

Precious Nonsense

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

January 1993 -- Issue 36

Best Wishes for the Coming Year from The Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society!

Every season has its cheer,
Life is lovely all the year!

Yes, you're right, S/A Cole fouled up again. The November issue is coming out in January, and we didn't get any holiday cards put together this year, either. (Believe it or not, she really did start working on the November issue as soon as the October one was finished, then ended up spending November fighting mystery stomach trouble. It's better now, thank you, and let's hope we can get the MGS back in the pink as well.) As has been commented in earlier issues, 1992 has been the most annoying year of Sarah Cole's life, she has fallen terribly behind (as some of you waiting for her to cash checks know), but she's juggling as fast as she can. Before *too* long, things should be in their proper places, and the *Nonsense* can come out in a far more timely fashion than it has. By the way, S/A Cole's loss is your gain: she hasn't even begun to think about sending out the renewal notices (they'll probably be ready in time for the next issue).

In the meantime, there is some old business to wrap up (a report on winners of the last two drawings the MGS has had, and the winners of the Big Quiz), some new business (a synopsis of *Foggerty's Fairy*), and some other things that happened to be passing. So let's see what we've got.

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What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwest- ern}

The Indianapolis Civic Theater (1200 W. 38th St., Indianapolis, IN 46208 / (317) 923-4597) is including *Pinafore* in its 1992-1993 season. Twelve performances between February 26 and March 14 are currently scheduled. Apparently, their earlier production of *Pirates* went over so well that they decided to give another G&S opera (Good for them!). We haven't received a flyer with times or prices yet, but in the meantime, the company itself could tell you such details. We hope their *Pinafore* goes as well as their *Pirates* seems to have gone.

The Sorg Opera Company (63 S. Main St., Suite 205; P.O. Box 906; Middletown, OH 45042 / (513) 425-0180) will be presenting **Pirates** April 16-17,

1993, at 8:00 pm at the Sorg Opera House. The flyer we have is for their subscription tickets, but individual tickets will apparently cost between \$50 and \$35 if you're an adult, and \$27 and \$19 if you're a student. This is probably incorrect, since a letter from the Whitewater Opera Company indicates that Sorg's prices are the same as Whitewater's (which, as you will see are \$14-\$20). You might want to contact the company to make sure. Similarly, the Whitewater Opera Co. (P.O. Box 633, Richmond, IN 47375) is planning to present the same (**Pirates**) production April 23 and 24, 1993 at the Centerville High School, in Centerville, Indiana. Performances begin at 8:00 pm, and tickets range from \$14.00 to \$20.00. Tickets can be ordered by calling (317) 962-7106.

The Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company (the address varies, but the return address on the flyer is c/o Roland Bailey; 5507 S. Kenwood; Chicago, IL 60637) is celebrating the centennial of **Utopia (Limited)** by presenting **Utopia (Limited)** March 11-14, 1993, at Mandel Hall, on the campus of the University of Chicago. There should also be a performance at the Beverly Arts Center in Chicago April 3, and a summer presentation sometime in July or August. We'll pass on the details as we hear them.

Another upcoming *Utopia* appears to be that of the Madison Savoyards (P.O. Box 1612; Madison, WI 53701). While the dates for their production don't appear to have been set yet, they seem to usually perform in late July or early August. We'll try to pass on what we hear, or you can get in touch with the company for more information.

Light Opera Works' will be presenting *The Count of Luxembourg*, *Babes in Toyland* and **Iolanthe** during its 1993 season. Lehar's *Count of Luxembourg* is scheduled to be performed June 25-27, **Iolanthe** is scheduled for August 27-29, and this year's big attraction, Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, will be given December 26-January 2. They're starting to take subscriptions for the three operas, and prices range from \$38 to \$97 at this time, so if you're interested in seeing all three, subscribing would be a good idea (not to mention a great bargain! From all appearances, these productions are likely to be sell-outs). For more information, Light Opera Works can be reached at 927 Noyes St., Evanston, IL 60201-2799 {(708) 869-6300}. By the way, they are taking subscriptions over the phone.

We have learned, through the astuteness of members Marietta Landwehr and Al Busa, that the Marriott Lincolnshire Resort and Theater is planning on presenting *The Hot Mikado* June 16 through August 22. The flyer states, "This all-new boogie-woogie adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan most popular opera, *The Mikado* swings the Big Band

Sounds of the 1940's. Set in the mythical kingdom of Titipu, it's a romantic tale of mistaken identities and hilarious improbabilities set against jumping rhythms reminiscent of Benny Goodman." It is also said to be directed and choreographed by award-winning David H. Bell. Subscription prices (for their whole series) aren't listed, but when we called for information, the box office said tickets are going to be \$31.00. For more information, call the Marriott Lincolnshire Theater at (708) 634-0200 (or write the theater at Ten Marriott drive; Lincolnshire, IL 60065). The other shows in their season are *Sweeny Todd* (January 27-April 4), *First* (A musical tribute to baseball and Jackie Robinson, running April 7-June 13), *Oklahoma* (August 25-October 31), and *42nd Street* (November 3-January 23, 1994).

