

= Richard D 'Oyly Carte =

Richard D 'Oyly Carte ( 3 May 1844 ? 3 April 1901 ) was an English talent agent , theatrical impresario , composer and hotelier during the latter half of the Victorian era . Rising from humble beginnings , Carte built two of London 's theatres and a hotel empire , while also establishing an opera company that ran continuously for over a hundred years and a management agency representing some of the most important artists of the day .

Carte started his career working for his father , Richard Carte , in the music publishing and musical instrument manufacturing business . As a young man , he conducted and composed music , but he soon turned to promoting the entertainment careers of others through his management agency . Carte believed that a school of wholesome , well @-@ crafted , family @-@ friendly , English comic opera could be as popular as the risqué French works dominating the London musical stage in the 1870s . To that end , he brought together the dramatist W. S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan and , together with his wife Helen Carte , he nurtured their collaboration on a series of thirteen Savoy operas . He founded the D 'Oyly Carte Opera Company and built the state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art Savoy Theatre to host the Gilbert and Sullivan operas .

Carte also built the Savoy Hotel in London , and acquired other luxury hotels . In addition , he erected the Palace Theatre , London , which he had intended to be the home of a new school of English grand opera , although this ambition was not realised beyond the production of a single grand opera by Sullivan , *Ivanhoe* . Nevertheless , his partnership with Gilbert and Sullivan , and his careful management of their operas and relationship , created a series of works whose success was unprecedented in the history of musical theatre . His opera company , later operated by Helen and then by his son , Rupert , and granddaughter , Bridget , promoted those works for over a century , and they are still performed regularly today .

= = Early life = =

Carte was born in Greek Street in the West End of London on 3 May 1844 . He was the eldest of six children . His father , Richard Carte ( originally Cart ; 1808 ? 1891 ) , was a flautist , and his mother was the former Eliza Jones ( 1814 ? 1885 ) ; they had eloped , to the disappointment of her father , Thomas Jones , a clergyman . His siblings were Blanch ( 1846 ? 1935 ) , Viola ( 1848 ? 1925 ) , Rose ( b . 1854 ) , Henry ( 1856 ? 1926 ) and Eliza ( 1860 ? 1941 ) . Carte was of Welsh and Norman ancestry ; D 'Oyly is a Norman French name which " was a forename ( not part of a double surname ) " . To supplement his income as a performer , Carte 's father joined the firm of Rudall , Rose & Co . , musical instrument makers and music publishers , in 1850 . After he became a partner in the business , it changed its name to Rudall , Rose , Carte and Co. and later to Rudall , Carte & Co .

Carte was brought up in Dartmouth Park Road . His cultured mother exposed her family to art , music and poetry , and young Carte studied the violin and then the flute at an early age . The family spoke French at home two days a week , and his parents often took their children to the theatre . He was educated at University College School , which he left in 1860 . In 1861 , he achieved First Class level in the matriculation examination and then attended University College , London . However , he left later that year to work in his father 's business , along with his brother , Henry . He studied music during this time and composed some pieces , which he dedicated to the actress Kate Terry . He also acted in amateur theatricals .

= = Career = =

Between 1868 and 1877 , Carte wrote and published the music for a number of his own songs and instrumental works , as well as several comic operas : *Doctor Ambrosias* ? *His Secret* , at St. George 's Hall ( 1868 ) ; *Marie* , with librettist E. Spencer Mott , at London 's Opera Comique in 1871 ; and *Happy Hampstead* , with librettist Frank Desprez , which debuted on an 1876 provincial tour and then played at the Royalty Theatre in 1877 . On tour in 1871 , Carte conducted *Cox and Box* by

composer Arthur Sullivan and dramatist F. C. Burnand , in tandem with English adaptations of two Offenbach pieces , called *Rose of Auvergne* and *Breaking the Spell* , in which Carte 's client Selina Dolaro appeared . Carte 's musical talent would be helpful later in his career , as he was able to audition singers himself from the pianoforte .

