



# THE TRUMPET BRAY

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



Vol. XXVIII No. 4  
January/February 2004

~ effective enough - at a distance ~

**CARTOONS IN NEWTON**  
Sunday, February 1 at 2:00 PM

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 AT 2:00 PM: CARTOONS AT THE NEWTON FREE LIBRARY.** We enjoyed this charming program a few years ago, hosted by MIT, and look forward to seeing it again in Newton. We'll be seeing a group of G&S-inspired-or-related animated cartoons provided by NEGASS's **Don Smith**. The program includes:

A one-hour version of **RUDDIGORE** featuring the voices of old **D'Oyly Carte** regulars such as **Donald Adams**, **Kenneth Sandford**, **John Reed** and **Peggy Ann Jones**.

Two short pieces based on patter songs: "Modern Major-General" from **PIRATES** and "When I Went to the Bar" from **IOLANTHE**, both in the voice of **John Reed**.

"Gentlemen of Titipu" - a very free, modern and "hip" short adaptation of **MIKADO**, whose sole redeeming quality (according to Don) is that **Anna Russell** provides the voice of **Katisha**.

"Gilbert and Sullivan - the Very Models" - a short "clay-mation" story of the partnership, which lasts about 15 minutes and features music from all of the operas.

Can you imagine a pleasanter way to spend 2 hours on a cold winter afternoon?

**HOW TO GET THERE:** The **Newton Free Library** is located at 330 Homer Street, Newton Center, MA, 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.] See <http://mln.lib.ma.us:8036/36map.html> for more info.

## RECENT MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

**DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY:** You didn't miss it - it was snowed out. But there were quite a few last-minute requests from folks who wanted to attend - so we'll try again next year.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**MARCH 21: LMLO SORCERER** We'll want to start casting early, in spite of the Last-Minute quality of the program, so that cast members can be prepared for tricky ensembles. Send Program Chair **Dave Leigh** your top three choices at [preeta3@yahoo.com](mailto:preeta3@yahoo.com), or phone him at (781) 894-3009, by his deadline of March 1, and he will do his best to satisfy you all. The cast list will appear in the next **Bray**. (Roles - see below.)

**Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre** (baronet): Duet, ensemble numbers, and dialogue. *Bass or Baritone*



I could do with a little less swooning by the contadine over the pop-starrish gondoliers, but most of the action was traditional and stylish. Two oddities, though- the inquisitor spoke with a nutty Spanish accent (well executed by the amusing **Laurie Weissbrot**, if you don't stop to wonder why the Plaza-Toros speak in queen's English), and for reasons I can't imagine (a paucity of willing contraltos?) the Duchess was played by a baritone (**Mike Reynolds**). Drag duchesses are all very well, but the musical effect (an octave lower) was a bit off, I must say. She wasn't campy--she was just a man! Still, it was a lively production that did real justice to that zesty score. Maybe I should get off my island more.

-- JONATHAN STRONG

[*Inside info: Bob Cumming tells Us "...we had originally cast our favorite contralto as The Duchess, but her husband had emergency brain surgery and she had to drop. Don Alhambra's understudy volunteered to do it (he had recently done Madame Arcati in **Blithe Spirit**) so we took him up on it--and Linda Nadeau had told us ahead of auditions that she couldn't do it because of other commitments.]*



**GONDOLIERS AT HARVARD** The Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players presented a high-spirited **GONDOLIERS** in early December, rollicking through a blizzard without missing a beat. I played in the orchestra, and enjoyed it greatly.

In a strong cast, the standout voice was **Phillipe Pierce** as Marco. *Take a pair of sparkling eyes* soared over the orchestra, full of sweetness and yearning. As Giuseppe, **Cross Woodfield** was endearingly befuddled, and did a nice job with *Rising early in the morning*. **Maria Alu** lent sparkling stage presence as Tessa, and succeeded in making her "You see, it was like this..." soliloquy sound easy and conversational. **Caroline Jackson** was charming as Gianetta, and the "Italian four" triumphed in *Then one of us will be a Queen*.

