



❖ NEGASS NEWS ❖

Welcome, joy! Adieu to sadness!

A note from Ann Ferentz, NEGASS President

As we usher in the new year, the NEGASS board hopes there will be many reasons for celebration in 2021, among them the upcoming 45th anniversary of NEGASS. Founded in October 1976 as the brainchild of the late Warren Colson, NEGASS has fostered appreciation of Gilbert and Sullivan in New England through sings, symposia, play readings, outings, and more for almost half a century. Who could have imagined in 1976 that NEGASS would ever hold events "virtually"—and what a sustaining joy those programs have been throughout the COVID-19 pandemic!

During this anniversary year, the NEGASS series of virtual programming will continue, spearheaded by indefatigable program chair Jacqueline Haney. We will also release archival videos of NEGASS past events throughout the year. Finally, there will be a 45th anniversary celebration in the fall, virtually or in-person, as circumstances allow.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the celebration. Do you have favorite NEGASS stories or photos? Please send memories to bray@negass.org for potential publication in the Bray and/or sharing at the 45th anniversary celebration, whatever form that may take! We would love to feature some favorite moments in each issue this year.

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Do you have an interesting backstage story?

Write us an article about your challenge to fulfill a director's unreasonable demands in 750 words or so. Send your nominee to the editor at editor@negass.org

❖ RECENT PRODUCTIONS ❖

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, A Victorian Christmas Celebration, presented by Tom Dawkins. This was a delightful "lessons and carols" program featuring holiday music by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol. This performance by Greater Worcester Opera in the style of a radio play was an absolute delight, with many laugh-out-loud moments as the viewer enjoyed pieces from favorite G&S operas worked into the familiar Dickens classic. Gayden Wren did a masterful job of picking appropriate pieces from *The Mikado*, *Pirates*, *Pinafore*, *Iolanthe*, *Ruddigore*, *Princess Ida*, *Gondoliers*, *Patience*, and *Yeomen of the Guard*, and re-writing the lyrics to fit the story. The performers from GWO, many of whom are members of NEGASS, sang and acted their way into one's very heart. You can find this performance still available on YouTube or on the GWO website, www.greaterworcesteropera.org, and it is well worth spending an enjoyable hour and a half watching.

January 2021 was a good month for virtual programming. Connecticut G&S Society showed its 2019 production of *Thespis* on January 23rd on its YouTube channel. Prior to that, on January 9th, they showed the September 2019 NEGASS symposium on *Thespis* put on by Jonathan Strong and John Dreslin. On January 16th, NEGASS held a watch party of the 1939 Victor Schertzinger film version of *The Mikado* with historical notes and discussion led by Board member Dr. John Dreslin. The film featured many D'Oyly Carte principals and chorus, including the incredible Martyn Green. Even though edited to fit a 90-minute running time, it was the finest performance of the Mikado your editor has ever seen.



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GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS AND REVIEWS

Send to editor@negass.org

MEMBERSHIP: NEGASS membership dues are \$25. Please join NEGASS online at 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

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



❖ NEGASS Programs ❖

In collaboration with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Maine, NEGASS will hold a Zoom trivia night on February 6, 2021 at 7 pm, hosted by Daniel Breen. Visit the Events page on the NEGASS website, www.negass.org, and tap on the Zoom link.

NEGASS and Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Maine host a trivia game with the focus on the works of Arthur Sullivan and W S Gilbert

Topic: G&S Trivia Night
Time: Feb 6, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89067288363?pwd=bVY5VWE1VHRtdm01MlNhbkI2Qmtwdz09>

A cooperative effort by the Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society, Valley Light Opera, Amherst Ballet and NEGASS brings us a viewing party of *Pineapple Poll* at 8:00pm on February 27. When the copyright on Sullivan's music expired in 1950, Charles Mackerras, then assistant conductor and repetiteur for Sadler's Wells Opera, felt that an arrangement of music from the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas would prove as popular as Rosenthal's arrangement of Offenbach's melodies in *Gaité Parisienne*. Mackerras described his choice of music:

"*Pineapple Poll* is a patchwork of tunes from the Savoy Operas, which pass by so quickly as to bewilder even Sullivan experts. Every bar is taken from the operas, although I found it necessary to 'cheat' at the end and insert a few bars from Sullivan's delightful *Overture di Ballo*. Occasionally I have made several tunes go together (a trick often used by Sullivan himself), and those who consider Sullivan incomplete without Gilbert will find that the original words in the opera often fit the situation in the ballet."

Pineapple Poll premiered on 13 March 1951 at Sadler's Wells Theatre by the Sadler's Wells Ballet as part of the Festival of Britain. To view this performance by the Amherst Ballet, visit Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society's YouTube channel.