(By the way, they have group rates. If anyone feels moved to organize a theater outing for the MGS to this show, just let S/A Cole know, and she'll be glad to send you the information the theater sent her on group packages.)

We have also heard from members Laurie Verson and Richard Baehr that the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players are going to be touring *Mikado* though the Chicago area, but whether this is going to be their show, or whether they will be appearing elsewhere is still uncertain. If *you* hear anything, let *us* know.

What Cheer! What Cheer! {Elsewhere}

The Mansion House at Grim's Dyke (Old Redding, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 6SH, England / Tel.: (081-954-4227)) is expected to be planning a number of special events to commemorate the centenary of *Utopia Limited* in 1993. When we find out what they are, we'll pass the information on.

The Washington Savoyards (P.O. Box 34584; Bethesda, MD 20827 / (301) 946-6250 {and leave a message, it says in the flyer}) is going to give **Gon-**

doliers (starring Geoffrey Shovelton as Marco) January 21-24, 1993, and **Princess Ida** May 13-16, 1993. Performances will be at the Duke Ellington Theater in Georgetown (35th and "R" St., N.W., Washington DC). Individual tickets are \$18/\$20 if you're an adult, or \$14/\$16 if you're a child or a Senior Citizen.

If you're going to be in the Toronto area January 21-23, 1993, you might want to see the St. Pat's Player's presentation (and version) of *Thespis*. Performances are at 8:00 pm January 21-23, plus a 2:30 matinee January 23, and will be held at the Cardinal Carter Academy of the Arts (36 Greenfield Ave., New York--and that can't mean New York City, since this is going to be the Canadian Premiere of the work). For more information, St. Pat's Players can be contacted at 86 Duplex Ave., Toronto M5P 2A4, Canada / (416) 489-1241. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults/students and \$12.50 for seniors. John Huston, whom many of us remember from his many conference appearances, is the stage director, and from what he's been saying about how *this* version of *Thespis* has been put together (this'll make at least 8 North American versions, won't it?), it ought to be a riot to see. The music is made up of Sullivan's arrangements of music from the non-G&S scores, and the 5 movements of the rediscovered *Thespis* ballet music. In addition, in a telephone conversation, Director Huston went on to add that they are going to perform it in the no-holes-barred style that the actors of the original Gaiety company would have used: there is expected to be a lot of ad-libbing and surprising stage business. It ought to be a tremendously interesting production (and S/A Cole, for one, hopes the cast doesn't wind up like Bob Hope and Jack Benny did when they kept ad-libbing themselves into corners while trying to do a jungle skit on Benny's television program. When it was all over, he said they had rehearsed the thing for a week, and every time it came out different. But the skit was a lot of fun to watch regardless: we hope the St. Pat's Players have the success they deserve).

Just for the record, John Huston tells us the St. Pat's Players is only two years away from complet-

ing all 14 of the G&S operas without a single repeat. He'd like to see the group move on to the non-G&S Gilbert and Sullivan (and especially Sullivan) operas, but time will tell.

The *Suncoast Savoyards* (c/o John Ambler; 12501 Ulmerton Rd. W., #141; Largo, FL 34644-2731 / (813) 596-2731) seem to be having a lot of fun. In October and November, the Gilbert and Sullivan Players of Clearwater (with which they seem to share members) presented **Mikado** as a benefit for the St. Petersburg (Florida) Nursing Program, and had a *Pinafore* sing-along. It is reported in their newsletter that the Gilbert and Sullivan Players of Clearwater are planning on presenting **Gondoliers** Feb. 27-28 and March 6-7 at the St. Petersburg Jr. College (Fine arts Auditorium, 2465 Drew St., Clearwater), and we learn from them and from Member A.G. Thurston, that the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players will be giving **Mikado** at the Ruth Eckerd Hall (1111 McMullen-Booth Rd., Clearwater, FL 34619). There's no word on ticket prices, but more information should be obtainable from Mr. Ambler. By the way, if NYGASP is planning to be on the road this spring, they might be coming to your area, too. Keep an eye out for them.

The Victorian Light Opera Company (P.O. Box 10391; Rockville, MD 20849-0391 / (301) 598-3058) is expecting to give **Patience** at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theater at the Rockville Civic Center, on April 16-18 and 23-25, 1993. A recent fund-raising letter says they're planning performances of **Trial by Jury**, **Pirates**, and **Iolanthe** upcoming. When we find out when, we'll certainly pass the information on.

