



## ≈ NEGASS Programs ≈

### From the President

As I write in early March, winter is giving way to the hope of spring: snow and ice are melting and birds are beginning to give voice to their spring songs. Seemingly everyone is involved in a production of *Ruddigore*, and I just completed a run with the Sudbury Savoyards last weekend. The show was filled with NEGASSers and we had a truly grand time. It was delightful to see NEGASS friends in the audience who weren't in the show themselves, including some who came as part of the NEGASS outing. By the time this goes to press, the Maine production will have also completed its run and Simsbury will be in the final few weeks of rehearsal before they open. NEGASS will be sponsoring an outing to the Simsbury Light Opera Company's production on April 27<sup>th</sup>, so I hope some of you will be considering attending.

There is also seemingly no end of opportunities for those willing to travel for operetta sings. The NEGASS *Iolanthe* sing in Hadley, MA will take place on March 30<sup>th</sup>, just as this *Bray* is going to press. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, the Toronto Gilbert & Sullivan Society is hosting a singalong of *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, and *The Gondoliers* (opening only). Longtime NYGSS member Sam Silvers is hosting a QWERT on May 17<sup>th</sup> in New York City (music of *Iolanthe*, *Yeomen*, *The Zoo*, *Trial by Jury* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*). The 22<sup>nd</sup> BaltiQWERT is on May 30<sup>th</sup> (music of *Trial By Jury*, *Utopia Ltd*, *Yeomen of the Guard*, *Sorcerer*, and *Iolanthe*!) And finally, NEGASS will host a read-through of *The Mikado* in Natick, MA on June 22<sup>nd</sup> with all the dialogue and a full orchestra, assembled once again by Andrew Conway.

For those with spring wanderlust who want to explore new things, an opportunity farther afield that may appeal is the Ardensingers' production of Sullivan's rarely performed last work, *The Emerald Isle*

or *The Caves of Carrig-Cleena*, in early May in Arden, DE. The score was completed by Edward German after Sullivan's death and the libretto is by Basil Hood, who was also the librettist for Sullivan's *The Rose of Persia* and went on to write several more "Savoy operas." The Ardensingers provide the following brief description ([www.ardensingers.org](http://www.ardensingers.org)), "A comedic romp set in the Irish countryside with redcoats, rebels, star-crossed lovers, charlatans, and the mysterious fairy Cleena! Terence O'Brien, an Irish patriot, is in love with the Lady Rosie, daughter of the Lord Lieutenant, the agent of English oppression. Can the 'Clan-na-Gael' (society of Irish patriots) escape the attention of the Lieutenant, and is there any hope for the love of Terence and Rosie?" We'll have to travel south to find out!

- Ann Ferentz

### Upcoming events

♪ *Iolanthe* Sing – March 30, South Hadley, MA

We will hold a Western MA sing-through of *Iolanthe* (yes, we WILL hold it this time!) on March 30, 2025 at 2:00 PM at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 98 North Maple Street in Hadley, MA. John Dreslin, NEGASS board member and music director for the Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society, will accompany on keyboard, with fellow Board member Aldo Fabrizi conducting.

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**THE TRUMPET BRAY** is published six times a year on the 1st day of February, April, June, August, October, and December by the New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society (NEGASS), PO Box 118, Arlington MA 02476. To contact the editor, see email address above. To contact all others use the email [contact@negass.org](mailto:contact@negass.org)

#### GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS AND REVIEWS

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

**MEMBERSHIP:** Annual NEGASS membership dues are \$25.

Please join NEGASS online at [www.negass.org](http://www.negass.org)

**THE TRUMPET BRAY** Members receive the Bray as a PDF email attachment. All editions, including the current one, are available at [www.negass.org](http://www.negass.org)

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



We are pleased to announce the *Iolanthe* cast:

