

Tentative Pinafore Outing

Member Hugh Locker has offered to organize a Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society Outing to one of the matinee performances of Light Opera Works' June 8, 1997, performance of H.M.S. Pinafore, depending on if enough people want to go. If you are interested in going, call him right away:

(815) 385-3676

The final price for the outing has yet to be determined, but figure on the show tickets costing between \$40.00 and \$50.00, plus dinner afterwards.

As these affairs generally work, participants make their own arrangements to get to Cahn Auditorium. Hopefully, enough people would be interested to get a group rate on the tickets. **We need at least 20 people to get a group rate (tell your friends!).** Afterwards, everybody goes to some local restaurant for dinner. Everybody pays their own checks, which saves a lot of calculations and bad feelings later. These arrangements have worked out pretty well in the past, though.

This outing may come off, or it may not: Please call Hugh Locker at (815) 385-3676 by

May 10, 1997

so plans can be made or cancelled.

*Fair moon, to thee I sing, Bright regent of the heavens,
Say, why is everything Either at sixes or at sevens?*

Here we are again, and I'm sorry about the delay. Things here have really been at sixes and sevens for the last several months. But with the cheerful sunshine of (and the flowers that bloom in the) Spring, we'll get there. There are lots of newsletters from other societies that I still have to go through, and other possible articles that need compiling, and we will try to get them put together by the next issue. In the meantime, we have something of a *Pinafore* issue: not only are we trying to organize an outing to Light Opera Works' *Pinafore*, but we have a description of an old advertising flyer that used *Pinafore* characters to promote the product, and a description of George S. Kaufman's musical *The Hollywood Pinafore*.

There are some other non-*Pinafore* items as well, like an announcement of a new murder mystery connected to a production of *Ruddigore*, so let's see where we go from here.

Oh, Members, How Say You, what is it you've done?

The winners in 1996's Big Quiz have been identified, and thanks to Norman Vogt, we have prizes for them!. The winners were **Thomas Drucker**, who won an Arthur

Sullivan mug, **George C. Weber**, who won a 1997 International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival calendar; **Ron Fava**, winner of a MGS calculator and a set of the Gilbert and Sullivan in America picture postcards from David Stone; and **Phocion Park**, who received a copy of Jane Stedman's *W.S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian & His*

Theatre. Congratulations to the Big Quiz participants. We'll have another Big Quiz in the next issue of the *Non-sense*.

Suanne Kuhn was instrumental (although she sings) in helping one of the Buckingham Friends School's classes with their unit on light opera */H.M.S. Pinafore*. We haven't heard what they did, and how it all came out, but we'll look forward to it.

What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwestern}

S/A Cole has heard a rumor that the *Savoy-Aires* are planning to stage **The Gondoliers** during 1997. This rumor has not been confirmed independently, but if you contact the company, they can probably fill you in. For more information, contact the company at P.O. Box 126, Evanston, IL 60204, or call David Craven at (312) 862-7781.

Another part of the rumor was that they may be in some financial difficulties: that was the reason for not staging *Princess Ida* as originally planned. Whether or not this rumor is true, the *Savoy-Aires* is always grateful to its donors. If you would care to become one, contact the company for more information

We learn from David Michaels that the *Park Ridge Gilbert and Sullivan Society* (P.O. Box 339, Park Ridge IL 60068-0339) will be giving **Yeomen of the Guard** May 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10, 1997, at the St. Mary's Episcopal Church (306 S. Prospect, in Park Ridge). Tickets are \$9.00 (\$8.00 for senior citizens). For more information, call (773) 774-8603. Director for this production will be Martha Maculas, and Jeff Richards is Music Director. Look for David Michaels as Sgt. Meryll.

Sometime this summer, **The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company** will most likely be presenting *The Sorcerer*, an encore of their March production. We'll pass on details as we learn them.

Light Opera Works 1997 season will feature **HMS Pinafore** (May 31, June 1 (mat.), 6, 7, and 8 (mat.)), *One Touch of Venus* (by Kurt Weil--August 15, 17 (mat.), 22, 23, and 24 (mat.)), and *The Merry Widow* for New Year's Eve (and also December 27, 23 (mat.), 31, January 2, 3, and 4 (mat.)). Ticket prices range from \$21.00 to \$48.00, depending on where you want to sit. Ticket prices for audience members 21 years old and younger are apparently available at half-price. For more information, call Light Opera Works at (847) 869-6300.

