

Precious Nonsense

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY
June 2001 -- Issue 63

Of course, you will understand that, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am bound to see that due economy is observed.

There's nothing like a bargain. With the postal rate on letters weighing more than an ounce going up on July 1, it seemed like a good idea to try to get a "fat" newsletter out before the change. So here we are. Although we're lacking any play synopses this time around, we do have the answers to last year's Big Quiz, plenty of news of G&S productions, and some interesting insights from Arthur Robinson. So let's see how it goes.

Oh, Members, How Say You, What is it You've Done?

We were saddened and pleased to learn that MGS member and frequent G&S lead performer David Michaels is leaving the Chicago area for Seattle. Sad because he's going, and glad because he'll be seeing more of his family (and able to report on G&S activity in Washington State)! Best wishes for his move and his future!

By the way, someone asked what our membership statistics are, after the renewals were returned. We have: 137 addresses on the mailing list; 165 members with Birthdays (I'm sure they *all* have birthdays, but that many have mentioned when theirs are); 26 of these are opera companies, libraries, or associations; 11 international addressees (two of which are not in England or Canada!)

So now you know: we could probably start recruiting again.



What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwestern}

The *Ohio Light Opera* includes two G&S offerings in their summer season. This year, their performances will include:

Rogers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* (June 14, 17*, 23, 28, July 6, 15*, 28, 20, 28, and August 11).

Victor Herbert's *The Red Mill* (July 7*, 11, 21*, 26, August 3, and 11*)

Johann Strauss's *The Merry War* (July 1*, 5, 14, 18*, 27, 31*, and August 9*)

The Gondoliers (July 8*, 11*, 21, 36*, August 1, and 9)

Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* (July 29, July 3*, 7, 12, 14*, 19*, 25*, August 5*, and 7*)

Kalman's *Sari* (July 10*, 13, 19, 22*, 28*, August 1*, 4, and 8)

The Yeomen of the Guard (July 24*, 23, 29*, August 2, 4*, 8*, and 10)

(Translations of the foreign-language operas were evidently made by James Stuart (*The Merry War* and *Sari*) and Richard Traubner (*Orpheus in the Underworld*.)

Performances are at 8:00 pm, with matinees (indicated by *) at 2:00. Individual tickets for all performances are \$30.00 for adults, and \$15.00 for students. They offer pre-performance lectures at 7:00 pm at the Friday and Saturday performances. For more information and tickets, call Ohio

Light Opera at (330) 263-2345 / www.wooster.edu/OHIOLIGHTOPERA/ . Or e-mail OH_LT_OPERA@wooster.edu. And their address is The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH 44691.

Although Light Opera Works isn't presenting any G&S this season, they do have an interesting program for youth, featuring, among other things, an opportunity to work on a production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. Their Musical Theater Summer Workshops ("for kids 8 to 18") this year include *Annie* (July 9-14, 2001), *Pirates of Penzance* (July 16-21, 2001), and *Guys and Dolls* (July 23-28, 2001). A typical day of the workshop week starts at 8:30 am, with time for networking, 9:30 is vocal and dance warm-ups, 10:00 is music instruction, 11:00 is dance instruction, Bring Your Own Lunch at Noon, 1:00 is acting instruction, 2:00 is show rehearsal, and the day winds up at 3:30 pm. The fee per workshop is \$325.00, with the program taking place at the Lake Street Church (607 Lake St., in Evanston, IL). Registration is limited to 40 students per workshop, paid when submitting the registration. For more information, you can call Light Opera Works at (847) 869-7930. And if the classes are full, it might be fun to see if non-family members can come enjoy their finished product. It sounds like a great idea, and we hope it goes well for Light Opera Works (and their students)!

And although Light Opera Works isn't giving any stages G&S performances this year, we just got an advertisement for a dinner theater-concert sort-of-a-thing they're going to be putting on July 25 and July 26, 2001. **Here's a How-De-Do! An Evening of Gilbert and Sullivan Favorites** will be presented July 25 at Allgaur's, at the Northbrook Hilton (2855 N. Milwaukee Ave., Northbrook, IL), and on the 26th at the North Shore Hotel (1611 Chicago Ave., Evanston, IL – catered by Malone Jaicomo Caterers). Cash bar starts at 6:00 pm, Dinner is at 6:30, with a concert at 8:00 (which should be concluded by 9:00 pm). Tickets are \$45.00 per person (plus a \$4.00 service charge per order). For more information, call them at (847) 869-6300 for a reservation form, or you can reach them by mail at 927 Noyes St., Evanston, IL 60201-2799.

By the way, I was speaking with some one unfamiliar with G&S recently, who regularly attends Light Opera Work's performances. He reported that their recent Countess Maritza was the best production he's seen them give in the eight years he's been attending. Congratulatory to them on it, and best wishes for continued successes!

Ruddigore in Evanston, Illinois! We hear from their spokesman Kingsley Day that the Savoy-aire's 37th annual Gilbert & Sullivan production, **Ruddigore**, will be performed Friday-Sunday, November 2-4 and 9-11, 2001,

at Chute Auditorium, 1400 Oakton Street, Evanston, Illinois. Returning to lead the production are stage director L. Walter Stearns, musical director Daniel Robinson, choreographer Pamela Sue Fox, and executive producer Lilia Circle.

☞ **Auditions** will be held on Saturday, July 14, 1-4 p.m., and Sunday, July 15, 3-6 p.m., at First Congregational Church of Evanston (Church House), 1417 Hinman Avenue (between Lake and Greenwood) in Evanston. All roles are available; no appointment is necessary. Auditioners should prepare one song, preferably by Gilbert & Sullivan. An accompanist will be provided. Oh, this sounds like a lot of fun!

The Madison Savoyards, Ltd. will be performing *Iolanthe* in Madison, Wisconsin at the Wisconsin Union Theater Friday, July 20, Saturday, July 21, Saturday July 28 (all at 7:00 PM) and Sunday July 29 at 4:00 PM. Tickets are \$25.00 (\$23 for seniors and students, \$10 for children under 13) and will be available from the Union Theater Box Office, (608) 262-2201.

Member Evan E. Richards of the group reports that the Madison Savoyards have been producing fully staged productions of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas with orchestra for over 25 years. Over this period, they have produced all of them (but *Thespis*!) (Yes, including Utopia Ltd. and Grand Duke!). Their productions are faithful to the tradition and are usually excellent. This year's cast is particularly strong and promises to be a wonderful *Iolanthe*.

The Cleveland Opera (Suite 1052, 1422 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-2063 / (216) 575-0903, x 214) is currently taking group sales for its 2001-2002 season, entitled *Twenty-Six Weddings and a Funeral*. Part of what motivates that theme is their November/December show: *The Pirates of Penzance*, to be presented November 30, December 1 (at 8:00 pm) and December 2 (2:00 pm), 2001. Performances are at the State Theatre in Cleveland. For more information, give them a call.

The other productions in their season are *The Marriage of Figaro* (October 19-21), *La Cenerentola* (February 22-24, 2002), and *Rigoletto* (May 3-5, 2002). *Rigoletto* is presumably the funeral, so, if there are 26 weddings in the season, how many weddings are they counting on from *Pirates*?

