

Newsletter at a Glance

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Greetings from the Society's President

by Bernie MacCabe

A significant portion of this issue is devoted to the Society's singing workshop, and the public concert that was the most visible product of the workshop. As many of you know, the Gilbert & Sullivan Society was established around 7 years ago. The concert is a milestone event for us. It marks our passage, in a modest but concrete way, from being a music appreciation association to being both that and a performing arts society. The concert was the last act – so to speak – of the singing workshop organized by the Society. Becoming a performing arts society has always been one of our goals. Our vision remains to bring a full-scale Gilbert & Sullivan to a local stage. Stay tuned for more!

Forthcoming Events

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society's

Dinner Concert



Concert programme
"Conjugally Matrimonified"
by the Umbrella Singers

On: Saturday 7th May 2011, at 19:00h
In: Lindenbergssaal,
Lindenberg 8, 4058 Kleinbasel
(near Rheingasse/Utengasse junction)
Tram & bus stops: Wettsteinplatz or Rheingasse

Price includes:	Cost per person:
• Welcome apéro-buffet	• CHF 70 (G&S Society members)
• 3-course meal (drinks not included)	• CHF 85 (non members)
• Concert	• CHF 40 (16y & under)

For reservations (before 2nd May) please email: events@savoyards.ch
Further details at: www.savoyards.ch



Annual Dinner Concert – 7th May

This year's programme follows the topical theme of the Royal Wedding and is entitled "Conjugally Matrimonified". The Umbrella Singers will present a selection of British music, spanning four centuries and three countries, which celebrates the twin themes of love and marriage. There will be a selection of traditional English, Irish and Scottish songs as well as solos and ensembles from works by Gilbert & Sullivan; which will include well-loved favourites and also some new numbers from The Mikado, The Gondoliers, Princess Ida & HMS Pinafore that the Umbrella Singers have not yet performed at other G&S events.

The Royal Wedding – 29th April

Royal Wedding Celebration



On: April 29th 2011
Open from 10h00 to 16h00
In: the Messe, Basel

Live screening of the marriage ceremony, plus musical entertainments, and refreshments
Organised by the Hon. British Consul,
A. Chalmers

Planned performance of British music by
the Umbrella Singers, sponsored by
the Gilbert & Sullivan Society

**COME AND JOIN THE
CELEBRATIONS!!**

Details will be posted at www.messe.ch and on our website (www.savoyards.ch) when available

Summer Event – 24th June

Further details to follow but please reserve the date of the 24th June in your diaries!

Reviews

Review of G&S Singing Workshop February 8-13th *by Corinna Balfour*

On a fine February evening some 20 singers gathered together at the Panto Keller for an "Ensemble Singing and Concert Performance Workshop". Preparations had started a couple of weeks previously when participants were sent the music and further instructions from Lisa Wingard and Barbara Laurie. For each rehearsal we started with a physical warm up, with exercises to get rid of daytime stiffness and warming up singing muscles, showing that singing is as much physical exercise as any sport.

Then we started learning the music, with Barbara taking the men and Lisa the ladies. Lisa led us ladies skilfully through the 9 choruses that had been chosen, most of which were completely new to me. I think we all discovered that we could do things we thought we couldn't, sing higher (or lower?) than before, or simply to sing again after a gap. The rehearsal schedule was meticulously planned and, it was intensive but always fun as well.



I've participated in similar projects before and it's always remarkable how quickly a group of singers who have not sung together before can unite after a few days and reach a standard at which they can perform in front of an audience, even if not everything is perfect. We even managed some expression, where Lisa told us to sing one chorus overly "sweetly" or to treat something as a "nonsense" song.

For me it was also something of a voyage of discovery as I got to know some of the less familiar G&S choruses and could better appreciate the wit in the words and the skill with which Sullivan wrote the music; not as easy to sing as it might first appear!

Many thanks to Lisa and Barbara for giving us this opportunity to learn more and improve our singing technique, for making sure that we had lots of fun, also for all their hard work not just during the sessions, but before and between – like the iceberg,

most of the work takes place where it's not so evident.



It all went very well at the concert; we enjoyed singing in front of a very appreciative audience.

Many thanks to Corinna for this review

Review of the Workshop Concert 13th February *by Bryan Stone*

The programme showed a sketch by Gilbert, of a sailor out on the yardarm singing to his 'light guitar'. How many recognized it? It was first the title picture of a 'Bab Ballad', 'Joe Golightly', the far-away prototype of Ralph in 'H.M.S.Pinafore'. What a happy inspiration to introduce our Workshop Concert!

