

THE TRUMPET BRAY

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

Vol. XXXIII No. 8
May, 2009

*~If a man can't forge his own will,
whose will can he forge?~*

Sunday, May 31

NEGASS Annual Board Election Meeting, 5:00 PM
at Thai Thani, 408 Humphrey Street, Swampscott, MA
and
Mass Theatrica's *Mikado*, 7:00 PM
25 Exchange Street, Lynn, MA

UPCOMING MEETINGS

NEGASS Annual Board Election Meeting and Group Attendance of Mass Theatrica's *Mikado*

The Elections Committee is pleased to present the following list of nominees for offices at the annual NEGASS elections on May 31.

President: **Rebecca Hains**
Treasurer: **Tom Frates**
Program Chair: **Stephanie Mann**
Members-at-Large: **Tom Dawkins,**
Martha Birnbaum.

Continuing Members: **Tony Parkes** (Vice-President); **Marion Carroll** (Secretary); Members-at-Large: **Janice Dallas, Brad Amidon, Angeliki Theoharis.** **Dick Freedman** has agreed to act as Auditor (non-Board) to provide continuity in the financial area.

Elections will be held over dinner at Thai Thani restaurant in Swampscott and will be followed by a group visit to Mass Theatrica's production of *The Mikado*.

We are delighted at the interest shown by so many new people and look forward to a very active and enthusiastic Board for the future.

- J. DONALD SMITH, President

Directions to Thai Thani (408 Humphrey Street, Swampscott): Take the Lynnway to Lynn Shore Drive, which turns into Humphrey Street/Rt.129. The restaurant is across the street from Fisherman's Beach right before the fork of Humphrey Street and Puritan Street going towards Marblehead, MA. (781) 596-1820.

Immediately following NEGASS elections at Thai Thani, we will attend Mass Theatrica's presentation of *The Mikado* as part of our meeting. The performance is on **Sunday, May 31, 2009, 7:00 PM** at LynnArts, The Neal Rantoul Vault Theater, 25 Exchange Street, Lynn, MA.

This production has lined up some of Boston's most talented Gilbert & Sullivan interpreters, featuring **Brad Amidon** as Nanki-Poo, **Beth Grzegorzewski** as Yum-Yum, **Angeliki Theoharis** as Katisha, **Thomas Frates** as Koko, **Thomas Rene Brennan** as Pish-Tush, **Jeramie Hammond** as Pooch-Bah, and Yum-Yum's sisters are portrayed by **Jacque Wilson** as Pitti-Sing and **Susan Craft** as Peep-Bo. The *Mikado* is **Arthur Dunlap**. Rounding out the cast are **Lydian DeVere, Lara Fox, and Julia Teitel**.

Admission is \$15, \$13 seniors and students, and \$13 for NEGASS Members on presentation of membership card. For more information about the program, contact Mass Theatrica at 508-757-8515, masstheatrica@yahoo.com, or www.masstheatrica.org.

Note: if you plan to attend dinner/elections, rsvp programchair@negass.org by 5/30

Directions to LynnArts:

From Routes 128/95 North:

- Take exit 44B to rotary
- Take second exit at rotary (129 - Lynn - Lynnfield Street)
- After about 3 miles, pass Mobil Station - get in right lane and continue on about ½ mile
- at traffic signal (with pond to your left), bear right onto Boston Street
- after about ½ mile, turn left at lights (just before Stop & Shop) onto Washington Street
- stay on Washington Street past courthouse (on right), Hess Gas (on right), and Lynn Public Schools Administration Bldg. (on left)
- go straight through next stop sign
- go straight through next lights (Lynn Visitors Center on corner)
- at next light, turn left onto Broad Street and then take immediate left onto Spring Street
- park along Spring Street (2 hour parking)
- at end of Spring, turn left onto Exchange Street for LynnArts (#25 Exchange)
- if you don't find parking on Spring, go to the right on Exchange and park anywhere on the right or go around the block and try again

From Route 1/ Tobin Bridge:

