NAXOS

SULLIVAN

Pineapple Poll

(Complete Ballet, arr. Mackerras)

Irish Symphony

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

David Lloyd-Jones

Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)

Pineapple Poll • Symphony in E 'Irish'

In his youth Arthur Sullivan was regarded as a prodigy. At the age of fifteen, while still a chorister in the Chapel Royal, he was awarded the first Mendelssohn Scholarship to attend the Royal Academy of Music, where his teachers included William Sterndale Bennett and John Goss. The scholarship was extended so that he could study at the Leipzig Conservatory; his graduation work, incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1861), was performed at the Crystal Palace with great success. Works of his twenties like the *Symphony* (1866), the masque *Kenilworth* (1864) and the overture *In Memoriam* (1866) marked him out as a composer of great potential. Together with his friend George Grove, he discovered in Vienna in 1867 the remaining incidental music to *Rosamunde* which had been lost for decades.

In 1875 Sullivan enjoyed success with the dramatist W.S. Gilbert (1836-1911) with the one-act operetta, *Trial by Jury*, but it was the impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte (1844-1911) who realised their creative potential and established the three-way partnership that led to the string of hugely popular operettas dubbed the 'Savoy Operas'. Among the most successful were *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880), *Iolanthe* (1882), *The Mikado* (1885), *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888) and *The Gondoliers* (1889). Sullivan was frequently criticized for wasting his talents writing what were viewed in serious music circles as 'potboilers', but as he mixed in exclusive society and royal circles, and enjoyed gambling and travel, the financial rewards were compelling. Among his other compositions are *The Golden Legend* (1886), the opera *Ivanhoe* (1891) which was a failure, songs like *The Lost Chord* (1877) as well as hymns such as *Onward Christian Soldiers* (1871). Posterity, though, has judged that Sullivan's greatest talents lay in operettas for only they and the *Overtura di ballo* (1870) have survived the test of time. Sullivan was a prodigious worker and as well as composing he held conducting and teaching posts. Dogged by ill-health throughout his life, he was a man of great personal charm, and together with Mendelssohn, was Queen Victoria's favourite composer. He was knighted in 1883.

Sullivan was of partly Irish descent and his *Symphony in E* (later known as '*Irish*') originated during a holiday in Northern Ireland when he was 21. He recounted the moment of its conception in a letter to his mother: 'the other night as I was jolting home … through wind and rain in an open jaunting-car, the whole first movement of a symphony came into my head with a real Irish flavour about it - besides scraps of other movements.'

Symphonies by Englishmen were rarities in the middle of the nineteenth century, especially by a young composer. Sullivan needed strong advocates to secure a performance and in the singer Jenny Lind (the so-called Swedish Nightingale) he found one. Her persuasion led August Manns to conduct the work at the Crystal Palace on 10th March 1866, when it was warmly received. A further performance the following month under the auspices of the Musical Society of London conducted by Alfred Mellon was a triumph, with applause after every movement and an ovation for Sullivan at the end.

Mendelssohn and Schubert are obvious influences on the work, but what is also abundantly evident is the freshness of Sullivan's melodic gifts as well as his technical fluency. The first movement opens with a slow introduction, beginning with a unison brass fanfare, which is answered serenely by a rising sequence of chords on the strings. The musicologist, the late Percy Young, noted the resemblance of the latter to the opening of the *Cymbeline* overture by Cipriani Potter (1792-1871), a composer, pianist and conductor active in London in the first half of the nineteeenth century. A lithe and wistful theme in E minor played by the first violins launches the *Allegro*; this and the fanfare from the introduction feature prominently in the exposition and development sections, as well as the second main

theme which has an ardent quality to its curved elegance. Sullivan's conclusion to the movement is particularly effective as he conjures a relentless momentum to bring it full circle with a final emphatic appearance of the fanfare.

The main theme of the *Andante espressivo*, heard initially on the horns, is relaxed, with a warm romantic lyricism. As the music slips between major and minor keys Schubert is called to mind. Both here and in the third movement Sullivan's natural flair for woodwind writing is apparent, as exemplified in the oboe melody, accompanied by delicate pizzicatos, that opens the scherzo in an inspired and original manner. It leads to a perky folksong-like tune with a distinct Irish flavour that Sullivan subsequently turns into a stately march. A short pastoral-like trio with muted strings provides an attractive foil to the scherzo.

