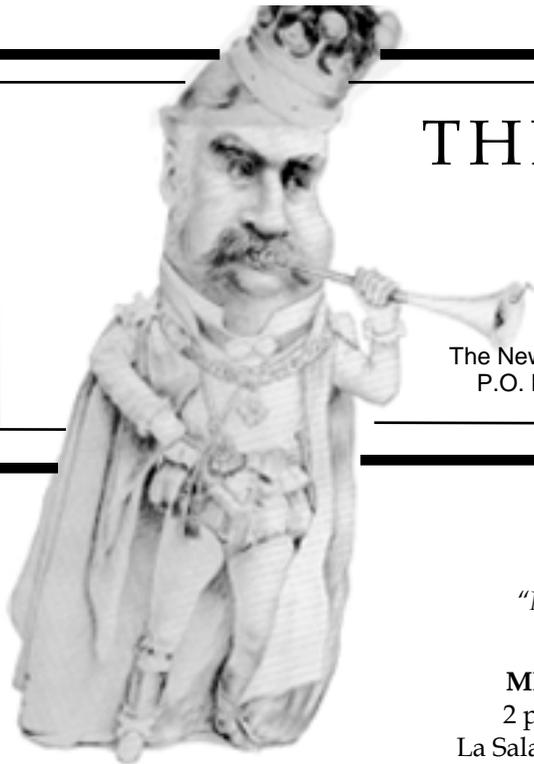


THE TRUMPET BRAY

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



Vol. XXXIII No. 3
November, 2008

"No matter. Our course is clear!"

**NEGASS Dinner Outing to
MITG&SP's *Pirates of Penzance***
2 p.m., Sunday, December 7, 2008
La Sala de Puerto Rico, and then dinner at
Mary Chung Restaurant
460 Massachusetts Avenue, in Cambridge

OUR NEXT MEETING

MITG&SP's *Pirates of Penzance*
2 p.m., Sunday, December 7, 2008

The December NEGASS meeting will be a group outing to the MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players' (MITG&SP) performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*, at the MIT Student Center, in La Sala de Puerto Rico. NEGASS members should reserve their own show tickets online for the group's *matinée* performance on Sunday, December 7. (Please note, they don't take telephone reservations!) Be sure to ask for the \$1.00 NEGASS discount that is available for NEGASS members only, and only for that performance. Afterwards we will gather for a group dinner at the **Mary Chung Restaurant**, at 460 Massachusetts Avenue, which is a few blocks walk up Mass Ave, away from the river. NEGASS members will meet after the show and share directions.

La Sala de Puerto Rico is on the 2nd floor of the MIT Student Union (a.k.a. the Stratton Student Center), on the MIT campus. An emap is available on Mapquest.

Parking in Cambridge is notoriously difficult, but meters don't work on Sundays. Both Cambridge and MIT actively ticket, and will immediately tow cars parked in certain restricted areas. Check street signs for parking regulations.

If you plan to arrive by public transportation, take the Red Line to **Kendall Square**, head away from the river, up to Vassar St. (if you're on the same side of the street as Legal Seafood, the Marriott, and the Coop, it's to your right). Go left on Vassar, then go left on Mass Ave, and enter the second building on your right.

If you are coming by bus, take the #1 bus to MIT. With Boston behind you as you get off the bus you will see the Stratton Student Center as the building on your left.

NOTES FROM OCTOBER

The Halloween Sing at Harvard

On Saturday, October 25, NEGASS members joined with members of the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players to sing through G&S solos from various operas. The event drew mostly H-R members, since it was on their "home turf", but NEGASS was well represented by good singers, including **Dick Freedman, Tony Parkes, Art Dunlap, Brad Amidon, Dean Edmonds, Angeliki Theoharis, Stephanie Mann** and **Janice Dallas**, who sent in these comments. Most of these people sang solo roles, including Dean, who is one of the Charter Members of NEGASS. Janice was impressed with the quality of the

college students' performances. The audience was given chorus music to sing from, and everyone was having too much fun to stop for an intermission. Afterward, there was cranberry juice, Tropical Punch, chocolate chip cookies, and pretzels.

Janice noted that Dean Edmonds' voice and good spirit carried him through the afternoon and that it was wonderful to hear him sing. Dean had come out by taxi from Boston, and had some trouble finding the location because our directions weren't sufficiently detailed. (*Please accept our apologies, Dean. We are trying to do a better job on that score, beginning with the current issue. Ed*).