We hear from Martha Liehe that the University of Colorado's Lyric Theatre Season is going to include what appears to be a double bill of **Ruddigore** and *Man of La Mancha* July 9-31, 1993 at the Music Theater. It sounds like an unusual combination, but it's what the clipping says. That's all the details we have at the moment, but we'll certainly pass on what we hear as we hear it.

The Winners of the 1992 MGS Big Quiz

Admittedly, it took S/A Cole long enough to get the quizzes checked, but they finally were, and when the results were tallied, **Charlee Hutton** was the big winner, with the most correct answers. She received reproductions of the illustrated libretti for *Mikado* and *Yeomen*. The winner with the fewest correct answers was **Laurie Verson**, who won a copy of the Benford Revised *G&S Lexicon*. Other participants this year won copies of the MGS's infamous G&S Scratch Pad, which they should have no trouble putting to good use.

While going over the quizzes, we found at least one addition to the answers that appeared in the last *Nonsense*.

For instance, in Question 22, Beer is mentioned in *Patience*, *Ruddigore*, *Gondoliers* and in *Grand Duke*

(in Duke Rudolf's opening song, he sings about how tea is served at his court rather than beer). We'll probably find more before it's time for the next Big Quiz, but in the meantime, that's all we have. We were also chided for listing Sullivan's birth date as May 13, 1852, when it should have been 1842, but the error didn't seem to interfere with members' answering the question.

In any event, this year's big winners Charlee Hutton and Laurie Verson are ineligible to win a big prize in next year's Big Quiz, but all members are welcome and encouraged to participate. If you have any quiz questions to suggest, I know Quizmaster Arthur Robinson would appreciate your help. Do keep in touch!

Let the Welkin Ring with the News

We have word of two new G&S-related newsletters. The October 1992 issue of *The Trumpet Bray* (New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society) reports that a special interest group of MENSA now has a newsletter called *Basingstoke!* For more information, the notice says to get in touch with editor/founder M.J. Baker, P.O. Box 1013; Binghamton, NY 13902. Also, the December 1992 issue of *The Titipu Tatler* (Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society) mentions a newsletter called **The Little List**. The article says "The first issue has a request to its readers to share anecdotes of various Gilbert and Sullivan productions, 'literary tidbits', and information you may have on how to stage a successful G&S production". The address is M. Peter Yelland, Editor; OPUS 1 Music, P.O. Box 101; Duncan B.C. Canada V9L 3X1. We haven't followed up on either of these yet, but they sound like they'd be interesting newsletters.

Charlee Hutton found some news (or maybe "olds" would be a better word) in the Paramount Studios copyright file about the performance of G&S operas after the copyright expired. An article in *The Wall Street Journal*, dated May 4, 1959, stated:

Britain rejected a petition by 500,000 Gilbert and Sullivan fans to protect copyrights on the operettas from jazz and rock 'n roll pirates. Sir David Eccles, president of the board of trade, said legislation to protect the expiring copyrights "would not be acceptable or desirable." Dorothy Alderley, 72, of Oxford, launched the petitions after saying: "Imagine Elvis Presley as 'Nanki Poo' in 'The Mikado'."

Charlee concluded by commenting that she hoped she didn't survive to see Rex Smith as Frederic. "Probably would have killed her on the spot!"

We have some more entertaining information we just received from member H.E. Spaulding out Pennsylvania way. In 1989, he had seen the Glimmerglass Opera's *Pinafore*, which they had preceded with a one-act operetta, *Mr. Jericho*. It was an astonishingly good little work, but he couldn't see any connection between it and *Pinafore*. It turns out that, while going over the last Big Quiz, it dawned on him that *Mr. Jericho* had been the curtain-raiser to *Haddon Hall*. It sounds like the Glimmerglass Opera pays a lot of attention to its selections. (Maybe next year we should include a question in the big quiz about who wrote the libretto and score to it. At least *one* person would get it right!)

He also tells about how a performance of *Trial by Jury* works when performed in a real courtroom. In November of 1991, the theater branch of the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas gave it during lunch hours. The public could attend for free, but lawyers had to pay \$5.00 (Mr. Spaulding, being an honorable man--a retired

short time, and when they came

back to the mortal world, many years had passed. As a matter of fact, the motif even appears in the Golden Legend legend as the story of the monk Felix (who listens to a heavenly bird for a few moments, and finds out he has been gone for a hundred years). In spite of the pleasures of Fairyland, the mortal generally wants to return to the mortal world, so they always discover this fact too late.

