

THE TRUMPET BRAY

NEGASS

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

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- Pour, oh pour the pirate sherry -

PIRATES Video in Newton

PIRATES VIDEO AT THE NEWTON FREE LIBRARY: SUNDAY, JANUARY 27 AT 2:00 PM The Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, a relatively new professional group founded in connection with the **International G&S Festival**, performed **PIRATES** at the festival this past summer – and left the world a fine videographic record of their production. **Don Smith**, who was there and is providing the video we'll watch, tells Us: "Among several excellent newcomers, it features former stars of the **Original D'Oyly Carte Opera Company**: **Michael Rayner** as Sergeant of Police, **Gareth Jones** at Major-General Stanley, **Pauline Birchall** as Edith and **Patricia Leonard** as Ruth. The Director is **Alan Spencer**, an Australian who is noted for his choreography, and the Conductor is **David Steadman**."

NEGASS will gather at the **Newton Free Library from 2:00-5:00 on Sunday, January 27** to share this videotaped performance with library patrons who love G&S. No refreshments are allowed in the library, and past years' attempts at choosing a spot in which to snack and chat after a library gathering have been less than satisfactory – so We propose, this year, that suggestions be solicited from among those present, and a decision be made on the spot! – with full awareness that the library closes, and we must leave, by 5 PM.

HOW TO GET THERE: The **Newton Free Library** is located at 330 Homer Street, Newton Center, across from City Hall. (There's a nice big parking lot belonging to the library.) From Route 128, take Rt. 30 (Commonwealth Ave) to the central Newton

intersection of Commonwealth Ave., Lowell St., North St. and Homer, which angles off Comm. Ave to the right.

By T: Take the **Green Line D-Riverside Car** to Newton Highlands, exit the station at Walnut Street, turn right and walk up Walnut Street a little over one mile. The library will be on your left. [It's worth calling a board member (see the masthead for numbers) if you'd like a ride.]



ALL-NEW ENGLAND G&S GALA: On **Sunday, May 5**, NEGASS invites members of local groups to perform and share their love of G&S. Invitations have started to go out to established performing groups, such as **The Sudbury Savoyards, SLOC, MITG&SP, HRG&SP, VLO, CG&SS, and Hancock County** – groups which often receive publicity and reviews in Our pages - and more will follow – but if you or your organization have not received an invitation, please don't think you're not invited!

The afternoon will feature, in addition to performances, a sing-along of G&S choruses and a catered reception. This is a great chance to intermingle and share, and to discuss how NEGASS can do more to help local performing groups. Contact Program Chair **Carl Weggel** at (978) 474-0396 or carl_weggel@juno.com if you or your group wants to take part.



LMLO MIKADO: On March 24 NEGASS will again enjoy a **Last Minute Light Opera/Orchestra** sing-through – this year, of **MIKADO**. **Dave Larrick** will conduct again, and **Vic Godin** is once more our Orchestra Manager. Program Chair **Carl Weggel** is ready to start casting now, so phone him at (978) 474-0396 or e-mail him at carl.weggel@juno.com if you know which role you want to sing.

Remember – in LMLO, desire to sing a role is much more important than appropriateness for the role (we all enjoyed **David Leigh** as Lady Blanche last year!) – and you can use as much or as little staging as you like. If you need to be “on book,” that’s just fine – just try to keep up with the orchestra!

MIKADO cast (as if you didn’t know):

- Yum-Yum (soprano)
- Peep-Bo (soprano or mezzo)
- Pitti-sing (mezzo)
- Katisha (contralto)
- Nanki-Pooh (tenor)
- Ko-Ko (comic baritone)
- Pooh-Bah (baritone)
- Pish-Tush (baritone)
- The Mikado (bass)



Choose your role, and Carl will endorse it!

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REVIEWS

We were hoping, in place of a description of the meeting NEGASS did not hold in November, to publish reviews of all the productions everyone went to see this fall – and We’ve received a few, at least (For instance - We were promised a review of “a great IDA in Middletown, CT” – which never appeared...) There’s room for more!

MITG&S PLAYERS’ PINAFORE MITG&SP’s performance venue is La Sala De Puerto Rico in MIT’s Student Center. A stage does not exist. There is no curtain. There is no backstage. There is no orchestra pit. Nonetheless, MIT almost always manages to put on a performance that pleases. This year’s opening-night performance of **PINAFORE** was no exception. The show featured many names that are familiar to NEGASS, as well as several new G&Sers. For an opening night at MITG&SP, the audience was remarkably large. On the whole, the audience was amply rewarded for its boldness.

