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'D'Oyly Carte's Pantomimes': Complementarity and Innovation

For the Christmas season of 1879 the Opéra Comique in London produced Gilbert and Sullivan's popular comic opera HMS Pinafore *with a cast comprised entirely of children aged sixteen and under. Widespread critical reception lauded the production for its innovation and for its surprising humour. The* Graphic *praised the production as a "comic, satirical, musical burlesque," whilst the* Examiner *noted "the audience literally choked with laughter," considering the piece "infinitely more comic" than when played by adult performers. This article examines* The Children's Pinafore *within the context of British pantomime culture, precedent all-child productions of* HMS Pinafore *that had recently been staged in the United States, and the phenomenal global consequences of D'Oyly Carte's "curious" and "possibly very hazardous experiment" that were to resonate around the globe for several decades to come. Gillian Arrighi is a Lecturer in Drama in the School of Drama, Fine Art and Music at the University of Newcastle, Australia. She is currently co-editing a volume for Palgrave Macmillan that brings together scholarship concerning children in the global entertainment business.*

Keywords: *HMS Pinafore*, *The Children's Pinafore*, W. S. Gilbert, A. Sullivan, child entertainers, theatre in Australasia.

> "We have no hesitation in describing it as the most marvellous juvenile performance ever seen in the Metropolis…many well-known members of the theatrical world who saw them at the rehearsal declared it to be the most remarkable performance they have ever attended."
>
> *Era*, Review of 'The Children's Pinafore," 21 December, 1879

> "The strangest feature of *The Children's Pinafore* is its complete success. Anything more charming than the acting, dancing, singing, and posturing of these Liliputian folk has not been seen on our stage for a long time."
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> *Graphic*, 20 December, 1879

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For the Christmas holiday season of 1879 Richard D'Oyly Carte produced Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore* at the Opéra Comique with a cast comprised entirely of children. In a recently published essay, childhood studies scholar Marah Gubar has drawn attention to the "tiny amount of scholarship" undertaken to date on the production that came to be known as *The Children's Pinafore*. In contradiction to scholars who have treated this historical event as if it were "a single production or juvenile troupe," or as an "extraordinary experiment" with a limited temporal and geographic location, Gubar considers the early transatlantic history of *The Children's Pinafore*—which she describes as an "international phenomenon"— alongside the complex question of why audiences of the 19th century "loved to see children acting like adults."[1] This article further contributes to the scholarship of this phenomenon of historical juvenile performance by extending the global scope of the study to Australasia where companies of children, drawn together by producers to perform *HMS Pinafore*, appeared within months of similar productions in the northern hemisphere. Acknowledging *The Children's Pinafore* as another event in a long history of child-centred theatrical performance, this article examines the inaugural London production within the context of British pantomime culture and interrogates claims made on behalf of the Opéra Comique's *Children's Pinafore* that it was a startling new development in theatre innovation.

HMS Pinafore was the fourth operatic collaboration between librettist W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911) and composer Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) and it premiered at the Opéra Comique on 25 May 1878 with a company of adult performers. By late 1879 the inaugural production, with a cast led by George Grossmith as Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. and Rutland Barrington as Captain Corcoran, had proved immensely popular with London audiences as evidenced by its uninterupted, nineteen-month run of over 500 performances. François Cellier, the resident conductor with the Comedy Opera Company, attributed the *idea* for *The Children's Pinafore* to Richard Barker who was the stage manager of the adult production for the duration of its long season.[2] Noting that Gilbert, Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte provided full support for the initiative, Cellier credited Barker with seeking out children under sixteen years of age for the cast of the new version.[3] A review in the *Era*, published two days before the official opening of the juvenile version and written in response to the first full dress rehearsal, suggested however that the producers may not have needed to look far afield or audition widely for their cast of children. The *Era* reviewer observed that most of the young performers were in fact the pupils of Edward Nolan, the Opéra Comique's resident chorus master, to whom the *Era* reviewer and H. Savile Clarke (in the *Examiner*) attributed the painstaking work of training the children to both sing and act the show.[4]

With its official opening on 16 December 1879, *The Children's Pinafore* replaced the adult company in the matinee time slot (an initiative characterised by the *Graphic* as "a very hazardous experiment,"[5]) and occupied the theatre alongside

