

BRIGHTON ARGUS – 7/11/16

Review: Gilbert (No Sullivan), The Foundry Group, 3 November 2016 at St. Michael's Community Hall, Brighton.

W.S. Gilbert did exist before Arthur Sullivan and indeed without him. WSG rollicked around the clubs and theatres of Victorian London, sparking satire like fireworks through the pages of 'Fun' and 'Punch' and 'scribbling amusing scenes/in all the London magazines'.

It is this literary life which inspired David Mountfield and Brian Mitchell's show 'Gilbert No Sullivan', a hilarious selection of Bab Ballads and comic sketches created by an imagination stretched laterally as far as the eye can see. By turn, pained railway travellers, tiresome old biddies, sea captains, cannibals, burglars, Lords of the realm and confectioners, the two actors marvellously interpret Gilbert's wilder flights of fancy, illustrating some of the tropes which were to become familiar from the Savoy operas.

David and Brian romp with minimum props and maximum gusto through Gilbertiana, occasionally ad libbing to great effect, trying to avoid any hint of a musical connection and failing. It's a very clever show from two enormously talented and very funny actors.

Louise Schweitzer

SAVOYNET – 12/11/16

Review: Gilbert (No Sullivan), presented by The Foundry Group, 4 November 2016 at Fifield Parish Hall, Oxfordshire.

Subtitled 'Tall Tales and Bonkers Ballads by W.S. Gilbert', this consisted of short stories 'The Finger of Fate', 'The Burglar's Story' and 'Foggerty's Fairy' (aka 'Story of a Twelfth Cake', and Bab Ballads 'Annie Protheroe' and 'The Yarn of the Nancy Bell'. They were adapted by Brian Mitchell and Joseph Nixon, and performed by David Mounfield and Brian Mitchell, both experienced comic actors.

The set was simple: a clothes rack holding a curtain, with a lace curtain underneath. This provided a left, right and centre entrance and formed the window for 'The Burglar's Story'. A blue cloth thrown over it was the sea in 'Finger of Fate' – the heads of the characters appeared over it when the ship went down. 2 dining chairs also served to make a coach, a railway carriage, an executioner's block and, covered with a grey blanket, rocks. Both actors wore Victorian gentlemen's day clothes, and added hats, shawls, a wig or a jabot to play all the characters. Extra cast members were puppets appearing over the clothes rack.

A running gag was that this was a 'No Sullivan' show, while the music cues were all Sullivan: The Tempest for 'Finger of Fate', Iolanthe for 'Foggerty's Fairy', Pirates for 'Burglar's Story', and Yeomen for 'Annie Protheroe'. I think I recognized Victoria and Merrie England in the introductory/interval music.

The show was fast and beautifully timed. The performers trusted the material, enjoyed the Victorian language and had the audience in fits of laughter. A very enjoyable evening.

Deirdre Kincaid.

Western Park Gazette

Gilbert (no Sullivan) Reviewed

17-12-2016

Gilbert (no Sullivan) by WS Gilbert adapted by Brian Mitchell & Joseph Nixon

The Foundry Group - David Mountfield & Brian Mitchell

Upstairs @ The Western, Leicester. 16 & 17 Dec 2016

Review by: Paul Towers, 16 December 2016

'...a hilarious evening of fun'

It is entirely appropriate that my last review for this year and under the old guard at Upstairs at The Western should be for the renowned and very popular Foundry Group. In what has become an annual treat for playgoers at The Western we have had our taste buds tickled by uproarious tales of wrestlers, Henry VIII, magnificent flyers and now dear old Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, the lyricist half of Gilbert and Sullivan.

I, for one, didn't realise that, prior to his musical collaborations with Mr Sullivan, Gilbert was a prodigious writer of tall tales, comic rants and parodic reviews as a means of making ends meet.

The Foundry Group have maintained their high standard by collating five of his more outrageous tales from the latter half of the 19th century and adapted them for two actors. These Victorian comic stories were published in the magazines of the day and proved very popular, especially when accompanied by Gilbert's own illustrations.



In David Mountfield and Brian Mitchell this production has two very able character actors who are very at home with a variety of accents and quick costume changes. Watching these sketches one can clearly see where modern performers like Tommy Cooper, Tony Hancock and Benny Hill got their inspiration.

Accompanied by hilariously bad 'special effects' and more awful props than a Play School toy box, this is a hilarious evening of fun that you can take even your maiden aunt to.

There are still a few tickets available for tonight's (Sat Dec 17) performance and I would urge you to grab one if you can.

Paul Towers