What's more, age has an unpleasant tendency to catch up with mortals who leave Fairyland, especially in the European fairy stories. If a fairy likes the visitor, he or she is given some kind of talisman and a taboo. For instance, in a Chinese story, the hero is given a box he is not supposed to open. In a British one, the hero is given a horse from which he must not dismount. In each case, the mortal finds that he had been gone so long that all his friends and relatives are dead. Invariably, the taboo is broken: the box is opened, and the horse is dismounted. The mortal suddenly ages however many earth years he has been gone, and generally crumbles to dust. People the fairies *don't* like get no talisman, and just crumble to dust. (For more information on this subject, see the chapter "The Supernatural Passage of Time in Fairyland" in Katherine Briggs' book The Vanishing People: Fairy Lore and Legends (New York: Pantheon, 1978. ISBN 0394502485).

If a mortal plans on remaining a mortal, and doesn't want to antagonize his or her spouse, living in Fairyland would seem the best option. But he or she must remain in Fairyland forever. Judging from folklore, joy incessant *does* bore the sense, and they are rarely able to do it. So, there's another reason for a law against fairies and mortals marrying.

On the other hand, while I've never seen this motif in a real fairy story, a number of writers have brought up the possibility of more-or-less supernatural beings taking on mortality. Unhappily, their sacrifice generally leaves them like mortals who have left Fairyland: they age many years in a moment.

engineer, was most annoyed to be mistaken for a lawyer). When he saw it, the Honorable Robert Gawthorp III (a Philadelphia Federal Judge) was playing "The Learned Judge". It sounds like this *Trial By Jury* is performed regularly. If anyone has any more details about these performances, S/A Cole knows she'd love to hear more about them.

Iolanthe and Fairy Marriage, Concluded

{A couple of issues ago, Sarah Cole started giving an analysis of the logic of the fairy law banning marriage between fairies and mortals. It looks like she's going to be able to finish it up this issue:}

Fairy Marriage III--Mortals in Fairyland, and Fairies giving up immortality

Last time, we showed that matches of mortals and immortals are not likely to work well on this green earth, due to the difference in aging rates, so it stood to reason that Gilbertian fairy law would require fairies to be married to fairies. But what about such matches in Fairyland? In Fairyland, according to legend, neither mortal nor fairy grows old, and "pleasures come in endless series".

Fairyland, too, though, has its drawbacks. During my misspent youth, much of which was squandered in the reading of folk tales and legends, I found that a nearly universal attribute of fairylands is that time passes very quickly there. From China to Britain are stories of people who have been in the presence of fairies for what they thought was only a

You can probably think of other examples, but the most notable literary characters I can think of are Ayesha in H. Rider Haggard's She, and Lo-Tsen in James Hilton's Lost Horizon. As you probably remember, Ayesha steps into the "Fire of Life" a second time to encourage her lover to join her in immortality, and ends up having her immortality taken from her (shades of the fate of the villain Donovan in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade--she winds up a real mess just like he does, too, come to think of it). And the young and beautiful Lo-Tsen leaves Shangri-la with her lover and Hugh Conway. Her lover dies during their escape, and when Conway is finally rescued, he is found with an ancient crone.

Arguably, these cases are just extensions of the mortal leaving Fairyland motif, but isn't that the whole point? If a fairy becomes a mortal, would not he or she *be* a mortal in Fairyland (or one who has *left* Fairyland) and subject to the penalties. I don't recall ever reading any legends about a fairy being killed, but does it not follow that the way to kill a fairy is to make it mortal? According to Strephon, if Iolanthe were a mortal, she would have been a couple of centuries old. If she had her immortality taken from her, she would, like Ayesha, shrivel into a badly-preserved mummy.

Come to think of it, if a fairy chose to take on mortality while still in his or her youth (before they would be crushed by the weight of age), there would be no problem, either with their marriage or with the fairy law. The law is not specific on *when* the fairy would die, and if the fairy became mortal, that fairy *would* die, eventually. But such an option would have come too late to apply in *Iolanthe*

Given the situation at the beginning of the opera, *Iolanthe*, in order to be remotely logical and remotely satisfying, could *only* end the way it does: with fairies married to mortals in Fairyland. Mortals married to immortals get unbearably jealous as they get old. Immortals married to mortals in immortal lands end up with discontented spouses (who insist on dying of instant old age), and immortals who would live as mortals also end up dying of instant

old age. Like a wise judge, the Lord Chancellor and the Queen of the Fairies (and therefore W.S. Gilbert) understood the intent of the law against fairies marrying mortals and, in the end, were able to bend the letter of the law to fit that intent. As far as I'm concerned, nothing could be more satisfactory.

The Other Winners of Recent MGS Prizes

It's been so long since we mentioned these drawings that some of us may have forgotten about them (S/A Cole nearly did). But she found the materials, and so the long-awaited drawings were conducted.

Drawing 1: Back in March, we asked the question, "What do people who like G&S prefer to be called?" Preferred words were "G&S Fans", "G&S-o-phile", "Savoyard", and "Enthusiast". We really ought to do this again sometime, because the *most* preferred word, which was **Enthusiast**, only had two votes. Everything else had only one.

