



≈ NEGASS Programs ≈

Save the Date! NEGASS 45th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, October 16th.

In October 1976, Warren Colson extended an invitation for Gilbert & Sullivan enthusiasts to meet at the Lutheran Church in Natick, MA. The description of that meeting from the first issue of the *Trumpet Bray* was “Everybody singing from *Pirates of Penzance*; Maynard Savoyards in *Gondoliers* excerpts; refreshments and general G&S excitement.” Thus NEGASS was born.

On October 16th, we will celebrate the fine 45-year tradition of NEGASS sing-alongs with laughing song and perhaps merry dance at the very place where the organization first met. This **live** event will take place from 10 am to 5 pm and will showcase the talented Gilbert & Sullivan performers and groups in New England.



Performing organizations are invited to present selections or a scene from the operettas with the audience as chorus; individuals and small groups are also welcome to participate. There may be additional sing-along opportunities, instrumental numbers, and other offerings by NEGASS members interspersed with the group performances. And of course the luncheon bell will ring merrily mid-day.

We are looking forward to having the **Simsbury Light Opera Company** present the Act I finale from *Iolanthe* (*I am humming “When darkly looms the day...” to myself as I write this – ed.*) Other confirmed participating groups are the **Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society** and **Greater Worcester Opera**. We hope several more groups will participate!

If your group is not yet on this list, you would like to present something as an individual or small group, or you have questions, please contact president@NEGASS.org.

Further information and sign-up will be shared by email as the fall approaches.

Bab Ballads Return on September 18th!

Come be a part of this historic, second performance! Readings, musical settings, animations, puppets – anything you can dream up that is based on one of Gilbert's comic poems. The program will be on Zoom on September 18, 2021 at 7:00 pm EST. There are many copies of *The Bab Ballads* on the G&S Archive, as well as mentions of several songs based upon them. To reserve your very own Bab, please contact the NEGASS program chair at JacquelineHaney@yahoo.com.

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



~ NEGASS NEWS ~

The 2021 NEGASS Annual Meeting was a Zoom get-together, and took place on June 13 at 7:00 PM.



Members thanked Carolyn Schwartz for past service, and welcomed new board member Jon Coffin from Ellsworth, Maine. Welcome back to Elaine Crane, Brad Amidon and Lindsey Soboleski, whose terms were up but were reelected. The board acknowledged Martha Birnbaum and thanked her for her extra-board contributions.

Brad Amidon, NEGASS treasurer, provided an overview of NEGASS finances. Last year's NEGASS income was all from memberships, as there were no events due to the pandemic. NEGASS continues to support G&S performances via program ads.

President Ann Ferentz summarized NEGASS events of the past year:

- Thanks to Jacki Haney for all her work on events during this past difficult year. Jacki hosted a variety of wonderful programs online when in-person events were not possible. Talks, performances, play readings, Christmas concert, watch parties – members far and wide enjoyed all coordinated events when performed or later when posted on our YouTube channel. A sample of offerings includes: *Mr. Jericho*, *Pineapple Poll*, *Allow Me to Explain* reading, trivia night, *Mikado* (Martyn Green) watch party.
- NEGASS rejoined the Gilbert & Society of London as an affiliate.
- NEGASS launched a YouTube channel and added old (archival) and new recordings. Janice Dallas provided many past recordings, which Ben Morse digitized to put on the YouTube channel.

- Sad news of David DeVries' (Bray editor) passing in April 2021; Laurie Weissbrot has taken over editing.

Program Chair Jacki Haney provided a summary of upcoming plans:

- July 25 *Trial By Jury* sing through and pot luck at Elaine Crane's house in West Boylston (reviewed later in this issue).



- Zoom events will continue for the benefit of far reaching members.
- 2nd Annual Bab Ballads program on Saturday, September 18.
- Anniversary celebration October 16.
- December program TBA - holiday party, zoom concert, etc.
- 2022 being able to visit different productions (such as Sudbury Savoyards' Grand Duke).
- Sing-outs, sing-throughs, LMLO's, etc. in person events going into the new year, as well as lectures and zoom events.

The NEGASS Website will maintain a list of current events.

Updates from G&S Groups in New England

After the official business meeting ended, members of area G&S groups gave updates on their groups, interspersed with musical numbers from the 1989 NEGASS Fantasy Day video, which has recently been added to the YouTube channel as an archival performance. The groups included in the updates were:

CT Gilbert & Sullivan Society (Middlefield, CT) – represented by president John Freedman

Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Maine (Ellsworth, ME) – Tiffany Laufer

Greater Worcester Opera (Worcester, MA) – Elaine Crane

Savoyard Light Opera Company (Carlisle, MA) – no representative. Their anticipated production of *Pirates* has been postponed to autumn 2022.