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the company of adults who maintained the evening performance until 20 February 1880, well after the end of the Christmas and New Year holiday period. Audience taste and preference for how they liked their *Pinafore* were thus well and truly catered for, with the juvenile *Pinafore* playing matinees and the adult *Pinafore* playing in the evenings. The adult performers, however, may not have had a preference for a reduction in salary, particularly as they were displaced by a tribe of youngsters whose remuneration would have totalled a fraction of the costs to keep the adult company performing two shows a day. Comparisons between the two versions that were unfavourable to the adult production must also have piqued the senior performers who had, after all, throughout an extended run of nineteen months, contributed significantly to the fortunes of the Comedy Opera Company and the reputations of Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte. The following excerpt from a review in the *Newcastle Courant* is just one example of the sort of comparisons weighted unfavourably against the adult cast. After claiming the juvenile version "a success" and grounding this claim in the quality of the children's acting ("marvellous"), singing ("a thing to be remembered for a generation"), and zeal ("tempered with discretion,") the reviewer carped about the adult version:

> I looked in at the "grown up" "Pinafore" entertainment the other evening, and it struck me that it was getting rather slovenly. A good deal is to be excused after so long a run; but slipshod acting and singing ought to be checked with a firm hand. Look to this, Mr Carte.[6]

In his memoirs, Cellier noted that upon returning from the United States in time to attend an early performance of the children's version, Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte "were so delighted with the children that they advised the members of the elder company to go and take lessons from their junior rivals."[7] The idea that child performers could teach adult performers how better to do their business became a recurrent motif in newspaper reports throughout both the opening London season and the troupe's provincial tour of 1880. The *Illustrated London News* thought "that there are many older and even well-practised actors and actresses who would catch many a hint or suggestion from these infant artistes."[8] On the other side of the world, colonial newspapers in Australia and New Zealand also reported the unfavourable criticism the adult company was attracting as a result of comparison with the younger troupe: "Two 'Pinafore' Companies were performing in London in January, but the children's one carries off the honours. They give daily matinees, which are crowded," the *Otago Witness* reported in March 1880, a few weeks after the fact.[9] The juvenile production took over the evening slot at the Opéra Comique on 20 February where it remained for another month until 20 March, thus further extending beyond the seasonal time of year for holiday productions. Eventually vacating the theatre of necessity to make way for the premiere of *The Pirates of Penzance,* the children's troupe then embarked upon a tour of provincial theatres, appearing early at Bristol's New Theatre Royal.[10]

The public's familiarity with the witty lyrics and memorable tunes of *HMS Pinafore* had been established during the long London run ("hackneyed" is the term

Cellier used, as the result of the widespread popularity and quotability of the songs).[11] That *Pinafore* had become a phenomenon of popular culture may have encouraged the organisers of the children's version to preserve the libretto and score in its entirety—they did not adapt or abbreviate the work in consideration of the child performers' lack of stage experience and vocal stamina. The only concession to the limitations of young voices was that Cellier rescored every song and chorus to suit the vocal range of the children, a painstaking task of transposition and, in the case of the choruses, musical re-arrangement, that Cellier understatedly characterised as "no child's-play," qualified the labour as "more than recompensed by the generous commendation of the composer and the compliments of the critics."[12]

Critical reception of *The Children's Pinafore* revealed that this was a rigorously rehearsed and scrupulously produced event, treated by its producers with the same level of professional management and accountability normally afforded high profile London theatricals. The carefully managed dress rehearsal that was attended by an enthusiastic audience drawn from the theatrical industry, and then favourably written up in the *Era* of 14 December, attests to this. Newspaper critics unequivocally praised the production as innovative and in the next breath described its enthusiastic reception by adult audiences who found its humour side-splittingly funny. It was these not unrelated qualities, inventiveness and comedy, together with the exemplary performances of the youthful cast, to which critics attributed the show's positive and popular reception.

