



THE TRUMPET BRAY

NEGASS
The New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society
P.O. Box 367, Arlington, MA 02476-0004

Vol. XXXIII No. 4
January, 2009

"How would I play the part -- . . .?"

MASTER CLASSES WITH ROBERTA MORRELL
Saturday, January 24 at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. & 4 p.m.
First Religious Society, Carlisle, MA
Sunday, January 25 at 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m. & 6:45 p.m.
Brandeis University, Waltham, MA



OUR UPCOMING MEETINGS

Roberta Morrell, singer, actress, director, author and performer with the original D'Oyly Carte Opera Company will give Master Classes in the greater Boston area on Saturday, January 24 and Sunday, January 25, 2009. These events are sponsored jointly by NEGASS and by the Savoyard Light Opera Company of Carlisle, MA. Performers, directors and aficionados of all ages and interests will find enjoyment and insight from these classes, whether as a participant or observer.

On completing her singing studies at the Royal College of Music, London, Roberta Morrell joined the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in 1972 and remained until the closure in 1982. She toured with the company twice to North America and to Australia and New Zealand. Since 1982, Ms. Morrell has worked as a free-lance performer and director and has staged over 80 operettas and musicals, both in the UK and US. She also appears with and directs "The Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan" company at concerts throughout Britain. She had given Master Classes in Philadelphia and New York and returns to Boston after her successful, and sold-out, efforts of last year.

For Performers: individual master classes are 40 minutes in length and are excellent for honing your audition or concert skills. Solos, duets, trios and quartets from any genre - Gilbert & Sullivan, operetta, musical theater, etc. - are welcome. You will need to be entirely off-book during your session. We also welcome monologues and 5- minute play scenes for non-singers.

Please bring two copies of your music - one for Ms. Morrell and one for the pianist, Thomas Dawkins.

Each class costs just \$50, which includes videotaping your session (please bring your own VHS videotape) and observation of the other classes in your time block.

In addition to the solo slots, the first session on Saturday is a group workshop for \$20 per person in the group. This group class is for both principals and chorus who want to improve their performance proficiency while having barrels of fun! **Come as an individual - join the group!**

Reservations for performers are essential. Since time is now very short before the event, please contact Rebecca Hains at programchair@negass.org to see which time slots still have vacancies.

WEATHER: In case of possibly inclement January weather, please check the NEGASS web site for up-to-date information. Performers will be called or emailed in case of cancellation.

For observers: You will have the opportunity to see how a master director works with a performer to develop a character and think about interpretation and presentation. The difference between the performer's first presentation at the beginning and the final one are a revelation. (Those of us of a 'certain age' may remember when Educational Television used to regularly telecast master classes conducted by such luminaries as Pablo Casals, Jascha Heifetz and Maria Callas, to name a few.)

Each session consisting of three to four master classes is \$10 per observer per session. NEGASS members are entitled to one session at no cost. Reservations for observers are recommended but not essential. Checks or cash will be taken at the door.

DIRECTIONS TO CARLISLE

First Religious Society, 27 School Street.

From Route 128, take Routes 4/225 nine miles through Bedford, following Route 225 on to Carlisle.

From Route 495, take Exit 32. Follow signs to Route 225. Turn left onto Route 225 and follow to Carlisle Center.

School Street comes directly off the traffic circle in the center of Carlisle, where MA-225, Bedford Street, Concord Street and School Street come together.

DIRECTIONS TO BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

415 South Street, Waltham, MA
Slosberg Hall, Room 212

Turn left when you enter the Brandeis campus. The Slosberg Center will be the first building on your left.

From the Mass. Turnpike (I-90) Eastbound
Take exit 14 for I-95/Rt 128. After the toll, keep left for 95/128 North. While on ramp, exit immediately onto exit 24 for Route 30. Bear left onto Route 30. Turn right at first traffic light onto River Road. Follow this for 1.5 miles, where it turns into South Street. Brandeis is 0.5 miles ahead on the left of South Street.