Amongst the "Spanish five", top honors went to **Bo Meng** as Don Alhambra. Meng's rich bass was a treat to hear, especially in *There lived a King*. The Plaza-Toro family and suite were delightful, with **Andrea Coleman** (Duchess), **Jim Maltese** (Duke), Cambridge **Ridley** (Casilda), and **Dan Spitzer** (Luiz) doing full justice to *Try we life-long*. Ms. Coleman sang *On the day when I was wedded* at a true *Allegro con fuoco*, displaying full tone and wonderful diction.

In her program bio, music director **Felicia Sonmez** described herself as a conducting novice, but her beat was

crystal clear and her tempi were exhilarating. Stage director **Leigh Beth Shapiro** made the most of the cast's youthful vigor. When Inez (**Andrea Wivchar**) revealed the Prince's identity, the chorus burst into *Is this indeed the King?* with irresistible enthusiasm, and sent the audience dancing a cachucha into the December night.

--ALESSANDRA KINGSFORD



**DELIGHTFUL RUDDIGORE AT MIT:** This production was just what an amateur performance should be, full of enthusiasm and freshness. After the overture, which was conducted with great panache by **Tom Dawkins**, the appearance of the Bridesmaids set the tone for the evening. What could be more delightful than a bevy of young ladies with sweet young voices, their hair piled high and their faces framed by frizzly corkscrew curls? **Sonya Tang** sang Dame Hannah's thrilling song with appropriate drama, and the girls did indeed shudder themselves offstage. (Note to Director **Andrew Sweet**: But if the girls are listening to Dame Hannah, why are they standing in semicircle upstage while she is downstage singing out to the audience?) **Caitlin Smythe** as Rose was totally sweet. I have always disliked **RUDDIGORE** because the heroine was so unlikable. Not this one. She evidently accepted Richard because that's the page her etiquette book opened to, and as for the rest of her bizarre choices--they were carried out with such innocence and grace that one simply loved her anyway. She was matched in charm by **David Daly** as Robin Oakapple, who had performed so excellently as Paramount in last year's production of **UTOPIA**.



A good tenor is hard to find. That's why MIT used a baritone for their tenor lead last spring... This time they used **Percy Liang**, who really does not have a great voice, for the role of Richard Dauntless. I don't care! I loved his performance anyway. His hornpipe, all 4 verses, was indeed the talk of the fleet. It had us smiling with delight--though I wish the girls could have joined in at the end. And his characterization was irresistible. (Note to Director: But wouldn't it have made more sense if he had focused his attention on Zorah, rather than flirting indifferently with every chorus member throughout Act I, and especially in the "Sweet little craft" number?) **Vanessa Quinlivan** as Mad Margaret was similarly quite weak vocally--maybe it was just the night I heard her, as she seemed a little hoarse--but dramatically fine. [*We noticed that she seemed to be taking all the high soprano chorus notes in both finales - she was probably doing the best she could in Margaret's awkward mezzo range - mlc*]

The Bucks and Blades were somewhat oddly characterized. They were so busy preening themselves that despite the words they were singing they totally ignored the lovely young ladies. **Jonathan Ichikawa** was a great Despard in the first act--the consummate melodramatic villain. I laughed myself silly at a bit he did at the end of the act: first he took off his hat and put it on Robin's head; then he draped his cape over his shoulders; then he handed him the whip; and then he peeled off his mustache and gave that to Robin as well! (OK, you had to be there.) He really disappointed me in Act II, however, with his incessant mugging. The point is that Despard really does want to be virtuous. He is not bored by it. He really is happy in his marriage with Margaret. But not this Despard. [*This is, after all, a matter of opinion - and clearly this Despard and his director were of a different opinion from this reviewer. mlc*]

A lot of previously cut material was restored to Act II of this production, with mixed results. Robin's patter song, "Away, Remorse," was pretty second rate. I enjoyed the extra dialogue in the Ghost scene and in the scene preceding the Patter Trio--expanding on the notion "If I had been so lucky as to have a steady brother." But ... it doesn't make sense! There is no way that Despard would want Robin to defy the Ghosts and lose his life, because then Despard would then be back in the same box he just escaped from! I had somehow managed to avoid noticing this inconsistency until now, when the long dialogue really forced it on my attention. [*Well - if Despard really did not want to remain with Margaret - that would account for a good many things! - or maybe it's just another topsey-turvey Gilbertism - mlc*]

