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Gashage Sullivan Boys and Girls



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The Gilbert and Sullivan Puzzler No. 36

By Don Devine

In the table below, there is one line, from song or dialog, from each of Gilbert and Sullivan's 13 operettas. Your challenge is to identify the operetta and the speaker or singer. The answers are near the back page. Score 2 points for each operetta correctly identified plus 3 points for each speaker or singer identified. Maximum score is 65.

The Line	The Operetta	The Speaker or Singer
I behaved like a regular cad		
Facts astronomical, solemn or comical		
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor		
You told me you were fair as gold		
Something poetic lurks, even in colocynth and calomel		
I have no reason to suppose that I am more curious than other people		
The narrow-minded pedant still believes that two and two make four!		
To lay aloft in a howling breeze, may tickle a landsman's taste		
and a pound of snuff for the pretty little girl on the hill		
To thy fond care I do commend thy sister		
Consider his extreme youth, and forgive him.		
Our duty is to spy on all our King's illicities		
Soon to be for aye united, till divorce or death shall part them		



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FUMGASS

Friends of the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society

FUMGASS are the supporters, friends and admirers of the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society (UMGASS).

Our functions include:

- providing financial support for UMGASS
- providing scholarships to deserving student members of the productions
- hosting an afterglow party for our members, cast and crew one evening during each production
- maintaining the Cozy Corner, at which we provide information and memorabilia for sale
- publishing the GASBAG

Benefits of membership include:

- high priority in ticket selection (second only to members of the cast)
- subscription to the GASBAG
- congregating occasionally with other FUMGASS members
- personal satisfaction of encouraging the performing arts

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or donate online via credit card or PayPal at https://www.umgass.org/fumgass. Questions or concerns about your membership status or benefits can be directed to the Keeper of the Rolls at goldberg@wccnet.edu.

UMGASS

University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society

The University of Michigan Gilbert & Sullivan Society (UMGASS) was founded in 1947 and is the oldest student-run society nationwide dedicated to performing the operettas of Sir William Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Each year they bring together students and community members for two fully staged productions of Gilbert & Sullivan operettas, which are performed with orchestra at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre in downtown Ann Arbor. The quality of their productions sets a high standard for community G&S companies, and their performances, particularly of the lesser-known works of the canon, are well regarded around the country and the world.

UMGASS are proud to be a great place for future performing arts professionals as well as a creative outlet for students, professors, and community members of all ages looking to blow off steam and have a good time participating in a great show!

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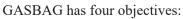
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GASBAG

Gilbert And Sullivan Boys And Girls

GASBAG is the FUMGASS newsletter. It is published three to five times a year. Each issue is mailed to about 400 members of FUMGASS and other G&S societies who exchange newsletters with us. Copies are also distributed to UMGASS members and are available to interested attendees at UMGASS performances. Our subscribers reside in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Italy and Japan.



- Act as an official record of UMGASS activities
- Entertain Savoyards
- Publish scholarly articles on G&S
 - Provide general information on G&S societies elsewhere







Next UMGASS Productions



H.M.S. Pinafore

Performances: December 2 - 5, 2021

A man-o-war riding at anchor
Finds its ranks are all rankled with rancor
When the caste system reels
Until a woman reveals
A secret that gnawed like a canker.

- Kevin Wachs





The Pirates of Penzance

Production staff petitions due by October 1, 2021 Performances: April 7 - 10, 2022

For love of their monarch Britannic,
While nervous police nearly panic,
Twenty chancery wards
Wed piratical lords,
And a five year old thief oceanic.
- Kevin Wachs





Spread the word about UMGASS!

Do you know any incoming University of Michigan students or anyone applying to U-M? Do they have skills in graphic design, accounting, or marketing? Do they like hammering or painting or singing or playing in orchestras or watching operettas?

www.umgass.org



The Activity Page

Patience, or Bunthorne's Bride



For children who are up in dates, and floor you with 'em flat

Patience opened 140 years ago, in 1881. What else happened in 1881?

- The Savoy Theatre was opened by Richard <u>D</u>'Oyly Carte. <u>I</u>t was the world's first public building to be fully lit by electricity.
- James A. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur both became President of the United States.
- Spelman College and the Tuskegee Institute were opened.
- The American Red Cross was established by Clara Barton.
- The Adventures of Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi was published.
- The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral happened in Tombstone, Arizona.
- ➡ Kinshasa (the capital of the modern-day Democratic Republic of the Congo) was founded as Léopoldville.
- 🗫 Composer Béla Bartók was born.
- Artist Pablo Picasso was born.
- Microbiologist Alexander Fleming was born.
- writer P.G. Wodehouse was born.

Arrange the underlined letters to answer this question:

What is Patience's job in Patience?

Letters

Dear FUMGASS Members,

By now, many of you may have seen the excellent productions *Cox & Box* and *Trial By Jury* this spring. The UMGASS board rose to the dual challenge of COVID isolation and the steep learning curve of producing their first ever virtual show. We certainly hope you enjoyed the productions! The feedback we've received has been very positive. Marc Shepherd, a former UMGASS and FUMGASS president who reviewed shows for the GASBAG, and current chairman of the Savoynet Performing Group was extremely complimentary. You can read his comments in this issue. Other exalted personages who watched the show were equally enthused. And the cast can't wait to do it again!

Though ticket sales were respectable, they did not cover all expenses. We knew the spring shows would be a grand experiment in digital productions, and FUMGASS was pleased to cover the balance. The consensus of our audience is they want more. We hope to add virtual capability to future shows.

In other news, Tracy Theatre Originals, a company from which we have rented costumes for many years, has closed up shop. We were offered the opportunity to purchase costumes from their collection. Ann Carnaby, the owner, was extremely generous in what she provided. The final shipment included 33 large garbage bags, 21 large plastic bins, and two wicker hampers from the D'Oyly Carte Company in London. Because these costumes are well made and in a variety of sizes, we have dramatically increased our costume stock. FUMGASS has supported the purchase with an earlier donation earmarked for costumes and is funding a climate-controlled storage unit, shelving, racks, bins and hangers. In addition, Ann sent vocal and orchestral scores from the Tracy Music Library and other ephemera which we are only now cataloguing.

Thank you for all you do!

