

THE
TRUMPET BRAY

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY



~ NEGASS EVENTS ~

Longwood Opera and NEGASS to do LMLO of *H.M.S. Pinafore* June 7 at 2:30 pm

NEGASS together with Longwood Opera will present a Last Minute Light Opera of *H.M.S. Pinafore* on June 7 at 2:30 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 1132 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA. You don't want to miss this time of fun and fellowship.

Kate Meifert conducts, **Jim Hay** is at the piano, and our able seamen and their cousins and aunts are:

- The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter - **Lonnie Powell**
(cover: *Tony Parkes*)
- Captain Corcoran - **Tom Frates**
(cover: *Thaddeus Bell*)
- Ralph Rackstraw, Able Seaman - **Josh Collier**
(cover: *David Bell*)
- Dick Deadeye, Able Seaman - **Mike Lague**
(cover: *Steve Lebron*)
- Bill Bobstay, Boatswain's Mate - **Randy Glidden**
(cover: *Larry Millner*)
- Bob Becket, Carpenter's Mate - **Tony Parkes**
(cover: *Tim Daughters*)
- Josephine - **Rebecca Hains**
(cover: *Carolyn Kelly Schwartz*)
- Cousin Hebe - **Christine Petkus** (cover: *Lisa Pierce-Goldstein*)
- Mrs. Cripps (Little Buttercup) **Angela Jajko** -
(cover: *Shannon Lebron*)

The cast will be joined by **Margaux Lebron**, **Theo Hains**, **Katie Hennessey** and **Arielle Emery** as "tiny sailors" sailing the "ocean blue."



G & S Summer Concert Series presenting *Here's a Howdy-Do*, July 8 at 7:30 pm

New England Light Opera and the New England Gilbert & Sullivan Society are continuing to collaborate in presenting the wildly successful Summer Concert Series in Hamilton. Benefitting NEGASS programming, this will be the 12th Annual Summer Concert Series and will open on Wednesday night, July 8 at 7:30 pm with "*Here's a Howdy-Do!*" showcasing beloved G&S scenes and songs.

"Our audiences give us standing ovations and say that our concerts are some of their favorite experiences!" said **Angela Jajko**, singer. The show is at 7:30 p.m. at the beautiful and air-conditioned Hamilton Wenham Community House, 284 Bay Road, Hamilton, MA.

~ NEGASS NEWS ~

NEGASS School Outreach Programs of *Pirates of Penzance* continue to delight

Students at the Thomas Nash School in Weymouth were introduced to our outreach production of "Pirates" at the end of May. On June 11, the program will be staged at North Attleboro. We continue to look forward to introducing Gilbert & Sullivan to yet a new generation of fans!

IN THIS ISSUE

NEGASS Events.....	1
NEGASS News.....	2
G & S News.....	3
Recent Productions.....	3
Calendar.....	5
G&S Trivia.....	6



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MEMBERSHIP NEGASS membership dues are \$25. Please join NEGASS online at www.negass.org, or contact memb@negass.org.

THE TRUMPET BRAY Members receive the Bray as a PDF email attachment. All editions including the current one are available at www.negass.org.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL: 15th of the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.



www.negass.org

NEGASS’ annual meeting and LMLO of *The Mikado* held May 3 in Arlington

NEGASS held a “two-for-one” event on May 3 combining our Annual Meeting with a Last Minute Light Opera - *The Mikado* at the Park Avenue Congregational Church in Arlington.

The annual meeting was held during the intermission of the LMLO of *The Mikado* and those elected to the four open positions for 2015 were **Angela Jajko**, President; **Connell Benn**, Vice-President; **Lisa Pierce-Goldstein**, Treasurer; and **Kate Meifert**, Program Chair.

The Mikado followed the customary LMLO format with NEGASS members in the “starring” roles whilst the audience filled in as the chorus.



Attending the meeting were (from left): Tony Parkes, Tom Weber, Carolyn Kelly Schwartz, Martha Birnbaum, Lisa Pierce-Goldstein, Angela Jajko, and Kaori Emery.