During the late 1860s and early 1870s , from within his father 's firm in Charing Cross and , by late 1874 , from a nearby address in Craig 's Court , Carte began to build an operatic , concert and lecture management agency . His two hundred clients eventually included Charles Gounod , Jacques Offenbach , Adelina Patti , Mario , Clara Schumann , Antoinette Sterling , Edward Lloyd , Mr. and Mrs. German Reed , George Grossmith , Matthew Arnold , James McNeill Whistler and Oscar Wilde . Hesketh Pearson said of Carte : " His acute business sense was aided by a frank and agreeable manner .... He took what other people thought were risks , but he felt were certainties . He knew everyone worth knowing ... and his practical judgement was as sure as his sense of artistry . "

= = = Founding his opera company = = =

In 1874 , Carte leased the Opera Comique , a small theatre off the Strand , where he presented a Brussels company in the British premiere of the operetta *Giroflé @-@ Giroflà* by Charles Lecocq , followed by *The Broken Branch* , an English adaptation of Gaston Serpette 's *La branche cassée* . Carte announced his ambitions on the front of the programme for the latter : " It is my desire to establish in London a permanent abode for light Opera . " The Observer reported , " Mr D 'Oyly Carte is not only a skilful manager , but a trained musician , and he appears to have grasped the fact that the public are beginning to become weary of what is known as a genuine opera bouffe , and are ready to welcome a musical entertainment of a higher order , such as a musician might produce with satisfaction " .

Carte later said it was " the scheme of my life " to found a school of high @-@ quality , family @-@ friendly English comic opera , in contrast to the bawdy burlesques and adaptations of French operettas that dominated the London musical stage at that time . His experience in writing operettas , however , had convinced him that his own creative talents were inadequate for the task . He later wrote to dramatist W. S. Gilbert , " I envy your position but I could never attain it . If I could be an author like you I would certainly not be a manager . I am simply the tradesman who sells your works of art . " Furthermore , in 1874 Carte did not yet have the resources to make his idea into reality , and after his season at the Opera Comique , he terminated his lease . In the same year , he arranged for his client , Offenbach , to collaborate with H. B. Farnie to write a new operetta on the theme of *Dick Whittington and His Cat* , which played during the Christmas season at the Alhambra Theatre .

In 1875 , Carte became the business manager of the Royalty Theatre , under the direction of his client , the popular singing actress Madame Selina Dolaro . There he programmed Offenbach 's *La Périchole* . To fill out the evening ( as long programmes were the fashion in Victorian theatre ) , he needed another piece . He remembered a libretto for a one @-@ act comic opera that W. S. Gilbert had written and shown to him in 1873 , called *Trial by Jury* . Meanwhile , Sullivan 's popular 1867 opera , *Cox and Box* , had been revived at the Gaiety Theatre in 1874 , and Carte had already asked him to write a piece for the Royalty . Carte knew that Gilbert had worked with Sullivan to create *Thespis* in 1871 , and he now suggested that Sullivan could write the music for *Trial by Jury* . Because Gilbert and Sullivan shared his vision of increasing the quality and respectability of English musical theatre , and so broadening its audience through the promotion of well @-@ crafted English light operas , Carte gave them wider authority as director and music director than was customary at that time . *Trial by Jury* , a comic treatment of an English courtroom , was an unexpected hit , outrunning *La Périchole* , and becoming the first step in Carte 's scheme to establish a new genre of English comic opera .

Carte managed the first tour of *Trial by Jury* , which stopped at the Theatre Royal in Dublin , Ireland , in September 1875 . While there , he met a young Scottish actress , Susan Couper Black , who used the stage name Helen Lenoir . She became fascinated by his vision for establishing a

company to promote English comic opera and gave up her next engagement to join his theatrical organisation as his secretary . Well @-@ educated , with an organisational ability , business acumen , focus on detail and diplomatic skills that surpassed even Carte 's , Lenoir gradually became intensely involved in all of his business affairs . Carte and Lenoir married in 1888 , three years after the death of his first wife .

Even after the initial production of *Trial by Jury* , however , Carte continued to produce continental operetta , touring in the summer of 1876 with a repertoire consisting of English adaptations of French opera bouffe ( Offenbach 's *La Périhole* , and *La Grande @-@ Duchesse de Gérolstein* , Lecocq 's *La fille de Madame Angot* and Léon Vasseur 's *La Timbale d 'argent* ) , paired with two one @-@ act English after @-@ pieces ( *Happy Hampstead* and *Trial by Jury* ) . Carte acted as the musical director of this travelling company that included W.H. Denny .

