

THE  
TRUMPET BRAY

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY



≈ NEGASS Programs ≈

**A night of Victorian dance**

by Ann Ferentz

On Saturday, September 17th, eighteen G&S enthusiasts enjoyed an evening of Victorian dancing led by NEGASS member and esteemed dance caller Tony Parkes, resplendent in his tails. It was wonderful to reconnect with each other after the summer and to welcome a number of folks who had never been to a NEGASS event before.



First, we gathered in a circle to learn some basic steps that we would use throughout the evening. Then Tony explained that when the operettas first came out, sheet music

would have been on sale in the lobby, including scores for parlor singing and dance arrangements. The music publisher would need to make an educated guess as to which tunes would be popular, so in some cases the music chosen for the dance arrangements does not necessarily reflect what we think of as the “greatest hits” from each operetta. Dance arrangements might include waltzes, quadrilles, and lancers.



After arranging us into squares of four couples each, Tony taught us the “Patience quadrille” and we managed a total of six quadrille figures before taking a break for refreshments and socializing. Then we were back at it for more dancing, this time a set of lancer figures. The dance arrangements were delightful and kept us



on our toes, so to speak, and sometimes laughing as familiar tunes took on unfamiliar tempi (imagine a very peppy version of “Tit Willow”!)

The evening closed with a Spanish waltz done in a large circle with couples dancing their way from one pair of friends to the next. A fitting close to a splendid event.



During the coming year, NEGASS looks forward to more in-person programs, including group outings to operettas throughout New England, and operetta sings.

Please share your ideas for events with the board. Submit information about G&S happenings to the Trumpet Bray ([editor@NEGASS.org](mailto:editor@NEGASS.org)). Join NEGASS or renew your membership to support these programs. Please email [contact@NEGASS.org](mailto:contact@NEGASS.org) if you are unsure of your membership status. The NEGASS Website maintains a list of current events. Events are also posted on our Facebook page.

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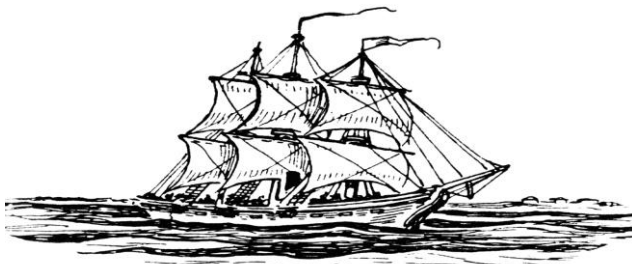
#### GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS AND REVIEWS

Send to [editor@negass.org](mailto:editor@negass.org)

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

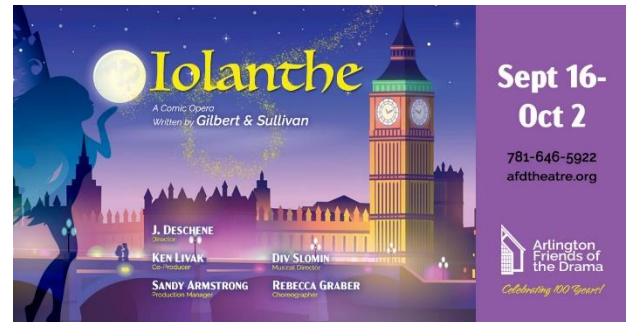


#### Future NEGASS events:

- Saturday, October 1, 2022 outing to *Iolanthe* (Arlington Friends of the Drama).
- November 19, 2022 4:00PM outing to *Pirates* (SLOC). NEGASS members should email [events@negass.org](mailto:events@negass.org) to join the NEGASS group for *Pirates* and get a \$10.00 discount off the regular ticket price.

### NEGASS NEWS

Arlington Friends of the Drama will present nine performances of *Iolanthe* from September 16, 2022 through October 2, 2022 to celebrate their centennial. Visit their website: <https://www.afdtheatre.org> for more information, their production schedule, and their code of conduct. And join other NEGASS members at their October 1 performance with discounted tickets available for members.



