



≈ NEGASS Programs ≈

**Thespis Read-Through & Open Sing  
CANCELLED**

The *Thespis* read-through and open sing, initially planned for January then moved to Sunday, April 10th, has been cancelled due to insufficient interest. *Thespis* enthusiasts, please contact [president@negass.org](mailto:president@negass.org) so we can figure out whether to plan for another date.

***The Gondoliers* and NEGASS Annual Meeting  
Save the Date: June 26<sup>th</sup>**

We are delighted that the *Gondoliers* sing originally planned for March 2020 is finally happening – and this time with a full orchestra. Conductor Aldo Fabrizi will guide us all with his able baton. Too much happiness!



The event will take place on Sunday, June 26 at 2:00 PM at Christ Lutheran Church, 113 Union Street in Natick, MA in conjunction with a short annual business meeting.

Most happily, much of the original 2020 cast is available for the new date, but there are still a few roles available. If you are interested, please email [lindsey@negass.org](mailto:lindsey@negass.org) no later than May 1st. (Please note that casting will give priority to current NEGASS members.) All are invited to participate in the Chorus of *Gondoliers* and *Contadine*, *Men-at-Arms*, *Heralds*, and *Pages*.

Interested instrumentalists should email Andrew Conway ([ahconway@gmail.com](mailto:ahconway@gmail.com)) who is assembling the orchestra.

Bring your own score or borrow one at the event. Admission is free; donations are always welcome.

The NEGASS Website will maintain 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.



Sudbury Savoyards has postponed their *Grand Duke* until early 2023.

Simsbury Light Opera Company announces the cast for their spring 2022 production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. See their poster below and read about how their rehearsals are progressing in the following, submitted by Joleen Urban Benedict, publicity chair:

Walk into Basingstoke, (SLOCO's rehearsal facility), on any Tuesday or Sunday night and you might experience a beautiful happening – a gathering of friendly, talented people singing and acting their hearts out with joy and creative power. Just being in their presence makes you feel part of the performance – the cast is that adept at reaching their audience.

**Simsbury Light Opera Company's 2022 Cast List**  
 For our 75th production of Gilbert & Sullivan's

**THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE**

Major General Stanley - Ralph Sherman  
 Pirate King - Jay Wolman  
 Samuel - Al Fichman  
 Frederic - Michael Robb  
 Sergeant of Police - Jeff Schwartz  
 Mabel - Kristen VanDerlyn  
 Edith - Meera Mennillo  
 Kate - Anna Kelly  
 Isabel - Kari Mackey  
 Ruth - Shira Flowers  
 General Stanley's Daughters  
 Kari Mackey,  
 Meera Mennillo, Melissa Osborne,  
 Aversa Sheldon, Anna Kelly,  
 April Ackroyd, Cassandra Pease,  
 Kathleen Archer, Madison Bailey,  
 meriLynn Keyes  
 Pirates and Police  
 Mark Callahan, Paul Kornman,  
 Al Fichman, Robert Janas,  
 Jeff Schwartz, Franklin Brown

April 30 - 7:30 PM  
 May 1 - 2 PM  
 May 7 - 7:30 PM  
 May 8 - 2 PM

Henry James Memorial School  
 Simsbury, CT

For tickets visit [www.sloco.org](http://www.sloco.org) or call 860 325 0766

SLOCO rehearsals for the *The Pirates of Penzance* are reaching a crescendo. At the first rehearsal, late in January, something special formed with this new cast.

Simsbury Light Opera President, Ralph Sherman says, “this is one of the best *Pirates* cast I have ever seen. We have many newcomers who are showing a lot of talent for singing and for comedy. They understand the characters and what makes the show funny. This cast is a great mix of Gilbert and Sullivan veterans and newbies. It’s fun to see them working together so well. The entire cast has good chemistry. As rehearsals progress, and everyone becomes more comfortable with their roles, I see cast members inspiring each other to greater heights. One good performance begets another. It’s a wonderful feeling.”

As the cast reaches the middle of the rehearsal schedule, props and scenery are popping out, costumes, designed by Kari Mackey, will soon be worn, voices become even more confident and characters more developed. The cast clearly enjoys the process.

Simsbury Light Opera’s Musical Director, Nathaniel Baker notes, “rehearsals have been a blast. Named roles and ensemble alike are tackling this project with gusto. This is a cast full of fresh faces. Several of our leads –

including both our Frederick and our Mabel — and a majority of our ensemble members are new to SLOCO.”