What Cheer! What Cheer! {International}

We hear from Lamplighters in San Francisco, CA, that they will be giving *Mikado* and *Patience* during their 2001-2002 season, in addition to their annual Gala. Performances of *Mikado* will be July 27-29 and August 1-4 at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center, and August 23-25 at the Dean Leshner Center at Walnut Creek. *Patience* will be at the Yerba Buena Center February 8-10 and 13-17, 2002, and at Walnut Creek January 24-26, 2002. The Champagne Gala will be November 2-4 at San Francisco's Gershwin Theater, and November 17 at the Walnut Creek Dean Leshner Center. For more information, the Lamplighters Music Theatre can be reached at 1766-A 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94107 / (415) 227-4797 / Fax (415) 227-0332 / www.lamplighters.org, or e-mail lamplighters@aol.com. We've heard nothing but excellent reports of their work (especially their Galas).

Ron Fava in Delaware reports that The Ardensingers, their local G&S group, is planning three productions. They are:
(1) *A Concert by The Ardensingers Orchestra* on October 19th, 2001. Includes music of Rossini, Mozart, Grieg, Sullivan and Joplin.

- (2) *The Gilbert and Sullivan Christmas Carol* on December 14th and 15th, 2001. This is the classic Dickens tale set to G&S music by Gayden Wren. (They have done it twice before and it attracts people both in and out of the G&S circle.)
(3) *The Yeomen of the Guard* on April 27, 28, May 4-6, 2002, which will be their major Spring Production.
For all of these, the contact number for information is (302) 239-1313 or randjfava@aol.com. They all take place at The Gild Hall, Arden, in north Wilmington, Delaware. If you're going to be in their area at those time, these ought to be worth looking up.

We hear from the Stanton Taylor of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Shreveport, Louisiana, that they'll present *Sorcerer*, on March 14, 15, 16 at 7:30 PM and Mar. 17, 2002 at 2:30 PM. Prices: Adult \$15.00, Senior \$12.00, Youths (17 and under) \$9.00. Both shows will be at The Performing Arts Center. For reservations or further information, call (318) 868-1429, or mail to: Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Shreveport; 205 E. Southfield Rd.; Shreveport, LA 71105-4325. If you're going to be in the area, it'd be worth looking into

The Savoy Operas in Russia

An MGSser who has been with us for a while is Yana Polyakovskaya, of St. Petersburg, Russia. We congratulate her on her recent successful defense of her doctoral thesis, on the topic of Gilbert and Sullivan in Russia. She has very kindly offered to put together some article on the topic for the *Nonsense*, which we're delighted to receive.

Specifically, Dr. Polyakovskaya graduated from St. Petersburg Conservatory with degrees in piano and musicology, and has been working on G & S for 7 years. In 2000, she defended the thesis "The Savoy-opera of Gilbert and Sullivan" in The Russian Art History Institute. Previously, in 1996, she gave a talk at The Seventh Sir Arthur Sullivan Festival (Keble College, Oxford) on "The English Operetta on the Russian Stage". She has several published articles on G & S. She also performs as a pianist. She is a laureate of a 40th Park Lane Groupe Young Artists Series (London, 1996) and a First International Competition of Contemporary Music Interpretation (Weimar, 1996).

The Savoy Opera in Russia Part 1, by Dr. Yana Polyakovskaya

The English operetta appeared on the Russian stage much later than French and Viennese ones. From the beginning of XVIII century Russia had a close culture relations with Paris and Vienna. Their fashion shops and theatres were models for Russian dandies and theatre-goers. The spreading of the French and German languages were enormous. St. Petersburg was a favorite place for the Paris and Viennese operetta prima donnas.

The situation with British-Russian cultural relations was absolutely different. In the last third of the XVIII century, during Ekaterina II's governing the English population in St. Petersburg was quite large. There were the English club and two English theatres. Ekaterina II enjoyed an English park art, and Charles Cameron was one of the favorite architects. English artists often visited the City. From 1770 to 1772 the famous Fischer troupe performed there English comic operas of T. Arne (*Love in a Village*), S. Arnold (*The Maid of the Mill*) and Ch. Dibdin (*The Padloc*).

During the XIX and XX centuries in St. Petersburg lived approximately 2000 British people. They had their own churches, shops, factories, charity societies, hospitals, reading rooms and even a newspaper *Friendship*. In spite of this the British community made up less than 0.2% of all population. The English artists came seldom and had to

adapt themselves to the taste not only English-spoken public but more wide one. French and German had the entertainment monopoly in Russia. *British* in entertainment was associated with farce and clowns who regularly performed in the show-booths and then in the coffee-houses.

The last quarter of the XIX century is a time of the great *British fashion*. All had to be British: pianos, watches, horses, carriages, governesses, dogs, education etc. This process began in the high society, in the Royal family and court.

In 1881 took place a politically important visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Russian capital. He sailed from Copenhagen on 2nd July with a squadron of five military ships and a great number of escort. As we know from Arthur Jacobs' *Arthur Sullivan. A Victorian musician* Arthur Sullivan and Frederic Clay were among the guests on the board of Duke's flagship *HMS Hercules*. Next day they sailed on the River Neva to Peterhof and on 4th July they dined with the Emperor Alexander III's family. It wasn't a first time when Sullivan met the Russian Royal family. He wrote: "[Next day] in the evening we dined at the royal palace with the Emperor and Empress... The former shook hands and said 'Nous nous sommes souvent rencontrés à Londres' [We often met in London] and the Empress said her mother [the Queen of Denmark] has written to her about me, and told her I was going to give her some music"¹.

In a family of Russian Tsar Nikolay II, the son of Alexander III, the English language was adopted as a intercourse language instead French. Anglomania came to Russia and on its wave – the English operetta.

The place of the English operetta in the whole operetta repertoire changed every season. In the end of 1880-s, when first Savoy-operas appeared it made no more than 1%. From the end of 1890-s *The Geisha* occupied the all Russian light theatres and was directed even in Soviet time. It was a triumph and after *The Geisha* the Russian audience could enjoy the long train of the English operettas and musical comedies of S. Johnes, I. Caryl, L. Monckton, P. Rubens and H. Talbot. They were performed everywhere: from the famous stages of three Emperor theatres (Mariinsky, Alexandrinsky, Mikhailovsky) to the miniature private theatres. Also we should mention an important Russian tour of the *Gaiety* theatre (1899).

The first English operetta on the Russian stage was *The Mikado*, which had an influence to the repertoire of operetta theatres. After two of St. Petersburg *The Mikado*, the Japanese theme gave no peace to the operetta stage-directors, composers, ballet masters and even circus artists. A three cases are worthy to mention.

On 12th March 1890 in a famous St. Petersburg Chinizelli Circus was a premiere of a big pantomime *The Mikado*. More than 300 artists took part in it. Costumes were made from the Japanese drawings, set design was copied from the Japanese pictures, hair design was made by the Japanese models. Among the characters there were Ka-ti-sha, Bo-bo-bel, sisters Pitti Sing, Yum-Yum and Bo-Bo.

In 1892 a famous Russian operetta-translator and librettist Konstantin Larin wrote an revue named *In the Operetta Kingdom, or Operettas inside out. The Mikado's Son2* was among a few non-French characters of the revue.

At last on the seasons 1897/98 and 1898/99 a ballet *The Mikado's daughter* of V. Langammer and V. Vranghel was often performed on the stage of The Mariinsky theatre.