The audience’s first introduction to the evening’s show was the uncurtained set: A massive, ambitious two-level affair. The lower level sported the carved and painted breeches of three massive cannon that faced

Tentative Meeting Schedule, 2001-2002	
March 24	Last Minute Light Opera/ Orchestra MIKADO
May 5	New England G&S Gala
June 9	Elections/Fantasy Day

NEXT BRAY COPY DEADLINE: March 3, 2002

Next Bray Stuffing: Sunday, March 10, 2002 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 home.



Welcome, Welcome, Welcome We New Member John E. Dreslin of Stonington, CT. Yes, this is the famous Music Director, Conductor, Accompanist, and Orchestrator of the **Connecticut G&S Society**, who, among other triumphs, collaborated with **Jonathan Strong** on the version of **THESPIS** premiered a few years ago. **Hearty Greeting Offer We!** —*mlc*

Charter Member **Harry Benford** has sent NEGASS a donation, in spite of having received notice of his status as Honorary Member For Life. He wishes to remind us all – in case we’ve lost track of the fact – that people who need a fresh copy, or a copy of a more recent edition, of his invaluable opus, **The G&S Lexicon**, can inquire about procedures from Barbara@queensburypress.com.



upstage. Very visually effective. The upper level was Captain Corcoran’s quarters and the poop deck. Separating the two levels were two authentic (read treacherous or non-negotiable), six-foot ladders with almost 12-inch risers. These ladders rendered the wearing of full-length, authentic Victorian dresses an invitation to disaster, and out of the question. Even wearing mid-calf-length dresses, all of the ladies had to exhibit extreme caution in negotiating these ladders. Buttercup “took a header” down the last two steps during her entrance at the opening of Act II, but she instantly recovered her composure to deliver a superb *Things are seldom what they seem*. Even the staging of this duet with Captain Corcoran was clever. A large overhead lantern invariably responded (with magical coruscations) to her mystic powers, to the befuddlement and consternation of Captain Corcoran.

The orchestra, under the baton of **Todd Neal**, was skilled and well rehearsed. Instead of my noticing a few standout instrumentalists, this year the orchestra was uniformly fine. The Vocal Direction of **Emina Torlak** was excellent throughout. Diction, particularly

when singing *When maiden loves* I kept expecting it to turn into *I'm just a girl who can't say no*. At least that nasal twang only showed up on rare occasion.

Tempo: *I have a song to sing* dragged badly; *Rapture, rapture* was waytoodammedfast.

HRG&S needs *mentors*. The director needs someone to gently take him by the scruff and say "Don't do that! Dame Carruthers is an older woman, not a withered crone. Shadbolt is a jailer; he does not have to look like Quasimodo!"

Zak Stone (Shadbolt) must have loved dancing to *Cock and Bull* because he finally got a chance to stand up straight. He and **Emily Ludmir** (Carruthers) were burdened by such unnecessary and mediocre personas. Phoebe and Sgt Merrill may well have preferred the block to marrying such unpalatable characters. Shadbolt and Carruthers have to have some personal appeal.

Choreography: A four-step turkey trot that was repeated over and over and over. Sometimes slow imperceptible movement will do for some numbers. It's better than repetition. There's a saying: "Bits of stage business are like tissues; once you use them, throw them away and do something else." The same could be said for dance and for movement.

DON BILODEAU

[We must say that one other NEGASSer told Us she had seen the show, and enjoyed it – she particularly liked the Point! – but since she has not sent Us a review, We can't say more, alas... - mlc]



Did anyone see The Bay Players of the South Shore (MA) production of *PIRATES*, featuring **Dave Leigh** as the Pirate King, **Tony Parkes** as Major-General Stanley, **Ben Stevens** as Frederic, and **Drew Stevens** as Samuel?



NEGASS "BUSINESS" CARDS: Program Chair **Carl Weggel** has been doing something very nice: he has, out of his own pocket and out of the goodness of his heart, been placing NEGASS ads in the programs of various musical and theatrical organizations with which he's involved. Moreover, he asked Us if We could provide him with a NEGASS "business card" to hand to folks who want a quick and easy way to find us.



We created the card – and then Carl turned around and used it as a business-card-sized ad in a program! – so this is a multi-purpose item.