- after crossing bridge, continue to Lynnfield/ Lynn/Rt. 129 exit
- at traffic signal, bear right following 129 east to Lynn
- from rotary, follow directions above

From 1A North/Boston:

- go through Callahan Tunnel, following 1A north to Revere
- pass Logan Airport and Suffolk Downs
- at major rotary/intersection, bear right following signs for 1A/Lynn
- pass Wonderland dog track
- at next rotary, continue to follow 1A
- continue over bridge into Lynn on the Lynnway
- at 4 the traffic signal get into left lane for downtown Lynn, turn left, stay in the right hand lane.
- at next light, turn right onto Broad Street at second light there are two roads that form a "v" around a building, turn left onto the second street (at the Sovereign Bank), Spring Street, and follow directions at top .

New NEGASS Members: Scenes and Arias Concert

On June 21, 2009, 7pm at Park Avenue Congregational Church, 50 Paul Revere Road, Arlington, MA, NEGASS is sponsoring a concert featuring new members of the NEGASS family. Admission is \$10 for General Admission, Children under 12 and NEGASS members get in for free! This concert will feature many favorite songs and scenes as well as some lesser-known gems of the repertoire. We hope to see you for our Father's Day concert!

Tickets:

- General Admission : \$10
- NEGASS Members: Free

~*~*~* **RECENT PRODUCTIONS** ~*~*~*

Harvard Gondoliers Float Our Boat

The consensus among G&S buffs is that "The Gondoliers" was the team's last big hit, opening in 1889 and running in its initial production for 559 performances. One finds no reason to quibble with this assessment, and the performance by the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players we caught during its April run at Agassiz Theater in the old Radcliffe Yard gave ample testimony in support. Not only did the Harvard troupe put on the opera with great fidelity to its creators' conception, but this production offered up some striking new talent and the development of some promising players from prior shows.



Two preliminary observations: first, on the night we attended the orchestra was sounding much better than it has in recent productions. Music Director **Hanjay Wang** took the overture at a dignified and stately tempo, and the musicians responded with a rich sonority and good precision. The brasses and woodwinds were particularly effective throughout the opera, a must with Sullivan's Spanish-tinged "Baratarian" themes. Second, the sets

were colorful, sturdy and functional without being a distraction—all to the good, though the Venetian scene in Act 1 was superior to the Baratarian one for Act 2. Praise, therefore, to Set Designer **Natalie Jacoby** and crew.

Now for the meaty bits. This semester's production has brought forth a generous supply of strong musical and theatrical talent. **Bridget Haile's** Giannetta and Sara Libenson's Tessa were both splendid. Haile's is the more powerful voice—the role of Giannetta gives it greater scope than did that of Iolanthe last semester—and she is a vivacious actress as well. Libenson in turn lent depth of tone and a charming coquettishness to Tessa.

We are following the careers of **Stewart Kramer** (Giuseppe) and **Benjamin Nelson** (Marco) with great interest. They are both musically and theatrically adept and made their characters come alive—although we'd have liked to see a little more facial nuance in their conversion from ardent republicans to "responsible" monarchists. One thing to add to their credit is the strong case they made for the aria "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes" in Act 2 (Nelson singing and both in their stage business), which has come in for some musical and literary criticism of late.



The ducal contingent of **Benjamin Morris** as the Duke of Plaza-Toro, **Sofia Selowsky** (an HRG&SP newcomer) as the Duchess, **Megan Amram** as Casilda and **Alexander MacQuitty** as Luiz, made a fine ensemble for their first-act numbers. Morris, a senior concluding a distinguished and multifarious career with HRG&SP, is a lanky drink of water not perhaps one's first idea of a body type for the Duke, but his good voice, rubber face and superior hoofing ran the role beautifully through its many paces. Selowsky countered her first act reticence with an explosion of musical and dramatic power in the second, aided by a felicitously deployed whip (about which we shall say no more). Ms. Amram too has a fine voice and disports herself well onstage. Her role, it seems, was conceived by Stage Director **Michael Yashinsky** as

