



≈ G&S EVENTS ≈

Connecticut's Troupers Light Opera announces auditions for *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Courtesy of Troupers Light Opera

Troupers Light Opera announces that auditions for Gilbert and Sullivan's fourth show and their first big hit, a satire of the British class system, the *Cabinet and the British Navy*, will be held on December 5 and 7, 2016 from 7-10pm at Union Memorial Church, 58 Church Street in Stamford CT.



The show, under the direction of Emily Trudeau (stage) and Eric Kramer (music) will be presented at the Wall Street Theatre in Norwalk CT in April 2017. Please direct any questions to:

info@trouperlightopera.org or
president@trouperlightopera.org

Parts we are auditioning for include Josephine (soprano), Little Buttercup (mezzo), Hebe (2nd soprano), Sir Joseph Porter (baritone), Captain Corcoran (baritone), Ralph Rackstraw (tenor), Dick Deadeye (bass-baritone), Bill Bobstay (baritone), and Bob Becket (bass).

Should you like to audition for any of the parts listed, please prepare one or two songs *in English*. They need not be from the show, but should be in a similar style. We would prefer you sing something that you are familiar with, from memory if possible instead. You are welcome to audition for the chorus at any time as well. We will provide an accompanist. Please bring music in the correct key.

≈ G&S NEWS ≈

**The Barontots of *Ruddigore*:
 What's up with those ghost kids?!**

From VLO Website

Valley Light Opera has a long history of featuring talented children in the cast of its productions, thereby introducing the next generation of actors and singers to the G&S genre and musical theatre. *Ruddigore* features a number of actors and actresses in supporting roles, but this year the VLO goes boldly and bravely into the macabre. The show features two ghostly children who emerge from the portraits with the rest of the bad Baronets! Henry and Amory Maxey, ages 8 and 10, are no strangers to the VLO, having been cast as villagers in last year's production of *Brigadoon*.

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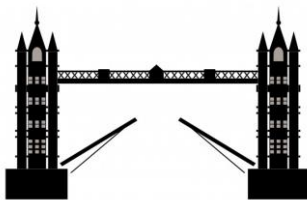
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www.negass.org



The “Barontots of *Ruddigore*” are the children of Trent and Libby Maxey – Libby being one of the VLO’s perennial soprano leads – and have been in and around VLO productions since they can remember.



Henry (left) and Amory Maxey in a real-life portrait similar to the one in the ancestors’ gallery. (Photo from the VLO website.)

We were able to catch up with the busy undead duo to ask about their experiences with *Ruddigore* and what other kids might think of the show.

You appear as Villagers in Act 1, then again as ghosts in Act 2. What is your favorite scene in *Ruddigore*?

H: The ghost scene, with the portraits, because that is really cool.

Are you sure you’re not just saying that because you’re in it?

H: I’m sure.

A: I enjoy the ghost scene. It’s scary, unlike the rest of the play.

What do you think other children might like about the play?

H: I think they might like the ghost scene because it’s kind of spooky, and that’s a really exciting part, and if I’m still enough, it will be like magic.

A: The ghost scene. I’m fairly sure that kids will like ghosts way more than some of the sappy love story.

Do you think that people can understand what is going on even though the language of the play is old-fashioned?

A: Probably. I mean, I normally understand the wording, and I’m in fifth grade!

H: Well, if they actually just LOOK at the play and don’t get too much distracted-and I think there are going to be supertitles?-so if they pay attention to the supertitles, they should be fine.

What do you like about being involved in a VLO production?

H: I think it's pretty cool for someone about my age because it's not often VLO gets a YOUNG actor. It's also kind of awesome how I get to be a ghost, and now I have a bigger part than the last time I was in a VLO show.

A: It's fun making friends with everyone and enjoying the snacks. I also enjoy being able to stay up late working on the show.

All the ghosts were heirs to the title Baronet of Ruddigore and were cursed with having to commit one crime a day. Tell us about your characters. What do you think they were like before their untimely death?

H: Our portrait is modeled on the princes in the tower, so if I were like one of those princes, I guess my crime would have been stealing, into the kitchens and taking things. Maybe things like a rolling pin, a frying pan, or a sharp knife.