Nathaniel continues, “folks coming to see our show can look forward to a new take on an old favorite. I don’t mean new as in gimmicks, like ‘let’s do Magic Flute... set in outer space!’ This production takes on a pillar of G&S with expert direction from Renee Haines, a real veteran in this material, and packs it with the energy every brilliantly written moment requires to pop on the stage. It’s informed, renewed and refreshing. [Recently], we were going over the opening number, Pour, oh pour the Pirate Sherry and the guys were singing it with lovely refinement. I stopped them, ‘Is that what pirates sound like?’ We talked about how to be accurate, sing healthily and layer on a gruff aspect. They nailed it on the next sing-through. In that moment I knew we were creating an experience that would transport our audience.



Major General Stanley's daughters

Photo credit Jeff Schwartz

SLOCO’s Artistic Director, Renee Haines agrees. She says “the rehearsals for SLOCO are going very, very well. There is an energy, enthusiasm and a camaraderie within this talented cast that I regard as an Artistic Director’s dream. Some of our performers have never been exposed to the masterful works of Gilbert and Sullivan prior, but one would never know this based on their quick and intuitive approach to the stage direction and choreography. There is such a strong desire to learn their roles and how to best convey that to the audience, with the goal in mind to create a wonderful experience for all involved. And above all else, we are having fun in our rehearsals. I believe in teaching and coaching the staging, helping the cast ‘digest’ it, and then letting this direction ‘live’ on the stage. It is so special to see the pieces falling together so beautifully. And it is during this pivotal moment, as I see things taking shape, that I find myself saying, NOW WE HAVE A SHOW!”

Simsbury Light Opera performs its 75th production Gilbert & Sullivan’s *The Pirates of Penzance* at Henry James Memorial School in Simsbury on April 30th, May 1 and May 7 and 8. For tickets, visit [www.sloco.org](http://www.sloco.org) or call 860 325 0766.

**Troupers Light Opera** of Norwalk, CT will also be performing *The Pirates of Penzance*, on April 2 and 9, 2022 at the Norwalk Concert Hall, 125 East Ave, Norwalk, CT. The full cast listing appeared in the last issue of The Bray. For details, visit <http://wp.trouperlightopera.org>

**The Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society** sent the following:

Spring is around the corner and preparations are underway for CG&SS’s 2022 production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Show dates and times are Saturday, October 15th 2:00PM and 7:30PM and Sunday October 16th 2:00PM. Performances will be at Valley Regional High School, Deep River, CT. Auditions for *Pinafore* will be held on Sunday, June 12th 6:00PM to 9:00PM and Tuesday, June 14th, 7:00PM to 9:00PM at Congregation Adath Israel, 8 Broad Street, Middletown, CT. Please visit our web site (<http://CTGANDS.ORG>) and Facebook page or call 860-354-2256 for further information on auditioning and the show.

We will be having a sing through of *Iolanthe* on May 15th, 4:00PM at Congregation Adath Israel. All Gilbert & Sullivan enthusiasts are welcome to participate. Those interested in singing one of the principal roles should send their first, second, third choices to John Freedman ([jfreedman@snet.net](mailto:jfreedman@snet.net)) no later than May 11th. For principal roles, preference will be given to current members of CG&SS. Even if you are just interested in singing chorus, please send us an email to let us know that you will be attending. *To attend/participate in the event you must provide proof of full vaccination (either your vax card or image of your vax card). We will send emails to attendees (and update our Facebook page) if additional precautions become necessary between now and May 15th.*

The hurdles we had to clear last season made staging a full live production of *Ruddigore* a difficult challenge. Keeping our cast, crew, orchestra and audience safe took a lot of extra planning and preparation and dogged determination. We hope that most if not all of those difficulties are now behind us, but if not, having successfully navigated those billowy waters last year we know how to deal with them and that we are up to the task.

The big news for us this year is that our stalwart and longtime Music Director John Dreslin has decided to sit this year out. John’s musical knowledge, his experience and skills as a Music Director, and his contributions to our group are legendary and held in high esteem by all. His shoes are not easy ones to fill. Finding someone to fill them took a lot of searching and outreach, but we found someone who we are confident will do an outstanding job for us as Music Director.



