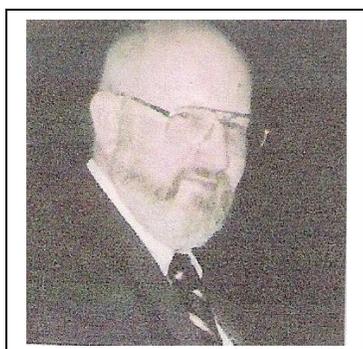




~ NEGASS NEWS ~

Trumpet Bray editor retires

By Martha Birnbaum



For over 5 years, **David DeVries** has steered our flagship publication, *The Trumpet Bray*, with style, class, attention to detail, and never missing a deadline. David is now stepping down but not stepping

away, and will serve as a mentor to new editor Laurie Weissbrot.

David's life-long love of G & S started in high school in the 1960s when he had the opportunity to see the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company at Boston's old Savoy Theater and again at the Colonial Theater in the 1970s when they toured the U.S. Later he became a member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust Ltd. David took over the *Bray* in 2015; although he had never edited a publication, he was undaunted! Drawing on his intimate knowledge of the G & S canon, he produced *Bray* editions covering all known G & S productions, collegiate and professional, in New England and New York, writing many of the reviews himself.

David introduced puzzles, interviews, and scholarly articles on G & S history, enriching our readers with little-known yet fascinating facts about his beloved theatrical duo. David may be retired, but he is still there for NEGASS.

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*Do You Have
a Favorite G&S Song?*
Write us an article about your
favorite G&S song in 750 words
or so. Send your nominee to the
editor at editor@negass.org

~ RECENT PRODUCTIONS ~

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a dearth of live productions. NEGASS was proud to present a Zoom Viewing Party:

~~ A Day at the Savoy Theater ~~
Saturday, November 21, 2020, at 7 pm
Featuring Mr. Jericho

Ralph MacPhail, Jr., Artistic Director for Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, contributed the following article

One of the delightful aspects of spending the last half-century devoted to Gilbert & Sullivan has been following the scholarship devoted to this remarkable collaboration.

I have seen Sullivan's full orchestral scores come out of London bank vaults and made available to all. I have seen books strip away the mythology that has surrounded the storied collaboration of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan (and Richard D'Oyly Carte.) I have seen and heard performances of



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GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS AND REVIEWS

Send to editor@negass.org

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



Sullivan's non-Gilbert works (including his oratorios) as well as Gilbert's non-Sullivan dramatic works. I have witnessed the lesser-known Savoy operas receiving more and more performances. I have been delighted to note that interest in Gilbert & Sullivan is now a part of the grist for scholarly journals and the repertoires of "grand" opera houses.

Mr. Jericho

This presentation of *Mr. Jericho* by Gilbert & Sullivan Austin represents another way in which scholarship into the history of the Savoy operas has deepened and broadened. Just five years ago, *Mr. Jericho* (words by Harry Greenbank; music by Ernest Ford) was an obscure footnote in the "post-carpet-quarrel" career of Gilbert & Sullivan. It was written in 1893 as a curtain-raiser for *Haddon Hall*, which was produced at the Savoy and composed by Sullivan, but written by Sydney Grundy. After a century of obscurity, *Mr. Jericho* was rescued from its fate by musicologist Christopher O'Brian and published in England.

I ordered a copy as soon as it became available, and found it a laugh-out-loud delight. The music sounds a lot like Sullivan's (Ernest Ford was Sullivan's pupil at the Royal Academy of Music), and Harry Greenbank was well on his way toward writing the tremendous successes of "the new musical comedy" at Daly's Theatre – works that for a while seemed to supersede comic opera in the public's estimation in the 1890s. Greenbank was surely familiar with his Gilbert & Sullivan, and in *Mr. Jericho* you may find echoes of *The Sorcerer*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Iolanthe*, and – well, discovering Greenbank's possible antecedents is a delight I'd rather leave to *you*.