A: Honestly, he was probably as bad as everyone else. He probably enjoyed blowing things up and stealing jewelry.



The portrait of the "Barontots" of Ruddigore as it appeared in the Ancestors' Gallery.
(Photo from the VLO website.)

What do you think about playing a ghost?

H: I like being able to torture John (Healy, who plays Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, the latest living Baronet of Ruddigore who is chastised by the ancestral ghosts for not properly fulfilling his duties.)

A: I enjoy being a ghost. The costume is actually better than any other that I have worn.

What is the most fun thing about being in Ruddigore, and what is the most challenging?

H: The most fun is the dancing. (He dances in the finale with SadieMae Mizula who also tells us her favorite part of the show is "dancing with Henry.") The hard part is stepping out of the portrait without falling flat on my face-the frame is a high thing.

A: I think the most fun thing is being onstage. The hardest thing is staying awake in the second act. Last year we could go home before the second act.

RECENT PRODUCTIONS

A Band of Pirates and a Pirate Band in Deep River, Connecticut

By Linda Silverstein

I had never been to Deep River, CT or to a production of the Connecticut G&S Society, but after reading the article in the recent *Trumpet Bray*, my husband and I decided to take a ride on a lovely fall day and check out their production of *The Pirates of Penzance*.



"The Bobby" patrols the parking lot. (Photo by Linda Silverstein.)

The Valley Regional High School has quite an extensive campus and we drove around the main building as we wondered which was the entrance to the Performing Arts Center – until we noticed one of the "undaunted men in blue" guarding a door. We finally decided that this must be the place.

Perusing the program before the performance's start, I was pleased to note a glossary. Now I have been to a lot of performances of *Pirates* and know many of the lines and lyrics by heart, but there are other lyrics that I was not aware of, probably because they are sung very fast. So it was nice to know what a Cunarder was, and who were Gerard Dow and Zoffany.

The CT G&S Society seems to be a family affair. Youngsters were assisting with ticket taking and ushering, and the cast included sisters, parents/children and even one grandfather and grandson duo.

The production featured two alternating casts. We saw the Skull cast, featuring **Victoria Reid** as Mabel, who added even more coloratura than usual! Many of the leads – **Tim Throckmorton** as Frederic, **Betty Olson** as Ruth, **Dave Henderson** as Pirate King and **David Schancupp** as Major General Stanley – were in both casts and all performed admirably, with great voices.

Particularly impressive to me was one of the younger cast members, **Remy McCoy**, who seemed to be a pre-teen, and who doubled as a first act daughter and second act policeperson. In that latter role she not only kept up with the adults but

seemed to know the choreography better than some of them!

The sets were very good, although no pirate ship in act one, and I liked the little details like a crate labeled Stanley in act two indicating the Major General had recently moved into his newly acquired property. This is one of the few theatrical productions where I was aware of the lighting. In the first act, the sky changed as the day progressed in a very effective manner.

Michael Loomis, a longtime G&S devotee and performer and member of *The Capital Steps*, stepped into the role of director and did a masterful job. His touches were clearly present, and he was present as well: taking on the roles of both an obnoxious audience cell phone user and a walk-on as the local Doctor of Divinity.

Working with Music Director/Conductor **John Dreslin**, Loomis expanded the role of the orchestra. This show not only had a band of pirates but also a pirate band. Musicians were dressed as pirates and interacted with the onstage performers in several amusing scenes.

According to the *Trumpet Bray* article, Loomis went back to original sources and resurrected material that has been dropped after the New York premiere. He also inserted songs from other operettas, including *Ruddigore's* "You understand? I think I do" which worked very well at the end of the paradox scene.

Overall we thought this production was thoroughly enjoyable and we would return to Deep River!

