fun at our administration of the navy, or holding up to ridicule a craze which is fast dying out, he is equally felicitous. In all his changing scenes, and in all his inimitable drolleries, he has been followed and supported by Sir Arthur Sullivan in a way that show how admirably their respective geniuses are adapted the one to the other. And now, from scenes and subjects that are familiar to most of us, Mr. Gilbert, with magicianly skill, transports us to the other side of the world, and bids us take a peep at the town and listen to the inhabitants of Titipu. While the scene is in every respect Japanese, and the characters no doubt partake, as far as the dresses are concerned, of the character of the interesting country of Japan, the unique style of the writer, and the happy peculiarities of the composer, are as apparent as though the plot had been laid in England. And in this contradiction lies so much of the humour of the opera, and invests it with so many of its laughter-producing qualities. Of the sharp, pointed, comical, and happy way of Mr. Gilbert of putting much in a small compass, and the wonderful way Sir Arthur Sullivan has of clothing this much in happy musical dress, we are all well acquainted, but when all this thoroughly English style, both as regards words and music, is made to express the feelings of the Japanese, and is made the vehicle for presenting to the audience an absurd story of that far off country, the effect is ridiculous in the extreme. In this ridiculous aspect lies so much of the charm, for when hear men dressed as we see them "on many a vase and jar, in attitudes queer and quaint," singing: in the tersest vernacular all about the wonderful Japanese Criminal Code, the incongruity cannot but appear to anyone who has the slightest sense of humour or a relish for the absurd. What also lends such life to the whole representation is the incessant use of the fan, that indispensable article with the denizens of almost all Eastern nations. As to the plot of *The Mikado*, it would be difficult to describe seriously, and it is still more difficult to write in words. None but the writer and conjuror up of the absurdities of "Bab Ballads" would ever have conceived the idea of turning an imaginary portion of

the Japanese Criminal Code into the main subject, out of which minor subjects spring, of an opera. But this is what Mr. Gilbert has done, and his success has certainly been great in blending together such a string of intensely comical situations with much that is serious and honestly good, and the linking together of these two opposite elements is doubtless one of its charms. The Mikado of Japan, a silly old ruler, resolved to try plan by which young men might be steadied, and has sent forth a decree that every man found guilty of flirtation should be put to death “unless connubially linked.” To evade the consequences of this terrible decree the citizens resolved upon plan by which the dreadful consequences might be averted, and the plan adopted may best be described the words of the opera itself—

And we straight let out on bail  
A convict from the county jail  
Whose head was next  
On some pretext  
Condemnèd to be mown off.  
And made him Headsman, for we said  
“Who’s next to be decapited  
Cannot cut off another’s head  
Until he’s cut his own off.”

This Lord High Executioner, who has been “taken from the county jail by a set of curious chances,” is Ko-Ko, who is a guardian of Yum-Yum, one of three sisters. This Yum-Yum is beloved by Nanki-Poo, the son of the Mikado. Ko-Ko is betrothed to Yum-Yum, but the Mikado has destined his son Nanki-Poo for Katisha, elderly female, who is decidedly “an acquired taste.” No executions having taken place in Titipu for a year the Mikado decrees that if no execution takes place within a month the office of Lord High Executioner shall be abolished. By the strange laws Ko-Ko is first on the list of those to be beheaded, but he raised to such high eminence from a gaol naturally objects to be his own executioner. Nanki-Poo, who after his misfortunes became wandering minstrel, being tired of life, is about to commit suicide, but Ko-Ko endeavours to persuade him to allow himself to be legally executed, and he agrees if he be allowed to marry Yum-Yum for that month. This is agreed to and the wedding festivities are prepared, but in the midst of them the dreadful Katisha appears. To escape the fate of marrying Katisha Nanki-Poo has left his regal home and turned minstrel. The festivities are thrown into the greatest confusion, and the first act ends. In the second act we see the preparations for Yum-Yum’s bridal, and her delight at the approaching union is thoroughly shattered by the announcement of Ko-Ko, that the law of Titipu is, that the widow of a man who has been beheaded shall be buried alive. This greatly troubles both Nauki-Poo and Yum-Yum. The Mikado arrives to see if his orders have been carried out, but an affidavit has been prepared to deceive him, and to show that Nanki-Poo has been executed, the truth being that the happy pair have been married. The Mikado gives all about him a piece of his mind and states his principles of government. After this the certificate of execution is given to him. He inquires after his son, and soon finds out that it refers to him. He is, however, not much troubled with the discovery. The Mikado tells them what horrible punishment is reserved for those who compass the death of an heir apparent, which produces much consternation. Another execution is debated, but the discussion is postponed until after luncheon. At this point Nauki-Poo and Yum-Yum appear on the scene once more, the irascible old Mikado is, after all, human and is delighted that no execution has taken place; Katisha’s rage is appeased and she accepts the hand of the Lord High Executioner, Ko-Ko. Thus all ends well and the

involved and improbable story is brought to close. To read the plot there is some difficulty in following it, but, when performed, very little. It will easily be seen here, how the librettist and composer, knowing their special qualities, would revel in the many extraordinary situations which present themselves, and those who hear *The Mikado* will be of opinion that they have succeeded most admirably. We have spoken thus far principally of the libretto, but much more than a passing word is due to the composer. If we have dwelt at considerable length on the subject and its manner of treatment it by no means follows that the music is not entitled to equal consideration. Could any composer of the present day give such happy musical illustrations of Mr. Gilbert's peculiarities as Sir A. Sullivan? Could any composer more thoroughly enter into the spirit and inner mind of his librettist than he? We think not. True, it has been their study for years, and they know each other's idiosyncrasies well, but their joint productions are no less to be admired and their skill to be appreciated. It may be said that in *The Mikado* we are reminded of previous works of theirs, and no doubt there is truth in the remark, but we do not care to stop and point out minutely where the comparisons are, suffice it to say that each and all are distinct and separate their way, and there sufficient individuality in each new production to give it special features of its own. But if there be a strong family likeness in all the operas from their joint pens, the merit is all the greater and the genius more strongly marked, when the interest in each succeeding one is maintained, and even increases, and when their works, though worked out pretty much on the same lines, continue to produce the same, if not an increasing pleasure. While the words of the songs and concerted pieces are highly amusing, the dialogue is equally so, and the large house assembled last night testified in no un mistakeable manner their pleasure at the performance. Of that performance too great praise can hardly be given. It is one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's cardinal virtues that whatever he puts before the public is done with a thoroughness and an attention to every detail that ought to have its reward. There may not be in any of his companies a great vocalist, but those taking part are always good, and never give offence by any serious shortcomings, while the choruses are almost invariably good and supported by an efficient band. This was so last night, and the whole was given with great precision. The overture is the weakest part work, but, that over, the Japanese nobles sing a well-written chorus, effectively orchestrated, "If you want to know who we are." The chorus of girls, "Comes a train of little ladies," and the trio, "Three little maids from school," are charming samples of sparkling writing, and the finale to the first act is well worked out. The madrigal form of writing seems somewhat out of place in a work of this kind, but nothing can better convey the idea that is intended to be conveyed than the one commencing "Brightly dawns our wedding day." This is a happy imitation of the old madrigal, and was deservedly encored. The numbers of the piece are numerous, and it is hardly possible to enumerate them, but many of the songs and duets were received with the greatest pleasure. Of the ladies, Miss Ethel was an excellent Tum-Tum [sic], and Miss Effie Mason and Miss Emily Wallace most ably seconded her efforts, The Katisha of Miss Fanny Edwards was one of the best delineations of the evening. Her fine contralto voice told with great effect, and the part of the elderly lady lost nothing in his [sic] hands. Mr. David Fisher, jun., has little voice, but his clear enunciation and piquant style we have had much pleasure in noticing on former occasions. Throughout he is most amusing, and whether in his patter songs, his dialogue, or his general action, his rendering of the important part of Ko-Ko, the Lord High Commissioner [sic], is highly diverting. The same remark will refer to the old Manchester favourite, Mr. Furneaux Cooke. His Pooh-Bah, the Lord Everything Else, was a splendid

impersonation, and added greatly to the success of the performance. Mr. Charles Richards was admirable Pish-Tush, Mr. James Danvers an excellent Mikado, and Mr. Chas. Rowan very satisfactory Nanki-Poo. The setting of the piece was everything that could be desired both as regards scenery, dresses, and general arrangement. Mr. Alfred Collier was the conductor, and under his able baton the accompaniments were kept judiciously subdued. The opera will be repeated to-night, and each evening during the week. [*Manchester Courier*, Tuesday 25 August 1885, p.5.]