From the Mass. Turnpike (I-90) Westbound
Take exit 15 for I-95/Rt 128 and Route 30. After the toll proceed straight for Route 30. Turn right at end of the ramp, and then right again at first traffic light onto Route 30. Turn left at next traffic light onto River Road. Follow this for 1.5 miles, where it turns into South Street. Brandeis is 0.5 miles ahead on the left of South Street.

From I-95/Route 128 Southbound
Take exit 24 for Route 30. At end of ramp, proceed through traffic light (across Route 30). This is River Road (River Road becomes South Street), and Brandeis is two miles ahead on the left.

From I-95/Route 128 Northbound
Take exit 24 for Route 30. Route 30 is one of several options at this exit, so follow signs carefully. Turn left at the top of the ramp onto Route 30. Turn right at the traffic lights. This is South Street, and Brandeis is two miles ahead on the left.

By commuter rail

Commuter train service is available from Boston's North Station (Fitchburg / South Acton line) to the Brandeis/Roberts Station that borders the campus.

Bray Editor

Due to circumstances beyond our control, Jim Parmentier has relinquished the position of Bray Editor. Michael Belle has been appointed in his place for the remainder of the current year. Since Mike won't be able to take over until the February issue, the current issue has been put together by me with the very able and welcome assistance of Editor Emerita Marion Carroll.

Please send items for inclusion in the Bray to:

Editor@negass.org

In order to avoid being caught short in the future, we welcome enquiries from individuals who might be interested in becoming Assistant Editor, with a view to possibly taking over in the future. Interested individuals should contact Marion Carroll for further information.

J. Donald Smith
President

NEGASS Meeting Schedule, Spring 2009

January 24-25	Master Class Weekend with Roberta Morrell (see main story)
SATURDAY, February 14; 2:00 p.m. at MIT	Valentine's Day Fantasy with MITG&SP
Sunday, March 22 3:00 p.m., in Lynn, MA	Last-Minute Light Opera Yeomen of the Guard with Mass Theatrica

NEXT BRAY DEADLINE: January 25, 2009

Next Bray Stuffing: Sunday, February 1, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. at the home of Janice and Ron Dallas, 63 Everett Street, Arlington, MA. E-mail or telephone for directions: 781-643-2537 or membership@negass.org

Reviews of Recent Productions

The Bostonians *Yeomen of the Guard*

We have not received a review of this production, but the Boston Phoenix review by Lloyd Schwartz is on-line at:

<http://thephoenix.com/Boston/Music/72959-A-song-to-sing-O/>

Harvard-Radcliffe G&S Players *Iolanthe*

Of Fairy Tales and Peer Pressure

"Iolanthe" is probably the most erudite of the Gilbert and Sullivan canon, both in terms of Gilbert's script and Sullivan's setting, as well as one of their silliest conceits, what with the entire House of Lords achieving a pixillated apotheosis in fairyland. The best thing to do with it is to play it as it lies, which the recent (December 4-13) Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players production by and large did. It is always gratifying to see a college G&S production in which all participants appear not only enthusiastic but also focused, skillful and knowing—they clearly get it.

Students always have lots on their plates, especially as a term draws to its close, so it would be churlish to pick on minor gaffes and glitches (of which there seemed to be fewer in this outing than this reviewer has seen in other HRG&SP productions). Some things call for special praise: stage director Benjamin Morris and lighting designer Mary Ellen Stebbins deserve kudos for very well-designed and executed tableaux, notably in Mountarat's "When Britain Really Ruled the Waves"; the entrance of the peers eschewed the usual snaking line and varied the movement and placement nicely. The costumes, some of which were acquired from outside but many of which were made in-house by Costume Designer Antonia Pugliese, were superb, and the sets by Stephany Lin, props and special effects were simple but imaginative and professionally effective.