Brynn Raupagh FUMGASS President

Electronic GASBAG

Are you a subscriber to the print version of GASBAG? Did you know that you can receive GASBAG by email? With the PDF version you can:

- receive GASBAG more quickly
- see GASBAG images in color
- click directly on links rather than typing URLs into your browser
- save FUMGASS money on printing and shipping costs
- find hidden messages

On the other hand, the digital GASBAG is harder to wear as a hat. If you'd like to make the change from print delivery to email delivery, please contact the Keeper of the Rolls, David Goldberg, at goldberg@wccnet.edu.



Features

A Costuming Coup or, Your FUMGASS Dollars at Work! By Mitch Gillett

The 2020 - 2021 pandemic season was bad for everyone. Among the hard hit were the arts, and particularly live theatre of every kind.

Most of you, dear readers, already know this as UMGASS had to cancel not only its Spring and Fall 2020 shows, but its live Spring 2021 show (albeit, producing an incredible online production of *Cox & Box / Trial By Jury*, which has received rave reviews from across the country), and it didn't just stop UMGASS, but every G&S company across the globe had to take an unexpected pause in their production schedule.

So, sort of like the domino effect, if nobody's producing theatre (particularly G&S), then no one is buying makeup or renting costumes and wigs. Costume houses have to keep huge amounts of stock costumes and costume pieces stored on site or in warehouses and have to pay rent on these buildings. Many costume houses don't have large reserves of cash, and this has caused several to close their doors.

Sadly, one of them is Tracy Theatre Originals (Originally, Tracy Music Library), a Boston rental library of sacred and secular music which had been in business since the 1890s, and supplied many of the special costumes and uniforms for UMGASS shows.

Originally founded by George Lowell Tracy, a musician and composer by trade, he partnered with Gilbert and Sullivan to be the sole "Authorized" supplier of parts and vocal scores for the U. S. market in the late 1890s. Since Gilbert and Sullivan, as a U.S. judge once said, "had no rights a natural born American had to respect," there was no way to copyright their material, but the next best thing was to at least profit off of the sale (and eventual rental) of officially sanctioned versions of the show, with the vocal scores arranged by George Lowell Tracy.

In the 1920s, the company decided to add costumes and scenery to their rental stock and continued through three more owners over the next 100 years. The company rented orchestra parts, vocal scores, separate chorus part books and costumes for most of the G&S canon. The company promoted itself as a national educational theatre supplier of "show packages" of music, costumes & scenery, and added Broadway shows to its inventory in the 1940s and 50s. I remember the Tracy vocal scores that were used for the Interlochen Operetta workshop in the 1970s and 80s.

In 1981, Ann Carnaby took over as the fourth owner, and decided to start phasing out the music rental part of the business, as the paper scores were not in good condition, having suffered many erasures of pencil notes over the years. The advent of readily available copy machines quickly made the music rental business redundant, and the adventurous American market preferred to choreograph their own productions rather than rent the "guides" created by Tracy to mimic original London choreography.



Hamper of D'Oyly Carte costumes (photo credit: Marilyn Gouin)



Costumes (photo credit: Marilyn Gouin)

Carnaby and her husband, a Londoner, were frequent visitors "across the pond" to visit his family and enjoy West End offerings. They became friendly with the front of house manager of the Savoy Theatre, Mr. Albert Truelove, and were greatly saddened to hear from him of the closing of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in the early 1980s. They were able to use this connection to acquire sets of authentic D'Oyly Carte costume pieces for several of the operas. For almost 40 years they continued to upgrade their stock, boosting their Broadway and G&S selections and generally being the goto costume house for G&S companies and student groups around the country. In the 2000s, Ann began a close relationship with UMGASS's Marilyn Gouin, the curator of the costume stock for the society. This

relationship allowed for special costume work when UMGASS rented their G&S show stock.

That brings the moving hand of time back to the pandemic present, and one of those costume houses hit hard and force to close for good is Tracy Costumes. The pandemic was the final straw, although Carnaby had been considering retiring

for several years. The puzzle then was how to deal with a collection of approximately 50,000 garments (including costumes, accessories and machinery) in such a way that the garments could continue to "perform" on stage.

Because Carnaby had a good relationship with UMGASS and Marilyn Gouin, she approached Marilyn with an offer to sell us complete sets of costumes for certain shows and throw in costume pieces and uniforms for others, particularly the Yeomen uniforms for The Yeomen of the Guard. Marilyn approached FUMGASS President Brynn Raupagh and UMGASS Staff Advisor Lori Gould, and they in turn conferred with FUMGASS Treasurer Ali Roselle. It was decided that there were funds

> earmarked for costumes and additional funds were allotted to cover the balance and the shipping. Marilyn negotiated for costume sets for *Iolanthe*, Yeomen, Patience (mostly uniforms), Pinafore, and Pirates. FUMGASS president Brynn Raupagh has calculated that it would only take three shows' worth of rental savings to break even with the purchase of the new stock.



Lori and Brynn unpacking costumes (photo credit: Marilyn Gouin)

The costumes arrived on May 17, 2021 and went into the costume storage unit. It consists of twenty-one large plastic totes, thirty-three large contractors' bags, and two original D'Oyly Carte Opera Co. wicker costume hampers. On May 23, Brynn, Lori, Marilyn and several others began initial unpacking and it was found that there are *Mikado* and *Princess Ida* costume pieces included in the purchase, along with several opera vocal scores thrown in.

In the costumes for *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Marilyn and Lori made an incredible discovery. They unpacked a greenish long vest, and looking at the tag, they discovered it was an original D'Oyly Carte Opera costume piece, and to top it all off, it had been worn (noted on the label in ink) by their lead comedian John Reed. UMGASS now gets to be the guardian of this piece of G&S history. As the garments are unpacked and inventoried, we will be doing further research into the history of the pieces.

Your donations have made this, and other capital upgrades for the society, happen. This project by Marilyn, Brynn, Lori, and Ali shows what a great team your FUMGASS board can field.

Enjoy some of these photos of the costumes we bought: some unpacked, and some that may yet be unpacked in the next sessions.



Clockwise from left: Vest from Tracy collection; John Reed wearing the vest as Jack Point in a D'Oyly Carte production of THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD; close-up view of the label with Reed's name written in (costume photos credit: Marilyn Gouin; John Reed photo from The Gilbert and Sullivan Archive)



IOLANTHE costumes purchased by UMGASS from the Tracy Costumes collection (photo credit: Marilyn Gouin)

On The Origins Of Fallen Fairles

By Natan Zamansky

W.S. Gilbert's play *The Wicked World* premiered in January of 1873. The story is set in Fairyland, among a cohort of fairies who are unfamiliar with the concept of love. As they are given to understand that love is one of the primary differences between fairies and mortals, they find a way, through a quirk of fairy law, to summon two mortals to Fairyland, to see if they can figure out what this "love" is. This goes about as well as you might expect.

