



THE TRUMPET BRAY

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

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~ *Life is love in Merry May* ~

**ELECTIONS/FANTASY DAY
SUNDAY, MAY 18**



ELECTIONS/FANTASY DAY: SUNDAY, MAY 18 AT 2 PM, Park Avenue Congregational Church, Arlington, MA. We should be able to get through our annual **Elections** as expeditiously as we usually do – and then we'll leap with both feet into our annual **Fantasy Meeting**. **Victor Troll** will accompany any NEGASSer who wants to sing any G&S or G&S-related piece – whether or not it's "right for your voice" ! (Is it time for another male Three Little Maids, or female Big Black Block?)

- or are there folks who'd like to act a non-musical scene? That's fine, too! Do we have anyone, for instance, who has always wanted to give Princess Ida's pep talk, but isn't the right voice type to sing the role? Are there three women who'd like to play the KoKo/Pish-Tush/Pooh-Bah dialog scene that leads up to the Big Black Block trio? Or how about Bab Ballad devotees? – anyone want to read one or more?

Program Chair **Carl Weggel** suggests that Victor's cellist daughter might like to play the Lady Jane cello solo from **PATIENCE**. If that's her fantasy, is there a singer who'd like to help her out? Are there other instrumental fantasies we can satisfy? – an oboe solo here, a clarinet there...?

Or shall we just plunge into one grand choral finale after another, as we've done at past Fantasy meetings, allotting solos to whoever is there?

Don't be shy! – come and have fun! – But first, **help us elect our new board**: Up for re-election this year are our President, Treasurer, Program Chair (a one-year term), and two Members at Large.

Vice President **Tony Parkes**, who is heading our Nominating Committee, has named a slate which consists almost entirely of returning current members. (Even President **Don Smith**, who had been hoping to retire, has confessed to willingness to return if no replacement is found.) The big exception is the position of Program Chair: **Dave Leigh** has expressed interest in taking on this job, while **Carl Weggel** has not expressed the usual crying need for respite which holders of this position usually exhibit after a year or two – so we may actually have a race for a change!

Note: The board hopes to hold a meeting Saturday, June 21, to make plans for next season – join us to help in the planning, even if you don't want to join the Board!

HOW TO GET THERE: The Park Avenue Congregational Church, 50 Paul Revere Road in Arlington is located at the corner of Park Avenue and Paul Revere Road, on Park Avenue one block south of Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington.

Local route: Drive or take the #77 Arlington Heights bus along Massachusetts Avenue to Park Avenue, at the far west end of town, and then travel one block south. **From a distance**: Take Route 2 to the Park Avenue-Arlington exit, and drive north along Park Avenue until Massachusetts Avenue is in sight. **Free parking** is available on both Park Avenue and Paul Revere Road.



LAST MEETING: LMLO GONDOLIERS We are sorry to say that NOBODY has sent Us a review of this very successful and well-attended meeting! Too bad – because, as everyone knows, We do not write reviews for this rag!

Having made that clear, we must say that Program Chair/Casting Director **Carl Weggel** assembled a fine and well-balanced cast. The lively Italian contingent included **Juliet Cunningham** as Gianetta, **Randi Kestin** as Tessa, **Janice Dallas** as Fiametta, and **Eileen St. David** as Giulia, with Randi and **Sara Ballard** taking turns as last-minute-Vittoria – plus **Lee Patterson** as Marco, **Ken McPherson** as Giuseppe, **Peter Cameron** as Giorgio, **Carl Weggel** as both Francesco and Annebale, and **Jeff Weisenfreund** stepping in as an absolutely last-minute Antonio. The Spaniards included Ourselves as Casilda, **Laura Gouillart** as the Duchess, **Sara Ballard** as Inez, **John Smyth** – new to the East Coast, and very welcome! – as Luiz, **Tony Parkes** as the Duke, and **Walt Howe** as Don Alhambra.

Our dependably fine leader **David Larrick** conducted the usual fine orchestra assembled by **Vic Godin** – thanks are due to **Bill Venman** and **Valley Light Opera** for their loan of scores! **Linda Silverstein**, NEGASS Publicist, created a handsome commemorative program; NEGASS Hospitality Chair **Carl Mahoney** provided welcome refreshments... and both the performers and the audience had a great time!