The Lord Chancellor	Ben Morse
George, Earl of Mountarat	Matt Roefrig
Thomas, Earl Tolloller	Peter Boettcher
Private Willis, Grenadier Guard	Michael Budnick
Strephon, an Arcadian Shepherd	Laurie Weissbrot
Phyllis, a Ward in Chancery	Maggie Paraggio
Queen of the Fairies	Kathy Blaisdell
Iolanthe, a Fairy, Strephon's mother	Ann Ferentz
Celia, a Fairy	Elysse Link
Leila, a Fairy	Aversa Sheldon
Fleta, a Fairy	TBD

All attendees are encouraged to sing chorus. Bring your own score, or borrow one from our library. NEGASS Board members will provide light refreshments.

#### ♪ Ruddigore Outing - April 27<sup>th</sup>, Simsbury, CT

Join a group of fellow Gilbert & Sullivan enthusiasts for the Sunday matinee of *Ruddigore* or *The Witch's Curse*, directed by Jacqueline Haney with musical direction by Ralph Sherman. This performance will be at 2 PM at the Henry James Memorial School, 115 Firetown Road in Simsbury, CT. NEGASS members who are up to date in their paid membership may purchase up to two tickets at a \$5 discount (\$25 adults/\$20 seniors) before Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> via our website: <https://www.negass.org/gs-events.html>  
Hope to see you there!

#### ♪ NEGASS Annual Meeting - June 22, Natick, MA

NEGASS will hold its annual business meeting on the afternoon of Sunday, June 22 followed by a read-through of *The Mikado* with full orchestra. Andrew Conway will be contacting instrumentalists about participating in the orchestra. If you want to contact him proactively, please email [ahconway@gmail.org](mailto:ahconway@gmail.org).



Interested in a role? Email Program Chair Lindsey Buccella ([programs@negass.org](mailto:programs@negass.org)) with your request by May 1<sup>st</sup>. All are welcome to apply for any role they fancy. As usual, members of NEGASS in good standing will receive casting preference; popular roles may be shared with one singer per act. Roles available: The Mikado of Japan (bass or bass-baritone), Nanki-Poo (tenor), Ko-Ko (comic baritone), Pooh-Bah (baritone), Pish-Tush (baritone), Yum-Yum (soprano), Pitti-Sing (mezzo-soprano), Peep-Bo (soprano or mezzo-soprano), Katisha (contralto).

Everyone in attendance will be the chorus. Bring your own score or borrow one from our library. The NEGASS Board will provide light refreshments.

♪ NEGASS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Sept 4-6 2026, Concord, MA



Planning continues for next year's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary sing-out of all 13 operettas. A website is now available where we will post additional information as it becomes available). This will be the site for registration and role/conducting/accompanying requests next spring:

[www.negass.org/50th-anniversary](http://www.negass.org/50th-anniversary). Meanwhile if you have questions or ideas, please email the committee at [50thanniversary@negass.org](mailto:50thanniversary@negass.org).

We will need many volunteers with diverse skills to pull off this event. We know NEGASS members are persons of many capacities. What is yours? Do you get secret pleasure from organizing things? Setting up forms and working the spreadsheets? Keeping little (and not so little) lists? Doing travel planning? Helping people from out of town with rides and fun things to do? Sitting at a table and checking people in? Setting up meals? With lots of volunteers everyone will have time to enjoy the event too!

Not a NEGASS member? Join now! Visit <http://www.negass.org/membership.html>.

## ∞ NEGASS NEWS ∞



Join Simsbury Light Opera Company for their 78<sup>th</sup> season's production of *Ruddigore or The Witch's Curse*, directed by Jacqueline Haney with musical direction by Ralph Sherman. Performances are

April 26, 7:30PM & April 27, 2:00PM and May 3, 7:30PM & May 4, 2:00PM at Henry James Memorial School, 155 Firetown Road, Simsbury CT. For tickets call 860-325-0766 or go to [www.SLOCO.org](http://www.SLOCO.org). Or join

other NEGASS members for the April 27 performance at a discount, as described above under NEGASS Events.

