

The pirates of penzance

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The Pirate of Penzance is a movie rendition of the operetta of the same title by Gilbert and Sullivan. The said film was released in 1983 and tells the story of Frederick, a young pirate who decides to change his ways when he meets Mabel and falls in love for the first time. As a comedic opera, the movie is worthy of the great reviews it receives from present day critics. However, I personally think that the director did not take advantage of the film techniques that could have smoothed the whole thing. He wanted to catch the raw aspect of Gilbert and Sullivan's work, to a point that the settings were way off key; there's a cinematic experience missing.

Aside from being both musical factors, I think that the Little Stores of Horror and the Pirates of Penzance shared little in common; unless of course we entertain the general theme of romantic relations. In terms of power struggles, we could see the attempt of two individuals to overcome the control of people and plant they have come to love. In contrast however, the musical score of the two films differ.

On one hand is a more classic, theatric composition/performances and on the other is a more modernized and jazzed up Little Shop of Horror. Both movies did epitomize the absolute masculine as the protagonist but instead chose to have a "nerd" and Frederick was not played out in a machismo kind of way.

All the three films; Little Shop of Horrors, TheMusicMan, and The Pirates of Penzance include love between two rather unlikely couple. Little shop is a cult movie by people's standards today and does not really offer bright approach to it self. We see a person eaten up, or the dentist body being cut up. This is something one would never expect to see in the other two films.

The Music Man offers a tad bit more similarity in plot and characters with the Pirates of Penzance.

In terms of the inner conflicts of both films; there is sameness in manner which the two protagonists are at a state of leaving and evolving from their old and assumed to be bad lives. A key element in their desire to turn a leaf is two women. One is a daughter of a Major General, Mabel; while the other is the town's librarian.

In comparing we could say that Mabel and Ms. Marian accept the conflict of the two heroes differently. Mabel is more accepting and shows her self to be the first person to answer Frederik's request. Ms. Marian on the other hand was the one insistent in the fraud nature of Professor Hill. While one seeks for her lover's acceptance, the other asks for change and even agrees to hide the salesman's identity. Being the con-artist salesman shares a resemblance to being a pirate if we think about it; coming in an innocent town and pillaging or deceiving in order to gain and then get up and leave.

I would not have believed that Kevin Kline would ever sing in a film, especially an operetta on which he plays a Pirate King. The latter was able to capture the aim of showing these particular band of pirates as non-ferocious kind, who really are not as buccaneer as they would want to be. There is this particular charm in the manner in which Kline handled the role.

The Pirates of Penzance does not bank on realism; however the portrayal of Pirate King had a certain kick to the whole flick. In terms of singing voice we could easily see that this man can; compared to Matthew Broderick and

James Seymour. Kevin Kline took on the role and revealed the comedic and some what joke like layer that surrounds the Pirate King.

One of my favorite characters of the Play is the Major General played by George Rose. As we could see his voice is able to replicate the demands of the original operatic performance. There is versatility in the type of tones he could play with in his character. One may take him as the little funny man of the show but at the same time when he explicitly shifts to his authoritative position as Major General, he is still able to bring out the rawness of the humor and the performance.

These two individuals tended to carry the show especially where the hero, Frederick lacked. I am unsure if he played his role according to specifications or the actor playing the part simply was an amateur and did not know how to attack the character. He seems to be one of those 1980's aspiring rockers who are a tad bit effeminate.

The initial coming together of Gilbert and Sullivan was through the opera *Thespis* (1871) at which their approach then was spontaneous and risqué. The Producer, Richard D'Oyly Carte was a key figure in shaping and maintaining the creative collaborations of the two. the age difference of the two men probably helped in providing a balance the works they worked together. Gilbert was hand on in his approach to theatre and made sure that everything was in order.

He wanted actors to imbibe the absurdity of the characters as if they were more real and no logical alternative is possible. Sullivan on the other hand

focused mainly on the musical scores; meaning the two kept clear to a certain extent of each one's area of responsibility. However in later years, we are able to see falling out between the two due perhaps to their difference in theatrical direction. One did not see the point of working with the other. It was unfortunate since the humor and crispness of Gilbert's craft is dressed well with the fresh notes of Sullivan.

To be honest, I found the spectacle of the movie quite cheap. Perhaps this was due to the desire to maintain the authenticity of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera; however in terms of set, things could be way better. It turned out to seem like the scenes are shot on a studio crafted for a local children's program. The pirate king and Frederick had on something that cuts across old pirate with 80's new wave. Fredrick's costume is not really reminiscent of the stereotypical pirate, resembles more of a Spanish Bull Fighter crossed with a Spanish gun fitter I think that the color of his shirt and the dual belts and the knee high boots give this impression

The theme is a coming of age, love and honor despite what one has grown to live as. There is of course the factor of finding humor and humanity in those we have often deemed to be scoundrels. The relationship between collective belonging and individuality is seen.

Reference:

Wilford Leach (1983), *The Pirates of Penzance*, film, original from Gilbert and Sullivan.