As promised, we had a random drawing among the responses for the winner, who was to receive a copy of the two-record set "The Gilbert and Sullivan Album". Since S/A Cole had to replace her CD player in June, she now has a really random method for selecting winners. Her player has a "random select" feature that will pick selections (at random, obviously) from among the discs in the player at the time. She put a CD in the machine with as many selections as responses, numbered the responses, and let the CD player randomly select one of the numbers. The random winner was **Hal Kanthor**, and best wishes to him.

Drawing 2: In May, we were going to have a drawing among the returned address correction sheets. Using the same random-select method as described above (that is to say, we filled the CD player with discs, numbered the responses to match the discs' selections, and let the machine pick one), the winner was **Marge Drevalas**, who received a copy of Arthur Jacobs's Arthur Sullivan: A Victori-

an Musician. We hope she will enjoy the book.

It goes without saying that S/A Cole is looking forward to the next drawing: it gives her another opportunity to play with her CD player.

Where Can it Be?

Now here's an offer not to be missed. We recently received a letter from Dr. Coulson Conn (432 Old Forge Rd.; Media, PA 19063), who says that he has access to First Day Covers of the Gilbert and Sullivan Commemorative stamps recently issued in England. He can get them for \$10.00 per First Day Cover. If you are interested, send him a check for \$10.00 (per cover) and a large self-addressed, stamped envelope (the cover is 8 3/4" x 4 3/8", so the envelope has to be big enough to hold one). He will be placing his order soon (probably by the beginning of January 1993), so get in touch with him right away if you want one of the First Day Covers. Now, if it turns out that he's placed his order, and you want one, all is not lost. Member Norman Vogt in DeKalb (IL) said he was going to order a few extras, so just ask S/A Cole, and she'll let you know how to get in touch with him.

Rose Records (214 S. Wabash Ave.; Chicago, IL 60604 / 1-800-955-ROSE (credit card orders) FAX: (312) 663-3559) has available CDs of **Patrience/Gondoliers** (abridged) (Z8095-2), **Iolanthe** (Z8066-2), and **Gondoliers** (Z8958-2) for \$9.99 each. These appear to be the CD version of the 1980's Arabesque recordings of the 1930's D'Oyly Carte casts. I very much enjoy these recordings, for whatever that's worth, and the price is a bargain. If you're interested, it wouldn't hurt to give Rose Records a call about ordering them.

Harry Benford's revised **Gilbert and Sullivan Lexicon** is still available from Sarah Jennings Press (2222 Fuller Rd.; Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2313 / (313) 665-7410) for \$20.00. For Canadian addresses, it's \$25.00 Canadian, and for the U.K., £11. All prices include shipping, handling, and sales tax.

(If you live somewhere else, the price of the book is US\$19.00, and shipping and all will be billed. Discounts are also available on orders of five or more). It's a nice, yellow, trade-size paperback (7" x 10", 270 pages) with lots of pictures and an index, a bibliography, and the libretto of *The Zoo*.)

The Musical Heritage Society (1710 Highway 35; Ocean, NY 07712) has recently issued the (original) D'Oyly Carte's **Last Last Night** on Compact Disc for \$25.98. If you belong to the Musical Heritage Society and want that recording, the order number is 062079K. If you aren't a member, and don't want to be one, the MGS can get them. The total cost, plus shipping, comes to \$29.13. If you want one, just let S/A Cole know, and she'll be glad to order one for you. (It's also available on cassette for about \$24.00 plus shipping, if you're interested and would prefer that format).

{I wouldn't call this a review, exactly, but as a comment on the CD version of the Original D'Oyly Carte Last Last Night recording, S/A Cole has this recording, and says it's a lot of fun having it on CD. The sound (naturally) is much better it is on LP, it's so nice to be able to listen to the whole recording at once, without having to turn over any records; and the performance, while sad in a way, is so much more enthusiastic than the standard, grand-opera-type recordings of G&S selections that are available. Maybe the live audience and the convenience of the CDs make a difference, but S/A Cole has enjoyed the recording more now than she did when it first came out.}

Also available, it is **Gilbert & Sullivan Overtures**, which features overtures of *Mikado*, *Iolanthe*, *Pinafore*, *Pirates*, *Ruddigore*, *Gondoliers*, *Yeomen* and *Di Ballo*, is also available on Musical Heritage Society CD now. The recording was issued a few years ago under a different label, but if you didn't get one then and want one, now's a good opportunity to get one. It's \$12.99 plus shipping (coming to a grand total of \$15.09), and also available on cassette.

