

THE TRUMPET BRAY

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To chase the gloom away, on thee I'll call -

JANUARY MEETING: IOLANTHE AT THE HUNTINGTON, January 21 at 2 PM. The Huntington Theatre Company, located just across Huntington Avenue from Symphony Hall, bills itself as "Boston's Leading Professional Theatre." It is staging IOLANTHE from January 5th through February 4th, and on our scheduled meeting date, January 21st, there is a 2PM matinee. Not only that, there is a regularly scheduled feature, a "Humanities Lecture," on that day. Not only that, the guest lecturer is none other than Steve Ledbetter, who greatly informed and entertained one of our meetings a while ago, when he described the musicological research involved in the Braude Brothers' TRIAL BY JURY.

They are bending their rules regarding group sales, for which they usually require much greater notice than we can give them. They will let us have \$45 orchestra seats for \$36.70, or \$35 balcony seats for \$28.20. But we must give them a final count by January 15th! So call me (617-630-9525) or email me (rnf@gis.net) promptly with your reservation. Specify how many, and whether you want orchestra or balcony. I believe a backstage tour will be available afterwards, and an opportunity to meet the cast; a group of us will surely go out together afterwards to dine.

Join us for what is sure to be a spectacular show.

-- DICK FREEDMAN

More on the Huntington IO later in this issue! - mlc

A G&S CHRISTMAS CAROL in December: I have gotten used to beginning with an apology for "technical difficulties" leading to a late start. My recent stint as Producer of SORCERER at MIT had such announcements at three different performances. But this time I admitted culpability, having left the dialogue parts at home (luckily only four miles away!). I returned to find Mike Bromberg leading the audience in a rousing chorus from PIRATES.

Before starting the performance I had to cast a few last parts, and could not find anyone to play Mr. Goodman except, Mike. He agreed when Nancy Burstein volunteered to fill in at the piano during his two songs. The dramatis personae were Lois Magnan as Balladeer, J. Donald Smith as Narrator, David Jedlinsky as Ebenezer Scrooge, Dick Freedman as Bob Cratchit, Janice Dallas AND Nancy Burstein as Emily Cratchit (the quartet for the Cratchets had only Bob, Tiny Tim, and Emily listed, so Janice took the soprano line and Nancy the alto), Mario Sengco as Tiny Tim Cratchit, Carl Weggel as Fred Scrooge, Randi Kestin as Ms. Kindheart, Mike Bromberg as Mr. Goodman, Bob Russell as Old Fezziwig, David Kamalic as Jacob Marley's Ghost, Janice Dallas as the Three Gossips (rolled into one!), and Patricia Brewer, Victoria Reid, and Randi Kestin as the three little maids, excuse me, ghosts, of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. One-liners or dialogue parts were given to (foisted on?) Robert Casey as

Pooh-Bah, Janice Dallas as Dora Lincoln, and Dick Freedman as Passer-by and as Ghost of Samuel. J. Donald Smith read stage directions, cued the pianist, and turned pages for the pianist. Everybody sang chorus. After a stirring finish with "God bless us every one" to the tune of "He is an Englishman" we adjourned downstairs to the excellent refreshments provided by Patricia Brewer and Carol Mahoney.

-- DICK FREEDMAN

Our sincere apologies to Gayden Wren of Garden City, NY, the author of A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol, for not previously honoring him (is it a him? - oh, how embarrassing!) as he deserves for his 1993 opus, which NEGASS mounted with such pleasure in December. We will try to do better in the future. — mlc

Bray-Stuffing: Acts II & III of Engaged. (Read November's Bray for a synopsis of Act I.) Entering 13 Cottage Avenue in Arlington, we found ourselves in a double drawing-room in the home of Mr. Symperson, where his sweet, pretty little daughter Minnie (Janice Dallas) stood with her maid Parker (Marion Leeds Carroll), preparing for her wedding that day to her cousin, Cheviot Hill. Her father (Peter Cameron) entered, and during their loving exchange reminded us all that Symperson was to receive £1000 a year on the occasion of his nephew's marriage, that this same income would be taken from Cheviot's companion Belvawny on that occasion, and that Cheviot was very wealthy but very stingy - a minor problem which dear artless little Minnie planned to solve by controlling him completely after their marriage.


