



~ NEGASS Programs ~

NEGASS Annual Meeting and *Yeomen of the Guard* by NEGASS President Ann Ferentz

The NEGASS annual meeting was held on Sunday, June 25th at Christ Lutheran Church in Natick, MA followed by a read-through of *Yeomen of the Guard* with a full orchestra. Approximately 50 people attended.

The NEGASS board includes representatives from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Brad Amidon, Jon Coffin, Elaine Crane, and Lindsey Soboleski were reelected to two-year terms; while John Dreslin, Aldo Fabrizi, Ann Ferentz, Jacqueline Haney, Ben Morse, and Laurie Weissbrot will continue to serve until the 2024 meeting. Martha Birnbaum continues to support the Board with communications and general wisdom from many years of service to NEGASS.

Brad Amidon, treasurer, reported that NEGASS is in excellent financial shape. During the past year income from memberships and donations balanced expenses, which were primarily program-related. Expenses exceeded income by \$72.

Ann Ferentz, president, provided a review of the year just past during which both NEGASS events and community theater productions of G&S in New England were back in full swing after the pandemic. NEGASS events included a dance to tunes from the operettas, called by NEGASS member and renowned dance caller Tony Parkes; several group outings to G&S productions, with discounted tickets for NEGASS members; and a winter sing of *The Mikado* in western Massachusetts. This past year also saw the acquisition of the Valley Light Opera library of G&S orchestral scores for all the operas and a few other pieces (such as Sullivan-without-Gilbert operettas). NEGASS is making the scores available for rental to any G&S groups in New England and beyond. Matt Tragert is hosting the

Library, and is the newly appointed NEGASS librarian.

During the coming year, NEGASS intends to continue to sponsor the ever-popular operetta sings, starting with *Ruddigore* in October, and discounted group outings to G&S productions for members.

All are encouraged to share ideas for events with the board (board@NEGASS.org); to submit information about G&S happenings to the Trumpet Bray (editor@NEGASS.org); and to join NEGASS or renew their memberships to support these programs. Please email contact@NEGASS.org if you are unsure of your membership status. If you aren't already a NEGASS member, we hope you will consider joining our ranks for a small insult of \$25 per year.

Sing me your song, O!

A rousing afternoon with *Yeomen of the Guard*



On the afternoon of Sunday, June 25th all the NEGASS slaves of duty who attended the annual meeting were rewarded by spending the rest of the afternoon singing or playing their way through *Yeomen of the Guard*, under the able baton of Aldo Fabrizi. The orchestra sounded fabulous and everyone did a great job, particularly considering the complexities of the *Yeomen* score.

A bit of last-minute shuffling of roles was needed because, sadly, a couple of cast members were not able to attend. Thanks to Lindsey Soboleski and the flexibility of NEGASSers, all roles were covered. Mike Bromberg ended up playing Jack Point

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GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS AND REVIEWS

Send to editor@negass.org

MEMBERSHIP: NEGASS membership dues are \$25.

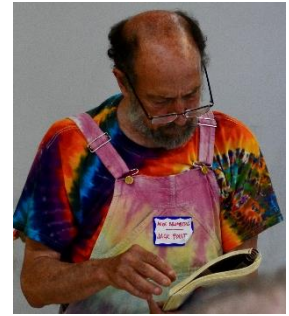
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DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL: 15th of the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.



throughout, a dream role for him; Randy Glidden moved to Sir Richard Cholmondeley; Randy Divinski stepped in as Second Yeoman at the last minute; and Juliet Cunningham covered First Yeoman, in addition to her role as Leonard Meryll, with different costume pieces for each character! Francesco Buccella made his theatrical debut as First Citizen and Andrew Conway leapt from the orchestral ranks to join Francesco in harassing Elsie as Second Citizen.



Michael Bromberg as Jack Point

Such a grand time was had by all that we barely noticed the sweltering heat of summer until the final chords sounded!

Future NEGASS events:

NEGASS is planning a sing-through of *Ruddigore* on October 22, 2023 at the Christ Lutheran Church in Natick, MA. Mark your calendars now! The NEGASS Board of Directors is always looking for events that might be of interest to the membership. Please send your ideas to programs@negass.org. The NEGASS Website, negass.org keeps a list of current events, which are also posted on our Facebook page.