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### JANUARY NEGASS Meeting Roberta Morrell Master Class Weekend

Saturday, January 24 and Sunday, January 25, 2009

**Roberta Morrell**, singer, actress, director, author and principal with the famed D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in England, will give Master Classes in the Greater Boston area on Saturday and Sunday, January 24 and 25, 2009.

Sponsored by the New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and in conjunction with the Savoyard Light Opera Company (SLOC), these Master Classes provide an opportunity for performers of all levels to receive expert, highly supportive coaching from Miss Morrell. Opportunities include a group workshop, sixteen sessions in which individuals may perform, and the chance to observe these Master Classes as they occur.

Singers should come prepared with a memorized song, bringing two copies of their music—one for Roberta and one for our accompanist, **Thomas Dawkins**. During the Master Class, participants will perform this prepared piece once, then work through the piece with Roberta and perform it again at the end of the session.

Master Classes are a great way to prepare for an audition, fine tune a character, or make your concert piece more interesting. In addition to participation by soloists, we welcome duets, trios, and small ensembles, as well as straight dialogue from actors. Pre-registration for this event began on November 1, 2008. Registration forms are available from **Rebecca Hains** at [programchair@negass.org](mailto:programchair@negass.org)

SLOC is a Carlisle-based community theater organization that produces a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta every other

year, alternating with other works of musical theater. This year's production is *Annie Get Your Gun*. This event is NEGASS's first collaboration with SLOC in recent history.

*Please note that there will not be any public performances associated with these Master Class events.*

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FEBRUARY NEGASS Meeting: A Valentine's Day Fantasy

Co-sponsored by the MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players
2:00 p.m., Saturday, February 14, 2009

On Valentine's Day, NEGASS and the MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players will join in the MIT Student Center, Room 407 for a Fantasy Day meeting. Watch future issues of *The Trumpet Bray* for more information!



MARCH NEGASS Meeting: Last Minute Light Opera, *The Yeomen of the Guard*

Co-sponsored by Mass Theatrica
3:00 p.m., Sunday, March 22, 2009

Mass Theatrica and NEGASS will present a Last Minute Light Opera production of G&S' *The Yeomen of the Guard*, in concert. Admission will be free for NEGASSers and \$10 for non-NEGASSers. Solo roles will be cast ahead of time; watch future issues of *The Trumpet Bray* for a casting call.

The performance will be at Lynn Arts, in the Neal Rantoul Vault Theatre, 25 Exchange Street, in Lynn, MA. The theater is easily accessible via public transportation - - just a short walk from the Lynn Commuter Rail station.

Audience members are welcome to sing along with the choruses. A limited number of scores will be available, but if you have your own score, please bring it with you.

For more information about Mass Theatrica, please visit <http://www.masstheatrica.org>.

NEGASS Meetings: Winter '08, Spring, 09	
December 7	An Outing to <i>Pirates</i> by MITG&SP
January 24-25	Roberta Morrell Master Class Weekend
February 14	Valentine's Day Fantasy with MITG&SP
March 22	Last Minute Light Opera <i>Yeomen</i> with Mass Theatrica

NEXT BRAY DEADLINE: January 10, 2009

Next Bray Stuffing: Sunday, January 11, 2009, 3:00 PM, at the home of **Janice and Ron Dallas**, 63 Everett Street, Arlington, MA. E-mail or phone for directions: (781) 643-2537, or membership@negass.org.



Reviews-Reviews-Reviews

Early Gilbert at Newport

Thomas German Reed and his wife **Priscilla** ran a small family theatre in London during the latter half of the 19th century. They commissioned original sketches and chamber-sized comic operas from up-and-coming talent, and among the up-and-comers was young **William S. Gilbert**. During the period 1869-75 he devised librettos and lyrics for six chamber pieces to be performed at German Reed's Gallery of Illustration. The first of these pieces was *No Cards*. The plot is a familiar one: an attractive ingénue has two suitors—a penniless youth (Churchmouse) and a wealthy but elderly bachelor (Ellis Dee—the name suggestive of the abbreviation for

pounds/shillings/pence). After a series of impromptu impersonations, the rivalry is resolved in favor of the youth. The score is attributed to one 'Lionel Elliott', for whom no biographical information is available.

