

PM and 6 & 7 at 2. Call 734-764-2538 or visit <http://www.umgass.org> for more info.

December 7, 1889, *The Gondoliers* opens

December 23, 1871, *Thespis* opens.

December 31, 1879, *The Pirates of Penzance* opens in NYC

January 5, 1884, *Princess Ida* opens

January 22, 1887, *Ruddigore* opens

☺☺ **Carl Rosa Opera** has announced two tours to the United States next Spring: **MIKADO**, Feb - March 04, repeated in rep with **PINAFORE**, Sept - Nov 04. For more info visit their web site: www.carlosaopera.co.uk/

March 7, 1896, *The Grand Duke* opens

March 14, 1885, *The Mikado* opens

March 25, 1875, *Trial by Jury* opens

☺☺ **New Hampshire Gilbert & Sullivan Society** will perform **RUDDIGORE** March 12-28, 2004. For more info, phone 603-679-2781, e-mail nhgandssociety@leddycenter.org or visit their new website at <http://leddycenter.org/nhgandssociety>

☺☺ **THE BOSTONIANS** (aka **Boston Opera and Concert Ensemble**), **Richard Conrad's** new group, is planning to include G&S in its repertoire (unlike **Opera Boston**, the new avatar of **Boston Opera Society**, which removed Richard from its leadership this past year and is not planning any more G&S). We don't see any G&S planned for this season, but We'll keep an eye on their web site <<http://www.thebostonians.org/>> for future developments.

☺☺ **The 11th International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival** will take place in Buxton, Derbyshire, England, July 31 - August 22, 2004. More news will be forthcoming.

☺☺ **SON OF SINGOUT Toronto** is planning a reprise of its August 2000 "T2K Singout, Eh?" in August 20-22, 2004. (We mistakenly said in the last **Bray** that this was a function of the **Toronto G&S Society** - but no! - this is being organized, as was the last Toronto Singout, by four very brave individuals: **Len Henderson, Herschel Rosen, Ori Seigel, and Elspeth Simpson**) To be sure you are included in their list for informational updates and mailings, email torontosingout2004@sympatico.ca or send a letter to: Son of Singout | 22 Royal Street | Oshawa ON Canada | L1H 2T6. Include your name and postal address in your email message, so a printed brochure and registration form can be sent to you. (They'd like your phone number, too.)

RECENT MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

SEPTEMBER MEETING: BAB BALLADS/PINAFORE
Guided by the Union Jack flying from my front porch, 14 NEGASSers came to my house on Sept. 21 to celebrate the **Bab Ballads**. President **Don Smith** opened the meeting and then we all joined in singing a rousing rendition of "Hail, Poetry" (our official song), accompanied by **Tom Dawkins** at the piano. We decided that it would be a good idea to mix our Bab Ballad readings with appropriate vocal excerpts. First, I (**Janice Dallas**) read "The Bumboat Woman's Story", followed by "I'm called little Buttercup", sung by **Allegra Martin**. Don read "Captain Reese" and **Sheldon Hochman** followed it with "My Gallant Crew". We went on to welcome Sir Joseph (Tom) with myself taking Hebe's part.



The next Bab Ballad, "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell", was shared in the reading by **Art Dunlap** and **Steve Levine**. It was followed by "A British Tar" with Art as Carpenter, **Peter Cameron** as the Boatswain, and Allegra as Ralph ("very pretty, very pretty"). After inserting "Ode to My Clothes", read by **Skyler Wrench**, we returned to the **PINAFORE** theme. **Marion Leeds Carroll** read us "Joe Golightly, or the First Lord's Daughter" which, of course, led us into "Refrain, Audacious Tar" (Janice as Josephine, Allegra as Ralph). Sheldon finished up the first part of the gathering with "The Fairy Curate" and we adjourned to the heavily laden refreshment table.

