

Precious Nonsense

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

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Her honeymoon With that buffoon At seven commences, so *you* shun her!

Although this isn't June, this seems to be the season for engagements and brides (see the "Oh, Members" section for an explanation). There is also a wedding afoot in the Cole household: S/A Cole's brother is getting married, so for the past two months she has been occupied with helping make arrangements. That's why the **Nonsense** was delayed (again). But we tried to make it worth the wait. We have a couple of book reviews, a lot of production announcements, the long, long delayed Membership Cards, and even a couple of prize giveaways. So let's toddle away, with or without the Lord High Executioner.

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

Jeordano Martinez was responsible for the acclaimed production of **Mikado** recently presented at North Central College in Naperville (Illinois). As far as we know, this was the first substantial G&S performance to take place at North Central College since the 1970's, so it was nice to see a return to the classics.

The Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society has so many talented members, not only actors and directors, but craftsmen and -women. Member **Harold Schrader** was well-known for his woodworking skills in the Naperville area up until the time he and his wife Mary moved to Annawan, on the other side of the state. Well, his fame has caught up with him. He, his hand-carved miniature furniture, and virtually-indestructible Barbie furniture were the front-page feature for the February 27, 1992, issue of *The Atkinson-Annawan News*. Congratulations on your continued success!

Congratulations to **Marcy Berman**, one of our New York members, on her engagement. For those of us who receive the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Society's newsletter *The Palace Peeper*, we also know she is engaged to none other than its editor, Marc Shepherd! You may remember in the last *Nonsense*, we said a lot of unpleasant things about that article that appeared in *Victoria Magazine* last January (I don't expect this is breaking a confidence), but that article was what brought these two together, so that's one more good thing that came from it.

We also extend congratulations to **Annabeth Packard**, who was also recently engaged. We hope both of them (all *four* of them!) have years and years of afternoon!

What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwest- ern}

Hugh Locker has reported that the Chicago radio station WFMT (98.7 FM) is going to be airing a complete survey of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas during April, at 1:00 on Thursday afternoons. Some of you may remember a talk given at the *Basingstoke!* G&S Weekend in 1989, where the presenter lamented the fact that so little G&S was broadcast in the Chicago area. It looks like things are picking up!

We hear from the Petermans of Rochester, Minnesota, that the Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera (P.O. Box 580172, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0172) are giving weekend performances of *Iolanthe* through April 12 at the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center (1900 S. Nicollet Ave. in Minneapolis). If you're in the neighborhood, you might want to look them up: the Petermans report that they always do an excellent, lavish production with a full orchestra.

The University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society (Michigan League Bldg., 911 N. University, Ann Arbor, MI 48109 / (313) 761-7855) is going to be presenting *Pirates* April 9-11 and 16-18 at 8:00 pm, and April 11, 12, 18, and 19th at 2:00 pm in the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre of the Michigan League. Tickets are \$8.50, \$9.50, \$10.00 and \$11.00. For more information, do give them a call.

S/A Cole has pulled another major boner. Tom and Ruthann Stetak wrote her about a production of something called "The Hot (or Swing) Mikado" was due to be presented in Ohio during (I think) April, and now she can't find the note anywhere. I know this isn't much help, especially about what sounds like an intriguing presentation or revival, but if you're in the Ohio area, you might want to keep an eye out for it. In the mean-

time, maybe someone can let the rest of us know what it was all about.

We just heard from David Michaels that **The Savoy-Aires** are going to be holding their annual sing-along **April 26, 1992** at the St. Augustine Church (1140 Wilmette Ave., in Wilmette). Singing will be from *Gondoliers*. The singing will probably begin about 6:00 or 7:00, and be preceded by a silent auction of donated G&S (or otherwise) memorabilia and such. David Michaels didn't know what the ticket cost was going to be, but *Nancy Arlen* {(708) 869-8831} is expected to have that information.

We also just heard from David Michaels that **The Park Ridge Gilbert and Sullivan Society** is going to be giving *Ruddigore* the last weekend of May and the first weekend of June. We'll pass on any details as we hear them, but in the meantime, PARIGASS can, as far as we know, be reached at: P.O. Box 339, Park Ridge, IL 60068. They should be able to fill in any details. David Michaels is due to appear as one of the Deceased Murgatroyds, and we just learned that Annabeth Packard is going to be Dame Hannah. We'll look forward to seeing them and it.