If you have been coming to our shows, you may recognize the name Karen Ciccone. As 1st flute and long time member of our pit orchestra, Karen is certainly familiar with all the G&S music, our group, our

performers, and our artistic leadership. Karen holds a B.S. in Music Education from Rhode Island College, and a Master of Music Education from UCONN. She has been music director for a number of different groups including Pfizer Players, Flanders Players, and East Lyme Arts Council, and choir director of Pawtuxet Valley Community Chorus. She has been the music director and educator at a number of different high schools and middle schools and has received multiple high school regional awards for best director, vocals, pit, leads and a Eugene O'Neill award as Best Music Director for the Norwich Arts Council's production of *Pippin*. Those who have worked with Karen know that she is dedicated, tireless, and enthusiastic and puts her heart and soul into everything she does. We welcome her and look forward to working with her on what we know will be an outstanding production of *Pinafore*.

was directed by Deiran Manning. Performers included: Dorothy Rose, Ahlf Wheatcraft, Daniel Clement, Roland Dube, Zack Field, Vanessa Klein, Deiran Manning, Joe Marshall, Celeste Mittelhauser, and Sandi Sullivan with pianists Deiran Manning and Jessica Mehre.



On a sad note, CG&SS President Edward Kerrigan has informed us that Annlee Sortland recently passed away. A perennial chorus member, Annie was a "piratical maid of all work" who did tickets, programs, publicity, sponsors, donors...you name it, she did it, always with a smile, for the past 40 years. She will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.



As reported by NEGASS Board member Jon Coffin, "THEY pulled it off. A good time was had by all! Everyone I have talked to was so happy to revisit some of the old numbers and kick up their heels on the boards. We are grateful to have been given a chance to perform. Our beloved veteran principal players and some new people got a chance to try their hands again, or with us for the first time, and that was tender and exciting. We hope to employ many of our players next time around; there is definite value in getting together in concert, on stage, and rehearsing in creative ways, with distancing, pods, and virtually. We would have preferred more wide open rehearsal; but this was a great experience of "making do."

**Savoyard Light Opera Company** of Carlisle, MA will do a fully staged performance of *The Pirates of Penzance* in November 2022. For details visit [SavoyardLightOpera.org](http://SavoyardLightOpera.org)

The performance included excerpts from *Pirates of Penzance*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Iolanthe* and many more. To donate to the GSSME and learn more about the Society, visit: [gilbertsullivanmaine.org](http://gilbertsullivanmaine.org) To link to the video of the concert: <https://youtu.be/4CvG72mcEYM>

**Arlington Friends of the Drama** will present nine performances of *Iolanthe* from September 16, 2022 through October 2, 2022 to celebrate their centennial. In the last Bray we announced their director search. The artistic director will be J. Deschene, who has performed and directed with the MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players, with Musical Director Div Slomin. Auditions will be in June. Visit their website: <https://www.afdtheatre.org> for more information.

**Valley Light Opera** of Amherst, MA has made their recent production of *Pirates of Penzance* available on YouTube. Go to their website [VLO.org](http://VLO.org) for the link. Contributions can be made through [VLO.org](http://VLO.org) or mailed to:

**Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Maine** and Winter Harbor Music Festival presented "A Gilbert & Sullivan Musical Revue" on March 4th, 2022 at 7pm at Hammond Hall, Winter Harbor. The production

Greenfield Savings Bank  
ATTN: VLO Donations  
6 University Dr.  
Amherst MA 01002

## Yes, we know it isn't

### Valley Light Opera is pleased to announce our upcoming Spring Concert, the Mozart Requiem.

We have all been affected directly, indirectly and collectively by the COVID pandemic over the last two years. During this period, VLO experienced the loss of nine longtime contributors to the growth of this organization over the past 45 years. Founders Bill and Sally Venman are also among those missed.

As members of Valley Light Opera, we turn to music. We rejoice in community. We have been unable to come together to grieve the losses so strongly felt - until now.

We hope you will join us in April as VLO presents, *the Mozart Requiem*, complete with soloists, choir and orchestra. We offer this performance not only in tribute to our recently departed members, but also in solidarity with our greater community as we honor the lives, legacy and contributions that each one of these members and others in the community have made during their lifetime.

It is our hope that Mozart's beautiful music will create a space of grief, remembrance, gratitude and renewal for our suffering but resilient community. The list of VLO honorees is provided below.

#### ♥ William Venman (1931-2019) & Sally Venman (1932-2010)

♥ Glen Gordon (1931-2020)

♥ Robert Graham (1929-2020)

♥ Susanne Anderson (1947-2020)

♥ Carolyn Samonds (1941-2020)

♥ Catherine Bennett (1945-2020)

♥ Mary Ellen Sailor (1959-2020)

♥ Anju Soparker Diggs (1958-2021)

♥ Diane Kelton (1924-2021)

♥ Elaine Walker (1938-2022)

## ~ G&S NEWS ~

Clifton Coles, known on SavoyNet as "Uncle Cliffy," died in January from complications of surgery. Cliff was one of our informal scholars in Gilbert and Sullivan, and the works beyond the Big 13. His research into more obscure topics such as Rosina Brandram, or "Mirette" and "His Majesty", and any of the 1890s operas was always informative and interesting. He will be missed by the G&S world.