After their exit, the tall, slender and dramatic Belinda Treherne (Marion) entered, dressed in mourning, and proceeded to eat many of the wedding refreshments while bewailing her fate: She had been married inadvertently three months earlier, through a Scots wedding ceremony (merely declaring a marriage state in the presence of a witness will do the trick), to an unknown youth whom she had never since seen, thus effectively annulling her engagement to her beloved Belvawny. Her old school chum Minnie then entered and consoled her (while trying to save some of the breakfast tarts), sending her off to change into more festive attire and to return in time for the wedding breakfast at Cheviot's home.

The susceptible Cheviot Hill (Dick Freedman) entered next, and after a romantic (and stingy) interlude with Parker, went on to a romantic (and stingy) interlude with Minnie. This was followed by a conversation with Belvawny (Bill Mahoney), who

entered to plead with his erstwhile companion (and meal ticket) to give up the idea of marriage. Not to go too deeply into the intricacies of the plot: Act II ended with Cheviot, engaged to at least two other young women (Minnie and the Scots cottager Maggie from Act I), greeting Belinda as his wife. This left us all in such a state of suspense that we decided to go on to Act III without a pause.

Act III opened with a serenade, sung charmingly by Bill (as Belvawny) to Minnie and Belinda, both of whom he was wooing while Cheviot was off ascertaining whether that cottage on the border of Scotland in which he and Belinda declared themselves husband and wife was actually in Scotland or in England. By the end of the act, Cheviot had lost his fortune, re-found it, become single again, and -- by turning over a slip of paper to read a P.S. declaring that, although the cottage was in England, the garden was in Scotland -- found that Belinda was indeed his faithful wife. With a sigh of relief, we stuffed the last Bray and went home.

-- MAGGIE MACFARLANE



Tentative 1995-96 Meeting Schedule:

1/21	IOLANTHE at the Huntington
2/25	LMLO GONDOLIERS (Produced by Patricia Brewer)
4/14 (note change of date!)	Eyes and No Eyes (Royal Victorian Opera Co, Chuck Berney, Director)
5/5	Sudbury Retrospective (PRINCESS IDA)
6/9	Election/Business meeting AND G&S Collecting (Hosted by J. Donald Smith at the Newton library)

~ NEXT BRAY COPY DEADLINE: February 4 ~

Next Bray-Stuffing: On Sunday, February 11, 1996 at 3 PM we'll meet at 13 Cottage Avenue, Arlington, MA to fold & stuff the Bray and to read through -- now, of all the world of Gilbert's plays, We wonder what? - perhaps Sweethearts. Call Us at (617) 646-9115 for directions and further information. -mlc

 Welcome, Welcome, Welcome We new member David Jedlinsky. Is that right? Has the co-founder and stalwart of MITG&SP not been a NEGASS member all this time?! All the time that he's been producing, designing, starring, producing

videotapes, and basically keeping MITG&SP going?!
Well, it's about time! Hearty Greetings Offer We!

-- mlc



Huntington's IOLANTHE: The Huntington has a tradition of doing a musical work almost every season, which began with their production of Cole Porter's *You Never Know* in 1984. In 1990 they produced G&S's *H.M.S. PINAFORE*, which enjoyed tremendous popularity and critical acclaim. Most of the creative team that brought you *PINAFORE* have been reunited for this production of *IOLANTHE*. They include director Larry Carpenter, choreographer Daniel Pelzig, scene designer James Leonard Joy and Costume designer Mariann Verheyen. Completing this lineup are music director Stan Tucker, lighting designer Marcia Madeira, and a cast of gifted singers and actors.

It would be fair (and fun) to compare *IOLANTHE* with the zany sketches from Britain's Monty Python troupe or the golden years of our own Saturday Night Live. But *IOLANTHE* offers us more than boisterous satire and fairies "tripping hither, tripping thither." *IO* is a love story brimming with romance. Yes, there are goofy aristocrats and not quite so graceful fairies lampooning English society, but underneath it is authentic affection and tenderness. You can hear it in Sullivan's music (which he began to compose a mere two days after his mother died). When the Huntington's Producing Director Peter Altman and stage director Larry Carpenter first began discussing the possibility of doing *IOLANTHE*, they were intrigued by the romance and were moved by the authenticity of the love that was in the shadow of satire.