Tremendous business has been done here during the week by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Mikado company, on its first production in Manchester, of Gilbert and Sullivan's latest operatic production. Houses crowded from pit to gallery have witnessed every representation, and it almost goes without saying that the reception accorded *The Mikado* elsewhere has been emphatically confirmed by the local audiences. Whilst some critics are declaring that Sir Arthur Sullivan's music in the new opera is the finest that he has yet contributed to this class of work, others are contending, with equal earnestness, that it is Mr. Gilbert's share of the opera which displays the most conspicuous improvement over former efforts; but, amidst these conflicting opinions; all appear to agree that *The Mikado* is well worthy to take a high rank amongst the extraordinarily successful entertainments provided by the happy collaboration of Gilbert and Sullivan. Such airs as "Three little maids from school are we," "They'll none of 'em be missed," &c., are received nightly with most enthusiastic encores, and such exquisite specimens of Mr Gilbert's humour as the mock melodramatic scene between Ko-Ko and Katisha, in the second act, invariably provoke the most uproarious merriment. It has been so customary in the case of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's previous provincial companies, that a point of excellence almost, if not absolutely, equal to the Savoy standard has been reached, that one is bound to feel some disappointment at the comparative deficiency of the present combination. This deficiency resolves itself into the general fault that some of the members of the company are not sufficiently content to allow Mr Gilbert's humour to produce its effect, but deem it necessary to supplement it with business that does not improve the impressions created. Still, had not the reputation of Mr Carte's companies stood exceptionally high in the provinces, no fault would probably have been found with the company under notice. Miss Ethel Pierson and Miss Effie Mason cannot be too warmly praised for their charming performances as Yum-Yum and Pitti-Sing respectively; Miss Edwards is a thoroughly artistic Katisha, and Miss Emily Wallace makes the most of her small opportunities. Mr. James Danvers in the minor part of the Mikado scored perhaps as legitimate success as any of the gentlemen of the company, and the other characters were competently represented by Messrs. David Fisher, jun., Charles Rowan, Furneaux Cook, and Charles Richards. The scenery and dresses are magnificent, and the mounting left nothing to be desired. [*The Era*, 19 August 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 31 August.***

THEATRE ROYAL, MANCHESTER. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 29 August 1885, p.6.]

Notwithstanding the attractiveness of the rival programmes submitted to Manchester playgoers this week, *The Mikado* continues to draw houses crowded to their utmost capacity, and the heartiest enjoyment is still provoked by every performance of the delightful opera. Miss Ethel Pierson, Miss Effie Mason, Miss Fanny Edwards, Mr. Geo. Fisher, jun. [sic], Mr. Jas. Danvers, and Mr. Richards all render their parts admirably, and Messrs. Furneaux Cook, Rowan &c., are moderately

successful in the other parts. The performance as a whole has improved considerably since its first rendition in Manchester, and is now very satisfactory in all respects. [*The Era*, 5 September 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 7 September.***

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE, BIRMINGHAM. Six nights, Thursday (Mat. & Eve.). *The Mikado*. Scenery painted by Mr. Edwin Butts. Musical Director, Mr. Alfred Cellier. [*Birmingham Daily Post*, Wednesday 9 September 1885, p. 1.]

Lovers of the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan—and who is there can withstand their fascination?—have had an opportunity of hearing their new Japanese opera *The Mikado*. It has been a long time since such a large audience was seen at this house as that which crowded it in every part on Monday and following nights. Previous operas written and composed by the same producers have always ensured a hearty reception here, but the enthusiasm manifested at the first representation in Birmingham of *The Mikado* may certainly be said to be unprecedented. Apart from the intrinsic literary and musical worth of the opera it had the additional merit of being faultlessly rendered in every respect. Mr. Fisher has a congenial character as Ko-Ko, of which he made the very most, and was ably supported by Mr. Cook as Pish-Tush. Mr. Charles Rowan was equally good as the Prince. The three sisters were ably rendered by Miss Ethel Pierson, Effie Mason, and Emily Wallace. They made a distinct hit in the tuneful trio “Three little maids from school,” which has been redemanded every night. *The Mikado* has a comparatively small share in the opera, but small as is the part it finds a most capable exponent in Mr. Danvers; whilst Miss Fanny Edwards as Katisha made a very good impression. All the other parts were well sustained, and so successful has the opera proved that the management will do well to ensure, at the earliest convenient date, a return visit of Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s company. [*The Era*, Saturday 12 September 1885, p.15.]

***Week commencing 14 September.***

THEATRE ROYAL, SHEFFIELD. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 12 September 1885, p.5.]

A crowded audience assembled at the Theatre last night to witness the performance, for the first time in Sheffield, by Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s Company, of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s new Japanese opera. Mr. Daw’s enterprise in bringing such capital companies to Sheffield deserves every encouragement, and no doubt the lessee of the Theatre Royal will find that first-rate companies with good plays are the most profitable undertakings.

The production of a new opera by Gilbert and Sullivan is now regarded more as a national event than as a theatrical enterprise. For weeks before the first performance speculations are rife as to the probable subject of the libretto, scraps of information and prospective rumours are published and commented upon by the newspapers, and the management of the Savoy Theatre, London, where these operas are produced, make elaborate arrangements for simultaneous performances and preservation of copyrights. Popular interest is thus aroused, and on the occasion of the first representation criticisms of the opera are wired to the provinces, the colonies, and America. Special articles in the press are devoted to it, and on the recent production of “*The Mikado*,” one London paper went so far as to give illustrations of the scenes and characters, and a facsimile of the score.

The question consequently arises—What is the cause of this universal popularity, and how is it that the same amount of interest is not manifested towards



other works of the same class? The answer is not difficult to find. From the time when "The Sorcerer" first saw the light, Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan have scored one long unbroken series of successes, and this result has been attained in the first place by the intrinsic genius and ability of the *collaborateurs*, and secondly by the close attention which they give to every detail, however minute, in the work and its performance. Mr. Gilbert is a most accomplished dramatist and poet, and is a wit of the first water, and yet he does not seem to be accorded that leading position among English authors to which his splendid talents entitle him. Perhaps this is due to the vein of cynicism which runs through all his writings and mars some of his best work. But the man who has given to the world such plays as "Gretchen," "Broken Hearts," "The Palace of Truth," "Dan'l Druce," and "Pygmalion and Galatea" deserves to be placed in the front rank of British dramatists. It seems almost a matter for regret that Mr. Gilbert should devote his energies to the production of satirical comic operatic *libretti*, which are really not, in themselves, contributions to art, and which, being written to supply a demand which he himself has created, can only possess a transitory popularity. With Sir Arthur Sullivan it is different, for his music, though essentially in keeping with the incidents and characters in the work, is in itself so tuneful and charming that "selections" from Sullivan's operas will be as popular 50 years hence as they are now. Sullivan possesses an inexhaustible fund of melody, and an originality in device and "effect" which give him an immense advantage over composers who work on conventional lines; and as an orchestrator and master of the art of instrumentation he has few, if any, equals among contemporary musicians. In addition to these necessary qualifications, Sullivan is as versatile in his compositions as he is scholarly, and can compose an oratorio or a comic opera, an anthem or a patter song with equal success. Never has his wonderful facility in uniting music to the humour of his text been shown more successfully than in "The Mikado." In this, the latest of the Gilbert-Sullivan series, the librettist has surpassed himself, so far as the grotesque and wildly extravagant nature of his subject is concerned. Unfortunately, little scope is allowed the composer for the display of that sympathetic style of composition in which Sir A. Sullivan is heard at his best, as, with the exception of a chorus of girls in the first act, there is not a number in the opera which is not either humorous or satirical. The idea of writing an opera on a Japanese subject was suggested to Mr. Gilbert's mind by the success of the Japanese Village at Knightsbridge. The result is a "book" which, in its grim humour and grotesque ghastliness, surpasses any previous vagary of the author's imagination. The chief character is an executioner, men and women are to be beheaded wholesale, a young lady coolly relates how "the sabre true cut cleanly through his cervical vertebrae," and there are cheerful remarks about trunkless heads and deathly bows.