Incidentally, if you surf the Net, why not visit Light Opera Works' website at www.light-opera-works.org. Also, see the notice on the front page: we're hoping to get a group together to see the June 8 performance!

The Winnetka Theatre (620 Lincoln Ave., Winnetka, IL 60093 / (847) 446-0537) is expecting to stage, what they describe as, "an updated version of this classic musical," May 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 16, and 17, 1996. Friday and Saturday performances are at 8:00 pm, Sunday performances are at 2:00 pm. Tickets should be about \$11.00: to order tickets, call (847) 604-0275.

The 1997 **Ohio Light Opera** performance schedule includes Victor Herbert's *Eileen*, Strauss's *Fledermaus*, *Patience*, Messager's *Véronique*, *Yeomen of the Guard*, Lehar's *Count of Luxembourg*, and Romberg's *The New Moon*. Individual tickets for all performances are \$26.00. To order tickets, call the box office at (330) 263-2329 or (330) 263-2345.

Performance dates are:

Eileen: June 10 (mat.), 12, 15 (mat.), 20, 21, 25 (mat.), July 8 (mat.), 11, 17, 26, August 2 (mat.), and 5 (mat.)

Yeomen of the Guard: June 11 (mat.), 14 (mat.), 24 (mat.), July 10, 20 (mat.), August 2, and 8.

The New Moon: June 13, 14, 19, 28 (mat.), 29 (mat.), July 1 (mat.), 3, 6 (mat.), 9 (mat.), 16 (mat.), 23, 30, and August 9 (mat.)

Fledermaus: June 17 (mat.), 18 (mat.), 21 (mat.), 22 (mat.), 27, July 5 (mat.), 12, 24, 30 (mat.), and August 9

Count of Luxembourg: June 26, 28, July 2 (mat.) 13 (mat.), 19 (mat.), 25, 29 (mat.), and August 6.

Véronique: July 5, 12 (mat.), 18, 22 (mat.), 27 (mat.), 31, and August 6 (mat.)

Patience: July 15 (mat.), 19, 12 (mat.), 26 (mat.), August 1, 3 (mat.), and 7.

Evening performances are at 8:00 pm, and matinees are at 2:00 pm. Evidently, every Friday and Saturday evening, there will be free pre-performance lectures at 7:00 pm. For more information about the Ohio Light Opera's season, you can also write: The Ohio Light Opera, The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH 44691.

From Norman Vogt, we have the flyer from the **Philadelphia International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival**. This year's festival starts in Berkeley, California (June 13-22: we don't have any information on this hub), continues in Philadelphia (July 19-27, or the 18th, if you count one of the professional productions), and concludes in Buxton, England (August 2-17, which we don't have any information on, either). If you're interested in attending, or knowing more, about at least the Philadelphia hub, contact the festival at **The Gilbert and Sullivan Festi-**

val; P.O. Box 59285; Philadelphia, PA 19102-9285, or call or fax it at (215) 629-0672. Running with what we've got, it appears there are no "package deals" for the festival attractions, so call for a flyer right away: you'll need it to figure out how much the attractions you're interested in will cost. It also lists where the events are going to be held. Apparently, the main site for the festival is the Annenberg Center. Anyhow, the schedule, according to this flyer, is:

Friday, July 18: 7:30 pm: *GG*: a musical entertainment based on the life of George Grossmith, plus the Savoy Company and Nine Lives Travelling Players -- *Cox and Box*. Tickets: \$40.00 to \$25.00.

Saturday, July 19: 2:00 pm: Opening Ceremony Big Sing (\$10.00)

7:30 pm: *Mikado*, performed by the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company. Tickets: \$50.00-\$30.00.