Mr. Carpenter has likened the Huntington Theatre production to "an exquisite jewel box." This is an intimate production with a small but delicately balanced cast and orchestra. Music director Stan Tucker notes, "We didn't re-orchestrate the score, but we've arranged it in such a way as to preserve the integrity and depth of the music when performing it with fewer singers and musicians than is traditionally called for. The music is at once intimate and sonorous."

While *IOLANTHE* is sure to make you laugh, now that the chill of winter is upon us, this romantic gem may be the best way to warm your hearts.

-- MARTIN BLANCO (of The Huntington Theatre)
[For ticket info, see the Calendar section - mlc]

~~~~~ UPCOMING MEETINGS ~~~~~

IMLO GONDOLIERS. Patricia Brewer (former Program Chair) writes: Between the winter holidays and the rites of spring, NEGASSers can brighten their spirits by participating in our annual Last-Minute Light Opera production, to take place on February 25 at 2 PM at Eliot Hall in Jamaica Plain. [We'll print a map next month - it's a wonderful space! - mlc] After the great success of last year's *RUDDIGORE*, I have decided to throw caution to the winds and invite you all to Venice and Barataria to perform *GONDOLIERS*.

IMLO productions are always self-directed and all performers should be ON book. Rehearsals arranged by the cast are not forbidden, but not encouraged, as they tend to raise the standards of the production higher than we like them to be. Costumes are under the control of the person being costumed. [We've seen everything from full outfit, makeup and wig to appropriate (or inappropriate) T-shirt & jeans - mlc]

Auditions are accomplished by contacting Patricia Brewer either by mail at 111 Spring Street, West Roxbury, MA 02132, or by phone at (617) 323-3480. Tell me which part you'd like and why you'd like it - a nice grovel or a small bribe would not be out of line. Wanting a part real bad is more important than experience or talent. [And as usual, we assume, more important than appropriate age, appearance, voice type (or lack thereof) or gender. - mlc] I'll notify everyone of the casting in plenty of time for you to pull yourself together at the "LAST MINUTE."

GONDO has a large cast so I'll need lots of you to help out with this - contact me so I don't have to spend too much time begging and beating the bushes. Consider the exciting possibilities listed here and call me at once with your choices! Or call me if anything needs clarifying. Or call me just to say hello!

~~~ GONDOLIERS Cast ~~~

THE DUKE OF PLAZA-TORO - Baritone - A Grandee of Spain - a great sense of his own dignity, yet completely under control of his wife and daughter.

LUJIZ - Tenor - His attendant - comes on with every appearance of being the lead tenor, sings some great stuff, then gets to snooze until the last scene.

DON ALHAMBRA DEL BOLERO - Baritone - The Grand Inquisitor - gets to frighten the chorus and drool over Casilda - has two fine songs to sing.

MARCO and GIUSEPPE PALMIERI - Tenor and Baritone - two jolly gondoliers - never appear on-stage except together. Manly but unsophisticated fellows.

ANTONIO, FRANCESCO, GEORGIO - two baritones and a tenor - specific gondoliers with a few things to sing and say. [Antonio has a great solo in the Act I opening number!]

ANNIBALE - a gondolier with a few spoken lines.

THE DUCHESS OF PLAZA-TORO - Alto - your typical middle-aged Gilbertian dragon - has lots of fun singing, no long speeches.

CASILDA - Soprano - Daughter of the Duke and Duchess - always a coveted role but no real songs of her own.

GIANETTA and TESSA - Soprano and Mezzo - like their husbands (Marco & Giuseppe), they are never seen apart. Good healthy vigorous country girls.

FIAMETTA, VITTORIA, GIULIA - two Mezzos and a Soprano - the long opening number (as well as a shorter number in Act II) contains business and solo music for these smaller ladies' roles. [Soprano Fiametta gets THE opening solo! - mlc]

INEZ - Alto - makes her appearance just before the final curtain. Are we a wee bit tired of seeing her always played by a genetic female?

