



Very Truly Yours,
Gilbert
&
Sullivan



Notes from the Author

Sometimes a play turns out more or less the way you expect it to, and sometimes it evolves before your eyes into something completely different. For me, *Very Truly Yours*, Gilbert & Sullivan was one of the latter sort.

I'd devised two long-running revues for the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island, *An Evening with Gilbert & Sullivan* and *The World According to Gilbert & Sullivan*, and the company board had asked me for another. Never one to turn down an invitation to write (or to direct), I said yes.

I didn't expect it to be very complicated. Assembling a revue isn't the easiest thing in the world, but when the material you're mining is as rich as the operas of Gilbert & Sullivan, and when the constraints are so rigid (all of the company's revues are supposed to be in two acts; feature 25-30 songs; be written for a five-person ensemble of soprano, mezzo, tenor, baritone and bass; allow a rough balance between the size of the four roles; include at least one song from each of the 14 operas; and not feature songs also used in the immediately preceding revue), it's easier than you might think to fill in the appropriate blanks.

The hardest thing about putting together a revue is the initial concept, and I already had that: I was going to base it on the concept of props, with the audience entering to a set festooned with a wide array of props, one of which would be used in each song.

So I was all set to go—and then a play broke out.

At this point—1994 or thereabouts—I was working, as I had been for more than a decade, on my book, *A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Art of Gilbert & Sullivan* (Oxford University Press, 2002). In addition to a close reading of the operas' texts, this involved a considerable amount of research into the collaboration of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, and especially their methods of working together in creating their operas.

And as I sat reading in various places, most notably the Morgan Library on East 36th Street, I kept coming across facts, quotations and commentary that resonated with the operas I was studying—not simply finding that their lives clarified their operas, but also that their operas clarified their lives.

As I worked, I became more and more convinced that there was something worth saying here, something outside the scope of my book (which was adamantly nonbiographical) but related to it. The picture of the man W.S. Gilbert and the man Arthur Sullivan that began to emerge wasn't like the men I'd seen in other books and in movies and plays, most of which had focused on artistic conflicts and personality clashes. Sometimes it seemed as if, in their 25-year collaboration, Gilbert and Sullivan had worked in harmony for two years and been estranged for 23—which we know is not the case.

For a while I simply noted these snippets of conversation, correspondence and commentary, without any sense of what to do with them. But slowly I found them infiltrating my revue, influencing my choices of songs and creeping into the narrations ... which were getting impossibly long and, worse yet, boring. I found that it took a lot more words to explain how Gilbert & Sullivan came to write a particular song than it had taken them to do it.

Finally the obvious dawned on me: Instead of having a narrator explain how they did it, let them speak for themselves.

And pretty soon they were. Suddenly the choice of songs was obvious—certain quotes led to certain songs, certain songs seemed to reference events in the lives of their creators ... and gradually the shape of the show became clear.

The only trouble was, it wasn't really a revue. The 30 songs had become 20, to make room for the readings. Instead of being loosely knit, the show got tighter and tighter as I went along. Before I understood it fully myself, I had not a revue but a play disguised as a revue. It had taken me so long to realize this that I was subsequently rather surprised to find that audiences recognized it at once, and that they didn't have any problem with the somewhat deceptive structure of the show.

What this is, then, is a biographical play. It is a biography not of a man or of two men, but rather of a relationship—the collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan. We don't concern ourselves with their childhoods, and touch only briefly on their lives afterward. To the extent that we address their personal lives, it is to illuminate the impact that those lives had on the collaboration and on the wonderful operas that the collaboration produced.

I wish I could convey to an audience everything I learned about these fascinating men in my 16 years of research, and the many intriguing speculations—none provable, and of varying degrees of probability—that occurred to me along the way. The story of their collaboration truly is one as dramatic as any opera they ever wrote. But in the interest of brevity and in the interest of entertainment, I've had to be ruthless in paring away everything but the essentials. Perhaps someday I'll stage a six-hour "director's cut" and let the real Savoyards wallow in every little detail.

For the time being, though, I hope that people will come away from this show knowing a little more about the men behind the music, and with a renewed appreciation for the magic that they found in collaboration with one another. Really, the collaboration was more brilliant than either man was—virtually nothing they did alone or with other people has survived to the present day as anything but an oddity or an appendix to the collaboration. That partnership, then, deserves our attention more than the personal foibles or occasional disagreements which take center stage in many books, plays and movies about them. "Gilbert & Sullivan" is a bigger and more important subject than Gilbert, Sullivan or even Gilbert and Sullivan.

The wonder of artistic creation is essentially inexplicable, so I make no pretense to "explain" the magic of Gilbert & Sullivan. I do hope, in the words of the play, "to present to you Mr. W.S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan, in their own words, the words of their contemporaries and, of course, in excerpts from all 14 of their operas.

It's a compelling story, the kind that seems to tell itself ... and, in this case, more or less did.

--Gayden Wren, 2003



A Very Truly Quarter Century

Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan has had many lives since the company premiered it in 1995. It toured Long Island for three years, and then had an Off-Broadway run in 1998. Subsequently it has been staged by numerous companies around the United States and overseas, and has been well received wherever it has appeared.

One particular kind of production has proven to be especially popular: the reunion production, usually in conjunction with a significant anniversary in the producing company's history. Because it offers many roles of brief duration, Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan lends itself to big casts (as many as 63) and short rehearsal periods (as short as a single day). I directed the first such production in 2000, marking the 50th anniversary of Oberlin College's Gilbert & Sullivan Players; since then it has been staged in this way by a number of other companies, including the Off-Monroe Players in Rochester, N.Y.; the Empire Lyric Players in Denver; and, of course, the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island, for whom I directed it in 2003 to mark the company's 50th season. (We're delighted to have 17 members of that production's cast returning for this new version.)