We started the second part of the meeting with "Things Are Seldom What They Seem". This time Marion took on the part of Buttercup, while Peter took the Captain's part. **Howard Rosencrantz** gave us a reading of "General John & Private James", followed by Marion reading "The Baby's Vengeance". We then went back to **PINAFORE** with the singing of "The Bell Trio" by myself as Josephine, Art as Captain, and Tom as Sir Joseph. **Linda Silverstein** read us "The Captain and the Mermaids", followed by "Kind Captain, I've Important Information", sung by Art (Deadeye) and Peter (Captain). Marion finished up our **PINAFORE** selections with "A Many Years Ago," after which Tom burst into **Anna Russell's** parody of that piece, Dandelion's song from *How to Write Your Own G&S Opera*. Finally we adjourned to refreshments and good conversation, and all gradually wended their way home.

-- JANICE DALLAS



UNOFFICIAL OCTOBER MEETING: On Oct. 19th, a small group of dedicated NEGASSers gathered at my house to hold a sing-through of **IOLANTHE**. NEGASS

has occasionally had requests for this sort of gathering, so when **Isabel Leonard** requested that we have one AND volunteered to be pianist if someone would host, I decided to host it. With only 10 people, we did quite a bit of doubling up on parts, not to mention a certain amount of "creativity" in trying to follow the music! Here's the list of who took what parts:

Strephon - **Carl Weggel** (Act 1), **Art Dunlap** (Act 2)
 Lord Chancellor - **Dave Leigh**
 Lord Montararat - **Dean Edmonds, Jr.** (a Charter Member who just happened to be in town that day)
 Lord Tolloller - **Art Dunlap** (Act 1), **Skylar Wrench** (Act 2)
 Pvt. Willis - **Peter Cameron**
 chorus - **Sheldon Hochman**

Iolanthe - **Janice Dallas**
 Fairy Queen - **Isabel Leonard**
 Phyllis - **Rebecca Burstein**
 Celia - **Rebecca Burstein**
 Leila - **Janice Dallas**
 Fleta - **Peter Cameron**



Carl turned pages for Isabel, which was especially helpful when she was trying to sing her part as the Fairy Queen and play accompaniment as well. A special treat for us all was Dave singing "Fold Your Flapping Wings", Strephon's deleted solo. It's a beautiful piece of music. We all wanted to have another sing-through sometime next year, hopefully with a few more singers in attendance to help out with all the parts!

-- JANICE DALLAS



BRUCE I. MILLER MEMORIAL CONCERT, Saturday, October 25, 2003 An exhilarating day, full of amazing emotional highs (the excitement of seeing so many old friends and meeting so many new people) and lows (the sadness and nostalgia inevitable on this occasion).

To even my amazement, we stayed very much on schedule all day long -- thanks to the stunning coordination of **Alex Zequeira** '94 and his right-hand man, **Shawn McKay** '06, plus of course **John Delorey** and his team of officers. Set-up of the risers in the morning and the orchestra in the afternoon was achieved with incredible efficiency. And our "practice" procession of the singers onstage went remarkably smoothly.

For many of us the day's high point in a way came early, when all forces merged at 3:00 to run through the five items pretty much everybody sang: the Mozart, the Lessons & Carols pieces, the Cantique and the Songs of H.C. Amazingly little fine-tuning and repetition were necessary -- that's how focused everyone was, and how

strong our memories of Bruce's teaching and training. And I know all involved will not soon forget the feeling when **Bob Ouellette** '90 first guided the combined current and alum Chamber Singers in our first run-through of "The Long Day Closes."

Frank Caputo's beautiful photo montage ran just before the concert's official starting time of 8:00 p.m. The sequence of pictures was accompanied by a recording of Bruce's Choir singing the fourth movement of the Brahms REQUIEM (Mechanics Hall, 2002). Thus the mood was set, and it was maintained by the awesome sight of over 150 students, alums and friends mounting risers onstage and sets of risers on either side -- a beautiful, solemn procession.

After welcomes by **Alex Zequeira** (our evening's superb M.C.) and **Father McFarland**, we were honored to have a wonderful reflection from **Father Brooks**, which was every bit as delightful and touching as I'd hoped it would be when I first asked him to speak.

