

Although a good deal has been written about Sullivan and his operettas - and in particular those in which he collaborated with the librettist W. S. Gilbert - very little scholarly attention has been turned towards the musical texts. The situation has been made difficult not only by the wide dispersal of the autograph full scores, but also by the fact that some are no longer extant, whilst a number are not openly available for research. Having largely overcome the problem of accessibility, the dissertation examines the autograph full scores of all Sullivan's operettas except The Rose of Persia, Thespis and Utopia Limited (the latter two of which are apparently no longer extant). In addition, numerous other important sources are considered, in particular authoritative nineteenth century vocal scores and full scores, authoritative literary texts, and currently available band parts and vocal scores. As a result a considerable amount of information is brought to light concerning the composer's working methods, his creative role in the structure of the operettas and the textual evolution of the works. The posthumous influence which the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company has had on currently performed texts is also considered.

The dissertation contains a large number of music examples, giving transcriptions of material which has never been published. Much of the significant "lost" music to be found in the autograph scores is included as well as a good deal from other sources. Most operettas yield material which has remained unpublished; in the case of Ruddigore and The Yeomen of the Guard the quantity is substantial.

The dissertation reveals that the standard musical texts used in Britain for many of the operettas differ, sometimes considerably, from what Sullivan is known to have written. It also disturbs established notions concerning the literary texts, and especially the form these took at the first performances.