In the end of the XIXth century there were plenty of the various *The Mikado* productions, and very successful ones: in St. Petersburg, Moscow and provinces, in Russian, Ukrainian and Polish. They had a lot of response in press. The press reviews depended mainly on the tastes of newspaper's audience. It is curious to compare the

opinions of two periodicals: academic *Russkaya muzikalnaya gazeta* (*The Russian musical newspaper*) and daily *Sankt-Petersburgskie vedomosti* (*The St. Petersburg news*). The former judges from the point *the operetta as a low genre*: "The British music is almost unknown to us excepting the banal operetta *The Mikado* of the famous British composer Sullivan"³. The latter describing *The Geisha* performance mentions that "music and text resemble the world known and triumphant Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado*. But the music of the latter is more tuneful and original than of the new one. Also its libretto is more intelligent and witty"⁴.

But not only reviewer's opinions were contrary. The productions themselves greatly differed from each other. [to be continued]

¹ Jacobs A. Arthur Sullivan A Victorian musician. – 2nd ed. – Aldershot, 1992. – S.164.

² The name of the Russian version of *The Mikado* – *The Mikado's son*.
³ Letni sezoni // Russkaya muzikalnaya gazeta – 1894. – September 19.

⁴ Die Geisha v Theatre i sadu Aquarium // Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. – 1898. – 4 May (120).

Where Can it Be?

CD Recordings:

S/A Cole recently e-mailed the Ohio Light Opera about the possibility of putting links for selling their CDs from their website. They said they're working on it, but as of June 22 they haven't been set up yet. But in the meantime, outlets are Newport Classic ([401] 848-2442), Albany Records ([518] 436-8814), or OLO itself ([330] 263-2345). The recordings available are Victor Herbert's *Eileen* (NPD 85615) from 1997, Andre Messager's *Veronique* (NPD 85635) from 1997, Emmerich Kalman's *The Bayadere* (NPD 85655) from 1998, Oscar Straus's *The Chocolate Soldier* (NPD 85650) from 1998, Lionel Monckton's *The Arcadians* (NPD 85665) from 1998, *Princess Ida* (NPD 85675) from 1999, Johann Strauss's *A Night in Venice* (NPD 85661) from 1999, Herbert's *Naughty Marietta* (TROY432) from 2000, and *Utopia Limited* (NPD 85659) from 2000.

Theatre Notecards:

Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection of the Houghton Library of Harvard University (I'll no doubt be corrected on how to describe that, but be that as it may) sent the MGS a set of the Gilbert and Sullivan notecards, which I gather were produced to go along with the recent G&S Exhibition at the library. We're likely to use them for as a prize, so now you know what to look forward to.

But for those of us who would like some *now*, S/A Cole has begun to look into how they can be purchased. At this point, no links or listings for them have turned up on the Library website, but I haven't done any calling around yet, either. At this point, what I *can* tell you is that they are about 5" x 8", a set of 12 is listed as costing \$15.00, and are really lovely. Scenes include reproductions of a J.G. Hyde color lithograph poster for *Iolanthe*, one for the D'Oyly Carte 1880 American tour for *The Pirates of Penzance*, Marcel Vertès's design for the teahouse scene from the 1939 filming of *The Mikado*, and (my favorite) Al Hirschfeld's sketches of 1930s D'Oyly Carte stars Sydney Granville, Darrell Fancourt, Muriel Dickson, and Martyn Green as the characters they played in *Trial by Jury*, *Pinafore*, and *Iolanthe*.

If you find out the cards' availability before I do, please pass on the information. The telephone number for the library is (617) 495-2445 / e-mail: HTC@harvard.edu

Grains Among the Chaff

We hear from Geoffrey Shovelton that the book he spoke of in the last *Nonsense – Wheat Among the Chaff* by his former professor Jay Appleton – that Halfcrowns Publishers will be handling the book, and that it will be priced at \$8.99, with \$2.50 to add for postage and packing. I haven't hunted up an address or web address yet, so if you find one before I do, let me know. At least you'll know what to expect when you get there.

A Nice Dilemma We Have Here

We heard from Byron Hathaway – which is always nice – and he had a question that someone here can probably answer. He says:

In the summer of 1975, my wife and I went to England for a three-week vacation, spending most of the time in London. While there, we viewed several of the summer festival performances of D'Oyly Carte's summer series at the Royal Festival Hall. We became friendly with several of the star performers, since my wife and I were also G&S singers in the USA. During that period, a recording was being made of that season's hit, *Utopia Limited*. One day, we were asked if we wanted to come to the recording studio to watch/listen as the recording was being made. We did so, and even took photos of the occasion. But I was foolish enough *not* to note where all this was happening. I now ask if any of the *Nonsense* readers can tell me where his recording was made – what studio in the city of London. I was told that this information was noted on the album, but I no longer have these records, so I cannot check. If someone can supply me with the name of this recording studio, I will be most grateful.

I checked the CD program notes, and all they say is that the recording was originally made in 1975. I think the LP went in the 1996 flood. In any event, if anyone knows where the D'Oyly Carte's recording of *Utopia Limited* was made, please do let us know.

The 2000 Big Quiz Answers

Winners this year were Ronald B. Daniels, Barbra Edson Lewis, Phocion Park, and (it's about time he got to win something) Arthur Robinson. They have been notified separately, and trust they were satisfied with the prizes their efforts earned. (In case you're curious, the prizes they won included a videocassette of *Topsy Turvy* (very generously donated by Lisa Beth Bower), a cassette recording of *Ivanhoe*, Bartlett's *Gilbert and Sullivan Quiz Book* (graciously provided by David Stone), and a cassette of Gilbert and Sullivan overtures (courtesy of the David Coles.)

For those of us who played along at home, it's always interesting to see that the winning entries looked like. So here are the answers, both the objective ones you could look up, and (what I thought were a lot more fun) the subjective ones that depend on the respondent. How well did you do?

1. What will the Savoy-Aires' production be in 2000? **It was *The Mikado*.**
2. On what kind of ship was Dick Dauntless a sailor? **He shipped [d'ya see?] on a Revenue Sloop.**
3. How old was Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance*? **She admitted to being forty-seven.**
4. In *The Palace of Truth*, what is the magical property of that palace? **In the Palace of Truth, all the occupants had to speak the absolute truth, without**

realizing they were doing so; unless one was protected by some talisman that allowed them to continue saying what one wanted people to think was true. Sometimes, as Elizabeth Bennet exclaims in *Pride and Prejudice*, and the courtiers visiting The Palace of Truth learn, Honesty is a greatly overrated virtue. (By the way, she exclaims it in the movie: I couldn't find it in the book.)