Our 67th season marks 2/3 of a century, but that's not normally an occasion for lavish celebrations. However, when we found ourselves forced to shut down live performances in the wake of COVID-19, and when we turned our thoughts to possible ways of keeping ourselves before audiences online, the idea of a movie version occurred to me ... and, close on the heels of that thought, the idea of making it another reunion production. After all, if everybody is going to be participating from their homes, why limit those homes to places on Long Island, or to people who've been onstage with us lately?

The current cast includes one performer who joined the company in 1970 and a couple who are making their company debuts with this production. I'm delighted to have had the chance to work with so many old friends, and with so many newer friends as well. It's been an honor for me to have worked with the Light Opera Company for the past 45 years, and nobody (except Robert Del Monte, who with this show marks his 50th straight year with the company) knows better than I how much talent there's been in every era of that history, and how many wonderful people we've been privileged to call members, colleagues and friends—in the past, in the present and, yes, in years to come.

But I don't need to explain that to anyone who sees the show—it's readily apparent, from the first frame to the last.

Enjoy the show!

--Gayden Wren, 2021



Sixty-Seven Years of Gilbert & Sullivan on Long Island

There had been Gilbert & Sullivan performances on Long Island at least since the 1920s, ranging from school shows to community-theater productions; it's even possible that touring professional productions may have made stops on the Island, though we have been unable to document specific instances. However, there had never been an ongoing Gilbert & Sullivan company in the area prior to 1953, when what was to become the Gilbert & Sullivan Workshop of Long Island was founded.

It was almost inevitable that, if such a group formed, brothers-in-law Norman "Buddy" Packer and Martin "Marty" Waters would be at the heart of it. Waters had been in London in 1939, attending the Royal Academy of Physicians and Surgeons, and had been exposed to the richness of Gilbert & Sullivan productions in England, both professional and amateur. He was smitten and, when he came home, he brought with him a stack of 78-rpm records—Ruddigore, as recorded by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. He played them for his brother-in-law, and Packer became a lifelong convert.

By 1953, when he and his wife, Ruth, moved to Merrick and settled there next door to his brother-in-law, Packer was a confirmed Savoyard. He'd served as vice president of the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Society and even produced a televised version of *The Mikado* in 1949. When Helen Marx, president of the Camp Avenue School PTA, asked him if he could organize a fund raiser, his thoughts turned—as they so often did—to Gilbert & Sullivan.

Initially the idea was for Packer and Waters to run an adult-education class in G&S that would culminate in a concert performance of *The Mikado*. But when Packer recruited an old friend, Sally Buckstone of Oceanside (a veteran of his television *Mikado*), to sing, the seeds of a new group were planted. Buckstone was a fine singer but also a talented director, and soon *The Mikado* was a fully staged performance, with sets, costumes and stage lighting. Presented in Spring 1954, it was so well-received that momentum took over.

The Gilbert & Sullivan Workshop of Long Island was officially launched the next year in Merrick, when the same team presented *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and then *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1956. The Camp Avenue PTA had benefited so much from *The Mikado* and its successors that soon other schools were inquiring into the possibility of getting performances of their own. Buckstone, Packer and Waters were eager to expand their season and broaden their performer base, and by the early 1960s the Workshop was a full-fledged touring company, performing throughout Nassau County and making gradual incursions into Suffolk County and Queens as well.

During these same years, the Workshop expanded its repertoire to include *Trial by Jury*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe* and *Ruddigore*. It would not be until 1975 that it performed *The Gondoliers* for the first time, however, and not until 1979 that it first staged *The Sorcerer*.

Buckstone, Packer and Waters continued to be mainstays of the group as it moved into the 1970s. In 1977 the Workshop left its longtime home at the Old Mill Road School in Merrick, taking up residence at the Roland A. Chatterton School, also in Merrick, which remains its Tuesday- and Thursday-night home to the present day.

The 1980s brought major changes to the group, beginning with its name: In 1980, due to a consensus that the Workshop had evolved into something larger in scope and more professional in its performances than the word "workshop" suggested, the group's name was officially changed to the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island. (Originally this was a stopgap measure, pending a different, shorter name—but, 40 years later, it's still in place!)

Two years later the first of the three founding members left the group, as Buddy Packer and his wife (“my well-loved Ruth,” he always called her) retired to Florida. Marty Waters performed his last show with the company in 1984, and retired to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Sally Buckstone continued to direct with the company (and/or its Yiddish sister company) until the mid-1990s, before relocating to Florida; 20 years later she moved back to Long Island, where she died in 2017 at the age of 93.

The most striking aspect of the 1980s was the development of the Yiddish division of the company. Initially a novelty fund raiser presenting a 30-minute, Yiddish-language version of H.M.S. Pinafore called *Der Shirtz* in 1978, the Yiddish company soon blossomed into a whole new group. Under the leadership of longtime company stalwarts Al Grand, Bob Tartell and Elaine Lerner, and directed by Sally Buckstone, what eventually became the Gilbert & Sullivan Yiddish Light Opera Company of Long Island developed the full-length *Der Yiddisher Pinafore* and *Der Yiddisher Mikado* (both based on 1950s shows by writer Miriam Walowit) and Grand’s *Di Yam Gazlonim* (based on *The Pirates of Penzance*). The Yiddish company split off from its English-language parent in 1988. Touring nationally and internationally, it marked out a unique corner of the Gilbert & Sullivan universe and made it its own, before closing its doors in 2018.