The overture, which is orchestrated in Sullivan's best style, is simply an arrangement of the principal airs in the opera, and would form a very pleasing item in a concert programme. A lively opening chorus of Japanese gentlemen is followed by the entrance of the hero, Nanki-Poo, the son of the Mikado of Japan, but who is now disguised as a "second trombone player." He has come to Titipu in search of his sweetheart, Yum-Yum, and in an effective song he illustrates his accommodative styles of minstrelsy. We are next informed by Pish-Tush that the Mikado, in his endeavour to promote morality among his subjects, has

— Decreed in words succinct.  
That all who flirted, leer'd, or wink'd  
(Unless connubially link'd),  
Should forthwith be beheaded.

In order to avert the terrible slaughter which would have resulted from the enforcement of this decree, the people

Straightway let out on bail,  
A convict from ths county gaol  
Whose dead was next. on some pretext,  
Condemned to be mown off  
And made *him* headsman, so we said,  
Who's next to be decapited  
Cannot cut off another's head  
Until he's cut his own off.

The entrance of the headsman, Ko-Ko, is heralded by a pompous march and chorus, broken by a solo for Ko-Ko, who then sings the usual patter song. This is in Mr. Gilbert's happiest vein, and gives a list of persons "who never would be missed."

The idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone,  
All centuries but this, and ev'ry country but his own;  
And the lady, from the provinces, who dresses like a guy,  
And who "doesn't think she waltzes, but would rather like to try;"  
And that singular anomaly, the lady novalist,  
She never would be missed.

It appears that this high functionary is betrothed to Yum-Yum, who now comes on the scene. The two best numbers in the opera follow. The first is a chorus of girls in two-part harmony of extraordinary beauty, with a very clever and striking accompaniment, and this is followed by the "gem" of the opera, a trio entitled "Three little maids from school." Ko-Ko, in order to avoid the disagreeable alternative of beheading himself, looks out for a substitute, and finds one in Nanki-Poo, who agrees to be decapitated on the condition that he is allowed to marry Yum-Yum, and have three weeks, grace granted. To this Ko-Ko consents, and matters are apparently settled for three weeks, when another character makes her appearance. This is Katisha, who is engaged to Nanki-Poo, and has come to claim him. This closes the first act. The *finale* is full of good things, both in music and words, and contains a rollicking chorus in six-eight time, destined to become very popular. The second act opens with a bridal chorus with a very taking refrain, and followed by a charming song for Yum-Yum of peculiar rhythm and striking originality. Preparations are being made for the wedding of Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum, who take part in a pretty madrigal written in the fine old English style. Yum-Yum wishes to back out of the marriage on being informed that by the law of the land she will have to share her husband's fate, and expresses her grief in a lively trio with Nanki-Poo and Ko-Ko. Katisha again enters on the scene, with the Mikado, and a chorus is sung, in which the composer has largely indulged in "local colouring." A very funny song for the Mikado follows, in which he states that his object in criminal matters is to let the punishmeul fit the crime.

The billiard sharp whom any one catches  
His doom's extremely hard—  
He's made to dwell in a dungeon cell,  
On a spot that's always barr'd;  
And there he plays extravagant matches,  
In fitless finger stalls,  
On a cloth untrue, with a twisted cue  
And elliptical billiard balls.

A very “catching” duet, “The flowers that bloom in the spring,” is followed by a dramatic song by Katisha, which has been described by a London musical critic as being “Handelian in its breadth and Schumannesque in its passionate force.” Katisha and Ko-Ko next sing a comical duet, commencing:—

KATISHA.       There is beauty in the bellow of the blast  
                  There is grandeur in the growling of the gale,  
                  There is eloquent outpouring when the lion is a-roaring  
                  And the tiger is a-lashing of his tail.

KO-KO.           Yes, I like to see a tiger  
                  From the Congo or the Niger,  
                  And especially when a-lashing of his tail.

This last remark of Ko-Ko’s, however is somewhat paradoxical, as the Congo and the Niger are both African rivers, and the tiger is generally understood to be a stranger to the “Dark Continent.”

All difficulties being settled, Nanki-Poo marries Yum-Yum, Ko-Ko marries Katisha, and the opera concludes with a swinging chorus.

The verbal quips and witticisms which Mr. Gilbert has scattered with so unsparing hand are provocative of much merriment. One of his characters, Pooh-Bah, a gentleman who in his own person unites the positions of all the officers of the State—judicial, parliamentary, episcopal, municipal, legal, &c.,—rolled into one, states that he is inordinately proud, and boasts that he can trace his descent from a “protoplasmal primordial atomic globule.” The Lord High Executioner also is allotted a good share of the smart sayings, and his wooing of Katisha in the last act is irresistibly funny.

The performance of the opera at the Theatre last night was in every respect perfect, both as regards principals, chorus, and orchestra. One of the causes which conduce to the success of the Gilbert-Sullivan operas in the provinces is the complete and thoroughly efficient manner in which they are represented, and the capital companies which are engaged to perform them. But even a good opera, given by a good company, may fail if it is not properly put on the stage, and Mr. Daw is to be congratulated on the enterprise which he has displayed in mounting “The Mikado” with a lavish splendour, which makes the two scenes in the opera triumphs of scenic art. New scenery has been specially pointed by Mr. E. A. Swift, the resident artist, and Mr. W. F. Robson, and the rich colours of the dresses and the graceful groupings of the characters mingle with the gorgeous magnificence of the background, and make up two of the loveliest stage pictures which it has been the lot of Sheffield playgoers to witness for a long time. Some of the movements of the figures are decidedly the reverse of graceful, the ladies looking very comical in their sack-like garments, and, in accordance with Celestial custom, all the characters have to waddle with toes turned in. But the picturesque effects which are obtained by the general use of fans are surprising and very pleasing, and this article plays an important part in the general *ensemble*. The company which is performing the opera at the Theatre is an exceptionally excellent one, and several of its members are old Sheffield favourites. The principal character, that of Ko-Ko, is entrusted to Mr. David Fisher, Jun., whose successes in the parts of the Major-General in “Pirates of Penzance,” and King Gama, in “Princess Ida” will be well remembered. His interpretation of the part is excruciatingly comical, and his peculiar voice and pronounced mannerisms aid him considerably in the representation of an extravagantly humorous character. His singing of the “Patter” song, the “Tit willow” song, and the second verse of the duet, “The flower of the spring,” last evening was inimitable, and the latter effort was

accorded a double encore. Mr. Charles Rowan, who was very well received, acted and sang most commendably as Nanki-Poo, and gave his opening song in a very creditable and musicianly manner. The Mikado of Mr. James Danvers was an excellent performance, and his facial expression and admirable make-up were only equalled by Mr. Furneaux Cook in the part of the “combination” official, Pooh-Bah. The rôle of Yum-Yum was undertaken by Miss Ethel Pierson, and her singing and acting were alike clever and vivacious. Miss Fanny Edwards, one of the truest contralto vocalists on the comic-opera stage, obtained a hearty reception, and sang the splendid song “Hearts do not break,” with much success. Mention must be made of the singing of Miss Effie Mason as Pitti-Sing and Miss Emily Wallace as Peep-Bo, and Mr. George Gordon as Pish-Tush sang and acted excellently. The orchestra, under the admirable conductorship of Mr. Alfred Cellier, performed the intricate score in a most worthy manner. [*Sheffield Independent*, Tuesday 15 September 1885, p.2.]

