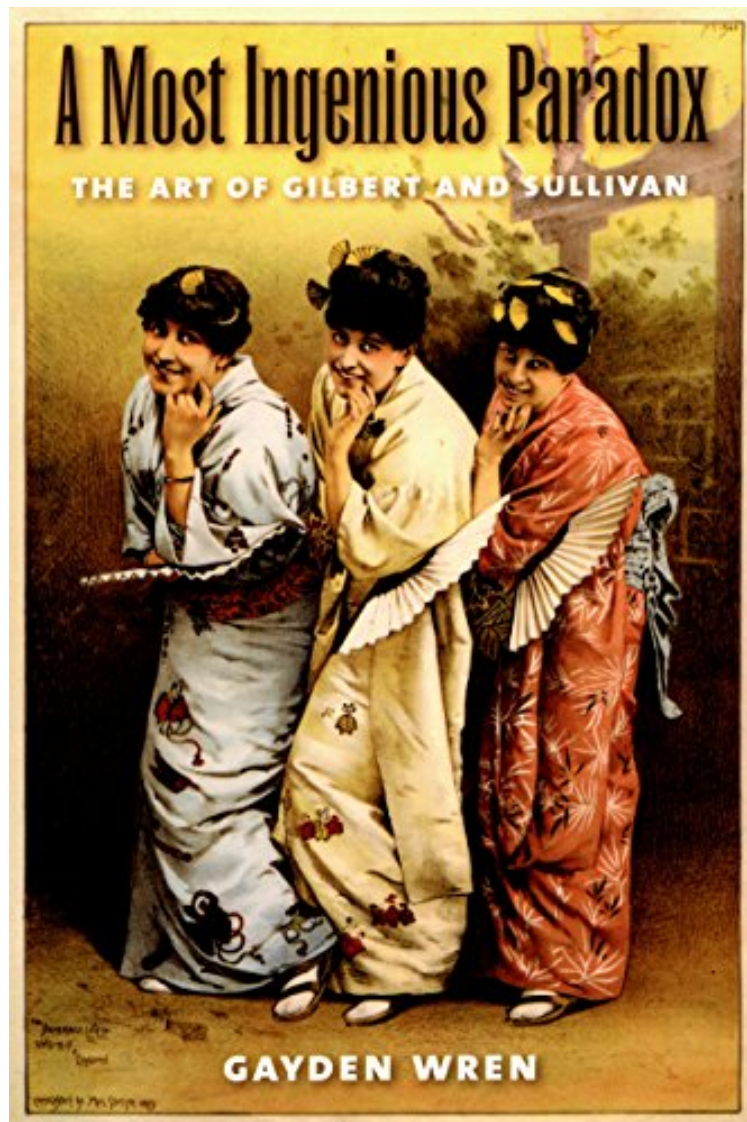


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A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Art of Gilbert and Sullivan

Gayden Wren

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Gayden Wren : A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Art of Gilbert and Sullivan before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Art of Gilbert and Sullivan:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very enlightening... a good read.By BBrooks107I have only made it through the first part of the book so far... up through "The Sorcerer". It is easy to read and very enlightening. Gayden Wren touches on facets of Gilbert and Sullivan that I never considered. I look forward to reading the rest of the book! I would recommend it to any Gilbert Sullivan enthusiast!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Most Ingenius ParadoxBy Charles L. DuvalThis is one of the best GS books I've read in a long time. Concentrates on the

performance life of the GS opera since the closing of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and perhaps the birth of a new phase of artistic freedom and creativity. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not What I Was Expecting or Hoped For By Fritz90710 This was not as I expected. I thought there would be more on the background of the operas, the personalities of the creators and the performers and the general atmosphere of the theatrical world of London of that era. All that is offered, essentially, is a pseudo-intellectual analysis of each of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas written in such a way that if the reader did not know each of the works in some close fashion then they would be lost and definitely bored. I am very familiar with most of these works and I was very bored indeed. The author attacks each chapter as if he were writing about Shakespeare, Milton or Dante. As much as I love GS, they are not in that intellectual sphere no do the operas merit or benefit from such analysis. He seems to contradict himself all over the place making the reader quite confused. His pontifications about the relative quality of each opera seems quite subjective and offensive. I found myself getting angry. In the final analysis this book commits the unpardonable sin. It is so dull!