Members prominently featured were: **Tony Parkes** as the Mikado, **Juliet Cunningham** as Nanki-Poo, **Jon Saul** as Ko-Ko, **Miles Rind** as Pooh-Bah, **Tim Daughters** as Pish-Tush, **Christine Petkus** as Yum-Yum, **Carolyn Schwartz** as Pitti-Sing, **Lisa Pierce-Goldstein** as Peep-Bo. **Letitia Stevens** as Katisha shown below, pleads with the Mikado’s court.

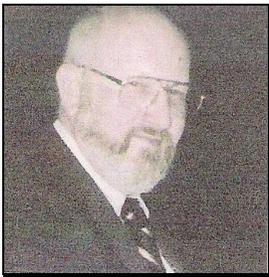


Letitia Stevens as Katisha pleads with the Mikado's court.

NEGASS' First Meet-Up-Vinebrook Tavern

NEGASS members got together for a friendly, relaxed Meet-Up at the Vinebrook Tavern in Lexington on Friday, April 10. This was the first of hopefully more "Meet-Ups" in the future. Attendees were able to "talk shop" about their favorite shows, beloved characters, and awesome productions all while sampling the liquid and culinary refreshments offered by the tavern.

Introducing the New Editor



I am honored to have been chosen to be the next editor of *The Trumpet Bray*. I have never had the occasion of performing or working the back of the house in any theatrical production but I did

spend over a decade as a Managing Director for the Dedham-based National Amusements at their locations at the former Lincoln Plaza Cinemas in Worcester and later at Showcase Cinemas 1-10 in West Springfield.

After being introduced to G&S while in high school in the 1960's, I had the opportunity to see the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company at Boston's old Savoy Theater in the late 1960's and again at the Colonial Theater in the 1970's when they toured the U.S. Afterwards for many years I was a member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust Ltd. I look forward to meeting you.

≈ G & S NEWS ≈

Pineapple Poll and The Zoo Coming Soon

Pioneer Valley's Amherst Ballet and the Valley Light Opera are joining to present *Pineapple Poll* and *The Zoo* on June 25-28 at the Academy of Music in Northampton. *Pineapple Poll* is an instrumental ballet arranged by Sir Charles Mackerras using music from the G&S operas. *The Zoo* is a one-act comic opera with music by Arthur Sullivan and based on a book by B.C. Stephenson under the name of Bolton Rowe. See www.vlo.org for details.



"An Evening with G&S" will be presented by Longwood Opera on August 4 at 7:30 pm

"An Evening of Gilbert & Sullivan" will be presented by Longwood Opera on August 4 at Christ Episcopal Church, 1132 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA. Showtime is 7:30 pm.

Greater Worcester Opera to present *Gilbert and Sullivan & More* August 5 at 7:00 pm

As part of what will be the 12th Annual Summer Concert Series, Greater Worcester Opera (GWO) will present "Gilbert and Sullivan & More" on Wednesday evening, August 5 at 7:30 pm.

The program features many well-known area G&S singers including **Carolyn Kelly Schwartz, Connell Benn, Thomas Crumb, Christine Petkus, Michael Gondek, Richard Monroe, Benjamin Morse, Tara Alcorn, Katherine Engel Meifert, Jodie Kitty,** and **Elaine Crane** as well as an amazing accompanist and an entertainingly informative narrator.

Audiences and singers will love this event that will be held at Birches Auditorium, 65 Briarwood Circle, Worcester, Mass. Free parking, air conditioned and modest ticket prices. Complimentary refreshments will complete the evening. What's not to love? Set the date aside!

≈ RECENT PRODUCTIONS ≈

***Iolanthe* by Connecticut's Troupers Light Opera garners two reviews:**

Sullivan would have been pleased

Troupers Light Opera celebrated its 70th year with a revival of "Iolanthe" for four showings in mid-April. Savoyards may wish to visit the website trouperlightopera.org for highlights of their impressive history. They utilize various venues; this time it was the attractive Norwalk Concert Hall. School stages allow for the flying of backdrops and varied entrances of the cast, so allowances must be made for set decoration in a concert hall with a relatively small stage.

Maestro Jun Nakabayshi's conducting was the highlight of the performance. The orchestra, as well as the singers, responded to the clarity of his solid beat. The overture was polished and Sullivan would have been pleased with his sensitivity and coloring.