As for the little operetta itself, it's a charming work filled with pleasant musical numbers and funny characters and dialogue poking fun (as Gilbert & Sullivan often did) at class distinctions and their impediments to "true love." My long-time and valued musical collaborator **Dr. Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** was enthusiastic; GSA President **Libby Weed** got on board, and Gilbert & Sullivan Austin soon costumed and fully staged *Mr. Jericho* with the suggestion of a set, and performed it with grand-piano accompaniment by **Jeanne Dayton Sasaki**.

Just who is *Mr. Jericho*? The eponymous gentleman is actually the manufacturer of "Jericho's Jams," a popular breakfast staple, and we

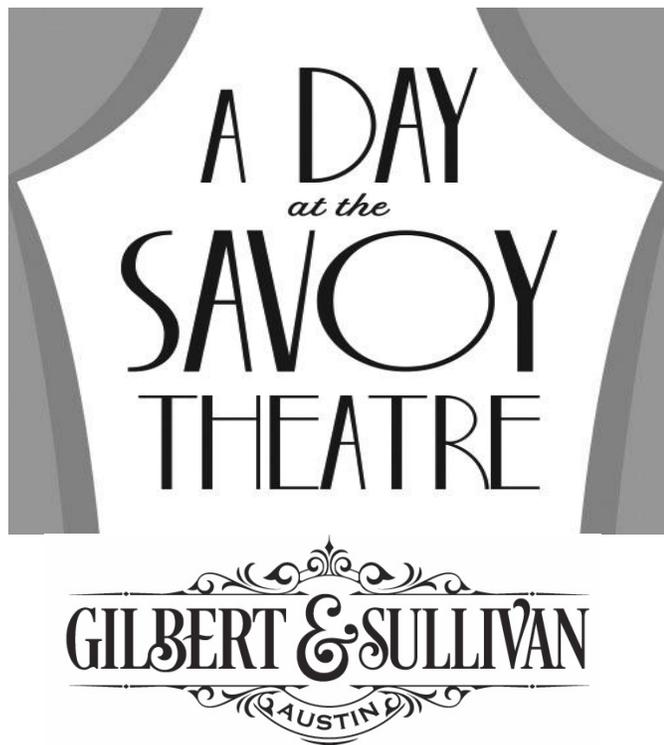
guarantee you'll be singing his advertising jingle long after the webcast is over! And if you'd like to dig deeper into the show, you can't do better than to consult the Gilbert & Sullivan Archive:
<https://www.gsarchive.net/companions/jericho/index.html>.

A Day at the Savoy Theatre

When Gilbert & Sullivan Austin decided to produce the work, we realized that it was really too short to stand on its own, so CFO **David Wieckowski** researched the history of the Savoy Theatre. His research led to an hour-long illustrated lecture using PowerPoint slides of historical images that complement his text. We further decided to have the five performers in *Mr. Jericho* perform musical numbers from each Gilbert & Sullivan première that ran at the Savoy from its opening in 1881 until *Mr. Jericho* opened in 1893. Faithful Savoyard **Janette Jones** selected these numbers, and the two of us staged them, interspersing them in appropriate places in the chronology.

Here is a link to the full program:
<https://www.gilbertsullivan.org/shows/a-day-at-the-savoy-theatre-2020/>

We Austin Savoyards were delighted when the New England Gilbert & Sullivan Society expressed interest in sharing our production to a wider audience, and we'd like very much to see more such inter-organizational cooperation in the future.



NEGASS Programs

With the holidays fast approaching, NEGASS will continue its series of virtual programming with **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear: A Victorian Christmas Celebration**. It is a "lessons and carols" program featuring Thomas Dawkins and including holiday music by Sir Arthur Sullivan. Join us on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at 7:00 pm Eastern Standard Time using this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83029776990?pwd=NndyM2Z2TUdPa1BXc2xTNIJFak1aUT09>

The Lessons and Carols services that many of us know and love arrived in America even before it came to English collegiate chapels; Brown University began their version of the service in 1916. The famous King's College, Cambridge "Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols" began when Chaplain Eric Milner-White and his music director Arthur Henry Mann introduced this style of Christmas Eve worship only a few weeks after WWI came to an end; the choirmaster of the Groton School heard it there and brought it back home in 1928. But the beginnings of this type of service came thirty years before King's, at Truro Cathedral, or rather the barn-like structure that preceded the building of the cathedral, in 1878. The Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, "arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve, nine carols and nine tiny lessons. They were read by various officers of the church, beginning with a chorister and ending, through different grades, with the bishop."

