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# Turn of the Century British Musical Comedy in an American Performance Library

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TURN OF THE CENTURY BRITISH MUSICAL COMEDY IN AN AMERICAN  
PERFORMANCE LIBRARY

by

Victoria Peters

A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Music

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

May 2018

## ABSTRACT

### TURN OF THE CENTURY BRITISH MUSICAL COMEDY AND THIER USE IN AN AMERICAN PERFORMANCE LIBRARY

by

Victoria Peters

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018  
Under the Supervision of Professor Gillian Rodger

The genre label 'musical comedy' gained its stride in the 1920s, but the term emerged as early as the 1870s. These early musical comedies are often overlooked in the historical discussion of musical theater, due to a lack of integration between the storyline and musical numbers. With the help of the Tams-Witmark collection, housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Mills Music Library, this paper examines how two of these early musical comedies, composed by England's Ivan Caryll and Sidney Jones, were exported and used by touring theater companies in The United States. These flexible musical comedies complicate the kinds of expectations established by the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, who combined elements drawn from literary burlesque with traditional opera structure. The types of musical comedies written by Caryll and Jones represent the flexible strand of musical comedy that combined elements drawn from satirical burlesque, variety sketch, and pantomime.

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

Musical comedies gained their stride in the 1920s with the types of musical theater productions led by composers such as Richard Rodgers and Jerome Kern. This genre label, however, emerged much earlier, starting to be used as a designation as early as the 1870s. These early musical comedies are often overlooked in the historical discussion of musical theater, due perhaps to the lack of integration between the storyline and musical numbers. With the help of the Tams-Witmark collection, housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Mills Music Library special collections, this paper will examine how two of these early musical comedies, composed by Ivan Caryll and Sidney Jones, were exported from London and used by touring theater companies in the United States.

The production that brought Sidney Jones to the attention of the prominent producer George Edwardes was *Dorothy*, with a score by Edwardes's longtime music director, Alfred Cellier. This comic operetta had a period libretto with a score that was previously part of a provincial flop about a young noblewoman who disguises herself as a milkmaid to gain the affections of a dapper aristocrat, and managed to have a longer run than the original Gilbert and Sullivan productions.<sup>1</sup> Jones's own *The Gaiety Girl*, which premiered six years later, was the next in a popular formula of productions produced by Edwardes. This series of book musicals is known as the 'Girl' shows, or the 'Gaiety Musicals' as they were primarily staged at the Gaiety Theatre over the two decades following the premiere of *The Gaiety Girl*. As Sheridan Morley describes, "It was as though, having discovered the musical as a potential theatrical form for the coming century, theatre managers and writers alike had only in fact discovered one

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<sup>1</sup> Kurt Gänzl, *The Musical: A Concise History* (Boston: Northeastern University, 1997), 89.

serviceable storyline.”<sup>2</sup> The ‘Girl’ shows followed two basic plot patterns: “either an impoverished young woman loves an aristocrat and wins him against all odds, or a young woman of means tries to escape an unwanted marriage and leads other characters on a chase through some colorful locale. Everything is always resolved happily just before the final curtain.”<sup>3</sup> These shows had similar tuneful but forgettable scores and variations on the same title: *The Geisha*, *The Shop Girl*, *My Girl*, *The Circus Girl*, *A Runaway Girl*, and *The Utah Girl* are a few examples.

Edwardes billed these shows as *musical comedies*, and has been criticized by some scholars for taking credit for a genre that had been invented on Broadway almost a decade earlier, the *musical farce*.<sup>4</sup> Teams like Harrigan and Hart were flourishing in the United States as well as on tours to Europe. Parallel to the musical farce-comedy in the United States, new British popular entertainments sprang from the roots of burlesque. The full-length burlesque had dialogue in prose, rather than traditional rhymed and punned couplets, with original music. These ‘New Burlesques’ spread from the Gaiety Theater and featured comedy scenes, virtual sketches, cheery up-to-date songs, and pretty ballads, but died with the stars Fred Leslie and Nellie Farren, (discussed further in the following chapter).<sup>5</sup> Edwardes, in order to keep up with the other London theatres and the changing respectability of the theatre in the eyes of the audience, started presenting musical comedies/farces with a more dainty, well-behaved manner about them.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sheridan Morley, *Spread a Little Happiness: The First Hundred Years of the British Musical* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987), 20.

<sup>3</sup> John Kenrick, *Musical Theatre: A History* (New York, N.Y.: Continuum, 2008), 94.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Gänzl, *The Musical*, 92.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald Martin Bordman, *American Musical Comedy: From Adonis to Dreamgirls* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 50.

The Gaiety musical comedies that started coming across the Atlantic with *A Gaiety Girl* sped the development of the genre in The United States. The sophistication and elegance of the Gaiety importations set new standards and propelled the advance of the musical comedy in America.<sup>7</sup> Despite the distinctions that could be drawn between operetta, burlesque, and musical comedy, they should not to be viewed as necessarily separate genres, due to the terms being used interchangeably. Kenrick argues that if we place Harrigan and Hart's *Mulligan Guard's Picnic* next to Jones's *The Geisha* there is no difference. Both follow the definition of musical comedy: a comic drama that makes substantial use of original, popular-style songs (rather than operatic-style melodies found in operetta) as a storytelling element. He states that this evidence leads to the notion that Harrigan and Hart were the first to establish musical comedy as a genre because they were the first to inject variety and vaudeville into mainstream musical theatre.<sup>8</sup> English imports did not have as much staying power in the United States as they did in London; the attraction for British society for elegant hauteur and reflections of the unique attitudes and tastes did not translate well to American democratic notions.<sup>9</sup>

A distinction needs to be made between the Daly's musicals, where Sidney Jones was musical director, and the Gaiety musicals, where Ivan Caryll was musical director. Both theatres looked for librettos that would fit the flagship stars and give them good roles and opportunities. The Daly's, however, was expected to have a script that was more substantial in the plot and dialogue. Drama and real romance were foreign to a Gaiety plot which was apt to barely hold the songs and dances of the evening together. Neither piece would yield a book that would hold

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<sup>7</sup> Gerald Bordman and Thomas S. Hischak, *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 20

<sup>8</sup> Kenrick, *Musical Theatre*, 95.

<sup>9</sup> Bordman, *American Musical Comedy*, 56.

itself up as a piece of theater. Love affairs at the Gaiety were expected to be light-hearted while performers Marie Tempest and Hayden Coffin at Daly's had to lead theirs through difficulties and duets to end happily at the final curtain. The differences did not stop there. The music that accompanied a Daly's musical had a greater range and depth than anything heard at the Gaiety. Sidney Jones's compositions had a higher percentage of lyric music, ensemble work, and concerted finales than anything written by Ivan Caryll for the Gaiety. Both Jones and Caryll, however, had their scores "leavened with Monckton ditties for, most especially, the soubrette, and the mixture of contrasting styles proved to be as effective as it was in the lighter scores."<sup>10</sup> Both theatres had chorus girls who were fashioned in various costumes for the differing set locations of the productions. However, the girls at Daly's were required to sing while the Gaiety prized dancers or elegant ladies to show off the fashions of the time.

The majority of scholarship written on the types of shows composed by Sidney Jones and Ivan Caryll is from the 1960s to the 1980s. Unfortunately, modern scholars have been focused more on later musical comedies, like those composed by Richard Rodgers and Jerome Kern, and modern book musical writers such as Andrew Lloyd Webber and Stephen Sondheim. The authors used most often in my thesis are Kurt Gänzl, Gerald Bordman, and Allan Hyman, though Bordman focuses more heavily on American productions. Two of these sources are written as chronicles and feature season by season accounts of every show presented in a given year. The first is *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle* by Gerald Bordman. This is a very useful reference work for a brief selection about any work performed in The United States, beginning with the very first evidence of musical theater in the mid-eighteenth century. Bordman has continued issuing new editions of this text to incorporate new information about older works and

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<sup>10</sup> Gänzl, *The Musical*, 112.

including new seasons of productions. Importations of productions by English composers like Caryl and Jones are present, which gives great context to the reception of their productions in America. A similar reference work is *The British Musical Theatre* by Kurt Gänzl. This book is published in two volumes, the first covering works from 1865-1914, and the second from 1915-1985. Gänzl does a nice job of setting up each season with an introductory section about its important composers, the types of works presented, and the historical context.

Both Bordman and Gänzl have written works on more specific areas of musical theater. Bordman's *American Musical Comedy* and *American Operetta* are arranged as detailed walk-throughs of these two genres, although this is a problematic approach with early musical comedies like those of Caryl and Jones as these cross over both genres. Bordman glosses over this in his preface, stating "the modern American 'musical play' has evolved naturally and ineluctable from nineteenth-century comic opera...while operetta and revue went their independent ways, musical comedy borrowed haphazardly from both genres and responded to numerous influences outside the theatre."<sup>11</sup> He goes on to categorize such early pieces like those of Caryl based on his own opinion of what makes them operetta or musical comedy. Gänzl's *Song & dance: the complete story of stage musicals* attempts to cover the beginning of stage musicals, starting with the universally agreed upon John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* in 1728, and ending in the year of publication, 1994. He looks in Europe and the U.S. for examples and compares them with spotlights on certain genres and time periods, focusing on those that directly evolved into today's Broadway musical.

Allan Hyman is the greatest source specifically on the London theaters and composers central to this topic. *The Gaiety Years* and *Sullivan and his Satellites* are some of the most

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<sup>11</sup> Bordman, *American Musical Comedy: From Adonis to Dreamgirls*, i.

important sources looking at how the early musical comedies stemmed from Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas and the Gaiety burlesque. He is also a great source for reviews and other public opinions on the premieres of the productions in this period. W. MacQueen-Pope is the author of *Gaiety: Theatre of Enchantment* and *Shirtfronts and Sables; A Story of the Days When Money Could Be Spent*, both that offer a detailed look at this influential theater with insights into the little researched performers that made it so popular.

Richard Traubner's *Operetta: A Theatrical History*, Mark Lubbock's *The Complete Book of Light Opera: With an American Section by David Ewen.*, and Cecil Smith's *Musical Comedy in America* all attempt similar overviews of genres, that really cover the same content with different names. Though Lubbock focuses on Europe and Smith on America, and Traubner covers both, they all are looking at the same types of productions and composers. Smith and Traubner take the chronological approach in prose, which gives them the opportunity to describe the fluctuations and evolutions of these genres. Lubbock and Ewen present the shows in alphabetical order, followed by biographies of their composers. This is a good way to present specific information in a thematic sense but misses the opportunity to give historical context to the descriptions.

Two scholars who have started looking more critically at the musical theater genre are John Kenrick and Ethan Mordden. Both Mordden's *Anything Goes: A History of American Musical Theatre* and Kenrick's *Musical Theatre: A History* have been published in the last 10 years and so take a much more critical look at the beginning genres in musical theater, including the types of early musical comedies discussed in this paper. Both begin with *The Beggar's Opera*, and though Mordden focuses on the American evolution of musical theater, both his and

Kenrick's works give the modern scholar's perspective on how the early genres developed into the Broadway of today.