If you would like copies of this card, visit <http://negass.org/Pages/Ads.html> and follow the instructions on the page. Or attend a NEGASS meeting and see if anyone there has any to share. --mlc



JONATHAN STRONG'S VLO DUKE TALK [CONTINUED] [As *Gamarex* explained last issue, *Jonathan Strong's* remarks at our October meeting were for the most part based upon a talk he had planned to give at a *Valley Light Opera* gathering – which, in the event, was snowed out. Still, what he had to say is certainly worth hearing! – sorry We could not share with you all his vial of *Opoponax*, a very pleasant eau de toilet... - mlc]

Continued from last issue: Now let me say a word about Sullivan's contribution. I think back to my **Tufts** students again, and how at the end of the course I asked them all how it is that these fourteen operas still speak to us so vibrantly after more than a century. After enumerating much to Gilbert's credit, the group heard from the kid recruited from Rio Grande City, Texas, for his baseball playing: "I think it's the music." And of course, any true Savoyard knows this to be a good half of the truth. **DUKE** is a peculiar score for Sullivan. It is not his final thought on opera, the way the libretto seems to have been for Gilbert. Sullivan shortly after wrote *The Beauty Stone*, to my mind a score whose richness and warmth and atmosphere rivals *YEOMEN*, and after failing to reach popular success with that romantic work, he followed it up with *The Rose of Persia* and the unfinished *Emerald Isle*, which began to turn the corner to the musical comedies of the Edwardian era, a style that already in 1896 was in the ascendant: Sidney Jones's *Geisha* was a huge commercial success, and Richard D'Oyly Carte lamented that the public now "wanted simple 'fun' and.

little else." In **DUKE**, one might see Sullivan as bidding farewell to a century of classical *opera bouffe*, a form traceable back through Offenbach and Johann Strauss to the earlier French vaudevilles augmented with touches of the grander operatic tradition drawn from Weber and Rossini and Donizetti. Sullivan was heir to that tradition, and as it began to break apart in 1896, he offered this last compendium. **MIKADO**, for all its *Japonaiserie*, is of course musically English; **DUKE**, on the other hand, is demonstrably international. It's not just a matter of the French *Galop* at the height of the *Bacchanal*, or of the *café chantant* Roulette song; of Julia's Italian operatic *scena* or the Baroness's *Brindisi*; of the Wagnerian marches or the Viennese waltz duet or the *Polonaise* in the First Act Finale ("But stay, your new made court"); of the *habanera* for the Duke and Baroness or, most magnificent of them all, the Greek chorus "Eloia! Opoponax!" (and here let me show you a bottle of Opoponax I've brought along!)- No, it's not only the fecundity of the musical sources (among which we must also note the English madrigal and the Irish jig -- all Europe with Ireland thrown in!), it is also the astonishing unity of the score as a whole than I find such a splendid achievement, entirely in synchrony with Gilbert's overflowing cornucopia tangled up into a neat knot, if I may mix a metaphor. You can search the score for a love duet of any traditional sort – and I mean a traditionally Savoy sort! –with the exception of Lisa's two self-pitying laments, you won't really find any sort of tender melody. If it's sentimental, it's mock; if it's grand, it's absurd. But mostly it's quick, edgy, bouncing along like a ball on a roulette wheel. Even **GONDOLIERS** doesn't have as many pages of quick tempo music. And even if **DUKE** is a long score, it's a sort of perpetual-motion machine, hurtling forward. It's, finally, a tight and rhythmically-propelled score with lots of harmonic interest, and the melodies reveal themselves like jewels flashing by: Once you've got it in your bones, you'll treasure it. It's the kind of knotty score that tends to get better and better on each hearing, an opportunity most Savoyards have never really had. There's only been the one rather stiff **D' Oily Carte** recording. But now you all will have the chance to discover, through your own performance, the glories of this final Savoy opera.

JONATHAN STRONG



The **Sudbury Savoyards** will be presenting **SORCERER** in February/March of 2002. Generally known as a traditionalist company, we promise a new twist with this year's production.

As most of you probably know, the story of **SORCERER** concerns Alexis and his fiancée, Aline.

Alexis and Aline are very much in love and very happy, and Alexis wants everyone in their village to be as deeply and truly in love as he is. To achieve this, he hires a local sorcerer, J.W. Wells. Wells agrees to provide a love potion to be placed in the tea at the banquet to be served in honor of Alexis' and Aline's engagement. After drinking the potion, everyone will fall asleep and, upon waking, will fall in love with the first person of the opposite sex that they meet. The potion indeed works, but with unexpected consequences. Mismatching continues until the situation becomes hopelessly entangled. The only way to break the spell and restore all to their former affections is for either Wells or Alexis to give up his life to the demon, Ahrimanes.

