



≈ NEGASS EVENT ≈

**NEGASS and GWO hosting a “One-Day Mini Supernatural Sing-Out” at 51 Walden in Concord on June 17**

The New England Gilbert & Sullivan Society and Greater Worcester Opera are planning a marathon ‘Sing-Out’ of four Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas. The four “supernatural” shows are *Thespis*, *The Sorcerer*, *Ruddigore* and *Iolanthe*. 51 Walden in Concord is the venue for this all-day extravaganza.



Photo of 51 Walden sign provided by Anthony V. from Foursquare.

The opening show is *Thespis* followed by *The Sorcerer*. A break for lunch will then precede *Ruddigore*. After dinner break, *Iolanthe* will close out the day. For the lunch and dinner breaks there are several fine eateries near 51 Walden. As with all sing-outs, the audience is the chorus. Please bring your scores so you can sing along. This event is free for the audience with a suggested donation at the door.

**NEGASS annual meeting scheduled for June 17 at the “Supernatural Sing-Out”**

The annual business meeting and election of NEGASS board members will be held

after the *Ruddigore* portion of the “Supernatural Sing-Out.” This provides NEGASS members another good reason not to miss this super event.

**NEGASS and Longwood Opera co-hosting a *Yeomen of the Guard* Sing-Out**

A *Yeomen of the Guard* Sing-Out is being jointly sponsored by NEGASS and the Longwood Opera on Sunday, June 18, 2017. Christ Episcopal Church at 1132 Highland Avenue, Needham is the venue. Once again, the audience is the chorus. Please bring your scores so you can participate. At the very least bring yourself and enjoy a great time!

**The 2017 NEGASS and NELO summer concert series is announced**

New England Light Opera and the New England Gilbert & Sullivan Society have announced the schedule for their 2017 summer concert series. Four Wednesdays in July will be reserved for various musical programs. July 5 features a G&S “Here’s a Howdy-Do,” followed by “Broadway Lights” on July 12, “Songs from the Gilded Stage” on July 19, and finally on July 26 will be “Cabaret Nights.”

Come and hear some of the finest singers in the greater Boston area. All shows begin at 7:30 p.m. at

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Dear NEGASSers,

If you submitted a NEGASS Sing-Out role request form online but have not received a personal email from Angela Jajko confirming receipt, please let us know asap at [angelaajako@hotmail.com](mailto:angelaajako@hotmail.com). Some forms did not reach us Thanks.



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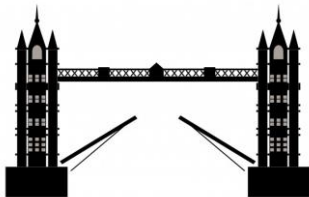
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the Community House of Hamilton and Wenham, located at 284 Bay Road, Hamilton MA 01982. Get your tickets early. A summer pass for all four concerts is \$35 for adults/\$25 seniors and kids. Per show tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and NEGASS members and \$5 for students and kids.

~ G&S EVENTS ~

**GWO to present a concert version of *Pirates* at five venues; go to the show on June 16 and get a discount for the June 17 "Supernatural Sing-Out"**

Greater Worcester Opera is presenting a fully staged and costumed concert version of Gilbert & Sullivan's rollicking tale of pirates, constables, wards and generals in June 2017 at any of five different performance venues. Performance dates are June 9, 2017 at the Eagle Hill Cultural Center, Hardwick, June 10 & 11 at New Players Theatre Guild in Fitchburg, June 16 at Southgate in Shrewsbury, June 23 & 25 at Briarwood Community Center, Worcester and June 24 at Melrose Highlands Congregational Church in Melrose.



Attendees at Southgate performance on June 16 will be eligible for discounts for the NEGASS "Supernatural Sing-Out" on June 17 at 51 Walden in Concord. See the GWO web site for more details.