Corinna has described the Workshop itself; this, then, was the result. No, there were many results; let's take them one at a time. First, there was the excitement of meeting in the Panto Theatre in Sperrstrasse. A great 'first-night audience' had turned out and many found familiar but long unseen friends. Clear, the G&S feeling sits deep in many of us. Then, with an introduction by Bernie, we were off. Tom gave a brief and often witty introduction to each piece. A first, surprising discipline: the 20 or more singers, all in black, looking and behaving like a chorus, which wasn't self-evident because some admitted it was the first time they'd ever done this.



Lisa Wingard struck up (I wanted to say, 'on the pianoforte', but it was an electronic instrument, hammered to good effect) and we were off, an interesting and challenging programme to amuse the most choosy Savoyard. It takes courage to start with 'The Grand Duke' which (come on, now!) nobody really

knows; then, even 'Welcome Gentry' from Ruddigore takes some learning, but really got into a swing; and the crowd scene of 'Here's a man of jollity' of Yeomen, seriously complex, worked well. By now we were tapping our feet and all cheerful, and a lovely ironic chorus from 'Sorcerer' led into a burst of whirling music with 'Cachucha': we would have danced if we could.

Our soloists followed, first, with a plaintive song, the haunting 'When Maiden loves' from 'Yeomen'; it's the moment when the theatre goes still, the curtain goes up and Phoebe sits along on a stage, spinning, dominated by the forbidding Tower. Thank you, Ann, for catching the mood perfectly.



'Prithee, pretty maiden', with Ann and David, comically romantic, and David's 'A more humane Mikado' expounded those obscure but telling punishments. Now came William Heckel, from Geneva, to fill our hall with a passionate 'Is there not one maiden breast?' from 'Pirates' and 'Pinafore' with Suzanne Büchler's liting and flirtatious 'I'm called little Buttercup'. Inevitably Charles Slovenski, also a guest from Geneva, stopped the show with his superb and distraught Nightmare song from 'Iolanthe', but it was well, as we had a break. A change in tradition gave us Suzanne again with Lloyd Webber and the 'Phantom', and 'Think of me', and then William with the all-time classic of 'Gondoliers', 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes'. Ann brought out the mischief of Yum-Yum in 'the sun who rays..', and a riotous romp, the mock



Italianate duet 'We're called Gondolieri', was rendered joyously by Charles and William. It was very popular!

Now the ensemble finished a delightful and

challenging programme with more 'sorcery', 'Ring forth ye bells', 'Hail Poetry' from Pirates (to remind us of Sullivan's hymn tunes), 'Hark the Hour of Ten', from Trial By Jury, and last of all another from the obscure recesses of Utopia Ltd, and who then expected an introduction from 'Rule Britannia'? Sullivan's light moment introduces a pseudo-patriotic song, the 'Little Group of Isles'. And so we cheered

and gradually dispersed, two joyous hours passed almost unperceived.

But there was more. The Concert showed what can be done in this environment; most singers surprised themselves as it was clear that we had come to enjoy them. The music was competently and clearly sung, the voices were surprisingly good. Some minor heresies of timing and pitch ironed themselves out quickly; the mood was consistently happy and the lesson was learned: It can be done, and it is good to do. And our audience cannot have left unmoved by the joyous swing of these musical and verbal treasures which are the 'Savoyard's' home ground.. But – the gay Sally Lunn and the strawberry jam awaited. From one who loved it: Thank you, Lisa and Barbara, and all who promoted, sponsored, published and cashed up (it must have been a success there too) and made it happen.

The Pirates of Penzance – The very model of a modern major general

by Bryan Stone

It was always supposed that the model of the Model was Sir Garnet Wolseley, whose fame in military exploit was already legendary; he had let the campaign in the Ashanti War of 1873, and would in 1885 be sent to Khar-toum, in the hope (sadly unfulfilled) of relieving General Gordon.

The 'Pirates' opened (to beat copyright poachers) in New York on New Year's Eve 1879, and in London at the Savoy in 1880. Wolseley was therefore a well-known contemporary figure, though already a lieutenant-General when 'Pirates' opened. He was however not the parody of an officer which Gilbert describes, whose 'knowledge... 'had only been brought down to the beginning of the century'.

Wolseley was author of a new book on field tactics, and even got a mention elsewhere by Gilbert, in 'Patience' in the glorious 'Heavy Dragoon song I described last time; but of course you knew that that was behind the line, 'The skill of Sir Garnet in thrashing a cannibal'. All very distasteful, the more so in 1916 when some of the Generals really were still in the last century, with little more than Sir Garnet's tac-



tics to help them. It is said that Wolseley loved this song and sang it at home as a joke against himself at private occasions. His guests would, however, forgive him; for 'Pirates' was a huge success, and always has been.