Join NEGASS for a Night at the Opera  
Arlington Friends of the Drama's production of  
*Iolanthe*  
Saturday, October 1st at 8 PM  
22 Academy Street, Arlington, MA

Richard Tecca of The Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society (CGSS) sent along the following two articles:

#### Talented Director Also Plays Leading Role in CGSS's *H.M.S. Pinafore* October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>

On October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> the CT Gilbert & Sullivan Society will present *H.M.S. Pinafore* or *The Lass That Loved a Sailor* in Deep River, Connecticut. Dr.



Spencer Reese returns for his third season as Artistic Director of the CGSS. At the request of the Society, he will also play the role of Ralph Rackstraw (A Sailor) that is loved by the Captain's daughter Josephine (The Lass).

Spencer Reese is a Connecticut native. He earned his under-graduate degree in Voice at UCONN in 2013. He was a University Scholar in the Honors Program there. As part of this program, Spencer wrote, directed, produced, and starred in a four-act original opera entitled *Always Hope*. He then earned a master's degree in Opera Stage Directing from the Eastman School of Music, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Reese currently serves as the stage director for UCONN Opera Theatre, and is a frequent teaching artist for Goodspeed musicals. He has spent the last eight summers with the Ohio Light Opera, where he serves as a stage director, resident performing artist, as well as the company's choreographer. This summer he celebrated opening his 50<sup>th</sup> production with OLO. Half his productions were from the Gilbert & Sullivan canon.

He was flattered when CGSS asked him to sing in the show as well as serving as Artistic Director. He had this to say about this year's show: "H.M.S. Pinafore is a gem of a show, and one that is treasured in the Gilbert & Sullivan canon. A seafaring adventure full of crafty twists and turns. Its high-energy music and comparatively short length make it a great night of live theatre for the whole family!"

### Why Actors Audition for Gilbert & Sullivan Shows

Gilbert & Sullivan organizations in Connecticut are alive and well. The CT Gilbert & Sullivan Society is a shining example. It has presented a show every year since 1981. The actors serve without a stipend. And they commit to rehearsals every Sunday and Tuesday during the summer months of July through September. Why are they willing to do this? To find out we asked three actors why they auditioned for this show.



**John Paul Hammond** lives in New London and is a senior at St Bernard School where he is an active member of the Drama program. He is participating in his third year with the CT Gilbert & Sullivan Society, playing as a pit musician in 2019 and as an actor in 2021 and 2022. As John puts it, "I am very excited to be taking part in this hilarious production with a very talented cast and crew. And for the chance to perform outside of my school".

**Denise Schultzman** lives in Groton and works for the Cross Sound Ferry Call Center. She has been a member of Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society since 1990. She is also a member of Flock Theatre in New London, specializing in mean, stuck-up, rich ladies as she will do in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. As Denise puts it, "Gilbert & Sullivan is fun. You can lose yourself. The costumes are fun. The best part is having someone to play dress-up with."



**Natalie Wood** lives in Hebron. In "real life" she is a Commercial Contracts Negotiator with a large IT firm. Prior to that she practiced law in Glastonbury and Simsbury. *H.M.S. Pinafore* will be her fourth

performance with the CT Gilbert & Sullivan Society. A classically trained dancer, her performances include *Snow White*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and *The Nutcracker*. As a clarinetist she has performed with orchestras in the tri-state area. She has also directed and choreographed musicals, and has been the featured artist in concerts, performing works from opera and musical stage. Her reasons for joining CT Gilbert & Sullivan Society are: "As a classical music junkie and an opera fanatic, auditioning for Gilbert and Sullivan shows are a no-brainer for me. In CT there are not a large number of opportunities to perform such wonderful CTG&SS repertoire - or any classical or operatic repertoire for that matter. I'm eternally grateful to CTG&SS for providing this forum. This year's production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* is a gem of a piece with plenty to please a wide range of audiences. It's certainly a production that, if you have never had the opportunity to watch a Gilbert and Sullivan show, is an excellent piece to start with because it features swashbuckling sailors, romantic conundrums, hidden secrets, and surprising outcomes. It will get you hooked, and you'll look for other opportunities to catch performances of all the wonderful works in the G&S canon".