Encouraged by the success of *Trial by Jury* , Carte made attempts in 1875 ? 76 to raise money for either a revival of *Thespis* or a new piece . A year later , he finally found four backers and formed the " *Comedy Opera Company* " to produce the future works of Gilbert and Sullivan , along with the works of other British author / composer teams . This allowed Carte to lease the *Opera Comique* and to give Gilbert and Sullivan firm terms for a new opera . By this time , Helen Lenoir had been promoted from Carte 's secretary to his assistant . The first comic opera produced by the new company was Gilbert and Sullivan 's *The Sorcerer* in 1877 , with a plot involving a tradesmanlike London magician and his patented love potion . Gilbert , Sullivan and Carte were able to select their own cast , instead of using the players under contract to the theatre where the work was produced , as had been the case with their earlier works . They chose talented actors , few of whom were well @-@ known stars , and Carte 's agency provided many of the artists . The reception of the piece showed that Carte had been right : there was a promising future in family @-@ friendly English comic opera .

*The Sorcerer* was followed by H.M.S. Pinafore in 1878 . Business for the new opera was slow at first . Carte 's investors in the *Comedy Opera Company* advocated cutting their losses and closing the show . After promotional efforts by Carte and Sullivan , who included some of the Pinafore music in several promenade concerts at Covent Garden , Pinafore became a hit . Carte persuaded Gilbert and Sullivan that when their original agreement with the *Comedy Opera Company* expired in July 1879 , a business partnership among the three of them would be to their advantage . The three each put up £ 1 @,@ 000 and formed a new partnership under the name " *Mr Richard D 'Oyly Carte 's Opera Company* " . Under the partnership agreement , once the expenses of mounting the productions had been deducted , each of the three men was entitled to one third of the profits .

On 31 July 1879 , the last day of their agreement with Carte , the directors of the *Comedy Opera Company* attempted to repossess the Pinafore set by force during a performance , causing a celebrated fracas . Carte 's stagehands managed to ward off their backstage attackers and protect the scenery and props . The *Comedy Opera Company* opened a rival production of H.M.S. Pinafore in London , but it was not as popular as the D 'Oyly Carte production and soon closed . Legal action over the ownership of the rights ended in victory for Carte , Gilbert and Sullivan . From 1 August 1879 , the new company , later called the *D 'Oyly Carte Opera Company* , became the sole authorised producer of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan .

= = = Early opera successes ; property interests = = =

H.M.S. Pinafore was so successful that Carte soon sent two additional companies out to tour in the provinces . The opera ran for 571 performances in London , the second @-@ longest run in musical theatre history up to that time . Over 150 unauthorised productions sprang up in America alone , but because American law then offered no copyright protection to foreigners , Carte , Gilbert and Sullivan were not able to demand royalties from , or to control the artistic content of , these productions .

To try to counter this copyright piracy and make some money from the popularity of their opera in America , Carte travelled to New York with the authors and the company to present an " authentic " production of Pinafore there , beginning in December 1879 , as well as American tours . Carte 's

assistant , Helen Lenoir , who became his wife in 1888 , made fifteen visits to America in the 1880s and 1890s to promote Carte 's interests , superintending arrangements for American productions and tours of each of the new Gilbert and Sullivan operas . Beginning with Pinafore , Carte licensed the J. C. Williamson company to produce the works in Australia and New Zealand .

In an effort to head off unauthorised American productions of their next opera , The Pirates of Penzance , Carte and his partners opened it in New York on 31 December 1879 , prior to its 1880 London premiere . They hoped to forestall further " piracy " by establishing the authorised production and tours in America before others could copy it and by delaying publication of the score and libretto . They did succeed in keeping for themselves the direct profits of the venture , but they tried without success for many years to control the American performance copyrights over their operas . Pirates was an immediate hit in New York , and later London , becoming one of the most popular Gilbert and Sullivan operas . To secure the British copyright , there was a perfunctory performance the afternoon before the New York premiere , at the Royal Bijou Theatre , Paignton , Devon , organised by Helen Lenoir .

The next Gilbert and Sullivan opera , Patience , opened at the Opera Comique in April 1881 and was another big success , usurping Pinafore 's position as the longest running piece in the series with the second @-@ longest run in musical theatre history . Patience satirised the self @-@ indulgent aesthetic movement of the 1870s and ' 80s in England . To popularise the opera in America , in 1882 Carte sent one of the artistes under his management , the young poet Oscar Wilde , on a lecture tour to explain to Americans what the aesthetic movement was about . Carte told an interviewer at that time that he had fifteen theatrical companies and performers touring simultaneously in Europe , America and Australia .