High spirits characterise the opening of the finale. It is contrasted by a gentler rising theme ending with a cadence riven with Schubertian sadness. Later, a melody, first heard on the oboe, is combined in deft counterpoint with an overtly rhythmic theme in the first violins. Such a device was to become a hallmark of the composer in the double choruses of his operettas. Overall it is little wonder that the critic of *The Times* wrote of this remarkable youthful achievement that it was 'the best musical work, if judged only by the largeness of its form and the number of beautiful thoughts it contains, for a long time produced by an English composer.'

Andrew Burn

The idea of transforming the music of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas into a ballet score occurred to me while I was playing in the orchestra for a Gilbert and Sullivan season in Australia. 'How wonderful it would be', I thought, 'to arrange the eminently danceable tunes into a sort of symphonic synthesis and score them for full orchestra.' Although the idea had been in my head for several years, the opportunity to put theory into practice did not occur until 1951 at Sadler's Wells, when I suggested it to John Cranko, a young choreographer from South Africa who was just beginning to create attention with his ingenious and original balletic inventions.

The thought of a ballet using Sullivan's music and a scenario taken from Gilbert delighted John Cranko from the start, and after a thorough search of Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* we decided on 'The Bumboat Woman's Story', No. 81 of the series. The subject of this was later developed by Gilbert into *HMS Pinafore*, but for our purposes it provided an ideal balletic situation. Dancers do not speak on the stage, and thus the secret of the girls dressed as men could be kept from the audience until very near the end of the ballet. (Audiences are often as surprised as Poll herself to find that all the sailors are really women in disguise.) Luck was still further on our side in that the copyright on Sullivan's music was just about to lapse, while the Festival of Britain in 1951 made a perfect setting for a new comic British ballet - especially one which indulged the British taste for laughing at their most honoured institutions.

Naturally, as there are no voices in my arrangement of the music, considerable alterations to Sullivan's orchestration had to be made, so that the score would not sound like those all too familiar selections in which the cornet plays the voice part of 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes' to the accompaniment of Sullivan's orchestration, cooked up for brass or military band. I wanted the music to sound as natural as possible in its new form, both in content and orchestration. However, I did study the original scoring of all the tunes used in the ballet, in order to preserve as many of Sullivan's touches of instrumentation as possible. The score is a patchwork quilt of tunes from most of the Savoy operas, and they pass by the listener so quickly as to bewilder even Gilbert and Sullivan experts. So far, I have come across only two people who were able to place the source of every tune in the ballet. Every bar of *Pineapple Poll*, including the bridge passages, is taken from one or other of the operas, although I found it necessary to 'cheat' a little at the end and insert a few bars of Sullivan's early *Overtura di ballo*. Occasionally I have made several quite separate tunes go together (a trick which Sullivan often used), and die-hards who associate every scrap of Sullivan's melodies with Gilbert's librettos will find that the original words in the opera often fit the new situation in the ballet. (An obvious example is my use of 'Twenty lovesick maidens we' from *Patience*, as the girls cast loving eyes at Captain Belaye.)

As charming young ballerinas do not usually like to appear on the stage as fat old women, John Cranko changed Gilbert's Little Buttercup-like character Poll Pineapple into a youthful and fascinating Pineapple Poll, while Lieutenant Belaye becomes a Captain (and later even an Admiral) in order to have the necessary swagger for a *premier danseur*. Other characters have also been added, but they are all thoroughly Gilbertian types and seem to fit quite naturally into the first Gilbert and Sullivan ballet.

Pineapple Poll was first performed on 13th March 1951 at Sadler's Wells Theatre, by the then Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet (now the Royal Ballet), with Elaine Fifield, David Blair and David Poole in the principal roles of Poll, Belaye and Jasper. Although many other ballets based on Gilbert and Sullivan were predicted after the immediate success of *Pineapple Poll*, as far as I know no further such ballets have appeared. When the copyright on Gilbert's librettos expired in 1962, producers and stage directors turned their attention instead to new and original productions of the Savoy operas themselves. In the following *résumé* of the ballet, the sources are indicated in brackets, for those interested in musical detective work.

