

THE TRUMPET BRAY

NEGASS

The New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society
P.O. Box 367, Arlington, MA 02476-0004

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August 2002

- eating fresh butter with a tablespoon -

**PICNIC MEETING
PATIENCE SING-THROUGH**

* * * R E N E W A L I S S U E * * *

AUGUST PICNIC MEETING: Sunday, AUGUST 25 AT 4 PM This year's picnic will be held at the home of **Dr. and Mrs. David Sheldon**, our gracious host of two years ago, who live at **281 Fairmount Avenue, Hyde Park**, just south of Boston. We'll begin at 4:00 p.m. with a complete sing-through of **PATIENCE**, accompanied by **Ms. Juliet Cunningham**, followed by feasting and general merriment. All NEGASS members, prospective members, and their guests are cordially invited.

All those attending the picnic are asked to bring their own entrees and beverages and one item (salad, vegetables, dessert, etc.) to share. Grills (with fuel) will be available for barbecuing, and there will be condiments and paper plates available as well. We suggest that you bring a lawn chair or blanket upon which to enjoy your picnic.

Roles in **PATIENCE** include:

Patience (soprano)
Lady Ella (soprano)
Lady Saphir (mezzo-soprano)
Lady Angela (mezzo-soprano)
The Duke of Dunstable (tenor)
Archibald Grosvenor (baritone)
Reginald Bunthorne (baritone)
Major Murgatroyd (baritone)
Colonel Calverly (bass-baritone)



Contact Program Chair **Carl Weggel** at (978) 474-0396 or programchair@negass.org to let him know which role you want to sing. (It's a great warm-up if you intend to

audition for the production the **Sudbury Savoyards** will spend this winter preparing!)

HOW TO GET THERE: 281 Fairmount Avenue, Hyde Park, MA (A bluish, gray-green Victorian house on the corner of LeSeur Street – phone the Sheldons at (617) 364-5810 if you have trouble finding your way.)

From the center of Boston: Go to Forest Hills. From Forest Hills, take Hyde Park Ave. heading southeast about 3 or 4 miles to Cleary Square. There will be a police station on the right, and then a Papa Gino's on the left. Turn left at the Papa Gino's onto River Street. Go about 2 blocks and then bear right onto Fairmount Ave. Go over the bridge above the railroad tracks to the light at the Truman Highway. Continue straight, through the lights, on Fairmount Ave. Go to the top of the hill. Number 281 Fairmount Ave. is on the corner of LeSeur Street.

From Route 128/Route I-93: Take the exit in Canton for Route 138 North (Exit 2). Head northeast on Route 138 into Milton a distance of about 2.5 miles. Go to the fourth set of traffic lights. You will know you are approaching them when you see Curry College on your left. At this intersection, where there is a firehouse, turn left onto Bradlee Street (to the right of the firehouse) -- DO NOT make too sharp a left turn, as this would take you onto Atherton Street instead. Take Bradlee Street about 1/4 mile to the first street on your right, and turn right. Then take the first left. You will be on Fairmount Ave. Go up 2 blocks to #281, at the corner of LeSeur Street.

JUNE MEETING: NEGASS ELECTIONS AND FANTASY DAY. On Sunday, June 9 elections took place with the following attendees: **Janice and Ron Dallas, Don Smith, Dick Freedman, Peter Cameron, Carol Mahoney, Sheldon Hochman, Tony Parkes, Art Dunlap, and myself.** As suggested in the previous **Trumpet Bray**, the elections did go super fast...the current slate of candidates were entirely re-instated, with a bit of a game of Musical Chairs among the positions, on a token ballot. Afterwards, Janice gave the latest membership report, and Dick gave the latest treasurer's report.

The business part of the meeting done with, it was time for choruses...at least male choruses, as men greatly outnumbered women in this meeting. The shows picked included **IOLANTHE, PIRATES, PINAFORE, PATIENCE** and **IDA**. But Janice, as the female soloist, did very well with the solos and even dueted with Art a couple of times. There were some good male solos, too, as Sheldon did well in the King Gama solo, and Peter was very good as Private Willis.