The Town of Newport, Rhode Island, is famous for its Gilded Age "cottages"—mansions along the waterfront built at enormous expense in the days before the income tax. One of the most impressive is Astor's Beechwood Mansion, operated by the Beechwood Foundation. It hosts a resident theatre company. In the afternoon of Sunday, 26 October 2008, the Beechwood Theatre Company presented a special performance of Gilbert & Elliott's *No Cards*.

The production was expertly supervised by director **Charles Lane Cowen** and music director **Phyllis L. Spiece**, and delightfully acted by members of the resident company. **Katherine Bettinghaus** sparkled as Annabella Penrose, the sought-after heroine, and **Sonya Selby** was impressive as her guardian, Mrs. Pennythorne. Ellis Dee was strongly portrayed by **Patrick Grimes**, who was particularly memorable in his 'disguised' form, resembling a Victorian-era mad scientist, with cascading grey locks and Coke-bottle glasses. **Trevor Kettelkamp** adroitly captured both Churchmouse's timidity and his resourcefulness. **Matthew Akers** was appropriately useful as Seymour, the butler, and **Teresa Renee Lawrence** assumed the interpolated role of 'Miss Muffy', as well as providing piano accompaniment. The performance was cleverly presented as an 'amateur theatrical' being staged for the enjoyment of Mrs. Astor's guests circa 1891. The venue, Beechwood's elaborately ornamented Grand Ballroom, was perfect for the mood of the piece, strongly evoking turn-of-the-century High Society.

Interest in Gilbert's Gallery of Illustration pieces was aroused in 1967 by the publication of Professor **Jane Stedman's** *Gilbert Before Sullivan*, which included scripts for all six pieces and a score for one of them (*Ages Ago*). Since then some adventurous groups have mounted productions. Led by its incomparably talented director, the Royal Victorian Opera Company (based in the Boston area) worked its way through the entire cycle, beginning with *A Sensation Novel* in 1982 and ending with *No Cards* in 1996. The Ardensingers, a G&S group in Arden, Delaware, performed *Eyes and No Eyes* in November 2006, and an imaginative version of *Happy Arcadia* was mounted in March 2007 by the Topsfield-based New England Light Opera, in tandem with *Cox & Box*. Like that frequently-performed farce by Burnand & Sullivan, the Gallery of

Illustration pieces are economical to produce, having small casts with piano accompaniment, and they (usually) require little in the way of sets and props (the exception is *Ages Ago* which, like *Ruddigore*, has ancestors emerging from their portraits). They provide much in Gilbertian wit and opportunities for bravura acting, as well as some very listenable music (e.g. Jonathan Strong's pastiche score for *Happy Arcadia*). It is hoped that as they become better known, they will be more frequently performed.

Chuck Berney



Princess Ida by Valley Light Opera

Valley Light Opera presented *Princess Ida* on the first two weekends of November at Amherst Regional High School in Amherst, MA. VLO has been presenting Gilbert

and Sullivan operettas and other light opera fare in central Massachusetts for over 30 years, and I finally was able to attend one of their shows. This *Princess Ida* was delightful in many traditional and non-traditional ways!

The first impression of any Gilbert and Sullivan performance is the music. The orchestra, led by Music Director **Michael Greenbaum**, played with a light touch and spritely tempos throughout, sensitively supporting the singers, and adding excitement during the action scenes. I sat near the front of the hall, and had no trouble hearing the singers' words. It was a pleasure to listen to those natural voices, without the assistance of amplified sound. Only when the singers were singing from the back of the stage, which did not occur often, did the instruments cover some of the singing.

When the curtain opened for the first scene of Act I the large cast, splendidly costumed, came into view. The renaissance-inspired "men-in-tights" and women in beautiful dresses and even more spectacular hats transported the audience into Castle Hildebrand. The entrance of Ida's brothers, played by **Matthew Roehrig**, **Steve Atkinson**, and **Kurtiss Gordon**, was most impressive. Clomping in from the back of the hall, they

came clad in clanging chains and armor. Arac (Matthew Roehrig) delivered his announcing song with mock seriousness and real humor. Then, even more impressive, was the entrance of King Gama! He wore a crown that deserves a special bravo unto itself, and he entered from the back of the hall riding a "horse"! I fear the audience on the left side of the hall may not have seen this "animal" come and go, but those of us on the right side gave this action its own ovation. The two kings, Hildebrand (**Nicholas Dahlman**) and Gama (**Jonathan Klate**), were a treat to watch all night. Their singing was clear and true, their comic timing flawless. The way they each "commanded the stage" as kings are meant to do, made their roles seem much bigger and stronger than Gilbert wrote them (more on this later).