That this version of *HMS Pinafore* was widely acknowledged as innovative begs interrogation, particularly in the light of very recent theatrical events that had similarly engaged entire casts of children in London and the major cities of the east coast of North America. Throughout 1877-78 popular juvenile pantomimes had been produced at London's Adelphi Theatre with whole casts comprised of children, while in 1878 an Italian company of children had performed Lecocq's three-act opera *La Fille de Madame Angot* in London.[13] During 1879 the first juvenile productions of *Pinafore* had been staged on the other side of the Atlantic in Philadelphia, New York and Boston. In the British theatrical tradition moreover, child performers were not, as Richard Foulkes has pointed out, "in themselves a novelty" and on the contemporary pantomime stage very large numbers of children were employed every year as performers in the Christmas productions.[14] Victorian theatre producers were well aware of the attraction of child performers and that, as Clement Scott acutely observed in 1879, "there is nothing that children like better than to see children act."[15] Scott's comment motions to the position of children as theatrical consumers, implying their presence in contemporary mainstream audiences. It is important to acknowledge that in 1879 *The Children's Pinafore* at the Opéra Comique was the latest in a long history of children's theatrical troupes in Britain but, as this article discusses, the template of the production contributed to a burgeoning cultural taste for children's theatre—that is, entertainment for and by children.

Children's casts—a 'novel' idea

In his recollections Cellier mused that "[t]he title 'Pinafore' may, probably, have first inspired this novel idea" to produce the show with a cast comprised entirely of children, an 'inspiration' that Cellier, as mentioned above, assigned to Richard Barker.[16] Taking into account the proliferation of juvenile *Pinafores* produced on the east coast of the United States throughout the preceding eight months, Cellier's credit to an in-house colleague seems rather disingenuous. In the absence of international copyright laws governing stage plays, multiple productions of *HMS Pinafore* had proliferated in major eastern US cities throughout early 1879, with nine adult productions of *HMS Pinafore* opening on Broadway in the first three months of that year alone, and a further three in April.[17] American theatre producers in Philadelphia, New York City and Boston derived further business from this immensely popular comic opera when they originated the first juvenile productions of *HMS Pinafore,* performed entirely by casts of children.[18]

On the afternoon of 1 May, 1879 the first juvenile *Pinafore* presented in New York City (with a cast of 101 children) opened at Haverly's Fourteenth Street Theatre (formerly the Lyceum).[19] William Collier, who joined the company when 11 years old, later noted that his salary for a place in the chorus was $3.50 per week and when the company went on tour he continued to receive this weekly rate of pay as well as his board.[20] The newspaper advertisement he responded to apparently called for 250 children "to appear at the stage door of Haverly's Theatre to try for places in a juvenile cast to present 'Pinafore.'"[21] Within a fortnight of opening, the New York Children's Pinafore troupe was joined at Haverly's by the English Opera Company (also known as the Castle Company) which presented an adult *Pinafore* in the evenings at 8pm.[22] Three months later Haverly's juvenile company went on tour (initially to New England and Canada)[23] and proceeded to play the show for a continuous period of fourteen months.[24]

During 1879 Americans, it would seem, could not get enough *Pinafore*, whether performed by adults or children. A bill from Wallack's Theatre in New York City (at Thirteenth Street and Fourth) dated 29 April 1879—just a few days prior to the juvenile opening at Haverly's—announced the imminent arrival of the Philadelphia Company of Juvenile Artists in their production of *HMS Pinafore*. Opening on 5 May, this production played matinees for two weeks.[25] In Boston on 12 May the Murphy-MacDonough Miniature Opera Pinafore opened at the Boston Museum with a cast of 60 local children. Playing matinees throughout the summer for audiences primarily comprised of families, the production eventually played evenings as well as matinees.[26] In New York City yet another juvenile *Pinafore* opened at Wood's Theatre on Broadway on 20 October.[27]

Production staff at the Opéra Comique must have been aware of the multiple *Pinafore*s staged by American producers throughout 1879 and recognised the

Figure 1 . Front and verso of a promotional card for a Children's Pinafore *in New York (author's collection)*

popular potential for a *Children's Pinafore* at home in the UK. Whilst it seems unlikely that theatre critics with leading London journals such as the *Era* and the *Graphic* were unaware of these trans-Atlantic events of piracy, they were certainly familiar with the Adelphi pantomimes performed entirely by casts of children during 1877-78. Richard Foulkes and Anne Varty have separately discussed the children's pantomimes at the Adelphi, Foulkes' consideration particularly concerns Lewis Carroll's affection for the 'respectable' pantomimes of E. L. Blanchard and F. W. Green.[28]