One sees immediate similarities to several opera libretti Gilbert was to later write: The clear-cut Gilbertian "invasion plot" (to borrow a term from Jane Stedman) as exemplified in *Princess Ida*, the fairyland setting of *Iolanthe*, and the same basic central premise of *Patience*.

As far as my research has taken me, the idea of an opera based on *The Wicked World* was first put to paper in 1884, and not by Gilbert himself. *Princess Ida* had opened in early January, and by March it was clear that it was not doing as well as anyone involved had hoped. Richard D'Oyly Carte invoked the clause in his contract with Gilbert and Sullivan allowing him to request a new opera from them at six month's notice, and Gilbert got to work coming up with a plot. He first pitched to Sullivan a version of the infamous "lozenge plot," which Sullivan had apparently rejected at least once before, and Sullivan responded with his equally infamous letter of April 1st, 1884.

"I will be quite frank," Sullivan begins. "With *Princess Ida* I have come to the end of my tether -- the end of my capability in that class of piece." This was the same letter in which he requested from Gilbert "a story of human interest and probability." In another letter a few days later, Sullivan elaborated on his concern that the lozenge plot would be too similar to *The Sorcerer*, and suggested "A piece of the character and treatment of *Pygmalion And Galatea*, *The Wicked World*, or even of a lighter stamp, I feel I could do with interest and confidence of success."

It may seem odd that Sullivan would suggest *The* Wicked World as the sort of thing he'd be interested in, when in the very same letter he expressed concern over Gilbert and Sullivan repeating themselves. After all, The Wicked World shares clear similarities with the last three operas the duo had worked on. Of course, Sullivan was not actually suggesting a direct adaptation of *The Wicked World*, but merely something in that style. The Wicked World treats its subject somewhat more seriously and cynically than any opera Gilbert and Sullivan had written up to that point. Still, Sullivan's objections may seem somewhat arbitrary, and perhaps they were. It has often been assumed that by "a story of human interest and probability," Sullivan meant a story with a realistic setting, and events that could plausibly happen. But his suggestion of Pygmalion And Galatea and The Wicked World as examples of ideas he could work with suggests he was more interested in the tone of the piece than the precise subject matter.

But we know how this all turned out. Gilbert eventually came up with a plot that was acceptable to Sullivan, and so *The Mikado* was born. The idea of an opera based on *The Wicked World* would not reemerge in any significant capacity until a little over a decade later.

I will not give a detailed account of what happened in the intervening decade. Much has been written about that. Suffice it to say that Gilbert and Sullivan's artistic tensions were dwarfed by the financial tensions between Gilbert and D'Oyly Carte. The team split up after an argument over the cost of a carpet during the production of *The Gondoliers*. Sullivan went with D'Oyly Carte to write his grand opera *Ivanhoe*, and then stayed on retainer at the Savoy as D'Oyly Carte attempted to pair him with a variety of librettists, to disappointing results. Gilbert struck out on his own, and enjoyed a bit of success with *The Mountebanks*, but it was clear to all involved

and all observing that, as good as Gilbert XOR Sullivan might be, Gilbert and Sullivan were greater than the sum of their parts. They got back together for Utopia (Limited) and The Grand Duke, and common knowledge has it that it was the failure of the latter

EDITOR'S NOTE: XOR (exclusive or) is "a Boolean operator working on two variables that has the value of 1 if one but not both of the variables has a value of 1." In this context, "Gilbert XOR Sullivan" refers to Gilbert and Sullivan each working independently of the other.

(it ran for only 123 performances, the shortest initial run of any G&S opera except *Thespis*) that caused the partnership to shatter for good.

In April of 1897, nearly a year after *The Grand* Duke had closed, Gilbert wrote to Helen Carte, alluding to a previous correspondence in which he suggested *The Wicked World* as the basis for an opera. He also mentioned that Richard D'Oyly Carte had expressed an objection to "the chorus being composed entirely of ladies." It is suggested that Carte's objection had something to do with the musical construction of the piece, given that Gilbert suggests that it should be for the composer to decide whether it would present an insuperable difficulty. But in this letter, Gilbert also suggested an alternate treatment of the plot that would allow for the inclusion of a male chorus, "by making the fairies syrens [sic] on a rock in the Mediterranean... A shipful of classical warriors -- Ulysses and his companions, say -- are lured to the island by their songs, and as a consequence, the syrens, while preaching the horrors of love, fall hopelessly in love with the newcomers." In some ways, Gilbert's proposed alternate plot presents some advantages to The Wicked World, but evidently he decided to go back to the original plot.

In a 1909 interview given a week before *Fallen Fairies* opened, Gilbert revealed that he had offered the libretto to seven different composers, six of whom had turned it down. The interview mentions Sullivan, Edward Elgar, Alexander Mackenzie, Jules Massenet, André Messager, Liza Lehmann, and finally Edward German, who ultimately set it.

It seems reasonable to assume that Gilbert

offered the libretto to Sullivan first. This suggests two curiosities. The first, that Gilbert was willing to jump right back into collaborating with both Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte so soon after the dismal failure of *The Grand Duke*. The second, that Sullivan, years after explicitly suggesting *The Wicked World* as an example of the sort of thing he'd like to work on, turned down that exact project. Curiosities these are, but perhaps not baffling mysteries. After all, an entire decade had elapsed, and a lot had changed in the interim. (And I do think we ought to at least

consider the possibility that Sullivan's refusal may have been partially prompted by the same thing that caused him to reject His Excellency a few years earlier: Gilbert's insistence on including a part for Nancy McIntosh.) In any event, the aforementioned interview suggests that Sullivan took issue with the lack of male chorus, and so did every other composer Gilbert approached, save Elgar, "who offered no reason for his refusal."



Nancy McIntosh as Selene (from Gilbert and Sullivan Archive)

It may not be entirely clear why the lack of a male chorus should present such difficulty for composers. After all, many of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas contain extended scenes with only a women's chorus present. Alexander Mackenzie offered an account of the meeting he had with Gilbert in which he said the following:

"He asked me whether an opera without a male chorus would have any chance of success, my affirmative answer being based on the fact that I had just finished one on these very lines. I was, however, careful to point out that the possibility depended on a sufficiency of principal male characters to supply the missing links and preserve the balance of the vocal numbers, and gladly agreed to consider one of his early plays which, on subsequent consideration, I ventured to find unsuitable to the purpose."