10:30 pm: Festival Club -- including cabaret *Iolanthe* (\$5.00)

Sunday, July 20: 10:00 am: G&S Singing Competition (\$7.50)

3:00 pm: Washington school children present excerpts from *Iolanthe* (\$15.00)

7:30 pm: *Yeomen of the Guard* (Summer Savoyards, Binghamton) (\$40.00-\$25.00)

10:30 pm: Festival Club -- including cabaret (\$5.00)

Monday, July 21: 10:30 am: David Turner (artistic director of *The Mousetrap*) talks of his live in theatre, adjudication and *The Mousetrap* (\$10.00)

3:00 pm: Dan Rothermel presents a lecture on Sullivan's grand opera *Ivanhoe* (\$10.00)

7:30 pm: The International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival Orchestra in concert with soloists from the newly formed Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company (\$40.00-\$25.00)

10:30 pm: Festival Club -- Members of the Savoynet perform *The Sorcerer* [Wow! A Cyberopera! ed.] (\$5.00)

Tuesday, July 22: 10:30 am: Philadelphia opening of the First International Gilbert and Sullivan Film Festival (\$7.50)

3:00 pm: Kenneth Sullivan masterclass (\$15.00)

7:30 pm: *The Zoo*, plus the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company -- *Cox and Box*, plus West Chester *Trial by Jury* (\$40.00-\$25.00)

10:30 pm: Festival Club -- including cabaret (\$5.00)

Wednesday, July 23: 10:30 am: Film Festival continues (\$7.50)

3:00 pm: *Gondoliers* -- Concert version (\$10.00)

7:30 pm: *HMS Pinafore* (The Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company) (\$50.00-\$30.00)

10:30 pm: Festival Club -- including cabaret *Patientie* (\$5.00)

Thursday, July 24: 10:30 am: Film Festival continues (\$7.50)

10:30 am: Roberta Morrell workshop (\$10.00)

3:00 pm: Gillian Knight leads a masterclass (\$15.00)

7:30 pm: *Princess Ida* (Derby Gilbert and Sullivan Company, UK) (\$40.00-\$25.00)

10:30 pm: Festival Club -- including cabaret (\$5.00)

Friday, July 25: 10:30 am: Film Festival continues (\$7.50)

3:00 pm: Valerie Masterson leads a masterclass (\$15.00)

7:30 pm: *Utopia Limited* (Montreal West Operatic Society, Canada) (\$40.00-\$25.00)

Saturday, July 26: 10:00 am: G&S Acting Competition (\$7.50)

10:00 am: Memorabilia Fair (all day: FREE!)

10:30 am: Film Festival continues (\$7.50)

3:00 pm: *Dear Jessie*: Principals from the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company in a tribute to the life and career of Jessie Bond (\$15.00)

7:30 pm: *Pirates of Penzance* (New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players with Albert Bergeret) (\$50.00-\$30.00)

Sunday, July 27: 10:30 am: Albert Bergeret, Artistic Director of the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players "How to get the most out of Gilbert's words and Sullivan's music" (\$10.00)

2:30 pm: *Mikado*, performed by the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company. Tickets: \$50.00-\$30.00.

7:00 pm: Awards ceremony, dinner and dance (\$35.00)

Ins and Outs with G&S: *Pinafore* and Sapolio Soap

In among the MGS renewals, someone asked what I do when I'm not involved with Gilbert and Sullivan. (Between you and me, one of the reasons for the delays in this latest *Nonsense* have **been** the other things I've been doing, but be that as it may.) One of the things I've been doing lately has been helping chauffeur a costumer friend to events. At a recent vintage clothing show, though, the clothing and the G&S were surprisingly combined: among the dresses and jewelry in one of the booths were some pieces of ephemera. And one of the pieces of ephemera was most of a booklet promoting the use of Sapolio & Hand Sapolio soap, capitalizing on the popularity of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. It appears the cover is missing

(and it's possible some of the pages are missing, too), but what remains is most amusing. The booklet appears to have been published by Enoch Morgan's Sons Co. (440 to 444 West St. New York), probably during 1879. It features parodies of the major songs, and pictures of the characters with bars of Sapolio soap.

Sapolio Soap seemed to have used parodies regularly to advertise the product. In *Parodies of the works of English & American authors* (Hamilton, Walter, 1844--1899. comp. **Parodies of the works of English & American authors, collected and annotated by Walter Hamilton.** London, Reeves & Turner, 1884-89.6 v. illus.), I remember seeing the parody of Longfellow's *Excelsior*, which, as I recall, described some young fellow plastering the neighborhood with Sapolio signs. The crowd ends up dragging him away, still shouting "Sapolio!" I'm sure there are plenty of readers that know more about Sapolio Soap and their advertising, and I hope they'll enlighten the rest of us.