Then the music started: "Lacrimosa," "Cantique de Jean Racine," "The Morning Star" and "Lo, How a Rose" filled the ears of the hundreds of people who had come to hear them, all under **John Delorey's** able baton.

The Choir then withdrew from the stage, leaving only the current Chamber Singers, who remained onstage as **Chris Torres** '03 -- who had taken shore leave from the Navy to fly in for the occasion, from California -- delivered his own deeply moving reflection. The Chamber Singers then sang Brahms' "Zum Schluss," accompanied by **Aleksandr Kirillov** '05 (Organ Scholar) and **Jonathan Yasuda** '05 (Brooks Scholar) and conducted by John Delorey. Then Bob Ouellette and dozens of other Chamber Singers alums then returned to the stage to perform "The Long Day Closes."

The stage was empty when **George Ashur** '79 offered the evening's final reflection -- as hilarious and heartfelt as you would imagine. Then came other special alumni offerings: Vaughan Williams' SERENADE TO MUSIC, performed by 16 alumni (many of them professional singers) and conducted by **Tony Ashur** '82, and then the duet Bruce and **Helga Perry** restored to **H.M.S. PINAFORE**, sung by **Jonathan Mack** '97 and **Nicole (Bard) Lian** '96 under the guidance of no less than Helga herself.

Frank Caputo's wonderful video tribute was the penultimate feature of the program. A half hour in length, it highlighted scenes from some of Bruce's favorite stage productions (**PIRATES**, **SWEENEY**, **THE**

FANTASTICKS and *CAROUSEL*) as well as several of his Choir concerts and even some of his own solo appearances. I was glad for the chance it gave to recall Bruce's work -- and to allow the many singers to kick back and "enjoy the show" for a while rather than perform.

And then the massive Choir took the stage again for the Songs of Holy Cross, under **George Ashur's** baton. Ever faithful to Bruce's ways, we even gave an encore. And then it was time simply to enjoy the reception in the Ballroom Lobby. Afterwards, many continued to visit and socialize downstairs in the Pub.

- **BRADEN MECHLEY**
bmechley@holycross.edu

Janice Dallas, who garnered the above article for *NEGASS*, points out that *NEGASSers* **Randi Kestin & Jennifer (Healey) Dohm** took part in the Choir. For more memories of Bruce, visit <http://www.bruceimiller.com/>

MEMBER NEWS

Ray Thackeray, who was Pvt. Willis in *SLOC's* last *IOLANTHE*, writes: ... about that time, I bought a boat and sailed from Boston to San Francisco - and having recently relocated back to England a year ago after nearly 20 years in the States (just couldn't stand being in the same country as George W. Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger) I'm now playing Pooh-Bah in the **Maidenhead Operatic Company's MIKADO** <<http://www.mos-uk.org>>. If any of the old crowd are ever in jolly old England, they should look me up (just south of London)
-- **RAY THACKERY**
ray.thackeray@travent.com or +44 1372 374635

AS FAR AWAY AS YESTERDAY: **Norm Vogt**, who was a faithful reader of *The Trumpet Bray* and an avid G&S fan, died July 7, 2003, in his Freeport, IL, home following a three year battle with cancer. Norm, who held degrees in both music and library science, retired from the Northern Illinois University Libraries in 1998 where he had worked since 1961.
- **LORNA VOGT**

AM I NUTS? asks **Ruth Roper**: I am considering taking on a G&S production this winter at the Medford church at which I am music director. Part of me is thrilled at the idea, part wondering if I am nuts. So I come to you, experienced G&S-ers, for advice.

My lead soprano would be an ideal Josephine, and this would be her fondest dream. (It was her idea.) I have a potential Buttercup in house as well, and am working on a few others. I myself have accompanied *PINAFORE*,

PIRATES, IOLANTHE, PATIENCE & RUDDIGORE in the past, and believe I could handle music direction and/or accompaniment for any of those. Our church fellowship hall has a lovely small stage, a Chickering piano, and folding chairs for 200; a growing audience base from several successful coffeehouses, recitals and Messiah sings.

