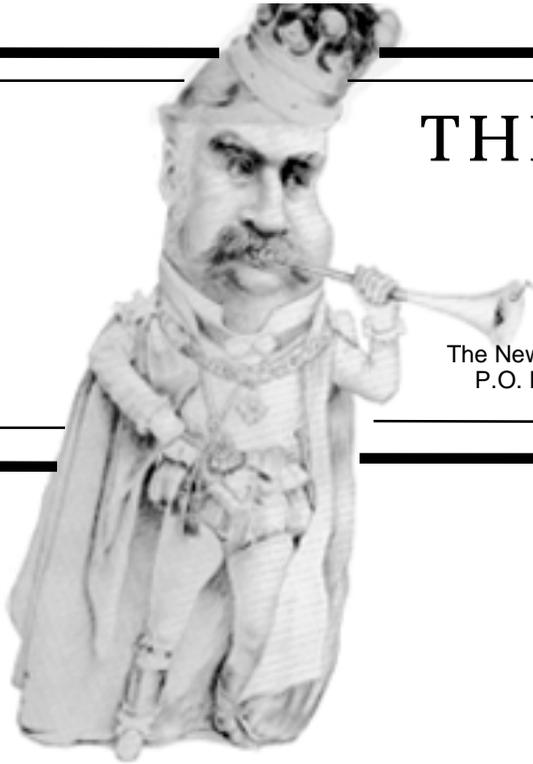


# THE TRUMPET BRAY

NEGASS

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



Vol. XXXI No. 3  
November/December 2006

~Unusual revelry~

**Holiday sing-in  
with MIT G&S Players  
Saturday, Dec. 9th, 2:00 pm**

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### HOLIDAY SING-IN, Dec. 9th

The MIT Gilbert and Sullivan Players have agreed to host a joint meeting with NEGASS on Saturday, December 9th, at 2:00 p.m., in the MIT Student Center. We'll sing through a series of finales together. The meeting will take place at the MIT student center.

Our program for the afternoon:

Act 1 finale of **Ruddigore**  
Act 1 finale of **Iolanthe**  
Act 1 finale of **Patience**  
(interval for rest and refreshment)  
Act 1 finale of **H. M. S. Pinafore**  
Act 2 finale of **Pirates of Penzance**

Afterwards, the floor will be open for any other G&S singing.

Members of MITG&SP will take the solos in **Ruddigore** and **Patience**, while members of NEGASS will take the solos in **Iolanthe** and **H.M.S. Pinafore**. We'll share the parts in the **Pirates** finale between our organizations.

Feel free to request a part ahead of time, or simply e-mail or call me to let me know that you'll be coming. We've got a great many small parts available, so if you've never done a solo before, this is a good opportunity to try it out.

### Solos in **Iolanthe**:

**Strephon**, baritone  
**Iolanthe**, mezzo  
**Phyllis**, soprano  
**Tolloller**, tenor  
**Mountarat**, baritone  
**The Lord Chancellor**, baritone  
**The Fairy Queen**, contralto  
**Leila**, soprano or mezzo  
**Celia**, soprano or mezzo

### Solos in **H. M. S. Pinafore**:

(we'll start with "Refrain, audacious tar")  
**Josephine**, soprano



**Ralph**, tenor  
**Dick Deadeye**, bass  
**Cousin Hebe**, mezzo  
**Little Buttercup**, contralto  
**Boatswain**, baritone or bass

**Division of solos in **The Pirates of Penzance**:** (we'll start with "When a felon's not engaged in his employment")  
**Sergeant of Police** (MIT member)



Next Nanki-Poo entered in the person of **Carl Weggel**. Carl has a fine tenor voice, and would be a valuable resource for local productions if he were more musically secure. He was accosted by **Art Dunlap**, a rich-voiced and secure Pish-Tush, and then thoroughly trounced by the experienced Pooh-Bah of **Dick Freedman**.

Surprises began at the entrance of Ko-Ko: We all remember when **Don Smith** never sang, even in choruses. But here he was, performing the star role, and doing a quite respectable job of it!

Next came the Three Little Maids, and I, for one, turned in confusion: we had only three women in the room besides Juliet, and one of them had already been told off to sing Katisha - so, who was to sing what?

Of course, merely playing the piano has never stopped Juliet from singing! **Juliet** was Yum-Yum from the keyboard, of course; **Janice** was Peep Bo, and **April Grant** was Pitti-Sing - and a charming trio they were.