Carte had been planning to build a new theatre for several years to promote English comic opera and , in particular , the Gilbert and Sullivan operas . With profits from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas and his concert and lecture agency , he bought property along the Strand in 1880 with frontage onto the Thames Embankment , where he built the Savoy Theatre in 1881 . Carte chose the name in honour of the Savoy Palace , which had been built on the site in the thirteenth century by Peter , Count of Savoy . It later passed to John of Gaunt but was destroyed in the Peasants ' Revolt in 1381 . The Savoy Theatre was a state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art facility , setting a new standard for technology , comfort and decor . It was the first public building in the world to be lit entirely by electric lights and seated nearly 1 @,@ 300 people ( compared to the Opera Comique 's 862 ) .

Patience was the first production at the new theatre , transferring there on 10 October 1881 . The first generator proved too small to power the whole building , and though the entire front of house was electrically lit , the stage was lit by gas until 28 December 1881 . At that performance , Carte stepped on stage and broke a glowing lightbulb before the audience to demonstrate the safety of the new technology . The Times concluded that the theatre " is admirably adapted for its purpose , its acoustic qualities are excellent , and all reasonable demands of comfort and taste are complied with . " Carte and his manager , George Edwardes ( later famous as manager of the Gaiety Theatre ) , introduced several innovations at the theatre including free programme booklets , the orderly " queue " system with numbered tickets for the pit and gallery ( an American idea ) , tea served at the interval and a policy of no tipping for cloakroom or other services . Daily expenses at the theatre were about half the possible takings from ticket sales . The last eight of Gilbert and Sullivan 's comic operas were premiered at the Savoy , and all of their operas came to be known as Savoy operas .

The Savoy Hotel , designed by the architect Thomas Edward Colcutt , opened in 1889 . Financed by profits from The Mikado , it was the first hotel lit by electric lights and the first with electric lifts . In the 1890s , under its famous manager , César Ritz , and chef Auguste Escoffier , it became a well @-@ known luxury hotel and would generate more income and contribute more to the D 'Oyly Carte fortunes than any other enterprise , including the opera companies . Carte later acquired and refurbished Claridge 's ( 1893 ) , The Grand Hotel in Rome ( 1896 ) , Simpson 's @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Strand ( 1898 ) and The Berkeley ( 1900 ) .

= = = Peak years for the opera company = = =

During the years when the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were being written , Richard D 'Oyly Carte also produced operas and plays by other writing teams , as well as other works to fill the Savoy Theatre in between new operas . Many of these were companion pieces to the Gilbert and Sullivan operas , as the Victorian audiences preferred long evenings in the theatre . Some , however , were new full @-@ length pieces either for the Savoy or for Carte 's touring companies , which toured the Gilbert and Sullivan operas , and these new works , extensively . Carte and Lenoir also continued to run his management agency . As an example of their level of activity , an 1881 souvenir programme commemorating the 250th performance of *Patience* in London and its 100th performance in New York states that , in addition to these two productions of *Patience* , Carte was simultaneously producing many other projects . These included two companies touring with *Patience* , two touring with other Gilbert and Sullivan operas , one touring with the operetta *Olivette* ( co @-@ produced with Charles Wyndham ) , one with Claude Duval in America , a production of *Youth* running at a New York theatre , a lecture tour by Archibald Forbes ( a war correspondent ) and productions of *Patience* , *Pirates* , *Claude Duval* and *Billee Taylor* in association with J. C. Williamson in Australia , among other things .

Carte also introduced the practice of licensing amateur theatrical societies to present works for which he held the rights , increasing the works ' popularity and the sales of scores and libretti , as well as the rental of band parts . This had an important influence on amateur theatre in general . Cellier and Bridgeman wrote in 1914 that , prior to the creation of the Savoy operas , amateur actors were treated with contempt by professionals . After the formation of amateur Gilbert and Sullivan companies licensed to perform the operas , professionals recognised that the amateur societies " support the culture of music and the drama . They are now accepted as useful training schools for the legitimate stage , and from the volunteer ranks have sprung many present @-@ day favourites . " Cellier and Bridgeman attributed the rise in quality and reputation of the amateur groups largely to " the popularity of , and infectious craze for performing , the Gilbert and Sullivan operas " . The National Operatic and Dramatic Association was founded in 1899 . It reported , in 1914 , that nearly 200 British societies were producing Gilbert and Sullivan operas that year .