We hear from Norman and Lorna Vogt that Ohio Light Opera's 1992 G&S offerings are going to be Mikado and Gondoliers, and we also just received their flyer. The other operas on their schedule include Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Magdalena*, Romberg's *The Student Prince*, Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach's **The Brigands** (in the W.S. Gilbert translation!), and Edward German's *Tom Jones*. The schedule is *Magdalena* (June 10, 13 {matinee}, 25, July 3, 11, 19 {mat.} 29 {mat.} and August 8 {mat.}); *The Student Prince* (June 11, 13, 14 {mat.}, 17 {mat.}, 18, 20 {mat.}, 28 {mat.}, July 4 {mat.}, 10, 14 {mat.}, 22, 28 {mat.}, August 2, and 7); The Gondoliers (June 12, 20, 23 {mat.}, 27 {mat.}, July 1 {mat.} 26 {mat.}, 31, and August 6); *Die Fledermaus* (June 16 {mat.}, 19, 21 {mat.}, 27, 30 {mat.}, July 2, 18 {mat.}, 26, 29, and August 9); The Mikado (June 26, July 5, 8 {mat.}, 11 {mat.}, 16, 21 {mat.}, 25, 30, August 2 {mat.}, 5, and 8); **The Brigands** (July 7 {mat.}, 9, 12 (mat.), 18, 24, August 1 {mat.}, 5 {mat.}, and *Tom Jones* (July 17, 22 {mat.}, 23, 25 {mat.}, August 1, 4 {mat.}, and 9). Evening performances begin at 8:00, while Matinees begin at 2:00 pm. Individual ticket prices are \$21.00, but Ohio Light Opera has several matinee specials and such that might be helpful. For more information, call the box office at (216) 263-2345 or 263-2329, or write the company at The College of Wooster; Wooster, OH 44691.

According to an article in the March 12, 1992 *Chicago Sun-Times*, sent in by Norman Vogt, the Grant Park Symphony Concert series (held out-of-doors in Grant Park in Chicago), is going to include a set of four

"pops" concerts. One of those pops concerts is going to be (probably a concert version of) The Mikado June 26-27, conducted by James Paul. That ought to be something to look forward to.

According to their newsletter *Savoyardage*, the Madison Savoyards are expecting to give Sorcerer this summer, July 24-25 and July 31-August 1. At this point they don't seem to have worked out the details, but more information can be obtained from the company at P.O. Box 1612, Madison, WI 53701.

Light Opera Works' 1992 season is to consist of Oscar Strauss's **A Waltz Dream** (June 26-28), Gilbert and Sullivan's **The Grand Duke (August 28-30)**, and Kurt Weill's **Knickerbocker Holiday** (December 29-January 3). Since so few of the MGS members who were at the 1991 Annual Meeting had seen **Grand Duke**, we have decided to hold the 1992 Annual Outing in conjunction with that production. This time, the MGS get-together will probably be an evening thing for a change (that is, we'll be going to an evening performance, rather than a matinee), but so far the only detail that has been set is that we're planning on going. For more information (on the production--they don't know any more about the MGS Annual Meeting than S/A Cole does at the moment), Light Opera Works can be reached at 927 Noyes St., Evanston, IL 60201-2799 {(708) 869-6300}.

The Cleveland Opera (Suite 1052, 1422 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1901 / (216) 575-0903) is planning to give The Yeomen of the Guard November 20-22, 1992. These are all the details we have so far, but we'll pass on anything more we hear once we hear it.

The Whitewater Opera Co. (P.O. Box 633, Richmond, IN 47375) is planning on presenting Pirates April 23 and 24, 1993. This may be a little early to mention it, but at least we know what to keep an eye out for.

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What Cheer! What Cheer! {Elsewhere}

The Montreal West Operatic Society (120 Astoria Ave., Pointe Claire, Quebec H9S 5A8, Canada) is going to be giving Pirates April 8-11 at the West Hill Theater. Performances are at 8:00 pm (with an April 11, 2:00 pm, matinee), and tickets are \$17.50 Canadian. For more information, the box office can be reached at (514) 488-7629 from 12:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The Lamplighters (2350 Turk Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94118 / Box Office: (415) 752-7755) is going to present Iolanthe March 21-May 3, *My Fair*

Lady June 20-August 2, and *The Yeomen of the Guard* September 26-November 1, on various Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during those periods. Individual tickets are \$21.00 (\$24.00 for *My Fair Lady*), and performances begin at 8:30 pm (2:30 pm on Sundays). For more information, contact the company. We have heard nothing but good reports of this company's performances, so this season should be most entertaining. By the way, this year is their 40th anniversary, so if you call or write, be sure and congratulate them.

So far as we know, the Washington Savoyards (P.O. Box 34584; Bethesda, MD 20827/ (301) 946-6250) are planning to present **The Pirates of Penzance** as their Spring production May 28-31. All performances are at the Duke Ellington theater in Georgetown. For more information, do contact the company.

In honor of the Sullivan Sesquicentennial, the Victorian Lyric Opera Company (P.O. Box 10391, Rockville, MD 20849) is planning a G&S weekend June 19-21, called **The Great Gilbert & Sullivan Sing-Out; A Musical Marathon**, Larry Garvin tells us. The fun begins at 7:00 pm at the Rockville Civic Center Mansion, with a dress-up reception and buffet, and really gets going on the 20th, at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theater of the Rockville Civic Center. The affair is called a "sing-out" because from 8:00 am to about midnight, participants will be able to participate in the singing of *all* the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. As the flyer says,

At the 'Sing-Out', the operettas will be presented in a concert format without spoken dialogue. Leading roles will be filled in advance through a process of sign-ups, and chorus roles will be available to all on a first-come basis. A theater company make ask to take charge of an entire opera and perhaps provide some staged musical numbers, although (stationary) chorus participation will remain open to all. The singers will be accompanied by pianists playing the vocal score and the accompaniment. For some of the operettas, a small ensemble of instruments may be used.