The characterization of the Ghosts was brilliant. Led by **Rishi Basu** as Sir Roderick, they were hideous animated corpses, with skewed necks and stiff gaits--truly terrifying. On the other hand, the "torture" was incomprehensible. I had no idea whether or how Robin was in "indescribable agony." (I saw one production some years ago in which the agony consisted of tickling ...) [*We were quite satisfied that the ghosts were magically causing some sort of agony, and Robin made it quite clear that he was experiencing it - We see no reason to try to make the mystical material -but that's Us - mlc*] I especially loved the duet in which the petite and charming Dame Hannah, and the stiff and statuesque Sir Roderick, really did look like a pretty little flower and a great oak tree.

Well, as you can see, I had some cavils, but still enjoyed it thoroughly! It's a pleasure to see a show in which the choruses are so well characterized, and the leads' voices

(if not uniformly great) are all fresh and young. Thank you, MITGASP!  
- NANCY BURSTEIN

[*We saw this production at the closing matinee., and enjoyed it thoroughly. Having seen a low-budget professional opera, full of excellent voices but weak on production values, the week before, We were struck by the difference: MITG&SP's sets and costumes were delightful, and really enhanced the performances. Andrew Sweet's direction made the most of a complex and often-misunderstood show, emphasizing the best and smoothing over the weaker parts, and drawing fine performances out of a cast of very young amateurs. And those performers gave all they had, presenting their roles with such sincerity that any technical limitations barely touched Us. Bravo, MITG&SP! - mlc*]

&&& **RUDDIGORE AT MIT - II** The MIT Gilbert And Sullivan Players presented **RUDDIGORE** as their fall production at the La Sala de Puerto Rico, a ballroom at the MIT Student Center which they convert into an auditorium. This was the first MITGASP production I'd seen in nearly ten years, and **RUDDIGORE** is one of my favorite operas, so I was interested to see MIT's current troupe put it on. The quality of the performance was uneven — some aspects worked very well while others did not — but the energy and the commitment from the people involved were unquestionable.

**Caitlin Smythe** sang beautifully as Rose Maybud, and used her Book of Etiquette to great comic effect. **David Daly** made a very appealing Robin, full of shyness and insecurities in his first scenes, and slowly building up confidence. He sang well and his diction was admirable, except when he spoke in falsetto, as in much of the Ghost Scene. **Vanessa Quinlan** seemed to take Gilbert's description of Mad Margaret to heart, and played her as "an obvious caricature of theatrical madness." She did not evoke the pathos usually associated with the character, but she certainly was funny, especially in Act 2. **Jonathan Ichikawa** played Sir Despard with a gleefully exaggerated melodrama in the first act and rigid primness in the second, and matched Quinlan's Margaret very well. As Sir Roderic, **Rishi Basu** had a powerful stage presence that commanded everyone's attention whenever he appeared.

**Robert Morrison** gave Old Adam an interesting approach: a stock character fully aware that he is a stock



character, and determined to play it for all it's worth. **Sonya Tang's** Dame Hannah had but little characterization, and she belted as much of "Sir Rupert Murgatroyd" as she could. **Percy Liang** clearly gave playing Richard Dauntless his all, but his singing was strained and his dialogue, while jovial and energetic, was largely unintelligible. The principals' singing was good, on the whole. Much of the dialogue, however, was disappointing — lines were rattled off with too much speed and too little diction; moreover, some of the actors spoke as if merely reciting memorized lines, without a sense of what the words meant or what thoughts their characters were trying to express.

The Chorus made a concerted effort (pardon the pun), but despite the participation of some capable singers such as **Rebecca Burstein**, **Deborah Sager**, **Allegra Martin** and **Art Dunlap**, the group as a whole left something to be desired, particularly in terms of balance and pitch. The Bridesmaids sang well enough by themselves, though the mezzo line could have been stronger, but faltered with the addition of the Bucks and Blades. The Ancestors, on their own, had too much power from the second basses and not enough from the others, and stumbled on the chromatic descents in "Ghost's High Noon." As a unified whole, the Chorus presented a pleasant sound, but could not keep on key without the orchestra.