5. Which G&S operas are featured in the Ohio Light Opera's 2000 season? **They were *The Mikado* (June 20-August 9) and *Utopia Limited* (July 14-August 8).**
6. *The Contrabandista* is a "remake" of what operetta? **As all the respondents pointed out, it was a remake of no opera: *The Chieftain* (1894) was a remake of it (1867).**
7. In "the wonder-working days of old", how much were dukes worth? **According to Don Alhambra Bolero, Grand Inquisitor of Spain, they were worth Three a Penny. And I'm not going to argue with an Inquisitor.**
8. A number of authors have written book-length commentaries on the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Name an author and the title of his or her book. **Titles included *The Gilbert and Sullivan Book* by Leslie Baily, *Audrey Williamson's Gilbert & Sullivan Opera: An Assessment*,**
9. How many proverbs are referred to in the song "Things Are Seldom What They Seem"? **Answers range from 19 to 21, depending on what counts as a proverb. I counted 21, not counting "Things are seldom what they seem", which is just a statement of fact**

*Skin milk masquerades as cream
High-Lows pass as patent leather
Jackdaws strut in peacock's feathers
Black sheep dwell in every fold
All that glitters is not gold
Storks tum out to be but logs
Bulls are but inflated frogs
Drops the wind and stops the mill
Turbot is ambitious brill
Guild the farthing, if you will, yet it is a farthing still.
Once a cat was killed by care
Only brave deserve the fair
Wink is often good as nod
Spoils the child who spares the rod
Thirsty lambs run foxy dangers
Dogs are found in many mangers
Paw of cat the chestnut snatches
Worn-out garments show new patches
Only count the chick that hatches
Men are grown-up catchy-catchies
Here today and gone tomorrow*

10. In what year was the ballet *Pineapple Poll* first presented? **In 1951, by the Sadlers Wells Theatre Ballet.**
11. Who complains about receiving excessive "toffee", and in which opera does he or she do it? **The Duke of Dunstable does so, in *Patience*.**
12. What is the name of the island on which *Utopia Limited* is set? **It is set on the Island of**
20. How old was *Patience* when she first knew Archibald Grosvenor? **She says she was a tiny babe of four, in the song *Long Years Ago*.**
21. How many people in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are at some point scheduled to be beheaded? **Two: Nanki-Poo in *Mikado* and Col. Fairfax in *Yeomen*.**
22. If you didn't participate in last year's quiz, name your favorite Gilbert and Sullivan opera. If you did answer this question last year, report on whether any changes to your answer have been made? **We got a vote for *Ruddigore*, one for *Patience*, two for *Yeomen*, (though one remarked that choosing a favorite**

opera is like trying to choose a favorite child. My mother once said the favorite child is the one that needs the most love at the moment, and one of the respondents solved that problem by adding that her favorite is *The One I Am Doing At the Moment*. And I still like *Iolanthe*.

23. How many lines does Private Willis speak in *Iolanthe*? He has four (and, according to the libretto I'm using, he's listed only as "sentry" in two of them.
24. How many lines does Mabel speak in *The Pirates of Penzance*? Six, if it's a traditional performance, and two if it's ultra-traditional or Joseph Papp-style (Papp's production restored the "chanting" of the exchange between the Police Sergeant and Mabel, and the remaining four lines are therefore sung).
25. Write a short song parody based on a G&S song. Oh, there are some clever ones this year; a couple political, a couple topical, and a couple off-the-wall.

One says, "As a news agency reported that members of congress wee proposing, and in some instances approving, appropriation bills which could soon deplete the 'surplus' which the presidential candidates were thinking they would have the opportunity to allocate in their budget proposals. Picture a horde of congresspeople with pens and calculators in hand prepared to 'raid' the surplus and put portions of it in bills to fund their pork barrel projects. As they advance on their prey they sing as did the pirates of Penzance who sang 'with catlike tread', all the time being very caution, hoping that no one would discover that the surplus was well, or nearly, spent when they thought it would still be there to allocate"

With stealthy steps,
Upon our spoils we prey,
In silence secure,
Our rapacious way we steal,
No remorse at all,
We always guard our work
Our pork barrel projects might be too widely heard.

So brazenly the congressperson creeps
While the "surplus" guardian sleeps.

Come, 'pols who grace the scene,
Let's vary our authority
With a little skullduggery.

Come, 'pols who grace the scene,
Truce to legislation,
Take another notion,
Let's mix skullduggery
With a little fiscal larceny.

Here's your pork barrel aid,
And your highway bit,
Your term preserver,
You may want to hit.
Your back home voters,
You must need to please,
Thank those folks,
And your pollsters' keys."

Another, inspired by the recent bewilderment during the last U.S. presidential election, followed Mr. Bunthorne's lead:

"It is really rather silly that elections, wily-nilly, can actually be so bad,
That the voting is affected – ballots counted or rejected
– on the basis of a hanging 'chad'."

One, who is regularly involved in producing the operas,

had this to say:

"We used to put on parodies at season-ending Company parties. Once the scenery crew performed. I can only remember part of it.

When the curtain opens wider 'stead of closing ['stead of closing]
And the tangled ropes won't let the darn thing budge [darn thing budge]
All the stupefied performers stand there posing [echo]
'Til we climb aloft and give the ropes a nudge [echo]
When you hear the shrill fire sirens coming nigher [echo]
Don't think of saving some child left alone [echo]
For we probably have set the wings on fire [echo]
And the life you save will likely be your own [echo]
Oh! For we probably have set the wings on fire, wings on fire,
A stagehand's lot is not a happy one!"

Those of you on SavoyNet may recognize this one. The entrant who posted it used it in the Big Quiz. He got the idea when someone on the list suggested the nude scene in *Topsy-Turvy* was included only to achieve an "R" rating and thus make more money:

"Here's a first-rate opportunity
To include a bit of nudity,
So when Jack Valenti's viewed it, he
Will assign an R for crudity!
This will help the film financially;
The receipts will rise substantially,
Though the Barney fans who boo at us
Claim the nudity's gratuitous."

Sarah Cole (not an entrant as such, but she must put in her oar) once had the idea that a comic musical concert version of the *Star Wars* trilogy, based on songs from the G&S operas, would be a hoot (the *HMS Death Star* parody in the issue before last left her dissatisfied, and thought a version that included melodies from all the operas would be a lot of fun). It could be called *Princess Leia, or The Jedi's Curse*. But she didn't get any farther than a couple of snippets ("In for a penny, in for a pound: it's money that makes Han's world go 'round" would conclude the trio the "boys" sing before heading off to the prison level to rescue the princess; the action of *The Empire Strikes Back* could be summed up in a song based on Mercury's "Olympus is now in a terrible muddle" from *Thespis*; the orgy at Jabba's palace could be "Come, Bumpers, aye, ever so many"; Luke Skywalker's confronting his mentors about his parentage came out: "Faithless gurus, to deceive me, I who trusted so! / Young Skywalker do not leave we, hear me e'er you go!"; and so forth). Only one song was completed: Princess Leia's Invocation of Obi Wan Kenobi (based on Princess Ida's "Invocation to Minerva"):

Kenobi, Ah, help me! (*This phrase would be the portion of the message Luke Skywalker intercepts. It goes on:*)

Oh, general wise
That lovest right,
In this our plight,
To you, Rebellion cries.

Disaster reigns,
But informa-
Tion, ah, that may
Preserve the rebels' pains
This 'droid contains.

[Oh, general wise, that lovest right, / Help thou our plight!]
In this dark hour you we rely upon,
And safely see this 'droid to Alderaan!

(If sung at the right tempo, it comes out about the same length as what she actually does say in the movie. Come to think of it, there were a couple more snippets that were rather cute. The encounter with the Ewoks is based on "Climbing over Rocky

Mountain” from *Thespis* (there’s a difference), which allowed Threepio to sing:

Far away from grief and care / High in the Endoran air,
Here they live and reign along / In a world that is still their
own.
Here enthroned in the sky / Too near Vader’s piercing eye,
As a god I’ll make decrees / That they’ll honor, if they
please.