In any event, *this* particular booklet begins with an "Opening Chorus" in which the sailors sing:

We sail the ocean blue,
And our saucy ship's a beauty,
We're sober men and true,
And attentive to our duty.
Our cutlasses are bright,
Our marlinspikes are gleaming

And like a polished table top
Our good ships decks are seeming
And if you ask what makes them so
We answer, Tis SAPOLIO

[You try to set it to the melody: I couldn't make it fit, either]

Ironically, the back of that page warns buyers against "Pirates--Counterfeiters--Imitators", not of *Pinafore*, but of Sapolio soap. The text describes the size of the cake, and the way it is wrapped. In case you're curious, "SAPOLIO is in for 'a cake about 3 3/4 inches long, 1 1/2 inches wide, 1 1/2 inches thick, wrapped in a tin-foil paper wrapper and encircled with a Blue Band printed in gold letters. The HAND SAPOLIO is put up in the same general style except the Band is MAGENTA color." It's sold for 10¢ a cake.

Next, "What the Admiral [sic.] knows about Sapolio":

When I was a lad I served a term
As office boy to an attorney's firm,
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor
And I polished up the handle of the big front door.

I polished up that handle so carfullee
That now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navee,
But I could'nt have polished it bright I know
If I had not used SAPOLIO.

The back tells how well Sapolio works as a house cleaner and for removing household stains.

Then, "His Sisters and his cousins and his aunts coincide in regard to Sapolio":

Sir JP: I am the monarch of the sea
And SAPOLIO is what saved me.
For when the storm did loudly roar
And the ship went down off a rocky shore
With a cake of SAPOLIO from the store
I gently washed myself ashore.
Therefore its praise I loudly chants--

Hebe: And so do his sisters and his cousins and his aunts

His sisters and his cousins whom he reckons by the dozens

And his aunts.

[I had seen at least parts of this booklet before, and that was the first time I had heard that old groaner.] The back tells about Sapolio's virtue as a polisher and for general uses.

The next page tells the reader "What the Moon said to Captain Corcoran"

Capt.: Fair moon, to the[e] I sing
Bright regent of the heaven.
Say, why do you shine so bright.
After the hour is seven:

Moon: O gentle Captain Corcoran,
The reason you shall know.
They shine me up the whole day long
Bright with SAPOLIO.

MORAL

Bright as the moon will all things grow
When polished with Sapolio.

This back of this page talks about Enoch Morgan's Sons *hand* Sapolio. It sounds like it included some sort of abrasive: "In the BATH it acts as a flesh brush and Soap Combined", and "Its frequent use will remove tan, stains and blemishes from the hands and face. . ."

Speaking of blemishes, the next page is devoted to Dick Deadeye. It is entitled "Dick Deadeye's yarn about Hand Sapolio".

Dear public, I've important information
Sing hey, the working public that you are
About a certain intimate relation
Between the human cuticle and tar
Or iron rust or ink or nasty tar.

With hand SAPOLIO gently wash the places
Sing hey, the dirty public that you are
And then no stain your cuticle disgraces
Sing hey, the cleanly public that you are
From iron rust or ink or nasty tar.

His page also give special uses for Sapolio and Hand Sapolio.

Next, "Little Buttercup makes a few remarks about SAPOLIO":

I'm called Little Buttercup -- dear little Buttercup
Though I could never tell why:
But still I'm called Buttercup -- poor little Buttercup
Sweet little Buttercup I.
I've snuff and tobaccy, and excellent jacky
I've scissors and watches and knives
I've ribbons and laces to set off the faces
Of pretty young sweethearts and wives.
But the thing I most treasure I'll tell you with pleasure
It beats every soap that I know
For washing the dishes or what else you wishes
And it's Morgan's SAPOLIO.

The back of this page recounts the virtues of the soap each of the characters had most appreciated. It is pointed out that the "moral deduced from the above unquestioned testimony" is that no house is complete and no household can be happy and prosperous without Sapolio and Hand Sapolio.