Valley Light Opera will hold auditions for *HMS Pinafore* - May 15, 16 and 17 in Hadley, MA for their November production. Check [www.VLO.org](http://www.VLO.org) for information.



The Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society will hold auditions for its October 2025 production of *IOLANTHE* Sunday, June 22nd, from 6:30 to 8:30PM and Tuesday, June

24th, from 7:00 to 8:30PM. Call back date/time, if needed, will be Tuesday, July 8th at 7:00PM.

Auditions are at Congregation Adath Israel, 8 Broad Street, Middletown, CT.

If you are auditioning for a principal role, or if you would like to join men's or women's chorus, but you have not performed with us or with a similar group, please fill in an audition form, available at <https://bit.ly/CGANDSS> or by scanning this QR code, and bring it with you to your audition. Or complete one on site when you arrive at auditions.

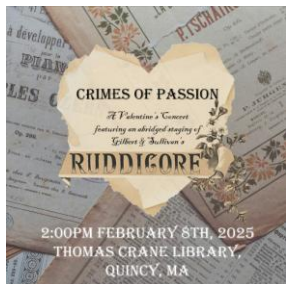


We ask that you perform a song of your choice. It need not be from the upcoming show or even be a G&S number. Select something, preferably in English, that you think best demonstrates your singing abilities. Bring a copy of the sheet music for your song for our accompanist. We may ask you to sing scales to assess your vocal range. You will be asked to read dialog for the principal role(s) in which you are interested. We may ask you to read dialog for other roles for which you might be considered.

Sunday evening rehearsals at Congregation Adath Israel in Middletown, start July 13th at 6PM. If you are intending to join the show, please send an email to [jfreedman@snet.net](mailto:jfreedman@snet.net) with cc to [musdent@aol.com](mailto:musdent@aol.com) confirming that you plan to join the chorus for our 2025 production of *Iolanthe* and will be attending our Sunday rehearsals starting on July 13th. Include your name, your contact information (phone(s), email, and street address), your vocal range, and a sentence or two about any prior singing/performing experience that you've had.

For further information about our rehearsal and performance schedule or about auditioning and performing with us, please call 860-554-1256.

## REVIEWS



**The Maenad Theatre Troupe** performed “Crimes of Passion,” a free Saint Valentines Day concert, at the Thomas Crane Library, in Quincy, MA at 2:00 PM February 8, 2025. They opened the event by stating that opera is a bad place to

go for relationship advice, then backed up that statement with scenes from *Carmen* (Habanera), *Into the Woods* (Agony), *Così fan tutte* (Smanie implacabili, and In vomini, in soldati), *Barber of Seville* (Ah qual colpo), *A Little Night Music* (You must meet my wife, In praise of women, and It would have been wonderful), *Rigoletto* (La donna è mobile), *Magic Flute* (The man who feels love’s sweet emotion, and Oh maiden come to join me) and *La Bohème* (Quando m’en vo). After a brief intermission they provided an abridged version of *Ruddigore*. There were no choruses, no ghosts, no Adam Goodheart (nor even a Gideon Crawle). The singing ranged from very good to excellent. Most of the dialogue scenes were cut back or even cut out. If there had been scenery it would have been well-chewed.

### The Cast

Rose Maybud	Madison Christian
Mad Margaret	Lee Ellis
Dick Dauntless	Bryan Sabag
Robin Oakapple	Sean Connaughton
Sir Despard	Rob Gullicksen
Zorah	Lucio Faria
Dame Hannah	Heather Petitpas
Accompanist	Marnen Laibow-Kaiser
MC/Narrator	Jim Martin

This group of singers may or may not go on to do more Gilbert and Sullivan. I certainly hope they do. (I did not attend the performance, but watched the very enjoyable video available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA\\_7iibsfuw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA_7iibsfuw))

- Laurie Weissbrot

### Sudbury Savoyards *Ruddigore*

After last year’s gender bending version of *Princess Ida*, it came as something of a relief that Sudbury Savoyards returned to a more traditional staging in this year’s presentation of *Ruddigore*. Briana Bensenouci directed and choreographed, her first time filling these roles for Sudbury, and she had some very creative ideas for the large cast of over 40.