And the finale, based on “It is our duty plain” from *Princess Ida* (the song sung while the heroes are fighting) which needed work, *The Pirates of Penzance* finale, and that of *Mikado*:

Vader: And so it goes: I’m thrust into convenient Eternity /
Exchanging evil living for ethereal paternity!

(Luke, Han, and Leia sing something appropriate about the story being finished, concluding with:)

Threepio: That is, of course, until George Lucas starts another trilogy! (Which the Chorus of Ewoks naturally echos, leading into:)

Han: The threatened cloud is passed away,

Leia: And brightly shines the dawning day!

Luke: But though the work will start too soon,

Leia: We’ll celebrate this afternoon!

Chorus of Ewoks and everybody else: Then let the throng our joy
advance with laughing song and merry dance! With joyous
song and ringing cheers, inaugurate their new careers!

It’s probably just as well this poor effort died a’bourning, but it might have been amusing for G&S enthusiasts who enjoyed *Star Wars*. If anyone actually does want to run with the idea, I’d love to help out.

And Isaac Asimov, once one of the lives and souls of the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Society, would turn over in his urn if he heard this one, based on his long short story *The Bicentennial Man: The Fable of the Robot and the Girl* (based on “A Lady Fair of Lineage High” from *Princess Ida*)

A girl of blithe and carefree ways
Was loved by a robot in future days.
The miss was lively and full of fun,
The robot a fully metal one.

So it would not do –

The scheme fell through,

Though a fine machine with artistic skill,

For a living woman

He was too inhuman,

So though fond of the robot’s manlike will,

To the girl he remained a robot still.

With a view to take on a human look,
He earned his freedom and he wrote a book.
He made a fortune, and exchanged, we find,
His metal body for organic kind.

But it would not do –

The scheme fell through –

For though man he appeared to the searching eye,

His synthetic brain

Did still remain.

So a robot he stayed, and the reason why:

Unlike a human being, he could not die.

To a surgeon he went – for his course was plain.
He had the procedure that would kill his brain;
And for ending life on the human plan,
He was named “The Bicentennial Man.”

But it would not do –

The scheme fell through –

For the girl who had prompted the hoped-for bliss,

Though still admired,

Had long since expired.

So the best we can hope for the man is this:

An eternity spent with “Little Miss.”

Although *The Bicentennial Man* is not a favorite story, I wouldn’t want to see it made fun of, either. I trust this parody, like *Princess Ida* itself, will be taken as a “respectful ‘per-version’” of the original. By the way, in examining G&S parodies on the Internet, I was reminded that a G&S parody doesn’t have to be based on a G&S song, but could be based on another popular song and be about a G&S plot, incident or character. One funny song was the plot of *Ruddigore*, sung to *The Beverly Hillbillies’* theme. Hey, it works for Weird Al Yankovic!

26. Have you seen the film *Topsy Turvy*? **Three Yeses, One No.**
27. Have you seen the film *The Girl Said No*? **One yes, Three Nos. (And it’s too bad there’s only one “yes”, too, because, if you like older films, and Damon Runyon-type stories, it’s likely to be a film you’d enjoy. The 1938 film stars Robert Armstrong and Irene Hervey, and is set in a Runyonesque New York City. After a bookie is cheated by a taxi dancer, he decides to get even by tricking her into thinking he can make her into a Broadway star. Things don’t work out the way he expects when the mom-and-pop restaurateurs he uses to produce a show the girl can appear in are actually former Broadway stars (who were famous for their Gilbert and Sullivan productions), they and their reconstituted company (as well as the former taxi dancer) actually are good, and he falls in love with the girl.**
28. Who does Colonel Farifax impersonate? **He impersonates Leonard Meryll. (And a better grammarian than I pointed out that it’s the accusative before the verb and should be “Whom does Colonel Fairfax impersonate”).**
29. What color are Reginald Bunthorne’s eyes said to be? **At one point, he is asked in song to raise his purple eyes from his heart-drawn poesy, so they would seem to be purple.**
30. Who describes herself as a child of nature? **Yum-Yum says she is a child of nature, and takes after her mother.**
31. In how many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas does a wedding take place in the second act? **In three of them (and they’re only referred to, not seen): *Iolanthe* (the fairies and the Peers), *Mikado* (Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum, and Ko-Ko and Katisha), and *The Grand Duke* (Ludwig and Julia Jellicoe and Ludwig and the Baroness Von Krackenfeldt).**
32. In which opera does the “Patter Trio” appear? **The Patter Trio is sung (or delivered, depending on the talent of the performers) in the second act of *Ruddigore*.**
33. Marco and Giuseppe Palmieri find themselves kings of what country? **They are monarch of the Island of Barataria.**
34. The film *Topsy Turvy* has made quite a hit. But how many times is the term “topsy-turvy” used in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas? **It is used three times: twice in *Thespis* (Mercury complains how the thespians have turned the world topsy-turvy with their ineptness as gods, and the returning Olympians sing that Olympus is turned topsy-turvy), and *The Grand Duke* (when Ludwig sings of how the state will be modeled on the ancient Greek states, he says, “In the period Socratic, every dining room was Attic, which suggests an architecture of a topsy-turvy kind.”) Isn’t it interesting that a term so frequently associated with the G&S operas should only appear in the most obscure of them.**
35. Describe the appearance of the Rich Attorney’s elderly, ugly daughter? **She may very well pass for forty-**

- three in the dusk with the light behind her and/or an incubus. Take your pick. (I love that description. I have a friend who is 43, and *she* looks like Greer Garson at 32 in the dawn with the light before her. So elderly and ugly could be a matter of preference.
36. In which opera does the "Bell Trio" appear? **Captain Corcoran, Sir Joseph Porter, and Josephine sing the Bell Trio in the second act of *H.M.S. Pinafore*.**
 37. Under what conditions should "A" die in misery? **Assuming I [as the singer] am "B".**
 38. Who sings the song "Come, Mighty Must"? **Lady Blanche sings "Come, Mighty Must".**
 39. In which opera does he or she sing it? **She sings it in the second act of *Princess Ida*. That is, she sings it if the song isn't cut, as it generally is. Somebody pointed out that, as a rule, nobody sings it.**
 40. Who declares that "Man is Nature's sole mistake"? **Lady Psyche sings that Man is Nature's sole mistake, also in the second act of *Princess Ida*. I get a kick out of seeing that line included in quotation books: judging from the placement in the books, the compilers assumed "man" meant "people", instead of "males". Oh, well, maybe the books were compiled by men.**
 41. Mount Ararat is the site where Noah's Ark is said to have landed. Name a Gilbert and Sullivan opera that includes a character with that name. ***Iolanthe* has a character named George, Earl of Mountararat.**
 42. Pick an actor or singer, past or present, and name a G&S role you would like -- or would have liked -- to see him or her play. Explain your answer. **Suggestions included Stanley Holloway as the Sergeant of Police from *Pirates* (because he would be very funny), Martyn Green as Bunthorne in *Patience* (because he never got a chance to do it), Robert Merrill as The Mikado (because he had a powerful and fluid voice that could effectively express several moods), Julie Andrews in some of the soprano leads, Fred Astaire as the Learned Judge in *Trial By Jury* (because it would be fun to see him dance like a semi-despondent fury), and Boris Karloff as King Paramount in *Utopia Limited* (because he had a surprisingly good voice, and had so frequently been stuck playing indians or natives in the movies. He deserved to be King of them).**
 43. A Captain Corcoran appears in two of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Name those two operas. **They are *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *Utopia Limited*.**
 44. Name the madrigal in *The Mikado*. **It is "Brightly Dawns our Wedding Day". Someone remarked he had heard it used as a processional in a wedding, and didn't think that boded well for the groom.**
 45. Name another madrigal that appears in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, and the opera in which it appears. **Named madrigals include "Strange Adventure" from *Yeomen*, and "When the Buds are Blossoming" from *Ruddigore*. Can you think of any others?**
 46. In what year was *Patience* first produced? **In 1881.**
 47. Research time: Name a celebrity not associated with Gilbert and Sullivan who has, at one time or another, appeared in a G&S opera, and the role he or she played. **Findings indicated that Agatha Christie said in her autobiography that she had appeared in a youthful version of *Yeomen* as Col. Fairfax; Noel Coward claimed in the *Complete Noel Coward Songbook* that in his youth he had appeared in *Pinafore*, Harold Wilson, former British Prime Minister, was said to be in the chorus of several G&S productions in his college and younger days, and, at 17, Beverly Sills played *Patience* in a touring company. Incidentally, the next time you go**