And through it all, accompanist **Bonnie Donham** did a very admirable job considering she seemed unfamiliar with the music. [*Janice adds: "Bonnie was wonderful!"*] Carol was as usual great with the refreshments. Overall, to paraphrase Rodgers and Hammerstein (yes, I know they're not), it was a grand afternoon for singing! -- **MARK WOODRUFF**

[*See our re-arranged Board Members listed on the masthead on the last page of the Bray - mlc*]



*And now, M'Luds,
to the business of the day*

(by all means!):

It's time to renew your membership!

The Board's decision several years ago to create extra categories of membership is still in effect - please bear in mind that the majority of our members are still "Yeomen," but that those who wish to contribute more to NEGASS have the opportunity to do so, in the following increments:

- \$15 **Yeomen** (basic membership)
- 25 **Daughters of the Plough**
- 50 **Bucks and Blades**
- 100 **Flowers of Progress**

*(On the other hand, if even the \$15 basic membership is a problem, please talk to Membership Chair **Janice Dallas**. Please note – Charter Members officially hold their*

Tentative Meeting Schedule, 2002-2003

August 25	Picnic Meeting/ <i>PATIENCE</i>
October 6	Master Class with Eileen St David
January 26	Newton Free Library Film
March	LMLO GONDOLIERS
Late April	Lecture? Cartoons? Film?
May 18	Elections/Fantasy Day

NEXT BRAY COPY DEADLINE: September 15

Next Bray Stuffing: Sunday, September 22, at 3:00 PM. Call Us at (781) 646-9115 evenings and weekends, or send email to marion@leedscarroll.com, for directions to Our easy-to-get-to Arlington, MA home.

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome We New Member Robert Breau from West Sussex, England - **Don Smith** signed him up at the **Buxton G&S Festival**. **Tell Us, Tell Us all about it! Hearty Greeting Offer We!**

— mlc

membership as a gift from the Society – but many insist upon donating at some level.)

Lacking the means for a Display of Fireworks in the Evening, We celebrate these friends by printing a yearly list of Members Extraordinary - those who chose a category higher than Yeomen for the previous year. Here, forthwith, is the list of 2001-2002 Extraordinary Memberships (*Bow, bow, ye Lower Middle Classes*):

Daughters of the Plough

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Anonymous | Dr. & Mrs. Daniel Miller |
| Martha Birnbaum | Mr. & Mrs. Erwin H. Miller |
| Mr. Peter T. Cameron | Jennifer Morris & Alex Gundy |
| Ms. Judith Chasin | Tony Parkes |
| Allen & Janet Cohen | Lee Patterson |
| Janice E. Dallas | Lonnie Powell |
| John E. Dreslin | Ruth Roper |
| Philip Drew | Rose Marie Short |
| Barry E. Garden | Mr. David Stieber |
| Dale Hall | Jonathan Strong |
| Sheldon & Alice Hochman | Victor Troll & Nell Wright |
| Charlee Hutton | Fred Ward |
| Alessandra Kingsford | Tom Weber |
| Steven B. Levine | Carl Weggel |
| Ernest V. Loewenstein | Dr. & Mrs. Charles Wilder |
| Robert L. Manninen | Stephen Zydfosky |
| Neil McCormick | |



MINIATURE G&S THEATER: *We've received the following query - can anyone help? We're sure the answer is, yes, there are such images - We just don't know where to send him. Share the info with Us, and We'll run it in the next Bray!*

I am an avid model maker producing miniature theaters. I would like to make a model of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, but as of yet am unable to find any visual information regarding the sets or the cast. As an ex Englander and theater electrician, I have made most of the UK theaters (in miniature) but alas not the great Gilbert & Sullivan. Are there any pictures or photos depicting the scenics or sets? I am reasonably good with Photoshop 7 on the computer. Please can you help?