GOBS OF GONDOLIERS AND CONTADINE to sing the elaborate chorus parts - if you have ever sung these chorus parts or if you'd like to just try them, please come help dress the stage and fill out the sound.

Our ORCHESTRA will be Eric Schwartz.

-- PATRICIA BREWER

A PREVIEW OF APRIL'S FUN: CHUCK BERNEY/EYES & NO EYES IN NYC. From a description of the NYG&SS's November meeting, published in the The Palace Peeper, their newsletter, We glean: Our speaker, Dr. Charles Berney, Artistic Director of the Royal Victorian Opera Company, presented an entertaining discussion entitled "Gilbert's Apprenticeship: Six Easy Pieces." Dr. Berney came highly qualified to discuss this topic, having produced all six of Gilbert's Illustrations (which were written between 1869 and 1875), some more than once. Dr. Berney's thesis was that Gilbert's early work on the Illustrations provided him with the experience that helped him to grow into the skillful creator of the Savoy operas. The NY Society then went on to perform what sounds like a first-rate concert version of Eyes and No Eyes, an 1875 Illustration, produced by one of their active

members, Susan Poliniak. (And a photo caption went on to explain that Chuck was in NYC to visit his daughter Jennifer, an NYU freshman. No, NEGASS - he hasn't moved away!) -- mlc

MORE EXCHANGES RE THE WARREN COLSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY: Nancy Burdine left a message on Our tape replying to Our whine in the last Bray about the lack of response from NEGASSers about the Library question: She and Bill reminded Us that Natick was Warren's home for a long time, noted that its library is in the process of expanding, and pointed out that it is within a bike ride of Wellesley, providing a college connection. (And, as an MIT tool, We must point out that Wellesley is MIT's sister school...) On the other hand, it's a bit out of the way for some of us ...

We passed this message on to President Dick Freedman, who responded: But I did begin my inquiries with Natick's Morse Library, who basically told me very cordially that they had neither the facilities nor the interest. And I finally talked to Ruth Colson, who agrees with my view that it is reasonable to go ahead with the Newton Library, rather than continue to search for the perfect collection custodian. This way we would have SOMETHING, and the things not suitable for circulation could be kept by their owners until a different facility is found (maybe when NEGASS gets a building of its own like Arlington Friends of the Drama) [is this a new dream to explore, NEGASSers?! - mlc]. Or maybe a collector like Donald Smith would be willing to be custodian of a NEGASS collection, to bring out and exhibit once a year or whatever.

So - what is the sense of the membership? Shall NEGASS go ahead with a Newton Library/NEGASS G&S Collection? Please be in touch with your officers, and let us know what you think! - mlc.

Sincere thanks to Ron & Janice Dallas (and to President Dick in position of courier) for having provided Us, at last, with a computer-graphic version of the NEGASS Logo (created several years ago by Chuck Berney's talented daughter Elizabeth). Once We figure out how to get it to print out as a positive, rather than a negative, image, there'll be no more paste-ups!!! And, We hope, a better-looking Bray as a result.

REVIEWS:

Isn't anyone sending Us a review of BAM's TRIAL/SORCERER double bill? Whatever else, We're sure it was a professional production, and worth Our notice!

YEOMEN AT H-RG&S. G&S is alive and well at Agassiz Theater. The Harvard-Radcliffe G&S Players staged a creditable production of YEOMEN OF THE GUARD this December.

This was a traditional YEOMEN: no surprises, no altered endings, no undue clowning. It was a relief to see "Strange Adventure" done straight and Phoebe's caresses during "Were I Thy Bride" kept within the bounds of decorum and credibility. The standard modern text was used, with "Rapture, Rapture" but none of the recently restored songs or verses. Director Eileen St. David and Music Director Todd Douglas Neal kept the show moving at a good pace, despite a few slow tempi for normally lively songs.