[Photos page 3! -- *mlc*]



PICNIC MEETING We'll hold this year's picnic on **Sunday, Aug 24**. **Dave Sheldon** is offering his home again, unless anyone else would like to volunteer. Any preference as to the opera we ought to sing through at the picnic? Tell Us your thoughts!

NEXT YEAR'S MEETINGS Any advice for a new Program Chair? What has NEGASS been doing right or wrong over the past few years? Tell Us your thoughts!



BAB BALLADS Harvard University Press has just issued a handsome, newly-designed paperbound printing of **Jim Ellis's** edition of the Bab Ballads. Jim has offered to read from his book at an upcoming meeting – more news as it breaks!



Tentative Meeting Schedule, 2002-2003

May 18	Elections/Fantasy Day
June 21	Possible Board Meeting – all are welcome!
August 24	Picnic Meeting

NEXT BRAY COPY DEADLINE: August 3, 2003

Next Bray Stuffing: Sunday August 10, 2003 at 3:00 PM. Call Us at (781) 646-9115 evenings and weekends, or send email to marion@leedscarroll.com, for directions to Our easy-to-get-to Arlington, MA home.

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome We New Members **Dr. & Mrs. Ernest J. Kahn**, appreciative audience members from Sharon, MA, and **Cindy Carter** from Waban, MA, who is another "enthusiastic audience" member. **Tell Us, Tell Us All About It! Hearty Greeting Offer We!** —*mlc*



SING-OUT AGAIN! Victorian Lyric Opera Company's Third Gilbert & Sullivan Sing-Out will be held in the Rockville Civic Center, 603 Edmonston Dr., Rockville, MD August 29-31, 2003 (that's Labor Day weekend!) Visit their website (<http://www.vloc.org>) or email them at vloc.singout@att.net for more news.



G&S VOCAL SCORES IN PRINT I felt the need to expand on **Dave Leigh's** comments on page 4 of the March *Bray*. Leigh was responding to the question about the **Dover** editions of *PINAFORE*, *PIRATES*, and *MIKADO*. He complains about Dover's description of some characters' voice parts, e.g., Pish-Tush and Boatswain as basses, the Captain as a bass-baritone, and Edith as a mezzo-soprano. Pish-Tush and Edith were written for those respective voice parts originally. The other two are arguable, but I hardly see how this compromises the scores' utility.

Leigh complains about Dover's use of clefs. Sullivan was quite inconsistent about this. In his scores, the same character can be in treble clef in one song, and bass clef in another. While I can see the argument for leaving the clefs as Sullivan did, we routinely accept similar normalization of 'spelling' in editions of Shakespeare. The Broude Brothers edition of *TRIAL BY JURY* also modernized (putting all male basses and baritones in bass clef, even if Sullivan had had them in treble).

[Continued below]



Some of our audience – wide-ranging in age!



And part of what they saw:
Eileen St. David, Sara Ballard, Juliet Cunningham, Randi Kestin and Janice Dallas as contadine

For more of **Ron Dallas'** photos of the meeting, visit <http://www.dallas-family.com/LMLO-Mar2003/thumbs/index.htm>

G&S VOCAL SCORES IN PRINT continued: It is true that the Dover scores include some of the "traditional" modifications, but then, so do pretty much all of the G&S scores now available, aside from the handful of scholarly editions, none of which exist yet for the three operas Dover has put out. Dover has, in fact, gone back to early sources and made a good start at stripping away many of the traditional accretions found in other scores. A legitimate criticism is that they did so half-heartedly, but Dover is the best available until a better product comes out.

I agree with Leigh that Dover's footnotes are sporadic, but to the extent Dover gives them, readers are better

informed than they would have been had they purchased any other edition of these operas. As long as readers remember Leigh's caution that the Dover footnotes aren't exhaustive, I see no reason to object to their presence. How many footnotes do you find in the **Schirmer, Chappell, or Kalmus** scores?

The Dover scores do have errors, although the ones Leigh points out are pretty benign. There are a few I consider more serious than those he mentioned; as I've reviewed these scores elsewhere, I won't repeat myself. But if one is going to make a bottom-line recommendation, it must be practical. The full scores Dover has issued are head and

&& **UTOPIA AT MIT** I saw the latest MITGASP production both weekends, and enjoyed it thoroughly. The later performance was more polished, and the Phantis "understudy", **Andrew Sweet**, did a substantially better job than the MIT grad student **Ahmed E. Ismail**, whom I saw in the earlier performance--in terms of a warmer voice, more expression, and better interactions with Scaphio and the others.