Aldo Fabrizi also made his return as music director, after a year’s hiatus, and ably led the orchestra of 27 players. *Ruddigore* is probably the most tampered with of all the commonly produced Gilbert and Sullivan scores, having been largely edited by Geoffrey Toye



during the 1920’s. This production mainly followed his version which is enshrined in the Schirmer’s vocal score, but with a few tweaks. The ladies’ chorus was

divided into two groups: A group of seven served as the “Bridesmaids Union” and the remaining eight or



so appeared as villagers. At times only the Bridesmaids would be onstage, as in the “Happily Coupled are We” sequence. The men also were divided in the 2<sup>nd</sup> act between named ghosts and anonymous ones. In

the first act, some of the men onstage sang in the choruses of “I shipp’d, d’ye see.” Then, in the second act, the full chorus came on stage to do a very effective version of “When the Nightwind Howls,” especially arranged by Maestro Fabrizi. For this number, the women, and many of the men, were hidden under ghost-like cloaks. Also, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> act finale (which even in the Schirmer score offers about 3 different choices) a combination of the “original” 4/4 finale and the 9/8 option was used. Since I, too, have been known to monkey with some of the scores, I had no objection, and it all worked quite well.



After a lively rendition of the Toye overture (which I much prefer over the original by Clarke), the curtain opened on a depiction of the seaside town of Rederring with newcomer Clara Haymon doing a



nice job with Zorah’s solo. The ever-dependable Carolyn Schwartz then



appeared to present the story of





“Sir Rupert Murgatroyd” which was cleverly acted out during the song. Lindsey Buccella entered to portray Rose Maybud, a part she carried out flawlessly for the whole show. (Lindsey was one of the six NEGASS board

members who appeared in this production). David Smyth was her counterpart, Robin Oakapple, who transformed into an evil baronet for Act 2, when he sports a devilish moustache. They were eventually joined by Ben Oehlkers, a newcomer, as the “bumptious” Richard Dauntless. Both these gentlemen played off each other and Lindsey very well and supplied lots of laughs.



Unfortunately, there was no real hornpipe danced by anybody; instead the cast acted out a mock ship battle during the hornpipe



music. Veteran performer Elaine Crane portrayed Mad Margaret, and did a lovely rendition of “Cheerily Carols the Lark” showing off the lower part of her vocal range. Her counterpart was Jeremy White as Sir Despard. Their 2<sup>nd</sup> act duet “I Was Once a Very Abandoned Person” was a delight to behold. Another



NEGASS board member, Ben Morse, made the most of his somewhat smaller role of Old Adam. With the 1<sup>st</sup> Act cast now fully accounted for, the Act 1 finale proceeded smoothly, with maybe a bit of an intonation problem in the famous madrigal



section. However, this was quickly solved when all were singing together. Both verses received an enthusiastic round of applause from the packed house. The rather lengthy playoff music was effectively staged.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> act revolved around the appearance of the ghosts of the past baronets of Ruddigore. The transformation from portraits to live action was done using painted over mesh that then was lit from behind the mesh to show the ghosts coming to life. After briefly singing from behind their frames, they filed out through two curtained passages onto the

front of the stage to do their scene. The effect worked well, and was done in reverse when it was time for them to return



to their frames. Lonnie Powell was a commanding presence as Sir Roderick, and as mentioned earlier, the presentation of “When the Night Wind Howls” was most impressive. Elaine,



Jeremy, and David executed the famous patter trio cleanly. A surprising highlight of the act was Carolyn and Lonnie’s touching rendition of “There Grew a Little Flower.” The show ended with the ghosts coming back to life to join the rest of the cast in the spirited finale.