The principals displayed a fine sense of teamwork, making this YEOMEN more than the sum of its parts. Happily, the strongest players were cast in the key roles. Caline Yamakawa's soaring soprano and winsome ways made her Elsie the standout of the piece. Joel Derfner as Fairfax and Doug Miller as Point competed ably for her hand, Derfner tough and tender by turns and Miller striking just the right note of an unhappy man under pressure to be funny. Anna Blair made a deliciously flirtatious Phoebe, and Martin Lebowhl was suitably loutish as Wilfred. Katherine Bryant was an imposing Dame Carruthers and Bob Grady a hearty Sergeant Meryll with near-perfect diction.

The small chorus (four Yeomen, eight Citizens) sang and acted well. Each Citizen took on a name and character, including the wife and daughter of Sir Richard Cholmondeley and a second daughter [sic] for Dame Carruthers; this made for some good byplay during the crowd scenes.

Some nice touches: Sir Richard passing the dower money to Elsie during the pause before the final repeat of "Temptation, oh, temptation"; Elsie embracing Point with real affection just before being blindfolded and led off to marry Fairfax; Wilfred getting his thumb caught in the thumbscrew and making it look believable; and Point's agile dancing throughout. The crucial dialogue before and after "When a wooer goes a-wooing" was also extremely well done, though Point could have made more of his final collapse. On the whole, the women's voices were stronger and surer than the men's; the "bridal trio" in the second-act finale was especially lovely.

All in all, it was an enjoyable show that left me looking forward to the same group's PRINCESS IDA next Spring.

-- TONY PARKES

&&& YEOMEN is my favorite G&S show of all time, and because of that fact it's hard for me to find a production of that show that I actually like. After being sorely disappointed by the performance of SLOC's YEOMEN last year I was afraid that Harvard would let me down too. Fortunately, though, Eileen St. David had much more respect for the plot and did an extraordinary job with it. She'd be hard pressed to outdo herself the next time she directs a show after this one.

What really stands out in Harvard's YEOMEN is the depth of the characters that we saw on stage. They were all real people with many different dimensions to their personalities. Some of these were really unique and it gave me a refreshing new perspective on the motivations of characters such as Jack Point (Doug Miller), Col. Fairfax (Joel Derfner), and Wilfred Shadbolt (Martin Lebowhl).

Wilfred, for instance, is often played as a burly brute who really does love assistant tormenting and lusts after Phoebe so much that no one can really blame her for despising him. However, it was very hard not to love this Wilfred, who was so hopelessly in love with Phoebe and ...well... so darn cute that instead I had to wonder what was wrong with Phoebe! Aside from being Asst. Tormentor, Wilfred was a decently good and handsome man, while Fairfax was the devil himself!

It is truly amazing how the portrayal of Colonel Fairfax really changes the mood of the show. The same can probably be said about Jack Point. If you have an honorable Fairfax and a dolt for a Jack Point, the ending of YEOMEN is sad but not very hard to take. However, make Jack Point an honorable man who makes a lot of stupid mistakes because he doesn't know any better, and couple him with an evil, conniving, opportunistic, and sadistic Fairfax, and you have a full-blown tragedy on your hands that will leave you stunned for hours.

Harvard's Fairfax was so deadpan through most of Act I that at first I was convinced he couldn't act. He has a beautiful singing voice, however, so at first I figured he got the part because of his voice. He took quite a few musical liberties with both of his solos - something the music director (Todd Neal) could have kept to a minimum. In fact, many people commented that they thought Joel was pompous for doing that. But once I became more acquainted with this Fairfax - who was not an ordinary Fairfax - I realized that this was the whole point. It wasn't Joel - it was Fairfax who was pompous and very full of himself indeed. You see, this Fairfax had no problem at all assuming the identity of Leonard Meryll and thoroughly enjoyed