In Chapter 2, this paper begins with the historical context of musical theater in this period. The precursors to musical comedy, Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and English burlesque are introduced. This is followed by a thorough background of the well-known producer, George Edwardes, who is seen as the pioneer of the musical comedy genre. Then in Chapter 3 a look at each composer and their major compositions. First, a look at Ivan Caryll, his life, work at the Gaiety Theater with Edwardes, and his emigration to the U.S. and the compositions he completed there. This paper also focuses on his many collaborations and gives information on those composers and their backgrounds. Following Caryll is biographical information on Sidney Jones, his life, his work with George Edwardes at Daly's Theater, and the compositions he completed after leaving the music director position. These are the most exhaustive biographies and collections of information on either of these composers. Though they are mentioned by most of the scholarship in this area, the information collected here is the sure to contribute to other scholars wishing to delve into the lesser known composers in this period.

In the fourth chapter this paper discusses the plots and backgrounds of the two shows selected from the Tams-Witmark collection. First, a look at the musical comedy *San Toy*, composed by Sidney Jones. Then there is a description of the materials available in the archive, which includes promptbooks, piano-vocal scores, orchestral parts, full scores, stage managers' guides, libretti and dialogue parts, and production material such as scenery, lighting, and costume plots. The annotations and notes from these materials offer a glimpse into the production values of nineteenth- and twentieth-century opera in the United States. Then the plot of Caryll's *The Girl from Kays* is examined, followed by a look at the materials available from

the show in the Tams-Witmark collection. The materials from the collection are used to display the flexible nature of this genre, where songs were often not tied to the dramatic progression of the plot. The use of these materials by touring companies in actual performances gives the opportunity to reconstruct the order of the musical numbers and gives evidence of the types of songs that were often interpolated in these productions.

## Chapter 2 – English Musical Comedy: The Theaters and Managers

Before the musical comedy, pioneered by producer George Edwardes at his theaters, The Gaiety and Daly's, the dominant force in musical theater in the last third of the nineteenth century were the operettas written by W.S. Sullivan with music by Arthur Gilbert. These operettas show some influence by the English burlesque that was popular at the Gaiety before musical comedy and had success in America beginning in the 1860s with Lydia Thompson's tour.<sup>12</sup> English burlesque can be described as an extension of pantomime that was appealing to a relatively educated and sophisticated audience. The music was often secondary to the dialogue and consisted of arrangements of popular songs and incidental music. Operatic burlesques appropriated numbers from a serious opera model and added new words and humorous touches. Additional numbers were interpolated from music hall or minstrel songs.<sup>13</sup> Gilbert and Sullivan were writing operettas at the end of the burlesque era, but their works demanded more serious singing skills. Burlesque performers were often not formally trained but came out of music hall and other popular forms. While they could often sing quite nicely, they lacked the skills to perform opera or even most operetta. Burlesque performers did sometimes transition into supporting roles in Gilbert and Sullivan productions.

The two met sometime in 1869; Gilbert was a busy dramatist, critic, and cartoonist, and Sullivan was recognized as England's leading young composer.<sup>14</sup> They went on to produce fourteen comic operas or operettas between 1871 and 1896. Gilbert and Sullivan introduced

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Clyde Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*, Cultural studies of the United States (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 28.

<sup>13</sup> Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, "English Theatrical Burlesque," *Grove Music Online*, accessed May 2, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000004381>.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Lamb, "Gilbert and Sullivan and the Gaiety," *The Musical Times* 112, no. 1546 (1971): 1163.

innovations in content and form where fanciful worlds combined with memorable melodies convey both humor and pathos. They employed a serious kind of parody, often satirizing gender roles and behaviors, governmental activity, prior genres, and other social norms.<sup>15</sup> Gilbert described his revolution against the usual operetta of the time at a speech in 1906,

We set out with the determination to prove that our plots, however ridiculous, should be coherent, that our dialogue should be void of offence; on artistic principles, no man should play a women's part and no woman a man's. Finally, we agreed that no lady of the company should be required to wear a dress that she could not wear to with absolute propriety to a private fancy ball.<sup>16</sup>

These new ideals for operetta were in response to burlesque and pantomime elements used at this time, which included “the ‘principal boy’ played by a girl, the low comedian, and the shower of puns,” along with brief and revealing costumes.<sup>17</sup> Gilbert and Sullivan’s works suggested to a new audience that humor and satire could also be respectable and attract a respectable audience, including women.

## **2.1 George Edwardes**

George Edwardes began his career as an acting manager on a touring company performing *The Lady of Lyons*. Most performances on this tour were in small provincial theaters with bad living conditions, but Edwardes’ natural affection for people and sense of humor came out to save the show when some audiences demanded their money back. He was promoted due to his success to box office manager at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin where Michael Gunn had resolved to found a school of English comic opera due to the success of Gilbert and Sullivan’s second collaboration, *Trial by Jury*. Gunn sent Edwardes to see Robert D’Oyly Carte, Gilbert

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Schwab, “Why Gilbert and Sullivan Still Matter: Gender, Genre, Parody,” *Rutgers University, School of Arts and Sciences*, accessed May 2, 2018, <http://sas.rutgers.edu/20-publications/1257-why-gilbert-and-sullivan-still-matter-gender-genre-parody>.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Traubner, *Operetta: A Theatrical History*. (Garden City, New York: Double Day, 1983), 155.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

and Sullivan's manager, at the Opera Comique. After impressing Carte, he was made box office manager of the London Theatre.<sup>18</sup>

In May of 1878, Carte helped Gilbert and Sullivan open *HMS Pinafore*, a show which poked fun at the Royal Navy without vulgarity. It had a successful opening but did not hold its popularity for long, though Sullivan pumped it back into fashion by playing a selection from the show at the Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden. By August, Pinafore-mania had touring companies performing it all over the country, though many were pirated versions, especially those that made it to New York. George Edwardes took over more responsibility when Carte took a company over to New York to perform *Pinafore*, though Gilbert, always the contrarian, disliked some of Edwardes's methods.

The Gaiety Theater opened in 1868. The original owner was John Hollingshead who put on years of French operetta, comic drama, and burlesque extravaganza in the space. To place his theater above the competition he put an electric light on the roof as a publicity stunt, which helped in 1869 to put The Gaiety on the map, along with multiple visits by the Prince of Wales. The same year Hollingshead put in the Gaiety Restaurant, which was popular for people coming to the West End to see plays or operas. The Gaiety hosted the first collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan, which was titled *Thespis, or The Gods Grow Old*. The main performing attractions were J.L. Toole and Nellie Farren, who was married to the stage manager Robert Soutar (Farren is pictured in Figure 1).

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<sup>18</sup> Alan Hyman, *The Gaiety Years* (London: Cassell, 1975), 25.



Figure 1. Nellie Farren, carte de visite by Fradelle & Marshall, London, ca. 1870s, personal collection of Gillian M. Rodger

This was not a successful start for the soon to be famous collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan as the comic opera was too subtle for the audience and too difficult for the cast. All that remains of it today is the published libretto and two musical numbers, the second, “Climbing Over Rocky Mountain,” was repurposed for *The Pirates of Penzance*.<sup>19</sup> What was the most successful for the Gaiety audience were burlesques built around Nellie Farren or those featuring Edward Terry, Katie Vaughan, and Edward Royce who all joined with Farren to form the Gaiety

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<sup>19</sup> Lamb, “Gilbert and Sullivan and the Gaiety,” 1164.

Quartet. However, the burlesque genre became outdated by Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*.

Edwardes met Hollingshead at the Gaiety Restaurant and they became friends. Gilbert and Sullivan continued producing hits like *Pirates of Penzance*, and *Patience, or Burnthorne's Bride*, which Carte transferred to the Savoy and bought out with Gilbert and Sullivan as his partners. Edwardes became acting manager at the Savoy and was then offered a partnership of the Gaiety Theater by the ailing Hollingshead.<sup>20</sup> The new producer wanted to widen the audience at the Gaiety, which women refused to attend, so he wanted to put on a light sentimental opera, *Dorothy*, though due to poor casting, he had to sell the work. But he managed to scrape together the money to buy Hollingshead out of his share of the theater. He put on a successful burlesque, *Monte Cristo Junior*, which even toured to Australia and the U.S., with Nellie Farren and Fred Leslie headlining. However, these two crowd favorites were soon forced to retire. Edwardes tried to put up more burlesques, but they were never the same, so he moved on to musical comedy.

Hyman describes musical comedy as having catchy pieces and melodious music "with a light hearted and inconsequential plot, strung together with the object of keeping the audience amused between song and dance numbers and designed to give the comedians scope for putting in their individual gags."<sup>21</sup> The music was most often popular music with some concerted music in the choruses, finales, and an occasional trio or quartet that sometimes felt like opera. The songs were the main feature of the score. They were often slotted into the plot but the second act, like in variety musicals, was often a group of little numbers that had no reference to the rest of the storyline. The musical comedy was pioneered by George Edwardes at the Gaiety Theater in

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<sup>20</sup> Hyman, *The Gaiety Years*, 32.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

London and “were a mixture of ‘opera-bouffe,’ Gilbert and Sullivan, and the Gaiety burlesque. They had a slight romantic plot... There were colorful scenes, plenty of song-and-dance numbers and, most important of all—a chorus of gorgeous girls.”<sup>22</sup> Gilbert and Sullivan had a disagreement on paying for carpets for their office and vowed never to collaborate again, leading their manager Carte to fall back on revivals, which made Edwardes “the leading impresario of musical plays.”<sup>23</sup> Gilbert and Sullivan’s comic operas stand alone due to their libretti and music being so integrated, with every number contributing to the development of the story. The light operettas produced by Edwardes and other managers like Robert Courtneidge and Frank Curzan were “not as pure as the Savoy operas with comedians allowed to gag instead of sticking to the script and additional numbers being added with no bearing on the piece—scores by Sidney Jones, Lionel Monckton, Paul Rubens, and others rose to the standards of operetta.”<sup>24</sup>

One of Edwardes’s first successful musical comedies was *The Shop Girl* with score by Ivan Caryll, who became the mainstay of the genre and will be discussed further in the following section. There were additional numbers by Lionel Monckton and the book was written by an American journalist, H.J. Dam. *The Shop Girl* was presented in 1894 and received as a triumph that broke all records at The Gaiety. The principal actors were Ada Reeve, a singing upstart from the music halls who played the shop girl; Seymour Hicks, a light comedian; and Teddy Payne, a low comedian with a lisp who “excelled in song and dance numbers and grotesque impersonations... When the curtain rose on *The Shop Girl* on November 1, 1894... The Gaiety was packed to the rafters with an audience which had come to see a colourful show, to admire

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<sup>22</sup> Alan Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914* (London: Chappell, 1978), xiii.

<sup>23</sup> Hyman, *The Gaiety Years*, 68.