Conductor **Thomas Dawkins** did an admirable job with both the instrumentalists and the singers, keeping them all with the music and with each other. Costume designer **Erin Tyndall** tended to keep things simple, clearly placing the action in the early 1800's without going into too much detail. One or two costumes were jarringly out of place — Sir Despard's Act-One costume looked more like a turn-of-the-20th-Century circus ringleader, and Robin showed up for his wedding in a modern-day tuxedo — but the rest worked nicely. Set designers **Jean Kajanavaikoon** and **Larry Stone** used the limited stage space to its fullest potential in both acts, even creating smooth transitions at the beginning and the end of the Ghost Scene. (Every account I have read of **RUDDIGORE's** premiere in 1887 mentions the technical difficulties in the Ghost Scene — maybe D'Oyly Carte should have brought over MIT students!)

Director **Andrew Sweet** restored much of the material cut from Act 2 shortly before and after **RUDDIGORE's** premiere. Old Adam once again became Gideon Crawle; the Ancestors had more interjections; Sir Ruthven, Margaret and Despard spoke more openly about accepting death as an alternative to committing daily crimes; and the Ancestors got revived at the end. Some portions of this restored material worked better than others. Adam's name change to Gideon Crawle worked

fine, especially with the radical change in costume, but the restoration of the second verse of "I Once Was As Meek" made the song feel longer than it should have. Likewise the additional interjections by the Ancestors hurt the pacing of the scene, which is probably why Gilbert cut them in rehearsals in the first place. Sir Ruthven was given back "For 35 Years", the original patter-song replaced by the much-inferior "Henceforth All The Crimes," but Daly spoke more of the lyrics than he sang — a questionable choice, since most of the audience, even those who knew **RUDDIGORE**, were hearing the song for the first time, and thus weren't given much sense of the melody. The dialogue before the "Matter Trio" was strengthened with the additions, giving a clear foundation for Sir Ruthven's realization that refusing to commit a daily crime is "tantamount to suicide." The revival of the Ancestors, however, suffered from technical impracticality: to get them down from their frames, the lights had to go out again, with the rest of the cast onstage, while the Ancestors got into place and the tech crew made the necessary adjustments. This effectively brought the action to a screeching halt for a full ten or fifteen seconds, which the Bridesmaids spent shrieking in the darkness for little apparent reason, and when the Ancestors reappeared and were told that they never should have died at all, they so enjoyed being alive again they upstaged the principals for the rest of the scene. I have to agree with Gilbert — the end of the opera is better without it. I also have to wonder why Sweet would go through all the trouble to undo changes in the second act that were made by the authors, yet leave untouched the changes in the first act, made by others long after the authors were dead.

Still, despite the flaws of this production, it was clear that everyone involved had a good time, and from the chatter I heard at intermission, so did the audience.

- DAVE LEIGH



**IOLANTHE IN CARLISLE**, presented by **The Savoyard Light Opera Company**, Carlisle, MA 11/16/03. (This production was dedicated to the memory of **Bill Burdine**.) Corey Auditorium is a nice little theatre, with good acoustics and sight lines. Not a bad seat in the house. The Sunday matinee audience was the usual G&S mix: very young children, very old children who've been seeing G&S all their lives, and a platoon of Ladies In Red Hats.

I was especially interested in their production since they feature a full orchestra. The conductor led the orchestra with passion and gusto. ("I'd rather be doing this than anything. Anything!"- **Fred Frabotta**) I was expecting to concentrate on the flute in the "weak enough to tarry"

section of the overture, but that part was done by the clarinet. No one else noticed that, so no one else was that picky. I suppose the conductor went with his strengths. He had lots of strength with this fine orchestra.

The sets were simple and uncluttered. Act I was a sylvan glade by the pool. The Fairies entered from the side, while Celia (**Linda Emmanuel**), Leila (**Rebekah Skirball**) and Fleta (**Zoe Daniel**, SLOC's president) arose from the closed flowers of pond lilies. Iolanthe would later arise from a flower upstage. There were large flowers and a dragonfly. Act II featured a sentry box stage right, a backdrop of the London skyline, and a huge Big Ben clock face stage left. Simple, clean, and uncluttered. The Act II set even drew applause.