The GWO's exceptional cast of *Pirates* (will include: Pirate King – Kyle Carlson (cover Stuart Cabral), General Stanley – Ben Morse, Frederic – Matthew Hennek, Mabel – Lydian DeVere Yard (cover Lisa

Tierney), Ruth – **Angela Jajko**, Sergeant of Police – **Frank Walker**, Edith – **Elaine Crane**, Kate – **Carolyn Schwartz**, Isabel – **Lisa Tierney**, and Samuel – **Brad Amidon**.

Pirates and Police: **Preston Arnold**, **Stuart Cabral**, **Ned Cheesman**, **Bob Datz**, **Mike Gorman**, **Rick Kimball**, **George Oliver** and **Alan Rohwer**.

General Stanley's Wards: **LaDelle Arnold**, **Alice Ball**, **Ginny Bailey**, **Lydia Barrett**, **Betsey Fiedler**, **Greta Koenig**, **Amanda Lauricella**, **Patrice Metcalf**, **Kathleen Meyer**, **Kirstin Olson**, **Christine Petkus**, **Lindsey Soboleski**, and **Lori Stevenson**.

### Greater Worcester Opera to present a “Gilbert and Sullivan Extravaganza”

Greater Worcester Opera will present a “Gilbert and Sullivan Extravaganza” as part of their 14th Annual Summer Concert Series. The concert will be at the Briarwood Auditorium, 65 Briarwood Circle in Worcester MA on Wednesday June 26, 2017. Showtime will be at 7:30 pm. Tickets will be available at the door (\$10 general admission, \$5 students).

Enjoy a comfortable and air-conditioned atmosphere, while experiencing engaging performances by some of the area’s finest singers, accompanied by Olga Rogach and narrated by Rick Kimball. The music is exquisite, the price reasonable and the refreshments complimentary- it's a great way to support the arts while having a wonderful time!



### Odyssey Opera to present *Patience* at BU

Boston’s Odyssey Opera will present *Patience* on June 2 and 3, 2017. This fully staged production of Wilde’s world of the aesthetes of Victorian England will be presented at the Boston University Theatre, 204 Huntington Avenue, Boston. **Gil Rose** will be the conductor and stage direction will be by **Frank Kelley**.

Starring in the principal roles will be **Aaron Engebretth** (Reginald Bunthorne), **Sara Heaton** (Patience), **Paul Max Tipton** (Archibald

Grosvenor), **Janna Baty** (Lady Jane), **James Maddalena** (Colonel Calverley), **Steven Goldstein** (Lieut. The Duke of Dunstable), **Jaime Korkos** (Lady Angela), **Sara Womble** (Lady Ella), **Heather Gallagher** (Lady Saphir), and **Sumner Thompson** (Major Murgatroyd).

## ↻ G&S NEWS ↻

### A Gilbert & Sullivan Forum at George Mason University

By **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, about 75 Savoyards, friends, and staff members of George Mason University gathered in Fairfax, Virginia, at the Fenwick Library to celebrate the donation by **David and Annabelle Stone** of their remarkable Gilbert & Sullivan collection to the University.

Following a welcome by **John G. Zenelis**, Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, **David Stone** described the genesis of the collection and the decision to donate it to Mason, then led attendees to three separate exhibition areas in the Fenwick. On one wall were thirteen framed illustrated sheet-music covers, one from each of the Savoy operas. Photographs, manuscripts, programs, books, musical scores – even Sir Arthur Sullivan’s racing binoculars! – and so much more were on display, carefully arranged thematically and elegantly captioned. The exhibition may be viewed online at [gilbertandsullivan2017.gmu.edu](http://gilbertandsullivan2017.gmu.edu).

After the tour, the assemblage walked to the deLaski Performing Arts Building for the Gilbert & Sullivan Forum. They were welcomed by **Rick Davis**, Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, who was instrumental in planning the festivities, and who served as the Forum’s chair.

**W. Scott Hayes**, Sullivan’s great grandnephew, was the first speaker. “Sir Arthur Sullivan: The California Connection” was an illustrated lecture documenting the composer’s trip in 1885 to see his relatives: the wife and six children of his deceased brother Frederic, who had settled in California. (Frederic had played the original Judge in *Trial by Jury* and would probably have created what we now call the Grossmith parts had he lived). Assisted by his wife Kitty, who handled the many illustrative slides, Scott made clear that the composer took financial responsibility for his

relatives, but also provided emotional support and practical advice through his one visit and many letters. He also informally adopted his eldest nephew, Herbert, who lived with Sullivan as his son.