- to a professional musical performance involving singers (like touring musicals and whatnot), generally, at least one of the leads has appeared in several G&S productions. Look and see if I'm right.)
48. Name all the melodies used in the overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard*.
Tower Theme ("When our Gallant Norman Foes"),
"When a Wooer Goes a-wooing",
"Were I thy bride",
First Act Finale ("All frenzied with despair I rage"),
Second Act Finale ("With happiness my soul is cloyed"),
"Oh, a Private Buffoon" and these basic melodies intertwine. Someone suggested "Strange Adventure" as appearing in there toward the end. I couldn't find it, but that doesn't mean it isn't there.
 49. Dream Cast: We all have ideas of how we would like to see certain operas presented, or wondered how a role if it had been played by a particular actor or singer (or combination). To that end, pick one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and list the cast *you* would like to see in these roles. Anachronisms, or performers who could never have performed together, are acceptable. Explain the reasoning behind your choice of cast. **You know, this was such a long question to answer that the responses are going to be in a separate article. Look for it, and see what you think.**
 50. How many positions does Pooh-Bah hold? List them to prove your answer: **We counted 29: First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, Lord Mayor (both acting and elect), Lord Chamberlain, Attorney-General, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Privy Purse, Private Secretary, Solicitor, Lord Chief Justice, Leader of the Opposition, Paymaster-General, Lord High Auditor, First Commissioner of Police (also referred to Chief Commissioner of Police), Master of the Rolls [I wonder if he has to bring rolls for the police? Ed.], Judge Ordinary, Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Commissionaire, Coroner, Groom of the Second Floor Front, Registrar, and Lord High Everything Else. But he had refused an appointment as Lord High Substitute.**

BONUS QUESTION: What significant similarity is there between the films *Topsy-Turvy* and *The Girl Said No*? **This is an easy one: they are both about presenting a production of *The Mikado*.**

Let the Welkin Ring with the News

Although he's recently retired from managing a college library, member Ronald Daniels does keep busy, even in the G&S area. He mentions:

Gilbert and Sullivan live on in west-central Illinois. The Brown County High School Drama Club presented the *Pirates of Penzance* in the high school auditorium on April 6 and 7 evenings and in a Sunday matinee on April 8. The version was "A new version...as presented on Broadway by New York Shakespeare Festival". The "sisters" song about the weather and the song about the tools distributed to the pirates for the raid on the castle were not included. The performers were few in number (21) but spirited. The same could be said about the 6 person pit band of clarinet, drums, flute, piano, trombone, and trumpet. The star performer, suitable so, was Katie Kenedy, a senior and

accomplished musician, who had been taking voice lessons at Western Illinois University.

The usual caveat about high school and overly-ambitious amateur interpretations of G&S was unintentionally declared in the newspaper announcement of the production: "Join the band of swashbuckling pirates, bumbling policemen, ditsy maidens and the delightfully dotty 'model of a major general' in a romp over the rocky coast of Cornwall...." The "policemen" were girls who performed a sort of syncopated mild kickline and shuffle. Nevertheless the spirit of several of the actors was "very evident" as was the undeniable fact that G&S can "take a licking and still keep ticking".

You know, this is awful to say, but in reading how Pirates was promoted here, it's no wonder I was in college before I found out G&S wasn't silly but remarkably sophisticated. It's a good reminder how we all need to work together to show how relevant the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas remain at the turn of the millennium, without being ridiculous. But editorializing aside, it's good to hear that Central Illinois is still willing to present G&S.

I Dream of Gilbert and Sullivan: Dream Cast for G&S Operas

G&S, as with any work of art, is open to interpretation. But unlike many works, that don't involve so many of the senses, or so much imagination, those interpretations come most strongly from the *audience*, rather than the performers or producers. Maybe that's because many of the operas aren't performed often, or because, as a rule, performers don't work closely enough or often enough with the operas to learn an appreciation of them as a whole (surprisingly few of the MGS's members are performers). Or maybe it's G&S's addictive qualities, which lead people to read the libretti, listen to recordings of the operas they haven't seen, and visualize the operas. Whatever the reason, people have definite ideas about how their favorite G&S operas ought to be performed.

Partly to give members a chance to air their views, and partly because it's fun to find out what those views might be, the last Big Quiz included a question about who quiz entrants would like to see in certain roles, or with whom they would cast a particular opera. As you'll see, "revisionist" productions notwithstanding, when given a choice, quiz entrants visualize a long traditional lines. It just goes to show that W.S. Gilbert knew what he was doing when he wrote and directed his texts. Such information about how audience members understand the operas should be useful to opera producers in presenting them.

But on to the "dream casts". The "casted" operas included *Utopia Limited*, *Mikado*, two *Patiences*, and *Yeomen of the Guard*. See if you agree or disagree.

Dream cast for *Utopia Limited*, as planned by Arthur Robinson. He remarked, "I would have liked to see the D'Oyly Carte do *Utopia Limited* with members of the company who were with them when I first saw them in 1968 (or with other members from around that era): Donald Adams as King Paramount, John Reed and Kenneth Sandford as Scaphio and Phantis., Philip Potter (or Thomas Round) and Valerie Masterson as Fitzbattleaxe and Zara, Peggy Ann Jones as Nekaya or Kalyba, Jon Ellison as Tarara, and so on."

Dream Cast for *Mikado*, as selected by Ronald B. Daniels:
The Mikado (Bass-baritone): *Robert Merrill*. He would be an excellent interpreter of the role.
Nanki-Poo (Tenor): (Unidentified)

Ko-Ko (Baritone): *Martyn Green*, the incomparable in singing and acting this role so much his.
Pooh-Bah (Baritone-Bass): *Simon Grant*. A versatile and accomplished singer.
Pish-Tush (Baritone-Bass): *David Thomas*. Noted performer with a wide variety of experience.
Go-To (Bass): *John Milne*. Great, deep voice.
Yum-Yum (Soprano): *Jenny Lind*, the Swedish nightingale. Reputed to have an incomparable charming voice.
Pitti-Sing (Mezzo-Soprano): *Fredericka von Stade*. Has a lively voice and a great flair for acting.
Peep-Bo (Soprano): *Rise Stevens*. Lovely, bright voice.
Katisha (Contralto): *Marilyn Horne*. She is listed as a mezzo-soprano, but she can sound like a true alto.