Captain Corcoran returns, and it appears, "The Captain of the Pinafore is never without SAPOLIO":

Capt.: I am the captain of the Pinafore.
All: And a right good captain, too.
Capt.: My sword in the light is exceedingly bright
And so are my guns to true,
And they dazzle the eyes of the dastard foe
For they're polished up with SAPOLIO.
And this is a fact that you all should know
And I hope you do not doubt it, that I never am without it
That I never am without SAPOLIO
All: What, never?

Capt.: No, never!
All: What, never?
Capt.: Well, hardly ever!
All: He's hardly ever with out SAPOLIO.

The back goes over the advantages of the soap, but then gives the caution that Sapolio is not recommended for use on gold silver, fine plated glass or mirrors.

"Ralph & Josephine are in one regard to the merits of SAPOLIO" concludes the booklet. They do so in the rays of the rising sun:

Duet: Oh, joy, oh, rapture unforseen,
The clouded sky is no serene,
The God of Day, the orb of love
Has hung his ensign high above.
Bright as yon sun our hearth shall glow
For we shall use SAPOLIO.

On the back, the readers are told how they (and Josephine and Ralph) can get Sapolio: by asking their grocer, druggist, or hardware and home furnishing stores to carry it.

Sapolio is no longer available from these sources, but then again, neither is *Pinafore*. But even if it isn't use in advertising, *Pinafore* is still available, and is still as bright as, well, as bright as the Admiral got the door handle with Sapolio!

{By the way, speaking of vintage clothing, if anybody should happen to have any crochet patterns for either Victorian (Civil War Era) hair nets or World War II era snoods they'd be willing to loan, trade, or what-have-you, please let me know. That was one of the things I *was* looking for at the vintage clothing show, and didn't find.)

Where Can it Be?

We hear from Judy C. Pittman, who is interested in seeing her copy of *The Works of Gilbert and Sullivan* go to a good home, for a reasonable recompense. It was published in 1941 by Garden City Publishing Co./The Book League of America, with illustrations by W.S. Gilbert. The contents of the book are evidently the libretti for *Thespis*, *Trial By Jury*, *The Sorcerer*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *Princess Ida*, *The Mikado*, *Ruddigore*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and *Gondoliers*. Ms Pittman judges the book to be in good condition. If you're interested in buying it, drop her a note at 4871 Clintonville Road; Clarkston, MI 48346. She'll look forward to hearing from you.

We just got a preview copy of the St. Martin's Press's new book *Murder & Sullivan*, by Sara Hoskinson Frommer. The press release says, "*Who would have thought that Gilbert and Sullivan could be deadly?*"

It goes on:

Certainly not Joan Spencer, viola player and star of **Murder & Sullivan**, Sara Hoskinson Frommer's third Joan Spencer mystery. When Joan saves a young girl from the tornado that sweeps through the small town of Oliver, Indiana, she never expects that she's about to be a witness to murder. Joan volunteers to play the viola for the Civic Symphony's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta, *Ruddigore*, starring the young girl's father David, a circuit court judge. But tragedy strikes when David is murdered onstage. Aided by her eighteen-year-old son Andrew and Detective Fred Lundquist, Joan discovers that the judge had more enemies in the town than it would seem at first glance. The question is, who hated him enough to commit murder?

I haven't found anyone to read it yet to find out who *did* hate him that much, but mystery readers would probably want to find out for themselves, anyway. It is supposed to be released on May 14 in hardcover (ISBN 0-312-155956), to retail at \$21.95. The press release mentions that the author is a violinist in the Bloomington (Indiana) Symphony. Those of us in the Bloomington area might want to watch for her.

Incidentally, we haven't been able to round up someone to write a review for *W.S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian & His Theatre* by Jane W. Stedman (Oxford University Press, ISBN 019-816174-3, \$30.00) or *The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan* edited by Ian Bradley (Oxford, again, ISBN 019-816503X, \$40.00, I think). If someone would like to write a report, please let me know (and write it).