Sunday, the weekend will conclude with a brunch at Phineas Restaurant in Rockville. The fee for the whole event (except for the brunch, and lodging if you don't live locally) is only \$15.00. This is a new sort of event to S/A Cole, and it might be a lot of fun. For more information, get in touch with the

Victorian Lyric Opera Co. S/A Cole has some flyers about it, too, so if you want one from her, just let her know. Before their Sing-Out, we learn from the Farron Family, the Victorian Lyric Opera Co. is going to be giving *Mikado* May 29-31 and June 5-7. Performances begin at 8:00 pm (with the May 31 and June 7 performances being 3:00 matinees), and tickets are \$8.00 (\$6.00 for students/children).

The Gilbert and Sullivan Festival at the University of Boulder, Colorado, is well-known for frequently having former D'Oyly Carte's John Reed as artistic director. Rumor has it that they and he have been prevailed upon to present *The Grand Duke* in 1992. We should have more details soon. The group is also interested in hearing from other performing groups who have presented this rarity. If you would like more information, or would like to give *them* some, do contact Dennis Jackson, College of Music, Box 301, University of Colorado/Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309.

We hear from Anne Stanyon and Ronald Lewis, that a mini 1992 Sullivan Conference will held May 15-17, 1992, and the Main Festival will be October 23-25, at the Forte Crest Hotel, Hull, England. The May Conference, entitled *Arthur Sullivan: The Unperson of English Music* will be held at Cliffe College, Calver, Derbyshire, and is expected to feature Prof. Arthur Jacobs ("Long Years Ago, Fourteen Maybe: A Biographer's Second Thoughts"), Nigel Burton ("Haddon Hall: A Conductor's Viewpoint"), Dr. Ian Bradley ("Sullivan's Place in Victorian Hymnody"), Roger Wild ("Sullivan's Published Scores: A Collector's View"), David Eaton ("Arthur Sullivan: The Unperson of British Music"), Alan Borthwick and David Lyle ("Ivanhoe: A Twentieth Century Perspective" and David Russell Hulme ("Sullivan's Methods of Composition; With particular reference to *The Pirates of Penzance*") as speakers. A couple of recitals, plus a tour of Haddon Hall, are also expected to be included. The price is expected to be £80. For more information, get in touch with Stephen Turnbull; Cockfield House; 48 Front Street; Cockfield, Bishop Auckland; Co. Durham DL13 5DS England (or call 01-0388-710308).

The program for the Main Festival is out now, and as things stand now, this is the plan:
Friday, Oct. 23: Welcome and sherry reception at 9:00 pm, with a grand auction of Sullivan/G&S memorabilia at 9:30.
Saturday, Oct. 24: In the morning, participants can

either see a program of films, videos and tapes (including a 1926 newsreel of the new Ricketts costumes for *Mikado*, and an American radio program offering an entertaining explanation of Elgar's Enigma) or take a walking tour of historic buildings in the center of Hull. In the afternoon, there are illustrated talks on Sullivan, and Victorian popular song. At 5:00 is tea, and at 7:00 is the Gala Concert at the Hull City Hall. It will be conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, and feature **Thespis** ballet music, Festival Te Deum, Sullivan's Cello Concerto, and a concert performance of *Trial by Jury*. The Te Deum is going to be performed with a full chorus, orchestra, and wind band; and this performance will be the first time in living memory that it has been performed the way it was intended to be performed. A Gala Banquet at the City Hall follows.

Sunday, Oct. 25: A service of Matins will be at 11:00, using music exclusively by Sullivan (including the Jubilate Deo of 1868 and the Boer War Te Deum). After lunch, a song and instrumental recital by musicians from Hymers College will feature "The Window" song cycle, the Idyll and Duo Concertante, among other things. Afterward, there will be an illustrated talk about early recordings of Sullivan's work. The weekend concludes with afternoon tea, and a vocal recital.

Add-ons are a Do-It-Yourself concert at 9:00 pm on Sunday (in which you can perform your favorite item from Sullivan's output), and a chance to see a dress rehearsal of the centenary revival of *Haddon Hill* on Monday. The basic cost for the festival is £148-50, which includes accommodations for the nights of October 23 and 24. It may cost more (or less), depending on how much you want to participate in. In any event, a £30 deposit is required to hold your reservation, and for more information, do get in touch with Stephen Turnbull; Sullivan Festival 1992; Cockfield House; 48 Front Street; Cockfield, Bishop Auckland; Co. Durham DL13 5DS England (or call 01-0388-710308) before August 31, 1992.

The Austin (TX) Gilbert and Sullivan Society is planning to give *Mikado* sometime during June, 1992. At this point, they're expecting to give it at the Zachary Scott Theatre Center. For more information, the company can be reached via Reba Gillman, Secretary; 1606 The High Road; Austin, TX 78748.