Two landmarks defined the 1990s for the company. One was the development of the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Orchestra of Long Island, under the direction first of founding music director Raymond J. Osnato and then several other conductors. The company had occasionally recruited orchestras for specific performances in the 1960s and 1970s, but had never had an orchestra of its own. Beginning in 1992, however, the company made it a priority to develop its own orchestra, beginning with a tiny ensemble of six (Osnato rescored all of *Princess Ida* for a wind ensemble) and slowly growing with the passing years. In recent years the company has returned to using primarily pickup orchestras, but there has been only one year since 1992 in which it relied on piano accompaniment alone.

1992 also saw the launching of “The Savoy Project: or, Gilbert & Sullivan from A to Z.” Spurred by a desire to try new shows and convinced that it had been depending too much upon the “Big Three,” the company undertook a complete cycle of the works of Gilbert & Sullivan, beginning with the group’s first-ever production of *Princess Ida* in 1992 and ending with *The Mikado* in 2004, marking the company’s 50th anniversary. The project, which was an overwhelming success and garnered feature coverage from all the region’s major media outlets, included the Long Island premieres of four of the Savoy operas—*Princess Ida*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Utopia, Limited* and *The Grand Duke*—as well as of the Sullivan/Stephenson operetta *The Zoo*.

In 1994 the company presented the world premiere of Gayden Wren’s *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. The premiere, held at a Unitarian church in Garden City, sold out, prompting the company to revive it as a seasonal fund raiser every few years thereafter. The show, which tells the Charles Dickens story with new lyrics set to Gilbert & Sullivan songs, went on to a sold-out run Off-Broadway in 2001 and has been staged close to 100 times by companies throughout the United States and abroad.

A high point of the 2010s came in 2014, when the company presented the “lost” Gilbert & Sullivan opera *Thespis* for the first time, with W.S. Gilbert’s surviving book and lyrics set to new music by Thomas Z. Shepard, the noted composer and record producer. (Shepard has remained with the company ever since, in a variety of capacities.)

The 2018 production was also a landmark: Though the company had in the past been associated entirely with traditional productions of the Savoy operas, director Alex Paul Sheerin set *Patience* in a coffeehouse in contemporary Brooklyn. In 2019 the sold-out 25th-anniversary production of *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* turned out to be the company’s last full-company stage production to date, as *The Mikado*—planned for June 2020—was forced to be shut down owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Light Opera Company's immediate future remains to be seen (though the group's board has announced plans to resume production of *The Mikado* as soon as public-safety protocols make it safe to do so), but its longer-term prognosis is clear: The company that Marty Waters, Buddy Packer and Sally Buckstone founded 2/3 of a century ago is likely to continue to flourish. After all, it is built on a foundation that remains as solid now as it was in 1954: the operas of Gilbert & Sullivan.

Cast Bios

CLAUDIA ARROYO (Rachel Scott Russell) is making her third appearance with the Light Opera Company, following *The Gondoliers* and *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. She has also performed with the Long Island Cabaret Theater in *The Best Things in Life*, *The Greatest Show* and *Lights Camera Action*, and in *Don Pasquale* with the North Shore Music Festival. Claudia loves to sing and is delighted to be a part of the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island.

LAURIE BAACH (*The Hour*) played her favorite company role to date in 2019, as Emily Cratchit in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*, after previously appearing in the ensemble for *Patience* and *The Gondoliers*. She is excited to be performing in this digital production of *Very Truly Yours*, Gilbert & Sullivan.

LILLIAN BAUM (Henriette Scott Russell) made her Light Opera Company debut as Lady Blanche in *Princess Ida*, and appeared in many subsequent productions with the company. She also appeared as one of the "Dray Kleyne Meydlakh" in *Der Yiddisher Mikado* with the Gilbert & Sullivan Yiddish Light Opera Company. She appeared alongside her husband, Lloyd Baum, in the Long Island premiere of *Curtains*, and the two have also sung together in *The Best of Long Beach*, *The Best of Broadway*. When not memorizing lyrics, she is a chartered financial consultant and a registered tax-return preparer with a practice in Long Beach.

LLOYD BAUM (*Pish-Tush*) is thrilled to be in another great Light Opera Company production, having previously been in six operas, and scheduled to have been in the currently postponed production of *The Mikado*. Lloyd was bitten by the acting bug in high school and made his debut in *Fiorello*. After a short hiatus of 35 years, he was bitten again and performed in several talent shows at Temple Emanu-el. He then discovered community theater, and portrayed characters as diverse as Senex in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Grandpa in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, Lazar Wolf in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Arvide in *Guys and Dolls*, Van Buren in *Damn Yankees*, MacMillan in *Big*, Christopher Belling in *Curtains*, Major Metcalf in *The Mousetrap*, Samuel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Samuel Chase in *1776*, Davenport in *Inherit the Wind*, Beinstock in *Some Like It Hot*, and Whitney in *Anything Goes*, as well as originating the dual role of Narrator/King in the children's musical *I See, I See!* He has performed with the Broad Hollow Theater Company, Plaza Theatrical Productions and the Merrick Theater and Center for the Arts. Lloyd also has appeared in several revues in Island Park, Bay Terrace, Lido Beach, Bellmore and at Hofstra University, and is a member of the Long Island Cabaret. As always, he thanks Lillian for all of her help and support.

STANLEY BERGMAN (*The New York Times/Walter Smythe*) has been a member of the Company since 2007. During that time he has played several standout roles, including Samuel in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Uncle Tim in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*, as well as being a stalwart tenor in the chorus. Lately Stan has moved into another branch of the arts by co-authoring *Mini Stories & Poems by Him and Her*, a book of poems and short stories written with his wife, Carol Bergman. If you enjoy reading fun and uplifting stories, you should contact Stan at CandS@gmail.com and purchase their book. You will not be disappointed!