Following standard theatrical convention, Gilbert decided that it must be Wells who is sacrificed because 1) he's the only one not paired with some other main character, 2) he is of a lower class than Alexis and therefore less important and 3) he's not a tenor.



For many people familiar with the story, one problem they have is: Why does Wells have to be sacrificed? Isn't it all Alexis' fault for having hired him in the first place? Or is Wells at fault for doing the deed, knowing what the consequences could be, and not warning Alexis of the danger?

Given this dilemma, we will let the audience decide! At each performance, the audience will be asked whether it should be Alexis or Wells who is "voted off." Their vote will determine the final outcome of the play, and the cast must be ready to do Ending "A" or "B". It will be up to both Alexis and Wells to make their case throughout the play that the other should be sacrificed.

So come and see our performances (February 22, 23, 28, March 1 and 2 at 8pm; February 24 and March 2 and 2pm at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School) and help determine the outcome!

For more information, please check our website at www.sudburysavoyards.org

--- **KATHY LAGUE, Director**

Cast for the **Sudbury Savoyards SORCERER**: Sir Marmaduke: **Eric Ruben**; Lady Sangazure: **Laura Gouillart**; Ahrimanes: **Ted Koban**; Aline: **Stephanie Mann**; Alexis: **Ben Stevens**; Constance: **Sarah Telford**; Dr. Daly: **David Kehs**; Mrs. Partlet:

1/15/02, Tues. 2/12, **Tues. 3/19: New England/New York coalition IDA**, with **Sam Silvers** as Gama, **Dennis Blackwell** as Hildebrand, **Larry Seiler** as Cyril, **Dan Kamalic** as Florian, **Liane Grasso** as Psyche, **Linda Nadeau** as Blanche, and **Marion Leeds Carroll** as Ida – more news as it breaks!, Mon. 4/15, Thurs. 5/16, Sat. June 15: **TBA**.

April 3, 1880, *The Pirates of Penzance* opens in London
 April 23, 1881, *Patience* opens

☺☺ **Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players** will perform *PATIENCE* April 4-6 & 11-13 at 8:00 PM, and April 6, 7 & 13 at 2:00 PM. HRG&SP's opening night is always Black Tie, and closing night is Hack Night. April 6 features a special Children's Matinee. For more info, contact **Judith Scarl** at scarl@fas.harvard.edu or visit the HRG&SP Web page: <http://hcs.harvard.edu/~hrgps/>.

May 13, 1842, Arthur Sullivan is born
 May 25, 1878, *H.M.S. Pinafore* opens
 May 27, 1883, Sullivan is knighted
 May 29, 1911, W.S. Gilbert dies

☺☺ **The Boston University Savoyards** will hold their **Second-Ever Reunion** May 17-19, 2002. For more information, visit their Web site at www.savoyard.net, or contact rbcant@earthlink.net.

☺☺ A **Lamplighters** (CA) touring group will present a program, **Gilbert and Sullivan a la Carte**, at **The Music Hall** in Portsmouth, NH on **May 18, 2002**. Seems to be the standard story of the partnership and features songs from all of the operas. More details as I learn them. – **DON SMITH**

The **9th Annual Gilbert and Sullivan Festival** will again take place in two locations:

Sunday, July 28 - Sunday, August 4, 2002 at the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne. This part of the Festival will comprise only Professional Performances or Non-adjudicated amateur performances.

Saturday, August 3 - Sunday, August 18, 2002 at the Opera House and Pavillion Gardens in Buxton. The second and third weekends in Buxton will contain the professional performances; all other dates in Buxton will comprise the competitive part of the Festival.

There may be an extension the following week for a separate competitive festival of Children's Productions.

-- **DON SMITH**

Visit the Festival web site at <http://www.gs-festival.co.uk> for more information about last summer's 8th Festival, and for more details about next summer.

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We'd like to remind folks: **To subscribe to SavoyNet**, the G&S mailing list, send the message "Subscribe SavoyNet (your full name)" to the address listserv@bridgewater.edu - and you'll be sent all the information you need.

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THE NEW ENGLAND GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

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The Trumpet Bray can be read on line at
http://www.negass.org/bray/html/Trumpet_Bray.html

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