The Fairies were dressed in green tights, with draping tutus cut to resemble flower leaves, and caps resembling flower petals. The Lords were in purple robes with faux ermine stoles, and purple tams. The Lord Chancellor was dressed in white. Strephon and Phyllis were dressed as rustics, Phyllis in bloomers. In all, the costume crew did an outstanding job.

Voices: All the singers had clip-on mikes, and all voices were piped through a central console (a sound man's dream). The Fairies were sweet and clear, the Fairy Queen (**Noelle Nordstrom**) strong and dead-on in character. Then Iolanthe (**Stephanie Mann**) arose from her flower and sang so much better than I had expected. Think of the summoning song as a 9, and ratchet it up 3 more.

Strephon (**Brad Kenney**) was weak in voice, but strong in acting and character. Phyllis (**Diane Doyle**) was the top voice in this impressive cast. She had a good bit of fun playing the ingénue with the Lords. **Rick Barnes** (Mountararat) and **Lonnie Powell** (Tolloller) made a great pair of rivals. Powell sang "Spurn not the nobly born" with strength and feeling. **Barry Hilton** (Lord Chancellor) is described in the program as "a decayed gentleperson of no fixed abode" who has performed most of the G&S canon from Tokyo to Manhattan. At first you may think his voice old and weak, but he handled the entire roll with ease, including the Nightmare song. (More on that later.) He's done this before.

**Bob Russell** (Private Willis) did very well, and added a nice bass run to "friendship's name."

Staging: This production was Audience-centered. Almost all the songs were played facing



front: Tripping thither, the Act I finale, even the "don't go" scene. It's hard to accept the Fairies singing straight out, and turning in an instant to say "don't go!" Strephon and Phyllis stood facing front on their first meeting. It's a technique that harkens back to the days of candle footlights. It's all right to do this, but when two people are supposed to be speaking intimately, look at him! Look at her! I can hear you. Mountararat and Tolloller played off each other in the "not worth while" scene. That worked better. And the groups stood in straight lines. (My pet peeve.) The stage has depth. Use it. In the Act I finale the Fairies were in two lines stage right, the Lords in two lines stage right. I can see the finale as the Fairy's chance for impish torment. Crowd control isn't that much of a problem. Rely on the cast's inventiveness for interplay.

The entrance of the Lords in "Trumpets bray" was a puzzle. I remember the Lord's entrance in the **Turtle Lane** production where the Lords filed down the aisle in slow, stately march, the very personification of pomposity and arrogance. The stereo effect was fantastic. Perhaps the director (**Donna DeWitt**) was looking for something different. What she tried was a mincing 4/4 step. The Lords looked like they were jogging in place. The attempt should be filed under "Great idea. Forget it." She had the Fairies come down the aisle singing "Forbear. Forbear." A great effect, but only two words.

Being literal: an annoying effect of miming the words. The Lords: "tan tan ta-ra (blow air trumpet) tzing boom (clash air cymbals); Phyllis "...I'll not be bound" (cross wrists to front); etc., etc., as if they were signing their words. Oh please!!!

Having fun: This we did. The cast clearly enjoyed themselves. There were several updated jokes; "...shall be attainable by MCAS examination!" (The audience didn't get that one until the second act.) "He's a parliamentary U-Haul. He carries everything!" The director outdid herself in the Nightmare scene. Four Fairies wheeled a bed on stage (how did they get such quiet casters?) with the Chancellor in a nightgown and cap, the pillows and blanket Union Jacks. They rocked the bed back and forth, and Barry Hilton never missed a beat. He stood up to reveal Homer Simpson slippers on his feet. Hilarious.

In the final scene, as the Fairy Queen said "You are a Fairy from this moment," wings sprouted from Private Willis' back. As they did from the Peers' back. Then the conductor stood for the finale- with wings on his back. Laughter and applause.

In all, I am happy that Carlise is an easy drive for me. I will keep SLOC on my short list from now on.