We then enjoyed a capital lunch and lots of visiting at George's, in another building, which gave us two more opportunities to enjoy some fresh air and get some exercise between sessions.

**David Stone** opened the second portion of the Forum with "Sullivan's Other Collaborators: Shakespeare to Kipling." Using slides of antiquarian sheet music and scores, David introduced us to five GMU students from the Vocal Studies Division of the School of Music: **Crystal Golden, Brittany Michaelson-Mulkey, Anjanette Trebing, Daniel Smith, and James Stevens**. They provided absolutely *lovely* renditions of Sullivan songs ranging from the ethereal "Orpheus with His Lute" to toe-tapping "The Absent-Minded Beggar" My favorite was the rarely heard *duet* version of Sullivan's song "Sweethearts," with lyrics by W. S. Gilbert. Other selections were "Mary Morison," "Only the Night Wind Sighs Alone," "Let Me Dream Again," and "Gone!" All were accompanied by **Eunae Ko Han**.

**Carolyn Williams** then whisked us off to Fairyland with her presentation, "Iolanthe and Other Victorian Fairies." We learned of the importance of fairies in Victorian literature, painting, music, and folklore. Examples illustrative, verbal and visual, including references to the ballet *La Sylphide* and to Gilbert's Bab Ballad "The Fairy Curate" and his "fairy comedy" *The Wicked World* were also presented, along with a consideration of the sexuality of fairies: both their innocence and sexual knowingness. These topics and others were all designed toward enhancing our appreciation of a fine production of *Iolanthe* most of us would see that evening, presented by Mason Opera.

**Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** was the final speaker. His topic, "Directing Gilbert & Sullivan with Reflected Light" used Gilbert's famous metaphor in a letter to Sullivan to suggest that the treasures of the Stone Collection could be useful to directors, designers, performers, and other creative theatrical personnel to mount productions grounded in historical research. The printed books, illustrated-magazine tear-sheets, photographs, cigarette cards and other ephemera hold records of "what was done when," to say nothing of the Stone Collection's remarkable

range of prompt-books and scores, which can be helpful in recreating Gilbert's stage pictures but should not be slavishly followed.



Photograph of Gilbert & Sullivan collectors and wives, with Scott and Kitty Hayes, taken in the upper gallery featuring exhibition of posters from the David and Annabelle Stone Collection, Hylton Performing Arts Center, Manassas, Virginia, April 27, 2017. Seated in foreground, left to right: Kitty Hayes, Ann Kanthor, Hal Kanthor, Ann Stone, Rochelle Shereff, Ralph MacPhail, Jr., and W. Scott Hayes. In the rear, left to right: J. Donald Smith, David Stone, and seated Jesse Shereff. (Photograph by Rick Davis.)

A panel discussion, moderated by Librarian and Professor **Steven K. Gerber**, closed the forum by looking to the future. "Gilbert and Sullivan: Nineteenth Century Opera for Twenty-first Century Audiences" was its title, and the panelists included Professors **John Aler** (Music), **Ken Elston** (Theater), **Peter N. Stearns** (History), **Williams**, and **MacPhail**. The lively discussion considered topics such as the potential problem of contemporary references in the works, the importance of romantic love and believably "lovable" characters in Savoy opera, and the value of updating the works. (I wish that the discussion had been recorded and transcribed!)

Following the Forum, many of us attended a wonderful Friends of Music Dinner, again at George's. The lovely meal, enjoyed on tables adorned with Union Jacks, was preceded by a pre-performance presentation extolling the value of Gilbert & Sullivan by **Rick Davis**.