Regards - **MICHAEL GEARY**
(732)291-9277
Mgtoys1@aol.com

[*We assumed that Michael wanted information about the original sets and the Savoy theater itself, but no - he says he'd be content with information about any modern production. Who'd like to help him out?*]

REVIEWS

WESTFORD CHORUS PIRATES: Viva Community Theater! On April 27 and 28, the **Westford Chorus** decided to branch out from its usual concert, choral productions with a venture into Gilbert & Sullivan's **PIRATES OF PENZANCE**. One only hopes that they resolve to do more such G&S!

The 8-piece orchestra, under Music Director, **Daniel Rowntree**, was outstanding. It consisted of piano, augmented by winds—1 flute/piccolo, 2 clarinets, 1 oboe/English horn, 1 bassoon, 1 trumpet, and 1 French horn. Of especial note, the bassoonist, **Diane Zolnaski**, was superb; rating the rest of the orchestra, the flautist, **Susan Caplan**, was “first among equals.” The conductor added a clever theatrical touch: he strode to the podium dashing dressed in a picturesque pirate's colorful costume. Throughout the show Daniel's choice of tempi and dynamics were excellent; intonation was invariably “spot-on.”

Since this was the first venture of the Westford Chorus into staged productions, some members of the chorus were still somewhat unaccustomed to acting whilst singing, although others were completely at ease on stage. The Stage Director, **Alexandra Childs**, largely resolved this problem by dividing the chorus into thirds. One third formed—to quote choreographer, **Pat**

Montano, – the on-stage “moving chorus,” while the remaining two thirds were divided into the two halves of the aptly-named “Greek Chorus” at each side of the rear of the stage, to add their voices to the moving chorus.

Unfortunately, the acoustics of the venue—the auditorium at Blanchard Middle School—did not do justice to the dedicated cast. The same voices that sounded painfully weak in this inhospitable hall evoked high praise a week later, when Westford reprised several scenes at the NEGASS 25th Anniversary Gala on May 5. In particular, the Greek Chorus—tucked unobtrusively upstage near the wings—provided far less vocal augmentation than one might wish. Even sadder in this regard, Frederic, **Steven Jong**, was the hapless victim of this heartless hall. To quote from **PIRATES**, Steven “has acted nobly!” in this, his first acting experience. The Pirate King, **Dan Swanson**, on the other hand, somehow managed to project well in even in this unforgiving venue.

Ruth, **Susan Geidel**, seemed rather too youthful and far too attractive to satisfy Gilbert's derogatory concept of the role. She also seemed unaccustomed to delivering dialogue. The Girls' Chorus of the wards of General Stanley was both strong and solid, notably in their opening numbers, *Climbing over rocky mountain*, and *What ought we to do*. Mabel, **Susan Harsell**, often seemed somewhat uneasy and tentative on stage.

Major-General Stanley, **Tom Lumenello**, (now a new member of NEGASS)—obviously a favorite of the audience—displayed an easy insouciance on stage. His voice is still strong and clear, if no longer always rock solid. A clever staging—during his entrance to *Oh, dry the glistening tear*, General Stanley appeared with a pirate teddy bear, replete with eye patch and bandana. (A trivia question: Why are pirate captains invariably portrayed as blind in one eye?)

When the foeman bears his steel featured four Keystone Constables, **Ann Bennett**, **Pat Montano**, **Lynessa Moses**, and **Eileen Ross**—all women, all excellent! The Sergeant of Police, **Dick Curtis**, had a mobile face like clay animation, delivering the finest portrayal in the show in such numbers as *When a felon's not engaged in his employment*.

Arguably, the high point of the show was the Pirate Chorus's *Hail, Poetry*. This *a capella* chorus showcased the Westford Chorus at its finest. In this number, the Music Director demonstrated his mastery of dynamics. The Chorus responded with a perfectly-executed, one-measure swell that I have never heard before. The second highlight was *We triumph now*, from the second-

act finale, again featuring the Chorus's strengths. *We charge you yield* was effected via a large framed print of Queen Victoria.

In conclusion, Westford Chorus's production of *PIRATES* is to be applauded. The result is perhaps summarized by a scene from *PATIENCE*, "I can't help thinking [they're] a little stiff at it. . . Perhaps [they're] a little awkward at first—but everything must have a beginning. . . I'm afraid [they're] not quite right. Not supremely, perhaps, but oh, so all—but! . . . Oh, it's extremely good—for beginners it's admirable!"