Written more than a century ago and initially regarded even by their creators as nothing more than light entertainment, the fourteen operas of Gilbert Sullivan emerged over the course of the twentieth century as the world's most popular body of musical-theater works, ranking second only to Shakespeare in the history of English-language theater. Despite this resounding popularity and proven longevity, most books written about the duo have focused on the authors rather than the works. With this detailed examination of all fourteen operas, Gayden Wren fills the void. His bold thesis finds the key to the operas' longevity, not in the clever lyrics, witty dialogue, or catchy music, but in the central themes underlying the characters and stories themselves. Like Shakespeare's comedies, Wren shows, the operas of Gilbert Sullivan endure because of their timeless themes, which speak to audiences as powerfully now as they did the first time they were performed. Written out of an abiding love for the Savoy operas, this volume is essential reading for any devotee of these enchanting works, or indeed for anyone who loves musical theater.

From Library Journal New York Times editor Wren credits the lasting vitality of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan to their universal themes and the humanity of their characters. Those who would credit the brilliant pairing of witty language and superb music will dispute this, but Wren substantiates his claims with detailed arguments that prompt a new look at these familiar works. Although many books are available on the lives of Gilbert and Sullivan, the operas, and their place in Victorian life, there are a number of reasons to purchase this one. Wren's lengthy and intimate acquaintance with the works as performer, director, and teacher allows him to write with affection in an uncluttered style that will please both the general reader and the scholar. Beginning chapters cover each man's work prior to their collaboration, with subsequent chapters devoted to each Gilbert and Sullivan opera in chronological order and the final sections treating their later, separate work and their legacy. Plot summaries are given in an appendix, and a useful bibliography discusses the relative merits of each work. Finally, Wren illustrates Gilbert and Sullivan's complex and often adversarial relationship and its integral role in the success (or failure) of each opera. Highly recommended for academic and public libraries. Kate McCaffrey, Onondaga Cty. P.L., Syracuse, NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. "There are a multitude of books about Gilbert and Sullivan...many of them, as [Wren] duly notes, are sketchy or superficial. But no one could fairly throw these adjectives at *A Most Ingenious Paradox* itself. Mr. Wren argues his case in impressive detail."--*The Wall Street Journal* "Wren explores...with authority and brilliance."--Tim Page, *The Washington Post* "Wren's book is both a fascinating read and a valuable resource."--*American Theatre* "Wren's lengthy and intimate acquaintance with the works as performer, director and teacher allows him to write with affection in an uncluttered style that will please both the general reader and the scholar...Highly recommended."--*Library Journal* "Essential to a full understanding and appreciation of the Gilbert Sullivan operas...I kept nodding and thinking about most of his conclusions with 'Of course, I should have realized that years ago.'"--*Brattleboro Reformer* "Wren is an excellent professor of GS literature and makes an impressive number of points that will absorb (and sometimes annoy) advanced Savoyards."--*Opera News* "Wren is a gifted writer and gives his honest views with confidence, providing clear style of presentation, clarity of description and much to get one thinking."--*Classical Music Web* "Wren's analyses of *The Mikado* and *The Gondoliers* are models of their kind...Sometimes brilliant, occasionally maddening, Wren is almost unfailingly provocative."--*Gramophone* "Thoughtful analyses of each of the Savoy operas...a book worth adding to your library."--*GS Bag* "A fascinating study for anyone interested in the delightful works of Gilbert Sullivan as well as the contemporary American musical theatre..."--*Recommended Books* "Gayden Wren's book is a worthwhile and long overdue attempt to get to the heart of the Savoy operas. It is thoughtful on many aspects of both words and music."--*Music and Letters* "A Most Ingenious Paradox will take its place as an important study of Gilbert Sullivan as the worlds of music, theater, and scholarship continue (sometimes reluctantly) to evaluate and then acknowledge the Savoy Operas to be the classic works they are."--Ralph MacPhail, Jr., *Bridgewater College of Virginia* "There are a multitude of books about Gilbert and Sullivan...many of them, as [Wren] duly notes, are sketchy or superficial. But no one could fairly throw these adjectives at *A Most Ingenious Paradox* itself. Mr. Wren argues his case in impressive detail."--*The Wall Street Journal* "Wren explores...with

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