## ~ EDITOR'S CORNER ~

I know at least one of my readers, Rafe MacPhail, reads this newsletter closely. He was the first, and so far only, person to recognize a mistake I made, as new editor, in the numbering of the issues. When I got past Volume 45, No. 6, instead of beginning with Volume 46 No. 1, I called the August issue Volume 45 No. 7. It wasn't until the December issue that I finally caught my own error. Rather than do a public mea culpa at that time, I decided to wait for a sharp-eyed reader to diskivver my villainy. Apparently Rafe has, and treasures, every issue going back to Volume I, No. 1 so it's no surprise he caught the mistake.

You may have noticed fairly extensive write-ups about two of our local G&S groups in this issue: CG&SS and SLOCO. If you would like to see your group highlighted, all you have to do is send me an article, preferably with appropriate photographs.

Returning to a feature I began a few issues ago, for Christmas my wife got me a copy of *The Complete Novels of Charles Dickens*. This weighty tome will benefit my physical as well as my intellectual strength, as it weighs over 10 pounds and is more than four inches thick!

In *Nicholas Nickleby* I found the following items that could easily have been inspirations for Gilbert:

In chapter 10, in an upscale dressmaker's boutique in London we find an apartment being let to an importer of otto of roses. Rose attar is the basis for quality perfumes, and in *Trial by Jury* we find the scoundrel Edwin and his wronged maiden Angelina "breathing concentrated otto..."

A few chapters later the manager of that boutique laments that "...it's a queer world!" If only someone had added that it "teems with quiet fun." (Scaphio and Phantis dialogue in *Utopia Limited*.)

In chapter 25 an item highly prized by the donor but not much valued by the recipient is described as an "inestimable treasure." Ruth, anyone? (As described by the Pirate King in *Pirates of Penzance*.)

This section of the book describes Nicholas Nickleby's time with a theatrical troupe. There is a melodramatic villain type who refers to those out of his favor as "minions!" much as Preposterous does in *Thespis*. The entire section gives good context to G&S's first work, and makes me marvel that ANY part of it survived.

Near the end of the novel, an older man is lamenting the fact that he never pursued the young woman of his dreams, and states "Faint heart never won fair lady." Did Gilbert borrow this for *Iolanthe*?

- 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, Ed Kerrigan, Jon Coffin, Marianne Orlando, John Freedman, Rafe MacPhail, Scott Farrell, John Dreslin, Martha Birnbaum, and Sandy Armstrong. (Please forgive any omissions!)

## ❧ CALENDAR ❧

### NEGASS Events

**Thespis reading and open sing**

**Sunday, April 10, 2022**

**CANCELLED**

NEGASS Annual Meeting  
*Gondoliers* sing-through

Sunday, June 26 at 2:00 PM

Christ Lutheran Church  
113 Union Street  
Natick, MA

### G&S Events

*The Pirates of Penzance*  
Troupers Light Opera  
Norwalk, CT

April 2, 2022  
April 9, 2022  
Matinee & evening

Norwalk Concert Hall  
125 East Ave  
Norwalk, CT

*The Pirates of Penzance*  
Simsbury Light Opera Co  
Simsbury, CT

April 30, May 1, 2022  
May 7, 8, 2022

Henry James Memorial School  
Simsbury CT

*Iolanthe* sing-through  
Connecticut G & S Society  
Middletown, CT

May 15th, 2022  
4:00PM

Congregation Adath Israel  
8 Broad Street, Middletown, CT

Savoyard Light Opera Company  
Auditions for *Pirates of Penzance*

Spring 2022

Carlisle, MA

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

Sunday, June 12th 6:00PM to  
9:00PM and Tuesday, June  
14th, 7:00PM to 9:00PM

Congregation Adath Israel  
8 Broad Street, Middletown, CT

Arlington Friends of the Drama  
Auditions for *Iolanthe*

June 2022

22 Academy Street  
Arlington, MA

*Pirates of Penzance*  
Savoyard Light Opera Company

November 2022

Corey Auditorium  
117 Church Street  
Carlisle, MA

*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

*The Grand Duke*  
Sudbury Savoyards,  
Sudbury, MA

2023

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS  
Sudbury, MA