

The Time Traveller

A selection of references both G&S and also current day TV and film.

Bar 11

"'Tis done .. I'm satisfied"

In Yeoman of the Guard, Elsie sings 'Tis done I am a bride'.

Bar 109

"Is this 2012 ... It is"

A reference to Trial By Jury ("Is this the court of the Exchequer? It is")

Bar 111

"This lozenge functions well"

On several occasions Gilbert proposed a 'lozenge' plot to Sullivan, a device to change, magically, one of the characters. Sullivan did not want anything magical and so the lozenge never made an appearance in a G&S opera.

Bar 115

The Professor's cadenza is similar to Mabel's cadenza in Pirates of Penzance (Act 1).

Bar 117

The Professor's song is reminiscent of Nanki Poo's song, A Wandering Minstrel, from the Mikado.

Bar 181

"Free from life's fetters grim"

See Col. Fairfax's song in Act 2 of The Yeoman of the Guard ("Free from his fetters grim")

Bar 224

The Incantation

This is reminiscent of the incantation scene in The Sorcerer, which itself was a reference to a similar scene in the then popular 1831 opera Robert The Devil (Giacomo Meyerbeer). We have even 'borrowed' a motif from Meyerbeer which you can hear in bars 231/232.

Bar 292

Abandoned baby

Gilbert was fond of including babies in his plot lines. Babies swapped at birth (HMS Pinafore, The Gondoliers), babies promised in marriage (Princess Ida), and born on 29th February (Pirates of Penzance). In Sullivan's Cox and Box (words by FC Burnand) the main protagonists eventually discover they are long lost brothers. The proof is, paradoxically, that neither has a strawberry mark on his arm. Gilbert would have been more logical (sic).

Bar 356 and 383

"Poor fellow"

As in the pirates' response to Major General Stanley in Pirates of Penzance Act 1 Finale.

Bar 358 and following

"On the one hand .."

Reminiscent of Josephine's soul searching in HMS Pinafore when trying to decide between Ralph Rackstraw and Sir Joseph Porter.

Bar 394

Strawberry marks

See above explanation at Bar 292

Bar 426

DNA results

There are two modern references here.

The first is the Jeremy Kyle Show, a British daytime television tabloid talk show in which the results of a DNA test are announced in a dramatic fashion thereby establishing the paternity of a child.

The second is the highly annoying (to us anyway) practice of delaying results, to the accompaniment of underscored music, on reality and talent TV shows.

Bar 439

"When a lass of 22 becomes a grandmother"

Gilbert created topsy-turvy worlds, hence the 1999 film about Gilbert and Sullivan which was called Topsy-Turvy. Here we have a 22 year old grandmother and her 65 year old grandson.

Gilbert wrote a one-act operetta (music by Alfred Cellier) called Topsyturveydom in which everything is the reverse of our world. The people are born elderly and grow younger until they become infants. They are born wise and gradually forget everything. At one point in the operetta the king's mother and grandmother enter holding a baby who is actually the king's great grandmother.

Bar 509

"Hail DNA"

Reminiscent of 'Hail Poetry' from Pirates of Penzance.

James Watson and Francis Crick were leaders of the team which first documented the structure of DNA, the molecule that carries human genetic information. They were rewarded with Nobel prizes.

Bar 521

"In 2017 I your Grandfather will marry"

Reminiscent of Frederick's recitative in Pirates of Penzance, "In 1940 I of age shall be, I'll then return, and claim you, I declare it!

Bar 544 and following bars

"This memory wiper has the knack, I bought it from a man in black"

In the 1997 film, Men in Black, a device called a neuralyser is used to erase memory.

Bar 558

"And now that I've found you"

Reminiscent of Strephon's song in Iolanthe, "Good morrow, good mother!"

Bar 623

"I had to find out just who I was"

Reference to the British TV programme, 'Who do you think you are', in which celebrities research their family tree.