CGSS will present *H.M.S. Pinafore* in three performances on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM and 7:30PM and Sunday October 16<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM in the Performing Arts Center at Valley Regional High School in Deep River, Connecticut. Tickets and information regarding current Covid-19 guidelines are available at <http://CTGANDS.ORG/tickets> or by calling 860-554-1256.

**Simsbury Light Opera Company** will hold auditions for Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> from 6PM to 8PM and Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> from 7PM to 9PM at Basingstoke, their rehearsal building, 5 Herman Drive, Simsbury, CT. For information email [sloco@sloco.org](mailto:sloco@sloco.org) or visit their website <http://www.sloco.org>. Principals and chorus, please prepare to sing a Gilbert and Sullivan piece or a song from musical theater.



**Savoyard Light Opera Company** of Carlisle, MA will do a fully staged performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*. The following information is from their website [SavoyardLightOpera.org](http://SavoyardLightOpera.org):

They will set the show in the 1920s – meaning the Pirates will be “Gangsters/Bootleggers” along with some other fun ideas for costumes and more.

- Director – Donna DeWitt
- Music Director – Barry Singer
- Producers – Debbie Crane & Joy Paradissis Playter

Rehearsals take place in Carlisle or the surrounding towns. Performances will be at Carlisle Public Schools Friday November 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM, Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM, Sunday November 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM, Friday November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM, and Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM.

As mentioned earlier, there will be a NEGASS outing to the November 19, 2022 4:00PM *Pirates* performance. NEGASS members should email [events@negass.org](mailto:events@negass.org) to join the NEGASS group and get a \$10.00 discount off the regular ticket price.

**Concord Light Opera Company** of Concord, NH must postpone its production of *Ruddigore* until spring of 2023. Rehearsals will continue every Tuesday night at 7:00PM through October at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 274 Pleasant St. Concord, NH while the production staff tries to fill out the cast (Old Adam and Sir Roderic are currently open) and chorus. People are needed for ALL aspects of production. For further information email [clcnh@gmail.com](mailto:clcnh@gmail.com).

### Yes, we know it isn't

**Valley Light Opera** of Amherst, MA will present Johann Baptist Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* as their fall production (performances on November 5, 6, 11, 12, and 13) conducted by NEGASS Board member Aldo Fabrizi. “The Bat,” sometimes called “Revenge of the Bat,” premiered in 1874 and was Strauss’ third complete operetta. It is a delightful comedy full of love, deception, revelry, and revenge. The production will be set in Vienna, 1905, and will be performed in English (with a translation by NEGASS Board member Elaine Crane, who also appears as Rosalinde).

### ∞ G&S NEWS ∞

The 28<sup>TH</sup> International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival took place in Buxton, England at the Opera House from Saturday 30 July to Saturday 6 August, then moved on to the Royal Hall in Harrogate from the 10<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> of August. NEGASS Board member Jon Coffin and his wife Jana attended the festivities, and provide this first-hand report:



We made our customary pilgrimage to England to volunteer at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in late July and August this year. We missed two Covid years, and you can imagine how hungry we were for a full complement of G&S after that dry spell!

Typically, the National Gilbert and Sullivan Company produces four or five operettas per year, spreading performances between two venues: Buxton and Harrogate. This year The National Gilbert & Sullivan Company, still hindered by the aftereffects of the pandemic, put on just three: *Iolanthe*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and a long-awaited *Utopia, Limited*. Charles Court Opera, Forbear! Theater, Grosvenor Light Opera Company, the Brussels Light Opera Company, Opera della Luna, Savoynet, Bus Pass Opera, and several university groups gave us *Patience*, *The Mikado*, *The Sorcerer*, *The Gondoliers*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Princess Ida*, and *The Grand Duke*. The youth production of *Iolanthe* gave us a glimpse into the future of G&S.