Simsbury Light Opera Company (Simsbury, CT) – Ralph Sherman

Musical number from February 1989 Fantasy Day
Sudbury Savoyards (Sudbury, MA) – Brendon Chetwynd

Troupers Light Opera (Norwalk, CT) – Bill Abbott
Valley Light Opera (Amherst, MA) – Paul Peelle
Musical number from February 1989 Fantasy Day

The common thread running through the reports was a shared enthusiasm to return to performing after the last 16 months of pandemic shutdown.

RECENT EVENTS

In spite of the ongoing pandemic, there have been many recent G&S events.

The **Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society** (CG&SS) held a memorial service for Bob Cumming on June 2, 2021 at 8:00 PM via Zoom.



On Saturday, June 26th, 8PM EDT **CG&SS** premiered "My Favorite Scene Part II" on its YouTube channel. Part I, released in April, drew over 100 viewers! Again, **CG&SS** asked if people remember the first time they saw a Gilbert and Sullivan show. Do they recall their reaction to it? Was there a favorite scene? What made it special? Was it funnier? Did it have the most biting satire? The best music? Maybe. And maybe not. In the June production, five **CG&SS** performers shared their favorite scene: moments from *Ruddigore*, *Patience*, *Thespis*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Princess Ida*. Performers Kathleen Thompson and Natalie Wood from Hebron CT, David Henderson from Middletown CT, David Schancupp from Guilford, CT, and Julie Rumbold from Simsbury CT described what makes each scene special to them. If you missed the live show, the video will always be available to watch on their website, www.ctgands.org, by clicking on "VIRTUAL ENTERTAINMENT" at the top of the page. Accessible via computer, cell phone or tablet.

On July 11 and 13, **CG&SS** held auditions for their live production of *Ruddigore* this fall at Valley

Regional High School in Deep River, CT. Show dates are November 6th and 7th.

Greater Worcester Opera put on a G&S concert at the West Boylston Town Bandstand on July 15 at 6:30 PM, with selections from *Pirates*, *Trial*, *Gondoliers*, *the Sorcerer*, *Patience*, *Princess Ida*, *Utopia Limited*, *the Mikado*, *the Grand Duke*, *Iolanthe*, *Yeomen*, and *Ruddigore*, plus Sullivan's *The Lost Chord*. This all took place on a beautiful midsummer evening in front of a live audience numbering about 100 people of all ages, many of whom were new to G&S!

NEGASS In-Person Gathering

NEGASS Board member and GWO head Elaine Crane hosted the first in-person NEGASS event since January 2020 at her home on July 25 at 3:00. Attendees sang *Trial by Jury*, then enjoyed a pot luck supper. After the food, and maybe a little wine, everyone gathered around the piano as John Dreslin accompanied an impromptu sing-through of most of *Pirates of Penzance* with some singers covering several roles and some roles covered by several singers. It was great to be able to see and hear and touch old friends again!

Valley Light Opera held auditions on July 29, 30 and 31 for their fall production of *Pirates of Penzance* at the Academy of Music in Northampton MA.

~ G&S NEWS ~

Each year about a hundred or more members of Savoynet and their families make their pilgrimages from around the world to Harrogate, and previously Buxton, England for the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival. This year, with COVID restrictions, that number has been reduced to under 30, mostly from within the UK. And even for citizens of the United Kingdom, many potential attendees are qualifying their plans with the caveat "if we are allowed to travel."

The Festival is trying to accommodate its worldwide audience. From the International G&S Festival website:

We know many people around the world cannot get to the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival this year. But don't despair! You can still join in wherever you are.

The Festival will be streaming LIVE from Buxton Opera House from Monday 2 August to Friday 6 August with five brand-new productions from the National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company and Forbear! Theatre.

And if you can't watch them live, don't worry. An HD recording will be available on GSOPERA.TV for you to watch as many times as you like until 1 September.

Full Festival Digital Pass (£59.99) gives you access to all five new productions and includes your digital Souvenir Programme. Or, you can purchase individual shows for £14.99 each.



Make sure you are ready to enjoy a fantastic week of fun.

Meanwhile, back in New England . . .

Some time in September (exact date to be determined) the **Sudbury Savoyards**, Sudbury, MA, will hold auditions for a February 2022 production of *The Grand Duke*.

The **Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society** will perform *Ruddigore* at the Valley Regional High School in Deep River CT on Saturday, November 6th at 2PM and 7:30PM and Sunday, November 7th at 2PM.

Valley Light Opera will perform *Pirates of Penzance* in November at the Academy of Music in Northampton MA.