The opera Mackenzie alludes to which he had "just finished," was presumably *The Cricket On The Hearth*, the score to which was first published in 1901, and not only lacks a male chorus, but contains precious few vocal parts written in the bass clef. If Gilbert was indeed having trouble getting a composer to set a libretto with no male chorus, it makes sense that he would seek out a composer who had done just that. (Why Gilbert would not simply use the alternate plot he had proposed to Helen Carte years earlier is not clear.) Mackenzie's *Cricket On The Hearth*, however, while it does lack a male chorus, contains a higher proportion of male principal characters, and the chorus of women is less prominent throughout the work than Gilbert's proposed plot would demand.

Meanwhile, art song composer Liza Lehmann was making her first foray into the theater. In 1904, she composed music for a farce called *Sergeant Brue*, but was hamstrung by having to compose for a cast who couldn't sing, and producers who pressured her to write more "commonplace" music than was her wont, and who subsequently added numbers by other composers anyway. Lehmann's second theatrical project, *The Vicar Of Wakefield* in 1906, was a happier experience, and Lehmann's music met with substantial acclaim from many,

including Gilbert, who, according to Lehmann: "pronounced the music 'libretto-proof'... He subsequently most kindly offered me a libretto of his own. Although I fully appreciated the honour... I feared the particular subject that he offered was not within my range." She makes no mention of the makeup of the chorus, and places the date of this correspondence no earlier than 1906, and thus presumably after Gilbert had approached Mackenzie.

In Brian Rees's biography of Edward German, he suggests that Massenet's reason for his refusal was that he had recently done *Cendrillon* (which premiered in 1899) and did not want to do two fairy operas so close to

each other. As there is no citation, this seems to be pure speculation on Rees's part.

In December of 1908, Gilbert wrote to Edward German. German had previously finished Sullivan's final opera, *The Emerald Isle*, with a libretto by Basil Hood, and D'Oyly Carte immediately hired German and Hood back for two more operas, *Merrie England* and *A Princess Of Kensington*. In 1907, he had *Tom Jones*, the music of which was enthusiastically received. Consensus seemed to be that German's music was quite as good as Sullivan's, but also distinctive from Sullivan's, not an imitation.

In Gilbert's initial letter to German, he mentioned "the peculiarity... that the chorus must all be ladies." Evidently it was of some serious concern to at least some of the previous composers. But German, in a letter to his sister Rachel, suggests that there may have been another and a simpler reason for so many composers turning the project down: The plot just didn't seem very good. German wrote: "I don't think there is much 'run' in the thing: but I shall of course go through with it, if only for the adventure."

In an anticlimactic end for the saga, *Fallen Fairies* received mixed reviews. Few raves, few pans, a lot of equivocation. It ran for a measly fifty

performances. As for the backstage issues which plagued that production, that's a story for another time.

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Gilbert discussing FALLEN FAIRIES with Workman and German (from Gilbert and Sullivan Archive)

And Now for the Gay Sally Lunn! by Sarah McNitt

On a trip to England in 2015, my husband and I visited Sally Lunn's Historic Eating House. The building is one of the oldest houses in Bath and claims to be the original home of the Sally Lunn bun, which is a name you may recognize from *The Sorcerer*:

Now to the banquet we press; Now for the eggs and the ham; Now for the mustard and cress, Now for the strawberry jam! Now for the tea of our host, Now for the rollicking bun, Now for the muffin and toast, And now for the gay Sally Lunn!

The buns served in Bath are something like a cross between a large hamburger bun and an enormous English muffin. The bread's flavor is simple, similar to a brioche, so it can be dressed with savory or sweet toppings or simply toasted and buttered.

There is another baked good called Sally Lunn (or sometimes Solimemne) which is also compared



Photo from yojimbo809 on Flickr

to a brioche but is baked in a cake pan and sliced, rather than formed into individual buns. Most of the nineteenth century recipes that I have found refer to this baking method instead, so that may be the Sally Lunn Gilbert was picturing when he wrote the lines.

If you are an adventurous sort, you can attempt this rather imprecise Sally Lunn recipe from 1860, seventeen years before *The Sorcerer* was first performed:

A Solimemne or Sally Lunn

Recipe from Modern Cookery, for Private Families: Reduced to a System of Easy Practice (1860) by Eliza Acton

From three-quarters of a pound of flour take three ounces for the leaven, and make it into a lithe paste with half an ounce of solid, well-washed yeast [...], mixed with two or three tablespoonsful of just warm cream, or new milk; throw a cloth over and leave it near the fire to rise for about half an hour, or until it is twice its original size. In the interim make a hollow in the centre of the remainder of the flour, and put into it a quarter of an ounce of fine salt, one ounce of pounded sugar, the yolks of four fresh eggs, four ounces of lukewarm butter, and a couple of tablespoonsful of cream, also warm. Mix the whole gently and carefully into a perfectly smooth paste, flatten it with the hand upon the dresser, spread the leaven over it, and blend them thoroughly with light kneading, as directed for brioche paste [...]. The whole should of the same colour throughout.

Next, put it into a small, well-buttered copper stewpan, or plain cake-mould, and let it remain in a moderately warm place until it has risen, like the leaven, to double its original size; then with a paste-brush or feather wash the top with beaten egg, and without disturbing it, set it into a tolerably quick oven, and bake it nearly or quite an hour; but do not allow it to be too deeply coloured. Turn it from the mould, cut it once or twice asunder, and pour over the slices plenty of good butter, just dissolved in a small saucepan; put the cake together again and serve it immediately. [...] It will be many hours rising; sometimes as many as six or eight. If wanted for breakfast it should be made over night.

Flour 3/4 lb.; yeast, 1/2 oz.; little cream; salt, 1/4 oz.; sugar, 1 oz.; yolks of eggs, 4; butter, 4 oz.; to rise from 6 to 8 hours. Baked 1 hour.

An Imagined Correspondence

By an unknown author

David Goldberg brings this piece from a 1990s participant in a French horn discussion group. If you can source it, please let us know!

Hampstead, London. March 3, 1875

Dear Mr. Wagner,

As you know I often collaborate with Arthur Sullivan in the writing of comic operas which have been performed with some success in England in recent years. Unfortunately, Sullivan is a man of uncertain temperament, and has refused to write the score of my next opera on the grounds that he is going to be engaged for the next 3 years on a vast oratorio (he does have ambitions to make a name in serious music). I am therefore enquiring if you would like to undertake the task? I enclose a copy of the first draft.