Member Thomas J. Weakley passed on a section of The Video Catalog (P.O. Box 64428; St. Paul, MN 55164-0428), and along with the video of the Stratford Festival's production of *Iolanthe* (\$39.95 /

#20500) and Anna Russell's First Farewell Concert (\$39.95 / #11880), they have the 1939 filming of *The Mikado* (\$39.95 / #23007). It's listed as being in black and white, but since the film was released in technicolor, it's probably a mistake. For more information, contact The Video Catalog.

Plots of Gilbert's and Sullivan's Independent Works

Last issue, we speculated on the possibility of running a series on the plots of the lesser-known works of Gilbert and Sullivan. The idea seemed to go over well, so it looks like we're going to do it on an at least irregular basis. We've had a few offers of plot summaries (and if you're one of those offerers and haven't heard from S/A Cole on which one or ones of the works you should do, don't take it personally: she really has been busy, and is just now starting to get the offers sorted out). In the meantime, she thought she would start things off with one of her favorite plays by W.S. Gilbert:

Foggerty's Fairy

I enjoyed this play before, but after seeing all the trouble the characters in Steven Spielberg's Back to the Future got into by changing events in their past, I've enjoyed it even more.

Foggerty's Fairy is

the story about a man who wants to eliminate a small event in his past. While Gilbert doesn't refer to it as altering the space-time continuum (since Einstein hadn't come up with the name yet), he makes it only too clear that very small changes in one's past can lead to radical changes in one's present. He also did it about a century before Spielberg's group, besides.

Anyway, I'm making this description from the text appearing in Original Plays by W.S. Gilbert; Third Series (London: Chatto & Windus, 1895), which, unhappily, does not state when or where this work was first produced. According to the Dark Grey Gilbert Biography (Dark, Sidney, and Rowland Grey. W.S. Gilbert; His Life and Letters. New York: George H. Doran [n.d. Circa 1922]--my copy is dark green, incidentally), it was produced at the Criterion Theater in December, 1881. The plot is loosely based on a short story Gilbert wrote (apparently in 1880: according to the introduction to The Lost Stories of W.S. Gilbert, it was published in the Temple Bar Magazine in March, 1880), about a confectioner who deserted from the army who is trying to avoid a recruiting sergeant who could identify him. A fairy cake decoration offers to help him by obliterating any deed in his life. He chooses one he sees as key to his predicament, and suddenly finds himself a the captain of a slave ship (which is what he would have become if that key deed had not taken place). He chooses a different one to obliterate, and finds himself a banker about to be arrested for forgery. He finally obliterates the act of having met the fairy on the cake, and is restored to being a confectioner in his shop. The recruiting sergeant apparently never sees him anyway, and his wife tells him he dreamed the whole thing.

In the play, a man on his wedding day decides to obliterate the consequences of having met a woman (who is not his fiancée) who claims him in marriage. The major characters are *Frederick Foggerty* (the hero), *Theodore Walkinshaw* (his rival for the affections of:) *Jenny Talbot* (Foggerty's fiancée, at first, at least), *Miss Delia Spiff* (Foggerty's rich "Old, Old Love", who he had proposed to while he was financially embarrassed), *Miss Malvina de Vere* (a "Romantic Old Lady", who makes her living suing men for breach of promise), and *The Fairy Rebecca* (Foggerty's "Tutelary Fairy", who helps him change his past). The minor characters include Jenny's father, aunt and uncle, various wedding guests and bridesmaids, doctors for the insane, and an asylum keeper. We'll pick them up as we go along. Other interesting things about the play are lines that appear later in various G&S operas. The Ko-Ko/Nanki-Poo/Yum-Yum exchange about being too affectionate is used in the first act, Malvina de Vere is de-

scribed as having the remains of a fine woman about her. There are probably others, but these were the most noticeable. Anyway, this is the story.

Act I: The story opens in the Talbot drawing room on Jenny's and Foggerty's wedding morning. Jenny's relatives and wedding guests are all in low spirits. None of them care much for Foggerty, and as they discuss the union, it comes out that, although she is fond of Foggerty since they were children together, his main attraction for Jenny was the fact that he claims to have never loved anyone before (like Gwendolen Fairfax (in The Importance of Being Earnest) and her "thing" with the name "Ernest", she doesn't think she can love any man who has loved before). She had previously been engaged to Walkinshaw, but when Foggerty came back from Australia, he "told on" Walkinshaw, so Jenny engaged herself to Foggerty instead. But Walkinshaw knows that Foggerty has a fiancée in Australia: Miss Delia Spiff, a ridiculous (but rich) old woman with a green umbrella (that's what the book says) who, it turns out, is one of Jenny's relatives. Foggerty had proposed to her while destitute in Melbourne, and once he was able to see past her money to the woman, he fled. Walkinshaw won't have to snitch on Foggerty, because, according to the newspaper, Spiff has just arrived in England. After dropping this bombshell, Walkinshaw leaves Foggerty to brood. While soliloquizing over this turn of events, he states that nothing short of a fairy godmother could get him out of this predicament. Well, it turns out that he *does* have something along that line. The Fairy Rebecca pops up to be of assistance. She had been sorry to see a fine young man throwing himself away on someone like Delia Spiff, and had taken on the job of being Foggerty's fairy guardian. They start throwing out plans for getting Spiff out of the way, but they all require the help of a bad fairy (Rebecca is a good fairy and can't do them). Finally, Foggerty wishes he could blot Spiff out of his existence. That, it turns out, is something Rebecca *can* do, but she warns him that "the conse-