Miran Robarts sang beautifully as Phyllis, as did **John Matilaine** as Tolloller and **Frank Sisson** as Mountararat. **David Rich** was an ideal type for Strephon, and sang numerous pitches an octave higher to suit his confident, tenor range; but both he and the Lord Chancellor utilized maximum thrust throughout, rather than a romantic sound (Strephon) or "character" nuance with varied expression (Chancellor). Traditionalists hunger for characterizations in keeping with Gilbert's intentions and D'Oyly Carte ambience. The Wagnerian satire element was missing.

Celia (**Deborah Connelly**), Leila (**Maria Jacobi**) and Fleta (**Tammy Strom**) led the female chorus with spirit and charm. Private Willis (**Robert Scrofani**) and The Fairy Queen (**Linda McKeel**) held their own, in spite of non-traditional stage direction. **Wendy Falconer**, in the title role of Iolanthe, conveyed a love for the material and motherly color.

The stage director made some alterations to the libretto by Gilbert. It was learned later that the contract with the director specified that Gilbert's libretto could not be altered. However, high-style satire was sometimes lost. The Chancellor's "Nightmare Song" was accented with stage business by other principals on stage that diverted the listener. And the dignity and regality of the chorus of Peers was somewhat lost in the Peers' switching crowns with each other and taking off their robes to pile on top of Phyllis after pushing her, face down, to the floor.



Bill Henning was credited for sound and deserves special praise. The small chorus, and all principals, filled the room with twice the sound anticipated. And each member of the company gave utmost energy to the lack of respect accorded to Sir William Schwenck Gilbert. Dr. Alice Hamilton won a Pulitzer Prize (in "The Greek Way") in which she

compared Gilbert and Aristophanes as history's two greatest satirists. I would like to have seen Gilbert served as well.

- **Robert Cumming**

***Iolanthe* was "lively and entertaining"**

Troupers Light Opera presented 4 performances of *Iolanthe* at Norwalk Concert Hall on April 11 and 18, with a full 23-piece orchestra, conducted by **Jun Nakabayashi**. The show, directed by **Dan Montez** was lively and entertaining, though not without a number of "pork pies" (Cockney for nonsense).

Phyllis, played by **Miran Robarts** and Strephon played by **David Richy** were outstanding, and amply supported by stalwarts **John Matilaine** as Tolloller and **Frank Sisson** as Mountararat. **Wendy Falconer** was impressive in the title role of Iolanthe and **Michael Cosantino** was the Lord Chancellor. The small ensemble produced a remarkably strong sound, especially in Sullivan's marvelous Act I Finale. **Carl Mezzoff's** set did a fine job of hiding the fact that this was not a normal stage, but a concert hall. **Deb Connelly, Maria Jacobi** and **Tammy Strom** were delightful as the fairies Celia, Leila and Fleta and **Bob Scrofani** made an impressive Private Willis.
- **James Cooper**

Sudbury Savoyards gave *Patience* "their all" in February at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

I recently found myself in the unique position of being a member of the audience for The Sudbury Savoyards production of *Patience*. Unique, in that for the first time in several years, I found myself watching the show from the audience, rather than from on stage. Let me say off the bat, that although I am partial to that group and many of the performers, I will try to give an unbiased account of the show.

Patience, in my opinion, is one of Gilbert's wittiest plays, and director **Jim Ravan** made the wise choice to emphasize the humor of the piece. Too often I have seen the works of Gilbert and Sullivan performed by excellent singers who have little to no flair for comedy, or by adequate singers who end up making their characters too knowingly funny, and thus defeat the inherent humor in the piece. This show did not fall into either category. It was an energetic, well-paced, and very clever show.

It was not completely free of defect, but those defects were minor, and did not detract from the overall quality of the production. Probably the biggest gaffe

in my book was the ill-advised expository scene that opened the show. After enjoying the first few bars of the overture, beautifully played by the orchestra under the expert direction of **Kathryn Denney**, the show was halted for a new, and in my opinion, unnecessary scene in which the audience meets three



scientists who bring Oscar Wilde, through the use of a time machine, into the current day in order to explain “The aesthetic movement”. The fact that I am a traditionalist may have prejudiced me against this new scene, but in honesty I think the problem was that it was not a particularly funny piece of writing. That being said, it did give performers **Jon Saul** (as Wilde) and **Laurel Martin** (the head scientist) a chance to show off their skill at delivering dialogue. Both did fine work, and made me realize that here are two smart performers who in the past have more often than not been underutilized.