As far as the technical side of the show, the costuming designs by Sue Flint and Donna Roessler were first rate. Some of the chorus members had to change costumes several times, so there was a lot of costuming involved. Lighting was for the most part also well done, though there were a few times when some of the principals’ faces were insufficiently lit, although this might have been because they missed their mark on the stage. Scenery was also very well done. There were some good special effects including thunder and lightning. The singers all wore headset microphones, so there was no problem hearing them over the orchestra. All in all, this was a well thought out, well executed and thoroughly enjoyable production. It has been pointed out that this seems to be “Ruddigore Year: here in New England, with at least four groups from Maine to Connecticut presenting versions. This one will certainly rate as a standout.

John E. Dreslin

## ≈ G & S NEWS ≈

Erica Rome and Michael Blum will host **BaltiQWERT 22** on May 31, 2025 at the Towson Universalist Unitarian Church, 1710 Dulaney Valley Road, Lutherville MD. Casting has closed, but the casts have not yet been announced. Email questions, comments, or concerns to Erica at [erica@ericarome.com](mailto:erica@ericarome.com)

**Sam Silvers’ QWERT** in New York City will be held on Saturday, May 17, 2025. **Role requests are due no later than March 31, 2025.** We will sing through all

the music of Iolanthe, Yeomen, The Zoo, Trial by Jury and H.M.S. Pinafore. If you have not yet done so, please send Sam your role requests, ranked in order of the ones you most would like to do, plus any others you would be willing to do if you don't get your top choice(s). **We especially need more sopranos and altos.** If he casts you for a role, please learn it thoroughly beforehand, including all your ensemble, recitative, and harmony lines, to be able to sing on book on May 17 with piano accompaniment. He will try to spread the roles around fairly, and complete casting by April 7.

Erica Rome and Cathy Miller will be the pianists. Singing will start at 11AM with Iolanthe. It should be finished around 6PM. The event will take place at Sam's apartment on Broadway near 125th St. (near the #1 train) – more details will be distributed after casting.

If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail Sam at [ssilversgs@gmail.com](mailto:ssilversgs@gmail.com)

- Sam Silvers



The 31st **International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival** takes place at the stunning Buxton Opera House in August 2025. The Savoynet Performing Group has announced the following casts for its two productions:

**The Zoo - Wednesday, 6 August 2025**

Aesculapius Carboy	Jon Roselle
Eliza Smith	Laura Kroh
Thomas Brown	Laurence Cox
Laetitia	Ali Roselle
Mr. Grinder	Eric Peterson

**Ensemble:**

Philip Barton, Kay Byler Kelm, Melinda Carlisle, Alexander Conway, Carol Davis, Audrey Ditri, Rick DuPuy, Paul Ensell, Martin Everall, Tobin Fell, Beth Garrett, Manya Gaver-Holmes, Victoria Goulden, Christopher Hall, Sarah-Jane Hall, Robert Hall, Rick Joyce, Lindsey Lefler, Karen Ann Loxley, Oliver McDonnell, Christopher McInnis, Alyssa Mener, Daniel Miller, Tyler Parker, Angela Penn, Sarah Robinson, Ashley Saferight, Marc Shepherd, Sheila Skipper, Natalie Taylor, Kelsey Thornton, Christopher Wain, Sandra Wain, Jane White, Denise Wicken, Maria Zicos.