Act II opened with the women of Castle Adamant bustling with excitement, and they sang their opening songs with all the youth and vigor one could expect from school girls. Lady Psyche, played by **Chris McKenzie Willenbrock**, describing the evils of men (and later, man's evolution from apes), sang with a clear, rich soprano voice. After much anticipation, we finally got to see *Princess Ida*. Ida's two big arias in this show come as close to "Grand Opera" as anything Sullivan composed. It takes a complete singer as well as a complete actress to successfully deliver this role, and **Elaine Crane** came through with flying colors. I was pleased that Ida was not just a one-dimensional character of stern philosophies but was allowed to employ Elaine's considerable comic talents as well. (Again, more on this later). **Lucy Robinson** and **Heather Davies** were the mother-daughter pair of Lady Blanche and Melissa. Each had solos which cover large vocal and emotional ranges, and each did them very well. They also excelled in their later duet.

Although the three "princes" appear early in the opera it is in the second act that Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian really get to shine. From their Act II entrance climbing over a castle wall, through the next five songs, they must carry the action. Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian (played here, respectively, by **Jonathan Evans**, **Philip Helzer**, and **John Healy**) were amusing characters, and had most amusing hairstyles! By the end of each song, however, I felt something of an anti-climax. In Act II I like to see some character development in each of these roles throughout their very long time on the stage. During this time they each meet the woman they will end up with by the end of the opera, and they should be transformed by these encounters.

All of this action leads up to my favorite scene in G&S, which is the Act II finale. Starting with Cyril's "Kissing Song", and continuing with the chase scene of Ida and Hilarion which ends up in the river, Hilarion's big aria, the storming of the castle walls, and finally the showdown between King Hildebrand and Princess Ida, this scene must keep moving forward and always building upon itself until its ending notes when Ida soars her "defiance" out over the mob. The entire VLO cast and crew of this show are to be congratulated for presenting a most impressive and exciting explosion of sound and action during these climactic events.

During this review I have hinted at some non-traditional elements in this performance. Director **Steve Morgan** chose to make two rather dramatic changes to the opera. The first was to present this in two acts instead of three. This decision creates the challenge of what to do after each of the two finales. In order to cut this show into two halves the Act I and Act II finale scenes must continue without intermission. Because there are scene changes that must be made, we were presented with two original scenes, each presented in silence. At the end of Act I, King Hildebrand and King Gama came out in front of the curtain and presented a witty commentary scene on the "cruel treatment" that Gama suffers. Hildebrand had Gama's chains removed, he displayed acts of kindness, and we finally saw the royal treatment of being carried out in style. Nicholas Dahlman and Jonathan Klate played this scene with great humor. Hildebrand sniggered as he walked off, knowing that the kindness he was giving was really giving him the upper hand! Similarly, after Act II Princess Ida and Chloe (played brilliantly by **Nancy Nesheim**) came out in front of the curtain and presented a very funny scene about "weapon selection" for their upcoming battle. After trying out hat pins, egg beaters, and various weapons that were seemingly raided from other G&S shows (Corcoran's cat-o-nine-tails, some Penzance Police billy clubs...), Ida settles on a very large rifle (a Mauser rifle? I wouldn't know!).

I found these silent scenes to be very amusing but the subtle action detracted from the power of the finales that preceded them. Perhaps even 10-15 seconds of blackout could have helped let the audience come down from the excitement of the finales. Also, I would have liked to see a bit of music to go with the "silent movie" impression, even if it was just a single piano playing tunes from the show, just to help support the scene. Perhaps some musical jokes, such as snippets of music from the other shows that were alluded to as the battle props were being handled?

The other big change apparent throughout most of Act III was the director's stated intent to update Gilbert's "unsatisfying Victorian ending for late 20th and 21st century audiences". The women of this Castle Adamant did not want to settle their differences with violent battle, nor did they want to be conquered. The beautifully sung "Please you, do not hurt us" is transformed into a graceful dance in which the women disarmed the men and charmed them into peaceful behaviors. This dance was, to me, the most satisfying choreography of the evening. The mood snapped back to "battle formations" once the Princess appeared. The return of Ida's brothers brings on another great song for Arac, "This helmet, I suppose", and resulted in the very comical burying of the Page (**Abby Helzer**) under warrior armor. After the battle, when Ida realized that she was the conqueror's prize, she took control of the situation and dictated the terms for her marriage. She admires Hilarion for his bravery in saving her life at the end of Act II but she will not submit to marriage unless all the warring parties cease their hostilities. The reluctant Kings agree to peace. Here was more great acting between Hildebrand and Gama, which ended with a decidedly 21st century "fist-bump". Ida then reprised the music from the Act II finale, with her words changed to accommodate her wishes for a peaceful "alliance" instead of hostile "defiance".