My own vision would be for an intergenerational production (to involve kids as well as adults in the congregation and community) with only the leads requiring a major commitment. I'm from the minimum-fuss, maximum-fun school of rehearsal, and would hope for this to be a great winter adventure for all, as opposed to just another demand on already overscheduled folks. Unsure right now whether to try for a full production, or semi-staged, or just a read-thru.

So, as I now must decide whether to embark, I could really use your feedback, from "Go for it!" (a first-rate opportunity) to "Are you NUTS?" (Too late, ha ha!) I have a few specific questions as well:

- 1) Any opinions on which would be the best show for a first-in-this-town-to-my-knowledge G&S attempt?
- 2) Would it be unforgivable to lightly abridge or cut verses?
- 3) Do any of you out there have extra scores, costumes, or scenery which you could loan?
- 4) Any strong teen or adult cast members you might send my way if we go ahead? Any take on what kind of response I might get for an open casting?
- 5) Any updates and/or shticks you've seen in other productions which work well?
- 6) Any other church musician-types who have thoughts on how well this kind of undertaking fits into church life, and contributes to church vitality? Know of others besides Arlington St & Belmont UU who have done this? Anyone from a small church (to such an one, if such there be) ever done this?
- 7) Any advice on what a fair fee for a director, and/or music director, might be?
- 8) Am I NUTS?

-- Thanks, **RUTH ROPER**
(yes, Ruth, who stands before you)
ruthsroper@yahoo.com

[*Ruth - of course you're nuts - you sing choruses in public, don't you? But beyond that, We'd say, Go for it! The scores, the casts and the expertise are out there for you! - mlc*]

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SING-OUT AGAIN! Victorian Lyric Opera Company's Third Gilbert & Sullivan Sing-Out From the evening of Friday, August 27, to the afternoon of Sunday, August 29, one hundred eighteen Savoyards converged on Rockville, Maryland, for their third G&S Singout. You might ask, what is a singout? You pay a fee to the host organization, in this case, the **VLOC (Victorian Light Opera Company)**, and traverse the entire output of Messrs. Gilbert & Sullivan, from **TRIAL** to **DUKE**. This takes an evening, all day on Saturday, and a final morning on Sunday. Directors and pianists are provided, the lead roles are competed for, and the rest of us form a chorus. All dialogue, overtures and extended instrumental passages are deleted entirely...

My wife and I were privileged to sing under eight different conductors. Some cue the cutoffs; some do not. Some direct every measure and others sit while soloists work their magic. All had a sense of humor, and that's important. Pianists differed a great deal; some operettas received the slam-bang, in-your-face treatment that they deserve, and others profit from a more, shall we say, pastel performance. **PATIENCE** belongs to the latter group.

There were a few outstanding soloists, and we would judge nearly all the others 'good'. A few were in costume, but we would single out the gentleman who sang John Wellington Wells (**SORCERER**) and the lady who performed both Aline and Zara [**NEGASS's own Rebecca Haines!** - *mlc*]. There was a bit of dancing which was entertaining, but probably not up to performance standards of any kind. But it really doesn't matter.

Soloists dabbled in altered texts when appropriate, especially in the catalog arias assigned to the comic baritone part. Gilbert would have approved. In the hundred-or-so years since the creation of these works, a number of performance "conventions" have crept in; some are viable but we wish others would go away. **TRIAL** seems to have a great many of these, perhaps too many to maintain the flow of the work. And exactly where did the two "held" measures come from in the Peer's Chorus in **IOLANTHE**? Actually sounds better that way. Oh, but that really doesn't matter.

For a contribution, a theatre company won the right to assign all soloists for one operetta, and the best example was the **Washington (DC) Savoyards** who purchased **GONDOLIERS**, and produced a superior product with tight ensemble, great singing, and some acting which, in places, bordered on, dare we say: sexy. The VLOC did the same for **IOLANTHE**, with good result. When the Lord

Chancellor says "Iolanthe, thou livest?" it was emotional experience, and it is supposed to be thus.

Impossible to ignore, most choristers had their noses in the scores for **UTOPIA** and **DUKE**. But for the more familiar works, we noticed all levels of familiarity, even to those few who do not hold a score and can watch the director all the time. (Take that, MLC!)

