



~ NEGASS EVENTS ~

**Ruddigore, NEGASS/Longwood Opera, March 3, 2013, 2:30 pm, Christ Episcopal Church, 1132 Highland Ave., Needham, MA**

NEGASS and Longwood Opera present a joint concert of the seldom-heard original version of *Ruddigore*. The audience is the chorus, so bring your scores and be ready to sing along!

Principal roles will be sung by a mix of NEGASS members and members of Longwood Opera. The roles to be cast are:

- ROBIN OAKAPPLE, a young farmer (baritone)
- RICHARD DAUNTLESS, his foster brother – a Man-o-War’s-Man (tenor)
- SIR DESPARD MURGATROYD, of Ruddigore – a wicked baronet (baritone)
- OLD ADAM GOODHEART, Robin’s faithful servant (bass)
- ROSE MAYBUD, a village maiden (soprano)
- MAD MARGARET (mezzo-soprano)
- DAME HANNAH, Rose’s aunt (contralto)
- ZORAH, a professional bridesmaid (soprano)
- RUTH, a professional bridesmaid (speaking role - may sing alto in Chorus)
- SIR RODERIC MURGATROYD, ghost of the twenty-first baronet (bass-baritone)

In addition, we will be casting Four Ghosts who will sing chorus parts and have speaking lines.

If you are interested in a role, please contact Dave Leigh at [progchair AT negass DOT org](mailto:progchair@negass.org) by January 15, 2013. Due to the volume of role requests, we may be unable to cast all those who have expressed an interest in a specific role. The cast list will be published in the February *Trumpet Bray*.

**A rehearsal for principal singers** will be held at the church on Tuesday, February 26th, at 7:00 pm.

~ NEGASS NEWS ~

**NEGASS Brings G & S to Public Schools**

MODIFIED RAPTURE: The NEGASS Public School Outreach Committee has scored a small success, and is hoping to capitalize upon it. The Enrichment Coordinator of the Bishop Elementary School in Arlington has expressed interest in bringing our 40-minute program about Gilbert and Sullivan, “The Words or the Music?” to their 3rd and 4th graders.

This program was previously performed with great success at the Carlisle Elementary Schools last spring. The Outreach Committee has applied to the Arlington Cultural Council for a small grant to subsidize the performance. If the grant is approved, we will have the prestige of the ACC behind us, which bodes well for getting our program into additional schools.

**-Nancy Burstein**, for the Public School Outreach Committee

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GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS may be sent to editor AT negass DOT org. REVIEWS may be sent to progchair AT negass DOT org. CALENDAR ITEMS may be sent to calendar AT negass DOT org.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Standard membership in NEGASS pays for a printed or electronic copy of the Bray, plus a password to the current issue of the online PDF version. NEGASS membership dues are \$20, \$30, \$50 and \$100. To join, please contact membership chair Janice Dallas, 63 Everett St. Arlington, MA, 02474-6921 or email memb AT negass DOT org.

Members receive the Bray via US mail or as a PDF email attachment. To receive the Bray via email, please send a request to memb AT negass DOT org. All editions except the current edition are available online. The current edition is available online to NEGASS members only.

ARCHIVES Past issues of *The Trumpet Bray* can be read or downloaded from <http://www.negass.org/bray>

BETWEEN-BRAY ANNOUNCEMENTS Available to NEGASS members through online member profile.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL: 15<sup>th</sup> of the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November, 2011.

[www.negass.org](http://www.negass.org)

## A Victorian Yuletide Party

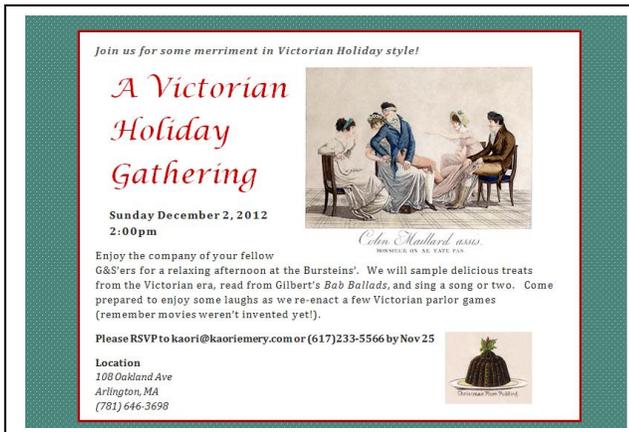
A nearly impromptu NEGASS meeting was held on Sunday December 2 at the Arlington home of Nancy Burstein. Unfortunately the planning horizon was too short to announce the meeting in the Bray, so notifications were sent out via e-mail to all members who had provided this information to the Society. Consequently some 20 NEGASSers and family members showed up to celebrate the holiday in Victorian style.