taking full credit for Leonard's accomplishments. Seeing him finally exhibit some emotion on stage at this point vindicated him as an actor. It meant that he was deliberately snubbing the Merylls at the beginning of the show - most likely because he probably didn't know them very well. He was once again cold to Sgt. Meryll (Bob Grady) in Act II, but warmed up very quickly once he found out that Elsie (Caline Yamakawa) was his wife. Fairfax took great pleasure in torturing Elsie but was skillful enough to not let her see his glee every time he got her upset. At the same time, he mercilessly led on Phoebe so that "A man who would woo a fair maid" became more of an attention-getting contest between Elsie and Phoebe than a lesson to teach Jack Point how to woo. The most heartbreaking moment in this production was the wedding scene in the Act II finale when Fairfax was revealed to Elsie. (It's usually the very end when Jack Point dies.) In this scene, Elsie of course is upset that she has "lost Leonard to Fairfax". This Elsie was particularly emotional about it, and while she knelt on the stage in tears, Fairfax stood behind her and laughed out loud. The more she cried, the harder he laughed. It was truly frightening - so much so that even after she recognized him, it was impossible to accept them as a couple, and every time he touched her I cringed in agony. (Is it any wonder that Jack Point drops dead of a heart-attack?)

Outstanding performances were also given by Anna Blair (Phoebe), Doug Miller (Jack Point), and Caline Yamakawa (Elsie). Phoebe was the perfect mix of a witty, flirtatious, intelligent girl who was willing to do anything for the man she loved. She was very funny, but at the same time she knew how to get what she wanted and she was very realistic. Elsie had a gorgeous voice and a wonderful innocent and moving character. Jack Point was a very funny court jester, but he also took himself seriously enough that you could really believe that he truly loved Elsie and thought there was more to life than just "being funny".

All in all - a great show! -- RANDI M. KESTIN

&&& I thought some aspects were great, but I'm not so sure if I would rate it that overall. Fairfax had a wonderful voice, but he loved it too much, and embellished too much... Fairfax couldn't act, or had a weird conception of the character. Wilfred was too nice a guy. Elsie... and Phoebe were great, singing AND acting. But the best award goes to the set designer. They had the usual Agassiz "front of a house, with a window right of the door", on stage right. An archway on stage left had a working portcullis! And the rear drop was a wonderful false-perspective (over-perspectivized, to coin a word) three-

story tower, so convincing that I had to go see backstage after the show to convince myself it was just painted on.

-- DICK FREEDMAN

SORCERER AT MIT. Seeing the MIT SORCERER was both a delightful and frustrating experience: delightful because it was so good (especially for a college production with so many first and second-year students) - frustrating because with a little more effort, it could have been a great performance.

The singing ranged from more-than-satisfactory to superb, for which the Music Director Bruce Miller must be given full credit. The star of the show was, without question, Daniel Kamalic as John Wellington Wells. His diction was superb, timing impeccable and stage presence remarkable (particularly for a freshman). Mary Finn brought a good deal more energy to the part of Lady Sangazure than is usually seen, and Ryan Caveney played Dr. Daly as a more human (rather than stuffy) individual than usual. He has a wonderful resonant baritone, but does need to work on his dynamic modulation to get some gradations between piano and forte.

Suzu Glazer and Krishan Oberoi made an excellent pair as Aline and Alexis, demonstrating the kind of singing voices which indicated some professional training, and were the only 'pair' who seemed to work together reasonably well as a team. Susan Rushing made an appropriately plaintive Constance, while Randi Kestin as Mrs. Partlett was a bit too self-conscious of the humor of the part, too young and, as a soprano, really miscast, to be terribly effective. The chorus was thin (only nine members the night I saw the production even though 13 were listed in the program) but carried itself with excellent energy. [Members of the company want to know: When was this? The chorus never numbered less than 12 throughout the run! - mlc]

So what was "wrong?" The performance which I saw (opening night) was slow. It took two-and-one half hours, which for a show normally as short as SORCERER is unacceptable, even though it didn't really drag. The problems which I could identify seemed to be due to a lack of appropriate direction. The "old" characters - Dr. Daly, Lady Sangazure, Sir Marmaduke - didn't contrast with their offspring. Several audible comments from the audience on the first entry of Sir Marmaduke and Alexis asking "which was which" point the problem: no wigs, no adequate make-up. Several of the performers were clearly very inexperienced on stage, as shown by the typical problem: they didn't know what to do with their hands! The director did not even bother to give

them the usual props for their roles. Aline and Alexis were sitting on the "stage" for their "filter-philtre" dialog, which was extended for several extra rounds a la "orphan-often" from Pirates. It didn't work since they were so close to the front that they could be seen only by the first row of the audience, not those further back in the bleachers.