-- **DON BIDOLEAU**

**&& IOLANTHE IN CARLISLE II November 23, 2003.**

As our son's family lives in Carlisle, it was only a natural that our grandchildren Margot (7) and Briana (5), who attend the Carlisle schools, begged us to take them to see the fairy come out of the stream in this most musical of G&S.

The phone ticket committee was most courteous in getting us first row seats and we were treated to a most memorable afternoon. From the moment the first notes of the full 24 piece orchestra began the overture, the brilliance of the sound was almost amplified by each instrument being perfectly tuned. With the animated movements of conductor, **Fred Frabotta**, the orchestra maintained excellent balances and nuances throughout the performance. During the overture, the haunting silvery tones of solo clarinetist **Debbie Levine** were spine tingling.

As the curtain opened, the stage setting was simple but included magnified water lily blossoms and a huge dragonfly at top stage left, so when the fairies entered, they seemed like the wee folk they were supposed to be. All fairies were clad in yellow green body suits, tutus, and enormous wings. Most of the fairy troupe entered from stage sides, but a few arose from the slowly opening lotus blossoms; an applause getter. Their costumes, and in fact all the costumes were in good taste, but the paisley matching vests of Phyllis (**Diana Doyle**) and Strephon (**Brad Kenney**) were outstanding, a tribute to costume designer **Sandra Bordeau**.



Because there was clear fidelity sound coming from the side speakers on the walls, I knew there were microphones on the principals. But try as I might, I could not see the mikes or transmitters, until after the show when I saw one of the cast removing a transmitter from his back belt. This was a talented result of sound system manager **Bill Lopoulos**.

Iolanthe (**Stephanie Mann**) entered from a slowly opening lotus blossom at stage center and her costume was same as other fairies, an unusual ploy, but it made her seem as one of the group and therefore more believable. Her wide ranging voice made her special, however.

Strephon and Phyllis were a truly matched pair. Strephon entered with a bounce which showed his true stage presence and Phyllis was most coquettish. Their duet *None shall Part Us* was done to perfection. I still think that

is the most melodious piece Sullivan wrote with its simple  $\frac{3}{4}$  time and thirds harmony.

A crisp drum roll and trumpet bray fanfare announced the entrance of the peers, with a large Union Jack flag unfurled on the backdrop.

Lord Tolloller (**Lonnie Powell**) showed his strong voice in *Of All the Young Ladies I Know*. The Lord Chancellor (**Barry Hilton**) showed good stage presence and was restrained in his actions in *When I went to the Bar*. He could have used more amplification, but he came across as a true leader of the peers and in command at all times. During *Go Away Madam*, the stage lighting changed to a deep red to show the transition to a serious matter, then changed back to green during the fairy presentations. Very effective and clever.

When the Fairy Queen (**Noelle Nordstrom**) sang, her full range and clear voice were evident. As usual, there were a few strays from Gilbert's text, and in *Henceforth, Strephon, Cast Away* she inserted that "you will be attainable by MCAS examination" the house was highly amused. When she sang *Oh! Chancellor Unwary* there should have been drum rolls and flashing lights to emphasize the "affidavit from a thunderstorm"?

The second act opened with a real audience gasp and applause. The customary guard house was on stage left, with a small silhouette of London on the backdrop floor. A full moon and clouds were projected on a screen. But the real feature was an almost full size replica of Big Ben's clock upper half on stage left. This huge clock was about 12' in diameter and 6' radial height....a beautiful piece of artwork from set construction manager **Kurt Lanza**.

Private Willis (**Bob Russell**) in *When All Night Long*, had a wonderful combination of voice, stature, and stage movements. Whenever he spoke of Liberals and Conservatives, he deftly signaled his hand to the left or the right, good results from stage director **Donna DeWitt**.

The Chancellor's *Nightmare Song* was a real show stopper. He entered clad in a flowing nightshirt with a bevy (bunch, gaggle, flock, herd?? What do you call a group of fairies?) of fairies hastily rolling on stage a large white bed with brilliantly colored Union Jacks for the counterpane and declining pillow. **Barry**, lying in the bed, really was great here, with clear, exact diction and not too fast, so you could enjoy Gilbert's wacky words. A cute

trick was the momentary hiking of his nightshirt to expose his socks with "black silk and gold clocks"!