But let's take it from the top! Paramount in the production, so to speak, was **David Michael Daly**, whose beautiful baritone and quirky charm contributed largely to my enjoyment of the evenings. His rendition of the blackly humorous "First you're born," and his two duets with **Jennifer Hazel** as Lady Sophy, were among my favorite parts both times through. Jennifer has a lovely clear voice, and created a sympathetic character in her moving air, "When but a maid of fifteen year."

Substantial directorial cuts reduced the role of Captain Fitzbattleaxe, and the fact that **Ben Hellman** is actually not a tenor ironically required a downward transposition of one of the best known numbers, "A tenor can't do himself justice." Ben was excellently cast for the part, looking and acting every inch the British subaltern. **Audrey Eash** was a fine Zara.

Brian Bermack did better as Scaphio the second time I saw him, interacting with more liveliness as suggested above. MIT undergraduate **Noe Kamelamela** (is that a Utopian name?) was cross-cast as Tarara and was fine musically, but unimpressive dramatically. She played the role as suspicious and ironic. I like it a lot better played naively. (A production at MIT 30 years ago had Tarara dressed as the Mad Hatter, seated on the side of the stage drinking a large cup of tea during several scenes.)

Graham Wright was impressive as Mr. Goldbury. He has a beautiful voice, but ... but ... the diction really is not there. And the part is so contradictory ... Graham was amusing as the crooked capitalist in the Act I finale, but was "A bright and beautiful English girl" supposed to be entirely sung in mockery? I couldn't tell. I did love **Jonathan Weinstein's** Lord Dramaleigh, constantly laughing and smiling. I won't say a word about Nekaya and Kalyba, played by **Caitlin Smythe** and **Rebecca Burstein**. (I hope some other reviewer is not under the same constraint!) [*They were charming, Nancy - and I'm not Rebecca's mother!* - mlc] But I can't refrain from



mentioning that when Graham sang "Down comes her hair, what does she care, it's all her own and it's worth the showing," it was a moment to remember.

Director **Evan Xenakis** ingeniously solved the problem of shortage of men by having Flowers of Progress double as First Life Guards (who never appeared again after the scene in which they starred). I was not impressed, however, by his handling of the chorus--or rather lack thereof. The women were given no choreography, and largely stood or sat still while singing "In lazy languor motionless", "Quaff the nectar", etc. It was all the more strikingly boring because one excellent female chorister--you know who you are, **Randi!**--inserted appropriate simple and graceful gestures which I wish had been done by all.

Wait! One more thing! I loved freshman **Ricardo Davila** as Calynx! His speeches opening the show were wonderfully animated, and got us all smiling.

But behold, I have said enough ... everybody else was fine!
Thanks, MITGASP!
- NANCY BURSTEIN



HARVARD SORCERER The Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players presented **SORCERER** at the Agassiz Theatre in Cambridge. This reviewer saw the first matinee performance on Saturday April 5th. Stage Director was **Caitlin Heller**, and Music Director was **Marisa Green** making her musical-directing debut; a very capable debut. The set was rather basic: a colonnade across the back leading to the house of Sir Marmaduke (?) on the actors' right. The (mostly) student orchestra played well, the only criticism I had was that the brass on occasion overpowered the singers.

The singing generally was very good. **Daniel Spitzer** as Wells lived up to the **Anna Russell** characterization of "the little man who pranced around and sang the patter songs." (I don't mean that unfavorably.) **Joseph Fishman** as Sir Marmaduke and **Abby Carlin** as Lady Sangazure were proper aristocrats. **Michael Moss** was the rather unsympathetic, controlling Alexis and **Rachel Simowitz** as Aline was the not too bright soprano. Dr. Daly as played by **Rick DuPuy** was the spacey vicar who in the end emerged from his inhibitions in a wild dance. **Matt Victory** played the Notary in a wheelchair, and had more of a voice than some Notaries. Mrs. Partlet (**Emily Donaldson**) was the ever-protective mother, and Constance (**Caroline Jackson**) was the despairing would-be bride. The reconstruction of the Ahrimanes scene in Act Two was performed by permission of the composer **David C. Larrick** who was present. **Mindy Klenoff** was Ahrimanes but unfortunately

she was too far upstage, peering out from the colonnade, for her lines to be understood by this listener. The chorus of five men and five women, dressed in peasant costumes, were a fine ensemble.