HOWARD BERNSTEIN (London Daily Telegraph/Justice Divver) has been a proud member of the Light Opera Company for close to 25 years and has appeared in 10 Gilbert & Sullivan works, as well as Sullivan's *The Zoo* and *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* three times—the first featuring his son, Michael, as Tiny Tim. Howard, an attorney, also serves as the company's general counsel. He resides in Long Beach with his wife, Adrienne. Howard's favorite starring role is as father to Jenn, Michael and Noah, stepfather to Sara and Kyle, and grandfather to Kyle's new daughter, Emma Marie.

JORDAN BRESLOW (*The Times of London 1*) is now in his 10th season with the Light Opera Company, and has played Major Murgatroyd in *Patience*, Antonio in *The Gondoliers*, and Bob Cratchit in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* as well as various ensemble appearances in *Thespis*, *The Sorcerer*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado* and *Ruddigore*. He had previously performed with the Suburban Players of Wantagh in *Anything Goes*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *Girl Crazy*, and as the title character in a Camp Kinder Ring production of *The Wiz*. Jordan was a member of the Binghamton Crosbys, the only all-male a cappella singing ensemble at Binghamton University, and continues as the group's alumni coordinator. He has served multiple terms on the Light Opera Company's executive board as business manager, publicity chairperson and, for the past several years, treasurer. He is celebrating 30 years of marriage to his wife Karen this September.

LOUISA CABEZUDO-ARNOLD (*The New York World*) is proud and excited to be serving her first term as president of the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island, for whom she has appeared in the ensembles of *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience* and *The Gondoliers*. She has also been seen as the \$60 million diva Ava Higgs-Livingston in *A Marriage by the Book*, written and directed by Lois Findlay. Louisa is a teacher at P.S. 40 Samuel Huntington in Jamaica and enjoys working with children as much as she enjoys singing. She has been married for 10 years to her wonderful husband Marc Anthony Arnold, and wishes to thank him for his love and for his support in her pursuit of her dream.

PATTIE CARRASQUILLO (Dame Hannah), having been absent from the company for a decade or so, is thrilled to return for this unique production of *Very Truly Yours*, Gilbert & Sullivan. Pattie joined the company in 1998 for *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and spent several seasons as a member of the chorus, before biting off larger roles including the wicked Katisha in *The Mikado* and as the ethereal Fairy Queen in *Iolanthe*, which remain among her favorite roles. She's also been seen as the mezzo in the revues *I Have a Song to Sing*, *Oh and Gilbert and Sullivan from A to Z*. "During a time when so much of life is different, the familiarity of the music and this company, both of which I have missed dearly, has brought me great comfort," Carrasquillo says. "I'm so glad to be a part of this."

ROBERT DEL MONTE (*The New York Mirror 2*) recently celebrated his 50th year with the company, during which time he has appeared in all of the Gilbert & Sullivan operas, as well as the Stephenson/Sullivan opera *The Zoo* and *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*, in which he created the role of the Ghost of Samuel. Known as "the backbone of the chorus," Robert lives in Oceanside and, when not acting in or listening to the Savoy operas, is a devotee of Broadway and the ballet.

LAUREN DeLUCIA (Elsie Maynard/Chorus) is a soprano and New Jersey native with a deep love of all styles of singing, ranging from early music to new compositions and musical theater. Her operatic credits include the title role in Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Armide* at the Miami Music Festival, Casilda in *The Gondoliers* with the Gilbert and Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island and First Lady in *The Magic Flute* with the Bach Society of Columbia University. She is an experienced chorister as well, having appeared as a soloist in J.S. Bach's *Magnificat* and Vivaldi's *Gloria in D Major*, and as a soprano ensemble member in the U.S. premiere of Carl Davis's *Last Train to Tomorrow*, at Alice Tully Hall, and in Handel's *Messiah* with Camerata New York. In 2020 Lauren earned her master's degree in voice from the Mannes School of Music in New York City.

SALLY DENMEAD (Tessa) has been caroming wildly between G & S societies for near forty years, wreaking havoc as she goes. Denmead was last spotted as Dame Hannah with the Pittsburgh Savoyards – with whom she has likewise claimed the roles of Tessa, Aline, Pitti-Sing, Elsie, Baroness von Krakenfeldt and Duchess of Plaza Toro – and assumed power over productions of Iolanthe, Sorcerer and Yeomen of the Guard. Approach with caution!

CHRISTINE DENTATO (Princess Ida) is so excited to perform in this production of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan. Her previous roles with the Light Opera Company include the soprano in the stage version of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan, Fiametta in The Gondoliers and the title role in Patience. While minoring in music at Hofstra University, Christine performed with Hofstra Opera Theater in such roles as Marcelina in Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro, the Fairy Queen in Purcell's The Fairy Queen, Lucy Locket in Britten's The Beggar's Opera and La Baronne in Offenbach's La Vie Parisienne. She has sung in young-artist programs such as the Music in the Alps summer program, and she was part of the U Artists Music Workshops and Concert program in 2019.

CATHERINE DIAKOU (New York Herald 1) is 15 years old and enjoying her education at St. Anthony's High School, where she is a sophomore. This is her second appearance with the Light Opera Company, and she is loving every minute of it. Once this pandemic is a thing of the past, she hopes to hightail it back onstage doing what she loves—singing, dancing and just being her.

