

Precious Nonsense

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

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To this attend without undue delay;
So set to work with what despatch ye may!



And you know what *that* means: it's BIG QUIZ time.

This is a streamlined *Nonsense* to get it in your hands so you'll have some time to work on it before November. That, and there aren't any articles to include this time. But we're working on it! In the meantime, have fun with the Big Quiz: everyone's answers are always so interesting!

What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwestern}

If you like to see *The Yeomen of the Guard* in Evanston, this will also be good news. The Savoy-Aires will be performing it October 18-20 and 25-27, at Chute [Middle School] Auditorium, at 1400 Oakton St., Evanston, Illinois. Their stage director will be Martha Adrienne, and Daniel Robinson is to be musical director.

I see no phone numbers or e-mail addresses for more information on the flyer we received, but the Savoy-Aires' address is P.O. Box 126, Evanston, IL 60204. They should be pleased to hear from you.



The Pittsburgh Savoyards are going to be busy this fall: they are scheduled to present *The Pirates of Penzance* September 27 - October 13, 2002, at the Andrew Carnegie Free Library and Music Hall (300 Beechwood Ave., Carnegie, PA) Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$12 students /seniors, and \$6 for preteens. For more information, or to see about getting a copy of their flyer, do contact them at P.O. Box 44065, Pittsburgh, PA, 15206-4065 / (412) 734-8476 / www.trfn.org/savoyard. (By the way, one of the things S/A Cole does at work is help design flyers, and I'm really impressed with the formatting on this one: you may want to ask for one as a help for your own group! It's an 8 1/2" x 14" fourfold mailing piece, the mailing label backs the order form (so you don't have to write your address), and offers a lot of

information options. It's worth seeing, especially if you're going to be in the Carnegie, Pennsylvania, area September 27-October 13.)

It's also worth seeing if you're going to be there in the spring. Then, they're expecting to present *Trial by Jury* and *Pineapple Poll*. Do get in touch with them for more information!

We hear from Ron Fava of *The Ardensingers*, out of Arden, Delaware that, for starters, they have a website: www.ardensingers.com. Further, their performance schedule for the 2002-2003 season is expected to be:

October 18, 2002: The Ardensingers Orchestra will present a Concert including works of Rossini, Prokofiev, and Sullivan (Overture to *Iolanthe*).

December 13 and 14, 2002: The Ardensingers cast and orchestra will present *A Gilbert and Sullivan Christmas Carol*: the familiar Dickens story set to Gilbert and Sullivan tunes by Gayden Wren (author of the recent book *A Most Ingenious Paradox*).

April 4, 5, 10, 11, and 12, 2003: The Ardensingers will present their major Spring production of *Iolanthe*.

All shows are at the Arden Gild Hall in Wilmington, Delaware. For more information, check their website, or call Ron Fava (302) 239-1313. If you're going to be in the Wilmington area, they do sound worth looking up!

We recently heard from general director/principal conductor Curt Tucker, of the Sorg Opera (Middletown, Ohio), and he gave us some good news

and some bad news. The bad news is that its partner company, the Whitewater Opera, out of Indiana, has closed. We are sorry to hear that, but we were pleased to learn that they have some G & S activity brewing, or, in this case, *churning*. Curt Tucker reports, "We had scheduled a production of *Patience* for April 2002, before postponing it to our 2002-03 season. It has now been rescheduled for April 11 and 12, 2003 at the Sorg Opera House in Middletown, Ohio. Tickets and information are available by calling Sorg Opera at (513) 425-0180. Our website, www.sorgopera.com has company information and should be soon updated for next season." That ought to be something to look forward to!

Director Tucker's own background sounds pretty extensive, too. He says, "Formerly associated with the G & S Society of San Jose and Stanford Savoyards, I've been doing G & S a long time. I first learned much of the rep. as a company member of the College Light Opera Company on Cape Cod, an outgrowth about 30 years ago of the Oberlin G & S Society." We'll be looking forward to hearing more from him, and from the Sorg Opera, in the future!