Scene 1 (At Portsmouth, in the morning)

Sailors from the good ship HMS *Hot Cross Bun* meet their 'sweethearts, wives, etc' in a typical 'opening chorus', while Jasper, pot-boy at 'The Steam Packet', serves drinks. (Music taken from *The Mikado*, *Trial by Jury*, *Patience*, *The Sorcerer*, *The Gondoliers*.)

Pineapple Poll comes selling her wares of 'ribbons and laces' (*The Gondoliers*). Her solo develops into a *pas de deux* as the poor pot-boy Jasper makes shy advances to her, which she rather rudely rejects (*Patience*, *The Gondoliers*). Like all the other girls of Portsmouth, Poll has eyes only for the dashing Captain Belaye, who now appears (*Cox and Box*). The girls all swoon with admiration (*Patience*) and the gallant Captain performs a brilliant hornpipe (*Cox and Box*). The jealous sailors furiously drag the women off the stage, leaving Belaye alone to meet his fiancée, Blanche (*The Mikado*). Unfortunately she is accompanied by her aunt, Mrs Dimple, who talks all the time (probably about the weather), leaving the amorous young couple not a moment's peace alone together (*The Pirates of Penzance*). But it would be 'contrary to etiquette' to object (*Ruddigore*) and Belaye finally escorts them off, none too pleased (*The Pirates of Penzance*).

Poll and the girls of the *corps de ballet* are still mooning around after the Captain (*Patience*). The sailors enter in an angry mood (*The Pirates of Penzance*, *Ruddigore*). An altercation ensues, and Belaye's arrival on the scene only makes matters worse. The scene ends in anger and confusion (*Iolanthe*, *Patience*).

Scene 2 (The Quayside, that evening)

The harassed Captain returns to his ship, followed by Poll, who suddenly determines to disguise herself in some sailor's clothes which she finds on the wharf. In this garb she runs on to the ship (*Iolanthe*). Other rather odd-looking sailors are seen going aboard too. Jasper, who has been following Poll in his hopeless love, rushes to the quayside, sees her clothes, and concludes that she has drowned herself. Sadly he dances alone with her clothes (*Princess Ida*).

Scene 3 (On board HMS *Hot Cross Bun*, next morning)

Belaye drills his crew (suddenly grown strangely inefficient) while Poll, who cannot keep her eyes off the Captain, always finds herself out of step (*Princess Ida*, *The Gondoliers*). Belaye orders the cannon to be fired and Poll faints at the din (*Ruddigore*).

Belaye tries to revive her (*Trial by Jury*), but on hearing the chime of a distant clock (*Iolanthe*) he suddenly takes a wedding ring out of his pocket and rushes ashore (*Patience*).

Poll is rather bewildered at the unmasculine behaviour of some of her fellow sailors, but as yet suspects nothing (*Princess Ida*). Belaye returns (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) and solemnly presents Blanche, his new bride, to the 'crew' (*Trial by Jury*). They all faint with horror (*Iolanthe*). Confusion is worse confounded as *all* the crew tear off sailors' garb and beards. They are *all* women in disguise, and together they passionately declare their love (*Trial by Jury*). The real sailors, who have got wind of the deception, rush on to the ship in a fury (*Iolanthe*).

However, they are soon reconciled (*Ruddigore*); especially when Belaye is promoted to Admiral, while Jasper, in a typically Gilbertian twist, takes the Captain's uniform. Poll proves that love is due more to the uniform than the man, and promptly fails in love with the new Captain (*The Mikado*, *Trial by Jury*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Patience*, *Princess Ida*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Overtura di ballo*). And so they all live happily ever after, with Mrs Dimple raised on high as a rather school-marmish Britannia (*The Yeomen of the Guard*).