As the show progressed and I watched the various performers play out their roles, I realized just how smart a job **Ravan** and **Denney** had done in casting this production. Although many lead roles were played by the stalwart “regular” performers, many others were given to talented individuals who previously had not been used to their full potential. Each player rose to the occasion, and all the roles were played with verve and gusto. In the role of Bunthorne, Sudbury regular **Dennis O’Brien** once again showed why he excels in patter roles. His flawless diction made every word of Gilbert’s dialogue crystal clear. Bunthorne is a deceptively difficult role to pull off. One may be tempted to overdo it to the point of caricature, but **O’Brien** wisely kept his character recognizable and believable.

In the title role, **Connell Benn** appeared as Patience. Her performance was a sheer delight. Rather than playing Patience as a naïve (i.e. stupid) country girl, **Benn** opted for an entirely different approach. Her Patience was the only normal person on stage, and her reactions to the surrounding lunacy were

priceless. As if that weren’t enough, her crystalline soprano voice was flawless. She made a perfect Patience. Also brilliantly cast was local favorite **Ben Morse** as Archibald Grosvenor. Given that his two prior roles for the group were as Sir Joseph Porter and as Major General Stanley, one might not think of **Morse** as right for the role of Grosvenor, but believe me that piece of casting was inspired. Whether tossing his long blond locks, or pining over Patience, **Morse** was consistently likeable and entertaining. So much so, that while watching some of the scenes between **Morse** and **Benn**, I got the distinct feeling that I had actually entered that time machine from the prologue and was now watching Carol Burnett and Harvey Korman in high gear.

Ann Ferentz brought her own fine comedic gifts to the role of Lady Angela, so much so that despite the high octane stage presence of **O’Brien**, **Benn** and **Morse**, **Ferentz** gave me biggest laugh of the evening, when in the second act while waxing poetic about Bunthorne, she became so rhapsodic that she seemed to have become possessed by some demonic spirit. A truly hilarious moment. Her comedic skill coupled with her fine soprano voice made me wonder why she, like **Benn**, hasn’t been used more frequently in the past. As Lady Saphir, **Johanna Shriver** sang beautifully and gave a colorful performance. **Katrina Skidmore**, as Lady Ella, displayed a youthful zeal that added to the high energy of the show. As Lady Jane, **Mary Finn** played her role realistically, and gained empathy from the audience.



And now, for the gentlemen. In the role of Major Murgatroyd, **Tony Parkes** showed why he is considered one of the most skillful interpreters of Gilbert and Sullivan. As Colonel Calverley, **Randy Glidden** had the manly bearing of a true soldier, even while wearing a pink tutu in the second act. You’ve got guts, Randy. Rounding out the trio of men was local favorite **Brad Amidon** as the Duke. Brad surprised me on this one. Rather than portraying the Duke as your typical silly-ass character, he instead chose to play him as a slightly

braindead dope, who never quite got what was going on around him. A very clever and effective take on the character.

The orchestra played brightly and beautifully under the expert direction of **Kathryn Denney**, who kept the tempi just right. Costumes by **Lucy Dean** were colorful and attractive, with help from **Paula Moravek** who made the numerous funny “plant hats” that were worn by the women. Overall this was a very enjoyable and energetic production, and I would like to thank **Ravan** and **Denney** for their hard work and smart casting decisions. The only negative note to the evening was one beyond their control. The show was not as well attended as it deserved to be. While *Pinafore*, *Pirates* and *Mikado* will always sell tickets easily, many of the less popular titles are just as enjoyable. We as the audience should do our best to support groups brave enough to produce these clever shows. Kudos to the Sudbury Savoyards for giving their all.

-Tom Frates



❧ 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 information.