The Portsmouth Festival is going to be present-

ing 25 Son et Lumiere performances of *Pinafore*, from July 18-August 15 every evening but Mondays. What makes this run especially interesting is that the performance will be given on board the HMS Victory in the Portsmouth Naval Dockyard. The orchestra will be under the direction of David Mackie, and the cast are expected to have been hand-picked from top British opera companies. Tickets are £10.50 and £15.00. For more information, write HMS Pinafore, City Arts, The Guildhall, Portsmouth, England, PO1 2AD, U.K., or call {01} 0705-834182.

We hear from the Farrons that the Aldersgate Church Community Theater (Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road; Alexandria, VA/(703) 780-1377) is planning to give *Pirates* October 23-25, and 30-31 (with a children's matinee on Halloween). We haven't heard of any church-based groups giving G&S in a long time. We wonder how their productions look.

Speaking of big G&S events, The Mansion House at Grim's Dyke (Old Redding, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 6SH, England / Tel.: (081-954-4227)) is planning a number of special events to commemorate the upcoming centenary of *Utopia Limited* in 1993. Details should be forthcoming as the management (of Grim's Dyke, that is) makes them available.

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Iolanthe Up One Side and Down the Other

Last October, Arthur Robinson sent in the following comments on the plot of *Iolanthe*. S/A Cole is no-good-for-nothing any more: she just found it today. In the meantime, she had written some comments on *Iolanthe* of her own, and since they're related, we'll put them together. First of all, Arthur Robinson's remarks:

The Fairies' Dilemma

There is an inconsistency in the plot of *Iolanthe* that seems to have gone unnoticed. When the fairies admit that they have married the peers, the Fairy Queen is faced with a nice dilemma: "You have all incurred death, but I can't slaughter the whole company. And yet the law is clear--every fairy must die who marries a mortal!" The Lord Chancellor saved the day by proposing a slight emendation, altering

the law so that every fairy who doesn't marry a mortal shall die. To avoid violating the new law herself, the Fairy Queen proposes to Private Willis, and all ends happily. Or does it? Private Willis, the Lord Chancellor, and all the peers (and, one assumes, Phyllis and Strephon's mortal lower half) are transformed into fairies. Presumably they are no longer mortals. Doesn't this mean that the fairies have just violated their new law, and it is now their bounden duty do devote themselves heart and soul to their own extermination? How could Gilbert, with his trained legal mind, put his characters into such a very awkward position?

This problem did not exist in his original *Iolanthe* plot. Gilbert's copybook containing a sketch of this plot (unpublished, but the relevant page is reproduced on p. 56 of Reginald Allen's *W.S. Gilbert: An Anniversary Survey*), explains that the "only way out of [the] difficulty is for Ld. C. to become [a] fairy. This he agrees to do." The lovelorn peers (not yet married in this version) follow his example, and nobly consent to become immortal; so does Private Willis. There is no need to change the law. Since "everyone is now a fairy," there is nothing to prevent another of Gilbert's mass weddings.

Gilbert's original version makes better sense, and seems more in line with his usual plot resolutions of this period. Why did he make the change, especially as the earlier version also allowed the business of peers and sentry sprouting wings (described in the copybook)? Maybe he did so to allow the Fairy Queen to blackmail the chivalrous Private Willis into matrimony, and overlooked (he hoped the audience would overlook) the flaw in the new plot; or maybe he simply forgot.

Of course, this doesn't solve all the problems in *Iolanthe's* plot. Why for instance, doesn't the Fairy Queen object in act I when she learns that Strephon, who is half a fairy, plans to marry Phyllis? If he does so, shouldn't his immortal upper half be executed by fairy law (although, with typical topsy-turvy-ness, his mortal lower half would be allowed to live)? There's an unbounded field of speculation, on which one could discourse for hours. (But one won't.)

{One reason for not having changed the plot is that the fairies' revelation that they are all married to mortals is the only thing that saved *Iolanthe* from execution, but be that as it may.} Sarah Cole had an interesting insight into the conclusion of the opera, too.

Iolanthe and Fairy Marriages

A couple of years ago, I was at a G&S conference, talking about this and that with the many G&S enthusiasts assembled. During the course of one of these conversations, one person dropped what he thought was a great bombshell about the way *Iolanthe* (*The Peer and the Peri*) ends. He pointed out that, according to the change made to fairy law, requiring fairies to marry only mortals, the Queen of the Fairies should die because she doesn't marry Private Willis until after he becomes a fairy. I replied that, according to the *Arabian Nights*, a peri marriage only requires the contracting parties to agree to live together as husband and wife, so according to fairy law, they **were** married when Private Willis accepted the Queen's proposal. The "bomber" got huffy and said he was sure Gilbert wouldn't have stood for their not being properly married.

Well, they were properly married: that was what I had just said. It's not my fault Gilbert understood his *Arabian Nights* stories better than the "bomber" did. As a matter of fact, Gilbert understood a lot of things better than a lot of people do, whether he realized it or not. A couple of years ago, somebody wrote an article about how illogical the plot of *Iolanthe* was. From what I've seen, it is one of the most logical of Gilbert's libretti. The essentials of the plot are consistent with the plot itself, with folklore, and with good sense.