We got a press release from Dr. Charles Berney, artistic director of the Royal Victorian Opera Company about the publication of a performing edition of the Royal Vic's 1992 hit *Put a Penny in the Slot*. The release goes on to say,

This work is an adaptation of the Nita-Bartolo subplot from *The Mountebanks*, a comic opera first performed in 1892, with words by W.S. Gilbert and Alfred Cellier [We had a plot description of that opera a couple of *Nonsenses* ago, if you want to see how it goes. Ed.] . . . The work calls for a cast of three (soprano, patter baritone, bass-baritone) with piano accompaniment; it takes about an hour to perform, and so is suitable for meetings, fund-raisers, etc. The performing edition includes all the dialog and

music, plus an introduction by Dr. Berney and a review of the Royal Vic performance by Jonathan strong. The songs (including 'Ophelia was a dainty little maid,' the eponymous 'Put a penny in the slot,' and the ticking song, 'When gentlemen are eaten up with jealousy') include some of Gilbert's wittiest lyrics. The cost is \$30.00 per copy plus \$4.00 shipping. For more information and/or to order, write to the Royal Victorian Opera Company at 91 Standist Road, Watertown MA 02172, or call Dr. Berney at (617) 926-4552. In addition, videos of *Put a Penny*, and of all sic of Gilbert's Gallery of Illustration pieces (including *Our Island Home* and *No Cards*) are available.

We hear from William V. Dorwart Jr., Ph.D., who had played in enough pit orchestras for G&S operas to understand how garbled some of the orchestra scores are. A couple of years ago, with Theodore Presser Company, he had typeset (on computer) scores for *Iolanthe* and *Trial By Jury*. By doing so, he was able to make the new materials legible and put page turns at convenient places wherever possible, to rationalize the relationships of the key signatures for the various instruments and have all instruments change keys at the same time, to give all instruments the same repeats and first and second endings, to provide abundant cues, and the same dynamics and articulations for all parts. Well, the completed scores now include *Yeomen of the Guard*, *The Zoo*, and *The Gondoliers*. For more information on obtaining these "clean" scores, contact Theodore Presser and see what happens: (610) 527-4242 / 1 Presser Place, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010. If you would like to speak to Dr. Dorwart about his work, he can be reached at (610) 667-3849. Last I heard, he was working on *Mikado* and also branching out to Lehar with *The Merry Widow*. If you call, you can ask him how they are coming.

Speaking of new G&S music, HLH Music Publications now has available nine new choral settings of G&S songs, "with piano accompaniment, all of medium difficulty. The lyrics for these octavos are also suitable for young choristers." I'm not sure what that says about the lyrics of other octavos, but be that as it may. In any event, J.E. Suben is the series editor, and Adam Paltrowitz is the arranger. The choral arrangements now available are

Though P'raps I May Incur Your Blame (Iolanthe / SATB / ED#SEC 118)
I'm Called Little Buttercup (SA / ED#SEC 119), (SSA / ED#SEC 120), (SSAA / ED#SEC 121)
I Am the Monarch of the Sea (SAB / ED#SEC 112), (SATB / ED#SEC 123)

Silvered is the Raven Hair (SA / ED#SEC 124), (SSA / ED#SEC 125)

Now to the Banquet We Press (SA / ED#SEC 126), (different SA / ED#SEC 127, available Spring 1997)

Available Spring, 1997 are:

Oh, Gentlemen, Listen (TTBB / ED#SEC 128), (SATB / ED#SEC 129)

Time Was, When Love and I (TTBB / ED#SEC 130), (SATB / ED#SEC 131)

My Name is John Wellington Wells (TTBB / ED#SEC 132)

There Grew a Little Flower (SSAA / ED#SEC 133), (SATB / ED#SEC 134)

When Maiden Loves (SSAA / ED#SEC 135)

Is Life a Boon? (TTBB / ED#SEC 136)

I Have a Song to Sing, O! (SATB / ED#SEC 137)

Prices range from \$1.25 to \$1.40, and are available from Musical Score Distributors; 625 Broadway, Suite 7A; New York, NY 10012 / (212) 475-0270, Fax (212) 473-7971.

The Hollywood Pinafore

A few issues ago, someone had asked what the plot of *Hollywood Pinafore* was. Daniel Llords did some checking, and says,

My records show--

Hollywood Pinafore

A modernized version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*; book and lyrics revised by George S. Kaufman. Sullivan score retained. Staged by George S. Kaufman. Included Anthony Tudor's ballet interlude "Success Story" with Viola Essen. Opened at the Alvin Theatre, May 31, 1945, and closed July 14, 1945--53 performances.