Thomas Dawkins, music director and organist of the Tufts University Chaplaincy will explore the history of the "lessons and carols" tradition along with some of the music from the first celebrations in Victorian England.



❧ G&S NEWS ❧

The International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival has just released its 2021 Festival Newsletter. Besides the expectation that, given the end of the pandemic, the festival will actually take place next summer, they announced the receipt of a £120,000 grant from the Cultural Recovery Fund. This will assure the festival's solvency and allow its continuation for many years into the future.

Information is available at www.gsfestival.org.

Greater Worcester Opera presents *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* Radio Play

Join us for a jolly romp through Gayden Wren's witty adaptation of this classic story, set to the music of Arthur Sullivan, with lyrics inspired by W.S. Gilbert. In the form of an Olde Tyme radio play, this will be an entertaining event for all ages! Featuring the vocal talents of Greater Worcester Opera. Free to enjoy (suggested donation \$10.) To be broadcast on Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 7:00 pm on Facebook and YouTube; available on YouTube afterwards.

❧ A MOMENT IN TIME ❧

From The Trumpet Bray, Vol 16, No.5, Feb. 1992:

Sally Lunn Tea Cakes

Legend has it that Sally Lunn touted her special Bath buns in the streets of that city. There is reference in 1727 to Lun's cakes, and these were probably made at a baker's shop of that name.

We do know that an enriched bread made with Caraway seeds and sprinkled with sugar *was* popular at breakfast time in the eighteenth century Bath houses and was called Sol-et-Lune - old Norman French for sun and moon - referring to the golden sun color at the egg-glazed top and the whiter, paler under part.

It is said - and not without good reason - that Sally Lunn, when "crying" her wares in the street, called out, "Soleilune." Which came first, we don't really know; the truth lies somewhere between.

What is perhaps even more interesting is that at one time it was traditional to eat "Sally Lunn" with a fork, slicing it horizontally and bathing it with scalded cream! Today, we eat it thinly sliced and well buttered at afternoon tea, or cut somewhat

thicker when a day or two old and toasted in front of a roaring fire.

4-tablespoons (1/2 stick) sweet butter
3/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon superfine granulated sugar
1-tablespoon active dry yeast or 1/2 ounce fresh
2 eggs, beaten
3 cups white bread flour
1-teaspoon salt.

For the glaze:

2-tablespoons sugar, mixed with
2-tablespoons water.

Makes 10 to 12 slices

Grease two 5-inch cake pans or two 1-pint ovenproof soufflé dishes.

Over low heat, slowly melt the butter in the milk with the sugar. Sprinkle with the yeast and leave in a warm place until frothy. Beat in the eggs.

Sift the flour and salt together into a large bowl, add the liquid, and mix well. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 10 minutes. Shape into two balls and place in the prepared pans or soufflé dishes. Place in oiled plastic bags and leave in a warm place for about 1 hour, or until the dough fills the pans.

Preheat the oven to 450 F.

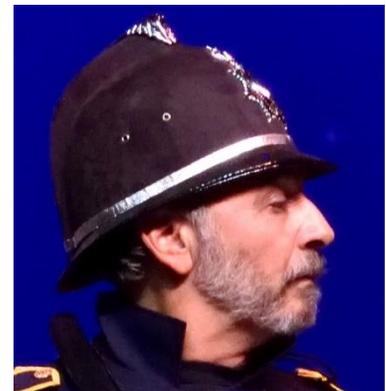
Bake for about 20 minutes, or until golden brown. Turn out onto a wire rack and glaze while still hot. Serve hot, sliced horizontally and buttered.

❧ CAST SPOTLIGHT ❧

John Freedman, Vice President of the Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society

John Freedman joined the Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society (CGSS) in the spring of 2012 after searching on-line to see if anyone in CT was performing a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

He found the CGSS website and saw they were



holding auditions for that year's shows: *Trial By Jury* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*. He had grown up listening to *H.M.S. Pinafore* and knew most of the music and lyrics to it, but had never performed on stage before. Much to the company's delight, he decided to give it a try. Though terrified of the prospect of being up on stage, he accepted the offer to take the role of Bob Beckett, Carpenter's Mate in *Pinafore*.