After *Patience* , Carte produced *Iolanthe* , which opened in 1882 . During its run , in February 1883 , Carte signed a five @-@ year partnership agreement with Gilbert and Sullivan , obliging them to create new operas for him upon six months ' notice . Sullivan had not intended to immediately write a new work with Gilbert , but he suffered a serious financial loss when his broker went bankrupt in November 1882 and must have felt the long @-@ term contract necessary for his security . Gilbert scholar Andrew Crowther comments , " Effectively , [ the contract ] made [ Gilbert and Sullivan ] Carte 's employees ? a situation which created its own resentments . " The partnership 's next opera , *Princess Ida* , opened in January 1884 . Carte soon saw that *Ida* was running weakly at the box office and invoked the agreement to call upon his partners to write a new opera . The musical establishment constantly pressured Sullivan to abandon comic opera in favour of serious music , and after he was knighted in 1883 , the pressure only increased . He soon regretted having signed the five @-@ year contract . In March 1884 , Sullivan told Carte that " it is impossible for me to do another piece of the character of those already written by Gilbert and myself . "

During this conflict and others during the 1880s , Carte and Helen Lenoir frequently worked to smooth over the partners ' differences using a mixture of friendship and business acumen . Sullivan asked to be released from the partnership on several occasions . Nevertheless , Carte was able to coax eight comic operas out of his partners in the 1880s . When *Princess Ida* closed after a comparatively short run of nine months , for the first time in the partnership 's history , the next opera was not ready . Gilbert first suggested a plot in which people fell in love against their wills after taking a magic lozenge ? a scenario that Sullivan had previously rejected . Gilbert eventually came up with a new idea and began work in May 1884 .

Carte produced the first revival of *The Sorcerer* , together with *Trial by Jury* , and matinees of *The Pirates of Penzance* played by a cast of children , while he waited for his partners to finish writing the new work . This became the partnership 's most successful opera , *The Mikado* , which opened in March 1885 . The piece satirised British institutions by setting them in a fictional Japan and took advantage of the Victorian craze for the exotic and " picturesque " Far East . *The Mikado* became

the partnership 's longest @-@ running hit , lasting for 672 performances at the Savoy Theatre , and supplanting *Patience* as the second @-@ longest @-@ running work of musical theatre up to that time . It was extraordinarily popular in the US and worldwide and remains the most frequently performed Savoy Opera .

The partnership 's next opera was *Ruddigore* , which opened in January 1887 . The piece , though a financial success , was a relative disappointment after the extraordinary run of *The Mikado* . When *Ruddigore* closed after nine months , Carte mounted revivals of earlier Gilbert and Sullivan operas at the Savoy for almost a year . After another attempt by Gilbert to persuade Sullivan to set a " lozenge plot " , Gilbert met his collaborator half way by writing a serio @-@ comic plot for *The Yeomen of the Guard* , which premiered in October 1888 . The opera ran for over a year , with strong New York and touring productions . This was a happy time for Carte , with a long @-@ running opera , new marriage and new hotel and opera house under construction . When Carte asked his partners for a new work , Sullivan again expressed reluctance to write another comic opera , asking if Gilbert would write a " dramatic work on a larger musical scale " . Gilbert declined but offered a compromise that Sullivan ultimately accepted : the two would write a light opera for the Savoy , and at the same time , Sullivan could work on a grand opera that Carte would produce at a new theatre he was planning to build to present British grand opera . The new comic opera was *The Gondoliers* , which opened in December 1889 and became one of the partnership 's greatest successes .