For the whole of this week nearly every seat on the box plan is booked in advance, the attraction being Gilbert and Sullivan’s latest work *The Mikado*. For this production the enterprising manager, Mr. J. H. Savile, has been working for some time, and has thrown into his efforts everything that money and taste could secure to make the visit a success and a credit to the Sheffield house. As a consequence Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s company is surrounded in both acts by scenery that certainly cannot have been surpassed in the provinces for beauty and richness. Mr. Charles Rowan’s rise in his profession is a matter of no little pride in his native town. His reception on the opening night must have been most gratifying, and it must also be frankly admitted that it was thoroughly deserved. Mr. Rowan was suffering from a slight cold, but rendered the many numbers allotted to the hero with great success, a pleasing stage presence and good acting backing up his correct and beautiful vocalisation. Mr. David Fisher, jun., as Ko-Ko and Miss Ethel Pierson as Yum-Yum are admirable. In fact, the opera is in every respect presented under the most favourable circumstances. [*The Era*, Saturday 19 September 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 21 September.***

LONDESBOROUGH THEATRE, SCARBOROUGH. Six nights. *The Mikado*. Musical Director, Mr. Alfred Cellier. [*Whitby Gazette*, Saturday 19 September 1885, p.1.]

The latest novelty of the season at this theatre has been the performance by Mr. R. D’Oyly Carte’s opera company of *The Mikado*, which has met with the most unequivocal success, the house being crowded every evening, and the various actors repeatedly encored and applauded. The opera is brimful of vivacity, and cannot fail to please all who witness it. [*The Era*, Saturday 26 September 1885, p.18.]

***Week commencing 28 September.***

THEATRE ROYAL, YORK. Six nights. [*York Herald*, Monday 28 September 1885, p.1.]

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s latest contribution to comic opera was produced at York for the first time on Monday, and was most favourably received by a large house. Though it may not be regarded as the most sparkling of the series written and composed by the distinguished *colaborateurs*, “The Mikado” has charm of novelty which is very pleasing to the popular taste. Whilst it must be admitted that in its general construction the work bears some resemblance to the others from the same hands, it is in detailed arrangement an agreeable departure from the seemingly stereotyped form of several of its predecessors. The spectator is now introduced to a strange country and race, viz., the Land of the Rising Sun and its inhabitants, the

Japanese. In “The Mikado” we are inclined to think that the librettist excels in his ability to combine quaint and extravagant fancy with amusing satire and general cynicism. The motive of the piece is the old one, “love,” but no one except Mr. Gilbert could have woven it into such a fanciful and, withal, amusing texture. The *Mikado of Japan* has betrothed his son, *Nanki-Poo* to an elderly dame, *Katisha*, who loves him. The son, however, has placed his affections upon *Yum-Yum*, who with her sisters *Pitti-Sing* and *Peep-Bo* are wards of *Ko-Ko*, the Lord High Executioner. *Ko-Ko* in his turn is intent upon marrying *Yum-Yum*, but the singular of Japan upset his plans to the advantage of the lovers. The *Mikado* commands an execution to take place; and *Ko-Ko*, having been under sentence of death for flirting, ought to be the victim. But, unfortunately, as Lord High Executioner he cannot behead himself. *Nanki-Poo*, who is a runaway from his father’s court, then makes an appearance, and agrees to be executed at the end of a month, if in the meantime he may marry *Yum-Yum*. *Ko-Ko* remembers that by the law the widow of a man who has been beheaded must be buried alive so that he will lose his chance of afterwards marrying the fair *Yum-Yum*. The *Mikado* arrives, and to pacify him he is told that an execution has taken place, the victim being his son, *Nanki-Poo*. Then comes consternation universal when it is found that a horrible death is the punishment for those who encompass the death of an heir-apparent. In the end, however, *Nanki-Poo* comes forward, the *Mikado* becomes reconciled, the lovers are made happy, and all ends well. In In describing this medley of incidents Mr. Gilbert has employed pretty scenic effects, very picturesque groupings, brilliantly witty dialogue and catching songs, to which Sir Arthur Sullivan has wedded sparkling music. The gem of the musical compositions is the trio sung by Miss Ethel Pierson, who makes a charming *Yum-Yum*, Miss Effie Mason (*Pitti-Sing*), and Miss Emily Wallace (*Peep-Bo*). This is “Three Young Maids from School.” [sic] It was received last night with *eclat*, and was heartily applauded. Miss Fanny Edwards (*Katisha*), has two or three effective ballads assigned to her, and her rich contralto voice was well employed. *Nanki-Poo* has some pretty duets with *Yum-Yum*, but Mr. Charles Rowan, who plays this part, was apparently suffering from a cold last night. Mr. George Gordon has a fine baritone voice, and he employs it most successfully as *Pish-Tush*. Mr. Furneaux Cook has a very amusing character, *Pooh-Bah*, “Lord High Everything Else,” and he makes the most of it, whilst our old friend, Mr. James Danvers, is certainly at home as the *Mikado*. But the central figure is *Ko-Ko*, Lord High Executioner, and Mr. David Fisher, junr., is herein at his best. The character fits him like a glove, and the patter song, in which he takes off several political personages, “who never would be missed,” creates roars of laughter. The chorus was very satisfactory; indeed the whole opera went in capital style last night, and encores were frequent. The piece was exceedingly well staged, and the spectacular displays gave full emphasis to a comic opera which is certain to have a highly successful run. [*York Herald*, Wednesday 30 September 1885, p.3.]

Crowded audiences have been the rule this week to witness the production of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s latest operatic success, *The Mikado*. The delightful music and quaint, fanciful dresses have been highly appreciated, and the members of the company heartily applauded. Mr. David Fisher, good as he has been in other parts, fairly excels himself as *Ko-Ko*. It is undoubtedly *the* part, and Mr. Fisher does full justice to it. Mr. Furneaux Cook makes a first-rate *Pooh-Bah*, and sings well. Mr. Charles Rowan is not in good voice, but as *Nanki-Po* is in every other way successful. Mr. James Danvers is very comical as the *Mikado*, and had a hearty reception. Miss Ethel Pierson as *Yum-Yum* is most charming, and renders her songs with great effect, Miss Effie Mason as *Pitti-Sing*, Miss Emily Wallace as *Peep-Bo*, Miss Fanny

Edwards as Katisha, and Mr George Gordon as Pish-Tush all give artistic impersonations. The band, under the skilful conductorship of Mr. A. Cellier, work well together, and a special word of praise is due to Mr. Clark, who has painted the new scenery in a most artistic manner. [*The Era*, Saturday 3 October 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 5 October.***

BLACKPOOL. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 3 October 1885, p.7.]

***Week commencing 12 October.***

NEWCASTLE. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 10 October 1885, p.6.]

On Monday there was a bumper attendance on the occasion of the first representation in Newcastle of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's Japanese opera *The Mikado*, the bookings for which in advance have exceeded any previous engagement here under the present management. The opera was mounted in a highly effective manner with more than usual care, and some special scenery did credit to the brush of Mr. W. F. Robson. The cast is also an excellent one. Mr. David Fisher, jun., succeeds admirably, and introduces some original and very humorous business which merits high praise. Mr. Charles Rowan acts and sings in a highly satisfactory manner as Nanki-Poo, and Mr. F. Cook's Pooh-Bah is a very amusing personation. Mr. J. Danvers is the Mikado, and Mr. G. Gordon, Pish-Tush. Miss Ethel Pierson was a pleasing and vivacious Yum-Yum, and was heartily applauded for her singing and dancing. Miss Effie Mason as Pitti-Sing, Miss Emily Wallace as Peep-Bo, and Miss Fanny Edwards as Katisha, were deserving of mention. The trio "Three Little Maids from School," sung by Misses Pierson, Wallace and Mason proved a genuine treat, and provoked the heartiest applause. [*The Era*, Saturday 17 October 1885, p.18.]

***Week commencing 19 October.***

THEATRE ROYAL, HULL. Six nights. (Saturday Mat.) *The Mikado*.