There were a few nice, original touches; for example, having Dr. Daly "reading" a lesson to several maidens in the background while Constance was singing her first act lament, and having an extra chorus woman trying to find a mate in the second act, chasing after every man (although it was a good trick to keep her away from Dr. Daly). Overall, the impression was of a production which was understaged and under-rehearsed. A pity, because I don't think that the group knows how good it can be if it puts in the utmost effort. MITG&SP is doing UTOPIA, LTD for its spring show. If maximum effort is applied, it can be a great show; if not, an unfamiliar show like UTOPIA can be a disaster. I wish them well.

-- J. DONALD SMITH

[As is often the case in student groups, the cast and directorial personnel at MIT are subject to change with each production. SORCERER had a group substantially different from last year's shows, and UTOPIA will have totally different music and stage directors. The artistic focus of the student board which chooses the directors and maintains the mood of the group does not change much, We're glad to say - which is why MIT's productions never fall below an enjoyable level. It would be interesting to compare the focus of, say, the Harvard and the MIT G&S boards, and see whether they have relevance to the two student groups' typical productions. - mlc]

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Don Smith's Buxton Diary, continued:

Monday, 31 July ...Coffee and Conversation with Donald Adams. He talked about his involvement with the D'Oyly Carte and his subsequent career, which began with extensive tours in Gilbert and Sullivan for All. He seemed to be a rather shy person. Mr. Adams has become a major star in the world of grand opera. He was not able to participate in the final night due to a commitment to singing Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress in Japan. He indicated that he would be making his Metropolitan Opera debut as Quince in Britten's Mid-Summer Night's Dream... His Master Class in the afternoon was less satisfactory. Apparently he had never run one before, so that he did not know how to really work with the performers. He concluded by singing "The Ghosts' High Noon" himself; he is in as great a voice as ever.

The first production of the festival was PATIENCE,

presented by the Wakefield G&S Society, of which James Newby, the Music Director of the Festival, is the resident Music Director and Producer. (The Producer is what is termed in America the Director.) The society presented a decent but slightly sloppy performance - ragged entrances and cut-offs from the chorus were most noticeable. Many of the tempi seemed rather slow. Ultimately, the society suffered from a shortage of men. The man shortage was so severe that they could not even find a non-singer for the role of Bunthorne's Solicitor - one soldier changed costume to fill the part for the first act finale, subsequently reappearing in uniform later (why not a female solicitor?). Except for a very few young-looking choristers, most of the performers were in their forties and fifties, comfortable with each other but without the competition for roles which might have jolted greater enthusiasm. Not a bad performance but not spectacular.

Tuesday, 1 August. The morning Coffee and Conversation were hosted by Thomas Round, and a greater contrast to the previous day could not be imagined. Here is a man celebrating this year his 50th (!) year on stage - and close to, if not at, his 80th birthday. He was comfortable with the conversation - one reminiscence led to another so that it was hard for Ian Smith to stop him long enough for the audience to ask questions. He was, for many in the audience, their D'Oyly Carte Matinee Idol and they came with old programs, records and posters to remind him of where they had seen him. (His debut with the D'Oyly Carte was in 1946.) The afternoon Master Class was likewise a great contrast to the previous day. Mr. Round helped performers take their roles apart and put them back together again, illustrating in song and dance how he viewed a particular piece. One striking memory: a duet with Lee Patterson in "A Tenor All Singers Above." Mr. Round sang several Irish folksongs a capella. While the voice is not there any more, he can still put over a song.

The evening production was H. M. S. PINAFORE by the Houston Gilbert and Sullivan Society. The Producer of this production and star, as Sir Joseph Porter, was Alistair Donkin, the last comic baritone of the D'Oyly Carte (1979-1982). If one wanted a "traditional" performance, this was it. Tradition, of course, is relative. For those who first saw the D'Oyly Carte in the '70s or '80s, this was traditional; for those in the audience whose memories go back further (mine to the '60s and others even into the '30s), the tradition is different. This was a spectacular musical and operatic performance; Robert Linder, the Musical Director, received the award for best musical director. The Josephine of Kimberly Lane (award for Best Female Singer) and the Ralph of Nathan Wight

were among the best musical interpretations of these roles that I have ever heard.