There were some terrific performances, with solid singing, by Ben Nelson as Lord Tolloller, Meghan McLoughlin as the Fairy Queen, and Stewart Kramer as Private Willis (Kramer is but a freshman, so we'll be following his career with great interest). Aseem Shukla as Strepthon and Anna Ward as Phyllis have fine voices and deployed them attractively, though Shukla needs to "cheat out" to project better, and Ward needs to get the volume up (G&S follow grand-opera conventions—no mikes to help fill the hall!). Matt Stone's Lord Chancellor confronted the opera's many inherent vocal and dramatic challenges, some of which he met ably (his spoken diction and stagecraft were admirable) and some not (sung diction and volume, even with the Nightmare Song slowed considerably). All the other principal performers, including Bridget Haile in the title role, Jonathan Finn-Gamino as Lord Mountarat, and

Adrianna Colon, Anna Resnick and Paige Martin as Celia, Leila and Fleta respectively, were capable and convincing in their roles. The orchestra, under the direction of David Miller, held up its end rather better than several prior incarnations in this reviewer's memory. There were several other production highlights and novelties, the most successful of which was the double-encore of "If You Go In," with the last iteration splendidly and hilariously tap-danced by Nelson, Stone and Finn-Gamino (no Harvard student should arrive on campus without his or her tap shoes!). One contribution by Assistant Lighting Director Michael Zellmann-Rohrer should not go unmentioned: his bio in the program was written entirely in classical Greek, thereby furnishing us a very appropriate Greek remark. Alas, no other contributors wrote theirs in French or Latin.

Inevitably, there are some things that don't work out quite as hoped. An innovative attempt to choreograph the overture with a kind of fairy prelude suffered both from an overly complicated structure for the small number of dancers and from the fact that Iolanthe's is one of Sullivan's best overtures, from which any visual distraction is suspect. Also, the stage business attending Tolloller's glorious aria "Spurn Not the Nobly Born" (a/k/a "Blue Blood") seemed fundamentally misconceived—Tolloller is here pleading, in Gilbert's topsy-turvy way, not to be disdained for his noble birth, yet he drops and shoves Phyllis around like some aristocratic Stanley Kowalski, creating unnecessary cognitive dissonance. Finally, someone in authority, I don't know who, re-inserted Strepthon's recitative and aria "Fold Your Flapping Wings," which Gilbert excised from the original production, and which is best left out—its "historicity" does not justify its sour mood, action-stopping effect, and Sullivan's less-than-inspired music. Gilbert made similar points much more effectively and wittily in other operas.

Taken in its totality, this Iolanthe was another in HRG&SP's long string of successful productions. We can't wait to see how they bring off "The Gondoliers," which will be their Spring presentation.

Department of full disclosure: your reviewer had two family members in this production, one each in the orchestra and chorus. *You* might call that the department of bragging; *I* couldn't possibly comment.

--Vance R. Koven

December Meeting Report

Instead of a formal meeting, we reverted to a previous practice of attending a performance. Some dozen or so NEGASSers saw the Sunday Matinee of the MITG&SP Pirates of Penzance. Seven of us then retreated to a nearby Chinese restaurant for two hours of dinner and gossip.

--JDS

Questionnaire

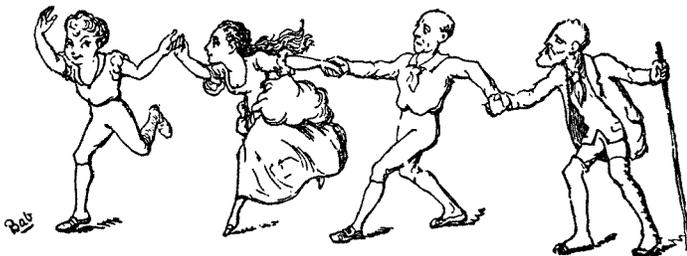
Those of you in the US will note a questionnaire in your envelope. It is an attempt by your Board to elicit members' opinions as to what NEGASS ought to be doing. Our new Program Chairs this year have revamped our programming efforts in an attempt to draw in new members and to provide events of interest to the membership in general. Nonetheless, we are cognizant of the fact that many of you belong to NEGASS only to receive the Trumpet Bray. However, there is concern that if the only reason for the existence of NEGASS, as with so many other G&S organizations, is to provide a newsletter, then we question whether the organization justifies the time and effort of a few people to keep it going. We await your responses with great interest.