Refreshments prepared by Kaori Emery included eggnog with freshly grated nutmeg, cucumber sandwiches cut out in holiday shapes, miniature mince pies, sugar plums, chicken salad on small croissants, apple slices with dip, ambrosia fruit salad, and as the piece de resistance, a plum pudding. Audrey Colson (daughter of NEGASS founder Warren) provided tiny gingerbread men, and Nancy kept the wassail bowl flowing.

With our appetites temporarily sated, we moved into the living room for a series of activities guided by Kaori, who after our singing of "Hail Poetry" began by reading us excerpts from a wonderful book entitled "A Gilbert and Sullivan Christmas". A lively discussion ensued about the fate of *Thespis*, and Donald Smith delighted us with the theory that the music was not lost because Sullivan had re-used most of it in subsequent operettas. We sang three choruses with Isabel Leonard at the piano: A seasonally appropriate piece by Sullivan entitled "The Last Night of the Year", "With Cat-Like Tread", and "Loudly Let the Trumpet Bray". Philip Burstein and Nancy Burstein then each read a *Bab Ballad* by W.S. Gilbert - "To the Terrestrial Globe" and "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell", respectively.

We next engaged in several old-fashioned games that would have been played at Victorian Yuletide gatherings. One person was sent out of the room while the others chose an object which he or she then had to identify based on the signals given by the group that the finder was "hot" or "cold". For "The Dumb Orator", a seated person read a song lyric without intonation or motion, while a second person standing behind her and with her head hidden under a tablecloth used her own hands to gesticulate dramatically in interpretation of the words. A third game required everyone to leave the room except for one person who stayed behind to hide an object in plain sight. Upon the return of the group, each person sat down upon determining for themselves where the object was. Five guests were totally unable to spot the object and had to "pay a forfeit".

They were required to sit up front in a row with arms linked and to answer several questions “as one individual” with each person saying one word of the answer, then going back to the beginning of the row. The audience thus got their combined wisdom on “What is the capital of North Dakota”, “Where do babies come from”, and “What is the best Gilbert and Sullivan operetta”.



By then, incredible as it seems, we were ready to adjourn to the dining room and once more fall upon the aforementioned refreshments. All agreed that we must do this again next year.

-Nancy Burstein

## ~G & S NEWS~

### Book Review: Gilbert & Sullivan: Gender, Genre, Parody by Carolyn Williams

In the years since Mike Leigh pushed them back into the public spotlight with the film *Topsy Turvy*, Gilbert & Sullivan have enjoyed more attention from authors, biographers and scholars than at any time in the preceding fifty years. Numerous books and articles have been published, bringing new insight into the lives of the authors and the operas they created together, and re-examining other, more “traditional” ideas on these subjects. The best so far have been Michael Ainger’s *Gilbert & Sullivan: a Dual Biography* (2002) and Gayden Wren’s *A Most Ingenious Paradox* (2006), both from Oxford University Press. Now we must add a third title to this list: *Gilbert & Sullivan: Gender, Genre, Parody*, the impressive and scholarly new volume by Carolyn Williams.

Reading through this book is like opening up *The Merrie Jest*s of Hugh Ambrose. Williams, who teaches courses on Victorian culture and theatre at Rutgers University, has brought together the source material that Gilbert and Sullivan worked from in creating

each opera, and with it the popular references and theatrical conventions that have largely been lost to us over the past 125 years. From the evolution of the “Jolly Jack Tar” to the notion of “cultural exhibitions” (like the Japanese village in *Knightsbridge*) to the moral guardians predicting the downfall of civilization due to the Aesthetes (effeminate men) and Suffragettes (masculine women), Williams shows us how rich and varied a source of satire Victorian London was, and how expertly Gilbert and Sullivan winnowed their theatrical gold from it.