*Iolanthe* then followed at the Harris Theatre, another short walk away. It was obvious to many that the young singers, GMU students, were enjoying Gilbert & Sullivan as much as we in the audience were. As we parted, all of us, I think, left with great appreciation for George Mason

University's wonderful welcome of their new acquisition and gratitude for the many GMU personnel who had planned such a lovely day.

**Postscript:** Two days earlier participants in the Lifelong Learning Institute at GMU's nearby Manassas campus gathered for a session designed to set the stage for a performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore* to be presented by the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players the following week. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** spoke on "The Secrets of *H.M.S. Pinafore*" from the mainstage of the Hylton Center for the Performing Arts. **Rick Davis** and **Jennifer Decker** sang musical illustrations, accompanied by **Eunae Ko Han**.

That evening about three dozen people gathered in the gallery of the theatre, which presented an incredible array of framed posters from the Stone Collection, nineteenth-century memorabilia relating to "the *Pinafore* craze" of 1878-79, and other delights. A "gallery talk" was actually a panel discussion, chaired by **Mr. Davis**, with **Messrs. Hayes, MacPhail, and Stone** discussing a range of topics presented by Mr. Davis.

## RECENT PRODUCTIONS

### Simsbury's *Iolanthe* the product of a "rebuilding" company and better for it

By **John E. Dreslin, D.M.D.**

Simsbury Light Opera (SLOCO) of Connecticut has continued to rebuild after almost folding a few short years ago, and the state is all the better for it. This year they presented *Iolanthe*, for four performances over the first two weekends of April, which proved to be another step upward following the success of last year's *Sorcerer*. There are still some problems which the creative team must work around. Most notably is the small stage at Eno Memorial Hall, where they present. This means that they must use the floor space for much of the action, while the orchestra is immediately in front of the actual stage, which itself seems to suffer from poor acoustics. This year the floor playing space was enlarged by removing some of the seating, which helped a lot. However this still means that often the singers cannot watch the conductor, resulting in a lack of cohesion between the two. After all what's the use of signaling a cutoff if nobody can see it? Also for budgetary reasons, I assume, the orchestra is extremely small, in this

case a string quartet, piano, with single flute, oboe, clarinet, and trumpet. There are no percussion or lower bass instruments. This is especially



**Lords Tolloller and Mountararat in front of the Peers in SLOCO's dress rehearsal.** (Photo by Nick Sherman.)

noticeable in numbers such as the March of the Peers, and 1<sup>st</sup> Act Finale where a fuller accompaniment is needed. Also many of Sullivan's orchestral details have to be omitted. Fortunately, the musicians were for the most part excellent players which did a lot to make up for their lack of numbers.

That said the directorial staff did their best to work through these handicaps. **Mike Reynolds'** stage direction was spot on, with many deft creative touches that added up to an enjoyable experience. Music director **Nathaniel Baker** gave an intelligent reading of the score and elicited an especially nice choral sound from the female chorus, with an excellent balancing of the parts between soprano and alto. The male chorus lacked in numbers what it really needed to be truly effective. At least in their big numbers they were backed up by the principal male characters, and this helped. Choreographer **Chelsea Derby**, who also played Leila, contributed some nice touches. Though the principal and fairy costumes were very nice, the Peers' can only be described as very basic. There seemed to be some lighting mishaps at the performance I attended (opening night) as well as some confusion in the bow sequence at the end of the show. These very well might have been corrected in the following three performances. There were many outstanding performers among the cast. Veteran G&S player **Julie Rumbold** was a young and vigorous Fairy Queen. Her fellow lead fairies **Chelsea Derby** (Leila), **Sierra Manning** (Celia), and **Erin Aldrich** (Fleta), were very charming with beautiful voices. Indeed the

opening scene was one of the highlights of the show. Another experienced G&S player **Rachel Abrams** undertook the title role and did an especially beautiful rendition of the “My Lord, a Suppliant at Your Feet” solo in the second act. Rounding out the female cast was **Jessica Cain** as Phyllis. She possessed a lovely singing tone, but some of her dialogue tended to get lost, especially when delivered from the stage, which might have more to do with the acoustics of the venue than any shortcomings on her part.