Brief review: For half of its length, "Hollywood Pinafore" successfully satirized the Gilbert/Sullivan classic. Joseph W. Porter (Victor Moore) serves as the head of a huge motion picture producing unit. Ralph Rackstraw (Gilbert Russell) represents a group of wage slaves, mostly writers, who wear prison garb as their work-a-day uniforms. Dick Live-Eye (William Gaxton--remember, he and the aforementioned Victor Moore had been the stars of such musicals as the Pulitzer Prize winning "Of Thee I Sing" -- score by the Gershwins -- and "Anything Goes" with the music of Cole Porter) with patch, is an actor's agent, on the prowl for his 10%. And the

Bumboat Woman becomes Louhedda Hobsons, Little Miss Buttercup, a Hollywood columnist (Shirley Booth, who went on to sing in "The Beautiful Sea" and "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" and the stage and film version of the dramatic "Come Back Little Sheba).

The second half of "Hollywood Pinafore" is devoted to an effort to recapture the spirit of the first half.

That's more than we knew before. Mr. Llords goes on to add,

Did you know that on May 24, 1945 (one week earlier), at the Broadway Theatre, a musical called ***Memphis Bound*** opened? [I didn't. Ed.] Book by Albert Barker and Sally Benton (remember her for the Junior Miss short stories in *The New Yorker Magazine*?), and music by Don Walker (who later went on to become a top orchestrator, if memory serves me right) and Clay Warnick.

A group of black singers and dancers leave on the showboat "Calliboga Queen", for a trip down the Mississippi for a performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in Memphis. However, the showboat gets stuck on a sandbar and the troupe has to give a performance of *Pinafore* to raise money to get her off. In Act I, Scene 4, the troupe gives most of the first half of *Pinafore*, and in Act II, the company gives most of the second half.

This show closed June 23, 1945, after a run of only 36 performances.

Now, this is serendipity: I don't know how this got on the kitchen table, but yesterday afternoon I found a letter from quizmaster Arthur Robinson, dated November of 1996. I have cleared my kitchen table since then, so, as I say, I don't know how it got on the table (thought I had, at least. In the letter was this description of *Hollywood Pinafore*:

Hollywood Pinafore, produced on Broadway in 1945 with book and lyrics by George S. Kaufman and (recycled) music by Sullivan, was both a satire of Hollywood (which Kaufman had previously satirized in *Once in a Lifetime*, one of his collaborations with Moss Hart) and a parody of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. All the music was from *Pinafore* (except for one number from *The Pirates of Penzance*). An abridged version of this musical was published in the Kaufman anthology *By George* (St. Martin's Press, 1979), edited by Donald Oliver.

The main characters are: **Joseph W. Porter**, head of a studio, "Pinafore Pictures"; **Miss Hebe**, his secretary; **Mike Corcoran**, a director; his daughter **Brenda Blossom**, a star; **Ralph Rackstraw**, a lowly writer; **Dick Live-Eye**, an agent; and **Louhedda Hobsons**, a columnist (an amalgam of Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper).

Hollywood Pinafore takes place at Pinafore pictures Studio, where everyone makes enormous salaries except Ralph Rackstraw, who is a writer and therefore ostracized. Even worse, Ralph convides, "I love--and love, alas above my salary." The object of his affections is Brenda Blossom, "for whom producers sigh and with each other vie to give her bigger billing." We also meet gossip columnist Louhedda Hopsons (known as "Little Butter-up"); the shady agent Dick Live-Eye, who has just sold the motion picture rights to the Bible (he wears a patch over one eye; "I received it from a client. 'Tis but ten percent of what *he* got"), and Mike Corcoran, a director who never (well, hardly ever) makes a flop or uses a big, big D (except in *Gone with the Wind*). Corcoran's daughter, Brenda Blossom (her name was Josephine, but she changed it), is sought in marriage by studio head Joe Porter, who enters accompanied by his sisters, cousins, and aunts (to all of whom he has given jobs in the studio). He sings of how he always takes the credit when a picture succeeds, "but when the preview's drear, I generally disappear, and seek the seclusion that a bathroom grants." Dick Live-Eye offers to be Porter's agent, generously offering to give him "ninety percent of everything you make."