<sup>24</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, xiii.

the Gaiety girls and to laugh at the antics of Teddy Payne as a fantastic shopwalker.”<sup>25</sup> It was sent to America in 1895 but had to close soon after. Edwardes also presented musical comedies at Daly’s Theater, which will be discussed further in section 1.3

At the turn of the century, the old Gaiety Theater was slated for demolition once the *Toreador*, a popular work that centered on adventures on the Spanish border, began its highly successful tour to the U.S. in 1903. Ivan Caryll directed the orchestra at the opening of the new Gaiety, which was attended by King Edward and Queen Alexandra. The opening was a performance of *The Orchid* by Caryll, Monckton and Paul Rubens, which successfully ran until 1905. The composing pair worked with James T. Tanner on *Our Miss Gibbs* which centered around Garrods department store (meant to parody Harrods) and the second book writer was credited to ‘Cryptos,’ which was a nom-de-plume for Edwardes, or as many came to call him, The Guv’nor. The Guv'nor celebrated his 25th year at the Gaiety in 1911, shortly after purchasing the Adelphi Theater, at which he intended to solely stage his musical plays. However, the public’s taste in entertainment was changing and his musical plays had lost their appeal:

The Gaiety type of musical comedy which had attracted huge audiences since *The Gaiety Girl* and *The Shop Girl* had become old-fashioned, while the craze for waltz time, which was the secret of *The Merry Widow*’s appeal, was on its way out. A new type of music known as ragtime, and later jazz, had originated in the U.S. and been popularized by Scott Joplin, a negro musician, with numbers like ‘The Maple Street Rag.’ The infectious jazz rhythm had already conquered the dance halls of America; Tin Pan Alley had vulgarized it and made it the nation’s most popular music.<sup>26</sup>

Jazz was about to invade Britain and Edwardes also faced strong competition from revues as well as a new form of entertainment first called Bioscope in America, then motion pictures, and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>26</sup> Hyman, *The Gaiety Years*, 191.

in Britain then the cinematograph. By the end of the century nearly every music hall in the country exhibited cinematograph shows.

Edwardes struggled to adjust and keep up with 3 theaters, his racing gambling hobbies, and the times, but his wife Julia was also a big spender and he had to slow down his managing style after a stroke in 1912. These revues which became more popular sprang from the musical halls; they discarded all semblance of a plot and consisted of brief sketches and solo tunes loosely linked together around a central theme. Edwardes died in 1915 but should be remembered as the man who established the musical comedy and deserves full credit for playing a part in raising standards of the actors and actresses in musical plays—particularly the chorus girls and small-part artists.<sup>27</sup> His human touch is what made him the best-loved theater manager of his day.<sup>28</sup> His musical comedies were even used as inspiration for films made around 1950 such as *Gaiety George* and *Trottie True* which “present the Edwardian musical comedy as both a break from previous Victorian forms, and as the initiation of a tradition which extends well into the mid-twentieth century. These two examples place the Edwardian Gaiety Theater at the center of their narrative, offering audiences nostalgic recreations of an Edwardian theatrical culture, which would still have been within living memory if the time of their release.”<sup>29</sup> Lawrence

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Postlewait, “George Edwardes and Musical Comedy: The Transformation of London Theatre and Society, 1878-1914,” in *The Performing Century: Nineteenth-Century Theatre’s History*, ed. Tracy C. Davis and Peter Holland, Redefining British theatre history (Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 94. It is important to note that some authors do not see Edwardes as the father of musical comedy, instead they see him as an investor who helped turn the entertainment world of the musical hall into a capital venture for his own profit, including profits from the exploitation of his dancers and prostitutes at the Empire Theatre of Varieties, where he was also manager. Joel Kaplan sees Edwardes’ *The Shop Girl* as the quintessential theatrical embodiment of the modern consumer society. The Edwardes musical, but exploiting the figure of the liberated woman while yet presenting her as a ‘girl’, achieved the ‘commodification’ of sexual identity.

<sup>28</sup> Hyman, *The Gaiety Years*, 221.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Napper, “British Gaiety: Musical Cinema and the Theatrical Tradition in British Film,” in *The Sound of Musicals* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 31.

Napper mentions that the Gaiety Theater influenced the theatrical model in carving out new spaces of leisure in the city. The musical comedy and popular theater in general created a space for a new kind of social process for expressing the conditions of urban life, both on and off-stage. It signaled a change in the idea of modernity and acceptance of popular entertainment by the urban middle class, which had a cultural change between the 1880s and 1920s.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Postlewait, "George Edwardes and Musical Comedy: The Transformation of London Theatre and Society, 1878-1914," 96.

## Chapter 3 – Musical Comedy Composers: Ivan Caryll & Sidney Jones

### 3.1 Ivan Caryll

Ivan Caryll was born Felix Tilkinor Tilken in 1861 in Liège Belgium. He moved to Paris before settling in London where, between 1886 and 1908, he composed a series of popular operettas.<sup>31</sup> For part of the 1890s he was married to Geraldine Ulmar, who was one of the favorites of the Bostonians (formerly the Old Boston Ideals theater), and also performed many Gilbert and Sullivan soprano roles with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.<sup>32</sup> Caryll relocated to the United States in 1910 and continued to compose, though he did not achieve major success alone. He wrote scores and collaborated with fellow composers and librettists such as Lionel Monckton, Owen Hall, Anne Caldwell, and C.M.S. McClellan.

When Caryll moved to London he began his musical career giving lessons to women in the suburbs, but after he sold some numbers to Edwardes he was put under contract and conducted the Gaiety's orchestra. He would watch the artists singing like a hawk and a great force radiated from him when he was conducting big concert numbers and finales. He lived like a prince and "established himself as the best conductor of light music in England... Whenever Caryll felt in a creative mood, he sat down and composed in a fever of activity until he had completed the work; his scores were noted for big swirling waltzes and semi-operatic finales. Caryll prided himself on being one of the best dressed men in town; he was most extravagant and spent money as soon as he earned it."<sup>33</sup> His shows following *The Shop Girl* at The Gaiety

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<sup>31</sup> Gerald Bordman and Thomas S. Hischak, *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 114.

<sup>32</sup> "M'LELLAN AND CARYLL.: Author and Composer of 'The Pink Lady' Have Had Interesting Careers.," *The Washington Post* (1877-1922); *Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C., United States, December 15, 1912), sec. MAGAZINE SECTION THEATRICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, SM3.

<sup>33</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 119.

followed the framework of plot which allowed its characters, scenic, and costume artists to take the audience to some unlikely and picturesque places. *The Circus Girl* was an 1896 collaboration with composer Lionel Monckton with a book by house librettist James P. Tanner that took place in the gaieties of Paris, its artists' ball, and a circus ring. He worked with Monckton again on *A Runaway Girl* with a book by Seymour Hicks and Harry Nichols in which the characters chased around southern Europe with an emphasis on Corsica and its bandits and modern-day Venice.<sup>34</sup>

Lionel Monckton was very different in personality from Caryl; he was an eccentric who would stand outside The Gaiety with a checking meter to record the number of people going up to the gallery and would check the numbers with those going into the pit. He was a meticulous artist who polished his numbers many times before he was satisfied with them.<sup>35</sup> From a legal family, he spent part of his career as a barrister and a drama critic for the *Daily Telegraph* before his song contributions started becoming popular in the mid-1890s. Monckton's songs were often the most popular for audiences even though the majority of the score was not his. But he did compose the major percentage of *A Country Girl*, *The Cingalee*, *Our Miss Gibbs*, *The Arcadians*, and *The Quaker Girl*. The "refinement, the 'Englishness,' and the haunting quality [he] so often achieved with the simplest melodies and most facile harmonies" are the appeal of Monckton's works, as stated by Richard Traubner.<sup>36</sup>

As previously stated, many of the Gaiety's shows toured America, so Ivan Caryl had kept a channel of communication open with Britain by sending over one or two musical comedies each year. Cecil Smith states that many thought of either Caryl or Monckton as

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<sup>34</sup> Gänzl, *The Musical*, 108.

<sup>35</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 121.

<sup>36</sup> Traubner, *Operetta*, 207.

Sullivan's successor "not to say that Caryll's musical ideas were a tenth as good as Sullivan's... Since he worked with a variety of librettists, most of whom were largely devoid of humor, he never had an opportunity to show what he might have been able to achieve with the stimulus of so inspired an author and lyricist as W.S. Gilbert."<sup>37</sup> Caryll began his training in his native Liège where he studied with the celebrated violinist Eugène Ysaÿe and later in Paris with Camille Saint-Saëns. He commuted across the Atlantic to help prepare his musical comedies. While in New York to see a production of *The Follies of 1910*, a New York Times article described Caryll as giving:

the impression of the accomplished boulevardier, man of the world and of affairs, rather than of the type generally supposed to be representative of the musical genius. He is punctilious in his attire, has the manner of one who has mixed freely with people of class and distinction, and who has been, nevertheless, sufficiently democratic in his associations to be at ease under almost any and all conditions. Although for many years identified with the English theatre, there is more of the manner of the Frenchman or the Russian than the Anglo-Saxon about him. When he talks it is spiritedly, and he enforces his idea with an occasional gesture for emphasis, with clarity and directness and a sureness of speech and leave no doubt as to the thought he is trying to convey.<sup>38</sup>

His next success was *The Gay Parisienne*, which was renamed *The Girl from Paris*. This was a part of his series of 'girl' musicals, which began as a superstition from Edwardes due to the success of *The Shop Girl* and *The Gaiety Girl*. The next in the series of collaborations with Monckton were *The Circus Girl*, *A Runaway Girl*, and *A Girl from Kay's* with a book by Owen Hall that was inspired by a French play. The 1903 hit was their biggest of the decade and abandoned the typical Gaiety texture for the low comedy of Sam Bernard and Hattie Williams, who attracted more of a popular audience who would not normally attend better-bred English

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<sup>37</sup> Cecil Michener Smith, *Musical Comedy in America* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1950), 131.

<sup>38</sup> "“AMERICAN CHORUS GIRLS BETTER THAN ENGLISH ONES’: So Says Ivan Caryll the Well-Known London Composer and Musical Director -- He Ought to Know.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, July 10, 1910), SM4.

works.<sup>39</sup> The music was also different, with Caryll composing a set of numbers that were made in the French vaudeville style and almost all related to the plot. *The Girl from Kay's* even had a “lengthy road life, not just one but two locally made musequels, and a full-scale remake” and will be discussed further in chapter 4.<sup>40</sup>

Caryll settled in the U.S. in 1911, four years before the war, and was well established as a top Broadway composer of musical plays. He had left Britain partly because he was jealous of Lionel Monckton for always writing the hit songs in their musical comedies. He teamed up with librettist C.M.S. McClellan and to produce a series of top-notch musical comedies based on up-to-date Parisian farce. McClellan was originally a newspaperman in New York and collaborated with Gustave Kerker on *The Belle of New York*, the first American musical show to score a hit in London. They reworked Marcel Guillemaud and Georges Berr's comedy *Le Satyre* and turned it into *The Pink Lady* which featured Caryll's sparkling score of bright-hearted music that he excelled at. McClellan also worked the text into a network of comical and comical-romantic plotting, with the original gaiety never sacrificed. The New York Times described *The Pink Lady* as “not a musical comedy of either the English or the American brand. Its fun is developed logically out of its situations, and so are its songs....[Caryll] has written music which has a breezy swing, and much of it is musicianly.”<sup>41</sup> When interviewed about the American lyric style, Caryll stated that “American popular music overdoes ragtime, although in proper amount,

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<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Musical Comedy in America*, 132.

<sup>40</sup> Gänzl, *The Musical*, 133.