Among the men, the imposing **Mark McNally**, another long time G&S veteran was the most impressive as Lord Mountarat. His foil **Tim Colby**, who is also SLOCO president this year, did his best as Lord Tolloller, even though he could be described more as a high baritone than a true tenor. Their second act dialogue was very well done. **Ralph Sherman** was a pleasing Strephon, and played his own flageolet riffs in the first act (as he did as Dr. Daly in last year’s production). **Jay Marshall Wolman** portrayed Private Willis after singing with the men’s chorus in Act 1. Probably the most problematic performance was **Hal Chernoff’s** Lord Chancellor. He certainly knows his material, and his dialogues were perfect, but he consistently got ahead of the accompaniment in the musical numbers, sometimes by half a measure and more. Since most of the time he could see the conductor, and he is an experienced performer, I am not sure what the problem was. Even the usual sure fire hit trio “If You Go In...” fell flat as a result, and then was even worse in the encore. Once again, maybe this was a case of opening night jitters and was fixed at the subsequent performances. This quibble aside, it was a most enjoyable show, and I am very much looking forward to SLOCO’s future productions, and hope that they will once more be on a solid footing for many years to come.

### ***Pinafore* and *The Magic Knight* paired by Troupers Light Opera in Norwalk CT**

**By John E. Dreslin, D.M.D.**

Troupers Light Opera had the honor of being the first event in the beautifully renovated Wall Street Theater in downtown Norwalk, CT, during the first two weekends of April. The theater was originally constructed in 1915, and has a long history, under various guises. It is a lovely space with good acoustics and an ample stage and orchestra pit, with both balcony and orchestra seating. For this outing, Troupers chose to pair the familiar *H.M.S.*

*Pinafore* with Victor Herbert’s thirty minute spoof of Wagner’s *Lohengrin* entitled *The Magic Knight*, which opened the evening. If nothing else this piece illustrated just how superior the writing of Gilbert and Sullivan is. Also, it showed how for an audience unfamiliar with a work, what a boon projected titles can be. Unfortunately, they were not used in this production, and I found most of the lyrics (there was no dialogue) completely unintelligible. I had to rely on the brief program synopsis to have any idea what was going on. The work mainly was a vehicle to highlight the lovely soprano work of **Miran Roberts** in the part of Elsa. Bass **Erik Contzius** also was very impressive in the role of the King (he would later in the program portray the Boatswain in *Pinafore*, once again well done).



**Little Buttercup sharing some of her wares with members of the *Pinafore* crew.** (Photo by Arthur Shulman courtesy of Troupers Light Opera.)

In comparison, *Pinafore* came across much better. The 24 piece orchestra performed ably under the precise conducting of music director **Eric Kramer**. It was not the original Sullivan scoring, in that there were only a single clarinet, horn, and trombone, but it was still a pretty full sound, with a large violin, cello and bass section (though if the program listing is correct, only a single viola). The chorus, though somewhat small, about six each of ladies and men, also was excellent both in singing and precision of movement, which fortunately was not overly busy thanks to director/choreographer **Emily Trudeau**. There were many creative touches that I found very amusing. One was the staging of the “Bell Trio”, done with no encores (or bells), but featuring Ralph refilling wine goblets for the trio participants between each verse, with the result that they became tipsier as the number proceeded. Then there was the running gag that Sir Joseph could never get the Captain’s name correct, referring to him at various times as Captain Cormorant, Crunch, Kirk, Kardasian, Kangaroo,

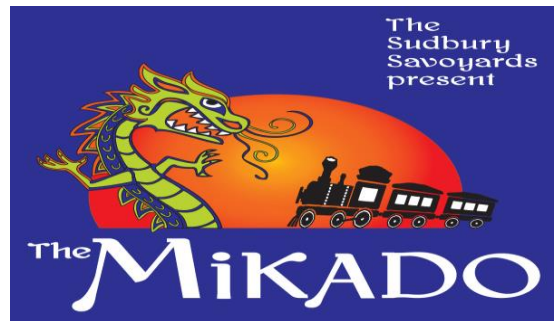
etc., only finally getting it right when he appears at the final scene as a common sailor.