Whatever may be the general opinion of Gilbert and Sullivan's "latest and greatest," sure it is that the *Mikado* drew together at the Hull Theatre Royal, on Monday, one of the largest and most fashionable houses it has been our pleasure to witness here of late. The theatre was crowded in every part, and even in the dress circle many had to content themselves with standing space. To the management this must be gratifying especially as there is every likelihood of a renewal of crowded houses each night this week. And, indeed, there is much to attract in the "Mikado." The very fact of our being transported to Japan will show the grand opportunity Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan afforded themselves of satirising certain Japanese laws, customs, dresses, mannerisms, and the like. Of course a vast amount of humour is also to be drawn from political and social topics nearer home, and wherever these cropped up they were fully appreciated at their worth. One of the great merits of the "Mikado," in our opinion, is that it is not over charged with characters, and that it is presented, not in four or five, but in two acts or tableaux. The dresses are remarkably quaint and rich, and the scenery is most attractive and appropriate. To many the first act of the opera came as a disappointment; it appeared heavy and without point. The second is brighter in all respects, and so the "Mikado," on the whole, may generally be accepted as one of the most successful of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's prolific productions. Musically there is not much of the "catchy" class in the composition, the chief merit lying in the good round choruses, and one or two quartets and duets. The

instrumental portion of the work is well and cleverly brought into play, indeed, we doubt if ever Sir Arthur Sullivan as shown himself more skilful than in "The Mikado." At times there is the true ring, not of superficial study, but of music denoting depth of thought, feeling, and expression, Much of the drollery is incidental of a Lord High Executioner being in search of someone to have his head chopped off, as it is the pleasure of the Mikado that somebody should be executed. It is suggested that the most e fitting subject for execution is the Lord High Executioner himself. But he naturally demurs to the proposal, and as he is in love with "Yum-Yum," who herself is in love with the son of the Mikado, an arrangement is come to whereby the Emperor's son shall be married for one month to Yum-Yum and then be executed, the widow becoming the wife of Ko-Ko, the Executioner. For hugging and obsculatory bliss Nanki-Poo, the Mikado's son, and Yum-Yum, display a remarkable weakness, and elicit much merriment by their love-sick ways reduced to ridicule. Whilst the acting of D'Oyly Carte's company is good and sprightly throughout, the voices, individually, do not recommend themselves for any particular encomium, and, as we said, it is in the choruses and concerted parts that the opera becomes most delightful. Mr. D. Fisher, jun., as Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu, contributes the lion's share of the fun, and it was only just to him that on several occasions he should be recalled. The three sisters, including Yum-Yum, wards of Ko-Ko, are most amusingly represented by Miss Ethel Pierson, Miss Effie Mason, and Miss E. Wallace; but abilities histrionic and vocal of a far a higher order are displayed by Miss Fanny Edwards as Katisha, a character most closely resembling that of the famous "Lady Jane." Mr. James Danvers bears himself well, if that be a compliment, as the Mikado; and Mr. C. Rowan is about as "spoony" (pardon the term) a lover as Yum-Yum need have; and Miss Pierson herself is not backward in the domain of Spoonyness. Mr. F. Cook, in whom is concentrated "Lord High Everything Else," deports himself with much mock gravity; and Mr George Gordon is a veritable giant, resembling somewhat the veritable "Chang." All who take an interest in Gilbert and Sullivan's works will find plenty in "The Mikado" to confirm their opinion of the wonderful versatility of these two great authors of our day. [*Hull Packet*, Friday 23 October 1885, p.6.]

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company, with Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest, *The Mikado*, opened here on Monday evening to an overflowing audience. On Saturday last not a seat in the circle had been left unbooked, in consequence of which a morning performance had been announced for, the 24th, and if we may judge from the extraordinary business done during the week, the extra performance will be equally well patronised. The interpretation of the opera is in the hands of well-known artists, the following being the cast:— The Mikado of Japan, Mr. James Danvers; Nanki-Poo, Mr. C. Rowan; Ko-Ko, Mr. D. Fisher, jun.; Pooh-Bah, Mr. F..Cook; Pish-Tush, Mr Geo. Gordon; Yum-Yum, Miss Ethel Pierson; Pitti-Sing, Miss Effie Mason; Peep-Bo, Miss E. Wallace; Katisha, Miss Fanny Edwards. The costumes are superb, the scenery very elaborate (for which Mr. Stocks, the resident artist, deserves the highest praise), and the mounting of the opera generally reflects great credit on Mr. Cuthbert, the manager. Mr. Alfred Cellier is the musical director; Mr. B. Redford, acting manager; and Mr. E. T. Steyne, stage-manager for Mr. D'Oyly Carte. [*The Era*, Saturday 24 October 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 26 October.***

BRADFORD. Six nights, *The Mikado*.

**Week commencing 2 November.**

THEATRE ROYAL, NOTTINGHAM. Six nights, *The Mikado*. [*Nottingham Evening Post*, Monday 2 November 1885, p.1.]

THEATRE ROYAL.—“The Mikado.”

The Nottingham public had last night, for the first time, an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the last comic opera yet produced the fruitful collaboration of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. “The Mikado,” as our readers are doubtless aware, is set in a frame of Japanese, though it is easy enough to see that the social foibles and follies so successfully hit off by the talented librettist are by no means solely the production of “far Japan.” Oliver Goldsmith, when he wished to satirise his age, did it in the guise of a Chinese traveller. Mr. Gilbert, reversing the order of proceeding, has decided upon holding up a Japanese mirror to English society. As to the success which has attended his efforts in this direction, the spectator must left to draw his own conclusions. Our business is simply to notice opera as a poetical and musical composition, and in this respect, any rate, it must be generally admitted to be a worthy successor of such works as “Pinafore” and “Patience.” A too detailed description of the plot would probably hardly be welcomed by the very large number of readers who intend during the week to pay a visit to the Theatre, it might, to some extent, interfere with their enjoyment. We may, however, explain in general terms that, *Nanki-Poo*, a disguised Japanese Prince, is in love with *Yum-Yum*, the ward and betrothed wife the Lord High Executioner, *Ko-Ko*, who was originally a cheap tailor, and was condemned to death for flirting, but has been raised by his fellow-citizens to his present rank because they argue,

Who’s next to be decapitated  
Cannot cut off another’s head  
Until he’s cut his own off.

The appearance the Lord High Executioner, with an immense sword, is very amusing, and an equally striking figure is that of *Pooh-Bah*, a stolid, haughty peer of long descent, who feels it his duty to mortify his family pride by serving under the ex-tailor as First Lord of the Treasury, as Lord Chamberlain, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and as half a dozen other high functionaries of State. The appearance the fair *Yum-Yum*, accompanied by her sisters, *Peep-Bo* and *Pitti-Sing*, is signalled by what is perhaps the prettiest number of the opera. The three girls and their companions trip lightly down the stage, their toes carefully turned in, and the loose sleeves of their many-coloured garments flapping about over their straight and heavy skirts. Then they break out into a charming trio, “Three little maids from school are we,” which did not fail to win the enthusiastic applause of the local audience last night, as it has done, in fact, everywhere the piece has yet been performed. *Yum-Yum* would rather marry *Nanki-Poo* than her wizen little guardian *Ko-Ko*; but throughout their love scene and their duet, “Were I not to Ko-Ko plighted,” they assume that this is impossible, notwithstanding the fact that *Nanki-Poo* is the son of the Mikado, having disguised himself as a minstrel and run away from home to avoid marrying the elderly and unattractive *Katisha*. A sudden turn is, however, given to fortune’s wheel by the strange discovery that *Ko-Ko* has to execute someone within month, and that, in default of a volunteer, he must be his own victim. *Nanki-Poo*, who in despair, is meditating suicide, offers to be beheaded at the stipulated time, if in the meanwhile he may become *Yum-Yum*’s husband, and *Ko-Ko* consents. The elderly and slighted *Katisha* alone protests against the projected sacrifice of *Nanki-Poo*’s life, and a spirited ensemble brings the first act to a conclusion. In the second act there a thoroughly comic scene, in which *Ko-Ko* nerves himself to watch the endearments of



*Nanki-Poo* and *Yum-Yum*—whom he still intends to marry when she is left a widow. Further difficulties crop up, however, in the discovery of a law which condemns a wife to be buried alive on the day of her husband's decapitation, and in the unexpected arrival of the *Mikado*, whose whim it is to suit the punishment to the crime, as he describes witty and tuneful song. At last the timidity of the Executioner leads him to spare his victim's life by bribing *Pooh-Bah* in one of his many capacities to make false affidavits of *Nanki-Poo's* death by the sword. Yet another complication arises from the discovery of *Nanki-Poo's* parentage, made too late by those who have compassed his death; but this also is cleared up almost as soon it is made, and the series of elaborate logical consequences soon brought to end. It will be seen from this brief description that in point of grotesque humour the new opera lacks nothing when compared with its predecessors. From a wealth of material as the "book" affords it is difficult, within reasonable limits, to extract any adequate sample of the writing, but, on the whole, the lines on the "billiard sharp" can hardly excelled even by the most celebrated humorists of our literature. Says Mr. Gilbert, or rather the *Mikado* on his behalf:—

"The billiard sharp whom any one catches,  
 His doom's extremely hard—  
 He's made to dwell  
 In dungeon cell,  
 On a spot that's always barred.  
 And there plays extravagant matches,  
 In fitless finger-stalls,  
 On cloth untrue.  
 With a twisted cue,  
 And elliptical billiard balls."