Under the management of F. B. Chatterton, the Adelphi Theatre in the Strand produced three pantomimes by E. L. Blanchard during the period from Christmas 1876 to early 1878.[29] The first of these, *Little Goody Two Shoes* opened at Christmas of 1876 and finally closed in April 1877 after a run extending well beyond the customary holiday season. Perhaps due to the popularity of this the first of the children's pantomimes, *Little Red Riding Hood* was subsequently produced just four months later in the 'unseasonal' period August-October,[30] its opening nevertheless coinciding with the August school holiday period. With a hiatus of only two months from juvenile casts, the third of Blanchard's children's pantomimes, *Robin Hood and His Merry Little Men,* was produced for the traditional Christmas holiday period of 1877-78. The *Era*'s response to the first of the Adelphi children's pantomimes, *Little Goody Two Shoes* had been that it was "made for children, acted by children, presented by children."[31] Two of these observations were correct, the pantomime was "made" for children, indicating that children were recognised by at least one London theatre management as a discrete group of consumers, large enough to justify the creation of a new form, the children's pantomime, "acted by children," for children. The children's pantomimes were not however strictly "presented" by

children. They were instead written, taught, and produced by adults for a newly acknowledged niche market that was seasonally aligned with school holiday periods. When Chatterton left the Adelphi in 1878, the theatre ceased production of children's pantomimes that were acted entirely 'by children, for children.'

The quintessentially Victorian traditions of British pantomime, whether at Christmas or any other holiday, held no currency of course in the United States. However, the timing of these events suggests that a trans-Atlantic transmission of the production template established by the Adelphi children's pantomimes—'by children, for children'—occurred when American producers adopted the hugely popular *HMS Pinafore* as the vehicle for clever child performers. Little more than a year after the third children's pantomime at the Adelphi (*Robin Hood and His Merry Little Men)*, the first children's *Pinafore* was produced in Philadelphia. British pantomime was a foreign medium to North Americans but the parodic narrative, witty lyrics and popular tunes of *Pinafore* proved an apposite vehicle for a cast of talented and precocious children in the 'by children, for children' model. Trans-Atlantic transmission occurred again when the 'idea' for *The Children's Pinafore* ricocheted back to London just a few months after the several all-child productions of *HMS Pinafore* that were produced in the United States during 1879-80.

International transmission of the idea of performances by children, for children, did not halt in the trans-Atlantic zone between London and the east coast of the United States moreover. On the other side of the world, in Melbourne, just one month after D'Oyly Carte's juveniles vacated the Opéra Comique and departed London for a tour of the English provinces, Australia's first *Children's Pinafore* opened on 24 April at the Bijou, one of the country's leading theatres. The 65-strong cast ranged in age from 3 to 13 years and all but one of the principal characters were played by pupils of Mrs Lewis's Academy of Music.[32] Married to the well-known theatre manager G. B. Lewis—at that time the manager of the Bijou theatre—Mrs Lewis was herself a popular actress,[33] but she was not the only Australian theatre producer with the same initiative. Just three weeks after the opening of her juvenile production, yet another *HMS Pinafore,* performed entirely by children, opened at the Mechanics' Institute Hall in Launceston, Tasmania. Pollard's Liliputian [sic] Combination, as the Tasmanian family-based troupe called themselves, almost immediately ran into legal problems when Arthur Sullivan, W. S. Gilbert, and J. C. Williamson (who held the exclusive rights to perform the opera in all the Australasian colonies), applied for an injunction to restrain Mr J. J. Pollard from producing *Pinafore*.[34]

Mrs Lewis's production proved to have a longer life than D'Oyly Carte's "hazardous" Christmas holiday "experiment" in London. The initial Melbourne season ran for sixteen weeks with newspaper reports estimating attendance at over 40,000 people.[35] The troupe subsequently played a fourteen-week season at the Queens' Theatre in Sydney with attendance of over 8,000 people during the first week alone.[36] After returning to Melbourne for a second season at the Bijou, Mrs

Lewis produced the pantomime, *Little Goody Two Shoes* (after the Adelphi model no doubt) with her young performers for the Christmas holiday period December to February, 1880-1881, followed by another six week season of *HMS Pinafore* at Garner's theatre in Adelaide from February to March of 1881. All told, this troupe had a consecutive run of eleven months, three months less than that of Haverly's juvenile troupe from New York. Although Mrs Lewis announced that her troupe of child performers would continue their inter-colonial tour of *HMS Pinafore* to New Zealand, it was in fact Pollard's Liliputian Combination that arrived in that colony in March 1881 where it played for eight months with a repertoire that initially rested solely on *HMS Pinafore* but extended, within a few months, to include Planquett's *Les Cloches de Corneville*.[37]

Children's troupes emerged to become a regular feature of Australasian theatrical touring until an Australian federal law, enacted in 1910 effectively put an end to the practice.[38] Thus, through a process of trans-national transmission, we can see that Blanchard and Chatterton's experiments with children's casts in pantomimes at the Adelphi Theatre in 1877-8 set in motion a theatrical trend that swiftly took root in North America and Australasia. It was a trend that was to continue, in Australasia at least, for the following three decades.