As you will see, the plot concerns a group of pirates at Penzance, a fishing port in Cornwall, England, one of whose number, named Frederic, leaves them and falls in love with the beautiful daughter of a majorgeneral. Various complications ensue, which you will see from the manuscript, but in the end all are reunited and everything ends happily. I particularly draw your attention to the chorus of comic policemen in the second half of the piece, which should give great opportunities for the exercise of your musical genius, knowing your talent and skill in choral work.

Perhaps you would be kind enough to read the draft and give me your opinion. I might add I am a great fan of your work. I often hum 'The Ride of the Valkyries' in the bath.

Yours sincerely, W.S. Gilbert.

Bayreuth, March 19, 1875

Dear Mr. Gilbert.

I am thanking you for your letter and the manuscript which I enjoyed very much. My wife Cosima says I have not laughed so much since her father died. Yes, I believe I could undertake the task of writing a score but first let me offer some suggestions.

I take it that Frederic, the central figure, represents the eternal Wanderer or Vogelgeist and that the daughters of the Major General are Sea Maidens or Wasserleitung. This I shall explain with a short song by Frederic in Act One, 'Himmel, Wo Ist Mein Doppelganger?' This will take up most of Act One, about three-quarters of an hour, and then the Wasserleitung appear and render a spirited chorus of 'Du Bist Ein Klott'. But do not fear - I shall not neglect the humour in this part. As Frederic is singing, an old woman (Mathilde) appears in the background and tries to climb up the cliff. We shall have much mirth watching her pitiful efforts to climb the rocks and then just when we think she has succeeded she falls off the top and is killed! When I read this idea to Cosima she could not stop laughing. Now for the pirates. I think it would

be better if they were all dwarfs (Nibelungen), symbolising the underworld. They should wear gnome's hats and have long beards down to their waists as then the audience will know they are dwarfs. They will naturally sing a merry chorus every time they appear:

Ho ho ho ho ho ho! Curses on everybody. Ho ho ho ho ho ho! Curses on everybody.

(I have given the English version as the German is a little difficulty.)

And so we come to the policemen. I am afraid that here, Mr. Gilbert, I am finding myself in slight disagreement with you. It is most important that these jovial fellows have a mirth-making chorus but I find your version rather sad. It is not very merry, is it not, to suggest the life of a policeman is not a happy one? I would suggest instead a new chorus for the police, viz: 'Leb' wohl, leb' wohl, hier ist das Krankenhaus.'

This will make much mirth. However, the climax of the opera, which is the clash between the pirates and the policemen, is a magnificent piece of writing, symbolising the eternal struggle between the forces of Evil Dominant, represented by the pirates, and Right Triumphant, represented by the police. Would it not, incidentally, be better if the police were giants? I am merely making the suggestion. But let us not be too serious, Mr Gilbert. I would suggest that the pirates gain their victory over the police by putting out their eyes with tiny arrows! I can almost see you laughing at this idea.

Thus it appears that Evil has triumphed, but then the Gods cause an earthquake in which all the dwarfs are killed (that is because being so small they slip down the cracks in the earth - I have thought out the details you see) and the opera ends with Frederic and the Wasserleitung singing 'Donner Und Blitzen, Mein Vater Ist Ein Feuerwerk' while the maiden's father, the Major-General, commits self-immolation (Purification by Fire.) This I think will be a most amusing opera and if you like I will add some jokes to the libretto.

With best wishes. Yours sincerely, R. Wagner



Hampstead, Friday

My Dear Sullivan,

Please forgive me for those harsh words the other night. For various reasons which I will not go into, I implore you to return to our partnership on any terms you want to lay down.

Yours sincerely, W.S.Gilbert

Reviews

Cox & Box and Trial by Jury by Marc Shepherd



Clockwise from top left: Box (Chazmond Peacock), Cox (Makoto Takata), Bouncer (Jeremy Williams)

The global coronavirus pandemic has spawned many new flavors of the performing arts. Lyric Opera of Chicago performed an abridged production of Wagner's *Ring* in a parking garage. San Francisco Opera staged a drive-in production of *The Barber of Seville*.

Online opera is harder to pull off: how do you synchronize the artists, when they are working in their homes, maybe even on different continents? The accompaniment is recorded first. Then, each singer records her role separately, making a smartphone video while listening to the piano through an earpiece. Finally, the editing team stitches these performances together into – we hope! – a pleasing whole.

No one will suggest that pandemic opera replace traditional staging. But might we have learned new ways to make art together that will endure, side by side, with the old? Or is pandemic opera an unwanted substitute

that will disappear once we no longer need it? UMGASS's recent online double-bill of *Cox and Box* and *Trial by Jury* might suggest some answers.

There is much that you lose in pandemic video. Instead of a set, you get performers' living rooms. Costumes are not centrally coordinated. Actors emote and react without seeing anyone else's performance. The piano is prerecorded, so a conductor cannot make live adjustments; tempo changes within a number are hard to execute well.

There is no camera operator, so performers need to stay within a static window. Let us say a prop needs to pass from one character to another. Both actors need to acquire similar-looking versions of the same object. X then passes it offscreen right, while Y grasps her copy from offscreen left.



TRIAL By JURY: The Plaintiff (Imani Mchunu) throws her bouquet at The Defendant (Jon Roselle)

Balancing those losses, what can be gained? For one thing, you get an international all-star cast. Just to give a few examples: Rachel Middle (Counsel in *Trial*) is a professional actress, singer, and director, living in London. She has never sung with UMGASS before, and were it not for the pandemic, probably never would. Jon Roselle (Defendant) is a former UMGASS member now living in Pleasantville, New York. Chazmond Peacock (Box) is a tenor based in Brooklyn, NY, who has worked at everything from amateur G&S to touring professional musical theater. It was great to see Ronald Orenstein in the Jury: he played principal roles with UMGASS in the 1970s but has lived in Canada for decades.