∞ NEGASS NEWS ∞

NEGASS Book Sale!

by Ann Ferentz

Is your copy of *The Merrie Jest*s of Hugh Ambrose looking lonely on the bookshelf? Do you need to round out your G&S music library? Why not add some of the volumes that NEGASS is ready to part with! We've received some recent donations from NEGASS members who are scaling down and would like their G&S books to find a good home, with proceeds benefitting NEGASS.

The volumes listed below are available for an "as you like" donation. Please contact Matt Tragert, librarian@negass.org, if you would like any of them.

Books

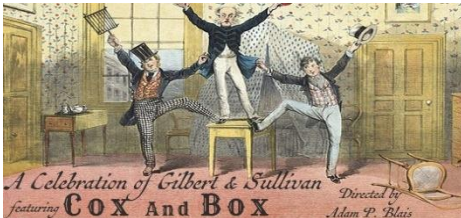
- "The Complete Plays of Gilbert and Sullivan" Illustrated by W. S. Gilbert. Garden City Publishing Co. 1938
- Leslie Ayer, "The Gilbert and Sullivan Companion"
- Reginald Allen, "Sir Arthur Sullivan." The Pierpont Library
- Andrew Goodman, "Gilbert and Sullivan's London"
- Arthur Jacobs, "Arthur Sullivan: A Victorian Musician"

Scores

- *Trial by Jury*, Schirmer edition (used)
- *Trial by Jury*, Chappell edition (used)
- *Ruddigore*, Oxford edition (new)
- *Ruddigore*, Schirmer edition (used)
- *Ruddigore*, Chappell edition (used)
- *Yeomen of the Guard*, Chappell edition (used)

The **Methuen Young People's Theatre** will present *The Pirates of Penzance* at the historic Methuen Memorial Music Hall, 192 Broadway, Methuen, MA. Performances will be the weekend following Labor Day, September 8th to 10th. For more information please visit methuencyoungpeoplestheatre@gmail.com

As reported in the last Bray, **Theater at Monmouth** at 796 Main Street, Monmouth, ME will present *A Celebration of Gilbert and Sullivan* September 14 - September 24, with a curtain raiser of *Cox and Box*; or, *The Long Lost Brothers*, *a Comic Triumveretta*. Then,



after the interval, enjoy songs from your favorite operas, including *The*

Pirates of Penzance, *Patience*, *Ruddigore*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and more! For more information visit

<https://theateratmonmouth.org/plays/h-m-s-pinafore/>

While searching for information on this group and the venue, we discovered that in the 1950's, Cumston Hall and Monmouth welcomed the



American Savoyards and their "Gilbert and Sullivan Festival Theatre." Although they only played there from 1953

to 1959, seven seasons, the lasting impression they left on the community can still be felt today.

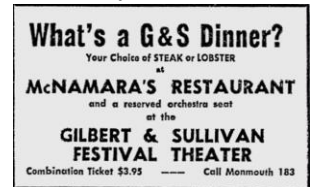
Savoynetter Stan DeOrsey helped create an exhibit, which is on display at the theater, built in 1900, to chronicle this era of G&S in Maine.

In November 1948 Dorothy Raedler started a professional Gilbert and Sullivan repertory company, The Masque and Lyre Light Opera Co., named after an amateur group Miss Raedler had directed while in college. They opened on Long Island with four different G&S shows, moving to New York City in the summer of 1949. They stayed in New York City until fall 1952, eventually performing ten two-act G&S shows.

In the fall of 1952, after a trip to England to research Gilbert's staging, costumes, sets, etc., Miss Raedler renamed the company the American Savoyards and went on tour through the U.S. performing *The Mikado* and *Patience*, generally in the spring or fall.

In 1953 Miss Raedler found Cumston Hall as the answer to a dream, the perfect location and theater. She thought of Monmouth as a permanent summer home, which G&S enthusiasts from around the whole country would visit. She named it The Gilbert and Sullivan Festival Theatre, Inc.

The American Savoyards came to Monmouth and Cumston Hall with eight shows in nine weeks, a different show each week (*The Mikado* was presented the first and last weeks). Their success caused them to add a tenth week to the schedule. They continued to return each summer to Cumston Hall, generally with ten shows for ten weeks, and initially to enthusiastic audiences. Their format was always the same, one show per week with eight performances (evenings Monday through Saturday, matinees Wednesday and Saturday, no Sunday show). Ticket costs were 99¢ in the balcony and never exceeded \$2.75 for front row seats.