After reviving ourselves with intermission refreshments and Juliet's rendition of "We are the Great Four-Hundred" in honor of the late **Anna Russell**, who had died the week before, we returned to see who would turn out to be the Mikado. It was the excellent **Tony Parkes**, singing a role that suits his voice perfectly. But who was his companion? The Katisha of **Marion Leeds Carroll** - who took on the role with about five minutes' notice, and did an excellent job even though it was far from her usual soprano fare.

We ended the afternoon with a chorus of Hail, Poetry, in honor of Skyler Wrench, after signing a get-well card to send him.

—**BROKEN FLOWER AND FAINT LILY**

❧ ❧ ❧ **ERRATA** ❧ ❧ ❧

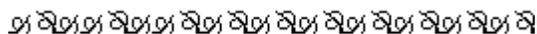
The list of Charter Members in the August Bray should have included Dean Edmonds, Jr. and Eleanor Babikian.



Meeting Schedule, 2006-07	
Dec. 9	Joint MITG&SP / NEGASS meeting
February (date TBA)	Annual Newton Library video
Mar 18 or 25	LMLO: <i>PATIENCE</i>
Apr 22 or 29	<i>ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN</i> / play-reading day
June 3	Election/fantasy day

**NEXT BRAY COPY DEADLINE: January 7, 2006**

**Next Bray Stuffing:** Sunday, **Jan. 14**, 3:00 pm, at the home of **Marion Leeds Carroll**, 111 Fairmont Street, Arlington, MA. For directions, email [negass@leedscarroll.com](mailto:negass@leedscarroll.com), or see <http://leedscarroll.com/Graphics/Scrapbook/directions.shtml>



**Welcome, Welcome, Welcome** We new member Alan Harwood!

❧ ❧ ❧ **G&S NEWS** ❧ ❧ ❧

**SAD TIDINGS**

**Marilyn Sorenson** played clarinet for both Sudbury, SLOC, MIT, and Juliet Cunningham's groups, among G&S shows. She died last month, shortly after Julia Gabaldon. Her memorial service date has not been set. Marilyn also played in our quintet for many years, including NEGASS parties at Mrs. Shepherd's home in RI. When she was a young woman living in Paris she played in a quintet with Jimmy Galway (Sir James nowadays). I mentioned to her that then playing with us was somewhat of a come down perhaps? - but she said not really too much ;>)

Marilyn taught French for many years at UMA Boston. She was a very good friend as well as a fellow musician and is missed by many.

--**NANCY BURDINE**



**Anna Russell**, revered by music-lovers for her 22-minute sendup of Richard Wagner's epic, four-opera "Ring" cycle at New York's Town Hall and other venues, died on Oct. 19 in Batemans Bay, Australia. She was 94.

Born in London in 1911, Russell studied at the Royal College of Music and began a disastrous, short-lived career as an opera singer. A performance of "Cavalleria Rusticana" came to a premature halt when Russell twisted her ankle on stage, slipped, fell and sent the set crashing. The orchestra collapsed in fits of laughter, the curtain came down and Russell was fired.



Russell's mother was Canadian, and the family returned in 1939 to Toronto, where she began to appear on local radio stations as an entertainer. Her first break came when Sir Ernest MacMillan, director of the Toronto Symphony, invited her to

appear as a soloist with his orchestra. She had the house in stitches.

The recording of Russell's 1953 Town Hall recital, available on Sony, has become a classic. Accompanied on piano, Russell offered lessons in "How to write your own Gilbert and Sullivan Opera," a lugubrious "Russian folk song" that went "Da, Nyet, Da, Nyet," and the analysis of Wagner's plot-heavy "Ring."

As Russell pondered the complex family relations of the doomed and addled Siegfried and followed him from the rock of Brunnhilde to the palace of Gutrune, she paused to note that Gutrune is "the only woman that Siegfried's ever come across who wasn't his aunt. I'm not making this up, you know!"

The last line became Russell's catchphrase, and the title of her 1985 autobiography. She toured the world's concert halls and music festivals with her performances, for which she wrote her own music and lyrics. Her success lay in her unique combination of biting humor, self-parody and in-depth knowledge of the music she clearly loved.

