The Yeomen of the Guard

This is the first critical edition, and indeed the first properly printed full score of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, a highly popular opera by Gilbert & Sullivan which premiered in 1888, and was considered by Sullivan to be his finest work. It is based on Sullivan’s autograph manuscript, Gilbert’s production prompt book for the original production, first editions of the vocal score and libretto, the manuscript full score copied for the US premiere which contains three ‘lost’ songs, and the recently discovered (2012) original set of orchestral parts for that production (these being the only 19th century parts thought still to exist).

The three ‘lost’ songs are significant and have never been published: two were cut prior to the original production, while the third is a completely different version of ‘Is Life a Boon?’. The new edition makes it easy to reinstate these, and the vocal score benefits from newly created piano reductions. Furthermore, the edition makes possible the concert performance of the work, and, via the editor’s reduced orchestration, performances where considerations of space and/or budget might otherwise prohibit it.

A major problem with the works of Gilbert & Sullivan is that much revised vocal scores were issued in the mid-1920s which, despite originating many years after the deaths of the authors, have come to be regarded as definitive. In the case of Yeomen, this 1920s score was the basis of all currently available editions prior to this OUP publication. The 20,000-word commentary details the editorial method and gives a thorough analysis of the many variant readings, and explains why the text presented here is authoritative. For the first time in well over 100 years, performers can be confident that every word, note and stage direction would be recognised by the authors.