In 1954 they added *Princess Ida* and *The Yeomen of the Guard* to their schedule, doing all ten shows and extending for an eleventh week. In 1955 they added the one-act plays *Trial by Jury* and *Cox & Box*. In 1956 they included *Utopia, Ltd.*, the first professional company to do this show since before 1900. In 1957 they were back to ten weeks, dropping *Patience*. Attendance increased in 1957 but so did expenses. In 1958 they cut back to nine weeks and added three non-G&S shows for increased variety. Attendance went down. In 1959 they were back to ten weeks but with five non-G&S shows, although they added *The Grand Duke* for the first professional production ever in North America.

But attendance was still down, the glow had worn off. Most Maine theater-goers did not feel a need to see *The Mikado* every summer. The end had been reached in Monmouth after seven glorious years. The primary reason was financial.

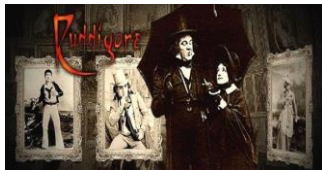
The company returned to New York City. As in Monmouth, the early years were exceptional but as the years passed, the New York theater crowd's interest lessened. In November 1965 the American Savoyards reorganized under the name American Gilbert and Sullivan Presentations, Inc. In December 1967 they officially disbanded.

The College Light Opera Company (CLOC), a non-profit theatre organization located in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, will perform two G&S operettas (out of their nine musicals season) at the Highfield Theatre, 58 Highfield Drive, Falmouth, MA:

HMS Pinafore and *Trial by Jury* June 27 – July 1
Yeomen of the Guard August 1 – 5

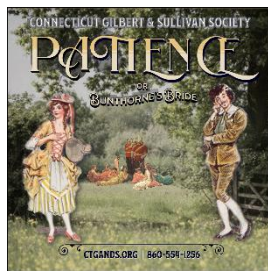
For more information visit
<http://www.collegelightoperacompany.com/>

Concord Light Opera Company of Concord, NH will perform *Ruddigore* September 30 and October 1, 2023.



Tuesday rehearsals resume on August 8 at 7:00PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 274 Pleasant St. Concord, NH. Anyone wishing to join the chorus is welcome. People are still needed for Cast, Crew, Marketing, Costuming, Hospitality and other aspects of the production. For audition music or other information please contact: Linda Ashford (603) 496-1594 or lindalashford@comcast.net

The **Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society** has announced the cast for its fall production of *Patience*.



Dates are Saturday October 28th at 2:00PM and 7:30PM and Sunday October 29th at 2:00PM at the Valley Regional High School, 256 Kelsey Hill Road, Deep River, CT. CG&SS double casts as much as possible rather than have understudies who never then get a chance to play before an audience, which also gives them a chance to develop new talent.

For further detailed information please visit <https://ctgands.org> or email jfreedman@snet.net or call 860-554-1256.

***Patience* Principal Roles**

<u>Role</u>	<u>Sat. Eve./Sun. Matinee</u>	<u>Sat. Matinee</u>
Patience	Haley Stoliker	Grace Murphy
Lady Angela	Natalie Wood	Rebecca McFarland
Lady Ella	Aversa Sheldon	Denise Schultzman
Lady Saphir	Elizabeth Boucher	Elizabeth Boucher
Lady Jane	Shira Flowers	Amber Woodward
Bunthorne	Ephraim Moshe	Ephraim Mosher
Grosvenor	David Henderson	David Henderson
Duke	Jeff Schwartz	Jeff Schwartz
Major	John Herring	Mark Callahan
Colonel	Mike Loomis	John Freedman
Solicitor	TBA	TBA

Each year the **Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society** presents a cash scholarship to a graduating high school senior who has participated in one or more of its productions. This year the Phraner – Unsworth Scholarship has been awarded to John Paul Hammond who has graduated from St. Bernard School in Uncasville, CT.



John Paul participated in 2019 as a violinist in the pit orchestra for *Thespis*, then in 2021 in the chorus of *Ruddigore*, and finally in 2022 portrayed the Boatswain in *H.M.S Pinafore*. He will be attending Washington and Lee University in the fall and although he has not decided on a major, he plans to minor in music.