She gave a farewell concert at Carnegie Hall in 1984, retired in 1986 and eventually moved from Unionville,

Ontario, to Batemans Bay in Australia's New South Wales, where she lived with her adopted daughter Diedre Prussak.

—**Shirley Apthorp**, for Bloomberg News. (*Excerpted from the obituary at bloomberg.com. —acg*)

### RECENT PRODUCTIONS

#### **IOLANTHE at the Boston Conservatory, 25-29 October 2006**

The Boston Conservatory is a school of music, dance, and theater, so one can go to one of its performances confident that it will be well worth seeing and hearing. This fall's production of IOLANTHE was no exception. Its few flaws were not enough to keep it from being a rousing success.

Stage director Neil Donohoe updated the piece from Victorian to Edwardian England, and all roles except Strephon and Phyllis were cross-cast. Donohoe wrote: "This conception evokes the controversies over 'family values,' true love vs. arranged marriage, liberalism vs. conservatism, and trenchant oppositions in political 'spin' propaganda. Lightheartedly, it asks governments to embrace true democratic equality for every citizen, no matter how different he or she or he/she may be." Maybe. Happily, Donohoe left Gilbert's book and lyrics intact, leaving the audience free to interpret the show for themselves without any heavy-handed moralizing. Once one got used to the cross-casting, the production was easy to enjoy on any level.

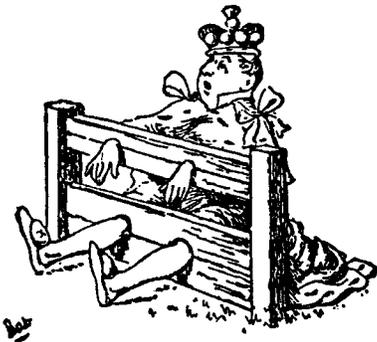
Music director Bill Casey and choreographer Michelle Chassé had drilled the cast and orchestra well, and Reuben Reynolds III conducted briskly but sensitively. Peter Waldron's simple multilevel set allowed for varied stage pictures without drawing focus from the actors, and Gail Astrid Buckley's costumes were gorgeous and looked of high quality.

The chorus of male fairies got a round of applause for their initial entrance; their semi-balletic, semi-camp dancing and posturing set the tone for the show. The female peers were less vocally impressive in their entrance march, but they handled their choreography and their tweedy personas effortlessly. Hannah McMurray and Sasha Virginia Weiss were well matched as Mountarat and Tolloller, with fine voices and just the right amount of upper-class condescension. Matthew Thompson as Strephon and Sarah Ziegler as Phyllis were

a bit more musical-comedy than comic-opera, but still almost believable as a young couple in love. Dan Micciche was a commanding Fairy Queen with a remarkable tenor/alto voice. Chris Ignacio as Iolanthe wisely played the part straight – or as straight as a male fairy can – and served as a necessary foil to all the high jinks.

The one major disappointment was Leah Joseph as the Lord Chancellor. She could not be faulted for her energy, and she is certainly not the first person to overact in the role, but she needs to learn that overacting or not, one still needs to make every word audible. She raced through much of her dialogue and swallowed many of her lyrics – not just in the Nightmare Song, but all through her part. A little more experience and a firmer directorial hand may make a fine comic actress of her yet. Lindsey Larson, who nearly stopped the show as Private Willis, could give her lessons in how to point a line and just how far to bend the fourth wall without breaking it.

There were other minor annoyances. The singers were over-miked, and many of their vocal deliveries smacked less of bel canto than of “can belto.” The directors had followed the American Schirmer edition of the score slavishly, including some dubious variant readings and some that were downright wrong (“I am bound not to deceive him” should have been “...not to undeceive him”).



But the good far outweighed the bad. When the entire ensemble broke out in four-part harmony at the end of the first act, I got goosebumps just

as I do from more traditional productions. The audience – many of whom, judging from overheard conversations, had never seen or even heard of IOLANTHE – laughed and applauded enthusiastically throughout the performance. I was happy to count myself among their number.