<sup>41</sup> “THE PINK LADY’ GAY AND AMUSING: Its Full Is Developed Logically Out of Its Situations and So Are Its Songs. THE LYRICS ARE BRIGHT Much of Mr. Caryll’s Music Has a Breezy Swing -- Some of Cast Very Good, and the Staging Masterly.” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, March 14, 1911), 11.

syncopation is a legitimate device. This country, however, does not lack composers of merit.”<sup>42</sup>

His later works include *The Little Café* and *Oh, Oh Delphine* and he sometimes collaborated with the celebrated British team of P.G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton. Wodehouse nicknamed him Fabulous Felix, from his real name, Felix Tilkins, but he had become more of a peacock than ever; he had residences on Long Island and Paris, as well as a villa at Deauville overlooking the racecourse. He had five children with his second wife Maud Hill, the Gaiety actress, and had a bathroom for each of them in his Deauville villa. He often handled Broadway managers with skill, conning them with his “magnificent beard” and getting them to pay enormous royalty fees for French authors, though the real Frenchmen sold rights to Caryl for only a few francs. He continued extravagant spending and had one more success in London, *The Kiss Call*, before his death in 1921 due to cancer.<sup>43</sup> He had suffered a severe hemorrhage while rehearsing *Little Miss Raffles*, his latest “‘comedy with music,’ as he liked to term his works, [which] was to have its first performance in New Haven” right before his death.<sup>44</sup> There was a requiem mass performed in his honor at St. Patrick’s Cathedral by a quartet of his former company artists.

Ivan Caryl was one of many composers of musical plays active around the turn of the century. He stands out from his peers largely due to his position at the Gaiety Theater in London and his collaboration with its owner, George Edwardes. They cemented the genre of the musical comedy and Caryl successfully brought the genre from England to America, where he continued to compose relevant and entertaining music for ‘comedy with music,’ musical comedies, or

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<sup>42</sup> Gerald Martin Bordman, *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 308.

<sup>43</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 205.

<sup>44</sup> “IVAN CARYLL DIES AS HE FINISHES PLAY: Noted Composer Stricken With Hemorrhage at Rehearsal of ‘Little Miss Raffles.’ BLOOD TRANSFUSION FAILS Author of ‘The Pink Lady’ and ‘Oh! Oh! Delphine,’ Was Prolific Writer of Musical Comedies.,” *New York Times* (New York, N.Y., United States, November 30, 1921), 14.

operetta as the works would now be termed. Perhaps due to his training in multiple countries and his outgoing personality, Caryll maintained his momentum and continued collaborating and producing new hits up until his sudden death.

### 3.2 Sidney Jones

Sidney Jones worked in the same period as Ivan Caryll and was music director for Daly's Theater. He wrote in the same genre, though slightly different manner for the audiences' tastes at Daly's. Jones, like Franz Lehár, was the son of a bandmaster and followed in his father's footsteps before becoming a theater conductor and composer. Jones was born in Islington in 1861 and after his father left the army, he settled his family of 8 in Leeds. Sydney assisted him at the Grand Theater and Harrogate Municipal Orchestra, playing clarinet in the orchestra before taking to conducting.<sup>45</sup> Jones had the look of a medium height businessman with a small moustache. He fell in love in Leeds with Hannah Mary Linley, who was a chorus girl, and they married. The band members often teased him for looking up at her and getting distracted from the music. He was a devoted husband, spending most of his time at home, and would always ask his wife her opinions of new compositions.<sup>46</sup>

During his early twenties Jones toured with an American variety show as the conductor, most likely *Fun on the Bristol*, which combined characters from variety and minstrelsy along with English Music Hall and operetta musical numbers.<sup>47</sup> He was also the musical director for

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<sup>45</sup> Andrew Lamb, "Jones, (James) Sidney," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed January 29, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000014466>.

<sup>46</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 132.

<sup>47</sup> Gillian M. Rodger, "Fun on the Bristol: Musical Comedy or Musical Oddity?" (presented at the Society for American Music Conference, Boston, Massachusetts, 2016).

the touring Vokes family (see Fig. 2 & 3) where he had the opportunity to compose incidental music and songs for their farce *In Camp*.



Figure 2. Vokes Family, cabinet card by Elliott & Fry, London, ca. 1870s, personal collection of Gillian M. Rodger (Right)

Figure 3. Vokes Sisters, carte de visite by anonymous photographer (probably Sarony, New York), ca. 1870s, personal collection of Gillian M. Rodger (Left)

Jones toured Britain as music director of the comic opera *Vetah* and then conducted Henry Leslie's touring productions of *Dorothy* and *Doris*. His first work for George Edwardes came after the producer spotted Jones conducting in the provinces. Jones was the music director for the

Gaiety Theatre Company's tour to America and Australia. While working for the Gaiety Company he conducted, composed additional dance music, and composed his first operetta in 1892. These early jobs allowed Jones to become familiar with the music of Alfred Cellier and Wilhelm Meyer-Lutz as well as popular songs featured in variety shows.<sup>48</sup>

Edwardes asked Jones to write some numbers for the Gaiety burlesque, *Don Juan*. That song, "Linger Longer Lou" became very popular and its sales ran into the millions.<sup>49</sup> His first commission while conducting at the Prince of Wales theater was supplying the music for *A Gaiety Girl*. The book was written by the bohemian Jewish lawyer, dangerous drama critic of the *Sporting Times*, and outrageous man-about-town, Jimmy Davis, who went by the pen name Owen Hall, "who [had] amassed tremendous debt, hence his nom-de-plume, 'Owin' 'all.'" <sup>50</sup> Hall had met Edwardes on a train and told him he could write a better musical than *In Town* with one hand tied behind his back. *In Town* was one of Edwardes's first forays away from burlesque at the Gaiety Theatre and attracted audiences with modern character types, recognizable modern dialogue, fashionable clothes, and modern-day London setting.

*A Gaiety Girl* was well received at the Prince of Wales, premiering on October 14, 1893, and transferred to the theatre built by Edwardes in Leicester Square on a time-share agreement with Augustin Daly, a New York impresario, called Daly's Theatre.<sup>51</sup> The theatre had been built in the Italian Renaissance style with a red, gold, silver, and bronze décor. The auditorium was

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<sup>48</sup> Celia Durk, "Sidney Jones (1861–1946)," *CHOMBEC news*, no. 9 (2010): 9, file:///Users/victoriapeters/Downloads/chombec-news-9.pdf

<sup>49</sup> W. (Walter) Macqueen-Pope, *Shirtfronts and Sables; a Story of the Days When Money Could Be Spent*. (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1953), 154.

<sup>50</sup> William A. Everett, "Imagining the Identities of East Asia in 1890s British Music Theatre: The Case of Sidney Jones's *The Geisha* (1896)," in *Franjo Ksaver Kuhač (1834–1911): Music Historiography and Identity*, Muzikološki zbornici 16 (Zagreb, Croatia: Hrvatsko Muzikološko Društvo, 2013), 301.

<sup>51</sup> Traubner, *Operetta*, 200.

constructed in the cantilever principle and the boxes were adorned with sea-nymphs, bubble blowing Cupids and electric lights of every color in the rainbow.<sup>52</sup> The story of *A Gaiety Girl* was tighter and more complex than the loosely structured *In Town*, but still allowed for specialties, interpolations, and alterations. The characters were allowed some depth and the dialogue was written in a clear and insightful style with no attempts at word play or obvious popular references, “Owen Hall had written neither a burlesque libretto nor a comic opera book but a light dramatic play which more than justified his boast to Edwardes.”<sup>53</sup> The plot surrounded a group of chorus girls from the Gaiety wishing to break into high society, who are shunned at a party until they agree to perform. A young officer falls in love with one of the girls and has to help clear her name in an accused theft by her rival, a society girl. The story contained almost all the elements that would characterize the stage musical in the coming decades: robbery, social class divisions, mistaken identity, transfer to a beach resort in France in the second act, followed by a finale where lovers are reunited, the villain unmasked, imposters shown up, and all the best songs sung again.

The show also established the notion that a mobile team of singer-dancers, in this case the Gaiety Girls, attached to one theatre and one management.<sup>54</sup> Edwardes took every opportunity to put The Girls onstage, each time dressed in new and more ravishing costumes. These were not the chorus girls of other genres; the Gaiety Girls were not first or foremost actresses or singer, though some got promoted eventually. Their chorus dances were dainty stepping affairs rather than “the energetic leg-flinging of the opera-bouffe girls, the bone fide ballet...of the Alhambra’s

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<sup>52</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 126.

<sup>53</sup> Kurt Gänzl, *The British Musical Theatre*, vol. I (1865-1914) (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 477.

<sup>54</sup> Sheridan Morley, *Spread a Little Happiness: The First Hundred Years of the British Musical* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987), 20.

soloists, or the acrobatics of the specialist comedy dancers who had long been a feature of both theater and music-hall in England.”<sup>55</sup> Andrew Lamb writes about Jones: “his works as a whole contain admirably crafted ensembles and concerted finales, offsetting the music-hall-style numbers that the taste of the time demanded.”<sup>56</sup> *A Gaiety Girl* has been described as the first musical comedy; “it employed popular music, modern witty lyrics with romantic ballads and well-written ensembles in the style of the lighter, more classic theatre of [Arthur] Sullivan and Cellier.”<sup>57</sup> It combined the appeal of farce comedy with the integrity of comic opera; the songs had a real relationship to the plot and the audience could identify more with the characters and situations than in comic opera. The production started a successful series of five shows that played at Daly’s before touring throughout Europe and other English-speaking countries such as Australia. Edwardes, the producer; Jones, the composer; Hall, the librettist; and Harry Greenbank, the lyricist, formed one of the most significant creative teams in musical theatre that came out of 1890s Britain, even outshining the Gaiety musicals on the international stage.<sup>58</sup>

Jones’s next show for Edwardes was *An Artist’s Model* in 1895. It had a style similar to *A Gaiety Girl* and Ivan Caryll’s *The Shop Girl*. Gervase Hughes states that these first two shows written by Jones showed “few signs of immaturity. The melodies were attractive, the workmanship consistently economical (reminding one of [Charles] Lecocq) and at times expert; passages which might have otherwise sounded trivial were often given added interest by unexpected vocal entries in canon, delicate orchestral figuration or other such tricks of the

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<sup>55</sup> Gänzl, *The Musical*, 108.

<sup>56</sup> Lamb, “Jones, (James) Sidney.”

<sup>57</sup> Durk, “Sidney Jones (1861–1946),” 9.

<sup>58</sup> Everett, “Imagining the Identities of East Asia in 1890s British Music Theatre,” 301.

trade.”<sup>59</sup> The production started out with the title *The Naughty Girl*, but then Marie Tempest, who had done so well in *A Gaiety Girl*, became available for the project. Edwardes decided to transfer the original leading lady, American Marie Halton, to the Gaiety’s production of *The Shop Girl*, and instead craft the character of a former artists muse for Tempest’s superior voice. It had the fairly novel plot of a merry widow who reunited with the artist from her younger days, a combination of a light ‘Gaiety-weight’ plot with a more romantic flair. Tempest was teamed with Hayden Coffin, a handsome baritone, and Letty Lind, a dancing soubrette famous for her skirt-dancing. They were given lushly romantic music by Jones and were supported by a group of comedians, featuring Huntley Wright. It was advertised as a ‘comedy with music’ rather than a musical comedy. This distinction did not make much sense to critics or audiences, who were expecting a musical, which was the new popular genre was being pushed up the intellectual ladder. Edwardes, looking to please audiences, simplified the storyline with drastic cutting and rewriting, and *An Artist’s Model* ran for a healthy 400 performances and won favor in the United States on tour.<sup>60</sup> The following is a promotional photograph from the show:

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<sup>59</sup> Gervase Hughes, *Composers of Operetta* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pr. Publ., 1977), 213.