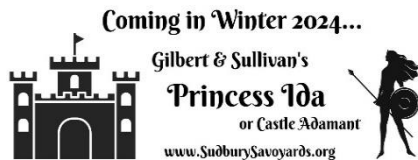
In answering the question “what I learned from participating in the Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society” he replied:

“Participating in the Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society was one of the most unique opportunities I was afforded as a high schooler. The ability to perform with such a passionate, dedicated, and talented cast in shows which they so deeply loved was a distinct honor. I learned so much about the workings of dramatic production, whether for Spencer Reese’s incredible direction, learning challenging and highly memorable pieces of music, and learning how to comport myself in front of an audience that was far larger than the audiences I was used to seeing. I was able to apply this knowledge in a number of ways, whether in my high school theater group, or in the various choral groups in which I participated during and after my time with the CTG&SS. Most special of all, however, was that I learned what people really mean by the term “labor of love.” The enthusiasm and joy that every single cast member brought to even the most menial of tasks was inspiring to say the least. Everyone there had such a burning desire to be there and to put on high quality theater, and to be surrounded by such a positive and welcoming group was an extraordinary blessing for me.”

As an interesting aside, John Paul’s younger sister has signed up to be part of the chorus for the 2023 Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society production of *Patience*.

The **Sudbury Savoyards** are planning a winter 2024 production of *Princess Ida*, Gilbert & Sullivan's eighth operatic collaboration.

Sudbury has presented a Gilbert and Sullivan show



on a Grand Scale every year since 1961 and are excited to be continuing this rich tradition in 2024.

The Sudbury Savoyards are a community theater group based in Sudbury, MA. Mainstage productions field a full cast of leads (auditioned) and chorus (unauditioned). A welcoming group that loves meeting newcomers and bringing them into their community, they recruit a full 25+ person orchestra, creating an amazing experience for their audiences. We expect this production will go up mid-late February 2024 with auditions and rehearsals starting around November.

Yes, we know it isn't

Too late for all but the last event, Elaine Crane's



GWO Concert series concludes August 2 with its Broadway Mix. A wonderful troupe of local singers. Come see it if you can!

As reported in the last Bray, Martha Birnbaum's **Cambridge Chamber Ensemble** will present their next production *Samson*.

TICKETS: <https://www.cambridgechamberensemble.org/>

Handel's SAMSON

September 28 - 30, 2023 at 1st Church in Cambridge

Delilah, learning that Samson's supernatural strength derives from his hair, secretly cuts his long locks. Her betrayal leads to his undoing.

❧ **G&S NEWS** ❧

Even as the SavoyNet Performing group is in Buxton, England preparing *Ruddigore* for this year's 29th Annual International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival on August 10th, we have received this email from Marc Shepherd:

The SavoyNet Performing Group Steering Committee has authorized me to post this call for a creative team for a production of *The Mikado* at the 2024 International

Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England. The performance is expected to take place on Thursday 8 August 2024, with rehearsals commencing 31st July.

If you are a candidate, or potential candidate, we would appreciate an **initial indication of interest** from you no later than **Saturday 5th August**. An indication of interest does not commit you to apply. Formal applications will be due by **30th August**.

Specifically, we are requesting indications of interest for a **stage director, musical director, and production manager**. Qualified candidates who have not previously directed for SavoyNet are encouraged to apply.

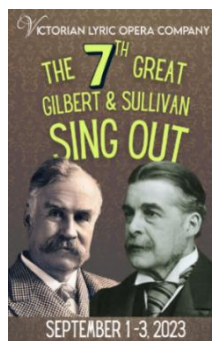
We are open to a non-traditional approach, and the Festival has presented non-traditional productions in the past. However, the show will be billed on the programme as "*The Mikado*," and it must be recognizable as such. Candidates should explicitly indicate how they would approach issues in staging the work which have raised difficulties for companies in the past few years. We do understand that ideas at this early stage are preliminary....

The SavoyNet Performing Group has performed a fully-staged opera at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival every year since 1998, aside from the two pandemic years 2020-21. Every production is planned in detail over the Internet, with the Company gathering at the Festival venue for rehearsals roughly a week before the date of the show. The success of the production depends on a year of intensive planning.

The production team is expected to announce auditions as soon as possible, with the aim of casting the show by December. It is important to cast the show promptly, due to the time frame of other groups that draw on many of the same performers...

All principals and chorus are expected to arrive entirely off-book. ...