CTG&S Society *Pirates of Penzance* was worth the trip and price of admission

By David DeVries

The Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society's fall production of *The Pirates of Penzance* offered up many good points yet I feel compelled to offer a couple of constructive observations towards the end of this missive. With the overture and throughout, the orchestra under the baton of **John Dreslin**, was like "the Judge" in *Trial by Jury* doing a "good job too" in keeping things going musically and at the prescribed tempo. Mr. Dreslin is celebrating his 30th season as Music Director and Conductor of the CTG&S Society. The twenty two members of the orchestra were all costumed as well

and provided just the right amount of accompaniment to the onstage action.

The CTG&S Society employed two casts, one for the Saturday matinee on October 15 (the "Skulls") and the second (the "Crossbones") for the other performances. I enjoyed the Sunday matinee on the 16th. The difference between casts was the change of five principal roles from one cast to the next. This is a great idea to allow more of their members to share the spotlight and for less seasoned players to perfect their craft.



The other "Pirate Band" led by CTG&S Society's long-time Music Director John Dreslin. Mr. Dreslin shown on the far right with his parrot. (Courtesy of John Dreslin.)

The opening number "Pour, oh pour the pirate sherry" was robustly presented by the pirates led by Samuel (**Henry Cox**). Casting the youthful-looking Mr. Cox as the Pirate Lieutenant worked OK but I would think the second in command would have warranted a more mature appearing pirate. However, Mr. Cox did a credible job but might have benefitted from a bit of make up to make him appear more wizened.

Renee Haines playing Mabel, together with the lady's chorus, did a fine job in the number "Poor Wand'ring One." Ms. Haines was allowed to do considerable extra vocalizing during most of her scenes. These exercises became rather redundant after the third repetition to the point that half of the woman's chorus covered their ears. Perhaps this was in jest but maybe for real.

The Major General's patter song, "I am the very model of a modern major general," was rendered in a very adroit manner by **David Schancupp** who looked every bit of a MMG.

Three of the highlights of any *Penzance* production in addition to the aforementioned, have to be the

trio in Act Two “Now for the pirates lair” in which Frederic (**Tim Throckmorton**) learns of his natal day from the Pirate King (**Dave Henderson**), and Ruth (**Betty L. Olson**). This segment never fails to be a rollicking expose of the paradox of leap year. The second high point allows our smitten couple Mabel and Frederic (Ms. Haines and Mr. Throckmorton) to showcase their talents in the duet “Stay Frederic, stay.” The third highlight, “With catlike tread”, was deftly presented by Samuel (Mr. Cox) and the men’s chorus comprising both pirates and police which features a melody which we might recall as “Hail, hail the gang’s all here.” It was at this point the ensemble provided us a little Offenbach “can-can” high-kicking demonstration.

The inclusion of numbers from other G&S comic operas provided a challenge to the audience to see if they could pick them out. Music Director John Dreslin was kind enough provide the additions: The “You Understand, I Think I do” *Ruddigore* number was placed between “Paradox” and “Away, Away.” Director Michael Loomis saw that included in an Australian version and liked it a lot. The Papp production inserts the “Matter, matter, matter” trio from *Ruddigore* at that point. Other insertions that we made - extended fight music by about ten measures. Then the *Pinafore* and Major General Song reprise in Act 2 finale which were in the original 1879 American version but then dropped. The Major General reprise once again was resurrected by the Papp version and comes just before the reprise of “Poor Wandering One.” The *Pinafore* snippet follows “Oh Spare them, they are all noblemen who have gone wrong.” We did not cut any music from the score at all except in the overture, and used the original orchestrations once again.”



Playbill contrasts. Left a reproduction for a WPA (Works Progress Administration) Federal Music Project production from the 1930’s. Right the cover from the CTG&S Society production of October 15-16, 2016.

Pluses included the continued use of supertitles projected above the stage which made it easy to understand the lyrics being sung. A great aid for

the hearing impaired. At the beginning of Act 2, the stage was engulfed in a fog which greatly added to the scene of the ancestors grave yard. Also adding to the climate was a full moon projected on the backdrop. When it came time for the Sergeant of Police to plead to the loyalties of the pirates by referencing “the queen,” a vignette of Queen Victoria took the place of the full moon for a few minutes, again a nice touch. I also appreciated the photos of the principals in the playbill.