All directors realize that there are risks associated with changing long-accepted tradition. I don't know if all of Steve Morgan and Michael Greenbaum's ideas worked for me, but I think they did present a very strong case for their vision of the Princess Ida. I applaud their efforts, and to everyone involved with VLO's *Princess Ida* production, I thank you, most politely!

Brad Amidon

Patience

By the Connecticut G&S Society

Those of us who live north and east of Boston have a hard time making the trek south and west very often. However, the Connecticut G&S Society has kindly sent me a DVD of their recent production of *Patience* so I've a good idea of what I've missed. *Patience* was the first opera of any kind I ever saw. That was in 1951, when I was six, and so *Patience* is especially close to my heart. This production brought back all the joy of first discovery. As always, my old *Thespis* collaborator, **John Dreslin**, put together a fine orchestra and set crisp tempos and molded solid ensembles. He had a great cast of singers to work with. Director **Bob Cumming**,

as always a true upholder of G&S tradition, produced from them perfect diction and precise stage movement. There wasn't a dull or messy moment.



Kathleen Thompson as Patience was delightfully perky. She had a high kick to keep Archibald from getting too close, and she hit all the high notes. **Allan Church** made a particularly bumbling Bunthorne. He had great chemistry with his beloved, his rival, and his ever-faithful Jane, the charmingly wistful **Carol Connolly** (who also could knock out those low notes impressively in song and speech). **Dave Henderson's** Grosvenor was amusingly insipid. I did wonder if his costume had wandered in from *Princess Ida*. The dragoons, as aesthetes, also seemed to affect the "Prince Hilarion look". But if it wasn't the gray mole we're used to, it was plenty of fun to look at. **Bill Ziegler's** Colonel was nicely Blimpish. He added an encore verse to his entrance song that included everyone from Bush and Obama to Sarah Palin and Mark Phelps. An innovation I DID approve of, however, was the inclusion of the original second verse to the dragoons' march.

Young high schooler **Jeff Soun Long**, as the Duke, is a real discovery, with marvelous delivery of his comic lines and a splendid tenor voice for one so young. Angela (who also took some of Ella's music) was most dependably played by **Katherine Yeager**, and backed up by **Renee Molnar Haines** as a fine Saphir. It was also nice to see some of my old *Thespis* alums--Leighton Phraner, Bill Sorensen and Liz Rodie-Jones in the chorus!

Though I might quibble about references to Bob's Stores and the like appearing in "Everyday young man", and the syncopated woodblocks that supported the aesthetic trio, this was a wonderfully coherent and amusing production of one of the sure-fire funniest of the Savoy operas. Anyone interested in seeing what our Connecticut neighbors can do should order this DVD and, best of all, head southwest to Connecticut the next time this group performs.

Jonathan Strong

The HOT MIKADO

Here's a new DVD of a show that that might perk the heart of some of us Savoyards of a certain age or interests. It's a 1940's-style jazz/gospel reworking of the traditional G&S show. It's William Schwenk and Arthur meeting the big band sound of Gene Krupa. The town square of Titipu becomes the Cotton Club of upper Harlem in the 1940s. Zoot suits are cut from the silk of Japanese kimonos and the Three Little Maids sound just like the Andrews Sisters. Nanki-Poo has fallen in love with Yum Yum, but she's been promised to the Lord High Executioner. Flirting is punishable by beheading; fortunately, executions are few and far between. When the Mikado (the "biggest cat" in all of Japan, and tap master extraordinaire) arrives to investigate, true love can finally triumph. Book and lyrics adapted by **David H. Bell**. Music adapted and arranged by Rob Bowman. The DVD can be obtained at the following weblink: <http://www.amazon.com/Mikado-Original-1995-London-Cast/dp/B000026F43>.

Hospitality Chair Still Open!