Ralph meets Brenda and proclaims his love for her. They plan to elope secretly ("This very night most quietly, / With just the right publicity, / A wedding bell will sound its chimes, / We'll only tell *The New York Times*"). Act (ends with all rejoicing at the upcoming wedding--except Dick Live-Eye, who plans to break it up.

In Act II Dick puts his plan into effect, threatening Brenda that unless she marries Joe Porter, she will be exiled to the stage, where she will only make a thousand dollars a week, not get her picture in the magazines, and be forced to act. The star quails in horror at this prospect, but decides to go through with her elopement. Dick spills the beans to Porter, who catches the pair and has Ralph loaded with chains. But Louhedda makes a confession: She once made a mistake in her column, as a result of which Ralph and Porter were given each other's rightful jobs. Corcoran proposes to Louhedda, and Miss Hebe to Porter (who decided they'll have a triple wed-

ding but separate honeymoons), resulting in three loving pairs ("and I get ten percent!" declares the agent). The entire cast sings the finale, entitled "With apologies to Gilbert and Sullivan."

America's Funniest Gilbert and Sullivan "Getting Stuck"

As you already know, S/A Cole has some pretty strange ideas. This latest one comes from that remarkably trivial, and oddly entertaining program *America's Funniest Home Videos*. S/A Cole thought it would be fun to do something like that with MGS members' experiences with or memories of G&S. We can't very well use funny videos, but we sure can use funny *stories*. Those of us who have seen the *The Best of Gilbert and Sullivan* performances know that one of the highlights of their performance is the part where Geoffrey Shovelton tells about misadventures with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company (like the time in *Iolanthe* when the Peers went on one knee to Phyllis, and fell over like dominoes). Well, I bet we have had experiences as funny as that, so let's share them!

Now, those of us familiar with *America's Funniest Home Videos* know that they give pretty substantial prizes for the three best entries each week. Since the flood last year, we're kind of short of prizes, but we can try to come up with something useful for the best entries used in each *Nonsense* issue. I hope that won't be a deterrent.



To get things started, I thought we could do something with things "Getting Stuck". I remember having seen part of one of the productions of *Mikado* that the cast of *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie* gave, in

which Fran Allison, Beulah Witch and Mrs. Oglepuss are singing "Three Little Maids from School" in costume, and Beulah Witch's nose gets stuck in Mrs. Oglepuss's wig. Fran Allison sings blissfully away while Beulah Witch and Mrs. Oglepuss try to get untangled. You've probably seen things as funny as that.

As a matter of fact, speaking of getting stuck, my mother passed on a story one of her high school friends' husbands had about the time he appeared in *Pinafore*:

H.M.S. Pinafore was the operetta for the 1947 schedule at Fostoria High School my freshman year. These were big, expensive affairs in Fostoria -- their musicals, choral works, concert and marching bands historically were top-

notch and often won honors at Ohio State at the annual high school music contests.

As captain of the Pinafore, I needed a big, appropriate uniform, it came to pass when a Knight Templar of the local Masons volunteered his uniform -- a perfect fit with sword and long coat and epaulets and fancy fore-and-aft hat! [Or come to think of it, was it the Knights of Columbus?]

Opening night was exciting. Early on, as I started to sing "I am the captain," I was supposed to climb the rope ladder a few rungs, then climb down and finish the song among the sailors on deck.

As I started back down, still singing, the scabbard of the sword got stuck in the rope rigging of the ladder. Needless to say, I finished the song hung up on the ladder. A quick curtain was all it took for me and others to extricate myself.

What funny "getting stuck" stories do you have? Pass them on, and if they pass our panel of experts, we'll put them in the *Nonsense* (or if you have any other stories, that'll be okay: we'll start a new category). We may even be able to manage a prize. All they have to be is true and pleasantly funny. And if this is as far as the funny-story idea goes, at least we all had chuckle over this Captain Corcoran getting caught in his own rig.

So that's what we have so far. We could really use some articles (and if you would like some ideas to write on, I'd be happy to give you some. Say, whatever happened with that idea of coming up with G&S-related research paper topics for high school/college students, with tips on how to proceed with the research? We could use some of those, too.), so if you feel literarily inclined, or have an axe to grind or what-have-you, please let us hear from you.

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