Of course, video allows for the possibility of re-takes, and the music director's dream: the ability to meticulously blend the sound in large ensemble numbers. In both shows, I heard harmony parts with greater clarity than I usually do in the theater. The pianists too were exemplary and mistake-free:

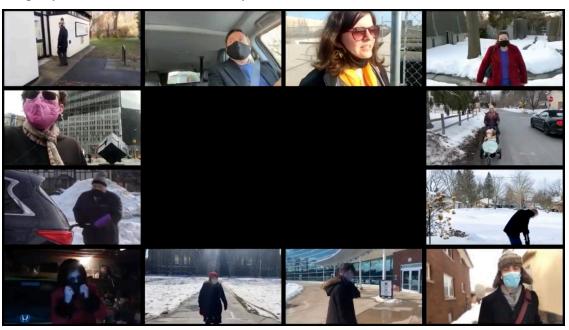
Aleksandr Polyakov for *C&B*, musical director Marisa Green for *Trial*. Polyakov played the overture so fast and so perfectly that, at first, I thought he must be a synthesizer, as I have never heard a human do it so well.

Early incarnations of pandemic opera typically featured simple screen grids (think *Brady Bunch*). Both directors—

Adellyn Geenen for C&B, Lori Kathleen Gould for *Trial*—took it much farther. Each of them developed full storyboards, mapping out where the video windows would be. If the Bridesmaids sing to the

Jury, they need to know if the Jurors are to their left, right, above, or below. Now, this is no different than the blocking plan that a director would map out for a stage production, except that once decided, there is no changing it – and there was no experience to fall back on.

Gould made more of her opportunity. She moved around the video windows with great fluidity, creating pretty patterns that compensated for the lack of movement *within* each window. Remember the vignette where the Judge passes a note to the First Bridesmaid via the Usher, then retrieves it and transfers his affections to the Plaintiff? The Usher's window seamlessly glided across the screen from one side to the other. Gould was "blocking" the window, instead of the actor. I especially loved the opening chorus, shot outdoors near each actor's home. The scenery was not essential to the opera – a train platform, Michigan Stadium, *etc.* – it was just to give the eye a treat.



TRIAL BY JURY opening chorus

Once we got into the story, the actors were in their homes. Some found beautiful rooms to play in front of; others just stood by a door. They all wore earpieces, usually the small wireless ones that you







Cox, Bouncer and Box

can pretend not to notice. A couple of choristers wore bulky headphones that were more obtrusive.

I am not going to review the performers individually: for the most part, they were wonderful—almost as good a cast as I could imagine. I was especially impressed with the reactions. Actors are taught to do this, but it is a lot harder when you don't see what you are reacting to. There were up to twenty-five little windows active, and I could not follow them all, but everywhere I looked there was another gem. I could watch *Trial* repeatedly and see something new every time.

During the pandemic, courts held *real* hearings remotely, so *Trial* by video is easy to accept. *Cox* &

Box presents a more difficult problem. The action takes place in a single room, and this fact is essential: without it, there is no story. Since the performers do not have identically furnished homes, instead each acted in front of a plain white wall. This solution made it appear they were in the same place—but it was visually dull. Granted, I cannot think of a better way to handle it with the technology at UMGASS's disposal, but for me this was the key difference between the two shows. In Trial, the team found ways to make video an asset. The production is full of clever touches that will make it worth watching long after the pandemic is forgotten. In C&B, the drawbacks of video were more troublesome, without



UMGASS easter egg: The Defendant's calendar appears to have been drawn by David Zinn



Synchronized choral swaying in TRIAL

as many of the benefits.

C&B had one other unsolved problem: dialogue. Without a score or piano track, the performers had to listen for cues through an earpiece. Given the unavoidable sound delay, there was obvious "dead air" between lines –just enough that their banter noticeably lacked the zip it would have in the theater, and that is so essential to the piece.

There are multiple versions of *C&B*. UMGASS performed *most* of the original 1867 version, which runs over an hour. There were a handful of cuts that I noticed, but given the limitations of the medium, I think the dialogue might beneficially have been pruned more. The music worked a lot better. I especially appreciated the chance to hear the original version of Box's "bacon lullaby," which I have heard separately, but never (as far as I recall) in a production.

In fairness, *C&B* is inherently weaker material, and perhaps it is not as well suited to the limitations of pandemic opera, whereas *Trial by Jury* turned out to be *perfectly* suited. Indeed, I would say this was

one of the top handful of *Trials* I have seen anywhere. Pandemic or not, it is an instant classic.

With that in mind, I was perplexed by the false scarcity imposed by UMGASS's video provider. You could buy tickets only on certain dates and times—all gone! As I write this today, I cannot go back and watch these shows at any price. I understand that a traditional production must close, but this was video. It lives forever, so why pretend that it doesn't? It was like the Home Box Office of the 1970s.

Like all performing groups, I am sure UMGASS cannot wait to get back to live theater. In the meantime, the group can be proud that it created this terrific double bill on video that we ought to enjoy for many years to come.

The Bab Ballads

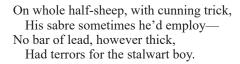
The Bab Ballads are a collection of poems and drawings by W.S. Gilbert, originally published as a column in the magazine Fun, for which Gilbert served as drama critic. Some of the ballads served as source material for characters, songs, and plots in Gilbert's later librettos.

Thomas Winterbottom Hance (1867)

In all the towns and cities fair
On Merry England's broad expanse,
No swordsman ever could compare
With Thomas Winterbottom Hance.

The dauntless lad could fairly hew A silken handkerchief in twain, Divide a leg of mutton too—

And this without unwholesome strain.



At Dover daily he'd prepare
To hew and slash, behind, before—
Which aggravated Monsieur Pierre,
Who watched him from the Calais

shore.

It caused good Pierre to swear and dance,

The sight annoyed and vexed him so; He was the bravest man in France—

He said so, and he ought to know.

"Regardez, donc, ce cochon gros— Ce polisson! Oh, sacré bleu! Son sabre, son plomb, et ses gigots! Comme cela m'ennuye, enfin, mon Dieu!

"Il sait que les foulards de soie Give no retaliating whack— Les gigots morts n'ont pas de quoi— Le plomb don't ever hit you back." But every day the headstrong lad Cut lead and mutton more and more; And every day, poor Pierre, half mad, Shrieked loud defiance from his shore.

Hance had a mother, poor and old,
A simple, harmless, village dame,
Who crowed and clapped as people told
Of Winterbottom's rising fame.

She said, "I'll be upon the spot To see my Tommy's sabre-play;" And so she left her leafy cot, And walked to Dover in a day.

Pierre had a doting mother, who Had heard of his defiant rage: His ma was nearly ninety-two. And rather dressy for her age.

At Hance's doings every morn, With sheer delight his mother cried:

And Monsieur Pierre's contemptuous scorn

Filled his mamma with proper pride.