MARTIN FULLER (W.S. Gilbert) got his feet wet in Gilbert & Sullivan at City College of New York, where in 1956 he sang in the chorus of The Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado as well as in Patience in 1961. He joined the Light Opera Company in 1982 and has sung such roles as the Usher in Trial by Jury; Sir Marmaduke in The Sorcerer; Dick Deadeye in H.M.S. Pinafore; the Pirate King and the Sergeant in The Pirates of Penzance; Colonel Calverley in Patience; Lord Mountararat and Private Willis in Iolanthe; Prince Arac and King Hildebrand in Princess Ida; Pooh-Bah and the Mikado in The Mikado; Old Adam, Sir Despard and Sir Roderic in Ruddigore; Sergeant Meryll and Wilfred Shadbolt in The Yeomen of the Guard; Don Alhambra in The Gondoliers; King Paramount in Utopia, Limited; the Duke and the Prince of Monte Carlo in The Grand Duke; Thomas Brown in The Zoo; and Mr. Fezziwig and the Narrator in A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol, along with principal roles in Der Yiddisher Pinafore, Di Yam Gazlonim and Der Yiddisher Mikado. Marty has also put his design skills to work as the company's technical director, creating set designs, posters and program covers for the company. In his rare offstage hours, Marty lives in Oceanside and has recently retired from Martin Fuller Displays, a window-dressing company based in Island Park.

TERRY HOCHLER (Baroness Von Krakenfeldt) is proud to have been the mezzo in the original production of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan, and to have recreated the role in the company's revival of the show, running from 2019 through ... well, who can say? She was lucky enough to have been born into a family of Gilbert & Sullivan fans, who gave her an early start in music appreciation. In fact, Terry was enrolled in a G&S workshop as a young girl, singing "I'm Called Little Buttercup" and – bizarrely – the tenor aria "A Wandering Minstrel!" Terry joined the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company right out of college, and has enjoyed playing numerous mezzo roles with the company over the years, both in full-orchestra productions and in revues. There's more to her than G&S, though, and she's been seen in numerous Broadway-style musicals and revues around Long Island through the years.



SARA ELLIOTT HOLLIDAY (Producer/Technical Director/Gianetta/Duchess 1/Casilda 2/Chorus) cut her teeth with the Texas Gilbert and Sullivan Company in the 1990s, and went on to Oberlin College and the Gilbert & Sullivan Players there. She made her Light Opera Company debut as Angelina in Trial by Jury in 1997, and has played various roles with the company ever since, including music director of Utopia, Limited and Iolanthe. Her favorite Gilbert & Sullivan roles include Patience, Yum-Yum and Casilda, as well as all the female roles in The World According to Gilbert & Sullivan and Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan, Hilarion in Gilbert's The Princess and, perhaps most of all, Bob Cratchit in A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol. In her spare time she is head of events at the New York Society Library and author of A Thousand Dances: A Novel of the British Blues Boom (Coral Press, 2018).

HENRY HORSTMANN (Ko-Ko/Giuseppe) is a baritone based in Lindenhurst, N.Y. Since graduating from the Crane School of Music at SUNY/Potsdam in 2018, he has been seen as Giuseppe Palmieri in The Gondoliers with the Light Opera Company—and hopes to be seen as Ko-Ko in The Mikado one of these days. He has also performed with the Bronx Opera in The Abduction from the Seraglio and The Mikado, with the Geneva Light Opera Company in The Barber of Seville, with the New York Lyric Opera in Die Zauberflöte and with the Winter Harbor Music Festival in Winterreise. Henry looks forward to performing live with this wonderful company in the future.

CHRIS JURAK (Lord Mountararat/Don Alhambra/Chorus) came to the company from the Metropolitan Opera, where his “professional” operatic career spanned the years 1978-1983, during which he sang in the Metropolitan Opera Children's Chorus as assorted altar boys, street urchins and the front half of a giant tea pot. From 1985 to 1987 he attended the Preparatory Division of the Manhattan School of Music as a major in classical voice, during which time he appeared in The Waldorf School of Garden City's productions of The Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado. After a “brief” hiatus, he sang as both chorus member and soloist with The Waldorf Choral Society from 2013 to 2016. Since 2016 he has been seen with the Light Opera Company as the Pirate King in The Pirates of Penzance, Colonel Calverley in Patience, Lord Tolloller in Iolanthe and Don Alhambra in The Gondoliers, as well as playing the Ghost of Marley in A Gilbert and Sullivan Christmas Carol and the baritone in The World According to Gilbert & Sullivan. He has also been cast in the role of Pish Tush for the company's upcoming production of The Mikado. Chris works professionally as a physical therapist, and, in his spare time, enjoys updating the lyrics to G&S songs.

JANETTE KENNEDY (Carte's Backer) was born in Rochester, N.Y., grew up in Sarasota, Fl., went to college in Oberlin, Ohio, lived in New York City for 15 years and, finally, moved home to the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee in 1997. She has worked as a glassblower, a video technician for Sesame Street, a set designer, a lighting designer, an Off-Off-Broadway theatrical producer, a secretary, a home-health caregiver, a Sunday-school teacher, a private tutor, a waitress, an au pair and a substitute teacher in the South Bronx. She was technical director for the Light Opera Company from 1987 to 1995, and currently works as a school-van driver and a writing tutor for a community college. In 2019 she began working on a master's degree in instructional technology which, if all goes well, she will complete in the summer of 2021. She lives near the mountains in a large house in Seymour, Tenn., with two sisters, a brother-in-law, a 12-year-old nephew and (at last count) three cats, a dog, some tadpoles and four fish.