Both Opera Houses where we enjoy G&S are early 19th century creations by the much-heralded Frank Matcham. The current opera-house-restorative architect David Wilmore gave lectures at both venues on the history and status of existing opera houses. The popularity of operettas – largely G&S – at that time was staggering. It is estimated, for example, that even mid-sized cities had 6,000 tickets available nightly! In terms of structure, most opera houses were self air-conditioning using natural air flow – a nearly lost art. We looked into the walls and bowels of the theaters and saw the intricacy and delicacy of design that architects had to “make do” with in those days. Another little fun fact: there were no ladies rest rooms. The speculation is that “hotels were built nearby and that that would suffice!” Total lack of focus on safety was also ponderous. Few fire exits, if any (and regular formidable fires). No hand rails on stairs. Low safety-consciousness then makes for great difficulty in modern remodeling now, highlighting the “antiquity vs. modern functionality” struggle.



A typical day at the Festival began with tea or coffee in the morning from the snack bar in the Utopia Pavilion overseen by Jana and others, followed by a seminar intended to attract G&S aficionados. Topics included D’Oyly-Carte history, interviews with current stars and principals, historical figures in the G&S realm. Then, live entertainment over the noon hour in the Festival forum, followed by performance(s) at 2:30 in both the Royal Halls or the ancillary theater the

Festival CONSTRUCTS just to make room for more performances. Some of these performances take place in the “Unifest” realm, with universities from all over England and the continent performing. Finally, at night the main concert in the Royal Hall ... an unforgettable place. I ushered at both performances in black tie with about eight other official volunteers.

A highlight this year was a one-woman adaptation in song and dialogue of Gilbert favorite Jessie Bond's autobiography – *The Unbreakable Bond* – the book is available in the International Society archive section. What a read!...tough to survive and make a living as a late 19th century mezzo, but she did it, with dignity and grace. Another gem was the G&S Express – *G&S meets Poirot* – the creation of the brilliant John Savournin and his Charles Court Opera company.

Of course, no Festival would be complete without enthusiastic marketing of the Theatrical Adventures riverboat cruises. This November G&S music lovers will be off to Spain on a cruise on the Guadalquivir in Andalucia. Next spring another trip is planned on the Moselle. For more information, don't hesitate to contact [oliver@theatricaladventures.com](mailto:oliver@theatricaladventures.com). You could still get on the Spanish trip if it's not sold out!

**The 29<sup>TH</sup> International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival** will take place in August 2023, and the Savoynet show will be *Ruddigore* on Thursday August 17, 2023 with the following production crew:

Stage Director: Mitch Gillett

Musical Director: Eric Peterson

Co-Producers: Philip Barton, Marisa Green

Auditions will be announced shortly.

### **G & S Archive finds new Curators**

Chris Angelico posted the following on Savoynet:

Greetings all!

On behalf also of Adam Cuerden, I'm happy to announce that the G&S Archive has found itself some new curators, who will help keep everything up-to-date and accurate. It's still where you all remember it – or if you've never seen it before, then I invite you to take a look around!

<https://gsarchive.net/>

The late Meredith Dixon carried the role for a time before her own time was cut short, and in her honour, we have created a short tribute page:

<https://gsarchive.net/html/dixon.html>

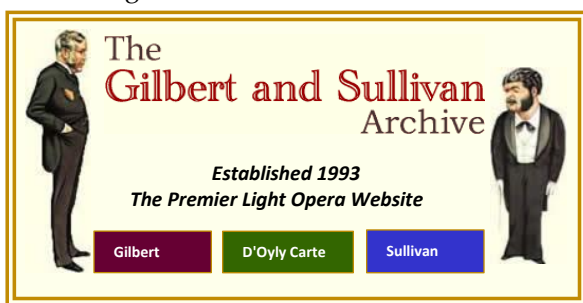
We would be honoured to be permitted to include quotes and tributes from those who knew her better than I did.

For all contributions to the Archive, be they large or small (even just pointing out a typo), feel free to reach out to Adam or to me.