During these years , Carte was not just the manager of the theatre . He was a full participant in the producing partnership with Gilbert and Sullivan , involved in casting and finding designers ; in charge of publicity ; directing and hiring designers for the non @-@ Gilbert works , including the many companion pieces ( sometimes with the help of assistants ) ; and casting , directing and rehearsing the touring companies , among other duties . According to Henry Lytton , " Mr. Carte was a great stage manager . He could take in the details of a scene with one sweep of his eagle eye and say unerringly just what was wrong . " The quality of Carte 's productions created a national and international taste for them , and he sent touring companies throughout the British provinces , to America ( generally managed by Helen ) , Europe and elsewhere . Queen Victoria honoured the company by calling for a Royal Command Performance of *The Gondoliers* at Windsor Castle in 1891 . Following the libretto closely , she noticed additions to the text made by some of the actors and asked Carte to explain why this was done . Carte replied that they " are what we call ' gags ' " . The queen answered that she had always understood that " gags were things that were put by authority into people 's mouths . " Carte rejoined , " These gags , Your Majesty , are things people put into their own mouths without authority . " George Bernard Shaw , writing in *The World* in October 1893 , stated :

Those who are old enough to compare the Savoy performances with those of the dark ages , taking into account the pictorial treatment of the fabrics and colors on the stage , the cultivation and intelligence of the choristers , the quality of the orchestra , and the degree of artistic good breeding , so to speak , expected from the principals , best know how great an advance has been made by Mr. D'Oyly Carte .

= = = End of the partnership and last years = = =

On 22 April 1890 , during the run of *The Gondoliers* , Gilbert discovered that maintenance expenses for the theatre , including a new £ 500 carpet for the front lobby of the theatre , were being charged to the partnership instead of borne by Carte . Gilbert angrily confronted Carte , but Carte refused to reconsider the accounts . Even though the amount of the charge was not great , Gilbert felt that it was a moral issue involving Carte 's integrity , and he could not look past it . Gilbert stormed out and wrote to Sullivan that " I left him with the remark that it was a mistake to kick down the ladder by which he had risen " . Helen Carte wrote that Gilbert had addressed Carte " in a way that I should not have thought you would have used to an offending menial . " Matters deteriorated further , and Gilbert brought a lawsuit . Sullivan sided with Carte , who was building the Royal English Opera House , the inaugural production of which was to be Sullivan 's forthcoming grand

opera . Gilbert won the dispute and felt vindicated , but his actions had been hurtful to his partners , and the partnership disbanded .

Carte 's first production at the Royal English Opera House was of Sullivan 's only grand opera , *Ivanhoe* , which opened in January 1891 . It played for an initial run of 155 performances , a record for an opera , but no other operas shared the new opera house with it . Instead , *Ivanhoe* was presented every night with alternating casts . When *Ivanhoe* finally closed in July , Carte had no new work ready to play at the opera house , and so it had to close . The opera house re-opened in November 1891 with André Messager 's *La Basoche* at first alternating in repertory with *Ivanhoe* , and then *La Basoche* played alone , closing in January 1892 . Carte again had no new opera to present at the house , and the venture soon failed . Sir Henry Wood , who had been répétiteur for the production , recalled in his autobiography , " If D 'Oyly Carte had had a repertory of six operas instead of only one , I believe he would have established English opera in London for all time . Towards the end of the run of *Ivanhoe* I was already preparing *The Flying Dutchman* with Eugène Oudin in the name part . He would have been superb . However , plans were altered and the Dutchman was shelved . " Carte leased the theatre to Sarah Bernhardt for a season and finally abandoned the project . He sold the opera house at a loss to producer Augustus Harris . It was then converted into a music hall , the Palace Theatre of Varieties , and later became the Palace Theatre .

Because of the carpet quarrel , Gilbert had vowed to write no more for the Savoy . When *The Gondoliers* closed in 1891 , Carte needed new authors and composers to write works for the Savoy Theatre . He turned to old friends George Dance , Frank Desprez and Edward Solomon for his next piece , *The Nautch Girl* , which ran for a satisfying 200 performances in 1891 ? 92 . Carte then revived Solomon and Sydney Grundy 's *The Vicar of Bray* , which ran through the summer of 1892 . Next came Grundy and Sullivan 's *Haddon Hall* , which held the stage until April 1893 . While Carte presented new pieces and revivals at the Savoy , his touring companies continued to play throughout Britain and in America . In 1894 , for example , Carte had four companies touring Britain and one playing in America .

Gilbert 's aggressive , though successful , legal action had embittered Carte and Sullivan , but the partnership had been so profitable that Carte and his wife eventually sought to reunite the author and composer . After several attempts by the Cartes , the reconciliation finally came through the efforts of Tom Chappell , who published the sheet music to their operas . In 1893 , Gilbert and Sullivan produced their penultimate collaboration , *Utopia , Limited* . While *Utopia* was being prepared , Carte produced *Jane Annie* , by J. M. Barrie and Arthur Conan Doyle , with music by Ernest Ford . Despite the popularity of Barrie and Conan Doyle , the show was a flop , closing after only 51 performances .