For starters, let's look at fairy marriages. We are told in the subtitle of the opera that these fairies are Peries, which are, according to *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (revised ed., 1981), "a beautiful but malevolent sprite of Persian myth, one of a class which was responsible for comets, eclipses, failure of crops, etc.; in later times applied to delicate, gentle, fairylike beings, begotten by fallen spirits who direct with a wand the pure in mind the way to heaven" (*Brewer's*, p. 852). In the story "Prince Ahmed and Peribanou", we find peries of each variety.

For what it's worth, the story of Prince Ahmed and Peribanou (I've also seen it ". . .the Peri Banou") is a fairly familiar one. If you haven't read it, it's about three princes who are in love with the same ward of their father the sultan. Neither the princess nor the sultan can decide which should marry her, so they're sent off to find some wonderful thing. When they return, they all have something equally wonderful, so that test failed. So they resort to the "farthest arrow" competition. The prince who shoots his arrow farthest gets to marry

the princess. One prince's arrow goes far, another's goes a long way, and another's (Prince Ahmed's) disappears entirely. Since nobody can find Ahmed's arrow, the princess goes to the second prince. Ahmed isn't too happy about it, but he was curious about what happened to his arrow, so he goes to look for it. He finally finds it in the mountains, at an impossible distance from where it was released. He realizes that some hand had guided it, goes a little farther, and finds an open door in the rocks. He enters, meets a beautiful woman with many beautiful attendants, who introduces herself as Periebanou. She is a fairy, and was the one who, among other things, had made his arrow go so far. She thought he deserved something better than a mere mortal princess, and asks him to marry her. We're going to talk more about that, later, but anyway, he says yes, and for a while, "pleasures come in endless series", as the husband of another fairy has been known to sing. After a while, though, Ahmed wants to see his father again, and the Sultan is wondering what became of Ahmed, anyway. Periebanou finally says he should go to visit his father. He has a nice visit, but due to the council of bad advisors, the sultan begins to fear Ahmed will overthrow him. The next time Ahmed visits, the Sultan starts giving him some impossible tasks to do. With Periebanou's help, Ahmed completes them all. The last task involved bringing his wife's ugly, quick-tempered brother to court. While they are there, the sultan is rude to the brother, so the brother kills the sultan and his bad advisors, and proclaims Ahmed and Periebanou to be sultan and sultana. That seems to be a satisfactory arrangement, and everybody presumably lives happily ever after.

Now you know the story, now let's look at the significant part: Ahmed's and Periebanou's marriage. Admittedly, my copy of the Arabian Nights is the expurgated version, but I compared it with the Lane translation (made in the early 1800s) and the Burton translation (published in 1885), and while the translations have a few fairly minor differences, they agree on the description of fairy marriages. After telling Prince Ahmed that she wants to make him happy, Periebanou says,

"Well, Prince Ahmed. . .will you pledge your faith to me, as I do mine to you?"

"Yes, madam, " replied the Prince in an ecstasy of joy, "what can I do more fortunate for myself, or with greater pleasure?"

"Then," answered the fairy, "you are my

husband, and I am your wife. Our fairy marriages are contracted with no other ceremonies, and yet are more indissoluble than those among men, with all their formalities."

Compare with,

Queen: (to Private Willis) To save my life, it is necessary that I marry at once. How would you like to be a fairy guardsman?

Willis: Well, ma'am, I don't think much of the British soldier who wouldn't inconvenience himself to save a female in distress.

It isn't as gushing, but the speeches have the same function. A proposal is made and accepted. As Periebanou said, **fairy** marriages are contracted with no other ceremonies. And, in Iolanthe, Private Willis is made a fairy *after* this fairy marriage; so the Queen of the Fairies *did* marry a mortal, although she was married to a fairy. So much for the angry bomber.

There no doubt *is* an unbounded field of speculation, on which one could discourse for hours with Iolanthe, and knowing S/A Cole, she probably will in future *Nonsenses*.

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Let the Welkin Ring with the News

Constance Thompson has sent some--well, I don't know that it's news, exactly, but it's an interesting description of what *the Lamplighters* in San Francisco have been doing in the G&S line lately. Apparently, they performed **Ruddigore** sometime during 1991, and of that production, Constance Thompson says,

In the ghost scene, Sir Roderic's portrait hung above a large fireplace, with an apparent blazing "fire". How on earth will he get down from there? Well, when the time came, he just walked straight down! It seems that the slender metal bars that appeared to be a sort of screen before the fire were actually much more substantial than they appeared, and also spaced to form practical steps. It was really striking, and the subject of much favorable comment.

It might be fun for someone around here to try the

next time **Ruddigore** is given.

She also said of their *Gala*, that it was a take off on *Star Trek*,

. . . [I]n which our intrepid crew (I am the captain of the Enterprise) lands on a strange planet, peopled by descendants of Lamplighters who had migrated from San Francisco years before. They went around singing G&S (quite mad), but some of them wanted to do **My Fair Lady** instead (the *Lamplighters'* next non-G&S production). It was all very clever and funny. Recognizing the various G&S selections, and the altered lyrics, was half the fun.