Are you a fun-loving person who would like to become more involved with NEGASS? If so, please consider volunteering to serve as our Hospitality Chair! This position involves coordinating refreshments for NEGASS meetings. Organized people who have good taste in food are encouraged to apply. Interested parties may email **Don Smith** at president@negass.org for more details.



The One-Minute G&S Canon

OK, we've all heard various "One Minute" versions of the G&S operas, but how many of you have considered the possibilities of assembling an aggregate of the operas? Here's one suggestion that was gleaned from Savoynet and forwarded to us by **Janice Dallas**.

1. Enter a chorus. It must be homogenized. (Pasteurized and low-fat is good too.)
2. Enter an extraordinarily sweet young soprano. She must have a large number of sisters.
3. Enter a young tenor, preferably lowly born and switched at birth.
4. The above two people must be a pair of star-crossed lovers. If they are not all that young, dim the lights and use lots of makeup.
5. Enter a "Dreadnaught-class" heavy contralto with designs on the tenor, and/or a dark secret in her past.
6. Enter a dapper little baritone, with designs on the soprano, who speaks too quickly, dances a bit while singing upstage, and encores everything he sings, no matter what the audience reaction.
7. Enter one or more "heavy" baritones who don't have a clue.
8. Select any four of the above and have them sing a madrigal in four part harmony. (The main reason that the plot of *The Grand Duke* seems so complicated is that it requires a quintet to sing the madrigal.) This song must feature lyrics such as "Fa La La," or "Ding Dong, Dong Ding."
9. Mix up all of the above ingredients and turn them upside down.
10. The entire cast, plus the stage hands and first two rows of the audience, dance off to get married at the end.

Mike Storie

NEW MEMBERS

Brenda Almeida of Bellingham, MA has joined us. She is an alto who attended **Rafe McPhail's** Elderhostel G&S class/performance last summer. Welcome, Brenda!



performances. The first will be on Sunday, Dec 7, at 2:00 PM. This will be when NEGASS will next meet. The final *matinee* performance will be on Saturday, Dec 13 at 2 PM. All performances will take place in [La Sala de Puerto Rico](#) on the 2nd floor of the MIT Student Center (directions can be found on Page 1). Tickets must be reserved online at <http://web.mit.edu/gsp/www/reserve.html>. There are no telephone reservations.

☸ FOPAC AUDITIONS MIKADO ☸

Friends of the Performing Arts in Concord (FOPAC) announces auditions for lead roles in *The Mikado* on Saturday, Jan 17, at 2 p.m. and Sunday, Jan 18 at 7 p.m. at 51 Walden Street in Concord, MA.

Performances will be March 14 and 15, 2009, at 51 Walden Street in Concord Center. A collaborative effort between the Concord Orchestra and the Concord Players, *The Mikado* will be semi-staged and performed with full orchestra and chorus, as well as full costuming for leads. **Alan Yost** will conduct the performance, and **Sarah Telford** will be the artistic and chorus director. For further information, contact the FOPAC office at (978) 369-7911. Information about FOPAC is available at www.51walden.org.

☸ SUDBURY AUDITIONS UTOPIA ☸

The Sudbury Savoyards recently held auditions for its February production of *Utopia, Ltd.* Performance dates are February 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28 in 2009 at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School. The cast list is posted on their website, which will also give you updated information about other activities of the group as well as opportunities to help out backstage or to support this production in other ways. (www.sudburysavoyards.org) or call 978-443-8811 for further information.

☸ HARVARD-RADCLIFFE PERFORMS IOLANTHE ☸

H-R G&SP will perform *Iolanthe* in the Agassiz Theater in Radcliffe yard on the following dates:
 Thursday, Dec 4 at 8 PM (Black Tie Opening)
 Friday, Dec 5 at 8 PM
 Saturday, Dec 6 at 2 PM (Milk & Cookies Matinee)
 Saturday, Dec 6 at 8 PM
 Sunday, Dec 7 at 2 PM
 Thursday, Dec 11 at 8 PM

Friday, Dec 12 at 8 PM
 Saturday, Dec 13 at 6 PM (followed by the Victorian Ball)
 Sunday, Dec 14 at 2 PM (Hack "Afternoon")

Reservations can be made on their new website at hrgsp@hcs.harvard.edu, or by calling 617- 938-9761.

Google Calendar for NEGASS

There are new functions in the online NEGASS calendar. To check out these features, go to our updated website at www.negass.org

THE NEW ENGLAND GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

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