Complementarity and innovation

I would like to return to the widespread reception of *The Children's Pinafore* at the Opéra Comique as "absolutely unique"[39] and worry at these receptive responses a little. The *Manchester Times* thought that: "As a rule clever children are decided nuisances, and one rarely witnesses the performances of infant phenomena without feeling bored to death," but that this could not be said of *The Children's Pinafore*.[40] Writing for the *Theatre*, Clement Scott compared the show to the Adelphi children's pantomimes (1877-78) and the recent London production by the Italian children's troupe of *La Fille de Madame Angot* (1878), observing: "I don't believe that London has ever seen anything better than the baby 'Pinafore.' The humour is fresh and spontaneous, there is no parrot-like prating or tedious conceit…"[41] Scott was not suggesting that the performances of the children at the Adelphi had been in any way poor—indeed, both Foulkes and Varty, in their separate discussions, validate the received cleverness and excellence of these performances—it was just that Scott thought the latest version of *HMS Pinafore* set a new high standard in juvenile theatrical achievement. Reviewing the carefully stage-managed dress rehearsal for members of the industry, the *Era* ebulliently noted:

> These youthful *artistes* (reviewer's emphasis) appeared in many instances capable of giving new conceptions of character—capable of introducing by-play and stage business, and by their natural talent and the keen zest with which they entered upon their task, capable also of making the spectator take a novel interest in a work which they already knew by heart.[42]

Perhaps one of the perceived innovations of *The Children's Pinafore* was that it was in many ways *like* pantomime, but sufficiently different to warrant attention as a new and original development. Salient elements of its dramaturgy, humour, and calendrical location surely resonated with audiences as exhibiting qualities and elements similar to pantomime. It can have been no coincidence, on the part of the producers at the Opéra Comique, that they placed the show at the time of year devoted to pantomime and the seasonal attendance of children and their families at the theatre. The imminence of the traditional pantomime season suggests a deliberate tactic to attract family audiences (adults and children together) who would normally attend London's high profile Christmas pantomimes such as those staged at Drury Lane.

That at least one reviewer (Clement Scott) was, upon seeing *The Children's Pinafore*, reminded of the Adelphi children's pantomimes, suggests a remembrance in the minds of many audience members that may well have aligned the children's production at the Opéra Comique with the Adelphi children's pantomimes several years earlier. A comparative reading of reviews suggests a wholesome tone set both *The Children's Pinafore* and the Adelphi children's pantomimes apart from the contemporary style of pantomime. The Adelphi children's pantomimes, for example, harked back to a past era, mid-century, when pantomime was deemed by some critics to have been more 'respectable,' less coarse than contemporary pantomime which was, by this time, infused with risqué elements introduced by Music Hall performers. The principal element of the Adelphi pantomimes that aligned them with the older style was the re-introduction of the Harlequinade, an essential component of mid-19th-century pantomime. Juvenile renditions of Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Columbine at the Adelphi were particularly noted by Lewis Carroll,[43] and broadly received with nostalgia by reviewers whose own childhood memories of an older form of pantomime were awakened. *The Children's Pinafore* likewise was without the risqué or coarse elements widely held to be influencing contemporary pantomime and its critics received and promoted the show as wholesome entertainment suitable for children and family groups.

That there were at the same time similarities between *The Children's Pinafore* and contemporary pantomime is borne out in the language used by reviewers whose choice of particular words suggests that some of the comic qualities of pantomime were also present in the children's production at the Opéra Comique. 'Satire,' 'musical burlesque,' and 'incongruity' are how the *Graphic* described the defining elements of the humour; in the *Era* the words 'grotesque' and 'grotesque drollery' were prominent. *The Children's Pinafore* was clearly not pantomime but the comic resonances were present and recognisable to Christmas audiences seeking the sort of entertainment traditionally aligned with the season.