Considering the number of G&S enthusiasts who also enjoy *Star Trek*, such a "Gala" would no doubt be great fun for people across the country.

According to a flyer from the British Philatelic Bureau (FREEPOST, Edinburgh EH3 0HN / Tel. 031-550-8900 {and you'll probably have to put an international code on the front of that}), that the Gibbons of Coventry and the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society sent along, *The British commemorative stamp for the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sir Arthur Sullivan will be released July 21, 1992.*

Incidentally, one commemorating the centenary of the death of Lord Tennyson was released March 10th, but anyway. Apparently, First Day Covers, Presentation Packs (which includes "a full set of stamps mounted on card and protected by a transparent sleeve, . . . [which] opens up to reveal a wealth of information, accompanied by full-colour illustrations"), and Stamp Cards ("enlarged to post-card size, to show in full their colourful and intricate detail) will be available. The flyer doesn't say anything about just ordering the Sullivan commemorative, but the Bureau should be able to give you further information and prices.

We haven't heard any more about the Savoy-Aires' Chicago G&S Weekend, which last we heard was due to come off sometime in May, 1992. If we do hear anything, though, we'll certainly let you know.

Speaking of sad news, we were sorry to hear of the cancellation of the Naperville production of H.M.S. Pinafore, that was scheduled to begin rehearsals during February. Apparently they couldn't get enough people to try out for the roles. Considering that Naperville supports a men's glee club, a children's chorus, numerous church choirs, plus an

award winning concert band, it seems amazing that so little of that talent saw fit to apply it to the production of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Let us hope that the appreciation of fine music soon catches on in that city: with all the talented people in Naperville, they surely should be able to support at least one community G&S production a year!

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Book Review of:

An Introduction to the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas, by Fredric Woodbridge Wilson. (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library in association with Dover Publications, 1989. ISBN 048626386X)

(Admittedly, The Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society spends a good deal of time playing catch-up. We never had a review of this book when it first came out (we never had a *reviewer*, either), so when one of our Florida members, A.G. Thurston, offered to write a review, we took him up on it. Better late than never, here it is:)

The author states, "This book is intended as an introductory guide to the beloved operas of Gilbert and Sullivan," but if you, the reader, will excuse this observation and this aside, Fredric Woodbridge Wilson is wrong: this book is much more than the bare bones description he used to describe it.

This book does give a modest but thorough description of each opera except *Thespis* and a recounting of each original production, the presentation of opening night performers, and a musical synopsis of major numbers. But there is more.

What makes this book different than standard reference books covering the same material lies in the wealth of material Wilson used to embellish the book and the wealth of material which he had at his disposal. As the curator of the world's largest collection of Gilbert and Sullivan memorabilia, housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Wilson had at hand an "unparalleled" collection from which to select items to use in his book. And use them he did, judiciously.

Included in each opera's synopsis are original pictures of the artists and their costumes, sketches of sets and performers (some were done by Gilbert himself), copies of music as written, cartoons, handbills, and even old photographs. Wilson added passages of dialogue, song lyrics, stage directions given in the libretti as they were published and performed during Gilbert's lifetime. Some passages differ slightly from today's accepted standard.

What a treasure trove of Gilbert and Sullivan remembrances! The Pierpont Morgan Library lays claim to having the largest collection of Gilbert and Sullivan materials in the world, and the claim is supported by the wealth of fascinating facts concerning the two men and their works. In addition to the previously-mentioned collectible-types, there are even more. In the back of the book is a two-columned chronology, covering three pages, of their accomplishments throughout their lifetimes. It is hard to believe that both men were so active creatively when working with or without each other. In one year, 1871, I counted the following writings for Gilbert: three comedies, a musical entertainment, a drama, and a book to theater adaption. As for Sullivan: a dramatic cantata and music supplied to *The Merchant of Venice*, plus joint creation of *Thespis*. Of interest in this chronology was Richard D'Oyly Carte who, early in the writing and composing careers of Gilbert and Sullivan also displayed his own talents in writing and composing.

In an added text, Wilson details the Pierpont Morgan Library's collection on Gilbert and Sullivan. It would take too much time and space to list the items per se, but a few examples will show how comprehensive the collection is. Personal letters give so much information about the individual, and the letters tell of two men who kept in touch with the creative elements of their art world. their correspondence included many classical composers (Liszt, Elgar, and others), writers (Dickens, Bret Harte, and others), actors, artists, singers, the royals (Queen Victoria, others). These are mentioned only to show the depth of Gilbert and Sullivan's influence on English life.

But, today, one hundred years later, if you hunger and thirst for a broad perspective on these two Victorian artists, sit down with this book (please buy your own) and be nourished with a satisfying Gilbert and Sullivan banquet.

(The book is still available from Dover Publications, as far as we know, so if you don't already have a copy, you could either order it from them, or from your local bookstore.)