A small note on licensing: The contents of the Archive are available under the terms of CC-BY-SA 4.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>). There may still be some errant copyright notices claiming "all rights reserved," but they will be updated progressively. This should make it easier for people to understand what's permitted with the files on the site.

Happy gasbagging!

Chris Angelico and Adam Cuerden



## EDITOR'S CORNER



This issue I return to my Dickens theme. Since my last article on the subject, I have read *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*. I began this series with the premise that Gilbert had been "borrowing" from

Dickens. Reading these novels I came to the realization that he is merely using phrases and events of which he knows his audiences will be aware because they have a common cultural grounding: their view of English life through Dickens' writings.

An example might help. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* a young man is being indentured to a Notary, and the Notary is explaining the ceremony: "I am about to sign my name. ... I am constrained to remark in a distinct tone of voice ... that I deliver this, as my act and deed. Mr. Abel will [repeat] the same cabalistic

words, and the business is over." It is not that Gilbert learned this from Dickens, as Gilbert himself was trained as a lawyer. Rather, Gilbert knew that when Aline and Alexis swore, in song, that they delivered their intent to marry as their act and deed, the audience would understand the solemn import involved.

There are three citations later in the book that pop up in *Patience*. Nell visits a girls' school and encounters a "file of young ladies, two and two, all with open books in their hands..." but maybe not all day. The owner of a wax-work (but not Madame Tussaud) is trying to sell tickets: "Remember that the price of admission is only sixpence, and that this is an opportunity which may never occur again." A little later in the story, Kit's mother visits him in jail and tries to convince the jailer to allow her to deliver, personally, a basket of food to her son, imploring: "I am his mother, and you had a mother once."

Not to leave out *Iolanthe*, near the end of the book, a character claims "I am not a man who does things by halves. Being in for a penny, I am ready ... to be in for a pound."

And finally, near the end of *Barnaby Rudge*, a young lady soon to be married goes through a variety of emotions, fluttering, blushing, colour coming and going ... . I could almost hear Pitti-Sing's advice to Yum-Yum on her wedding day.

I have read eleven of the Dickens novels, and have nine to go. Unless I get negative feedback, I will continue to look for, and write about, relevance to Gilbert's libretti. Thank you for your indulgence.

- Laurie Weissbrot

### We Have a Little List

The editor wishes to thank those who contributed to this issue of *The Trumpet Bray* including Ann Ferentz, Jon Coffin, Richard Tecca, Chris Angelico, Ben Morse, Lindsey Soboleski, and Joleen Benedict.

(Please forgive any omissions!)

❧ CALENDAR ❧

**NEGASS Events**

*Iolanthe*  
Arlington Friends of the Drama

Saturday, October 1, 2022

22 Academy Street  
Arlington, MA

*Pirates of Penzance*  
Group outing to SLOC  
show followed by dinner

November 19, 2022 4:00PM

Corey Auditorium  
117 Church Street  
Carlisle, MA

*The Grand Duke*  
Group outing to Sudbury Savoyards  
show followed by dinner

2023

Sudbury MA

**G&S Events**

*Iolanthe*  
Arlington Friends of the Drama

September 16, 2022  
to October 2, 2022

22 Academy Street  
Arlington, MA

*H.M.S. Pinafore*  
Connecticut G & S Society

October 15, 2022 2:00 & 7:30PM  
October 16, 2022 2:00PM.

Valley Regional High School  
Deep River, CT

*Pirates of Penzance*  
Savoyard Light Opera Company

Friday Nov 11 2022 7:30PM  
Saturday Nov 12 2022 7:30PM  
Sunday Nov 13 2022 2:00PM  
Friday Nov 18 2022 7:30PM  
Saturday Nov 19 2022 4:00PM

Corey Auditorium  
117 Church Street  
Carlisle, MA

*The Grand Duke*  
Sudbury Savoyards  
Sudbury, MA

2023

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS  
Sudbury, MA

*Ruddigore*  
Concord Light Opera Company

Spring, 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church  
274 Pleasant St.  
Concord, NH

GWO sing-through

2023

Worcester, MA