—TONY PARKES

### SALEM WitchQWERT, October 21

[A day of singing hosted by NEGASS's own Rebecca Hains—acg]

Thanks to Rebecca for hosting a great QWERT on Saturday at the Peabody Massachusetts library near Salem, the locus of witches, ghosts, ghouls, goblins and

Brazilian food. We had a great basement room all to ourselves. We started off with Trial by Jury at 10am. The Learned Judge was David Daly, a local who not only sang and acted well but also looked remarkably like Peter Buchi, the husband of Jane Buchi (of whom more later). Everyone said they would love to see Peter and David as Marco and Giuseppe. Rebecca was in excellent voice as Plaintiff, David Bell reprised his cad of a Defendant, and Rebecca's old friend Ben Hellman did a fine Counsel. Shel Hochman still sounds great as the Usher, and Dave Jedlinsky filled in as a last-minute replacement for the Foreman.

Next was The Sorcerer. I filled in for Marmaduke, Alexis was another local, a fine young performer, Len Giambrone. Phil Sternberg was in fine voice as Dr. Daly, and Ben Hellman filled in for J.W. Wells. Dave Jedlinsky was a rather young and healthy looking Notary. Wendy Falconer sang a lovely Lady Sangazure, and Emily Pettitt was a young Aline with a lovely, silvery tone. Carol Davis was funny as Mrs. Partlett, and Jane Buchi, from NY's Blue Hill Troupe was an excellent, Constance, bringing out all of the character's plight to its fullest.

For lunch we adjourned to the Fire Bull Restaurant, where we enjoyed an excellent Brazilian buffet but did not attempt to sing choruses in public.

After lunch we were treated to Tony Parkes' wry and wiry Lord Chancellor. Barry Hilton and the indefatigable David Bell were Mt. A. and Tolloller, and another local, Art Dunlap sang Pvt. Willis with gusto. David Jedlinsky sang a very fine Strephon opposite Debbie Lavin's rustic but hearty Phyllis. Mary Finn was a commanding Fairy Queen, and Christine St. Pierre was a heart-wrenching Iolanthe in her first outing in the role. Carol Davis was dainty, but not that little as Celia, and Sara Davis sang a light, sweet Leila.

Finally, we ended the day with Ruddigore. I sang Robin/Ruthven opposite the sweet Rose of Rebecca, David Bell sang his third demanding tenor role of the day (Dick) as it were a feather, and Tyler was a moody and dastardly Despard. Barry Hilton was an excellent Old Adam/Gideon Crawle (we did most of the 2nd verses of things), and Sheldon Hochman sang Roderic opposite the now contralto Debbie Lavin. Sara Daly gave us a sensitive Margaret (her debut in the role, I understand) and Zorah was another local, Isabel Leonard.

Florrie Marks accompanied all four shows(!) using a keyboard provided by Andi Stryker-Rodda who was

unable to attend in person due to another commitment. Rebecca and Tyler had to skedaddle off to Philadelphia for a friends' wedding, so the day ended at 4:30pm, but a great time was had by all!

—SAM SILVERS



### HOT MIKADO in Derry, NH

**Ann and Dick Luxner write:** Just returned from this afternoon's final performance of *Hot Mikado!* at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH. It was performed by The New Thalian Players based in Manchester.

Book and Lyrics by David H. Bell; Music adapted and arranged by Rob Bowman. Originally produced at Ford's Theatre, Washington, DC. which ran from March 18–July 27, 1986. There were additional productions in Washington and in London, according to Wikipedia:

"The plot of *Hot Mikado* does not stray far from the Gilbert and Sullivan original. The musical has the same witty tone as the original, with many of the songs bearing the same name and melody. For example, the song 'I Am So Proud' has the same melody for the verses, changing only towards the end, where it folds into a more jazzy round. It is set in Japan in the 1940s, with suggested settings and costuming combining Japanese design with American 1940's design. The set uses Japanese architecture, executed in the textures of *The Cotton Club* (neon, brass mahogany). The costumes include zoot suits, snoods, wedgies and felt hats, executed in the colorful silk kimono textures of Japan.

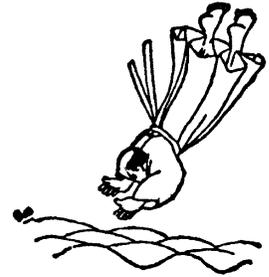
The score uses 1940's popular musical harmonies and arrangements and a wide range of styles, including hot gospel, blues, rock, Cab Calloway swing, and torch songs. The 'Three Little Maids' sing in Andrews Sisters style. The dances called for include the Lindy Hop, tap-dancing, the jitterbug and other 1940's dances.