Equally is it difficult, with regard the music, to select passages for special praise without seeming to do injustice to other equally deserving numbers. Sir Arthur Sullivan possesses the rare gift of expressing humour in musical notes, and in this fact lies doubtless to a large extent the secret of the happy collaboration. In the music of the "*Mikado*" not a single opportunity for humour is lost. In the admirable trio, "Three little maids from school are we," the fun flows in a broad and sparkling stream. The Executioner's substitute song; parts of the elaborate first finale; a capital glee, "See how the Fates their gifts allot;" and a ditty concerning a tom-tit which killed itself most gallantly for love, are all, in various degrees, laughter-moving and complete. The composer's humour, as has been aptly remarked, is at times sly and quiet, caught but by those who can feel slight touches of orchestration, or changes of inflection, and it is only from such listeners that he can receive entire justice. His work is thorough from end to end, and all the more thorough because it contains no trace of the boisterous or vulgar. For the execution of the work the company chosen by Mr. D'Oyly Carte is, as usual, very happily selected. The excellence the first production of the opera at the Savoy Theatre, in March of the present year, is indeed well supported in the "*Mikado*" travelling company, which, we are glad to say, includes more than one familiar favourite of Nottingham playgoers. Mr. Charles Rowan, as the wandering minstrel, *Nanki-Poo*, acts in refined manner, though a little more vigour would be acceptable, and he has an agreeable and well-trained voice. His opening song, with its humorous medley of topics was well received, and in later efforts he was equally successful. Mr. D. Fisher, jun., fully enters into the humour of *Ko-Ko's* character, and delivers dialogue and song in entire sympathy with the intentions of author and composer. His topical list of those persons "Who never would be missed," with his

amusing pantomimic suggestions of eminent statesmen, was one the chief successes of the evening, and was warmly encored. He is well supported by Mr. Furneaux Cook as *Pooh-Bah*, the personal embodiment of the Tipitu Ministry; Mr. James Danvers does well what he has to do as the *Mikado*, including the rendering of the song from which a verse is quoted above; and Mr. G. Gordon fills the small part of *Pish-Tush* with credit. The heroine—if she may designated—of the opera, *Yum-Yum*, is admirably personated by Miss Ethel Pierson, who fully enters into the merry girlish character, disports herself with charming grace, and in the love passages with the disguised prince is tender and unaffected. She is well supported by Miss Effie Mason as *Pitti-Sing*, and Miss Emily Wallace as *Peep-Bo*, her two sisters, and the first trio by these ladies, “Three little maids from school are we,” received the unusual honour of a double encore, a distinction afterwards gained by the charming mock madrigal in the second act. In solo parts Miss Pierson’s voice is sweet and clear, and she sings with great taste and refinement. Miss Fanny Edwards, who will be remembered for the similar parts she has taken in the earlier operas, plays the elderly maiden *Katisha* very cleverly, and is also very effective in the musical rendering of her lines. As to the chorus it is large and well-trained, a fact which the audience delightedly marked by frequent encores; and a word of praise is also due to the excellence of the orchestral arrangements. As usual in Nottingham the opera was capitally mounted, the first scene, that of the court-yard of *Ko-Ko*’s official residence being specially well finished, and in thorough keeping with the brilliant and, we believe, entirely correct Japanese costumes of the players. The house was well filled last night, and from the rise of the curtain to its fall the interest and enjoyment were not allowed to flag for a single moment. [*Nottingham Evening Post*, Tuesday 3 November 1885, p.4.]

***Week commencing 9 November.***

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, LEICESTER. Six nights, *The Mikado*. [*Leicester Chronicle*, Saturday 14 November 1885, p.1.]

For the first time in Leicester, Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s company produced on Monday evening Gilbert and Sullivan’s opera *The Mikado*. Mr. David Fisher proved himself a genuine comedian as *Ko-Ko*, the Lord High Executioner; Mr. James Danvers was exceedingly funny as the *Mikado*; Mr. Charles Rowan made an excellent *Nanki-Poo*; Mr. Furneaux Cook was a capital *Pooh-Bah*; and Mr. Geo. Gordon deserved praise as *Pish-Tush*. Miss Fanny Edwards displayed a magnificent voice and good style as *Katisha*; Miss Ethel Pierson as *Yum-Yum* also showed her possession of a splendid voice and charming appearance and Miss Effie Mason as *Pitti-Sing* and Miss Emily Wallace as *Peep-Bo* were both good. The remainder of the company were well up to their parts, and the staging was excellent. [*The Era*, Saturday 14 November, 1885, p.18.]

***Week commencing 16 November.***

PRINCE’S THEATRE, BRISTOL. Six nights & Saturday matinee. *The Mikado*. [*Western Daily Press*, Monday 16 November 1885, p.8.]

“THE MIKADO” AT THE PRINCE’S THEATRE.

It is not altogether an unhappy coincidence which has timed the visit of “The Mikado” Company to Bristol in the midst of electoral excitement, for as the attendance both on Monday night and last evening shows there are large numbers of people who are glad to turn from political controversy to the enjoyment of Mr. Gilbert’s humour and Sir Arthur Sullivan’s music. The interval between the production of the opera in London and its performance here has been much longer

than is usual, but meanwhile the music of the opera has grown familiar. It has been played by all kinds of bands, and has long been arranged for the pianoforte, so that the audiences at the Prince's Theatre this week will listen to many tunes which have already pleased them. The madrigal, the trio, "The flower that blooms in the spring," the "Titwillow" song, and some others, have been received with an enthusiasm which has not been decreased by previous acquaintance with the music, and the absurdities of Mr Gilbert's story and dialogue are evidently enjoyed. The representation of the opera at the Prince's Theatre does not leave much room for fault-finding. It must be regretted that Mr. Charles Rowan, who sang so admirably in "Princess Ida," was not able to take part—"Nanki-Poo"—assigned him last evening, and his substitute was not so successful as could have been wished. But Miss Ethel Pierson, Miss Fanny Edwards, and Mr. David Fisher, junior, are good in "The Mikado" as in the other operatic series in which they have appeared in Bristol, and Miss Effie Mason, who may be remembered as the clever little girl who played "Little Buttercup" in the Children's Pinafore Company four or five years ago, has developed into a very promising singer and actress. "The Mikado" is certainly not the least enjoyable, and it is one of the funniest of the splendid series which began with "The Sorcerer," and the theatre should be filled each evening this week, and at the morning performance on Saturday. [*Western Daily Press*, Wednesday 18 November 1885, p.3.]