But Hance's powers began to fail— His constitution was not strong— And Pierre, who once was stout and hale,

Grew thin from shouting all day long.

Their mothers saw them pale and wan, Maternal anguish tore each breast, And so they met to find a plan To set their offsprings' minds at rest.

Said Mrs. Hance, "Of course I shrinks From bloodshed, ma'am, as you're aware.

But still they'd better meet, I thinks."
"Assurément!" said Madame Pierre.

A sunny spot in sunny France Was hit upon for this affair; The ground was picked by Mrs. Hance, The stakes were pitched by Madame Pierre

Said Mrs. H., "Your work you see—Go in, my noble boy, and win."
"En garde, mon fils!" said Madame P.
"Allons!" "Go on!" "En garde!"
"Begin!"



(The mothers were of decent size,

Though not particularly tall;
But in the sketch that meets your eyes

I've been obliged to draw فه them small.)

Loud sneered the doughty man of France, "Ho! ho! Ho! ho! Ha! ha! Ha! ha!" "The French for 'Pish!" said Thomas Hance

Said Pierre, "L'Anglais, Monsieur, pour 'Bah."

Said Mrs. H., "Come, one! two! three!— We're sittin' here to see all fair;" "C'est Magnifique!" said Madame P., "Mais, parbleu! ce n'est pas la guerre!"

"Je scorn un foe si lache que vous!"
Said Pierre, the doughty son of France.
"I fight not coward foe, like you!"
Said our undaunted Tommy Hance.

"The French for 'Pooh!" our Tommy

"L' Anglais pour 'Va'" the Frenchman crowed,

And so with undiminished pride

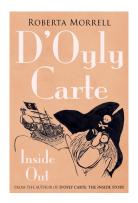
Each went on his respective road.

Some New(ish) Releases

D'Oyly Carte: Inside Out by Roberta Morrell

Publisher: Troubador Publishing

Published: 28 July 2020

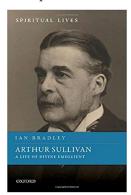


Arthur Sullivan: A Life of Divine

Emollient by Ian Bradley

Publisher: Oxford University Press

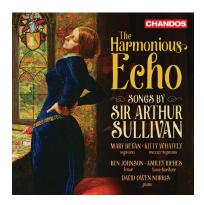
Published: 8 April 2021



The Harmonious Echo: Songs by Sir

Arthur Sullivan.
Label: Chandos.

Released: 30 April 2021





Alumni Notes

Alumni are listed by first UMGASS appearance.

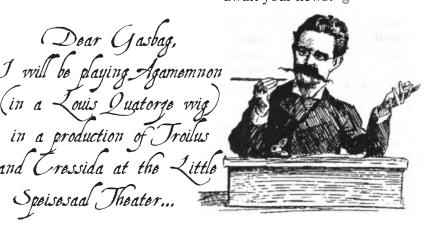
Bolivar Kegnastie ('63) is now living on his head at the bottom of a stream.

Marc Shepherd ('78) gave the annual Jay
Newman Memorial Lecture for the Gilbert & Sullivan

Society of New York. Marc discussed *The Variorum Gilbert & Sullivan*, which documents the evolution of the G&S libretti from pre-production drafts and the early productions, through the later amendments and editions. The lecture can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUX5x9YTqXY.

If you do something interesting like perform and in a show, get a new job, have a baby or a

grandbaby, get married, move, take up baby farming, become King of Barataria, or get a new daughter-in-law elect, please send an update to gasbag.editor@gmail.com. Your former castmates and your fans await your news!



G & S Menu

Please keep in mind that this information is subject to change, especially in light of COVID-19 restrictions.

Shows are listed by month with virtual productions first, followed by US then international productions.

If you will be putting on a virtual or in-person production, please send the information for inclusion in the next issue to gasbag.editor@gmail.com.

Upcoming Productions

June 2021

USA, **UT**, Cedar City

The Pirates of Penzance
Utah Shakespeare Festival
https://www.bard.org/

UK, England, Havant

Savoy Ahoy Havant Light Opera https://www.havantlightopera.co.uk/

UK, Touring

Express G&S, Iolanthe, The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado (Touring dates beginning in June) Charles Court Opera http://www.charlescourtopera.com/

UK, Touring

The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance (Touring dates beginning in June) Opera Anywhere https://operaanywhere.com/

UK, Touring

The Pirates of Penzance, The Gondoliers, The Mikado, HMS Pinafore and Iolanthe (Touring dates beginning in June) Scottish Opera https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/ July 2021

US, CA, Aptos

The Pirates of Penzance
Cabrillo Stage
https://www.cabrillostage.com/

US, OR, Klamath Falls

The Pirates of Penzance Ross Ragland Theater http://rrtheater.org/

US, PA, Doylestown

The Sorcerer
Bucks County Gilbert & Sullivan
Society
http://www.bucksgilbertandsullivan.org/

US, TX, El Paso

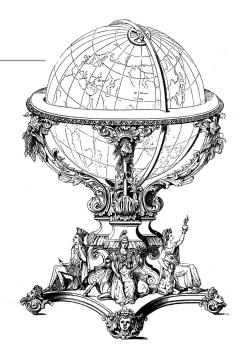
H.M.S. Pinafore Gilbert & Sullivan Company of El Paso http://gselpaso.org/

UK, England, Winchester

The Pirates of Penzance
Winchester Musicals and Opera
Society
https://www.wmos.org.uk/

UK, Touring

H.M.S. Pinafore (Touring dates beginning in July) Illyria Outdoor Theatre https://www.illyria.co.uk/



August 2021

US, MA, Falmouth

The Sorcerer
College Light Opera Company
http://www.collegelightoperacompany.com/

US, NJ, Ridgewood

The Yeomen of the Guard
Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera
Company

https://www.ridgewoodgilbertandsullivan.org/

US, VT, East Calais

H.M.S. Pinafore Unadilla Theatre https://unadilla.org/

Australia, Victoria, Melbourne

The Gondoliers
Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Victoria
https://gsov.org.au/

UK, England, Buxton & Harrogate

Various productions
The International Gilbert & Sullivan
Festival
https://www.gsfestivals.org/

UK, England, High Peak

Iolanthe
PB Theatricals Youth Theatre
http://pbtheatricals.org/

September 2021

UK, England, Cambridge

H.M.S. Pinafore
Cambridge University G&S Society
https://gands.org.uk/

UK, England, Touring

The Mikado
The Merry Opera Company
https://www.merryopera.co.uk/

UK, England, Touring

H.M.S. Pinafore
West Yorkshire Savoyards
https://www.thewestyorkshiresavoyards.com/