NEGASS Meetings: Spring 09

May 31, 5:00 p.m., in
Lynn, MA

NEGASS Annual
Board Election
Meeting, followed by
Mass Theatrica's *The
Mikado*

June 21, 7:00 p.m., in
Arlington, MA

Park Avenue
Congregational Church

NEXT BRAY DEADLINE: June 1, 2009

Next Bray Stuffing: **Saturday**, June 6, 2009, 3 p.m.
at the home of Janice and Ron Dallas, 63 Everett
Street, Arlington, MA. Email or telephone for
directions

something of a red-hot mama rather than the usual Gilbertian ingénue; this permitted some amusing stage business of a ribald sort, and some appropriately disapproving gestures from the Duchess. On the whole, however, we doubt that Gilbert would have approved: while it adds a frisson to her scenes with Luiz, it cuts against her interactions with Marco and Giuseppe. MacQuitty's Luiz was of lighter weight than the others in this group, but his stage presence is winsome and his light baritone mellifluous (yes, it's technically a tenor role, and MacQuitty is, we're told, naturally a tenor, but the notes are at the low end here and it's perhaps not the happiest part of his range).

As Don Alhambra, the Grand Inquisitor, HRG&SP gave us a striking debutant (hail and farewell, alas, as he is a graduating senior) in the person of **John Erban**, whose slimy and nasal personification yoked Elvis Presley to Vincent Price, with a tip of the hat to Severus Snape. His singing voice, though, was none of that—Erban has spent most of his college years in grand opera, and it definitely showed. Likewise, **Emily Hecht** as Inez, a tiny but crucial part, was admirably plummy of voice and capable in action.

The rest of the ensemble left little to be desired. They sang, danced and reacted with aplomb and deftness. Budgetary constraints, or something like, seem to have affected the costuming, such that the gondoliers appeared more like London cabbies, and the Duke's makeover in Act 2 involved no more than putting on his suit jacket; the women, however, were better served in their handmade dresses by Costume Designer **Janice He**, and Erban's getup as Don Alhambra, accessorized with a pet raven, was very effective.

Finally, a word about the stage direction. Mr. Yashinsky was highly inventive and prolific in creating stage business, some of it quite funny. He could, however, have heeded Don Alhambra's "There Lived a King" and exercised a bit more editorial discretion: for example, he spent a lot of time on a seriously distracting bit involving crushing grapes, to set up a visual punch line whereby Luiz and Casilda toasted one another with the results. Meh.

Bottom line, this was definitely one of the better HRG&SP productions in recent memory, among a field of very strong contenders. One of its best aspects is the prospect that a deep bench of continuing participants, front- and backstage, will delight audiences for years to come.

VANCE R. KOVEN

The Fairies At Tech

We have been treated to two Iolanthe productions in Cambridge this year—in December it was at Harvard, and in May the MIT G&S Players have entered their interpretation. One distinguishing characteristic of the MIT group is greater participation by Tech alumni and graduate students and general community members. This diversity of input makes it a little harder to call MIT performances truly student productions, although the leadership of the organization is Tech-based. Nevertheless, the character of the institution does make itself felt: aspects of the production, such as set construction, lighting, and other effects, were superb and, consciously or not, evince the engineer's outlook.



Engineering was well in evidence, for example, in creating a set that could be easily converted (in full view of the audience) from the abstracted Arcadian landscape of the first act to the houses of Parliament for Act II, and in setting up and deploying a snowmaking apparatus (about which more below). Sometimes, though, the best

solution to an engineering problem is to avoid it, especially if it can be designed away. Thus, the complications ensuing from Iolanthe's stream-bed exile (water and a weedy costume that needs to be quickly shed) were averted by setting her not in a pond among frogs, but a cave amid bats, though doing so may have cost the loss of a Gilbertian joke about "living among the frogs." This also furnished a cave entrance that could double in Act II as Pvt. Willis's sentry booth. Another adaptation was the use of tiaras rather than wings to denote fairyhood, which the lords in Act II could keep literally under their hats.