❖ G&S NEWS ❖

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society (London, UK) has events each month. The next two are:

"RECORDED - CORDED - CORDED" (*The Gondoliers*)
Saturday 13th February - A presentation from Leon Berger starting at 7.15pm

In 1888, Sir Arthur Sullivan commented on the invention of the Edison phonograph, "I am somewhat terrified that so much hideous & bad music will be put on record for ever." Vice-President Leon Berger shares with us some of his favourite tracks of unusual,

offbeat and sometimes rare G&S recordings collected over the last 50 years with his inimitable commentary.

An illustrated talk on the British Library's G&S archive
by Sarah Lenton Sat 20th March at 2.30. Sarah Lenton is a professional writer, broadcaster and archivist. She hopes to include input from another expert who can support her presentation and add to the chat and slides. Her suggestions of who she is hoping will join her sounds like we may be in for a very interesting afternoon indeed. Watch this space! There should be time for some question and answer afterwards.

The Society hopes to be able to make these meetings available globally on Zoom, but space is limited. To apply, email Hon. Sec Robert Gray at mrgoldbury@hotmail.com putting **G&S Zoom ASOC** in the subject line.

❖ A MOMENT IN TIME ❖

Pre-NEGASS Memories: Former member Peter Savon provided the two photographs below from the Martyn Green Reception at Dean S. Edmond's home on the occasion of Mr. Green donating his papers to the Boston University Archives in 1968. Green also served as artistic director for Simsbury Light Opera Company for two years, staging *Pirates of Penzance* in 1973 and *Patience* in 1974, a year before his death.



Martyn Green with members of the Boston University Savoyards. Seated are Warren Colson (NEGASS founder), Charles Garman, Martyn Green, and Jeffrey Weisenfreund (NEGASS charter member; back of head to camera). Paul Seltzer is standing in the background.

❖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, Peter Zavon, Dr. John Dreslin, and the CG&SS websites. (Please forgive any omissions!)



From L to R: Alan Abrams, Constance V. Miller, Charles Garman, ?, Cynthia DuPont, Martyn Green, and NEGASS charter members Juliet Cunningham, Jeffrey Weisenfreund, and Peter Zavon.

❖ EDITOR'S CORNER ❖

I recently started to read the works of Charles Dickens. Somehow I missed out on this in grade school in the early 1960s. While I expected to see many societal references, I was struck by some specific characters, plot lines, and dialogue that Gilbert seems to have lifted directly from Dickens. I shall start to address some of these on these pages. If you express an interest, I'll repeat the theme. If no one wants to see them, I'll stop.

This issue's citing is from a short story called *The Chimes*, a novella published in 1844. The main character is a Porter named Toby Veck, who must deliver a message to Sir Joseph Bowley from Alderman Cute. Laid out on two consecutive lines is the following:

"From Alderman Cute, Sir Joseph."
"Is this all? Have you nothing else, Porter?"

In case you don't see what caught my eye, I'll repeat the above with some typeface enhancement:

"From Alderman Cute, **Sir Joseph**."
"Is this all? Have you nothing else, **Porter**?"

So here we find the principal character from HMS Pinafore. Am I exploiting a coincidence? Let's look at some of the surrounding dialogue, where this gentleman and his wife discuss children on the public dole. She states "Nice children indeed, Sir Joseph." The Lady Bowley also composes a song for the poor men and boys in the village to sing to celebrate their assigned occupations and be happy in their proper lowly stations.

I would be interested to hear from any G&S scholars who might read this as to whether they agree that Gilbert might have been more than a little inspired by Dickens in some of the details surrounding his Sir Joseph Porter character.

— Laurie Weissbrot

February 2021

❖ CALENDAR ❖

NEGASS Events

Trivia Night
(with G&S Society of Maine)

February 6, 2021
7:00 pm

Zoom link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89067288363?pwd=bVY5VWE1VHRtdm01MlNHbkI2Qmtwdz09>

Pineapple Poll
(with Connecticut G & S Society,
Valley Light Opera, and
Amherst Ballet)

February 27, 2021
7:00 pm

CG&SS YouTube channel

Princess Ida
A comparison of the play
and the Tennyson poem
By John Dreslin

March 27, 2021
7:00 pm

Go to the Events page of negass.org
for the Zoom link.

G&S Events

**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

Ruddigore
Connecticut G & S Society
Middlefield, CT

October 2021

The Pirates of Penzance
Valley Light Opera
Northampton, MA

November 2021

The Grand Duke
Sudbury Savoyards,
Sudbury, MA

February 2022

TBD - **The Gondoliers** with Troupers
Light Opera, Norwalk, CT