Sullivan felt that his 'Pirates' music was, with 'Yeomen', the nearest he would get, in his co-operation with Gilbert, to grand opera. Here he enjoyed his own music, which is remarkable because he wrote it in one of his worst crises. It was not his kidney stone, nor his gambling losses, which shook him, but the realisation on arriving in the USA for the opening, with Act II still to compose, that all his drafting of Act I, from which the orchestra parts must come before rehearsal, had been left in London. He set to, to re-compose from memory, and then compose Act II from scratch, but time was short; he finished the full score at 07.00 on Dec 28, and the Overture at 05.00 on Dec. 31, rehearsed all morning and then, as he wrote, 'more dead than alive', conducted the first night. It was however a triumph, and you will look in vain for signs of haste in such pieces as Mabel's 'Poor wand'ring one', a musical jewel, short but perfect, which was composed at the last minute in the USA. Bradley regards it as a parody of Gounod's waltz rhythms in popular opera, but in 'Pirates' there is no sense of that; it is Mabel's song, gentle and affectionate. Now, it did give a powerful triumphal outburst in the Overture composed as we saw in the nick of time.

But sometimes a tune seems uncommonly familiar ; and low and behold, the flamboyant Spanish rhythm of 'Dance a Cachucha', in 'Gondoliers', to which you must tap your feet, draws closely upon Sullivan's 'Mabel' variations in the overture of 'Pirates'.

But now to Major General Stanley. He tells us in one of the most challenging and fastest patter songs that he knows about everything, except, that is ... but we'll see.

It starts harmlessly enough, 'I know the Kings of England, and I quote the fights historical, from Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical'.

Marathon was in 490 BC and the Greeks beat the Persians; a 'marathon' is today's recall of the messenger who ran to Athens with the news, then collapsed and died. Waterloo was Napoleon's last stand in 1815. But how about 'About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot 'o news?' Know your Newtonian mathematics, and then straight back to Greece for 'With many cheerful facts about the square on the hypotenuse' which, as we all know, points us to Pythagoras. Then, still mathematical, 'I'm very good at integral and differential calculus', (I learned that once



too), and 'I know the scientific names of beings animalculous' (i.e. Latin names of microscopic animals) and so 'In short, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral, (where did I hear that before? Who remembers BBC Radio's Twenty Questions?), 'I am the very model of a modern Major-General!

'I know our mythic history, King Arthur's and Sir Caradoc's, I answer hard acrostics, I've a pretty taste for paradox'. Clever here is how Gilbert, with a possessive, weaves the celtic Caradoc into the rhyme and rhythm, but 'paradox' is something which today moves us differently. In Act II Frederic's misfortune of being born in a leap year is sung as 'A paradox, a paradox, a most ingenious paradox', a description we would scarcely think of.' I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of Heliogabalus, in conics I can floor peculiarities parabolous'...The fantasy is rising. Heliogabalus was, as Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor from 218 - 222 AD and completely dissolute. He was murdered by his guards. Gilbert likes the euphonious name enough to quote it also in Utopia Limited. The geometry and calculation of cones is a little head-scratching, but involves parabolic lines. Gilbert prefers his rhyme with Heliogabalus, and so do I. But then, 'And I can hum a fugue, of which I've heard the music's din afore.... And whistle all the airs from that infernal nonsense 'Pinafore'!

By now it's obvious that he is playing with us for these outlandish rhymes, and that's how the song is sung... 'din afore?' (pause, head-scratching, and then in a rush, 'and whistle all the airs...')

What's next? 'Then I can write a washing bill in Babylonian Cuneiform' (That was wedge-shaped writing of 500 BC in the Middle East) and, and... But the last verse shows that Gilbert really had something else to say; in the same style Stanley goes on to say that

with all his knowledge, his military training is useless. 'In short... 'When I have learned what progress has been made in modern gunnery, when I know more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery, in short when I've a smattering of elemental strategy, --- strategy, hmmm, ah! ---you'll say a better Major-General has never sat a gee!' How corny could Gilbert get? You know, I think there's more to this than meets the

eye, or ear. I have always thought that this diversion into laughter, coupled with the irreproachable Wolseley, were his alibi, while he castigated the Army, like the Public Schools, of concentrating on things that would in real life be of no value at all. Gilbert despised institutions, however worthy. This song is not as funny as it looks. But we still love it.

More next time!

Many thanks Bryan for your article



Puzzles

Quotations

Some of Gilbert's catch-phrases have become assimilated in our English language. Can you give the sources of these quotations?

- 1 "The flowers that bloom in the spring"
- 2 "A policeman's lot is not a happy one"
- 3 "To let the punishment fit the crime"
- 4 "Of that there is no possible doubt"
- 5 "Never mind the why and wherefore"
- 6 "I have a song to sing, O"
- 7 "I've got a little list"
- 8 "Life's perhaps the only riddle
That we shrink from giving up"
- 9 "Gold lace has charm for the fair"
- 10 "Virtue is triumphant only in theatrical performances"

Solution to the Quiz in the Autumn newsletter

by Val Walder

The following 'verse' combines lines from one of G&S's operettas.
Can you name it?