As a conceptual matter, stage directors **Garry Zacheiss** and **Ky Lowenhaupt** deserve praise for choosing a wintry setting for the entire play, which provides sensible—and practical—costuming cues for the lords (nice touch: they wore differently colored scarves to denote their party affiliations), avoids costume changes for Act II, and, oh yes, furnishes an excuse to use the snow-maker.



Several performances are worthy of special mention: Andrew Sweet as the Lord Chancellor was first-rate, his acting well honed, his singing and dancing quite adequate, and his diction immaculate; **Kaila Deiorio-Haggart** (an undergraduate) as Phyllis, has a strong and lovely voice, although there were occasions when disagreements arose with her stagemates and accompanists over pitch. **Rosie Osser** played Iolanthe straight down the middle, with élan but without ostentation (she was particularly affecting in her big solo in Act II), which was also true of **Mark Costello's** Strephon. **Amanda Keil**, playing the Fairy Queen, is a professional singer whose voice and stage presence—very regal indeed—bespoke her training, but I confess surprise at her inability to project very well: a miscalculation of the room's acoustics, perhaps? **Davie Rolnick**, a freshman playing Private Willis, was wonderful in his small but scene-stealing role, marred only by an overly hasty and incomprehensible final line, which by rights should bring the house down. **Peter**

Boettcher and **Paul Quimby** as Lords Tolloller and Mountararat respectively, gave solid and funny performances. Quimby is not a natural tenor, which deprived him of oomph in Tolloller's punishing high notes, but his acting made up for this. The smaller solo roles of Celia, Leila and Fleta were well sung and acted by **Betsy Flowers**, **Michelle Abner** and **Brie Frame**, respectively. Flowers's delivery of the great line "but the weakness is so strong" was perfect.

A big "wow" goes to the much-improved quality of the orchestra, especially the brass, under Music Director **Allegra Martin**. **Kelsey Peterson** and **Nancy Ishihara's** costume designs were apt; the set design by Ms. Deiorio-Haggard was more abstract than one often sees, but effective. The choreography and lighting design—Susannah Gordon-Messer and **Mike Bromberg**, respectively—were unflashy and to the point. Overall, a very fine production; we hope future MITG&SP entries will build on this advance in polish and stageworthiness.

VANCE R. KOVEN

UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Mass Theatrica presents *The Mikado*

Mass Theatrica presents *The Mikado* on Saturday, May 30, 2009, 8:00 PM at Southgate Theatre, 30 Julio Drive, in Shrewsbury and on Sunday, May 31, 2009, 7:00 PM at LynnArts, in the Neal Rantoul Vault Theatre, 25Exchange Street, Lynn, MA.

The production is co-directed by NEGASS members Tom Frates and Angeliki Theoharis. *The Mikado* will be fully costumed and staged, with piano accompaniment by James Hay. The cast will include:

Yum-Yum (cover)	Beth Grzegorzewski, Lydian DeVere
Peep-Bo	Susan Craft, Lara Fox (cover)
Pitti-Sing	Jacque Wilson, Julia Teitel (cover)
Katisha	Angeliki Theoharis
Nanki-Poo	Brad Amidon
Ko-Ko	Thomas Frates

Pooh-Bah	Jeramie Hammond
Pish-Tush	Thomas René Brennan
Mikado	Arthur Dunlap

Martha Birnbaum will serve as stage manager/assistant to the directors. We hope to see you all there!

Salem Arts Festival: *Recital of Gilbert and Sullivan Arias*

On June 5, 2009 at 8 p.m., **Rebecca Hains** (soprano) and **Thomas Dawkins** (pianist) will offer a recital of Gilbert & Sullivan arias as part of the Salem Arts Festival at the Old Town Hall in Salem, Massachusetts. The recital will feature special guest **Tom Frates** (baritone). Rebecca's recital will be preceded by several other events, including an opening reception at 5:30.

The Salem Arts Festival is a family-friendly weekend showcasing talented, top-rated singers, musicians, dancers and artists, in not only an active but also interactive environment (a juried Art Exhibition, a talent show, open mic poetry readings, and activities for children as part of music, dance and art presentations). For more information, please visit <http://www.salemartsfestival.com>.