KENNETH KOPOLOVICZ (Pooh-Bah) is happy to be performing again, and to be entertaining people, during these difficult times. Ken comes from a very musical family. Some of his favorite roles on stage include Emile in *South Pacific*, Curly in *Oklahoma!*, Freddy in *My Fair Lady*, Deuteronomy in *Cats*, Joe in *Damn Yankees* and the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*. Ken holds master's degrees in general and special education (1-6) and a bachelor's degree in music education (K-12) and enjoys appearing in movies, television shows and touring operas. He plays the violin, composes his own music and also cooks Italian, Chinese and Mexican cuisines. Ken and his brother Rob will shortly be recording his own music—dance, rhythm and blues, ballads and soft rock—for one or more albums. In the meantime, though, he's thankful for the chance to work, even at a distance, with everyone involved in this show!

CASSANDRA LEMS (Duchess of Plaza Toro 1/Chorus) joined the Light Opera Company in 2003 as an Aesthetic Lady in *Patience*, and went on to play Urania in *Thespis*, the Counsel for the Plaintiff in *Trial by Jury*, Little Buttercup in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Fleta in *Iolanthe*, Chloe in *Princess Ida*, Dame Carruthers in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and the Duchess of Plaza-Toro in *The Gondoliers*, as well as singing in the chorus of *The Sorcerer*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Mikado*. (If you're counting, that's 11 of Gilbert & Sullivan's 14 operas, and she looks forward to adding the remaining three to her repertoire someday). She also narrated the company's revue *Gilbert & Sullivan's Greatest Hits* from 2011 to 2013. As if that weren't enough, Cassandra appeared in several staged readings of W.S. Gilbert's plays for the company, portraying Queen Altemire in *The Palace of Truth* and Cynisca in *Pygmalion* and *Galatea*, and created the role of Mrs. Autobahn for the company's Radio Night fundraisers, as well as singing in the company's all-star 2003 production of *Very Truly Yours*, *Gilbert & Sullivan* and its 2007 and 2014 productions of *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*.

NANCY MAGNATTA (*The New York Tribune*) is known for her enthusiastic chorus work—and her love of Gilbert & Sullivan—in the Light Opera Company's recent productions of *Patience* and *The Gondoliers*. In the winter of 2019 she played Aunt Eadie in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*, as well as acting, singing and dancing in the ensemble. She began singing only five years ago as a choir member at Christ Church in Oyster Bay, and fell in love with it; she now studies singing with conductor Michael Haigler. Nancy is a graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she earned a degree in marketing while embracing a lifelong hobby of photography, capturing the mountain scenes and nature. She continues her passion for photography in her ongoing efforts to capture the beauty of our Long Island swans and protect them as well. Nancy retired after a 40-year career as a motion-picture technician, and has now returned to school, working to complete a master's degree in theology at St. Joseph's College.

OLIVIA MAIO (formerly Peter Cratchit) is thrilled to be participating in this year's production of *Very Truly Yours*, *Gilbert & Sullivan*. Olivia is 10 years old and is in 5th grade. She played Peter Cratchit in the company's 2019 production of *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*, and has also participated in various performances at school, camp and as part of her after-school theater program. In her free time Olivia enjoys playing lacrosse and reading. She would like to thank her family for their love & support.

BARRY MASTELLONE (Mr. Wells/Grand Duke Rudolph) is one of the Light Opera Company's long-time members, having first appeared in a Company production in 1987. He has played many leading roles and joined many a chorus over that span; among the former may be counted John Wellington Wells in *The Sorcerer*, Samuel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Archibald Grosvenor and Major Murgatroyd in *Patience*, Florian in *Princess Ida*, Robin Oakapple in *Ruddigore*, the Duke of Plaza Toro and Annibale in *The Gondoliers*, Lord Scaphio in *Utopia, Limited*, the Notary in *The Grand Duke* and, for one brief afternoon as a stand-in as the title role in *The Mikado*, wherein he delivered his lines by having written them on the Certificate of Death. Barry also created the role of The Ghost of Marley in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* and served as the last president of the Light Opera Company when it consisted of both the original and Yiddish divisions (emphasis on "divisions"). He is delighted to be working with all of the members who are joining in this show, whether he's ever met them or not.

SYDNEY MATUSZAK (Casilda 1) is thrilled to be working with the Light Opera Company again! She is a Long Island-based actress and singer, as well as a graduate of Hofstra University with degrees in drama and psychology. Her most recent virtual credits include Mary in Chasing the Light and various musical collaborations with different companies. Her past stage roles include the Spirit in The Magic Flute, the Ghost of Christmas Present in A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol, the title role in The Diary of Anne Frank and Fraulein in Dreams and Nightmares. When she is not onstage, she is doing yoga, reading the latest book on mindfulness and cuddling with her dogs. She is dedicating this virtual performance to her mother, Kerri, her family and friends. For more, visit www.sydneyatuszak.com.

DEBRA MULÉ (“Sweethearts” soprano) joined the Light Opera Company in 1991, beginning as a chorus member and understudy in Patience. The following year she played the title role in the company’s first-ever production of Princess Ida, and for the next five years or so played a variety of soprano roles, in full operas and in The World According to Gilbert & Sullivan; she was also the original soprano in Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan. After she’d raised her two daughters, her life took an interesting turn and she now represents the 5th district in the Nassau County Legislature. Debra has been married to her husband, Steven, for 30 years and is thrilled to be back onstage with the company (well, almost) for this reunion production.