Critics also responded to the very particular nature of the comedy generated by *The Children's Pinafore*, it was a "new sensation," "fresh," "spontaneous," with an "individuality of the rarest kind,"[44] high praise indeed, suggesting that the comic

nature of the show was germane to its originality. I want to consider these judgements within the context of the show's proximity to the adult *Pinafore*. As mentioned earlier in this essay, the adult-performed *HMS Pinafore* had enjoyed a long and immensely popular London season lasting nineteen months and the tunes and lyrics of the comic opera had become entrenched within the cultural vernacular. Cellier remarked on this fact as follows:

> To Gilbert's play might have been applied the remark of the novice theatre-goer who declared he liked "Hamlet" chiefly because it contained so many quotations. For instance, the phrase "What never?—Hardly ever"—became a British proverb more familiar to all sorts and conditions of men and women than the Prince of Denmark's famous "To be, or not to be."[45]

A similar level of familiarity with the show can be assumed within the popular culture of North American cities where the juvenile *Pinafores* flourished, and, to a certain extent, also in Melbourne, Australia, where the juvenile production commenced shortly after the close of an adult production. A total of twelve adult productions had opened on Broadway in the months preceding the juvenile production at Haverly's, in Boston at least ten adult productions occurred during 1878-79,[46] and in Melbourne Mrs Lewis's juvenile production at the Bijou followed hard on the heels of the J.C. Williamson production starring Williamson and his wife, Maggie Moore. The juvenile productions of 1879-1880 were complementary outgrowths of the adult productions, their reception enhanced by the playful incongruity of highly skilled performances by children in a comic opera that popular audiences "already knew by heart."[47]

Anne Varty has posited that the Opéra Comique's miniature copy of the adult original heightened Gilbert and Sullivan's satire of the British Navy. She suggests that as a "parody of a parody," *The Children's Pinafore* "placed the production at a further remove from the potential political realities of [the work] in an era of heavy imperialist aggression."[48] Whilst this analysis of aspects of the comedy may apply to the London production of 1879-80 and the subsequent provincial tour, it does not hold for the multiple productions in North America. Granted, in the cities of North America where the juvenile productions were adjuncts to the adult productions, it is likely that parody or burlesque of the adult original may have enriched reception of the juvenile productions by adult audiences (although I would contend it is unlikely that child audiences picked up these particular comic nuances). In the United States and Canada, however, Gilbert and Sullivan's political satire of the British navy surely held little currency; *HMS Pinafore* was popularly received in these regions on different terms. Likewise in Australia and New Zealand where colonial experience and geographic distance diluted the political barbs of Gilbert and Sullivan's satire.

The reviewer for the *Era* articulated the attraction of *The Children's Pinafore* as being "not so much in its imitations of the elder performers, as in the childish

grace and drollery imparted by the juvenile performers themselves."[49] H. Savile Clarke's admiration and enthusiasm for the piece also resonated with the fascination for watching children do unexpectedly clever things: "Funny as the "Pinafore" is when played by grown up actors and actresses, it is infinitely more comic when interpreted by these tiny players, and Mr Gilbert's humour gains an additional piquancy when uttered by youthful lips."[50] Nearly a year after the children's company first performed in London, the reviewer for Liverpool's *Liberal Review* drew attention to the embodied *joie de vivre* of the children's performances: "The smaller characters and chorus are instinct with a freshness and spontaneity that keep the stage in a state of ever changing variety."[51]

Despite the enthusiastic critical and popular reception of *The Children's Pinafore* at the Opéra Comique, the show actually ran at a loss during its first London season.[52] The production did however tour extensively throughout the English provinces during 1880-81. D'Oyly Carte mounted only one more juvenile production for London audiences, *The Pirates of Penzance*. The show opened on Boxing Day 1884 and was thus aligned with the traditional Christmas pantomime season again, although this second juvenile production by the Opéra Comique had a much shorter season that the first *Children's Pinafore*, running for only thirty-six matinee performances until 13 February 1885.