Dream cast for *Patience*, as visualized by Phocion Park:
Reginald Bunthorne: *Martyn Green* (I have read about him and seen him as Ko-Ko in the movie version of *The Mikado*. His Bunthorne must have been very good.)
Archibald Grosvenor: *Kenneth Sandford*. I have seen him play the role and he did so superbly.
Patience: *Leonora Braham*. As the originator of the role, she would come closest to performing it as Gilbert intended.
Lady Angela: *Jessie Bond*. So much has been written about her;
and the rest of the cast made up by the role originators – as mentioned above, to reflect Gilbert's actual intentions.

Dream cast (2) for *Patience*, as Barbra Edson Lewis would like to see it:
Bunthorne: *Alec Guinness*
Grosvenor: *Leslie Howard*
Colonel Calverley: *Bryn Terfel*
Duke of Dunstable: *Jeremy Irons*
Major Murgatroyd: *Geoffrey Palmer*
Solicitor: *Nigel Hawthorne*
Patience: *Debbie Reynolds*
Angela: *Greer Garson*
Saphir: *Deborah Kerr*
Ella: *Susan Hampshire*
Jane: *Patricia Routledge*

Dream cast for *Yeomen of the Guard*, as Sarah Cole would cast it:
(I was such a terrible kid: I just loved story problems and essay questions. So I was really looking forward to this question.) An explanation of how to understand this list, to begin with. For one thing, I'm not as concerned as most enthusiasts about what Gilbert had in mind. I'm more concerned about what I hear in the libretto (Isn't that stuck-up!). A lot of these people, individually, might have been able to pull off the role, but collectively, the result would probably look like a bad imitation of those 1930s historical "romances" MGM used to make, where the star would suddenly be presented in the role as if expecting applause, or as if the fact that he or she were playing the part was more important than the part itself. In productions like that, you might as well forget the plot, because it's immediately going to be lost. But these are the *type* of personalities I would like to see in these parts.

For another thing, over the years, I've developed an appreciation for the Hollywood films of the 1930s and '40s. That fondness is evident from this cast list.

Lieutenant of the Tower: *I don't know*. It's an important part, but one that motivates the plot without drawing attention to itself. D'Arcy Corrigan (noteworthy for playing the "Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come" in the 1938 filming of *A Christmas Carol*) might be an idea: an actor whose presence is felt, but who the audience doesn't necessarily remember having seen would probably work. (Or H.B. Warner: he can play anything!)
Colonel Fairfax: *Ronald Colman*. I know he isn't a tenor, but he

has the good looks and dignity expected of the upper classes. He is also able to play “stinkers” in such a way that you really believe they’ll reform (as he did in *The Prisoner of Zenda* (King Rudolf), and to a lesser extent in *A Tale of Two Cities* (as Sydney Carton)). And – I can’t think of any way around saying it – although his charm, courage, and intellect, obscure the fact, Fairfax is basically a stinker (look how he takes advantage of Phoebe’s affection, and how he treats Jack Point when Elsie chooses him, or that cruel joke that motivates the second act finale). But, if Ronald Colman were playing the part, Fairfax would eventually recognize his failings and start to shape up. On the road to recovery is a good place to leave him.

Sgt. Meryll: *Donald Adams*. He looks right and he sounds right. I can’t imagine anyone else in that part.

Leonard Meryll: *David Niven*. The parts I’ve most frequently seen him in are the “wanabee” Ronald Colman-types, so the idea of having him “share” a role with Ronald Colman would fit with his typecasting, even though he sounds about as much like Ronald Colman as Dennis Day did when doing his Ronald Colman imitation. Now! there’s a scary thought: Dennis Day as Col. Fairfax!

Jack Point: *Buster Keaton*. But the Old Buster Keaton of the late 1940s, who had been through the mill, as Jack Point presumably has. This may sound like the oddest casting of all, but I am so sick of mawkish Jack Points! The Buster Keaton “character” was an earnest fellow who was funniest when he didn’t appear to realize he was being funny. Keaton himself once described that character by saying that he didn’t beg for the audience’s sympathy. If they wanted to feel sorry for him, that’s up to them; if not, that’s fine, too. I’d like to see a Jack Point with some backbone, that gets the audience’s sympathy because his situation is sad, not because he hangs around looking pitiful. Also, although his voice was, shall we say, uncultivated, he was a pretty adequate baritone.

Wilfred Shadbolt: *Boris Karloff or William Bendix*. Surprisingly enough, they could both sing, though Karloff could stay on key better. But more importantly, Shadbolt is in many ways – at least in my ideal version of *Yeomen* – an inversion of Fairfax. Fairfax looks good, but at heart he’s selfish. Shadbolt looks bad, but at heart is kind. After all, his secret ambition is to make people laugh instead of cry (as he probably must, as Assistant Tormen tor). Boris Karloff became famous looking spooky, yet the word most frequently used to describe him has been “gentle”. And William Bendix (I’m thinking especially of the way he played Chester Riley in *The Life of Riley* on radio) was a bullying, blustering blowhard, that everybody loved anyway because he meant well. Each would have given a different interpretation, that would have been equally valid. I know a case is frequently made for Shadbolt to be brutish or, sadly, brutal, but I prefer kindness. As Sidney Greenstreet remarks frequently in *The Mask of Dimitrios*, there’s so little kindness in the world. Say! Maybe if William Bendix played Wilfred, Boris Karloff could play the Lieutenant. After all, he’s familiar with *The Tower of London*.

Elsie Maynard: *Judy Garland*. You’re probably thinking, “What! Her style of singing is all wrong!” and I wouldn’t argue with you. But the pitch of her voice is good, and her “character” is right. I can’t help but think of the way she gave The Wizard a piece of her mind in *The Wizard of Oz* when he scared the Lion into fits, or the one she gave the Lion when he started chasing Toto. Or, in a more moving way, the way she told Gene Kelly to stay away from her in *Summer Stock*. Her character was one that doesn’t let emotions get in the way of doing what she thinks is right. An Elsie who would really tell Fairfax/Leonard to jump in the lake when he starts making love to her – no matter how badly she may have wanted him to – would be a refreshing change.

Phoebe Meryll: *Carole Lombard or Joan Blondell*. Both regularly came off as dizzy, self-indulgent comediennes, but the audience could tell there was something solid at their core. Phoebe strikes me as a self-centered flirt, but I’d like to see her as one who, like Fairfax, is beginning to recognize her character flaws by the end of the opera. I’d also prefer her to at least begin to appreciate Wilfred by the end. I think Joan Blondell would be more believable, judging from her

work in *Topper Returns*: she seems more natural, and less “flighty” than Carole Lombard.

Dame Carruthers: *Edna May Oliver*. Edna May Oliver, with that affected, grating voice – like a cello with a head cold – really was the quintessential arch old busybody, who was somehow likable anyway. From Hilda Withers to Miss Pross, she played the no-nonsense spinster who wasn’t completely immune to a gentleman’s attentions (depending on his intentions). I can’t see anyone else in that part, either.