On Monday evening Gilbert and Sullivan's everywhere popular opera *The Mikado* was produced in this city for the first time, and there was an excellent attendance. The company selected for the interpretation of the work is a very capable one, and embraces many artists who have previously won popularity by their performances in the earlier works of the same popular author. Mr. David Fisher was exceedingly humorous as Ko-Ko, and received a very hearty encore for "Tit-Willow." Pooh-Bah, in the hands of Mr. Furneaux Cook was also very amusing; and the music allotted to the character was sung with exceptional ability. Mr. James Danvers played the Mikado fairly well. Mr. Charles Rowan both sung and acted well as Nanki-Poo; and the fine voice of Mr. George Gordon as Pish-Tush was of great value in the concerted music. That excellent artist Miss Fanny Edwards played the part of Katisha, and, it is almost needless to say, played it well. Miss Ethel Pierson (Yum-Yum) and Miss Effie Mason (Pitti-Sing) infused considerable life into their renderings, and Miss Emily Wallace did all that could be done with the small party of Peep-Bo. An effective chorus and an able rendering by the orchestra of the instrumental music gave every opportunity for the work to be heard at its best, whilst the admirable manner in which it was staged reflected credit both on the management and on Mr. Mark Barraud, the scenic artist. [*The Era*, Saturday 21 November 1885, p.16.]

#### THE "MIKADO" AT THE THEATRE.

The first performance of the "Mikado" in Cardiff, as was naturally anticipated, attracted a large and fashionable audience. Dealing with a country in every way so peculiar and interesting as Japan, the scenery, dresses, and other accessories are totally different to those in the other operas by Gilbert and Sullivan, and this fact may in some measure account for the curiosity evinced by all amusement-seekers on its first appearance. In the limits at our disposal it is not possible to give even the slightest sketch of the plot, which, however, we may characterise as being in every way worthy of its author. The libretto sparkles with witty and smart sayings, and the audience is kept in roars of laughter throughout the evening. In the musical portion of "The Mikado" Sir Arthur Sullivan has again shown his genius and his ability to captivate the tastes of lovers of comic opera. Many of the songs and other numbers were on Monday night encored, amongst them being the quartette, "Brightly dawns

our wedding day,” “The flowers that bloom in the spring” (which was a second time encored), and a song by Ko-Ko, “On a tree by a river a little torn tit.” The pretty chorus in the first act “Comes a train of little ladies” was also, and deservedly, much applauded. The interpretation of Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s Company is all that can be desired. Mr. D. Fisher as Ko-Ko, and Mr. Charles Rowan, as Nanki-Poo, show themselves to be in thorough unison with the spirit of the piece, the “patter” song by Ko-Ko eliciting an enthusiastic encore. The Mikado of Mr. Jas. Danvers, though not so exacting, is capitally done; whilst Mr. Furneaux Cook, as Pooh-Bah and Mr. George Gordon as Pish-Tush, give finished impersonations of their characters. Miss Ethel Pierson, who enacts the role of Yum-Yum in a manner that keeps the house in irresistible good humour, possesses a sweet voice, and the songs and duets which she sings and takes part in add much to the musical treat afforded by “The Mikado.” Miss Fanny Edwards, who is well known in Cardiff as the Lady Jane in “Patience,” sings and acts the part of Katisha in her well known effective style and must be warmly congratulated on the result. Miss Emily Wallace, as Peep-Bo, and Miss Effie Mason as Pitti-Sing, must not be passed over without a word of commendation. The scenery and accessories are of the most gorgeous description, the dresses being thoroughly in harmony with the locale of the piece; and, if we may judge from the hearty plaudits of the large audience on Monday evening, “The Mikado” will, as it merits, have a successful week in Cardiff. [*Cardiff Times*, Saturday 28 November 1885, p.6.]

**Week commencing 23 November.**

THEATRE ROYAL, CARDIFF. Six nights & Saturday matinee. *The Mikado*. [*South Wales Daily News*, Monday 16 November 1885, p.1.]

“THE MIKADO” AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, CARDIFF.

Mr. Gilbert is essentially a dramatist of the day, a satirist of the season. Whatever foible happens her to be the fashion, whatever craze in vogue, he selects his material from these and produces a *piece de circonstance* which runs its appointed course and then gives place to another when the *motif* is found to be exhausted and the satire to be stale. Sometimes it is persons high in authority and things of great importance that come under his scourge at others lesser people and more trivial matters are made to feel the lash. In “Pinafore” the navy, in the “Pirates of Penzance” the army, and in “Iolanthe” the law give employment to his sarcastic wit. In “Patience” the æsthetes are held up to derision and contempt. Nowadays the Jingoism of the music-halls has given way to genuine love of country and of Queen. The Belt v. Lawes case is forgotten, and Postlethwaite and Maudle are relegated to the obscurity from which they should never have emerged. Society’s latest stir has been caused by Japan and things Japanese, and Mr. Gilbert, ever on the lookout for novelty and with “the pen of a ready writer,” sees his opportunity and gives “The Mikado” to the world. We yesterday gave a slight sketch of the new piece; it will now be our province to speak of the music, associated with the libretto, and of the performers, who gave vitality to the creations both of author and composer. Sir Arthur Sullivan has not troubled to invest his score with any great amount of local colour. A strange tonality is adopted in the overture and in the march heralding the approach of the Mikado in the second act, whereby a distinctly Oriental effect is produced, but for the most part he solaces himself with dainty melodies of a more familiar type, and with the humorous touches and brilliant orchestration that have before won him renown. Amongst the numbers that found most favour with the audience a last evening we may cite Ko-Ko’s capital song “They’ll none of ’em be missed”; the charming trio, “Three little maids from school are we”; the finale to the first act, “For he’s going to

marry Yum-Yum, Yum-Yum”; the quaint madrigal, “Brightly dawns our wedding-day”; the clever song for the Mikado which details a suitable punishment for each “evil liver,” the lively duet “The flowers that bloom in spring” (twice redemanded), and Ko-Ko’s ballad, “Willow Tit-willow.” There is scarcely a dull bar in the whole opera however, and the composer seems equally at home when illustrating comic thoughts as he is in portraying sentiments of pathos and of passion. The score of the “Mikado” will bear comparison with either of its predecessors in liveliness and interest, and in originality we think it is superior to any. Funny as Mr. Gilbert’s book is to read, it becomes doubly so when its humours are revealed by capable artistes especially selected for merit in their distinctive lines; and when sparkling music and screaming comic business is added the effect is irresistible.

After three hours of incessant merriment, the curtain fell amidst the loudest exclamations of delight; and amongst those present who seemed to enjoy the performance most thoroughly were Mr. Harben, Mrs. Marshall, and Miss Harben, who remained to the end. Sir Edward Reed was not there. It is, perhaps, as well, for, when Ko-Ko indicates a number of “apologetic Statesmen of a compromising kind” who never would be missed, his name was shouted from the gallery, and the hit seemed to be keenly relished in all parts of the theatre. Of those to whom fell the chief honours we must give the place to Mr. David Fisher, jun., whose Ko-Ko was a marvellous study. His dry humour and facial expression provoked the utmost hilarity, while his patter songs invariably brought down the house. He was admirably supported by Mr. Furneaux Cook, as Pooh-Bah. This gentleman is an excellent low comedian, and possesses a fine voice. Mr. Charles Rowan is no stranger to Cardiff, and the music of Nanki-Poo was safe in his hands. Mr. Allen Morris as the Mikado was an efficient substitute for Mr. James Danvers, who has been indisposed, we are sorry to hear, for some time. Miss Ethel Pierson makes a most bewitching Yum-Yum. She is brimful of fun and mischief, and never misses a point, while her singing and dancing are most attractive. The well-known actress, Miss Fanny Edwards, plays Katisha with power and intensity, and smaller parts are successfully entrusted to Mr. George Gordon and to the Misses Effie Mason and Emily Wallace. The choruses were perfectly rendered, and the orchestra, carefully led, was fully up to its work. Of the dresses we must speak in terms of high commendation, and the elaborate scenery was beyond all praise, reflecting the greatest credit on the management. Special late trains will run to Pontypridd, Treherbert, and Rhymney on Thursday, and there is to be a day performance on Saturday at 2 o’clock. [*Western Mail*, Tuesday 24 November 1885, p.6.]