Conclusion

The advent of *The Children's Pinafore*, produced hard on the heels of the Adelphi's children's pantomimes, marks a moment when children are recognised as a discrete type of audience with a critical mass worth catering to beyond the traditional Christmas period of family attendance at the theatre. Whilst this article contributes to our knowledge of the global extent of the *Children's Pinafore* during the late-19th century, an extended study of the 'for children, by children' phenomenon in North American and Australasian theatre history would significantly enhance our knowledge about child performance as a discrete form of entertainment. An extended study such as this would necessarily interrogate the emergence of children as a class of consumers, and the economic implications arising from trends that were, in turn, driven by the motors of modernity. Critical reception of these productions in different countries reveals that these shows challenged expectations of what children could achieve creatively. Moreover, the productions also challenged attitudes to childhood, even as the conditions and attributes of childhood were becoming increasingly enshrined in labour and education laws. Such a study would, I suspect, also reveal that many children involved in these theatre companies (such as William Collier in New York) exerted a surprising amount of agency to pursue their participation in the theatre.

[1] Marah Gubar, "Who Watched the Children's Pinafore? Age Transvestism on the Nineteenth-Century Stage," *Victorian Studies* 54:3 (Spring 2012): 410-426, all quotes in this paragraph at 410.
[2] Francois Cellier and Cunningham Bridgeman, *Gilbert and Sullivan and their Operas* (New York: London: Benjamin Blom, 1970 [1914]), 60.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] *Era*, 14 December 1879; *The Examiner*, 20 December 1879.
[5] *Graphic*, 20 December 1879.
[6] *Newcastle Courant* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), 19 December 1879.
[7] Cellier, 62.
[8] *Illustrated London News*, 17 January 1880, 52. See also *Liberal Review* (Liverpool), 13 November 1880, 13, "The little company play the piece with an all-round perfection to which we have not been accustomed from their big predecessors…[a]ltogether, "H.M.S. Pinafore" is seen to much more advantage at the hands of the children than it has ever appeared before."; *Bath Chronicle*, 17 February 1881, "The 'business' of the piece shows a finish and completeness not always observable in older performers."
[9] *Otago Witness* (Dunedin, N.Z.), 6 March 1880.
[10] *Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 13 March 1880.
[11] Cellier, 59.
[12] Cellier, 61.
[13] Theatrical troupes comprised entirely of child actors date from Renaissance times whilst child stars were a recurrent feature of theatrical and circus entertainments. Here my discussion is confined to recent theatrical events involving child performers that were readily recalled by London's theatre reviewers.
[14] Richard Foulkes, "Lewis Carroll, E. L. Blanchard and Frank W. Green" in Jim Davis, ed., *Victorian Pantomime: a collection of critical essays* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2010), 54-69, at 55.
[15] Clement Scott, "The Children's Pinafore," *Theatre*, 1 January 1880, new (3rd) series 1: 38.
[16] Cellier, 60.
[17] Musicals101.com, The Cyber Encyclopedia of Musical Theatre, TV and Film, http://www.musicals101.com/index.html, accessed 22 April 2011. These widespread acts of theatrical piracy were the reason that Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte travelled with a full company to New York in late 1879 to stage the official Opéra Comique production of *Pinafore*. Whilst there, the company also staged a copyright performance of the triumvirate's new work, *The Pirates of Penzance*; a single performance of *Pirates* in Paignton, Devon established copyright ownership for the work in England (Cellier, 59).
[18] The first all-child production of *HMS Pinafore* premiered on 14 April 1879 at the Broad Street Theatre in Philadelphia, produced by Messrs. Ford and Zimmerman, see Gubar, 412.
[19] "The History of 'Pinafore'," *New York Times*, 28 May 1911; Haverly's Lyceum Theatre Programme, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Scrapbooks of Programmes, Theatres-US-NY-Haverly's 14th St.
[20] A studio photograph of William Collier dressed for his part in *HMS Pinafore* is held in the University of Louisville Photographic Archives and available online at: http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/macauley/id/103
[21] "Little Willie Collier," *New York Times*, 8 October 1916. (See also entry for William Collier in the *Theatre Magazine*). *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* gives Collier's dates as 1866-1914, which made him 12-13 years and not 11 years old when he joined the cast of *Pinafore* at Haverly's.
[22] Informally named after the principal performer, William Castle, "The History of 'Pinafore'," *New York Times*, 28 May 1911.
[23] *New York Times*, 10 August 1879.
[24] *New York Times*, 8 October 1916. (See also *Theatre Magazine* entry for William Collier.)
[25] "The History of 'Pinafore'," *New York Times*, 28 May 1911; New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Scrapbook of Programmes, Theatres-US-NY-Wallacks.
[26] Harold Kanthor, "H.M.S. Pinafore and the Theater Season in Boston 1878-1879, *Journal of Popular Culture* (Spring 1991) 24:4 119-127, at 123. See also review in the *Boston Herald*, 13 May 1979.