Souvenirs were on sale in the lobby; among them were lapel buttons with clever phrases known to most G&S aficionados. A dollar apiece: hard to beat that.

Now why might you be interested in this sort of event? (And we understand that the next one is scheduled for **Toronto**, perhaps as soon as next August). A conference of persons who love Gilbert & Sullivan is rather a unique experience; we would be hard-pressed to come up with another body of work that draws this much passion. Each person's contribution, whether major or minor, is bolstered by those around him/her. Nobody worries about errors; indeed, if a soloist gets lost, he gets gentle assistance from others who know the role and may have performed it. You don't see this very often in the real world. In short, the total performance is buoyed by a loving concern that it may be done in the best possible way. When it works, it is spectacular (causing choristers like me to puddle up a bit). When it doesn't work, it still is not bad. You say you don't know anything about **UTOPIA** or **DUKE**? Certainly you are not alone, and such an event provides a way to increase your knowledge and skill in performing these little-known works.

You say that you own three piano scores of G&S (probably of the 'Big Three' - **PIRATES, PINAFORE, MIKADO**) -- and have no idea how to get the others? **The Trumpet Bray** will address this situation in subsequent issues. It will take the infusion of a little money, but it can be done, and certainly is a worthwhile project. And nothing wrong with borrowing or visiting used-book stores.

To conclude, the thirteen operettas of Gilbert & Sullivan are worth learning and experiencing. They are in the English language (the tongue of the best creative minds of our world), and express many of the universalities of human existence, even though each one was written more than a hundred years ago. I still am on an emotional high from the Rockville experience, and intend to remain there for the nonce.

You know Warren Colson would have been in his glory at a G&S singout. I still miss Warren.

-- **ARTHUR S. KOYKKA**

Sullivan experienced all too often much of what Eden reports. **Mike Leigh's** *Topsy-turvy* certainly opened this view of Gilbert to wider consideration, but Eden (who was a consultant on Leigh's film) extends it and documents it.

For me this revised notion of Gilbert's personality and character does not detract from his achievement as an artist. It rather informs my sense of what is particular to Gilbert that makes his work what it is. We all know that lasting art can come from the most unpleasant, unselfaware, and inartistic souls.

The most useful distinctions drawn by Eden may lie in his careful assessment of the overlapping forms of pantomime, burlesque, and extravaganza, which drew Gilbert into the theater and in some sense colored all his work. Eden notes that Gilbert's notion of burlesque is neither parodistic nor polemical but rather uses a source (such as *L'Elisir d'Amore* or *The Princess*) as a rack to hang his own absurdities upon. He is not a consistent satirist with an identifiable point of view but rather a whimsical jokester ready to undermine anyone and anything to show off his own cleverness, "in theater as in life." Gilbert was a kind of proto-post-modernist! Eden concludes that Gilbert was, finally, very un-Victorian. He would like to have claimed Dickens's compassion, but for him it remains a mere idea - whenever Gilbert displays sentiment he manages to undermine it through an irrepressible need for Babbish foolery. Even in his most serious play, *Gretchen*, rounded sentiment eludes him. In short, Gilbert was forever enacting feelings rather than having them, and as *The Grand Duke* so effectively sums up, he can portray every sentiment as sham.

In that sense Gilbert is a complete product of the theater - one almost wonders if he ever allowed himself a moment offstage at all. And this quality, while it certainly brought his friends, colleagues, and wife much woe, did allow him, when he found the counterbalance of Sullivan's music, to make something no one else could have made.

Having explored the operas fully in his previous book, Eden makes little mention of them here. Sullivan scarcely appears at all. This is actually rather helpful. We are so used to bouncing the collaborators back and forth that we may lose a sharp sense of who each was. Instead, we get the family history, the chaste but flirtatious relationships with young women, the non-musical plays, and of course the lawsuits. The Gilbert that emerges must surely take his place beside, if not wholly obliterating, previous Gilberts. This book adds essential layers of color to the portrait.

-- JONATHAN STRONG

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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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