-- CARL F. WEGGEL



IDA AT CLOC: The College Light Opera Co., of Falmouth, MA, presented a terrific production of *IDA* during the first week of August. This summer theatre features talented young musicians, selected from conservatories across the country, and their vitality brought Sullivan's sparkling score and Gilbert's sharp dialogue to radiant life.

Friesia Schuil as Ida and **Samuel H. Perwin** as Hilarion were well matched, dramatically and vocally. Their solos were lovely, and *The world is but a broken toy* was more tender than any love duet. As the warring monarchs, **Jacob Allen** as King Hildebrand and **Michael Salonia** as King Gama were excellent, cynical but with a certain nobility of bearing that lent credibility to the plot.

Hilarion's friends Florian and Cyril, played by **Bobby Benton** and **Henry O'Neill** respectively, were a delight, especially in *I am a maiden, cold and stately*. The three sons of Gama, **Michael McKinsey**, **Jason C. Leland**, and **Corey A.O. Williams**, provided rich voices and endearingly bewildered manners. McKinsey's burgundy-hued baritone made *This helmet, I suppose* sound like Purcell.

The Lady Blanche, **Jenny Lynn Towns**, delivered a fine *Come, mighty must* and left no doubt that she would make a formidable headmistress after Ida's departure. As her daughter Melissa, **Dayla Perkins** was charming. She and the Lady Psyche, **Grace Kuckro**, sparkled in *The woman of the wisest wit* - surely one of the catchiest tunes Sullivan ever wrote.

In all the ensembles, the fleet-footed cast made the most of **Corey A.O. Williams'** choreography. The chorus sounded robust and energetic, and music director **Elizabeth Hastings** balanced voices and

orchestra nicely. Stage director **Roger Andrews** paced the evening well, with an intermission between the prologue and Act I, and a very short break before Act II.

One especially nice touch: at the end of intermission, the orchestra's brass section played a fanfare outside the Highfield Theatre, by way of inviting the full house back to Castle Adamant. Congratulations to producers **Robert and Ursula Haslun** and all the CLOC staff for a delightful evening in the theatre!

--ALESSANDRA KINGSFORD



IDA AT CLOC - TAKE II: Once again, after seeing the notice for *IDA* in the all-knowing **Bray**, Jan and I journeyed to Falmouth for another mini-vacation to include CLOC's presentation of arguably one of the finest of G&S's works. Although the name "**College Light Opera Company**" may convey the impression of amateur status, it is my opinion that, while the cast may be technically amateur college students, this production definitely can stand with the best of the professionals. G&S is probably better suited to this type of quasi-professional acting, as amateurs tend to add more spontaneity to the show.

Our first pleasant surprise came when we drove up the tree-lined, winding road to "the top of the hill", as the sign read, and came upon a most unusual building of many, many gables. The quaint, almost modern theater was enjoyably air conditioned on this 94 degree matinee day. The 500 or so seats were comfortable, although the floor was not slanted enough and the vision over the person in front was difficult.



CLOC followed G&S's original format of a prologue followed by 2 acts. The intermission was after the prologue only, and there was only a few minute's pause between the acts. This was done efficiently.

Although the overture to *IDA* is not the most exciting music, the oboe solos (**Anthea Halsey**) were clear and haunting. The conductor (**Aron Accurso**) accurately followed Sullivan's tempos throughout the performance and brought out the best in the complete orchestra. At no time did the orchestra overpower the voices, although the singers definitely need microphones in this long theater.

The opening scene usually lacks movement in the chorus, but director (**Roger Andrews**) and choreographer (**Corey A. O. Williams**) made certain that everyone was actively searching for Gama's arrival. Hildebrand (**Jacob Allen**) elicited many laughs with his gigantic crimson robe which almost everyone

managed to step on. His voice showed clarity and range, but needed amplification to be heard in the rear of the hall.