<sup>60</sup> Morley, *Spread a Little Happiness*, 21.



Figure 4. “*An Artist’s Model*,” cabinet card by Sarony, New York, ca. 1880s, personal collection of Gillian M. Rodger.

The team’s third success together was *The Geisha*. This was inspired by Gilbert and Sullivan’s success with *The Mikado* and its second revival at the Savoy started a profusion of composers and writers looking too far off countries for inspiration.<sup>61</sup> The libretto written by Hall

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<sup>61</sup> Everett, “Imagining the Identities of East Asia in 1890s British Music Theatre,” 303. It is important to note that the Japan of *The Geisha* is very different from what is depicted in *The Mikado* of 1885. This is a result of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), which ended a year before the premiere of *The Geisha*. The war changed political relations in East Asia as well as between Japan, China, and European powers. Japan was seen as a modern military powerhouse while China was seen as weak when they gave up Korea and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan, though the Peninsula was returned after the ‘Triple Intervention,’ post-war by Russia, France, and Germany. Jones musical portrayal of characters from China and Japan exhibit the close relations between Britain and Japan, and strained relations between Britain and China. The Japanese characters sing in the style of the Savoy Operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, a more middle class respectable style. The Chinese characters sing in the raucous music hall style of the less sophisticated lower classes.

was crafted to feature Tempest, Lind, and Coffin equally and Jones provided some of his best soprano music, balladry, flirtatious duets, and jaunty comedic pieces for the stars. The plot featured a beautiful Geisha, a dapper Naval officer, a Japanese Marquis, a wily French fortune hunter, and an aristocratic English girl disguised as a Geisha in a tea house. Edwardes hired Arthur Dóisy from the Japanese Legation to supervise the settings and costumes and ensure their authenticity, following in the footsteps of Gilbert, who had insisted that everything Japanese in *The Mikado* be accurate.<sup>62</sup> *The Geisha* saw a London run even longer than *The Mikado*, had an equally successful transfer to Daly's in New York, and theaters around the world put on performances translated into many different languages. James T. Powers was the leading comedian in English importation musical comedies to the United States, including Jones' *The Geisha* and *San Toy*.<sup>63</sup> The book and lyrics "serve as a model of the period: increased romantic interest, generally of some potentially tragic or hopeless character, plus an increased reliance on the catch-phrase comic song, generally (painfully) of the most insipid type."<sup>64</sup> An aspect of these 'orientalist' projects that needs to be mentioned is the lack of political correctness in a modern sense of the phrase. Richard Traubner states that we need to forget political correctness when listening to *The Geisha*,

The work smacks of stuffy late-Victorian colonialism, and is suffused with attitudes and lyrics that could cause Asian associations to riot today. The main comedy part is a Chinese laundryman/teahouse manager saying "wellee" instead of "very"--the sort of thing that presumably caused great mirth from the time of the Boxer Rebellion. The mainly Japanese parts don't bother with pidgin English, but the English characters have no compunction in referring to them in "Jappy, Jap, Jappy" fashion. The plot is closer to *Madama Butterfly* than *The Mikado*, but without the pathos of the former or the comic brilliance of the latter.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 135.

<sup>63</sup> Bordman and Hischak, *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*, 508.

<sup>64</sup> Traubner, *Operetta*, 202

<sup>65</sup> Richard Traubner, "Guide to Records: Jones," *American Record Guide* 62, no. 3 (June 1999): 136.

The less successful musical comedy *A Greek Slave* continued the exotic locale theme in Ancient Rome, though audiences seemed to enjoy kimonos more than togas. The story followed a statue come to life, lover's troubles, and numerous complications of mistaken identity; the show did make an American appearance in 1899. *San Toy* succeeded *A Greek Slave* at Daly's and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Jones suffered from a "retiring and modest nature" and, while he was not one to boast about himself, would argue during auditions with Edwardes if a "particularly pretty and attractive girl did not quite come up to what Jones considered the Daly's musical standard."<sup>66</sup> He was a well-liked, genial conductor who would rarely lose his temper with orchestra members. Jones left Daly's Theatre after *San Toy* due to Edwardes' advocating of interpolated songs. The producer believed it "kept composers from simply writing what was necessary and likewise encouraging them to consistently produce their best work," and oftentimes these borrowed songs, rather than the show's score, became the biggest hits.<sup>67</sup> Jones had mixed success with his following works. They include *The Medal and the Maid*, *A Persian Princess*, *See-See*, *The Girl from Utah*, and *The Happy Day*, the latter two of which were collaborations with Paul Rubens. Rubens, who also collaborated with Monckton and Howard Talbot, was an Oxford educated prolific composer and sometimes lyricist who presented many shows at The Prince of Wales.

Jones's *The King of Cadonia* was a hit and credited as an influence on Ivor Novello, who had a series of successful spectacular shows beginning in 1935.<sup>68</sup> It was presented by Frank

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<sup>66</sup> Macqueen-Pope, *Shirtfronts and Sables; a Story of the Days When Money Could Be Spent*, 156.

<sup>67</sup> Everett, "Imagining the Identities of East Asia in 1890s British Music Theatre," 304.

<sup>68</sup> Durk, "Sidney Jones (1861–1946)," 9.

Curzon at the Prince of Wales in 1908. The lyrics were written by Adrian Ross and the book was by new author, Frederick Lonsdale. The plot follows a monarch who roams around his kingdom in disguise and falls in love with the princess he is supposed to marry on accident.<sup>69</sup> *The Medal and the Maid*, with a plot revolving around complications created when a flower girl and heiress exchange places, using a medallion as a token of recognition, and the comic opera *My Lady Molly*, which had its heroine disguise herself as a man to be near her love interest, were free from his resented interpolations, but they achieved little success. He was proud enough of *My Lady Molly* to revise it later and Lamb states “it especially showed Jones’s substantial abilities in the light-opera tradition of Sullivan, German and Liza Lehmann.”<sup>70</sup> *The Girl from Utah* had a book by James T. Tanner, lyrics by Adrian Ross and Percy Greenbank, and score in collaboration with Paul Rubens. It had a long run in London with the American Ina Claire in the title role. The plot surrounded a girl running away from an objectionable Mormon marriage but is saved by a handsome musical comedy star. The show transferred to the Knickerbocker Theater and the producer hired Jerome Kern to write additional numbers which made the show a smash hit, established Kern as a master of lyrical composition, and set *The Girl from Utah* as one of the milestones in American musical theater history, according to Bordman.<sup>71</sup> Kern’s “They Didn’t Believe Me” established the modern 4/4 ballad over the old-fashioned waltz and set the pattern for musical comedy love songs for about the next fifty years.<sup>72</sup> Jones became conductor at the Empire Theatre in London where he had the opportunity to compose some ballets. However, he

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<sup>69</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 17

<sup>70</sup> Lamb, “Jones, (James) Sidney.”

<sup>71</sup> Gerald Bordman, *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 344.

<sup>72</sup> Bordman and Hischak, *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre*, 264.

retired in 1916 after composing *The Happy Day* due to feeling inadequately able to keep up with audiences' changing tastes and the evolving styles in popular theater. He tried to hang on to the Edwardian waltz tradition while the populace moved on in the jazz-mad twenties. His death went basically unnoticed in 1947 and he has never received full credit for his achievements and positive role in advancing operetta.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Hughes, *Composers of Operetta*, 215.

## Chapter 4 – Musical Comedy Examples from the Tams-Witmark Collection

The Tams-Witmark Collection is housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Mills Music Library. The collection is comprised of 1,600 nineteenth and early twentieth century American musical theater shows. This former performing library gives researchers a great resource to see how an opera, musical comedy, operetta, vaudeville, revue, burlesque, or minstrel show was used by a performing ensemble. These professional and amateur groups would perform the works all over the United States. The items in the collection number 37,000 and include promptbooks, piano-vocal scores, orchestral parts, full scores, stage managers' guides, libretti and dialogue parts, and production material such as scenery, lighting, and costume plots. These items show the cuts, stage directions, English translations, added songs, or other changes made when a group wanted to customize a performance. The changes can be seen in numerous annotations on multiple editions of piano-vocal scores and scripts.<sup>74</sup> These annotations offer a glimpse into the production values of nineteenth- and twentieth-century opera in the United States.

Arthur Tams founded his Music Library in 1885 while stage managing for the Casino Theater. He built the collection through purchasing production libraries like the Conreid Library. Through this purchase he gained control over the German and English royalty operas played by the Conreid and McCaull Opera Companies. He purchased the entire library of one of the most important orchestral library owners, George Henschel and was in contact with an important American operatic tradition as the chorus master of the famed Clara Louise Kellogg Opera Company. By 1923 it was considered the largest circulating music library in the world. A year

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<sup>74</sup> UW Digital Collections, "Tams-Witmark Collection," accessed March 12, 2018, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/TamsWitmark>.

after the founding of his library, the M. Witmark and Sons music publishing house was established. It grew to be one of the major publishing companies in the United States under the direction of Isidore Witmark. The company diversified in 1898 and incorporated as a rental agency and represented luminaries such as Victor Herbert, Sigmond Romberg, and George M Cohan. There was an intense rivalry between Witmark and Tams for thirty years, resulting in legal battles over properties. However, Sargent Aborn, the popular producer who had taken over management of the Tams Library, managed to propose a consolidation and the libraries merged in 1925. In the 1960s the Tams-Witmark donated much of its old inventory to a few libraries around the United States. The Eastman School of Music received orchestrations of vocal excerpts from operas and sacred music. The Library of Congress received nineteenth-century operas and operettas. Westminster Choir College at Rider University received cantatas and oratorios. The University of Wisconsin Mills Music Library received nineteenth- and twentieth-century musical theater. However, the Tams-Witmark firm remains one of America's foremost musical theater licensing companies.<sup>75</sup> The following is a scan of a form present in the collection which would have been used to determine the parts needed by a borrowing company. This speaks to the way different sized ensembles could access these materials, as they could order various numbers of parts, rather than a show being lent as a complete set:

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

**TAMS-WITMARK MUSIC LIBRARY**

DATE RECEIVED .....

DATE SENT .....

ORDERED BY .....

HOW ORDERED .....

Name of Work .....

Composer .....

☐ Vocal Scores  
☐ Ed.  
☐ Chorus Scores  
☐ Prompt Book  
☐ Conductor's Score  
☐ Stage Guide  
☐ Libretti  
☐ Dialogue Parts

☐ S & A  
☐ Tenor  
☐ Bass

} CHORUS PARTS

ORCHESTRA PARTS

STRINGS .....

Send to: .....

Filled By

Per .....

