Costume design - Iolanthe

Object: Costume design

Place of origin: Great Britain (designed)

Date: 1967 (designed)

Artist/Maker: Goffin, Peter, born 1906 - died 1974 (designer)

Materials and Techniques: Watercolour and bodycolour over pencil on paper

Credit Line: Given by Dame Bridget D'Oyly Carte.

The V&A wishes to acknowledge the generous support given by The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, which facilitated the cataloguing of the D'Oyly Carte Archive designs in 2015/16.

Museum number: S.2357-2015

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

Iolanthe, or, The Peer and The Peri by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan was produced at the Savoy Theatre under the management of Richard D'Oyly Carte on Saturday 25th November 1882, until Tuesday 1st January 1884.

Sullivan was reluctant to be more famous for comic opera than for classical composition, but since he enjoyed the lifestyle it financed, began work on a score for Gilbert’s new libretto during the summer of 1882. Originally titled Perola and changed to Iolanthe at the last minute to maintain secrecy, Gilbert’s new libretto indulged his whimsical penchant bringing fairies to Westminster, whilst satirising the British parliamentary system, especially the House of Lords. As ever Gilbert meticulously planned the contrasting stage pictures made by his settings and characters including a fairy chorus and their Queen, a chorus of Peers, the Lord Chancellor, the banished fairy Iolanthe, and her half human son Strephon in love with the beautiful shepherdess Phyllis, the Lord Chancellor’s ward. With Sullivan’s equally contrasting pastoral and stirring music, brilliant lyrics and the added surprise of electric lights on the fairies’ foreheads, Iolanthe was another hit in London and New York, where D’Oyly Carte opened a production at the Standard Theatre the same night.

Peter Goffin (1906-1974) was born in Plymouth, the son of William Earl Goffin and Elizabeth Goffin and worked as an interior decorator and mural painter before designing for his local repertory theatre in Plymouth, and overseeing the staging, costumes and lighting of the Dance Drama group at Dartington Hall from 1931 to 1934. In 1936 Goffin worked at the Westminster Theatre as the designer on a wide variety of productions including T.S. Eliot's The Reunion, and went on to work for Rupert D'Oyly Carte to redesign his new production of The Yeomen of the Guard in 1938.


Descriptive line

Costume design by Peter Goffin for Iolanthe in Iolanthe, Saville Theatre, 1967

Dimensions

Height: 39.2 cm  approximately, Width: 25.5 cm  approximately

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URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1347146/iolanthe-costume-design-goffin-peter/