First Music Concert Series:
An Afternoon Tea with Gilbert and Sullivan

On Sunday, June 7, 2009 at 3pm, join the First Music Concert Series [1 Concord Street, Nashua, New Hampshire] for the fifth and final program in its inaugural season, as a power-packed afternoon of Gilbert and Sullivan favorites is offered by up-and-coming artists in the regional, national and international music scene.

The concert will be followed by an optional catered tea, co-sponsored through the **Crosby Bakery, Inc.** in Nashua, NH. Patrons may choose either a concert only option or a concert and tea option.

Tickets for the concert and tea option must be reserved and pre-purchased by Mat 31, at a cost of \$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors and \$10 for youth under 16. Seating for the tea is limited, so early reservation is recommended. Reservations are available by calling (603) 882-4861 or by e-mail under concerts@firstchurchnashua.org.

Tickets for the concert program-only option are available for reservation or at the door, at a cost of \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors, and \$4 for youth under 16. Artists include **Rebecca Hains**, **Angeliki Theoharris**, **Daniel Kamalic**, and **Tom Frates**. For further information, visit <http://www.firstchurchnashua.org/>.



Continental Airlines Tower Festival 2009:
Yeoman of the Guard

The CONTINENTAL AIRLINES TOWER FESTIVAL 2009 is proud to announce the return of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard* to the Tower of London after over 30 years!

The production, presented by Carl Rosa Opera, features a cast of over fifty singers and actors elaborately costumed and accompanied by the full Carl Rosa Opera Orchestra. These special and unique performances on the 13th & 15th September 2009 are the first time The

Yeomen of the Guard has been performed in the Towers moat since 1978. The production, commissioned by the Tower Festival, will be one of the only times you will be able to see *The Yeomen of the Guard* performed within the space where the action is set.

For more information and tickets go to <http://www.towerfestival.com> or phone 0844 847 2519.

NEGASS & Longwood Opera's *Iolanthe*

Christ Episcopal Church, 1132 Highland Avenue, Needham

The audience is the chorus, so bring your score!

Music is free but dinner is pot-luck. Please bring something to share if you'd like to stay for dinner.

Roles to be cast are:

The Lord Chancellor (comic baritone)
 Lord Mountararat (baritone)
 Lord Tolloller (tenor)
 Private Willis, of the Grenadier Guards (bass)
 Strephon, an Arcadian Shepherd (baritone)
 Queen of the Fairies (contralto)
 Iolanthe, a Fairy, Strephon's mother (mezzo-soprano)
 Celia, a Fairy (soprano)
 Leila, a Fairy (mezzo-soprano)
 Fleta, a Fairy (speaking role/chorus)
 Phyllis, an Arcadian Shepherdess and Ward in Chancery (soprano)

If you are interested in singing a role for this concert, please email Programchair@negass.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MITG&SP seeks Production crew for *The Mikado*

The MIT Gilbert and Sullivan Players announce interviews for our fall 2009 production of *The Mikado* or, *the Town of Titipu*. We are seeking a **Producer, Stage Director, Music Director, and Stage Manager**.

Performances will take place in the first two weeks of December, with auditions in the beginning of September. To schedule an interview or ask questions, please email gsp-board@mit.edu by May 12.

Please see <http://web.mit.edu/gsp/www> for more information about the MIT Gilbert and Sullivan Players.

CALENDAR



☺☺ **G&S Light Opera Company of Long Island**

The Mikado on Saturday, May 30, 2009, 8:00 PM at Southgate Theatre, 30 Julio Drive, in Shrewsbury and on Sunday, May 31, 2009, 7:00 PM at LynnArts, in the Neal Rantoul Vault Theatre, 25 Exchange Street, Lynn, MA

☺☺ **G&S Light Opera Company of Long Island**

The Yeomen of the Guard - Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island. May 30 at 8pm at Chaminade High School, Mineola, and May 31 at Islip Town Hall, West Islip.

www.gilbert-and-sullivan.net

☺☺ **An Afternoon Tea with Gilbert and Sullivan**

Admission - \$18/15/10 (with afternoon tea) - \$9/7/4 (concert only) - Adults/Seniors/Youth Pre-purchase of tickets for afternoon tea option required. (Limited admission) All other tickets (concert only) available at the door. (Open admission for concert)

1 Concord Street, Nashua, NH

<http://www.firstchurchnashua.org/>.