❧ We Have a Little List ❧

We wish to thank those who contributed to this issue of *The Trumpet Bray* including Angela Jajko, Susan Larson, Martha Birnbaum, James Cooper, Tom Frates and Robert Cumming (Please forgive any omissions!).

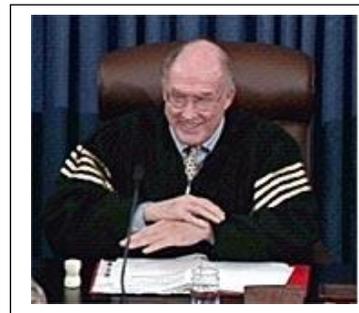
❧ A BIT OF G&S TRIVIA ❧

“AND A GOOD JUDGE TOO”

Q: What is it that the famous science fiction writer, Isaac Asimov, England's Queen Victoria and former Prime Minister Harold Wilson, German Kaiser Wilhelm II, and former U.S. Chief Justice William Rehnquist all have in common?

A: A shared love of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. In fact, William Hubbs Rehnquist (October 1, 1924 – September 3, 2005), served as 16th Chief Justice for nearly 19 years, making him the fourth-longest-serving Chief Justice after John Marshall, Roger Taney, and Melville Fuller, and the longest-serving Chief Justice who had previously served as an Associate Justice.

A life-long fan of the Savoy operas, Rehnquist added four yellow stripes to the sleeves of his robe in 1995 after appreciating the Lord Chancellor's costume in a community theater production of *Iolanthe*. He thereafter appeared in court with the same striped sleeves. (The Lord Chancellor was traditionally the senior member of the British judiciary.) The current Chief Justice, John Roberts, having succeeded Rehnquist, chose not to continue the practice.



Chief Justice Rehnquist presided over the 1999 impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton in the U.S. Senate. When the trial ended, TV reporter Charlie Rose asked Rehnquist what his duties were. Rehnquist replied, quoting a line from *Iolanthe*, "I did nothing in particular and I did it very well."

Topsy-Turvy.com

Dare to share with your friends your original stories of mis-takes, mis-steps, mis-cues or other on-stage (or otherwise) embarrassing moments. Send your memories to editor@negass.org Thanks.

Upcoming NEGASS EVENTS

<i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i> NEGASS/Longwood Opera	June 7, 2015, 2:30 pm www.longwoodopera.org	Christ Episcopal Church 1132 Highland Ave. Needham, MA
<i>Summer Concert Series</i> NEGASS/NELO	July 8, 15, 22, 29, 2015, 7:30 pm Summer Concert Series www.newenglandlightopera.org	Hamilton Wenham Community House 284 Bay Road Hamilton, MA

Upcoming Events

<i>The Mikado</i> College Light Opera Company	June 30-July 4, 2015 collegelightopera.com 508-548-2211	Highfield Theatre 58 Highfield Drive Falmouth, MA
<i>An Evening with G&S</i> Longwood Opera	August 4, 2015, 7:30 pm www.longwoodopera.org	Christ Episcopal Church 1132 Highland Ave. Needham, MA
<i>Gilbert & Sullivan & More</i> Greater Worcester Opera	August 5, 2015, 7:30 pm www.greaterworcesteroera.org	Briarwood Auditorium 65 Briarwood Circle Worcester, MA
<i>The Gondoliers</i> College Light Opera Company	August 18-22, 2015 collegelightopera.com 508-548-2211	Highfield Theatre 58 Highfield Drive Falmouth, MA
<i>G & S Road Scholar Weekend</i> Rafe MacPhail	August 23 - 28, 2015 www.roadscholar.org/programs/search_results.asp?keyword=Warwick+Gilbert	Warwick Center 62 Warwick Center Road Warwick, NY
<i>Ruddigore</i> Theater at Monmouth	September 17-27, 2015 boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org 207-933-2952	Theater at Monmouth 796 Main Street Monmouth ME 04259
<i>Iolanthe</i> CT G&S Society	October 3, 2015 http://ctgands.org/	Valley Regional High School 256 Kelsey Hill Rd Deep River, CT
<i>Pineapple Poll & The Zoo</i> Valley Light Opera And Amherst Ballet	June 25-28, 2015 http://www.vlo.org/	Academy of Music 274 Main Street Northampton MA 01060