Figure 5. Tams-Witmark Paperwork Example (Tams-Witmark Collection, Box 660A)

**4.1 – *San Toy***

Though Jones worked with Owen Hall for most of his musical comedies at the Daly's, he worked with Edward Morton on the libretto for *San Toy*. Morton (né Eleasa Aaron Moses) was a journalist and critic like Hall and was known as 'Mordred' of *The Referee*. Morton also authored 'Travellers Tales' as well as a one-act play, *Miss Impudence*, that played at Terry's in 1892. Kurt Gänzl states that Jones had to pander to the critic by using his submitted libretto, but that the actors and production team had all but rewritten it by the time rehearsals were done.<sup>76</sup> The lyrics were supplied by Harry Greenbank and Adrian Ross. They are considered the two powerhouse writers for lyrics in the new-style British musical and helped put the profession of lyricist on the

<sup>76</sup> Kurt Gänzl, *Song & Dance: The Complete Story of Stage Musicals* (New York: Smithmark, 1995), 68.

map. Unfortunately, Greenbank died of consumption (which he had contracted as a boy) at age 33, the same year as the premiere of *San Toy*. He was known to have a very modest and retiring nature and avoided public appearances during premieres. But he was popular for his amiability and generosity among his friends.<sup>77</sup> Gänzl states that Greenbank “provided many of the happiest and most popular lyrics of the British musical stage...and he had been instrumental in the development of the Daly’s musical into its high standard of workmanship and popularity, most memorably seen in *The Geisha*”<sup>78</sup> Adrian Ross took over writing the lyrics from Greenbank and *San Toy* premiered in October of 1899. Ross was responsible for the lyrics of most shows at the Gaiety and Daly’s. He was a solemn individual and still had the look of a Cambridge boy with his spectacles.<sup>79</sup>

The plot centers around San Toy, daughter of Yen How, a wealthy Mandarin, who lives in the city of Pynka Pong. She receives a command to enlist in the Emperor’s female guard, although she doesn’t quite fit the physical build. Her father tries to save her from this destiny by dressing her as a boy and calling her his son. She falls in love with Bobbie Preston, son of the British Consul and her English tutor. Bobbie’s sister Poppy is jealously watched by Lieutenant Harry Tucker as Poppy develops a close friendship with San Toy, though disguised as a boy. San Toy’s father arranged for her to marry Fo Hop, a Chinese student, in order to avoid the Emperor’s draft of sons of mandarins to the army. However, San Toy dislikes the unattractive and disagreeable Fo Hop enough to obey the Emperor and go to Peking as a woman and enlist in

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<sup>77</sup> Hyman, *Sullivan and His Satellites: A Study of English Operettas, 1860-1914*, 140.

<sup>78</sup> Gänzl, *The British Musical Theatre*, I (1865-1914):706.

<sup>79</sup> Alan Hyman, *The Gaiety Years* (London: Cassell, 1975), 111. Hyman, *The Gaiety Years*, 111.

“The Emperor’s Own.”<sup>80</sup> Bobbie accompanies her on business for his father, British Consul at Pynka Pong. The angry Fo Hop then reveals how Yen How has been deceiving the Emperor. He is then summoned to Peking, but Yen How sends a courier, Li, to tell the Emperor that he is sending his son San Toy to explain. But San Toy has already presented herself to the Emperor as a girl. Li is arrested due to the untruthful note but escapes with the help of Poppy Preston’s maid Dudley, by dressing as one of the Emperor’s guard. San Toy charms the Emperor, who contemplates making her one of his wives, until her English tastes and habits displease him. Fo Hop renounces his claim on her, and Bobbie Preston then claims her for his own.<sup>81</sup> There are similarities to *The Geisha*, but in many respects, *San Toy* is very different from its predecessor. The opening is surprisingly serious when it shows San Toy’s old nurse deciding against dying alongside her husband on his funeral pyre and seeking sanctuary with the British consul. Following an upbeat opening chorus, the scene could have seemed out of place, but Morton sets a “background of sincerity for the frivolities which were to follow and established the theme of the disparity of Eastern and Western cultures and customs upon which his work, like *The Geisha* was based.”<sup>82</sup>

The previous successful shows from the team at Daly’s starred Marie Tempest, who Jones thought very highly of as a performer and leading lady. Tempest had the best acting talent of the day and a lovely and flexible voice, although her rivals may have had more power. Edwardes had to deal with a rivalry between Tempest and Letty Lind during this period. At the

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<sup>80</sup> Mark Lubbock, *The Complete Book of Light Opera: With an American Section by David Ewen*. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), 647.

<sup>81</sup> John Drinkrow, *The Vintage Musical Comedy Book* (Reading, United Kingdom: Osprey, 1974), 121–122.

<sup>82</sup> Gänzl, *The British Musical Theatre*, I (1865-1914):709.

time of *San Toy*'s premiere, Lind had departed, and Edwardes hired Ada Reeve. Reeve thought very highly of her talents and thought she deserved the role of San Toy over Tempest, but Edwardes did not agree that she could vocally keep up with the role and she was cast as the maid, Dudley. Tempest and Reeve brought much tension to the rehearsals and the posturing between the two prima donnas eventually left Tempest victorious. The show was an immediate success but unfortunately brought about the end of reign of Marie Tempest. She had grown quite the prima donna attitude and often tried to produce the show, upsetting the company, and throwing many tantrums about having to work with comedians who cut up musical plays to suit their own ends. She got in a fight with Edwardes after a few weeks over the length of some Chinese trousers, even cutting them into shorts and strutting out onstage. Edwardes gave her an ultimatum to wear the pants or leave, as *San Toy* was not a pantomime or burlesque, and she chose to try her luck acting in straight plays. Tempest remained a popular comedienne in Britain and the United States until 1930.<sup>83</sup>

Bobby Preston was played by baritone Hayden Coffin, who had played a naval officer in *The Geisha* and Huntly Wright played another comic Chinaman. Rutland Barrington, who had left the Gilbert and Sullivan revivals at the Savoy, played the Chinese mandarin, Yen How, and was complimented for his song "Six Little Wives." Edwardes replaced Tempest with Florence Collingbourne, her understudy, but she quit the stage soon after due to her marriage. Ada Reeve then got the lead role. The premiere was unfortunate due to a storm causing an intense fog, so the auditorium was only half full at the curtain. The fog then started to penetrate the auditorium and the audience couldn't make out half of the stage. But over all these odds the show was well

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<sup>83</sup> Traubner, *Operetta*, 202.

received, even though Joseph Harker's meticulous Chinese settings and costumes couldn't be seen through the fog.

Edwardes had learned his lessons in the music business, one that audiences liked to see how their ticket money was being spent. The running costs of shows at Daly's were around £2,500 a week, much more than any other management around 1900. However, Edwardes knew these shows were designed to last and through the tours around the UK, he could be guaranteed a huge profit. Edwardes was right in his confidence in *San Toy*, which ran eight performances longer than *The Geisha*, setting a new record for 768 performances in just under two years.<sup>84</sup> Like the other successful oriental musical, it had a similarly successful life after Daly's with provincial as well as European tours.

The Tams-Witmark collection at the University of Wisconsin Mills Music Library holds 269 items pertaining to Sidney Jones's *San Toy* in four boxes. The Madison library catalog lists the Tams-Witmark collection by the name of the show. But rather than listing the contents of each box, the summary includes the number of each type of item that corresponds to the particular show. There is some detail listed like the editions of scores, whether the parts are complete, and if there are any special markings. For researchers who want to see a specific piece of the collection, unfortunately there is no way to distinguish between the boxes without looking through them individually. So, this was where my research began; I looked through the folders and packets of each box, making notes what was contained in each. This collection contains vocal scores of various editions, including specifically marked directors and stage managers scores. These would be very worthy of scholarly research in theatrical history or other similar disciplines due to the inserted pages of notes between the pages of notated music that show the

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<sup>84</sup> Morley, *Spread a Little Happiness*, 22.

stage directions for the actors, drawings of the layout of the set, and lists of properties needed, of which the following are examples:

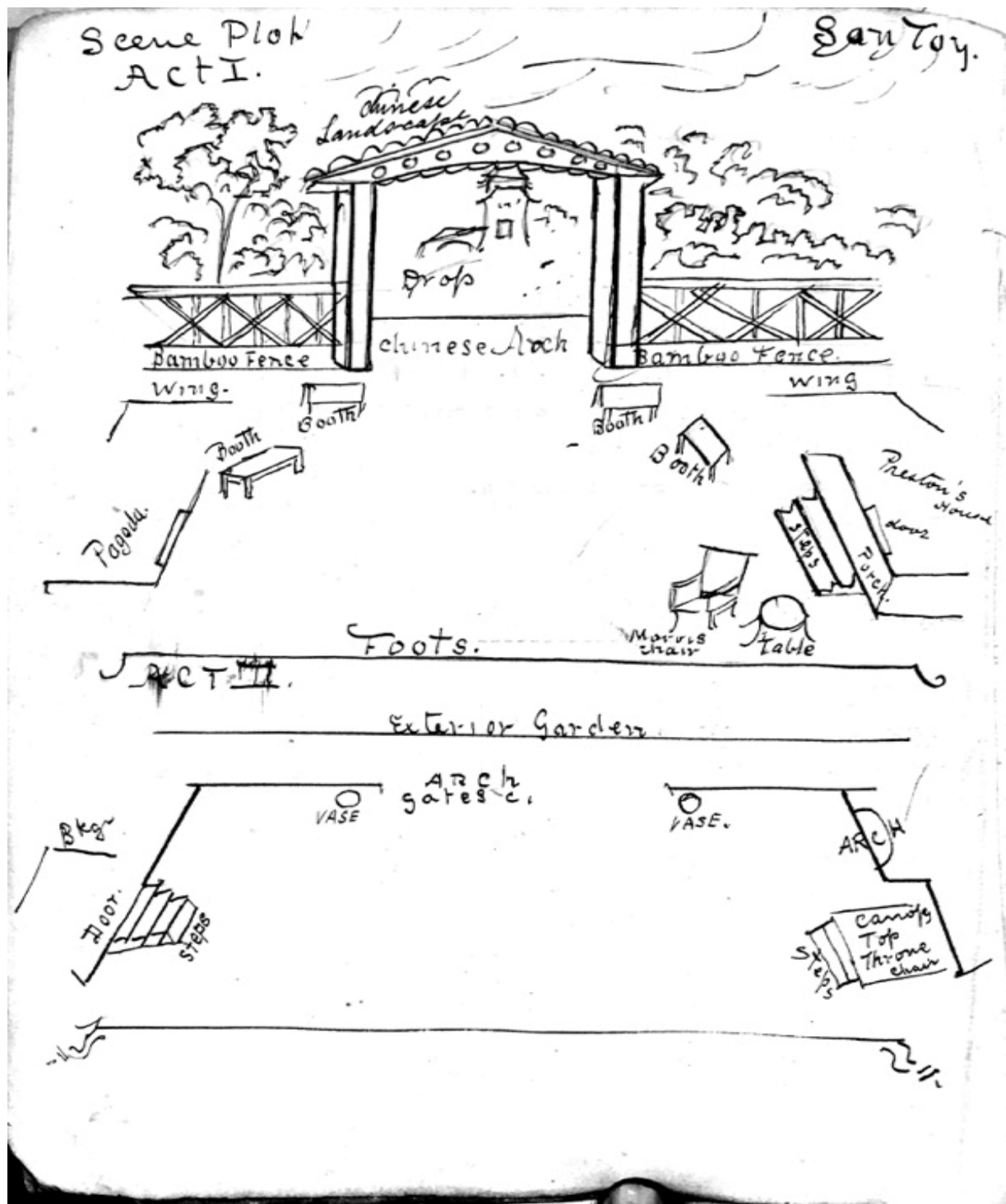


Figure 6. *San Toy* Set Design (Tams-Witmarck Collection, Box 660A)

7 - Horn  
 N° 8. CONCERTED NUMBER - "THE MOON."