**HMS Pinafore - Thursday, 14 August 2025**

Sir Joseph Porter	Martin Everall
Captain Corcoran	Rick DuPuy
Ralph Rackstraw	Chazmond Peacock
Dick Deadeye	Tyler Parker
Boatswain	Daniel Miller

Carpenter	Andrew Smith
Josephine	Lauren Cupples
Cousin Hebe	Sarah Robinson
Little Buttercup	Manya Gaver-Holmes

**Ensemble:**

Kay Byler Kelm, Melinda Carlisle, Alexander Conway, Simon Cooper, Laurence Cox, Paul Ensell, Tobin Fell, Beth Garrett, Manya Gaver-Holmes, Victoria Goulden, Robert Gray, Christopher Hall, Sarah-Jane Hall, Robert Hall, Stephen Huws, Lindsey Lefler, Julie-Ann Lomas, Oliver McDonnell, Christopher McInnis, Alyssa Mener, Rachel Middle, Dan Rosenbaum, Andrew Rushton, Ashley Saferight, Marc Shepherd, Sheila Skipper, Andrew Smith, Olivia Sohmer Rosenbaum, Natalie Taylor, Kelsey Thornton, Christopher Wain, Sandra Wain, Jane White, Maria Zicos, Victoria Zicos

**EDITOR'S CORNER**

With any luck, this issue will be out a few days before the end of March. That is so we can remind everyone of the Iolanthe event and to get Sam Silvers any last minute sign-ups for his May QWERT.

In Hadley, I'll be able, finally, to perform a role I first learned as an understudy over 40 years ago. As I am in the autumn of my life, I will never get the chance to play Strephon in a staged production of Iolanthe, but on Sunday, I will try my best to portray a 25 year old half man/half fairy. Come out and cheer me on! Plus, if you are male, you get the chance to participate in the greatest operatic male choral number ever written: "The Entrance and March of the Peers."

In case you haven't yet gotten the gist of my preferences, I love these sing-ins, sing-outs, QWERTs...whatever you like to call them. It is getting harder for me to participate in a fully staged show, but I still love the music and will still sing any chance I get. This season I'll be at the two NEGASS events (*Iolanthe* and *The Mikado*), and BaltiQWERT.

Hope to see and hear some of you there!

- 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, Lee Ellis Jacqueline Haney, John Dreslin, Sam Silvers, John Freedman, Marianne Orlando (for her beautiful illustrations), and Marc Shepherd (Please forgive any omissions!)

≈ CALENDAR ≈

**NEGASS Events**

*Iolanthe* sing-through

Sunday March 30, 2025  
2:00 PM

Wesley United Methodist Church  
98 North Maple Street  
Hadley, MA

Outing to SLOCO *Ruddigore*

April 27, 2025  
2:00 PM

Henry James Memorial School  
155 Firetown Road  
Simsbury, CT 06070

2025 Annual Meeting  
and  
*Mikado* sing-through

June 22, 2025  
2:00 PM

Christ Lutheran Church  
113 Union Street  
Natick, MA

NEGASS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Labor Day Weekend  
September 4-6, 2026

51 Walden  
Concord, MA

**G&S Events**

Simsbury Light Opera Company  
*Ruddigore*

April 26, 2025, 7:30 PM  
April 27, 2025, 2:00 PM  
May 3, 2025, 7:30 PM  
May 4, 2:00 PM

Henry James Memorial School  
155 Firetown Road  
Simsbury, CT 06070

Valley Light Opera  
*HMS Pinafore* Auditions

May 15, 16 and 17

Hadley, MA

Sam Silver's  
NYC QWERT

Saturday May 17, 2025  
11 AM

3117 Broadway Apt 28  
NYC NY

BaltiQWERT

Saturday May 31, 2025  
9 AM

Towson Universalist Unitarian Church  
1710 Dulaney Valley Road  
Lutherville MD

Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan  
Society  
*Iolanthe* auditions

June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 6PM to 9PM  
June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 7PM to 9PM

Congregation Adath Israel  
8 Broad Street  
Middletown, CT

31st International  
Gilbert & Sullivan Festival

August 2 - 16, 2025

Buxton Opera House  
Buxton UK

Sudbury Savoyards  
The Gondoliers auditions

Fall, 2025

TBA

Valley Light Opera  
*HMS Pinafore*

November 6 - 9, 2025

Hadley, MA

Sudbury Savoyards  
*The Gondoliers*

Winter 2026

TBA