Like many others, John learned about Gilbert & Sullivan from his parents. His father was a bit of an Anglophile and a big G&S fan. His mother, an actress, also loved G&S and was a big theater fan, especially musical theater. He grew up listening to G&S, and attended performances of their shows with his folks. His appreciation of them stems from the funny story lines and characters; story lines that brilliantly satirize society and the cultural norms of their times, plots full of ridiculous twists and ironies, characters whose circumstances and personalities are often overblown caricatures of people of the era, and replete with recognizable foibles common to all of us. He quotes John Dreslin (CG&SS Music Director and NEGASS Board member) who pointed out what makes G&S so special:

"Gilbert had the knack of taking common human foibles and incorporating them into characters to an excessive degree to make them comic. They are best acted out in a straight manner, so that the characters are in earnest and not aware of how outlandish they are. Their actions all make sense to them; only the audience is in on the joke."

Freedman points out that the Bobbies in *Pirates* are at their funniest when portrayed as taking themselves seriously. The audience sees the hopeless folly of their upcoming confrontation with the pirates and, as they cower when General Stanley's daughters urge them on to death and slaughter, the silliness that belies their otherwise stern and resolute mien.

Since that first timid audition in 2012, John has had the opportunity to play many of the lead baritone roles in the canon, including King Gama in *Princess Ida*, Giorgio and Don Alhambra in *Gondoliers*, Foreman in *Trial by Jury*, Pooh Bah and Mikado in *The Mikado*, Private Willis in *Iolanthe*, Sergeant of Police in *Pirates*, and Apollo in *Thespis*. He has also stood chorus and understudy duty.

John was recently elected as CG&SS Vice President, and will serve as CG&SS's Producer when they resume live performances, hopefully in 2021.

Professionally, after graduating from college, John worked as a metallurgical engineer; first in R&D and later on, managing a group developing computer automated test inspection systems. He later switched careers to computers and information systems, and retired in 2009 as the Director of Application Services in the Information Systems department at Foxwoods.

~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, Ralph MacPhail, Jr., Dr. John Dreslin, John Freedman and the CG&SS websites. (Please forgive any omissions!)

~ INTRODUCING THE NEW EDITOR ~

My name is Laurie Weissbrot. I have a long exposure to and love of all things Gilbert and Sullivan, including performance in staged and informal productions, set construction, and program layout. I only recently joined the NEGASS Board, but have been performing Gilbert and Sullivan for the past 40 years with Simsbury Light Opera, Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society, and at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival, as well as appearing in productions in Nashua and Concord, New Hampshire, and travelling around the country for sing-outs and sing-ins. I also have some pretty strong opinions, some of which I will be sharing with you in the future, about what separates a great performance from a merely good one. There are no bad performances. If someone is doing G&S, that's good!

This is my first foray into putting together an issue of *The Trumpet Bray*. Please bear with me as I get my feet wet. There will be no quiz this month, although I intend to get back to that tradition with the next issue (February 2021). I hope many things will begin to get back to normal in 2021!

In the meantime, I wish you all a safe, happy holiday season.

— Laurie Weissbrot

~ CALENDAR ~

NEGASS Events

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear:
A Victorian Christmas Celebration*
A Presentation by Tom Dawkins

December 12, 2020
7:00 P.M.

ZOOM link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83029776990?pwd=NndyM2Z2TUdPa1Bxc2xTNlJFak1aUT09>

G&S Events

A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol
Radio Play
Greater Worcester Opera
www.greaterworchesteropera.org

December 13, 2020
7:00 pm

Facebook and
YouTube



Pirates of Penzance
Simsbury Light Opera Co. ~~Postponed to spring 2021~~
sloco.org CANCELLED

International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival

July 31 – August 8 2021
August 8 -22 2021
September 7 – 11 2021

Buxton Opera House
Royal Hall Harrogate
Malvern Theatre