Tempo di Valse.

PIANO.



(SAN TOY.)

Have you heard there's a



S.T.

girl in the moon?

I have

SOPRANOS I & II.

Not a word! How absurd To have girls in the moon.....

TENOR.

ALL ENGLISH.

Not a word! How absurd To have girls in the moon.....

BASS.

Not a word! How absurd To have girls in the moon.....

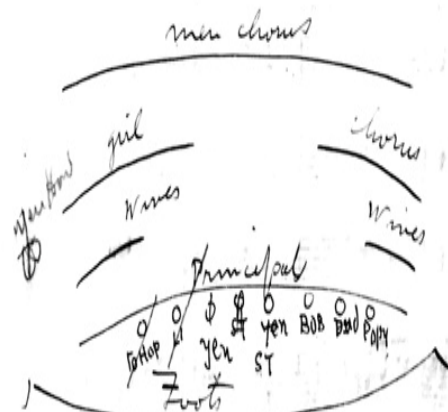


San Toy.

COPYRIGHT 1899, By SIDNEY JONES, LONDON.

K, P & C<sup>9</sup> 1309.

in this number the chorus all carry lanterns on sticks with a wire crook stick which they gradually lift up and down at cue



Positions at beginning of number all lanterns held upright and in front of body at height of chest.

Figure 7. Stage Manager's Guide Example (Tams Witmark Collection, Box 660A)

Ethan Mordden describes British musical comedies or musical plays at this time as:

aiming at a kind of comic opera interrupted by music-hall turns. Characters would use a few non-sequitur cue lines and a crowbar to insert a specialty number into the continuity, giving the shows a Gilbert and Sullivan air cut with the latest in show-biz smarts. Composers Sidney Jones, Lionel Monckton, Leslie Stuart, and Ivan Caryll led this corner of the repertory, and they must be faulted for allowing the G & S format to devolve. In place of Gilbert's wit was a kind of functional cleverness, vitality without imagination and Sullivan's keen characterizations gave way to all romantic leads sounding alike, all sidekicks sounding alike, and all choruses sounding alike.<sup>85</sup>

He argues that the problem with these shows were the compartmentalized, self-contained story numbers that had nothing to do with the plot. Perhaps these types of numbers were the reasoning behind companies who borrowed the scores of Jones' *San Toy* from the Tams-Witmark library rearranging the songs, taking some out, and finding their own way through the plot. Gillian Rodger states that "Scripts from the last decades of the nineteenth century were designed to be cut and reworked, and the musical elements were not conceived of as a unified whole but rather as material that could be shaped, added to, and combined in a number of different ways. This meant that any given musical comedy could accommodate additions of material and changes to the cast during its run."<sup>86</sup> While looking through the *San Toy* collection, I paid particular attention to the layout of the songs and the differences in the scores. The following is a list of the musical numbers as published in the vocal score in 1899 in comparison with a printed note of the order of musical numbers found in a director's score and a typed musical number list in a stage manager's guide:

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<sup>85</sup> Ethan Mordden, *Anything Goes: A History of American Musical Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 58.

<sup>86</sup> Gillian M. Rodger, "When Singing Was Acting: Song and Character in Variety Theater," *The Musical Quarterly* 98, no. 1–2 (March 1, 2015): 59, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://academic.oup.com/mq/article/98/1-2/57/1104489>.

Table 1. *San Toy*

<u>Published Musical Numbers</u>	<u>Directors Score Printed List</u>	<u>Stage Manager's Guide Typed List</u>
<b>Act 1</b>	<b>Act 1</b>	<b>Act 1</b>
Opening Chorus "We'll Keep the Feast in Pynka Pong"	Opening Chorus	Opening Chorus
"The Mandarin"	"The Mandarin"	"The Mandarin"
"The Lady's Maid"	"The Lady's Maid"	"Six Little Wives"
"A Posy from Over the Sea"	"A Posy From the Sea"	"It's Nice to be a Boy Sometimes"
"Six Little Wives"	"Six Little Wives"	"A.B.C"
"The Petals of the Plum Tree"	"It's Nice to be a Boy"	"The Lady's Maid"
"A.B.C."	Duet ("A.B.C.")	"The Moon"
"The Moon"	"The Moon"	"Pynka Pong"
"Pynka Pong"	"Pynka Pong"	"A Lover's Serenade" (printed 'Love has Come from Lotus Land')
"Love Has Come from Lotus-Land"	"Love Has Come from a Lotus-Land"	"When you are Wed to Me"
"When You Are Wed to Me"	"Samee Gamee"	"Samee Gamee"
"Samee Gamee"	Finale Act 1	Finale Act 1
"We Have Come Here Now"	<b>Act 2</b>	<b>Act 2</b>
<b>Act 2</b>	Opening Chorus	Chorus of Mandarin
Opening Chorus "We're the Cream of Courtly Creatures"	"A Little Bit of Fun"	"I'm so fond of a little bit of fun"
"Rhoda and her Pagoda"	"Me Gettee Out Very Quick"	"We have come to see"
"The Emperor's Own"	"Rhoda and her Pagoda"	"Rhoda and her Pagoda"
"By Our Majestic Monarch's Command"	"The Emperor's Own"	"The Emperor's Own"
"The Whole Story"	Entrance of English Vistors	Entrance of English Visitors
Pas Seul (Trixie's Dance)	"Somebody"	"Somebody"
"The Little China Maid"	Pas Seul (Dance)	Interpolated song (Tommy Atkins)
"We Have Come to See"	"I Mean to Introduce It into China"	Pas Seul (Dance)
"Pletty Little Chinee"	"Little China Maid"	"I mean to Introduce it into China"
"Back to London"	"Pletty Little Chinee"	"Pletty Little Chinee"
"I Mean to Introduce It into China"	"The Petals of the Plum Tree"	"The Little China Maid"
"The One in the World"	"Back to London"	"Chinese Soge Man"
"The Butterfly"	"Chinee soge-man"	Finale Act 2
"Chinee soge-man"	Finale Act 2	
Finale Act 2		
Supplementary Number "It's Nice to be a Boy Sometimes"		

Table 1 demonstrates the variations present in even a small extant example of the touring productions of *San Toy*. The original published order includes one supplementary number, “It’s Nice to be a Boy Sometimes” which is sung by San Toy. But the title is simply an addendum in the list with no indication even which act it would have been performed in. With the resources available in the Tams-Witmark collection, it is now apparent that this supplementary song would normally have been added into Act 1 around the fifth or sixth number. The third example of a musical number list which was typed into the front of a stage manager’s guide shows the shortest production in terms of the number of songs, 26 numbers compared to the published 29. This is also an example of the addition of interpolated songs, which was one of the reasons Jones left Daly’s. The only information given for the interpolated song is “Tommy Atkins,” but it is possible the production could have added a song from one of Jones’ other works, *The Gaiety Girl* which features a song titled, “Private Tommy Atkins.” This song was composed by S. Potter with lyrics by Henry Hamilton and is a patriotic song about English soldiers, so would match up with the characters in *San Toy*.<sup>87</sup> Gänzl mentions that it had also been used in a military sketch by Charles Arnold but was made popular when sung by Coffin in *The Gaiety Girl*, who then interpolated it in the original run of *San Toy*. Coffin also took advantage of Marie Tempest quitting the show and appropriated her best number, “The Petals of the Plum Tree.” More additional numbers were included when the title role fell to Ada Reeve. She proved to Edwardes she could sing the written part, then added “It’s Nice to Be a Boy Sometimes” and “All I Want is a little Bit of Fun,” both songs Tempest would never have sung. She also added “Somebody,” and though it seems like she was taking the score over with these additions, the lyrics were

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<sup>87</sup> Henry Hamilton and S. Potter, “Songs From A Gaiety Girl. Musical Comedy. Private Tommy Atkins.” (Box 143, Item 096, 1894), Lester S. Levy Music Collection, accessed March 23, 2018, <http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/collection/143/096>.

written by Percy Greenbank, brother of the late beloved lyricist, Harry Greenbank.<sup>88</sup> It is known that these songs would have been added often, but often not have been notated in any scores or scripts due to the changing nature of casts around the turn of the century. Audiences today would find it disconcerting for the action onstage in musical to simply stop and an unrelated song be performed before resuming the plot, but there is no evidence that nineteenth-century audiences would have been concerned.<sup>89</sup>

#### 4.2 – *The Girl From Kays*

The Tams-Witmark collection also has a few examples of Ivan Caryll's works that would have been used to tour the United States. The collection for his *The Girl from Kays* is located in 3 boxes and includes 126 items. These include chorus scores, vocal scores, orchestra parts organized by song, separately published songs, prompt books, and a few accompanying materials like notes and character specific lyric sheets with stage directions. The organization of the materials for *The Girl from Kays* was very different than that of *San Toy*, perhaps due to the former being a more popular show and having been revived more often.

The following figures are an example of a prompt book, which were printed copies of the dialogue, stage directions, and cues for music and scene shifts. These would have been used by a prompter, similar to a modern deputy stage manager. With rehearsal periods much shorter than modern standards, perhaps just a few weeks for a few hours a day, performances were sometimes more unpolished than we would expect from a modern theater performance. The prompter would stand by to assist performers with lines and blocking, so the prompt books often have valuable

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<sup>88</sup> Gänzl, *The British Musical Theatre*, I (1865-1914):478, 710.

<sup>89</sup> Rodger, "When Singing Was Acting," 59.

resources for the research of historical theatrical practice from the mid-seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.<sup>90</sup> The Tams-Witmark collection has prompt books available from a variety of productions, and Figure 6 shows a section of the props which were needed in a performance of *The Girl from Kays*. These were produced in typescript for individual productions, and then lent from the Tams library as seen in Figure 5, on very low-quality paper and bound often in individual acts. This very thin paper often shows the back-side's type through, as seen here.

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<sup>90</sup> Oscar Gross Brockett and Franklin J Hildy, *History of the Theatre* (Boston; Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 257.

