**Isabel Jay**

Born into a musical family, Isabel Jay was giving musical recitals by the age of twelve and in 1895 entered the Royal Academy of Music, where in July 1897, she became the first winner of the Betjemann medal for operatic singing. That same month, after accepting a three-year contract with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, she made her first stage appearance at the Savoy singing Elsie Maynard in a one-week try-out during the first London revival of *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

She then went on tour, joining D'Oyly Carte Opera Company "B" in August 1897 as principal soprano, singing Phyllis in *Iolanthe*, Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* and Elsie in *Yeomen*. Company "B" was disbanded in June 1898, but by August Miss Jay had joined the main Company at the Savoy covering both Gianetta and Casilda in a revival of *The Gondoliers*. She appeared as the Plaintiff in *Trial by Jury* when it was revived in September 1898 and in 1899 she filled in for Ruth Vincent as Josephine in *HMS Pinafore*.

Her big break came with Sullivan and Hood's *The Rose of Persia* when she was promoted to the role of the Sultana. She would go on to be the leading soprano at the Savoy until she left the Company in March 1902. After *The Rose of Persia* she appeared as Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, was Patience in the first London revival of *Patience*, created a number of non-G&S roles and took Phyllis (her favourite role) in the first London revival of *Iolanthe* in 1901.

Miss Jay made a number of recordings between 1900 and 1906, mostly from her early musical comedies but she also recorded "Poor Wand'ring One".

Miss Jay suffered from ill health during her later years due to the effects of scarlet fever as a child. She was just 47 when she died in Monte Carlo in 1927.

Her daughter, Celia, was a prominent member of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society in Brighton. In 1961, the Society introduced an Isabel Jay Trophy to be awarded annually by competition and a rose bowl was presented by Celia as the award.

We are thrilled to be in a position to re-introduce this competition after a gap of a number of years.

If you wish to find out more about Isabel, a 40 minute audio visual presentation based on the research and photographic collection of the late John Cannon is available at:

<https://youtu.be/KkuXKWeueb0>