As far as the principal cast, they were uniformly excellent. **Brett Kroeger** portrayed Josephine and was very impressive in both her arias. Tenor **Alan Briones**, who earlier had appeared as Lohengrin, was a sprightly Ralph, though he tended to not take his high notes full voice at the performance I attended. The parts of Buttercup and Sir Joseph were handled by two veteran Gilbert and Sullivan players, **Wendy Falconer**, and **David Schauncupp**. Both were in top notch form. **Bob Scrofani** was an amusing and effective Dick Deadeye, though his voice was more of a baritone than the deep bass that you often hear doing that part. **Suzanne Rossini** did especially excellent work as Cousin Hebe, and was allowed the extra dialogue prior to the "Bell Trio" that is often cut, as well as covering Buttercup's part in "Carefully on Tiptoe Stealing". I did have one problem with the staging however. The set was essentially the quarter deck of the ship, looking towards the stern. It was basically on two levels with steps leading up to the upper level on either side. Lighting seemed to also be on two levels, one set of lights for the upper, and another for the lower, and occasionally a full spot on the center of the upper level. There was considerable movement up and down these stairs, often while the singer was doing a solo, such as "Sorry Her Lot", for no apparent purpose. Compounding this sometimes as this was taking place they had to traverse a somewhat dimly lit section of the stairs, which I found highly distracting, plus causing me some anxiety as to the safety of the performers while accomplishing these maneuvers. That said, I thought that on the whole this was an excellent and enjoyable rendering of this great classic.

### **"All aboard!" *The Mikado* comes to town courtesy of the Sudbury Steampunk RR**

**By David DeVries**

My eye should have caught the steam train on the cover of the program, but alas, it did not. However when I saw the set on the stage of a train station, it dawned on me that this was not going to be a traditional rendering of *The Mikado*. (And alas, I am a traditionalist.) Using the station as a backdrop allowed the stage crew to employ baggage handling equipment and a faux steam engine with passenger cars to aid in the entrances of some of Titipu's key players.



Conductor **Craig Tata** led the orchestra in a wonderful musical interpretation of Mr. Sullivan's music. In point of fact, his mastery of the baton was equal to the likes of Isidore Godfrey and Royston Nash. The only quibble here would concern a little too much exuberance by the percussionist. In fact in the finale of Act 1 when Katisha (**Carolyn Schwartz**) sings "In vain you interrupt with this tornado," she strides to the center stage and delivers this statement directly to the pit which was a nice bit of humor. In fact **Kara Greenfield** who handled the percussion was kept quite busy throughout and did a great job as did all the other members of the orchestra.

It took the entrance of the men's chorus singing their introductory number "If you want to know who we are" for my wife to catch the fact that something different was going on. In fact she whispered to me, "Are we at the right show?" With the unmistakable notes of "A wand'ring minstrel I" performed by Nanki-Poo (**Stephen Im**), she knew we were at the right place. Mr. Im is an aspiring opera singer and is beginning to amass tenor roles on his resume including the tenor solo in *Elijah* with the Woods Hole Cantata Consort. He has a voice that is as crisp as a bell and his enunciation was just right. Mr. Im made his entrance carrying, not a stringed instrument but a trombone as befitting the character of a "second trombone."

**Ben Morse** as Ko-Ko was in his element. Ben is well known throughout the area for his expert handling of the patter songs and in this case handling of the Lord High Executioner's persona. He handled his role with just the right touch of comedic aplomb. After the initial highlight of Nanki-Poo and the men's chorus offering of the "Wand'ring minstrel" number, **Tim Daughters** as Pish-Tush enters to preface the entry of Ko-Ko. In "Our great Mikado, virtuous man," Tim offers a steady baritone presence throughout.

**Matt Tragert** as Pooh-Bah delivered his spoken lines and songs with a measured cadence and a haughtiness that only one with so many exalted titles could command. His portrayal of Pooh-Bah strutting about the stage was in league of Kenneth Sanford. Good job!