Yet as theater, something was lacking. One could have closed ones eyes, imagined that one was at a D'Oyly Carte performance, opened ones eyes at any point and predicted where the cast would be on stage and what they would have been doing. All five of the 'traditional' encores of the "Bell Trio" were presented, even though the audience had basically given up by the third. There were only two new bits of staging: Hebe being a closet lush; and an on-deck dinner for Josephine, Captain Corcoran and Sir Joseph during the musical introduction to Act II, with a slight jolt of passing glances between Josephine and Ralph, who was one of the sailors waiting at table.

A concern which led to many mutterings when the performance received the First Runner-Up Prize (i.e. Second Place) is the role of a professional on-stage in an amateur production. Donkin was not adjudicated himself and his performance was ignored in scoring. Is there an unfair advantage to a production when the central character, around whom the entire play revolves and who will usually make or break a production, is a professional? I can think of several other productions in this Festival, which, if they had been able to substitute a professional for a less-than-adequate amateur, might well have fared much better in the final tally. This is a question which I would hope will be seriously addressed by the Organizer and Adjudicator before next year's events. (Note: I take no position on this question; I only know that several people were very upset at what they perceived as being placed in competition with a professional, regardless of the fact that the professional didn't count in adjudication. I understand that adjudication itself was extremely controversial at the First Festival. Certainly since Donkin has performed with Houston for so many years, it would have disadvantaged them if he had been excluded, but some thought ought to be given to the future.) There was also some concern among the amateur producers at being placed in direct competition with a professional (Donkin also received a nomination for the Best Producer Award.) [Question: who ranks as a "professional" in the world of G&S? There aren't many performers who do nothing but, for pay. -- mlc]

The evening Cabaret was as musically spectacular as the performance. Many of the soloists performed operatic arias. I would like to single out for special mention: Lisa Young (Little Buttercup) for a country-western version of "I'm Called Little Buttercup," Ralph Katz for "If I Were a Rich Man" from "Fiddler on the Roof" (Ralph is a Cantor in real life) and Kimberly Lane for an incredible "My Heart Belongs

to Daddy," with the requisite (partial) strip-tease.

-- J. DONALD SMITH [More next Bray - mlc]  
[For an unedited version of Don's Diary, e-mail him at  
DSMITH@UMASSD.EDU. -- mlc]

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Following a discussion of copyright questions on SavoyNet, MITG&SP founder Andrew Greene dashed off the following informative verse:

(To the tune of "Oh, I'm the celestial drudge" -- um, er, no. To the tune of "When I, good friends, was called to the bar"...)

When I, good friends, was hauled to the bar,
'Bout a copyright violation,
Yes, I was, as many young Savoyards are,
Unclear on the situation.

I thought, since over fifty years had passed,
Since nineteen hundred and eleven,
That all the copyrights had lapsed
With Gilbert up in Heaven

(Chorus: He thought the copyrights had lapsed, &c.)

In theaters and halls I danced and sang,
My confidence growing firmer,
Until I received a call from the gang
Representing old G. Schirmer.

"Their royalties are what they sent us for.
(Though the law is rather murky,
It seems that the piano-vocal score
Is considered derivative work, see!)"

(Chorus: It seems that the &c.)

Thus chastened, I found the antidote
To the threat of litigation,
I'd restrict myself to what Gilbert wrote,
And to Sullivan's orchestration.

Since they've both been dead for over fifty years,
And the operas are almost all one hundred,
I'll set aside all legal fears:
And I'd do like the shows they'd done did.

(Chorus: He'll set &c.)

At length I became convinced I was safe
From the traps in the Berne Convention,
But I added a number after "Why poor, Ralph?"
Based on Sullivan's diary's mention.

They interrupted our opening night,
And they served us with a subpoena.