***Week commencing 30 November.***

Theatre Royal and Opera House, Devonport. This week Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s *Mikado* company has favoured us with a visit which has resulted in unqualified success. On Monday the house was well filled in every part with a select and enthusiastic audience. Much credit is due to our energetic lessee and manager, Mr. Fed. Holt, who has spared no expense to stage *The Mikado* in the best style, the scenery being very effective and artistic. Mr. David Fisher, jun., made a capital Ko-Ko, and elicited hearty approval, especially in his “Tit-Willow” song, which was thrice encored. Mr. F. Cook’s rendering of Pooh-Bah was also much appreciated. Mr. Chas. Rowan’s acting as the wandering minstrel, Nanki-Poo was excellent. Mr. G. Gordon rendered valuable service as Pish-Tush. Of the ladies it is difficult to say which shone the brightest. Miss Ethel Pierson, Miss Effie Mason, and Miss Emily Wallace were excellent in the respective parts of Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo,

and Miss Fanny Edwards gave a brilliant impersonation of Katisha. Mr. J. Danvers' Mikado was a highly commendable performance. Judging from the enthusiasm on Monday night the business for the week is certain to be good. [*The Era*, Saturday 5 December 1885, p.16.]

***Week commencing 7 December.***

THEATRE ROYAL, SHEFFIELD. Six Nights, *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 7 December 1885, p.5.]

“THE MIKADO” AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

There was a large house at the Theatre Royal last evening on the return visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company, in “The Mikado, or the Town of Titipu.” This latest of the many successful comic operas produced by Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan has been so recently noticed in detail in our columns as to render quite unnecessary any lengthened criticism or description of the work itself. Differing in many essential particulars from their former efforts, and being strikingly original in their treatment, it is certain that Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan have in the “Mikado” produced a work which “hits the public taste,” for not only has it had a most successful run at the Savoy Theatre, but where ever performed in the provinces, even during the turmoil of election weeks, it has been received by crowded houses with unqualified approval. The plot throughout abounds in adroitness of situation, and though at times bordering on the burlesque, there is a cynicism and freshness which does not pall the taste, whilst the songs and music are of a character bound to meet with favour wherever and whenever heard. The grotesqueness of situation and the grouping are exceedingly effective, whilst the scenery and novel costumes will be appreciated by all lovers of the opera comique. The cast last evening was, with one exception, the same as on the visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company in September, and, on the whole, the artistes play so well that it is scarcely surprising to hear they have had one unbroken round of successes at Leeds, Bradford, Hull, Newcastle, York. Cardiff and other places during the last three months. The opera went last night without a hitch, and the chief members were received with rapturous applause by the audience. Mr. James Danvers, “the Mikado,” is seriously indisposed, and his place was taken by Mr. Alleu Morris, who performed the portion which fell to him in a manner which deserves the highest praise. All the other principals are old favourites, and it is entirely unnecessary to give detailed praise to such artistes as Mr. Charles Rowan, Mr. David Fisher, junior, and Mr. Furneaux Cook who have made enviable reputations for themselves which their performances in “The Mikado” will certainly increase. Miss Ethel Pierson, as “Yum-Yum,” won golden opinions for her acting and singing, and Miss Fanny Edwards was highly successful as Katisha, the elderly lady, to love whom required some education. The part of Pitti-Sing was sustained by Miss Effie Mason, a young lady of great promise, whilst Mr. George Gordon and Miss Emily Wallace both performed in a manner which left nothing to be desired. The concerted pieces especially went exceedingly well, and the songs of “Titwillow” and “The flowers that bloom in the spring” called forth a hearty encore. The opera is especially well mounted, the orchestra a most effective one, and there is every indication that this return visit of “The Mikado” will be a successful one, and that Mr. Daw, the enterprising lessee, will have no occasion to regret the engagement. [*Sheffield Independent*, Tuesday 8 December 1885, p. 2.]

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company is playing in *The Mikado* to enthusiastic houses. The company has not changed in the slightest degree since its last visit unless its members are still more perfect in their parts. Mr. David Fisher cleverly adapts his

business in the song “They never will be missed,” to one or two local politicians, and causes roars of laughter. [*The Era*, Saturday 12 December 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 14 December.***

THE WINTER GARDENS, SOUTHPORT. Six nights, *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 12 December 1885, p.5.]

Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s opera company in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s popular opera, *The Mikado*, opened in the Pavilion on Monday evening for a week’s long engagement, and it has seldom been Mr. Long’s good fortune to have such an unusually excellent house on an opening night. The new scenery specially painted for the occasion aided considerably in securing the approval of the vast audience present. The “fun-provoking” characters are in the hands of Mr. David James, jun., and Mr. Furneaux Cook. As the Mikado, Mr. James Danvers was admirable, and sustained his well known reputation. Miss Effie Mason, Miss Ethel Pierson, and Miss Emily Wallace flirted with all the archness conceivable. The choruses were excellently rendered and the dresses unique. The opera has occupied the boards for the whole week. [*The Era*, Saturday 19 December 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 21 December.***

ROYAL COURT THEATRE, LIVERPOOL. Monday to Thursday & Saturday (matinee & evening). *The Mikado*.

“THE MIKADO”

When the latest of the Gilbert-Sullivan operas was presented for the first time in Liverpool, a few months ago, ample expression was given here to an estimate of the character of the work. A new series of representations of “The Mikado” began at the Court Theatre last night, when the estimate previously formed found confirmation. The “book of words” while unequal, contains many examples of ingenious Mr. Gilbert’s best vein of sarcasm tinged with humour, and if the melody of Sir Arthur Sullivan be comparatively trivial, the workmanship exhibited in his vocal concerted music and in his instrumentation is perfect. As in the previous representations of the opera at the Court, Mr. Charles Rowan appears as Nanki-Poo; Mr. David Fisher, junior, as Ko-Ko; Mr. George Gordon as Pish-Tush; Miss Effie Mason as Pitti-Sing; Miss Emily Wallace as Peep-Bo; and Miss Fanny Edwards as Katisha. Mr. Furneaux Cook, an excellent singer and actor, now plays Pooh-Bah; and Miss Ethel Pierson (another clever artist) Zum-Zum (*sic*); and Mr. Allen Morris, the Mikado—the latter taking the place of Mr. James Danvers, who, unfortunately, has been laid aside for some time by severe illness. The chorus is good; the orchestra commands similar praise; and the scenic accessories are admirable in design and execution. Mr. George Arnold is the conductor. “The Mikado” is to be repeated every evening this week (excepting Friday evening), and an additional performance is to be given on Saturday morning next. [*Liverpool Mercury*, Tuesday 22 December 1885, p.6.]

*The Mikado* came again to Liverpool on Monday as the preliminary “Court” Christmas attraction. The splendidly elaborate and strikingly artistic Robson pictures are still conspicuous in a preface of exceptional excellence, and the representation at the beginning of the week was enhanced in value by the fact that the new dresses for the entire company, designed from Japanese authorities by Mr. Wilhelm and Messrs. Liberty, were worn. Repeated performances have added considerably to the general effectiveness of the company. The title role is sustained by Mr. Allen Morris, who very efficiently performs the part during the temporary absence of Mr. James Danvers, in consequence of illness. Miss Effie Mason, Miss Emily Wallace, Miss

Fanny Edwards, Mr. Charles Rowan, Mr. David Fisher, jun., and Mr George George [=George Gordon] were again among the favourites of the cast, and Mr. Furneaux Cook now plays Pooh-Bah and Miss Ethel Pierson Yum-Yum with an amount of spirit which adds greatly to the merit of the generally excellent representation. The full strength of the Carl Rosa opera company was brought into requisition yesterday (Christmas Day) when *Stabat Mater* and *Gems of Sacred Song* were conspicuous items of the concert. [*the Era*, Saturday 26 December 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 28 December.***

ROYAL COURT THEATRE, LIVERPOOL. Six nights, matinees Friday & Saturday. *The Mikado*. [*Liverpool Mercury*, Monday 28 December 1885, p.1.]

Sullivan's sparkling comic opera "The Mikado" has been well received on its reproduction at the Court Theatre, and those who were unable to secure seats last week may be interested to learn that the performance will be continued each evening, and on Friday and Saturday mornings. There was a good attendance at the theatre last evening, and the piece was heartily enjoyed. [*Liverpool Mercury*, Tuesday 29 December 1885, p.6.]