[27] Musicals101.com, The Cyber Encyclopedia of Musical Theatre, TV and Film, http://www.musicals101.com/index.html, accessed 22 April 2011.
[28] Foulkes, 54-69; Anne Varty, *Children and Theatre in Victorian Britain: 'All Work, No Play'* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 86-92.
[29] See Foulkes, 54-61 and Varty, 86-92.
[30] Foulkes, 57.
[31] *Era*, 30 December 1877.
[32] *Otago Witness*, 1 May 1880, 19; *West Coast Times*, 23 November 1880, 2.
[33] See *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry for Rose Edouin (1844-1925) by Mimi Colligan, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/edouin-rose-13319. Born in England, Rose Edouin Bryer was from an English theatrical family and married George Benjamin William Lewis (1818-1906) in Shanghai in 1864. In 1876 G.B.W. Lewis took over the lease of the Academy of Music (Bijou Theatre) in Melbourne's Bourke Street.
[34] *Launceston Examiner* (Tasmania), 11 June 1880, 2.
[35] Three crude wood engravings representing scenes from the production at the Bijou are held by the State Library of Victoria and available online at:
http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab37985/1/b50867
http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab37985/1/b50868
http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab37985/1/b50869
[36] *Otago Witness* (Dunedin, New Zealand), 28 August and 11 September 1880.
[37] Pollard's Liliputian [sic] Opera Company opened at Invercargill on 15 March 1881 and departed Auckland for Hobart on 11 November 1881, *Otago Witness*, 19 March 1881, 20; Peter Downes, *The Pollards* (Wellington: Steele Roberts, 2002), 43.
A theatrical producer by the name of R.W. Cary organised an amateur adult production of *HMS Pinafore* in Wellington in October 1880 (*Otago Witness*, 16 October 1880, 24) and by mid-way though the following year was touring with a company of children (*Otago Witness*, 4 June 1881). *Pinafore* appears to have been their staple repertoire but Carey's juveniles also produced the *Pirates of Penzance* two years before D'Oyly Carte would produce it with a children's cast (*Observer* (Auckland), 18 February 1882, p358). During the early years of the 1880s some child performers moved freely between the various juvenile comic opera troupes managed in turn by Mrs Lewis, Pollard, Cary, and Stanley and Darbyshire. Stanley and Darbyshire's Juvenile Opera-Bouffe company also toured New Zealand for twelve months from November 1882 with a forty-strong company that included "the original and principal members" of Mrs Lewis's troupe from Melbourne. Throughout their year in New Zealand their repertoire included *HMS Pinafore*, the pantomime *Harlequin Jack the Giant Killer*, Offenbach's *Grand Duchess*, *Les Cloches de Corneville*, and the *Pirates of Penzance*. The troupe returned to Melbourne in late 1883 where it produced the pantomime *King Arthur; or, The Knights of the Round Table* at the Lyceum for the Christmas season before disbanding.
[38] Amongst its several goals the Australian federal Emigration Bill of 1910 aimed to prevent the emigration from, or taking out of, the Commonwealth of Australia, of "any child who is under contract to perform theatrical, operatic, or other work outside the Commonwealth." *Argus* [Melbourne], 10 November 1910, 6.
[39] *Era*, 14 December 1879.
[40] *Manchester Times*, 20 December 1879.
[41] Clement Scott, *Theatre*, 3:1 38-39 (1 January 1880.)
[42] *Era*, 14 December 1879.
[43] Foulkes, 56.
[44] *Era*, 21 December 1879.
[45] Cellier, 60.
[46] Kanthor, 119-127.
[47] *Era*, 14 December 1879
[48] Varty, 94-5.
[49] *Era*, 14 December 1879
[50] *Examiner*, 20 December 1879.

[51] *Liberal Review*, 13 November 1880.
[52] Letter from D'Oyly Carte to Gilbert and Sullivan, dated 8 April 1880. D'Oyly Carte Collection Box 22, V&A Theatre and Performance Collection.

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