The orchestrations call for Acoustic Bass, Electric Bass, Drums, Timpani, Duck Call, Glockenspiel, Large Gong, Mark Tree, Triangle, Wood Block, Flute, Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Cowbell, Trombone, Flugelhorn, Tambourine, and Trumpet.

According to the publisher's website, casting is intended to be inter-racial, with the MIKADO, KATISHA and POOH-BAH specifically singing in African-America musical styles. While *The Mikado* has encountered some controversy regarding language in its libretto that has come to be considered racist, *Hot Mikado* was sometimes criticized for the inclusion of white actors scat singing."

We enjoyed it immensely - the 1940s music and lyrics were authentic and adept, cleverly adapting G & S lyrics and music.

Everyone in the cast sang very well, very professionally. Acting was excellent. We especially thought that this was the first *Katisha* for whom we could feel real empathy. Also, because every word was clearly enunciated and many lyrics were sung slower than the original, we found it much easier to understand the meaning of the words. This was true especially for the ensembles, trios and the "Swing a Merry Madrigal."



Excerpts from the Director's Notes - from the program booklet:

" ... G&S's *The Mikado* has had numerous adaptations since its opening in London on March 1, 1885. ... It was an instant hit and was immediately translated as *Der Mikado* in Berlin, *Mikado: Of Een Dag in Titipu* in Holland, *El Mikado* in Madrid and *Il Mikado* in Rome, among others. ... By the 1920s there were all kinds of variations on *The Mikado*, including a transvestite version and jazz version in Berlin, and a Folies Bergere treatment in Paris. In the 1930s there was a "Mikado war" on Broadway with an all-black *Swing Mikado* playing across the street from an all-black *Hot Mikado*. It was that *Hot Mikado* that Rob Bowman and David Bell decided to resuscitate for a production at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC in 1986. However, there wasn't enough of it still in existence so they started from scratch. ... This time the story's told in the swing, blues, jazz and gospel rhythms of the 1940's - with some hip-hop and topical humor thrown in for good measure.

-- Beth Ann O'Hara, Director. "

We were told that a DVD was being made and will be available at the New Thalian Players website - [newthalianplayers.org](http://newthalianplayers.org)

—ANN AND DICK LUXNER

☞ **THE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN FESTIVAL, Buxton England, 2006.** I attended five days of the Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England in August of this year. The Festival runs altogether for three weeks, with a show every night and sometimes two a day. The performers are mainly amateur groups from England, but there were groups this year also from New York and Canada, and one from Japan singing Mikado. In Japanese. In addition there were performances by high schoolers and young professional singers. The program also included lectures (e.g. directing Gilbert and Sullivan), movies with commentary, late night cabarets, and remembrances. Renditions of Tom Lehrer and Flanders and Swan showed up occasionally. There are two or three non-performance events per day.

The overall atmosphere was loyal to the D'Oyly Carte tradition (John Reed and George Grossmith appear on program covers, and Reed, age 92, was in the audience), but there was great respect for invention and contemporary references.

I saw four performances. Gondoliers by the South Anglia Savoy Players was very well done, with solid singing and serviceable direction. Iolanthe, done by youngsters (high school and young college) put together for this performance, was, alas, distressing. There were a couple of good voices in the leads, and Strephon could handle himself on stage. But the director did not know what to do with kids, and the charm of klutziness wore off fast. At the other end of the quality continuum was Pirates done by the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company. The singing was not only superb musically, but each voice had a personality suited to the character.

The musical and stage directors (John Owen Edwards and Alan Spencer) had clearly worked through a common conception of this production, so that a crisp and taut overture was followed by crisp and taut stage movement with speech patterns to match. The humor, with the exception of the police routines, was equally arch and perfectly delivered. These were actors who knew how to do comedy, and it was very funny. (The same cast did Trial by Jury and Yeoman before and after I was there.)

The Yeoman production I saw was done by leads who had auditioned via submitted DVD's, and a chorus that was pulled together in the week before performance. Altogether the company had representatives from thirteen British G and S societies and other local opera groups. Again, the director (Alistair Donkin) had a clear

picture of what this production was to be about, and he got it. Wilfred Shadbolt (Stephen Godward) was touching and hilarious, a fine actor. Jack Point (Adam Hepkin) moved magnificently and brought biting anger to the role ("A Private Buffoon" was chilling); his demise (after he clawed at Phoebe's hem) left the audience stunned. The closing tableau was grim and powerful; for curtain calls the cast stayed in tableau without moving.