The book is divided into three sections, highlighting the principal focus of each opera’s analysis: Genres (*Thespis* through *Pirates*), Genders (*Patience*, *Iolanthe* and *Ida*), and Cultures (*Mikado* through *The Grand Duke*). The first section was, for me, the most illuminating, as it focused a great deal on the history of 19th-Century English theatre, including ballad opera, burlesque, extravaganza, opera bouffe (imported, of course, from France), and the many forms of melodrama. The chapter about *Thespis* is especially good – unlike many authors who dismiss the opera out of hand for various reasons (even Ian Bradley’s indispensable *Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan* skips *Thespis* entirely and jumps straight to *Trial By Jury*), Williams treats *Thespis* to as much research and analysis as she does any other opera in the canon. More importantly, she shows how Gilbert’s combination of extravaganza, opera bouffe, and carefully considered wordplay (such as the multiple meanings of “company” in the Junction Song) would form the basis of the new style of English comic opera that Sullivan, D’Oyly Carte and he would create in the collaborations to come.

The subsequent sections explore the way Gilbert & Sullivan expanded their parody beyond theatrical conventions to Victorian English society, and by extension, Victorian English ideas about other societies. The chapter on *Patience*, for example, includes some of the highly influential cartoons, created by George du Maurier for the magazine *Punch*, which lampoon the Aesthetic movement, and which were at least as influential on the creation of *Patience* as the Aesthetes themselves – right down to the disapproving Colonel. From the effeminate men of *Patience*, we are then taken into the world of *Iolanthe*, where the Fairy women are the social superiors of the Lordly men, then onto the masculine women of *Princess Ida*.

Similarly, the next section introduces the Victorian fashion for cultural exhibitions – which allowed

visitors to “experience” foreign cultures without ever having to leave London and shows us how that influenced *The Mikado*. We are taken through the subsequent operas to the Continent, to the 16th Century, and even to an island nation where the natives are treated to a cultural exhibition of...Victorian England.

If there is any flaw to the book, it’s that every once in a while, a tiny factual error can be found regarding one of the operas. (An example would be the caption for a picture from *The Pirates of Penzance*, where Frederic is misidentified as Major-General Stanley.) Usually these are easy to miss and just as easy to disregard, but there are a few jarring moments when a point Williams is making in her analysis contains a statement which is clearly incorrect. For instance, in

discussing *Yeomen*, she writes, "In paired numbers, Fairfax compares marriage to captivity ('Free from his fetters grim'), while Elsie likens it to a tomb ('Strange adventure')." This is a very interesting assessment, except that Elsie does not sing at all in “Strange adventure”, and the “tomb” mentioned in the song is no metaphor, but the condemned Fairfax’s very literal grave.

But such mistakes are extremely few and far between, and cannot detract from the overall excellence of Williams’ scholarship and presentation. There is always more to learn about Gilbert & Sullivan, and it’s been many years since I’ve learned so much on the subject from a single book. I rate this as a must-read for any student of the Savoy Operas.  
- Dafydd Mac an Leigh



### Upcoming Productions & Events

<i>Pirates of Penzance</i> MITG&SP	November 30, December 1, 6, 7 (8 pm) December 2, 8 (2 pm), 2012 <a href="http://www.mit.edu/gsp">www.mit.edu/gsp</a>	MIT Student Center (2nd floor) 84 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA
<i>The Sorcerer</i> NYGASP	December 1, 2, 2012 <a href="http://www.symphonyspace.org">www.symphonyspace.org</a> 212-769-1000	Symphony Space Broadway & 95th Street New York, NY
<i>New Year's Eve G&amp;S Gala</i> NYGASP	December 31, 2012 <a href="http://www.symphonyspace.org">www.symphonyspace.org</a> 212.864.5400	Symphony Space Broadway & 95th Street New York, NY
<i>Gondoliers</i> <i>Sudbury Savoyards</i>	February 21 - March 2, 2013 <a href="http://www.sudburysavoyards.org">www.sudburysavoyards.org</a> 978-443-8811	Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School 390 Lincoln Road Sudbury, MA
<i>Ruddigore</i> Joint NEGASS/Longwood Opera event	March 3, 2013 see page 1, NEGASS EVENTS	Christ Episcopal Church 1132 Highland Ave. Needham, MA