Gama (**Michael Salonia**) was outstanding in his costume (**by Mary Linda**), his hunched movements, (he actually appeared to slither across the stage) and his clearly animated renditions of *If you will give me your attention* and *Whene'er I spoke*.

The scenery (by **Scott Henkels**) was simple, adequate, and did not distract from the choruses. The talented use of lighting periodically created the illusion of scene changes. The chorus members were fully costumed in similar dress, but yet there was an individual touch to each outfit which gave the appearance of a more genuine crowd and not just a staged chorus. This was especially notable in the robes worn by Adamant's students. Each girl wore the same basic robe, but the shawls were individually colored and arranged.

Gama's sons (**Jason C. Leland, Michael McKinsey, and Corey A.O. Williams**) appeared as real country bumpkins with their black moustaches and beards. Clearly, intelligent they were not!

The end of the intermission was rousingly announced with a brass quartet (**Michael P. Flynn, John Maggi, Leah Jones, and Elizabeth Lewis**) appearing on the outside balcony of the playhouse playing the flourish for Ida's entrance in the last act.

When Ida (**Friesia Schuil**) made her grand entrance, she instantly was recognizable as royalty. Her dress was similar to her other students; she wore no jewelry, crown or other accouterments of her office, but her shimmering long hair, reaching to her waist, and her regal bearing, at once commanded deference. The high note of *Minerva* almost appeared to reach heaven itself. Her presentation of *Oh, goddess wise* transformed the performance to grand opera and brought a swell of applause from the audience. Once, again, a microphone to amplify the singing would have been welcome. Her soliloquy *Women of Adamant* might have been done more slowly to let the words sink in better.

Blanche (**Jenny Lynn Towns**) was excellently confusing in her slow, deliberate rendition of *Come, mighty Must*, complete with chalkboard.

When Hilarion (**Samuel H. Perwin**) was entering Adamant's castle, he simply stepped over the low fence while his friends (**Bobby Benton and Henry O'Neill**) struggled to climb the wall, which made a humorous staging. (Can they be compared to Gama's sons??)

Lady Psyche (**Grace Kuckro**) performed *A Lady fair* (the monkey song) with a refreshing, clear voice and perfect enunciation which could be heard by all the audience. Marionettes were used to cleverly compare the apeman and the fairest beauty queen.

Hildebrand's soldiers could have been more lively, but they performed their task. Ida's army looked ferocious with their huge axes, but their helmets of pots and pans conveyed their lack of serious intent.

Arac's (**Jason C. Leland**) song *This helmet I suppose* was well done, but when the last of the armor, the greaves, (yes, Sir William, that is what they are called) were removed, the three brothers stood in rather plain gray dress. (I've seen performances where they end up wearing red long johns, which brings the house down.)

The finale was classic, with Hilarion and Ida being a couple, etc. But when Gama quickly slithered behind the chorus and gleefully grabbed Blanche, covered her with his cloak, and she eventually took his hand, the audience broke into uncontrolled applause as appreciation of a great afternoon of true G&S entertainment.
- ALLEN J. COHEN



PIRATES IN GERMAN: Just thought I'd drop a line about the production of *PIRATES* as part of an International Operetta season this spring at the **Volksooper** in Vienna (yes, the Austrian one), in case none of your other sources has already done so. It's now 2 months since I saw it, but I hope I can remember some of the salient points.

As the publicity I read on the web was in German, I just assumed the performance would be in German, which sounded intriguing, and I didn't even bother to check on this point when I booked. I was therefore somewhat disconcerted when the opening chorus launched into the familiar "Pour, oh pour", etc. in flawless English. To my surprise, however, the ensuing dialog took place in *Deutsch*, and from then on we were on a switchback in which I estimate that about 80% of the show was in German and 20% in English - with no apparent pattern as to what was in which!

We were privileged to have **Dame Gwyneth Jones** as Ruth, and her German seemed as fluent as anyone's (to my untutored ear). Mabel was a Japanese lady with a beautiful voice and equally fluent German, while the only other Anglophone principals were the two Fredericks. Yes, the two Fredericks...