Michael Loomis, the society’s new artistic director, made a walk-on cameo appearance as Dr. Daly from *The Sorcerer*. I think we could have done without the cameo. A further distraction was the considerable interplay between performers on stage with orchestra members in the pit. Again a little bit of fun here would have been OK but not to excess. The use of a gong at a point in Act Two was unsettling as was the use of strobe lights to enhance the clash of the pirates and police. This company’s use of strobe lights seems to be a favorite embellishment as it was also used in last year’s *Iolanthe*.

On the whole, it was worth the trip (from north Worcester County MA) and price of admission.



Harvard’s *Mikado* did not prove to be “A source of innocent merriment”

By Linda Silverstein

Here’s a how-de-do indeed! The creative team behind the Harvard-Radcliffe G&S Players’ fall production of *The Mikado* felt very strongly that the operetta’s original form is “unacceptable, and that performing the work as such is a disgusting support of institutionalized racism.” So in order to make it more palatable to them, they expunged every reference to Japan and Japanese culture from the show.

Their idea was to set the story in a 1950s Las Vegas hotel owned and operated by the mafia. According to Stage Director **Zachary Mallory** (who also plays Katisha!) a mob boss who renamed himself The Mikado has established a “Japanese” hotel and requires his employees to take on “cringe-worthy” Japanese names and titles.

Well, this may work in the People's Republic of Cambridge, but it didn't work for me. I am not a G&S purist and have seen many productions of *Mikado* with alternate settings and venues, but the problem with this one is that Mallory and company are trying to have things both ways and that is not easy to do.

For example, if the three little maids are maids in a Las Vegas hotel, and one of them smokes constantly and one of them is pregnant, then it makes no sense for them to be singing about being schoolgirls from a seminary and wondering "what on earth the world can be."

Why is Ko-Ko brandishing a gun while talking about decapitating someone with a sword? Why does Yum-Yum say she has to marry Ko-Ko because he is her boss yet original dialogue referring to her as his ward is spoken? In 1950s Las Vegas, why does the wife of a beheaded man need to be buried alive? I was shaking my head through most of the performance.

In many places where the words were changed to make them less offensive, it was hard to hear them. I'm not sure whether this was a case of singers' enunciation or orchestra drowning out voices, but the first song was "we are gentleman of ----" and I have no idea what they were gentlemen of.

When we got to the Little List song, I whispered to my husband "this will be good," expecting lots of 1950s and Las Vegas references. But in this case, most of the original words were kept intact - except one reference to Donald Trump who was not yet annoying in the 50s - and not only was a great opportunity lost to update the song, but the 1885 words seemed particularly anachronistic in this setting.

Having said that....

Many aspects of the production were done very well and were enjoyable, beginning with the set, which was a faithful reproduction of a Las Vegas hotel of that time period. Most of the lead actors were very good. **Isabella Kopits** as Yum-Yum had a beautiful voice. **Aaron Slipper** as Ko-Ko, although appearing to channel Paul Lynde at times, was an enjoyable comic actor and his scenes with Katisha were very entertaining.

It must be the trend now to incorporate orchestra members into the action (see review of CT *Pirates*). In this show the second trombone in the pit had a couple of amusing sight gags.

Zachary Mallory was fun to watch as Katisha. He used his voice and body to great advantage, but I had to think, as he reminded me more of Jack Lemmon in *Some Like it Hot* than Laverne Fox, isn't this also offensive to a 21st century audience? In this time of transgender rights haven't we moved beyond men dressing as women for comic relief? If Harvard is going to be so politically correct about the depiction of Japanese, what about men as women (we're not talking Shakespearean casting). Back when our daughter was at Harvard, she was involved in a production of *Princess Ida* which caused controversy when the ending was changed so Ida wouldn't so easily capitulate to a man. These comic operas were written over 100 years ago, folks. If you don't like the way people are depicted and you can't accept that it represents the way things were a long time ago, please select another show.