Book Review of:

How Quaint the Ways of Paradox!: An Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan Bibliography by Philip H. Dillard. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1991. \$25.00. 208 p. ISBN 0810824450)

{About a year ago, Norman Vogt was talking to S/A Cole about the great idea he had: to put together an annotated bibliography of available G&S materials. Great minds must think alike, because a few months later, the following work was published. Norman Vogt

has very kindly agreed to review the book for the *Non-sense*, and here is his review: }

Gilbert and Sullivan aficionados welcome almost any new material published about their favorite duo. This newly published bibliography by Philip Dillard, an assistant professor at Southern Utah University is a compilation of many sources by and about Gilbert and Sullivan. Many of us are on a constant lookout for anything we can get our hands on so we should be thrilled that one among us has taken on such an arduous project. The book fills a long-felt void in G&S scholarship, as nothing like this has been done in over sixty years. Townley Searle's Sir William Schwenck Gilbert: A Topsy-Turvy Adventure (1931), an attempt at a complete bibliography of W.S. Gilbert and Mary R. Bristow's privately published bibliography A Gilbert and Sullivan Bibliography (1968), are the only two bibliographies that come close to Dillard's and there are such striking differences in these two works (:the scope of Searle and the incompleteness of Bristow, for example) that no real comparisons can be made.

The bibliography contains 1056 entries including books, journal articles, conference papers, dissertations, chapters in books, librettos and music scores. The book is arranged in categories such as analysis and criticism, biography and history, concordances, handbooks and dictionaries, as well as sections on juvenile books, collected and individual works and musical scores. Recordings per se are not included, but discographies are covered. As far as the reviewer was able to ascertain, the sources include nothing published after 1989, though the introduction gives barely a clue to the scope of the work. The works represented cover the entire length of G&S's respective careers. The bibliography is in part comprehensive and representative and the coverage is generally quite excellent. This broad coverage will be helpful to any researcher and in fact to anyone looking for a wide range of materials on Gilbert and Sullivan in one quick and easy-to-use source. The bibliography is annotated, but I'm afraid that Savoyards will find the non-critical, non-analytical and rather journalistic annotations a bit unstimulating, in style at least. No mention is made of any of the major American or British Gilbert and Sullivan newsletters which can provide some of the most interesting and stimulating ideas and opinions of G&S experts and some of the best discographies. This is somewhat disappointing, but not severely limiting to the work as a whole. Anyone doing any kind of G&S research will find this bibliography extremely helpful. We should be thankful for Mr. Dillard's love of G&S and his desire and ability to compile such a valuable work.

✠★☆ ✠★☆ ✠★☆

A Nice Dilemma We Have Here/The

Truth is Found

This time around we have a dilemma. We just heard from Ronald Lewis (c/o John Russert, 7337 Phillips St.; Sarasota, FL 34243), and he would very much like to get a hold of a copy of the Colson *Gilbert and Sullivan Concordance*. It is very much out of print, and no plans are afoot for it to be reprinted. If anyone has a copy they would like to part with, Mr. Lewis would no doubt be thrilled to hear from you on this matter.

✠★☆ ✠★☆ ✠★☆

The Latest Postcard Drawing

It's been a while since we have had a drawing, so this seems like as good a time as any to have one. The inspiration for the question that is going to be posed came, surprisingly enough, from *Light Opera Works* of Evanston, Illinois.

On one of their recent mailings, promoting their 1992 season (which will include **The Grand Duke**, by the way), they described the people who would be interested in seeing **Grand Duke** as Gilbert and Sullivan *Fanatics*. Now, I don't know about you, but I don't care much for being called a fanatic, for the sake of G&S or otherwise, and that set me to wondering what people who like G&S prefer to be called. There are so many options. I like being referred to as an *enthusiast*, but "fancier" is nice, too. Other terms I've seen (that I can think of offhand, anyway) have been "Devotee", "Maven", or "Fan".

So, anyway, the postcard question remains: **In your capacity of someone who enjoys the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, what do you like to be called?** Write your response on the enclosed postcard, and mail it back to the MGS by **May 1, 1992**. One of the responses will be picked at random to receive a copy of the 2-LP set *The Gilbert and Sullivan Album: The Gilbert and Sullivan Story {and} Donald Adams Sings Sullivan and Gilbert*, featuring Donald Adams and Thomas Round. It seems like just the sort of thing a G&S *whatever-you-want-to-call-it* would enjoy having.

★☆ ✠★☆ ✠★☆

Happy Birthday, Frederic, Whichever One it May Be (Or a Letter Drawing to Enter)

We recently got a note from Martin Peterman in Rochester (Minnesota), full of interesting news (that can be found elsewhere in the *Nonsense*), and what S/A Cole though was a good suggestion. He reasoned that, since February 29th comes along so

infrequently, and since the day means so much to those of us who like *The Pirates of Penzance*, members of the Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society have probably done a lot of interesting things to celebrate Frederic's birthday. And judging from the variety among MGS members, he is probably right. The Austin (TX) G&S Society had a party this year, and S/A Cole still has wry memories of the birthday party she threw in 1984 (a party, by the way, at which all the guests said, "Great party, Sarah, but who's Frederic?").