“Comes a train of little ladies” ushered in the ladies chorus appropriately on a train! They performed well as a group but alas, there was a dissonance that clouded their singing during the first act. This issue was not as pronounced in Act Two.

Highlighting Act Two, the trio “Here’s a how-de-do” performed by Yum-Yum (**Lindsey Soboleski**), Nanki-Poo and Ko-Ko was a delight and each complimented the other. The Mikado was played by **Randy Glidden** who handled his role with just enough “tongue in cheek” pomposity. His “Mikado’s Song,” nearly cut by Gilbert in the original production, was well done. In the two segments where the Mikado describes the punishments he would inflict on train window pane scribblers and billiard hustlers Glidden issues a controlled laughter nearly as sadistic as that rendered by Donald Adams of the D’Oyly Carte.

Katasha’s lament “Alone, a yet alive” was very delicately offered by Ms. Schwartz. The concept of this being a poignant piece hit the mark as well it should. Ko-Ko’s successful attempt at wooing Katisha in the solo “Tit-willow” was just as successful in wooing the audience. The duet of “Kat” and Ko-ko, “There is beauty in the bellow of the blast,” is always entertaining when Ko-ko asks, “Do you fancy you are elderly enough?” and “Is a maiden all the better when she’s tough?” Followed by “...are you sufficiently decayed?” A sequence which always brings forth a chortle.

On the whole Sudbury Savoyard’s production of *The Mikado* was well performed, time well-spent and done well-enough in steampunk to satisfy even a traditionalist such as myself.

### 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. Send copy of ticket stub for reimbursement. 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.

## A traditionalist weighs in on “modernization”

By David DeVries

I fancy myself as a Gilbert and Sullivan traditionalist. My wife and I recently took in a performance of *The Mikado* by the Sudbury Savoyards. The music was excellent and Sullivan would have been pleased. However, the setting was in a railway station and the costumes were more evening dress and top hats which would not have gone well with Gilbert.

(See review elsewhere in this issue.)

As a traditionalist I believe that performers and musicians have a responsibility to perform the music and stagecraft as near to the writer’s and composer’s intentions as possible. Yet there would be some who feel compelled to find and “expose” racism in G&S. This alleged “racism” is supposedly found in the costumes, facial make up and mannerisms of the late 1800’s Japan.



We can find the weeds in every man’s garden or we can see the flowers and fruit in that garden. I choose to see the best in the garden. Taking out the Gilbert (under whose instruction and direction these productions were produced – and we know that Gilbert was a stickler in this area) leaves only the Sullivan, this same Sullivan whose music in *The Mikado* from time to time does seem to be in Japanese style.

And then there are others who feel obliged to “modernize” the comic operas by changing the settings from the Cornwall coast or the Town of Titipu to a railway station, or to change the Tower of London in “Good Queen Bess’s Glorious Reign” to London in WWII, or to change *Ruddigore* again set in Cornwall to the U.S. in the Roaring Twenties. Are these changes to be considered “artistic license” for those who would perform these treasures or should “artistic license” be allowed



only to the two men from whom these productions sprung in the first place? I side with the last.

I don't take issue with some inserting a few current names to KoKo's "little list" or some other small additions to lyric or dialog that brings some modernization to the shows but I don't think it fair to the originators to completely derail the original intentions. Their treasures should be performed in much the same way as originally envisioned and as they have been for over a century to the delight of uncounted numbers of theatre-goers since *Thespis* opened at the Gaiety Theatre in 1871.

### ☞ REMEMBRANCES ☞

Mary Ann Urban, a forty-one year member of the Simsbury (CT) Light Opera Company passed away on February 20, 2017. She also served three terms as SLOCO 's president while her husband, Ron, and several of her family members also worked with SLOCO truly making it a "family affair."



Mary Ann Urban (from SLOCO website.)

Mary Ann was born on October 28, 1938 in Illinois and was predeceased by a sister, Carol. She is survived by her husband of nearly 61 years, Ronald of Simsbury, daughters Joleen (Urban) Benedict of Simsbury and Cortney Sannizzaro of Granby, her son, Jon of Colorado and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

"Is life a boon? If so, it must befall, that Death, whene'er he call, must call too soon..."