The "Dagnet" dumm-de-dum-dum by Hornist **Matha Crane** was a catching prelude to Iolanthe's revelation to the Chancellor. The ethereal voice rendering of the fairies as they entered through the audience was artfully done and created just the right setting for this climax.

As usual, everyone sprouted wings, even conductor **Fred Frabotta** (just had to mention him again because he and the orchestra really did an outstanding job.)

The grandchildren are still humming the tunes and will long remember their enchanting afternoon with Iolanthe and her friends from another grande performance of the **Savoyard Light Opera Company**. Thank you, **SLOC**.

-- ALLEN J. COHEN

*[We had not visited SLOC for several years, but took advantage of an opportunity to catch a later performance of this show (no wings for the conductor). We must admit that, although SLOC's loud, fast, bright, shallow, anything-for-a-laugh style is not to Our taste (and We found the body mikes distracting), the company does draw fine singers (Lonnie Powell remains Our favorite local tenor) and has a loyal, enthusiastic audience.*

*After struggling with Our cane up two long, steep staircases from the parking lot to the auditorium, We intended to fulminate against the venue's lack of handicap access - but on the way out We finally found two long, steep ramps which, although not much help for Us, would be fine for people in electric wheelchairs. But Allen Cohen assures Us that SLOC actually has about a dozen handicapped-parking places, a ground-level HC entrance, and an inside elevator to the auditorium. So We will limit Our complaint to the lack of useful signage: An IOLANTHE sign at the entrance to the parking lot would have saved the friend who drove Us there about 20 minutes of wrong turns; signs within the parking lot could have led Us to a less exhausting path to the hall; even signs within the school, to point visitors to the auditorium, were lacking and would have been helpful. As for the lack of handicapped-access signage, Allen assures us that, as a result of his request, that is due to be corrected in the spring. - mlc]*



**OHIO LIGHT OPERA'S GRAND DUKE ON CD:** Following their successful recordings (on **Newport Classics**) of **IDA** and **UTOPIA** with dialogue, **The Ohio Light Opera** has now released (on **Albany Records**) a lively and musicianly **GRAND DUKE**. It makes a dramatic case for the final Savoy opera and should be in every NEGASSers library.

But I do want to correct some misleading advertising: it's labeled "First Complete Recording," which it is not (if you want truly complete you'd have to go back to the 1965 **Lyric Theater Company of Washington DC's** 3-LP set, semi-professional though it was). The Ohio set does make a complete traversal of the opera in two hours and six minutes by trimming the dialogue considerably (not itself a bad idea when done with intelligence as it generally is here) and lopping off verses from the madrigal, the penny-roll duet, the big bombs duet, the Baroness's brindisi, the Monte Carlos' entry, and -- most unforgivably -- the herald's song).



They also cut Julia's "Ah, pity me" solo entirely (**D'Oyly Carte** leaves most of it in), and like the **D'OC**, without bothering to check the libretto, they begin Julia's mad scene without "I have a rival! Frenzy-thrilled, I find you both together" robbing us of three rhymes.

There are other snips taken and further typos adhered to, and a bizarre interpolation in which Ernest Dummkopf says of Julia, "You know, she's not really English. Her real name is Ilka von Palmay, a Hungarian prima donna who can easily be passed off as an English leading lady to these provincial German audiences." A stray joke from **UTOPIA**? It misses Gilbert's conceit that the Germans in **DUKE** speak English, and therefore the Englishwoman speaks with a "German" accent.

These quibbles should be noted in advance, and then you may settle in to a performance that certainly makes a splendid case for the opera. I hope it will inspire more revivals.  
-- JONATHAN STRONG

**&&& REVIEWS SOUGHT: BROUDE BROTHERS CRITICAL EDITION PINAFORE.** Elma Sanders of the Editorial Department of **Broude Brothers** writes: **Broude Brothers** has published a critical edition of **H.M.S. Pinafore** edited by **Percy M. Young**. We would like to send a copy to the New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society for review. *[How lovely! We have already received one offer - but if anyone else would like to get in line to review this important work for the Bray, please let Us know and We'll pass the copy on to you! -mlc]*