The Festival audience was my age and up (and I am contemplating retirement), and this is very much on the mind of management. A Festival theme was how to bring G and S to the young, and to that end they had a series of fund raisers (raffles, sales) to support G and S production kits for schools. A kit will contain costumes, directions about how to direct, simplified scores, etc.

Buxton is a tiny town (none of my English friends had heard of it) near Manchester. It has charm (OK, what little English town doesn't), has another festival (opera) for three weeks in July, and sits in the "Peak District". "The Alps of England" is what the tourist literature calls the area with what I hope is local humor. But the hills are beautiful and very walkable. And the Lake District is not far away.

—DAVID MATZ

## ☞☞ CALENDAR ☞☞

### ☞☞ Carl Rosa Tour

The spring American Tour of the Carl Rosa Opera's production of "The Pirates of Penzance" will be in New England at least on the following dates:

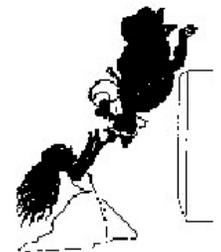
Keene, NH, Colonial Theater, Wednesday, March 6, 2007.  
Concord, NH, Capitol Center, Thursday, March 7, 2007.  
Portland, ME, Portland Center for the Arts, Thursday, March 14, 2007.

At least some of the week between New Hampshire and Maine will be spent in Eastern Canada. Check their web site <[www.CarlRosaOpera.co.uk](http://www.CarlRosaOpera.co.uk)> for further details.

—DON SMITH

☞☞ **The Harvard-Radcliffe G&S Players** are staging a double bill of *H. M. S. Pinafore* and *Trial By Jury*.

Their schedule: Black-tie reception November 30, 8pm; children's matinee Dec. 2, 2pm; hack night Dec. 16, 8pm; and regular evening shows Dec. 1,



Dec. 2, Dec. 3, Dec. 14, and Dec. 15, with a matinee on Dec. 16 "The week of December 7th through 10th will be dedicated to a celebratory reunion for our fifty years of alumni!" (Thanks to **Richard Freedman** for sending in the schedule. —*acg*)

☺☺ The Spring 2007 show at MITG&SP will be **PRINCESS IDA**. It is to take place the weekends of **May 5** and **May 12, 2007**.

☺☺ The **Montreal West Operatic Society** will present their 68th annual production, "The Yeomen of the Guard" on May 3, 4, 5 & 6 at Parkhaven Auditorium. Their road trip to the Haskell Opera House on the Border at Derby Line Vermont will take place May 19th Info at [www.mwos.org](http://www.mwos.org). — **Margaret Quinlan**

☺☺ **The New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players** will present a fully staged performance of **THE ROSE OF PERSIA** at City Center in NYC, on Thursday, January 11, 2007, at 8:00 p.m. Tickets may be ordered online at [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org) or by calling CityTix at 212-581-1212. Other upcoming NYGASP productions are **THE MIKADO** (Jan. 6 at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; Jan. 9 at 7:00 p.m.; Jan. 12 at 8:00 p.m.; Jan. 13 at 2:00 p.m.; Jan. 14 at 3:00 p.m.) and **THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD** (Jan. 5 at 8:00 p.m.; Jan. 7 at 3:00 p.m.; Jan. 13 at 8:00 p.m.).

☺☺ **The Sudbury Savoyards'** 2007 show will be **IOLANTHE**. [This notice unfortunately reached us too late for the last Bray. However, mark the production dates on your calendar. —*acg*]

The Sudbury Savoyards announce Auditions for our 2007 production of Gilbert & Sullivan's **Iolanthe!** Stage Director: Kathy Lague Music Director: Steve Malionek

Auditions will take place: Monday, November 13 and Tuesday, November 14 at 7:30 pm

Where: Sudbury United Methodist Church, 251 Old Sudbury Road (Rt 27) in Sudbury Center. Call backs will be held on Wednesday, November 15.

Performance dates: February 23, 24, 25, 28, & March 2, 3, 2007 at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School. Chorus members need not audition but must attend 11/13 or 11/14 to register. Please visit our website [www.sudburysavoyards.org](http://www.sudburysavoyards.org) or call 978-443-8811 for more information. Thanks! —**ANDREA ROESSLER, Producer**

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