--J. Donald Smith, President



NEW MEMBER

Ms. Katherine Drexel writes that she "...is a graduate of the Boston Conservatory and the University of York, England where she was a member of the York Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Ms. Drexel met her wife in the 2004 fall production of *Iolanthe* with the MITGSP. Two years later, she proposed in the program notes of *The Sorcerer*. She currently resides in Cambridge, MA and looks forward to performing G&S with American accents."



NEWS OF NEGASSERS

Passing the Baton from Grandfather to Grandson!

My father, **Van Pelt Brower**, a founding member of NEGASS, passed away in March, 2008 at 88 years of age. When I was a lad, my father performed lead roles in over a dozen community theater Gilbert & Sullivan productions in Wilbraham, Massachusetts.

My son, **Kevin Brower**, a graduate student at MIT, recently assumed the role of official family Savoyard by becoming the music director for the December production of *The Pirates of Penzance* by the MIT Gilbert and Sullivan Players. My father, Kevin's grandfather, was instrumental in fostering Kevin's love for music and science.

Kevin has been an MIT Gilbert and Sullivan Players' orchestra member for three recent productions and stepped up to the podium this fall for his first time conducting Gilbert & Sullivan. Kevin brings a rich musical heritage to this role through his performing and conducting experiences in various musical stage, orchestra, concert band and *a capella* activities.

Kevin's source of personal experience for this production of *Pirates* came primarily through listening to the 1960's D'Oyly Carte recordings and drawing upon live performances of other shows at SLOC and Harvard – and his grandfather's frequent informal renditions of "I am a Pirate King!". Kevin's goals as musical director were to preserve the traditional characteristics of the show and to fully synchronize the excellent performances of the stage and orchestral performers.

The Browsers are now three generations and counting for Gilbert & Sullivan tradition!

--Jeff Brower



New Books and Recordings

Richard Suart and A.S.H. Smyth: *they'd none of 'em be missed*, Forward by Jonathan Miller – a hilarious collection of 'little lists' from over the years, including Gilbert's own variations. Lavishly illustrated in color. Pallas Athene (Publishers) Ltd. 2008. \$26.95 ISBN 978 1 84368 036 9. <www.pallasathene.co.uk> Also available from www.amazon.com

Jeff S. Dailey: *Sir Arthur Sullivan's Grand Opera Ivanhoe and Its Theatrical and Musical Precursors*, The Edward Mellen Press, Ltd. 2008. ISBN 978-0-7734-5068-4. \$109.95. Available from the publisher www.mellenpress.com or from www.amazon.com

The Best of Gilbert and Sullivan, The Gala Ensemble. Audio CD. SonyBMG. \$24.49 from www.amazon.com (NOT to be confused with other recordings of the same name.)

CALENDAR

☺☺ SUDBURY to perform *Utopia Limited* ☺☺

The Sudbury Savoyards, under the stage direction of Ed Knights and the music direction of James Ravan, will give seven performances of *Utopia Limited* at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School beginning Friday, February 20, at 8:00 PM and running through Saturday evening, February 28. NEGASS members involved with the production include:

Brad Amidon – Captain Fitzbattleaxe
Tony Parkes – Phantis
Tom Frates – Mr. Goldbury

Others include Nancy Burdine, Janice Dallas, Andrea Rossler, Ron Dallas, Laurel Martin, Neil McCormick, Fred Hughes and Ann Ferentz.

Ticket information, price structures and more news are available at <www.sudburysavoyards.org>.