≈ BOARD SPOTLIGHT ≈

We're modifying the usual Cast Spotlight to introduce our newest NEGASS Board

member: Jon Coffin of Maine. The NEGASS board is delighted to have Jon join us. Jon is not a singer, not an actor, not a director, but the most



important person to our productions – an audience member! As a board member, Jon looks forward to strengthening connections between groups and ultimately increasing love of G&S throughout the region.

Jon recently completed a 49-year military career as an Army Psychologist. He debriefed soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan for ten years before retiring, which he considers to be the best work of his life. Today, Jon raises flowers--tulips, daffodils and dahlias--and is heavily engaged in a lifelong pursuit of 12-step work.

After retiring, Jon moved to Maine and fell in love with a G&S-cognizant woman, Jana, who convinced him to attend a production of *Pirates of Penzance* in 2013. The couple has never looked back! Jon found that being reintroduced to G&S was stunning. As an 8-year old in Boston, Jon enjoyed listening to a recording of "When I was a Lad/polished up the handle so carefully..." He writes that "The world suddenly 'made sense!' Have not many of us had similar associations? It is barely explainable . . . seems to be in the DNA."

Jon's passion for G&S has led to his being an appointed (volunteer!) Ambassador to the International Festival, its activities, and its river tours. When he and his fellow G&S-nut/ wife Jana volunteer at the Festival, Jana brews tea at the pavilion and Jon ushers. They never miss a performance: one summer they attended 40 shows! They have been on 5 river tours so far, including one on the Nile with several G&S friends from Maine and hope to be on the planned Seine trip in March of 2022.

Jon would love to talk to anyone interested in knowing more about International Society events.

≈ EDITOR'S CORNER ≈

I'm going to step away from Dickens this month to comment on the Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society's *My Favorite Scene* event from June. Two of the scenes, the one chosen by David Schancupp and the one chosen by Kathleen Thompson, perfectly illustrate a pet peeve of mine. There are directors who go to great lengths to "make Gilbert funny." In one of the funniest scenes in the canon, the "orphan" "often" interchange between the Pirate King and Major General Stanley, the director chose to add a few gags of his own. It killed the scene, in my not so humble opinion.

In the Mad Margaret - Despard scene from *Ruddigore*, which was played completely straight, I laughed out loud, along with the very appreciative audience. This despite the fact that it was a dialogue I had heard every rehearsal and every performance. But I had not previously *seen* the hysterical physical comedy brought to the scene by Susan Wrozek as Mad Margaret and Jerry Palmer, Kathleen's late husband, as Despard. I was trapped in a sarcophagus upstage waiting for my entrance as Sir Roderic.

Lesson for all directors: trust Gilbert's humor. He was a master of his craft. If you think you have to add or subtract to make him funny, think again. And for production companies, if this describes the director you have chosen, choose someone else!

- Laurie Weissbrot

≈ We Have a Little List ≈

The editor wishes to thank those who contributed in any way to this issue of *The Trumpet Bray* including Ann Ferentz, Martha Birnbaum, Elaine Crane, Don Smith, John Freedman, Mark Leibold, Ed Kerrigan, John Dreslin, Jon Coffin, Aldo Fabrizi, Jacqueline Haney, and the CG&SS website.

(Please forgive any omissions!)

❧ CALENDAR ❧

NEGASS Events

| | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Bab Ballads | Saturday September 16, 2021 7:00pm | Zoom |
| 45th NEGASS Anniversary | Saturday October 16, 2021 10:00am | Lutheran Church Natick MA |
| Holiday program TBA | December TBA | TBA |

G&S Events

| | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------|
| <i>International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival</i> | July 31 - August 8, 2021 August 8 - 18, 2021 September 7—11, 2021 | Buxton Opera House Royal Hall Harrogate Malvern Theatre | cancelled |
| <i>Grand Duke Auditions Sudbury Savoyards</i> | September (tbd) | Sudbury, MA | |
| <i>Ruddigore</i> Connecticut G & S Society Middlefield, CT | Saturday, November 6, 2021 2:00pm and 7:30pm Sunday, November 7, 2021 2:00pm | Valley Regional High School Deep River CT | |
| <i>The Pirates of Penzance</i> Valley Light Opera Northampton, MA | November 2021 | Academy of Music, Northampton, MA | |
| <i>The Grand Duke</i> Sudbury Savoyards, Sudbury, MA | February 2022 | | |
| <i>The Pirates of Penzance</i> Simsbury Light Opera Co Simsbury, CT | Spring 2022 | Eno Memorial Hall Simsbury CT | |
| <i>The Gondoliers</i> Troupers Light Opera Norwalk, CT | TBD | | |