MICHELLE NIMETZ (New York Herald 4/Miss Winifred Emery) is making her second appearance with the Light Opera Company, after making her debut with A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol in 2019, playing Gossip #3 and singing in the chorus. She would like to thank her family and friends for supporting and encouraging her to follow her dreams, and to her castmates, new and old, for their help. Finally, she would like to take a moment to acknowledge this past year and share her appreciation and gratitude for everyone involved in this virtual production of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan. Nothing can stop creativity, theater and the arts!

STEPHEN O’LEARY (Sergeant of Police/Florian) recently marked his 25th year with the Light Opera Company. He has served as music director for several Gilbert & Sullivan revues, as well as multiple productions of both Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan and A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol; he was both stage director and music director for the revue Ladies & Gentlemen, Gilbert & Sullivan. His G&S roles include Grosvenor in Patience, Guron in Princess Ida, Tarara in Utopia, Ltd. and Ludwig and the Herald in The Grand Duke, as well as John James Box in Cox and Box. He has a degree in music composition from the CUNY Graduate Center and has been music director of the New York Life Singers since 2001.

DELANEY R. PAGE (Sparkeion/Chorus) has been a member of the Light Opera Company since the 2014/2015 production of H.M.S. Pinafore. Company audiences will remember her as Kate in The Pirates of Penzance, as Celia in Iolanthe and as Vittoria in The Gondoliers; she also played the Balladeer and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come in A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol, and was set to perform as the performing understudy for Katisha in the now-postponed 2020 production of The Mikado. Delaney has also served on the company’s executive board and as director of fund development since 2019 and now serves as their webmaster.

PAUL PATANELLA (Grosvenor) has turned his hand to many aspects of staging Gilbert & Sullivan, as director, actor, composer and musician. He directed The Grand Duke at Oberlin College, where he also appeared on stage as Bunthorne, King Gama, and Antonio. Long Island audiences have seen Paul as King Gama, Scynthus, and Richard Dauntless. In the 1990s Paul was commissioned to write an original score for Thespis, and had completed Act I before the project was canceled (revival, anyone?). He has played trombone for a number of professional and community productions.



CHRISTA LOUISE PERZ (Patience) is a second-generation member of the company, and the mother of a third-generation member. Her mother, Eileen Engel, joined what was then the Gilbert & Sullivan Workshop of Long Island in 1970, and only five years later, at the age of 14, Christa began her own wonderful journey with what soon became the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island. For more than a decade she was one of the group's leading sopranos, singing such roles as Josephine (and Little Buttercup) in H.M.S. Pinafore, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, the title role in *Patience*, Phyllis in *Iolanthe*, Yum-Yum (and Pitti-Sing, Peep-Bo and Katisha) in *The Mikado* and Rose Maybud in *Ruddigore*. In 1980 she met her future husband, Phil Gellis, when he joined the company; their son is Jacob Gellis, best known as the original Tiny Tim in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. Christa and her second husband, Gary Perz (remembered by longtime Light Opera Company audience members as the title character in *The Mikado*), relocated to Hammondsport, N.Y., in the 1990s, and she has occasionally appeared with the Rochester-based G&S group the Off-Monroe Players, notably as Katisha. Her interests as a performer extend beyond the Savoy operas: Other favorite roles include Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes*, Cory in *Barefoot in the Park*, Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* and Cassandra in *Vanya, Sonya, Masha & Spike*. This is her first appearance with the company since the 2003 reunion production of *Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan*, but her love and adoration for the company has never wavered and she hasn't forgotten the life-long friends she's made among its members (including Drew Davidson, David Rosenthal, Tom Trempy, the late Barry Slonim and Gayden Wren).

ELLEN PICKUS (*The Times of London 2*) has been with the Light Opera Company since 1980, when her son was a year old and she was looking for a night out once a week. She served on the board as recording secretary for many years. Ellen's favorite roles include Pitti-Sing (love the pun!) in *The Mikado*, Mad Margaret in *Ruddigore* and the Duchess of Plaza Toro in *The Gondoliers*. For many years she taught English and creative writing in Long Beach. Ellen's books of poetry are for sale to raise money to fight Alzheimer's disease, and until recently she volunteered with a group of seniors interested in creative writing and with elementary-school students who needed help reading. She thanks her husband, Phil, for always being there and the members of the company for all the years of fun.

JONATHAN QUARANT ("Sweethearts" Tenor/Edwin/Cyril/Marco 2/Chorus) joined the Light Opera Company in 2019, playing Luiz and Marco (not in the same performances) in *The Gondoliers*. He went on to play the tenor role in the current in-person production of *Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan* and *Fred and Young Scrooge* (in the same performances) in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. Previously Jonathan was a member of the Long Island Choral Society as well as of the Festival Choir of Madison, located in Madison, Wisconsin. While attending Penn State University, he worked with the Penn State Glee Club under the direction of Dr. Christopher Kiver, and sang in dozens of performances on campus and in several cities during the club's annual spring-break tour. Jonathan had studied voice privately with Long Island baritone Peter Maravell, and sang an aria during a young-artist winners' concert in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. A graduate of North Babylon High School, Jonathan performed in all of the school's spring musical productions, notably playing Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado*.

JESS REED (Jessie Bond/Phoebe) first and last appeared with the Light Opera Company nearly 20 years ago as Lady Ella in *Patience*. Since then she has hopped around the globe, continuing to perform in plays, musicals and operettas. She recently returned to Long Island and has appeared at Eastline Theatre in several productions, including their first foray into the virtual as Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House*. Other favorite roles include Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Percy Talbot in *The Spitfire Grill*, Isabelle Grossman in *Crossing Delancey* and Sally Brown in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Jess is a newcomer to the actual play D&D stream world and will be returning to SlaydiesATL's *Hunt for the Heart Shards* this February on Twitch. She can be found on Twitter as @bardicbelle and at www.jess-reed.com.