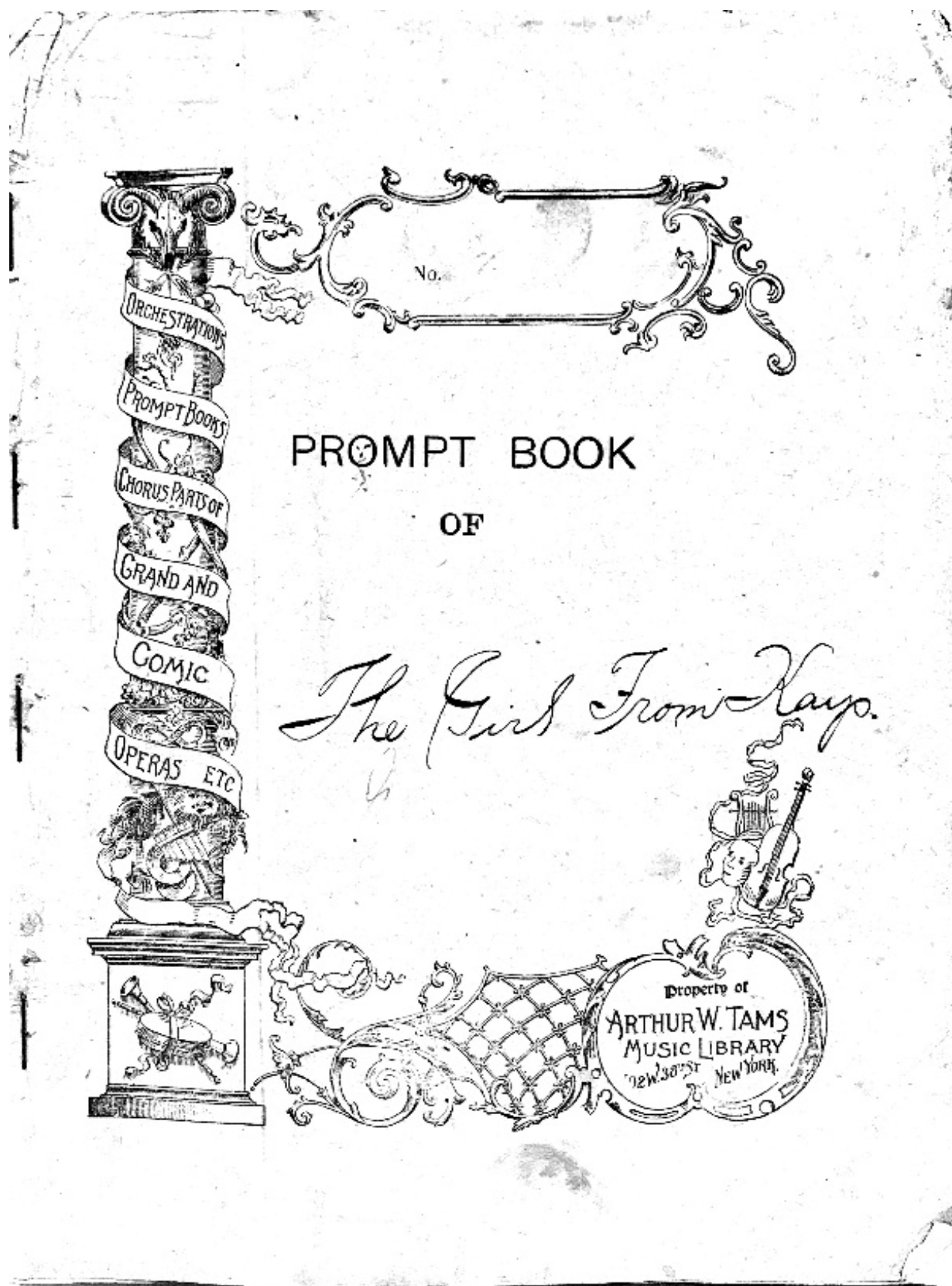


Figure 8. Prompt Book Title Page (Tams-Witmark Collection, Box 214A)



The plot of *The Girl from Kays* surrounds a newlywed couple leaving on their honeymoon. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is loosely based on a French libretto, Léon Gandillot's *La Marieé recalcitrante*. Caryl successfully used his background in French *opérette* and *vaudeville* to influence other writers to use more consistent plotting and character in their musical comedies due to his the more dramatic shape achieved in his when based off the successful Parisian plays.<sup>91</sup> The team at the Gaiety did not, however, give Gandillot credit for the plot. He found out from a magazine article and sued, leading Edwardes to have to pay royalties and Owen Hall to overhauling some of the Parisian sexy subtleties to a more English appropriate level. So, the character of a wild-oat sowing Frenchman changed to a rich, uneducated American comedic character called Mr. Hoggenheimer. The story begins with a new wife, Norah, catching her groom, Harry, kissing an ex-girlfriend, who was delivering a new hat from Kay's stores. This leads to the honeymooners sleeping in the hotel in separate rooms, the hotel being full of shopgirls, bridesmaids, Norah's family, and the girl from Kay's, Winnie, who ends up married to the millionaire Mr. Hoggenheimer in the end.<sup>92</sup> It had a long run at the Gaiety in London and had a popular tour of the provinces, as well as success in America.

Because the majority of the music in *The Girl from Kays* collection was arranged by song, it is harder to determine the order they would have gone in a performance. The collection included a set of orchestral parts which were organized by instrument and were in order by musical number. These can be compared to the published vocal score, shown in the Figure 6. Following the scan is a table to show the order of the leader and the first violin's musical numbers, Table 2.

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<sup>91</sup> Gänzl, *Song & Dance*, 69.

<sup>92</sup> Gänzl, *The Musical*, 132.

# THE GIRL FROM KAY'S.

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	18.	WALTZ SONG ( <i>Mary</i> )	...	...	"Love at the door"	(When love stands at the heart's door of a maiden)	123
	19.	SONG ( <i>Harry</i> )	...	...	"A High Old Time"	(Supposing things look black)	132
	20.	SONG ( <i>Winnie</i> )	...	...	"Mrs. Hoggenheimer"	(It's very nice to be a dame of high degree)	141
	21.	FINALE	...	...	...	(She'll marry Hoggenheimer)	151
ADDENDA.							
		SONG ( <i>Percy</i> )	...	...	"Glass, Glass"	(When I gaze in this glass)	153
		QUARTETTE ( <i>Nancy, Ellen, Fitz, and Frank</i> )	...	...	"My Birthday Party"	(I want to give a birthday party)	158
		SONG ( <i>Harry</i> )	...	...	"Matilda and the Builder"	(There was a little builder)	168
		SONG ( <i>Ellen</i> )	...	...	"Hi-mee-tho"	(Oh, the moon is all a gleam)	169
Vocal Score.							

Figure 10. Published Song List for *The Girl from Kays* (Tams-Witmark Collection, Box 214A)

Table 2. *The Girl from Kays*

<u>First Violin</u>	<u>Leader</u>
“Chorus of Bridesmaids”	“Chorus of Bridesmaids”
“Brides Song”	“Brides Song”
Scene and Chorus	Scene and Chorus
“Tips”	“Tips”
“The Girl from Kays”	“Bonnet Shop”
“Matilda and the Builder”	“Matilda and the Builder”
Finale Act 1	Finale Act 1
Act 2 Opening Chorus	Act 2 Opening Chorus
“Semi-detached” Duet	“Semi-detached” Duet
“Customers at Kays”	“Customers at Kays”
“Bob and Me”	“Bob and Me”
“Lucy Linda Lady”	Finale Act 2
“Sambo”	“Lucy Linda Lady”
“My Little Love-Bird”	“Sambo”
“I Don’t Care”	“I Don’t Care”
Finale Act 2	“Make It Up”
Opening Act 3	“My Birthday Party”
“I Love You All the Time”	“Mrs. Hoggenheimer”
“Sufficiency”	Finale Act 3
Waltz	“Valse Song”
“My Irish Indian”	“Glockenspiel”
“My Birthday Party”	“Egypt”
“Mrs. Hoggenheimer”	“Little Girls from Kays”
Finale Act 3	
Exit	

There was, however, in the sets of pieces arranged by song, many works which are not present either in the published list of musical numbers, or the ordered pieces from the orchestral parts. These could then be assumed to have been interpolated songs. These often have the composer and sometimes lyricist listed, so with this archive we are able to gain knowledge of which songs were popular at the time and would have been inserted into this work. These songs include “Busy Little Lizzie” by Ernest Bucalossi, “The Topsy Cake Walk” by Carl Kiefert, “The Frolic

of a Breeze” by Jerome Kern, “Flacton on the Sea” by Howard Talbot, “Medley” by Maurice Levi, and “Winnie” by E. Jones. There is also more information from these pieces that shed light on these highly collaborative works. For instance, we know that Ivan Caryll was the main composer and Adrian Ross was the main lyricist for *The Girl from Kays*. But, many of the pieces in the Tams-Witmark collection have the names of the collaborators or musical colleagues that Caryll borrowed from for this musical comedy. “Sufficiency” and “Egypt” are attributed to Clare Kummer. “Sambo” or “Smiling Sambo” has music by Howard Talbot and lyrics by Percy Greenbank. “A High Old Time” has music by A.D. Cammeyer and words by Claude Aveling. “My Irish Indian” is attributed to Jean Schwartz, “Lucy Linda Lady” is attributed to Dave Reed Jr, “Matilda and the Builder” is attributed to Bucalossi and Wood, and “I Don’t Care” is attributed to Paul Rubens. Most of the choruses were written by Cecil Cook. Gänzl mentions that often during the run of a Gaiety show, the score would be changed to keep it up to date, as well as to please repeat audience members. The plotful numbers would keep their place along with the Gaiety-musts like character duos for the stars Payne and Seymour. But the ballads, point numbers, and little bunches of interpolated songs were overhauled.<sup>93</sup>

Many of these numbers became very popular with the public, especially when sung by their favorite performer. In the Tams-Wimark collection for *The Girl from Kays* there are two examples of such pieces that were published separately from a complete vocal score. These would have been purchased by audience members, some of whom would have already learned the melodies as repeat attendees, to perform at home. These pieces of sheet music are in poorer condition than the other items in the collection, perhaps due to their intended public use, and can be seen in Figures 8 and 9.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 110.



Figure 11. "My Little Love Bird" Cover (Tams-Witmark Collection, Box 214A)



Figure 12. "Sufficiency" Cover (Tams-Witmark Collection, Box 214A)

## Chapter 5 – Conclusion

This thesis argues that a more thorough look at early musical comedies produced around the turn of the century is necessary in order to better understand musical comedy as it developed in the early twentieth century. I have given exhaustive backgrounds for two important composers of the genre, Ivan Caryll and Sidney Jones. Both were music directors in important theaters in London that were central to this genre, The Gaiety and Daly's, and their works toured Europe and America. I have discussed the issues of genre distinctions and crisscrossing evolutions in the scholarship about musical theater. Using the Tam-Witmark collection, I have recreated the possible format of how an early musical comedy would have been performed by an American touring theater company. It is necessary to take the scores and their flexible nature into account when constructing a broader history and more detailed discussion of individual shows.

This thesis contributes to the scholarship that shows the cross-Atlantic conversations that shaped both British and U.S. musical comedy in the last-third of the nineteenth century and the early 1900s. Scholarly histories of American musical theater have tended to assume that influence moved in only one direction before the turn of the century--they note the importation of British forms to the U.S. until the early twentieth century, when they acknowledge the existence of trade in both directions. The U.S. provided a work opportunity for English theater composers and performers, but Americans also frequently toured England and influenced their traditions, *Fun on the Bristol* and *The Belle of New York*, for example. But also, many performers who worked both sides of the Atlantic through much of the last third of the nineteenth century such as Ivan Caryll's first wife, Geraldine Ulmar, who performed many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas in the U.S. and England.

It is also important to note that looking at scores and looking at the skills performers brought helps give an idea of the kinds of flexibility inherent in these forms. The time when this form was popular was immediately following the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, as discussed in Chapter 2. These musical comedies complicate the kinds of expectations established by Gilbert and Sullivan, who were combining ideas from burlesque with traditional opera structure. The types of musical comedies written by Caryl and Jones revert back to the flexible nature of burlesque and pantomime. However, as the genre progressed the composers were pushing to relate the songs more to the plot and use less interpolated songs. These conventions could then be built on by the flexible jazz informed musical comedies of the 1910s. This evidence details how the libretto, score, performers, and theatrical context are necessary for a better understanding of the development of musical comedy, including those written on both sides of the Atlantic. Little is known about what was happening in this genre and time period in general and that is where future work following this model is very much needed.

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