quences of an act are often more numerous and important than people have any idea of." Foggerty's own origin was an excellent example. Many years earlier, the man who was to become Foggerty's father was walking down a street and stopped by a sculptor's shop to admire a monument to some colonel who had died of a cold after jumping in the Ganges to rescue his dog. While Foggerty's to-be father was standing there, an old friend walked up, and ended up inviting him to dinner. While at the dinner, he met the woman who was to become Foggerty's mother. Eventually, they were married, and then came Foggerty. He thinks it's pretty interesting that his life depended on a dinner invitation, but Rebecca points out that he owes his existence to something more remote than that: the invitation resulted from his father's having stopped to admire the monument, which resulted from the colonel's dying of a cold, which resulted from jumping in the Ganges after his dog, which resulted from the union of the dog's father and the dog's mother. If those two dogs had never gotten together, the dog would never have been born, and neither would Foggerty. He promises to be careful, and Rebecca gives him a little bottle of elixir and a box of pills. If he needs to see her, he should say so and swallow a pill. If he does decide to eliminate a factor in his life, he should name it and drink the potion. She disappears, and Jenny presently enters. They're about to leave for the church, when in walks Delia Spiff. She claims Foggerty in marriage (he was indiscreet enough to put his proposal in writing), Jenny rejects him, and as a last resort, he obliterates Delia Spiff from his existence.

Act II: Foggerty is found sleeping on a couch in a different drawing room from that in Act I. Rebecca wakes him, but has to leave him to his own devices, since she got involved with him because of Spiff, and all consequences of his having met her have been wiped, or as they frequently say, "spiffed", out. Foggerty hasn't a clue where he is or why, since his circumstances have been completely changed, but after observing his surroundings and the things in his pockets, and talking to Jenny's bridesmaids (from last act, who are also bridesmaids in this act), he concludes that he is a successful pharmacist about to marry Jenny. He doesn't know what

to make of the "stately lady of middle age and tragical demeanor" Miss de Vere, who seems to be a very close friend, but he is able to excuse himself to dress for, what he expects is, his wedding (you *know* he's going to be in for an unpleasant surprise). While Malvina melodramatically waits, Jenny enters in her wedding dress. From their conversation, we learn that, first of all, that Jenny is *not* about to marry Foggerty, and that Malvina has been disappointed matrimonially eighteen times previously. She has recovered substantial damages in her breach of promise lawsuits, though. She also suspects lover Nineteen to be false, but has hopes for lover Twenty. Jenny invites her to the wedding breakfast, and Miss de Vere retires to Jenny's boudoir to wait for them to return from the church. Walkinshaw, who, it turns out, is Jenny's fiancée, enters. Jenny admits that she doesn't care for him much, but since he had never loved any before her, she'll make do. She also tells him (much to his horror) that the pitiful Miss de Vere is in the house. He is lover Nineteen. He is saved any awkward explanations by the reappearance of Foggerty. He is extremely affectionate with Jenny, much to Walkinshaw's chagrin, but he lets it pass since they were children together. He exits to get the wedding party into the carriage, leaving Jenny and Foggerty alone. Foggerty is at a loss to explain Jenny's coldness and concern for Walkinshaw's feelings, until it finally dawns on him that Walkinshaw, and not he, is about to marry Jenny. Jenny is miserable as well, because it comes out that she has always loved Foggerty, but he never declared his affection for her. She leaves, and Foggerty realizes that it was his flying from Spiff that had previously brought them together (as you recall, he had returned to England, and had interfered with Walkinshaw's romance, which led to his own engagement). Walkinshaw and Talbot reenter to get the rest of the wedding party, and in a fit of rage, Foggerty roughs up Walkinshaw for stealing the girl he loves. He remembers too late that his previous engagement had been spiffed out, then runs out on the balcony to try to sort things out. Walkinshaw and Talbot begin to express some doubts about his sanity. While they're talking, though, Jenny storms in: she has learned from Miss de Vere that Walkinshaw is her faithless lover. She throws herself into Foggerty's arms (much to her

father's dismay, since he thinks Foggerty has flipped), and all would eventually work out well, until Malvina sweeps in to tell Foggerty that her last lover had proved faithless and that she is now free to marry him. Foggerty learns much to his surprise (though not to the audience's) that he is lover Twenty. Jenny faints in horror, and in the excitement, Foggerty jumps off the balcony and runs away.