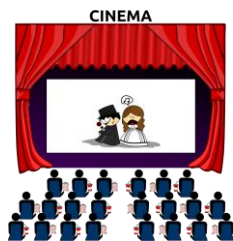
Reviewers Rewarded

Have you ever wanted to comment on your colleagues' hard work somewhere other than Facebook? Now is your chance! *The Trumpet Bray* seeks peer reviewers for local G&S productions. Plus, write a review that goes to publication, and we'll refund up to \$25 towards your ticket cost. Contact editor@negass.org for more info. *The Trumpet Bray* welcomes reviews of recent G & S shows. The editor reserves the right to amend submissions to adhere to publication requirements.

COMMUNICATIONS

Altive Media to launch a "Gilbert and Sullivan Double Bill" early next year

Altive Media, a London-based company involved with the production and distribution of works from the English National Opera, is launching a "Gilbert and Sullivan Double Bill" early next year. They will be featuring *The Pirates of Penzance* directed by Mike Leigh (credits include 'Topsy Turvy', 'Vera Drake', 'Another Year' and 'Mr. Turner') and *The Mikado*, directed by Jonathan Miller. Our shows are filmed in digital high definition with 5:1 surround sound.



I note that your organisation is active in performing Gilbert & Sullivan shows and was wondering if your members/audiences, etc., would be interested in setting up some screenings of the aforementioned operas, either at your venue, if facilities permit, or at a local theatre with the appropriate equipment? Altime Media would share ticket revenues on a 50/50 basis. The content is available in either hard drive or Blu-ray format. Altime Media also provide marketing assets for your use in promoting the shows.

I have included some Vimeo links to trailers of the two operas, to give you an idea of the quality of the productions. I can also provide links to the full performances, if required.

The Pirates of Penzance - <https://vimeo.com/186417692>
The Mikado - <https://vimeo.com/186431388>

Please get in touch if you think that your organisation would be interested in setting up some screenings.

Best regards,
Gerald Buckle
gbuckle@altivemedia.com

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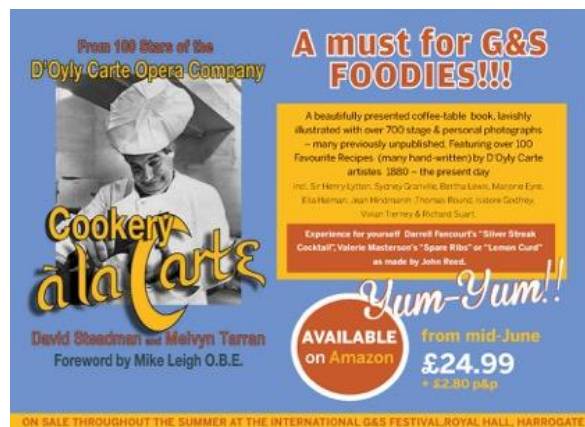
Best wishes
Kanon Digital Orchestration

Book "Cookery ala Carte" now available

In the unlikely event that you aren't already aware, there's a super new book by David Steadman and Melvyn Tarran for all you G & S Foodies! Full details and pictures below and it can be ordered through Amazon and eBay.

Kind regards,
Wilfrid and Susan

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∞ SOLICITATIONS ∞

We know that many of our members and readers are very busy with a host of activities be they work or G&S related, but in the off-hand chance that you find yourself with a spare moment, would you consider writing an article that could be published in *The Trumpet Bray*? Your most welcome submissions for the following columns may be sent to: editor@negass.org

G&S Events

The Pirates of Penzance
MITG&SP

December 2-10, 2016
gsp.mit.edu
See article on page 3

MIT Student Center
Sala de Puerto Rico 84
Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge MA 02139

The Mikado
Patience
New York GASP

December 28, 2016-January 8, 2017
April 29-30, 2017
nygasp.org
See article on page 3

Kaye Playhouse
Hunter College
E 64th Street (Between Park &
Lexington Avenues, NYC, NY

The Mikado
Sudbury Savoyards

April 22-30, 2017
sudburysavoyards.org

Maynard High School
1 Tiger Drive
Maynard MA 01754

☞ We Have a Little List ☞

We wish to thank those who contributed in any way to this issue of *The Trumpet Bray* including Linda Silverstein, John Dreslin, Troupers Light Opera and Valley Light Opera (Please forgive any omissions!)