*Utopia* was Carte 's most expensive production to date , but it ran for a comparatively disappointing 245 performances , until June 1894 . Carte then played first *Mirette* , composed by André Messager , then *The Chieftain* , by F. C. Burnand and Sullivan . These ran for 102 and 97 performances , respectively . The company then toured the London suburbs , and the theatre was dark during the summer of 1895 , reopening in November for a revival of *The Mikado* . This was followed in 1896 by *The Grand Duke* , which ran for 123 performances and was Gilbert and Sullivan 's only financial failure . *The Gondoliers* turned out to be Gilbert and Sullivan 's last big hit , and after *The Grand Duke* , the two men never collaborated again . At the Savoy , Carte produced *His Majesty* ( 1897 ) , *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* ( 1897 ) , *The Beauty Stone* ( 1898 ) and *The Lucky Star* ( 1899 ) , as well as revivals of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas .

Though the 1890s brought Carte more disappointments than hits in the theatre , his hotel business prospered and grew . He acquired Simpson 's @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Strand and Claridge 's Hotel , both of which he entirely rebuilt . There was one grave setback , in 1897 , when he had to dismiss his manager , Ritz , and his star chef , Escoffier , for financial misconduct . Carte 's choice as successor to Ritz was George Reeves @-@ Smith , manager and part @-@ owner of the Berkeley Hotel . To secure his services , Carte bought the Berkeley in 1900 and promoted Reeves @-@ Smith to be managing director of the whole Savoy Group . Carte had used the same method , a year earlier , to secure a new maître d 'hôtel . He was determined to engage M. Joseph , proprietor

of the Marivaux Restaurant in Paris , then at the height of its fame . Carte was seriously ill , but he insisted on being carried to the boat @-@ train . In Paris he bought the Marivaux and returned with Joseph to the Savoy .

Throughout the later 1890s , Carte 's health was in decline , and Helen assumed more and more of the responsibilities for the opera company . She profitably managed the theatre and the provincial touring companies . In 1894 , Carte had hired his son , Rupert , as an assistant . While Carte was ill , in 1897 , Rupert assisted Mrs. Carte and W. S. Gilbert with the first revival of *The Yeomen of the Guard* at the Savoy . The Savoy put on a number of shows for comparatively short runs during this period , including Sullivan 's *The Beauty Stone* , which ran for only 50 performances , in 1898 . In 1899 , Carte finally had a new success with Sullivan and Basil Hood 's *The Rose of Persia* , which ran for 213 performances . Neither Carte nor Sullivan lived to see the production of the next piece by Hood , *The Emerald Isle* , for which Edward German completed Sullivan 's unfinished score .

= = Personal life = =

Carte was married twice . His first wife was Blanche Julia Prowse ( 1853 ? 1885 ) , the daughter of William Prowse , a piano manufacturer , music publisher and booking agent . As a teenager , she had participated in amateur theatricals with Carte . They married in 1870 and had two sons , Lucas ( 1872 ? 1907 ) and Rupert . Blanche died of pneumonia in 1885 , and in 1888 , Carte married his assistant , Helen . Their wedding took place in the Savoy Chapel , with Arthur Sullivan as the best man . Rupert received training in an accounting firm and then became his father 's assistant in 1894 . Lucas , who was not involved in the family businesses , became a barrister . He was appointed Private Secretary to Lord Chief Justice Charles Russell in 1899 in connection with the Venezuelan boundary arbitration in Paris . There he contracted tuberculosis and later died of that disease at the age of 34 .

Carte 's London house was at the Adelphi , not far from the Savoy . Passionate about the visual arts as well as the performing arts , Carte invited his friend , the artist James McNeill Whistler , to decorate the house . Whistler had the entire billiard room painted the colour of the billiard cloth , and elsewhere painted his favourite yellow with his own hand . Equally enthusiastic for technological innovation , Carte installed a lift , the first in a private house in England . Around 1890 , he bought a small island in the River Thames , between Weybridge and Shepperton , called Folly Eyot , which he renamed D 'Oyly Carte Island . He wanted to use the island as an annex to his new Savoy Hotel , but the local authorities refused to grant him a drinks licence for the property . Instead , he built Eyot House , a large house and garden on the island , that he used as a residence . In later years , Carte displayed his macabre sense of humour by keeping a crocodile on the island .