Act III: It is evening in Walkinshaw's parlor (which has the same general arrangement as the Talbot parlor of Act I). Walkinshaw and Talbot are comparing notes on the day's proceedings. Talbot speculates that it's just as well Walkinshaw didn't marry Jenny, since he's no bargain anyway. Talbot has also made arrangements to have Foggerty hauled off as a lunatic. Foggerty, we find, has spent the last eight hours running away from Malvina, who has been in close pursuit. He has finally run back to Walkinshaw's house. Talbot tells Walkinshaw to keep him there until the Commission shows up to take him away, and leaves to notify them. A knock is heard at the door: Malvina has caught up with Foggerty. She hasn't caught up with Walkinshaw yet, though, so he goes to hide. Foggerty is too tired to move, and Malvina isn't in very good shape, either, when she staggers in. He refuses to marry her, she presents him with a summons, and they fall to dickering about the terms of the damages (six weeks of brooding over a lost love at a pound a day, plus £75 for losing him as a husband, plus £450 for public embarrassment, plus the cost of the trousseau, plus legal costs). Foggerty finally decides that, since he's lost Jenny, he might as well marry her, which is fine with her. He is then able to confide in her that he has no memory of his past, and Malvina offers to make a list of useful facts about his life. Foggerty goes to straighten out his clothes. As soon as he leaves, Talbot comes back with the Commission: two mental doctors and an asylum attendant. Malvina and Talbot leave, as do the doctors, to prepare their report on Foggerty's mental state (without having seen him, of course). Blogg, the attendant, is told to keep an eye on Foggerty, and to humor him in every way. Foggerty reenters. He doesn't know what Blogg is doing there, but from his conversation figures out he must be a policeman,

and the doctors are detectives. Blogg, naturally, agrees with him. Foggerty decides he must have committed some crime he doesn't know about, and tries to get the information out of Blogg. Blogg agrees with everything, and provides some imaginative responses for Foggerty's "rhetorical" questions, and by the time they're finished, Foggerty thinks he and Walkinshaw have murdered Walkinshaw's aunt.

Walkinshaw then rushes through the room, trying to make his escape from Malvina, and Foggerty promptly collars him for murdering his aunt. Blogg tells him Foggerty's mad, and must not be contradicted, as he takes him into custody. Malvina rushes in after Walkinshaw, who Foggerty denounces as a murderer. Blogg tells her to keep away from him because he's a madman. Talbot reenters to tell Foggerty they've come to take him away. There's only one thing left for him to do: he summons Rebecca with one of the pills she had given him. She reminds him that she can't help him, since she has been spiffed out, and starts to leave. He points out that he still has forty-seven summoning pills left, and he could make things most uncomfortable for her. She stays. Foggerty further points out that everything relating to his connection with Delia Spiff was *not* spiffed out: that if he had never known Spiff, he would never have had a problem with her, and therefore he would never have asked Rebecca for help, and therefore she would never have given him the potion to obliterate the event in his past, and therefore, he should never have wound up in this present mess. Rebecca agrees to restore things to their original condition, without Spiff. The scene changes back to Daytime in the Talbot drawing room. Walkinshaw gets Malvina, Foggerty gets Jenny, and they all go off happily to be married.

Welcome New Members

Andrew and Connie Hayward (Elgin, IL). Mr. Hay-

ward is an Englishman, whose uncle and aunt used to take him to D'Oyly Carte performances in the late 1960's. He says he's happily surprised at the amount of G&S performance in the area. Let's hope the companies can keep up the fine work.

Ronald, Harriet, Elaine, Adele, and Arthur Meyer (Wilmette, IL). Mrs. Meyer has been a G&S fan from childhood, and points out that her son Arthur, coincidentally, was born on Sullivan's birthday. In the tradition of Sullivan's devotion to his mother, too, May 13 that year also happened to be Mother's Day.

Robert and Jeannie Hirsch (Glenview, IL). Mr. Hirsch has been a G&S buff since he was in the chorus of his grammar school's production of *HMS Pinafore* in 1937.

And that ought to about do it for this trip. As usual, S/A Cole is going to try to do better in the future, so keep an eye out for a big fat *Nonsense* coming out one of these issues. Do keep the information coming, though, because the *Nonsense* won't be fat if you don't send anything to put in it.

We've also still suffering from artistic block. If you have any clever (or even not-so-clever) ideas about G&Ssy designs for birthday, congratulatory, or holiday cards, please do pass them on. You don't even have to draw them yourself: a description of an idea would be more than we have at the moment. Of course, if you want to draw it, go ahead and give it a try, but it certainly isn't essential. Either way, we'll look forward to hearing from you.

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