#### ☞ We Have a Little List ☞

We wish to thank those who contributed to this issue of *The Trumpet Bray* including Ralph MacPhail, Jr., John E. Dreslin, and Simsbury Light Opera Co. (Please forgive any omissions!)

### ☞ QUIZZES and CHORUSES ☞

Where do we find the following quotes?

1. "We're ready as witness to anyone's fitness"

- a. Trial by Jury
- b. The Gondoliers
- c. Iolanthe
- d. Utopia Ltd.

2. "Do not hurt us, if it please you"

- a. Princess Ida
- b. Pirates of Penzanze
- b. Patience
- d.Sorcerer

3. "Goodness me! Why, what was that?"

- a. Iolanthe
- b. Pirates of Penzance
- c. H.M.S. Pinafore
- d. Mikado

4. "All must sip the cup of sorrow"

- a. The Mikado
- b. Princess Ida
- c. Patience
- d. Ruddigore

Answers (no peeking!)

- 1. b
- 2. a
- 3. c
- 4. a

### ☞ 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](mailto:editor@negass.org)

#### FIRST CONTACT

How did you first get introduced to the fun of Gilbert and Sullivan? Share your recollections with other readers of *The Trumpet Bray*.

#### TOPSY-TURVEY.COM

Dare to share with your friends your original stories of mis-takes, mis-steps, mis-cues or other on-stage (or otherwise) embarrassing or memorable moments.

#### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

"Where Are They Now?" is an occasional feature spotlighting NEGASS members who have moved away but are still active G & S'ers on stages elsewhere.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Letters to the editor are always welcome.

## G&S Events

*Patience*  
Odyssey Opera

June 2-3, 2017  
Odyssey Opera  
[odysseyopera.org](http://odysseyopera.org)  
See article on page 3

Boston University Theatre  
264 Huntington Avenue  
Boston MA 02115

*The Pirates of Penzance*  
(Concert Version)  
Greater Worcester Opera

June 9-25, 2017  
[greaterworcesteropera.org](http://greaterworcesteropera.org)  
See article on page 2

Various venues

*A Supernatural Sing-Out*  
NEGASS & Greater Worcester  
Opera

June 17, 2017  
FOPAC  
See article on page 1

FOPAC  
51 Walden Street  
Concord MA 01742

*Yeomen of the Guard*  
*Sing-Out*  
Longwood Opera & NEGASS

June 18, 2017  
[longwoodopera.org](http://longwoodopera.org)  
see article on page 1

Christ Episcopal Church  
1132 Highland Avenue  
Needham MA 02494

*Trial by Jury and The Zoo*  
*Patience*  
College Light Opera Company

June 27-July 1, 2017  
July 25-29, 2017  
[Collegelightoperacompany.com](http://Collegelightoperacompany.com)

Highfield Theatre  
Depot Street (off Rt. 28)  
Falmouth MA 02541

*Here's a Howdy-Do*  
*Songs And Scenes from G&S*  
NEGASS and New England  
Light Opera

July 5, 2017  
[negass.org](http://negass.org) or [nelo.org](http://nelo.org)  
see article on page 1

Hamilton-Wenham Community  
House  
284 Bay Road, Hamilton MA  
01936

*Gilbert & Sullivan*  
*Extravaganza*  
Greater Worcester Opera

July 26, 2017  
[greaterworcesteropera.org](http://greaterworcesteropera.org)  
see article on page 3

Briarwood Auditorium  
65 Briarwood Circle  
Worcester MA 01605

*Princess Ida*  
CT G&S Society

October 14-15, 2017  
[ctgands.org](http://ctgands.org)

Valley Regional High School  
256 Kelsey Hill Road  
Deep River CT 06417

## Auditions

*Princess Ida*

June 4 & 6, 2017  
Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society  
[ctgands.org](http://ctgands.org)

Please check their website for  
further information