Kate: *Gia Kent*. Have you ever heard of her? I thought not. She played Lady Catherine De Bourgh’s Daughter in the Greer Garson/Lawrence Olivier filming of *Pride and Prejudice*. You hardly know the poor girl’s there, and she *knows* it. Poor Kate is dragged in out of nowhere, sings her song, and disappears again. That’s about what happens to Anne De Bourgh. Come to think of it, Edna May Oliver herded her around in *Pride and Prejudice*, too.

So now you know how other MGSers visualize some of the operas. See what (or who) *you* think would contribute to the making of a satisfying G&S opera performance.

Cleena-ng up after The Emerald Isle

Contrary to what the American Public thinks, librarians don't sit around reading books, as our Quizmaster Arthur Robinson (currently reference librarian at LaGrange College in Georgia) will attest. Librarians help people find information, and, even with the Internet, that keeps them pretty busy. That's why we haven't heard much from him lately. 2001 is the centennial of the Basil Hood/Arthur Sullivan and Edward German comic opera The Emerald Isle, or The Caves of Carrig-Cleena, and in honor of the occasion, he passed this question on. He says:

"I posted it on SavoyNet asking if anyone (especially anyone Irish) knew the correct pronunciation of "Cleena," but had no replies. Here's the piece. Again, it's a rather obscure point, but it is at least timely, since this is the EMERALD ISLE centennial."

In the Prince Consort's recording of Sullivan and Basil Hood's comic opera *The Emerald Isle*, "Cleena" and "Carrig-Cleena" are pronounced "Clay-na." This is the pronunciation given in the preface of the concert version of the vocal score published by Chappell in 1930 (the complete vocal score published in 1901 does not contain this note), and may well be the appropriate pronunciation (I am unfamiliar with Irish pronunciation). But it seems clear that Hood intended it to be pronounced as he spelled it, and that it was so pronounced in the original production.

There are two proofs of this. First, in the Act I finale, "Carrig-Cleena" is rhymed with "arena," and was also rhymed with "subpoena" in a further verse found in an early typescript of the libretto but later deleted:

A soldier pusillanimous
A general Court Martial to
Is summoned by a strict subpoena;
They're none the less unanimous
Though discipline they're partial to
They don't intend to go to Carrig-Cleena.

Second, there is an anecdote in François Cellier and Cunningham Bridgeman's *Gilbert, Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte* (London, 1914), pp. 404-5, concerning a rehearsal of *The Emerald Isle* during which "one of the ladies of the company" noticed that there was someone in the upper circle and pointed this out to Richard Barker, the stage-manager. It was in fact Helen D'Oyly Carte, but Barker, believing it was a charwoman, said "Never mind, my dear, she won't hurt--it's only the Fairy Cleaner." Obviously this joke would make no sense unless the cast

had been pronouncing "Cleena" to rhyme with "arena."

His point reminds me of a question I have. At one point, someone is singing the song he said he heard while fairies of who live in the caves of Carrig-Cleena. What he sings is:

Da Luan, da mort, da Luan, da mort Angus da Dardine!
I asked my boss's boss, who speaks Gaelic, what the phrase means; only he confessed he took the class in High School to meet girls. But he did say that Luan probably refers to an ancient Irish race that is associated with the fairies. I'm still curious, though: what does this phrase mean? We'll look forward to any definitive answer.

Four Textual Emendations in Gilbert's Comic Operas

As proposed by Arthur Robinson

This note is to propose four emendations--two that seem to me definite, and two that are admittedly conjectural--in Gilbert's less well-known comic operas.

First, in Act II of Thespis, all texts, including the one that Terence Rees has corrected in his Thespis: A Gilbert and Sullivan Enigma (Dillon's University Bookshop, 1964, p. 134), have Thespis read from Lemprière's Classical Dictionary: "Apollo was several times married, among others to Issa, Bolina, Coronis, Chymene, Cyrene, Chione, Acacallis, and Calliope." The fourth name here should be Clymene, not Chymene, as can be ascertained not only from ancient sources for the myth (e.g., Ovid's Metamorphoses 1.736) but from Lemprière's dictionary itself (s.v. "Apollo," p. 67), where this list of names does in fact appear. Whether Gilbert copied the name incorrectly--it is well known that he wrote Thespis in haste--or the printer misread it is uncertain; but there is no probable, possible shadow of doubt as to the correct name.

Second, in the Act I finale of The Mountebanks, the members of the Tamorra Secret Society posing as monks sing a chaunt consisting of Latin phrases that are meaninglessly jumbled together for comic effect, but do scan as dactylic hexameter, the most common Latin meter. The published text and the vocal score both give one line as "Esse genus neutrium--sic invariable nomen." This is obviously incorrect, since (a) the form neutrium does not exist in Latin--the correct form of the adjective neuter to agree with the noun genus would be neutrum; and (b) neutrium does not scan, whereas neutrum does. Thus, this word should be corrected to neutrum.

My other two emendations can't be proven, but I think they are justifiable on stylistic grounds. Gilbert was of course an expert rhymers, and was careful to use true rhymes (e.g., "here" and "peer") rather than mere identities (e.g., "here" and "hear"). The following quatrain appears in Act II of Thespis:

For Thespis as Jove is a terrible blunder,
Too nervous and timid--too easy and weak--
Whenever he's called on to lighten or thunder,
The thought of it keeps him awake for a week!

The rhyming of "weak" and "week" is indeed weak, and uncharacteristic of Gilbert. I suggest that the second line should end with "meek" rather than "weak," which not only is a true rhyme but seems to make slightly better sense in the context. (The word "weak" appears a few lines later, which may have led to the corruption of the text.)

Finally, in Act II of The Grand Duke, Julia Jellicoe sings the following lines, according to all early texts I have seen, including the pre-rehearsal libretto (reprinted in John Wolfson's Final Curtain [Chappell & Co., 1976], p. 260) and the Fourth Series of Gilbert's Original Plays (Chatto & Windus, 1911, p. 81):

So ends my dream--so fades my vision fair!
Of hope no gleam--distraction and despair!
My cherished dreams, the Ducal throne to share,
That aim supreme has vanished into air!

The plural "dreams" in the third line is obviously incorrect, since it spoils the rhyme. Since Gilbert's death, it has been altered in most texts (although not all) to "dream," which may be what Gilbert wrote. But it seems unlikely that Gilbert would have simply repeated a word he had used two lines earlier instead of using a new word that rhymed with "dream," "gleam," and "supreme." Since the text is corrupt in any case, I suggest that Gilbert actually wrote "My cherished **scheme**." This word seems appropriate to Julia's character, and in fact a similar phrase appears in Princess Ida: "So ends my cherished scheme!"

It may be worth mentioning that both Thespis and The Grand Duke were in the Fourth Series of Gilbert's Original Plays mentioned above (the first hardcover publication for each, as far as I know), and Gilbert died shortly before all the proofs were ready for his corrections (Rees, Thespis, pp. 93-94). Possibly, if he had lived a few weeks longer, he might have made the corrections suggested here.

And that's as far as we could get before the prices went up. If all goes well, we should have a couple of play/opera synopses for the next issue, local news, and maybe even the next Big Quiz. What would you like to see in the next issue? Do let me know (MidwestGS@pdqlink.com) and we'll see what we can do.

(By the way, you don't have to be Arthur Robinson or Sarah Cole to submit things for the *Nonsense*. I don't promise they won't be edited, but we sure would look forward to hearing from you.)

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