Contact Marc Shepherd oakapple2@gmail.com



Casting is now complete for **The 7th Great Gilbert & Sullivan Sing-Out**, Labor Day Weekend, Friday, Sept 1 - Sunday, Sept 3, 2023, at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre, Rockville Civic Center, 603 Edmonston Dr., Rockville, MD 20851, hosted by the **Victorian Lyric Opera Company**. NEGASS Board President Ann Ferentz will sing

Tessa in *Gondoliers*, Angelina in *Trial*, and Elsa in *Grand Duke*. Board member John Dreslin will be conducting *Iolanthe* and accompanying *Princess Ida* and *Pirates*. CG&SS members Joan Toone and Michael Loomis will also attend. Joan is singing Lady Blanche in *Princess Ida* and is a bridesmaid in *Trial*, and Michael will be Colonel Calverly in *Patience* and Sergeant Meryll in *Yeomen*.

✧ EDITOR'S CORNER ✧

As detailed in the first article in this issue, the NEGASS sing-through of *Yeomen of the Guard* at our annual meeting, with orchestra, was a huge success. There wasn't space to include many of the numerous pictures president Ann Ferentz took of the event, so I'll display more of them here.



The best part is that we were accompanied by a full orchestra, masterfully conducted by Aldo Fabrizi.

Or maybe the best part of the day is being able to catch up with and sing with old friends we have made while doing shows and concerts in the past who have become more like family.



Well, actually the best part is being able to perform a role, as I did, that I've done twice with CT G&S Society. Here I am as Wilfred with Kathryn Denney as Phoebe.



Maybe the best part is people taking on parts they could never sing in a show. Above we find Juliet Cunningham as Leonard Meryll singing "Alas I waver to and fro" with Phoebe and Tony Parkes as Sgt. Meryll.

Or could the best thing be when a person originally assigned a small part gets elevated to a



major role because someone else had to drop out at the last minute, as happened to Randy Glidden when he was moved to Sir Richard Cholmondeley? Here he is with Point and Elsie (Ann Ferentz) singing "How say you maiden?"

Actually, the best part is all these things put together. You never know what to expect from a read-through. Performances range from barely adequate to sublime. The quartet singing "Strange



Adventure" came in dead center on pitch at the end of their a capella section. Bravi to Lindsey Soboleski (Kate), Carolyn Kelly Schwartz (Dame Carruthers), Brad Amidon (Fairfax), and (Tony Parkes (Meryll).



Finally, never wishing to let a good photo go to waste, meet our new NEGASS Librarian, Matt Tragert, who also played Wilfred Shadbolt in Act 2.

On page three is an article about the American Savoyards. If you are going to the Monmouth event September 14, or if you are just visiting the Augusta area, be sure to drop in to the exhibit at Cumston Hall to see the entire history of this group and its cast members.

Returning briefly to my Dickens theme, our next NEGASS read/sing-through will be *Ruddigore* in October. In one exchange, Dick Dauntless asks Despard "Does your honour know what it is to have a heart?" and receives the reply: "My honour knows what it is to have a complete apparatus for conducting the circulation of the blood through the veins and arteries of the human body." Consider my surprise when I came across this conversation in Dickens' "Hard Times" in chapter 8: "Bitzer, have you a heart?" to which Bitzer replies: "The circulation, sir . . . couldn't be carried out without one. No man, sir, acquainted the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood could doubt that I have a heart."

- 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, John Dreslin, Marianne Orlando, Jacqueline Haney, Elaine Crane, Marc Shepherd, Martha Birnbaum, and Stan DeOrsey.

(Please forgive any omissions!)

❧ CALENDAR ❧

NEGASS Events

Ruddigore
NEGASS Read-thru

October 22, 2023

Christ Lutheran Church
110 Union Avenue
Natick, MA

G&S Events

The College Light Opera Company
Yeomen of the Guard

August 1 - 5, 2023

Highfield Theatre
58 Highfield Drive
Falmouth, MA

Victorian Lyric Opera Company's
7th Great Gilbert & Sullivan
Sing-Out

September 1 - 3, 2023

Rockville Civic Center
603 Edmonston Dr.
Rockville, MD

Pirates of Penzance
Methuen Young Peoples Theatre

September 8 - 10, 2023

Methuen Memorial Music Hall
192 Broadway
Methuen, MA

A Celebration of Gilbert and Sullivan

September 14 - 24, 2023

Theater at Monmouth
796 Main Street
Monmouth Maine

Ruddigore
Concord Light Opera Company

Sept 30 and Oct 1, 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church
274 Pleasant St.
Concord, NH

Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Patience

Oct 28th 2:00PM & 7:30PM
October 29th 2:00PM

Valley Regional High School
256 Kelsey Hill Road
Deep River, CT

Sudbury Savoyards
Princess Ida

February 2024

Sudbury MA