We recently heard from Jim Keyes, of the Delaware Community Chorus. Now, this is Delaware, OHIO, not the state. It's a volunteer group - about 30 members - located about

25 miles north of Columbus, Ohio. He reports, "We do a variety of rep, but usually to limited audiences. As an audience builder, and as a way to expand each chorus member's chance to go beyond just punching out notes, I thought we should tackle *Trial By Jury*. It's a fun piece, pretty accessible, and I believe, an audience builder. Our production will be what might be called "a concert version". This is to say, we won't have costumes and full-blown sets. Nor an orchestra. (Money, you know). However, I think we can stage the thing in a simplified way focusing on the music and the action. I do have some characters in the chorus who can pull off the roles. And the chorus is pretty going-sounding group."

This sounds like quite a thing. Admittedly, due to budgetary considerations, they're a little nervous about the publicity, so they're starting to advertise what promises to be quite an event now. At this point, they are figuring on presenting their work May

3 and 4, probably at Sanborn Hall on Ohio Wesleyan University campus. Tickets are expected to be \$5.00.

For more information, you might want to get in touch with them: Jim Keyes, Delaware Community Chorus, 2237 Bristol Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221 / jimkeyes7@msn.com.



The 2002 MGS Big Quiz



It's quiz time again, and we have what might be called a Frankenstein of a quiz this year. It's made up primarily of questions from previous quizzes. Many thanks to frequent Quizmaster Arthur Robinson, for all his past work: it just keeps giving!

As always, the rules of the big quiz are simple. The member who answers the most questions correctly wins a prize. You can refer to any reference sources you like, but all responses must be received by the Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society by **November 15, 2002**. But don't dawdle: that sounds like a lot of time, but it sneaks up on you! The answers will be checked and winners will be notified. In case of a tie, the response received first will take precedence, and decisions of the quiz correctors are final. This year's big prize winner will receive something nice--I don't know what he or she will win yet, but what we do find for a prize will be certain to satisfy.

Now, if you feel intimidated, you need not. The Society's founding fathers, in their wisdom, knew that many members would be novices in matters G&S-ical, so they saw to it that the member who makes an honest effort to answer the questions correctly and answers the fewest correctly will also win a nice prize. All are welcome to participate, even if you won a prize in the last quiz. We'll look forward to hearing from you (before November 1, don't forget). Any Questions?

Then let the Revels Commence!

1. Who observes that "volcanoes have a splendour that is grim"?
2. Speaking of volcanoes, in which G&S opera is Mount Vesuvius mentioned?
3. And whose temper was described as volcanic?
4. Who had "a terrible taste for tipping".