= = Death and legacy = =

Carte died at his London home from dropsy and heart disease in 1901 , just short of his 57th birthday . He is buried in the churchyard of St. Andrew 's church in Fairlight , East Sussex , near his parents ' graves . A memorial service was held at the Chapel Royal of the Savoy , where a memorial stained glass window was later dedicated to him . He left an estate valued at £ 250 @, @ 000 .

Carte was instrumental in bringing the British theatre from its low status in the mid @-@ Victorian age to a position of respectable eminence , with knighthoods for actors , such as Henry Irving , and for dramatists , including Gilbert . George Bernard Shaw wrote of Carte 's theatrical legacy , " Mr D 'Oyly Carte founded a new school of English comic opera ; raised operatic inscenation to the rank of a fine art ; and finally built a new English Opera House and made a magnificent effort to do for English grand opera what he had done for comic opera . " In Carte 's obituary , *The Times* noted , " By his refined taste he raised the reputation of the *mise en scène* of the Savoy operas to a very high pitch . He set a high standard " . Beyond this , however , Carte 's influence , through the production of the Savoy operas , heavily influenced the course of the development of modern musical theatre .

Carte was also a prime mover in making hotels respectable and respected : in the words of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography : " Led by the prince of Wales [ the Savoy ] became the



meeting place for London high society and the nouveaux riches of the British empire .... [ The ] food and the ambience lured people from the clubs to dine in public and give great parties there . It allowed ladies , hitherto fearful of dining in public , to be seen in full regalia in the Savoy dining and supper rooms . "

Carte left the theatre , opera company , hotels and his other business interests to Helen . Her London and touring companies continued to present the Savoy Operas in Britain and overseas . In 1901 she leased the Savoy Theatre to William Greet , overseeing his management of a revival of Iolanthe and several new comic operas . Rupert became chairman of the Savoy Hotel by 1903 , which Helen continued to own . In late 1906 , Helen staged a Gilbert and Sullivan repertory season at the Savoy Theatre . The season , and the following one , which were both directed by Gilbert , earned excellent reviews and sold well , revitalising the company . After the second repertory season concluded in 1909 , however , the company did not perform in London again until 1919 , only touring throughout Britain during that time .

At her death in 1913 , Helen passed the family businesses to Carte 's son , Rupert . He maintained the hotel business , disposing of the Grand Hotel in Rome , but expanding the group in London . The Savoy Group remained under the control of the Carte family and its associates until 1994 . Carte 's hotels have remained among the most prestigious in London , with the London Evening Standard calling the Savoy " London 's most famous hotel " in 2009 .

Rupert D 'Oyly Carte refreshed the opera company 's productions and added London seasons , beginning in 1919 , as well as provincial and foreign tours . In 1948 Rupert died , leaving a strong company to his daughter Bridget D 'Oyly Carte . However , the rising costs of mounting professional light opera without any government support eventually became too much for the company . Bridget was forced to close the company in 1982 . Nevertheless , the Gilbert and Sullivan operas continue to be produced frequently today throughout the English @-@ speaking world and beyond , and Carte 's vision of wholesome light operas that celebrate Great Britain endures .

= = Compositions = =

= = = Operettas = = =

Dr. Ambrosius ? His Secret ( 1868 )

Marie ( 1871 ) , with librettist E. Spencer Mott

Happy Hampstead ( 1876 ) , with librettist Frank Desprez ( Carte wrote the music for this short piece under the pen name " Mark Lynne " ) .

= = = Songs = = =

Carte 's Parlour songs include :

" Come Back to Me " , words and music by Carte .

" Diamond Eyes " , words by L. H. F. du Terraux .

" The Maiden 's Watch " , words by Amy Thornton , composed for and sung by Adelaide Newton

" The Mountain Boy " , sung by Florence Lancia

" Pourquoi ? " Chansonette , dedicated to Selina Dolaro

" Questions " , words by Desprez

" The Setting Sun " ( with obligato flute accompaniment )

" Stars of the Summer Night " , Serenade , with poetry by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

" Twilight " , Canzonet

" Waiting " , words by Adelaide Procter .

" Wake , Sweet Bird " ( with obligato flute accompaniment )

" Why so pale and wan , fond lover "