October 2021

USA, AK, Anchorage

The Pirates of Penzance
Anchorage Opera
https://anchorageopera.org/

USA, CT, Middlefield

Ruddigore
Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan
Society
http://ctgands.org/

UK, England, London

H.M.S. Pinafore English National Opera https://eno.org/

UK, England, London

The Gondoliers
Grosvenor Light Opera Company
https://gloc.org/

November 2021

USA, DE, Arden

A Gilbert & Sullivan Revue Ardensingers http://ardensingers.com/

USA, MA, Amherst

The Pirates of Penzance Valley Light Opera http://vlo.org/

USA, NY, Oswego

H.M.S. Pinafore
Oswego Opera Theater
https://oswegooperatheater.com/

Australia, Victoria, Melbourne

Thespis
Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Victoria
https://gsov.org.au/

UK, England, Bath

The Sorcerer
Bath Gilbert & Sullivan Society
https://www.bathgands.co.uk/

UK, England, Eastbourne

The Pirates of Penzance
Eastbourne Gilbert & Sullivan Society
https://www.eastbournegands.com/

UK, England, Erdington

Iolanthe
Erdington Operatic Society
https://www.erdington-operatic.co.uk/

UK, England, Manchester

The Black & White Mikado
North Manchester Amateur Operatic &
Dramatic Society
https://www.nmaods.com/

Some Recorded Productions

Please send a donation their way if you enjoy them!

- Victorian Lyric Opera Company (Rockville, MD) produced A Gilbert and Sullivan Drawing Room: "A family's weekly trivia night goes off the rails when the Victorian Era suddenly collides with the present. Traversing between the past and present, *Drawing Room* explores the impact Gilbert and Sullivan had on musical theater, politics, and society all wrapped up in a light-hearted romp that boasts some of the duo's most enduring songs!" You can watch at https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=G gkvSqArMM
- The Durham Savoyards' modernized virtual production of *Patience*, which was serialized on YouTube beginning in April, is still available online at https://www.youtube.com/durhamsavoyardsltd. You may have to rewatch multiple times to catch all the jokes in the background.

GaSLOCoLI (G&S Light Opera Company of Long Island) produced *Very Truly Yours, Gilbert and Sullivan*, written by Gayden Wren, author of *A Most*

Ingenious Paradox: The
Art of Gilbert & Sullivan
(Oxford University Press,
2002). The production
combines a narrated
history of Gilbert and
Sullivan's collaboration
with performances
of their songs. The
video can be found at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICEO4MjfdBc



Editor's Notes

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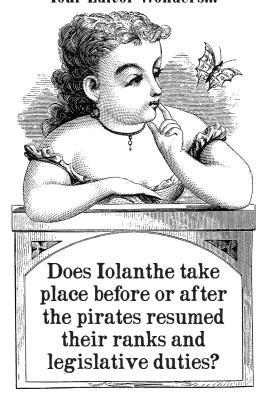


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- Thank you to everyone who wrote in with your feedback on our first issue!
- If you missed out on the audio-only production *Gilbert* and *Sullivan's Improbable New Musical...* and *Helen* (as announced in Issue 268) it is available online until June 27 as part of the Brighton Fringe arts festival. For tickets and more information, see: https://www.brightonfringe.org/whats-on/gilbert-and-sullivans-improbable-new-musical-and-helen-153738/.
- We love our long-time contributors, but we would also love to hear from new folks. If you like to write but don't have ideas about what to write about, let us know! We do not want to write all the articles ourself. You do not want us to write all the articles ourself. (The editorial "we" is confusing. We are working on it.)

Your Editor Wonders...



An error? What error?

(Errata from Issue 268)

- The cast list for *Trial By Jury* misspelled Jane White's name and left off the smallest cast member, Lila Roselle.
- We listed one of the actors in *Cox and Box* as "Basingstroke" (we thought it was a cat-petting pun) but we are told that it is "Basingstoke." We regret the error, but we also think that "Basingstroke" is a good name for a cat and invite you to use it. Please send pictures of any cats named Basingstroke to gasbag.editor@gmail.com. (In the end it turned out that the stuffed cat Basingstoke did not make the final cut of *Cox and Box*, but the live cat Pluto did appear. Congratulations on your UMGASS debut, Pluto.)
- We used the wrong email address for our Keeper of the Rolls, David Goldberg, in the print edition (and the first digital edition) of Issue 268. We didn't spot the error, and neither did our stalwart proofreader... David Goldberg. If you tried to make changes to your subscription and your email bounced back, please try again at goldberg@wccnet.edu.
- We forgot to list the UMGASS Spring 2021 productions in the G&S Menu. We hope that they were mentioned often¹ enough elsewhere in the issue that you remembered to watch them!

Frequently

The Gilbert and Sullivan Puzzler No. 36 Answers

Score 2 points for each operetta correctly identified plus 3 points for each speaker or singer identified. Maximum score is 65.

The Line	The Operetta	The Speaker or Singer	Points
I behaved like a regular cad	Trial by Jury	The Defendant	
Facts astronomical, solemn or comical	The Sorcerer	Mr. Wells, the Sorcerer	
I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor	H.M.S. Pinafore	Sir Joseph	
You told me you were fair as gold	The Pirates of Penzance	Frederic in his duet with Ruth	
Something poetic lurks, even in colocynth and calomel	Patience	Bunthorne reciting a new poem	
I have no reason to suppose that I am more curious than other people	Iolanthe	The Fairy Queen	
The narrow-minded pedant still believes that two and two make four!	Princess Ida	Princess Ida	
To lay aloft in a howling breeze, may tickle a landsman's taste	The Mikado	Nanki-Poo	
and a pound of snuff for the pretty little girl on the hill	Ruddigore	Rose Maybud, describing her acts of charity to Hannah	
To thy fond care I do commend thy sister	The Yeomen of the Guard	Wilfred Shadbolt	
Consider his extreme youth, and forgive him.	The Gondoliers	The Duke of Plaza-Toro	
Our duty is to spy on all our King's illicities	Utopia, Limited	Scaphio & Phantis in duet	
Soon to be for aye united, till divorce or death shall part them	The Grand Duke	Opening chorus announcing Ludwig and Lisa's coming wedding	
	•	Your total score:	

FUMGASS

c/o David Goldberg 8461 Thurston Rd. Pinckney, MI 48169