5. Who was said to have "a light, airy, joysome wit".
6. There are references to Christmas in which of the G&S operas?
7. Who created the role of Apollo in *Thespis*?
8. The line "Fairy Queen's no longer young" appears in which of the operas?
9. Who is described as "a great matrimonial fish"?
10. Name the foster brothers named in the G&S operas.
11. In the film Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones' friend Sala has a tendency to sing G&S songs when he is happy. Who played that friend, and from which opera did he choose his songs?
12. In the film Foul Play, who is supposed to be assassinated during a production of The Mikado?
13. According to Mr Goldbury (Utopia Ltd.), what is the ideal height and weight for an English Girl?
14. Who was born sneering?
15. Who is described as "A plump and pleasing person", and in which opera is he or she so described?
16. In which month does The Yeomen of the Guard take place?
17. In how many operas does at least one Princess appear?
18. What was the title of Gilbert's last play?
19. Tarara, who otherwise speaks English, uses the Utopian language when he swears. Why does he do so?
20. According to "Counsel for the Plaintiff" in *Trial by Jury*, what was reckoned as a serious crime in the reign of James II?
21. How did Josephine come to the conclusion that Sir Joseph Porter is "a truly great and good man"?
22. What was Robin Oakapple's profession?
23. "Mystical Germans" preach their sermons, Nekaya and Kalyba show themselves to loud applause, and the "professional bridesmaids" of *Ruddigore* are bound to be on duty the same time. What are their working hours? How do they compare with yours?
24. There are references to guinea pigs in which of the G&S operas?
25. What is described as "precious nonsense," and in which opera is it described as such?
26. Major-General Stanley refers to what as "that infernal nonsense"?
27. In *The Palace of Truth*, what is the magical property of that palace?
28. Name an incident that you experienced, or that you heard of, that reminded you of an incident in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera.
29. Name someone you know (or know of) who reminds you of a G&S character, and explain why.
30. Name your favorite G&S opera, and describe what it is about it that appeals to you.
31. Find an allusion to a G&S opera in another literary work, and cite it. Musical allusions count, too.
32. Describe an instance in which you learned something (that you wouldn't have learned otherwise) because of a reference in a G&S opera.
33. Who introduced Gilbert and Sullivan to each other?
34. Aristophanes mentioned in which of the G&S operas?
35. What is the secret sign of the conspiracy to overthrow Grand Duke Rudolf of Pfennig Halbfennig?
36. Speaking of Germany, in which operas is Beer mentioned?
37. And speaking of other summer pastimes, Fireworks are mentioned in which of the G&S operas?
38. On what day of the week was Arthur Sullivan born?
39. How many of the G&S operas have plots that hinge upon the switching of children in infancy?
40. When was Gilbert called to the bar?
41. What was the first ship Sir Joseph Porter ever saw?
42. In the G&S/*Star Wars* parody *HMS Death Star*, from which operas are the parodied songs taken?
43. What was the first English opera known to be presented in Russia?
44. What is the title of Gilbert's blank verse version of the Faust legend?
45. Cleena figures as a character in which work by Gilbert or Sullivan?
46. The composer Richard Wagner mentioned by name in which G&S opera?
47. From what is Sir Ruthven's line in *Ruddigore*, "Alas, poor ghost!" a quotation from?
48. Hamlet is mentioned by name in which of the G&S operas?
49. How do the Grand Duke Rudolph and his fiancée, the Baroness von Krackenfeldt, plan to keep

themselves warm during "the long, cold, dark December evenings"?

50. 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. Or, if you can't cast a whole production, name an actor/actress you would like to see in a particular role. Anachronisms, or performers who could never have performed together, are acceptable. Explain the reasoning behind your choice of cast. (*I find these answers very interesting: that's why it keeps turning up.*)

Bonus Question: According to the September 1962 (our quizmaster Arthur Robinson thought it was about then) Gilbert & Sullivan Journal, at one time Gilbert thought of writing a comic opera, based on something by Shelley. What was it?



Let the Welkin Ring with the News

On a sad note, and personally sad note, we were sorry to learn of the death of Ronald Daniels, of Jacksonville, Illinois, on March 18, 2002. He had been an associate professor at MacMurray College for 19 years, head librarian at its Henry Pfeiffer Library, and professor emeritus after his retirement in 1999. He is also the one who was so good about keeping the MGS posted about G&S activities in his part of the state, and found the articles about that *Pinafore* scandal of a couple of years ago (the one where the girl and her mother sued about her not being allowed to play Ralph Rackstraw). I was always glad to see his notes, because they were always so pleasant, not to mention informative. He really will be sadly missed by us, as well as MacMurray College, the Trinity Episcopal Church, and the Jacksonville Rotary Club.

(His wife Linda had sent us a copy of the obituary. He really was a diehard G&S enthusiast, too: I almost fell off my chair to learn that he was proud enough of being part of the Midwestern Gilbert

and Sullivan Society that it listed as one of the organizations he had belonged to! Now THAT's devotion!)



If you aren't too worn out from working on the Quiz, we'd sure like to hear from you with submissions of other printable work. We haven't had any play or opera synopses lately, or reports on those whose lives mirror those of G&S characters, so if you feel inclined, this would be a good chance to practice. In the meantime, and as always, we'll look forward to hearing from you!

(Incidentally, for those who had asked, I'm still working on that threatened Christmas in July letter. Only now it's a Christmas in July in August letter.)

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