Let the merry cymbals sound
In aid - in aid of a deserving charity.
And some day we shall get our share -
Twenty love-sick maidens we.

I cannot tell what this love may be
Though everywhere true love I see.
True love must be without alloy
No idle thoughts of gain or joy.
That is the love that's pure,
Love that will aye endure.

The solution to this quiz is "Patience"

This month's song "There's a little group of isles beyond the wave"



Zara

There's a little group of isles beyond the wave —
So tiny, you might almost wonder where it is —
That nation is the bravest of the brave,
And cowards are the rarest of all rarities.
The proudest nations kneel at her command;
She terrifies all foreign-born rascallions;
And holds the peace of Europe in her hand
With half a score invincible battalions!.

All

Such, at least, is the tale
Which is born on the gale,
From the island which dwells in the sea.
Let us hope, for her sake
That she makes no mistake —
That she's all the professes to be!

King Paramount

Oh, may we copy all her maxims wise,
And imitate her virtues and her charities;
And may we, by degrees, acclimatize
Her Parliamentary peculiarities!
By doing so, we shall in course of time,
Regenerate completely our entire land —
Great Britain is the monarchy sublime,
To which some add (others do not) Ireland.

All

Such, at least, is the tale
Which is born on the gale,
From the island which dwells in the sea.
Let us hope, for her sake
That she makes no mistake —
That she's all the professes to be!
Such, at least, is the tale
Which is born on the gale!

Karaoke, sing along with "There's a little group of isles beyond the wave"

http://diamond.boisestate.edu/gas/utopia/webop/ul_midi/026.mid

This will work on some but not all computers depending on how your computer is set up.

The plot

King Paramount of the south seas island of Utopia decides that his people should adopt all English customs and institutions, but he goes a bit overboard and decrees that the kingdom and each of its inhabitants should become a "company limited" based on the English "companies act" of 1862. The king's daughter, Princess Zara, brings six "flowers of progress" from England to train the Utopian people in "English" customs. But the reforms are too successful, which upsets the judges of the Utopian Supreme Court, the "Public Exploder" and ultimately the entire populace, which revolts against them. Zara realises that an essential element has been forgotten, namely "government by party". Introduce that and the result would be "general and unexampled prosperity".

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Cultural Classifieds- members

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Giant Crossword Quiz

Transacrostic: Write the answers to the clues in the diagram on this page. The letters of the first column, when read downwards will spell the name of a writer and the title of one of his works.

Clues

- A Sudden puff of air (5)
- B Coy (3)
- C Blunder (5)
- D Tavern (3)
- E Plunder (4)
- F Prickly seed-case (3)
- G Officer of royal household (7)
- H To value (4)
- I Famous Tom (5)
- J Excessively (3)
- K Lofty (4)
- L Locomotive (6)
- M Large lizard (6)
- N Extreme ring of target (5)
- O Falls (7)
- P Goddess of hunting (5)
- Q Severe trial (6)
- R Meadow (3)
- S Badly (3)
- T Equivalent (5)
- U Rustic (5)
- V Scatter seed (3)

A	21	78	11	61	52		
B	5	56	39				
C	77	89	59	62	22		
D	17	70	46				
E	34	48	92	79			
F	71	13	65				
G	68	42	97	23	30	10	93
H	37	57	15	98			
I	73	16	43	67	27		
J	3	81	38				
K	49	64	19	2			
L	44	83	7	76	54	31	
M	86	12	94	24	47	60	
N	1	33	25	45	91		
O	100	4	63	32	74	90	53
P	60	66	50	18	6		
Q	26	36	55	85	69	95	
R	58	99	35				
S	20	8	41				
T	28	96	72	40	88		
U	84	87	75	29	51		
V	14	9	82				

Now transfer all the letters from above to the diagram below, and an excerpt from the work will appear. The words are separated by the black squares.

1N	2K		3J	4O	5B		6P		7L	8S	9V	10G
11A	12M	13F	14V		15H	16I	17D	18P	19K		20S	
21A	22C	23G	24M		25H	26Q		27I	28T		29U	
30G	31L	32O	33N	34E	35R	36Q		37H	38J	39B	40T	41S
	42G	43I	44L	45N	46D		47M	48E		49K	50P	51U
52A		53O	54L	55Q		56B	57H	58R	59C		60M	61A
62C	63O	64K	65F		66P		67I	68G	69Q	70D		71F
72T	73I		74O		75U	76L	77C	78A	79E		80P	81J
82V	83L		84U	85Q	86M	87U	88T	89C	90O		91N	92E
93G	94M	95Q		96T	97G	98H	99R	100O				