So, here's the plan. **Send the MGS a note** (and DON'T use the enclosed postcard: it'll confuse the drawings, and poor S/A Cole is confused enough) **about a noteworthy celebration of Frederic's Birthday you have been a part of by May 1, 1992**. The various celebrations will no doubt be mentioned in the *Nonsense*, and one of the responders will be chosen at random to receive a copy of the 2-LP set of the (original) D'Oyly Carte's John-Reed-Era recording of (what else?) *The Pirates of Penzance*. We'll look forward to hearing from you (and maybe we'll get some ideas for our own future Frederic's Birthday celebrations).

Speaking of Frederic's Birthday, we were surprised and pleased to hear on *Those Were the Days* (the Chicago-area weekly radio program that rebroadcasts vintage radio programs) on February 29 a short musical synopsis of *Pirates* included along with the other recordings of classic comedy. Good for Them!

✠★☆ ✠★☆ ✠★☆

Where Can it Be?

The latest Rose Records catalog (to get in touch with them, write to 214 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago IL 60604, or call 1-800-955-ROSE or fax (312) 663-3559. They take Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover cards. But as I started out to say...) includes among many other interesting things the Arabesque CDs of **Patience/Gondoliers** (Arabesque Z8095-2), **H.M.S. Pinafore/Trial By Jury** (Arabesque 8052-2) and **Iolanthe** (Arabesque Z8066-2) for \$12.99 each. These are vintage recordings of the operas (early 1930's), and what they lack in recording quality, they make up for in performance quality. S/A Cole just loves that recording of *Iolanthe*. The price looks like an excellent bargain, if you're looking to add to your recording collection.

We learn from Hal Kanthor that The University Press of Virginia (Box 3608, University Station; Charlottesville, VA 22903-0608 / (804) 924-3469, FAX (804) 982-2655} has available a new book in its *Victorian Literature and Culture Series*: Alan Fischler's "**Modified Rapture**"; **Comedy in W.S. Gilbert's Savoy Operas**. According to the announcement, it is 160 pages long, 6"x9", cloth-bound, and costs \$25.00. If you're interested, it can be ordered from the publisher (in which case, add \$3.00 handling), or your local bookstore could try ordering it for you. The ISBN is 0813913349. It sounds like an interesting book, and we have a review copy of it: maybe we can coax someone into writing a review of it.

We see in the latest To-ron-to-Ra To-ron-to-Ra (Toronto Gilbert and Sullivan Society) that the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society has reprinted the libretto to Sullivan's *The Rose of Persia* (and the SASS was very nice to send the MGS one for its collection, too!), It costs £4.50, or \$9.00, which includes shipping. Checks can be sent to the SASS care of Peter Gibbons, 71 Hockley Lane, Eastern Green, Coventry, CV5 7FS, U.K. (and, by the way, if you're going to send a check, be sure it's something that can be cashed in England, or ask your bank about the fees involved in cashing foreign checks, and make out yours accordingly. It will save the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society a bit of expense if you do).

The MGS has some G&S scratch pads to get rid of. For those of us who haven't seen them yet, they are 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", with a Bab illustration and quotation from either a G&S opera libretto or a Bab Ballad. The designs repeat after 28 pages, so there are about 108 sheets per pad. The pages are in a variety of colors. They are US\$5.00 each, and the price includes a package of Sullivan postcards (those cards with the picture by Anne Stanyon, of Sullivan admiring his Christmas tree, and a package of G&S-related notecards (again, illustrations by Anne Stanyon), and shipping. If you want any, just drop S/A Cole a note (and a check, if you don't mind), and she'll get some out to you ASAP. The money, of course, is used to buy G&S items to donate to libraries and such.

✠★☆ ✠★☆ ✠★☆

And that's about it for March. Be sure and send in your cards and letters for the drawings before May 1 (Say! if you have any G&S trivia questions

burning a hole in your figurative pocket, you can send them along, too. It's time we started thinking about the 1992 Big Quiz).

At this time, S/A Cole usually spouts her goofy ideas about projects the MGS should undertake. She has another goofy idea, but this one sounds both easy, practical, and worth the effort. She was looking though the Dover Publications catalog recently at all the classic children's books Dover is reprinting these days, when it struck her that, to her knowledge, Gilbert's very funny "children's" narratives of Pinafore and Mikado have never been reprinted. Since G&S is "in" right now, and since Dover has been carrying the Wilson Introduction to the G&S Operas and the reprinted sheet music of selected G&S songs, they might be the ones to reprint these children's books.

So that's the background of the project, which is to write to Dover Publications, encouraging them to reprint The Pinafore Picture Book and The Story of the Mikado. If you feel inclined to write, the address (as far as we know) is: Dover Publications, Inc.; 180 Varick St.; New York, NY 10014. If they do, that's great; and if they don't, we aren't any worse off than we were before.

In any case, we'll see how it goes, and we hope all is going well with you. Do keep in touch!

✠★☆ ✠★☆ ✠★☆

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