☺☺ **Savoy Company, Philadelphia, PA**

The Pirates of Penzance. The production runs May 29 & 30 at the Academy of Music, 240 Broad St., Philadelphia, and June 12 & 13 at the open air theatre at Longwood Gardens, 1001 Longwood Road, Kennett Square.

☺☺ **Huntington Theatre**

May 15 - June 14, 2009

Pirates (or Gilbert & Sullivan Plunder'd)

at the Huntington Theatre, Boston, MA

<http://www.huntingtontheatre.org/season/production.aspx?id=5484&src=t>

☺☺ **CT G&S Society Auditions**

Auditions for *The Pirates of Penzance* will take place on June 14 and 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 at Congregation Adath Israel, 48 Old Church Ave, Middletown, CT 06457. This revival replaces original plans to revive "Yeomen" because of the general economy. Performances will take place in the new and stunning MHS auditorium (truly a performing arts center built to accommodate traveling Broadway shows) on Nov. 6, 7 and 8, conducted by NEGASS member Dr. John Dreslin and directed by founder Bob Cumming (singers.agency@snet.net). See website at ctgilbertandsullivan.org.

☺☺ **Ohio Light Opera**

<http://www.wooster.edu/ohiolightopera/>

HMS Pinafore June 25, 27; July 3, 11, 17, 23, 31; August 8

Ruddigore July 21, 25, 29, 31; August 7

☺☺ **College Light Opera, Falmouth, MA**

<http://www.collegelightopera.com/schedule09.htm>

Yeomen of the Guard

July 7-11 at 8 pm; Thursday matinee at 2 pm

HMS Pinafore

August 18-22 at 8 pm; Thursday matinee at 2 pm

☺☺ **Longwood Opera, Needham, MA**

Longwood Opera

An Evening of Gilbert and Sullivan

Tuesday, August 4, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Christ Episcopal Church

1132 Highland Avenue

Needham, MA

☺☺ **Longwood Opera, Needham, MA**

NEGASS & Longwood Opera

Joint Concert: Iolanthe

Sunday, August 23, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Christ Episcopal Church

1132 Highland Avenue

Needham, MA

☸☸ **New Repertory Theatre, Watertown, MA**
 (for those who really like to plan far in advance)
 May 2-23, 2010
Hot Mikado
 New Rep Theatre Company at Arsenal Center for the
 Arts, Watertown, MA
<http://www.newrep.org/>

THE PAPERLESS BRAY

Standard membership in NEGASS pays for a printed copy of each issue of the Bray, plus a password to the current issue of the on-line PDF version. You may also opt out of the mailed issues of the Bray and receive it online only. To get your password and/or sign up to receive the Bray online only, please contact our Membership Chair, **Janice Dallas**, at membership@negass.org

Past issues of **The Trumpet Bray** can always be read online at http://negass.org/Bray/Trumpet_Bray.html or be downloaded at <http://negass.org/bray/pdf/>. You can receive our special **Between-Bray E-Mails** by joining us and signing on to the NEGASS email list at <http://www.negass.org/Pages/EMail.html>



Gilbert & Sullivan Resources Online

The **Gilbert and Sullivan Archive**, a resource of information on all things G&S, is available at <http://diamond.boisestate.edu/gas/>

SavoyNet, the G&S mailing list, is always accepting new members. To subscribe, send a plain text email to listserv@bridgewater.edu with nothing in the subject line and SUBSCRIBE SAVOYNET *Your Name* in the message body.



THE NEW ENGLAND GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

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*NEGASS membership dues are \$20, 30, 50 and 100. Please contact **Janice Dallas**, 63 Everett St. Arlington, MA.*