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Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra gives over sixty concerts from September to June in Liverpool's art deco Philharmonic Hall and presents concerts throughout the United Kingdom, in addition to tours abroad. Members of the orchestra are involved in a number of innovative community education projects. One of the oldest concert-giving organisations in the world, the RLPO dates back to 1840. In 1957 it acquired the title 'Royal', and in 1991 it was the first organization to be granted the freedom of the City of Liverpool. The first professional conductor of the Liverpool Philharmonic, in 1844, was Jakob Zeugheer, followed by Alfred Mellon, Max Bruch, Charles Hallé, Frederic Hymen Cowen, and Thomas Beecham. In 1942 Malcolm Sargent became resident conductor, followed in 1948 by Hugo Rignold as music director. Subsequent incumbents have included Efrem Kurtz and John Pritchard, Walter Weller, David Atherton, Marek Janowski, Libor Pešek, Petr Altrichter and Gerard Schwarz. Vasily Petrenko became Principal Conductor in September 2006.

David Lloyd-Jones

David Lloyd–Jones began his professional career in 1959 on the music staff of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and soon became much in demand as a freelance conductor for orchestral and choral concerts, opera, BBC broadcasts and TV studio opera productions. He has appeared at the Royal Opera House (*Boris Godunov* with both Christoff and Ghaiurov), Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera and the Wexford, Cheltenham, Edinburgh and Leeds Festivals, and with the major British orchestras. In 1972 he was appointed Assistant Music Director at English National Opera, and during his time there conducted an extensive repertory which included, in addition to all the standard operas, *Die Meistersinger*, *Katya Kabanova*, and the British stage premiere of Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. In 1978, at the invitation of the Arts Council of Great Britain, he founded a new full-time opera company, Opera North, with its own orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia, of which he became Artistic Director and Principal Conductor. During his twelve seasons with the company he conducted fifty different new productions, including *The Trojans*, *Prince Igor*, *The Midsummer Marriage* (Tippett), and the British stage première of Richard Strauss's *Daphne*. He also conducted numerous orchestral concerts, including festival appearances in France and Germany. He has made many successful recordings of British and Russian music, and has an extensive career in the concert-hall and opera-house that takes him to leading musical centres throughout Central Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Israel, Australia, Japan, Canada and the Americas. His highly acclaimed cycle of Bax's symphonies and tone poems for Naxos (*The Gramophone* Award) was completed in the autumn of 2003. In 2007 he was given the rare distinction of being made an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society.

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SULLIVAN: Pineapple Poll • Symphony in E 'Irish'

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As Sir Charles Mackerras writes in the booklet notes, the idea of transforming 'the eminently danceable tunes' of the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas into a ballet score occurred to him while he was playing in the orchestra for a Gilbert and Sullivan season in Australia. *Pineapple Poll* was first performed, with immediate success, in March 1951 at Sadler's Wells Theatre. Sullivan was of partly Irish descent and his *Symphony in E* (later known as the *'Irish'*) originated during a holiday in Northern Ireland when he was 21. Although Mendelssohn and Schubert are obvious influences, the freshness of Sullivan's melodic gifts, as well as his technical fluency, are abundantly evident.

Sir Arthur SULLIVAN

(1842-1900)

	Pineapple Poll (arr. Mackerras)	**43:13**
	Scene 1	16:57
1	Opening Dance	3:34
2	Poll's Solo and Pas de Deux	3:32
3	Captain Belaye's Solo	3:06
4	Pas de Trois	2:58
5	Finale	3:47
	Scene 2	6:27
6	Poll's Solo	3:24
7	Jasper's Solo	3:03
	Scene 3	19:49
8	Belaye's Solo and Sailors' Drill	3:26
9	Poll's Solo	3:39
10	Entry of Belaye with Blanche as Bride	3:40
11	Reconciliation	3:06
12	Grand Finale	5:57
	Symphony in E 'Irish'	**35:13**
13	I. Andante – Allegro, ma non troppo vivace	12:54
14	II. Andante espressivo	7:25
15	III. Allegretto – Moderato – Tempo 1	6:18
16	IV. Allegro vivace e con brio	8:36

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
David Lloyd-Jones

Recorded at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, on 1st and 2nd August, 2006
Producer: Tim Handley • Engineer: Phil Rowlands
Publishers: Chappell Music Limited (tracks 1-12); Novello & Co. Ltd. (tracks 13-16)
Booklet Notes: Andrew Burn and Charles Mackerras

The Scene 2 actdrop by Osbert Lancaster for the original March 1951 Sadler's Wells production of *Pineapple Poll* is reproduced by permission of Lady Lancaster; print courtesy of the Raymond Mander & Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection.

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Playing Time
78:26

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