☺☺ G&S Society of Hancock County, Maine ☺☺

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Hancock County (Maine) performs *The Pirates of Penzance* on the weekend of February 20 through February 22 at the Bucksport Middle School, and the weekend of February 28 through March 1 at the Grand Auditorium in Ellsworth. See the Society web site <http://www.gilbertsullivanmaine.org/> for further information. (Please note that this is a new web site for the organization.)

☺☺ Valley Light Opera (VLO) of Amherst, MA ☺☺

VLO will present a concert performance of Sullivan's *The Beauty Stone* on March 7, 2009 at the Amherst Regional High School at 8 pm. It will be a benefit performance for the Amherst Historical Museum. The performance will be with full orchestra with narration linking the musical numbers and will include music recently rediscovered by Robin Gordon-Powell, Archivist of the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society. More details in the next Bray.

VLO has also announced that their autumn production will be *The Pirates of Penzance* over two weekends in early November.

☺☺ TROUPERS to perform *Trial & Pinafore* ☺☺

The Troupers Light Opera Company, in Darien, CT, will perform *Trial by Jury* and *HMS Pinafore* on April 3,4,5,10, 11, 2009 <http://www.trouperlightopera.org/Troupers/>

☺☺ MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players ☺☺

MITG&SP will perform *Iolanthe* in the spring of 2009 on May 1-3 and 7-9.

☺☺ Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert & Sullivan Players ☺☺

Dame Rumor whispers that HRG&SP will perform *The Gondoliers* in the spring of 2009.

☺☺ MASS Theatrica ☺☺

Mass Theatrica will perform *The Mikado* at Southgate in Shrewsbury, MA on May 29 at 7:00 p.m. (for residents only) and May 30 at 8:00 p.m. and at LynnArts in Lynn, MA on May 31 at 7:00 p.m. The May 30 and 31 performances are open to the public.

☺☺ College Light Opera Company, Falmouth, MA ☺☺

CLOC has announced that its two G&S productions this summer will be *HMS Pinafore* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*. The full schedule, including the musicals which CLOC also presents, will be announced shortly.

☺☺ Savoyard Light Opera Company (SLOC) ☺☺

We understand that SLOC has selected *The Pirates of Penzance* as its autumn 2009 show.

International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival

The 16th annual G&S Festival will take place from Saturday, August 1 through Saturday, August 22, 2009 in Buxton, England.

While full details are not yet available, Professional productions of *The Sorcerer* (Opera della Luna); *HMS Pinafore & Trial by Jury*; *Princess Ida* and *Pirates of Penzance* (the G&S Opera Company) have been announced.

There will be a concert performance of Sullivan's and German's *Emerald Isle*.

It has also been announced the SavoyNet Performing Group will present *The Grand Duke*. See below for information on joining SavoyNet.

The preliminary Festival program is on-line at:
www.gs-Festival.co.uk

THE ONLINE BRAY

Current PDF issues of **The Trumpet Bray** On-Line are now available to NEGASS members through use of a password, which is on your membership card. Please email Janice Dallas at membership@negass.org for the password if you can't find your card.

If you'd prefer to receive the **Bray** as an email attachment, without worrying about a password, tell Janice - this can be easily arranged!

Visit the NEGASS Web Site at
<http://www.negass.org>.

Past issues of **The Trumpet Bray** can always be read online at http://negass.org/Bray/Trumpet_Bray.html or downloaded at <http://negass.org/bray/pdf/>. You can receive our special **Between-Bray E-Mails** by joining us and signing on to the NEGASS email list at <http://www.negass.org/Pages/EMail.html>

Visit the Gilbert and Sullivan Archive at
<http://diamond.boisestate.edu/gas/>

NOTE: To subscribe to **SavoyNet**, the G&S mailing list, send a plain text email to listserv@bridgewater.edu with nothing in the subject line and SUBSCRIBE SAVOYNET *Your Name* in the message body.

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NEGASS membership dues are \$20, \$30, \$50 or \$100 annually.
Please contact Membership Chair **Janice Dallas** to review the advantages of the various membership categories.
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