All in all, a most enjoyable **SORCERER**.

-- PETER CAMERON

&& HARVARD SORCERER The **Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players**, made up of enthusiastic undergraduates and community members, presented an entertaining production of **SORCERER** in April. Playing in the pit, I was treated to a fine show.

Alexis and Aline, in the hands of **Michael Moss** and **Rachel Simowitz**, were charming. Mr. Moss sang his heart out, especially at "False one, begone!" which had the ring of genuine emotion. Ms. Simowitz sang well, and had a speaking voice of unusual flexibility, which she used to shade Aline's ditzier moments. As the parental figures, **Joseph Fishman** as Sir Marmaduke and **Abby Carlin** as Lady Sangazure were properly aristocratic. Ms. Carlin sang with lovely tone, even and unforced up and down the scale.

Daniel Spitzer was an excellent Wells, doing full justice to his famous patter song. **Rick DuPuy** as Dr. Daly and **Caroline Jackson** as Constance were sincere, and so likable that they were obviously made for each other. **Matt Victory** provided the Notary with amusing moments, and **Emily Donaldson** had fun with Mrs. Partlet, complete with large onion perched on her hat.

The bass role of Ahrimanes, composed by **David Larrick** for Sudbury's 1992 production and revived in 2002, was here given to a mezzo, **Mindy Klenoff**. She worked very hard, but to my ear, the role required a rich bass timbre for the scene to be truly effective.

The full cast, singing heartily, made the choruses sound "easy, in elegant diction." Also delightful was the lilting minuet in Act I. Played by a solo string quintet, led by concertmaster **Filbert Hong**, it was graceful in tone and supple in rhythm, with just enough ornamentation.

The music director, **Marisa Green**, was poised, competent, and clear. Stage director **Caitlin Heller** maintained a nice pace throughout. Talented undergraduates enjoying G&S are good news to local Savoyard groups, as this is where we'll find our future performers. Congratulations to all!

-- ALESSANDRA KINGSFORD

&&& HARVARD SORCERER: ALTERNATE VIEWPOINT I don't like writing bad reviews, but then again I don't relish bad G&S performances. The **Harvard-Radcliffe** production of **SORCERER** is an exception to their usual history of good shows.

The set was a veranda of the Pointdexter castle, with a stairway to arched ramparts. The set took up more than half the playing space. The cast did well in the available space, but the whole effect was claustrophobic.

The set was painted stonework in a very short spectrum of grays and rose, with very little contrast. Before this bland expanse came the male chorus, in a straight line, dressed in gray and brown burlap. Then came Mrs. Parlett (**Emily Donaldson**), and Constance (**Caroline Jackson**) dressed in pale beige. The ladies of the chorus were dressed in matching pale blue dresses. Have you ever seen a blue that looked beige? Sir Marmaduke was dressed in a hideous green army uniform with gold epaulettes. The whole effect of costume and scenery followed a consistent theme: Drab. Dull. Dreary.

In the second act the girls awoke in brown and purple dresses (after falling asleep in their drab dresses), and Constance wore a bright red dress, Sir Marmaduke a red tunic. The male villager only got new vests. Apparently the idea was a before-and-after effect of love, but the punchline just wasn't worth the drabness of the first act.

To get right to it, this play suffered (as did the audience; I know the difference between enthusiastic and polite applause) from a lack of direction. The chorus sang directly to the audience, standing in straight lines. When people finished their lines they simply stood where they were until their next line. So the show was a progression of one postcard picture to another. In the "I Like You" number the five pairs of the chorus did the exact same bits of business.

There is an acting technique to check the visuals of a scene; miming. Play the scene without words. If it doesn't carry the scene, the words won't help. It would have helped in the Aline-Alexis-Dr. Daly scene, because they weren't listening to each other. That's the basic failing of the direction; action is everything, words are secondary.

I have two actors to take to task. Dr. Daly is an *older* man, not an *old, old* man. He should be modeled after Walter Pidgeon, not a washed out, shuffling Barry Fitzgerald. Constance has to see *something* appealing in him. It's the same mistake they made with Dame Carruthers in **YEOMEN**. Sir Marmaduke played his first role with HRG&S, and showed all the animation of a pompous coatrack.