RICHARD RISI (Marco) is excited to be performing his third (and virtual!) production with the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island. He is a recent graduate of Hofstra University with a bachelor's degree in vocal performance. He made his company debut as Francesco in *The Gondoliers*, and most recently was seen as Young Marley in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. Some other notable roles he's played include Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Frick in *La Vie Parisienne*, Filch in *The Beggar's Opera* and Autumn in *The Fairy Queen*. Outside of opera and theater, Richard is an actor, composer, chorister and piano tuner. He'd like to thank the Light Opera Company for having this production during these strange times.

HANNA ROTH (introduction) is a 9-year-old actor and singer who is thrilled to be working with the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island again. Hanna most recently played the leading role as the Casting Director in an original work, *Bad Auditions by Bad Actors*, at the Take2 Actors Studio in Huntington. Previously she played Maui in *Moana Jr.* at the Cultural Arts Playhouse in Syosset, Belinda Cratchit in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* and Smee in *Peter Pan* at the USDAN summer arts camp. Hanna studies singing with Stephanie Horowitz at the Voice Studio in Merrick, and acting with Regina Schneider in Huntington, and lives in Oyster Bay with her parents and her brother, Zachary. You can visit her website at www.imaginehanna.com.

BEN SALERS (Sir Joseph Porter/Duke of Plaza Toro) can't wait for the day when he can perform Gilbert & Sullivan for a live audience again. For the past several years, the Light Opera Company has been like family for Ben, a transplant from Mississippi. He originally had the privilege of playing Sillimon in *Thespis* (in Tom Shepard's spectacular version of Arthur Sullivan's score), and has gone on to play various roles in a number of other G&S operas, most recently appearing as the Duke of Plaza Toro in *The Gondoliers*. Ben is grateful for music's way of soothing the soul during times of trial and tribulation, including this pandemic. Love to all, y'all!

BRENDA SANTANA (New York Herald 2/Musical Standard) is a true triple threat, with multiple company credits as actress, director and costumier. She's costumed the company's productions for almost a decade, and has served as director for *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Iolanthe*. An opera, jazz and theater singer/actress and director for more years than she'd like to admit, she has been seen in many productions and venues throughout the New York City area. However, her most important job is as mother to her three beautiful boys; Lucas, Sebastian and Julian, and as wife to her love, Charlie. To Lily and Michael, who helped this very green G&S novice get through some hairy times, both my partners in crime, you are missed terribly.

CARLY SESTI (Princess Nekaya) is super-excited to be making her Gilbert and Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island debut. She is a 21-year-old musical-theater performer from Plainview, N.Y., and next fall will be attending Circle in the Square Theatre School. She has participated in NYSSMA-All State and NYSSMA-All Eastern, and—despite her youth—has a long string of theatrical credits that includes Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Diana in *Next to Normal*, Woman #2 in *Songs of a New World*, Ursula in *The Little Mermaid*, Paulette in *Legally Blonde*, Mayzie in *Seussical* and Pennywise in *Urinetown*.

ALEX PAUL SHEERIN (Lewis Carroll) is a stage director originally from Long Island. Alex is the current director/assistant director in residence at the Indianapolis Opera, where he directed a cinematic staged rendition of *Madama Butterfly* as well as several virtual programs. He was a young-artist director at Brevard Music Center and the resident director at the North Shore Music Festival on Long Island, where he directed *Don Pasquale*. His credits include *Così fan tutte* for Queens College, *The Medium* for Chicago Summer Opera, *Così fan tutte* (abridged) for the Florida State Opera, *Patience* for the Gilbert and Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island and *The Very Best of Gilbert and Sullivan* for the Brevard Music Center. Prior to the pandemic shutdown, Alex was scheduled to direct *Glory Denied* and *L'Enfant et Les Sortilèges* at Florida State University, as well as *Carmen* for the North Shore Music Festival. Upcoming projects include *Trial by Zoom* for the Light Opera Company and *La Rondine* for Queens College.

THOMAS Z. SHEPARD (Music Director/Accompanist) is a lifelong Savoyard who got involved with the Light Opera Company in 2014, when the company staged his version of the “lost” Gilbert & Sullivan opera *Thespis*, with Gilbert’s libretto set to new music by Shepard, replacing the lost Sullivan score. One thing led to another, and he’s never left, having played the Narrator in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* (2014), served on the company board, worked as an accompanist on *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, *The Gondoliers* and *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol* (2019), and as music director for *The World According to Gilbert & Sullivan* and *Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan* (the ongoing in-person version). In his non-G&S life, Tom is a native of East Orange, N.J., who studied music at the Juilliard School, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Yale School of Music before embarking on a legendary career as a producer of Broadway and classical-music record albums, in the process earning 12 Grammy Awards. He is also a composer, whose credits include the operas *That Pig of a Molette* and *A Question of Faith* (both with libretti by Sheldon Harnick), the children’s cantata *In the Night Kitchen* (with words by Maurice Sendak) and the score for Otto Preminger’s film *Such Good Friends*. He lives with his wife of 60 years, artist Irene Clark, in West Gilgo Beach.

TAMARA SHYNGLE (New York Herald 3/Helen Lenoir Carte) has been involved with the Light Opera Company since 2003. She has enjoyed performing since she was young, but has found additional interest in working behind the scenes as well, including serving as stage manager for *The Mikado* and *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. She has been seen in the ensembles of various shows, musical revues and plays through the years. Her G&S credits include ensembles in *Thespis*, *Trial by Jury*, *The Sorcerer*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, *Ruddigore*, *The Yeomen of the Guard* and *The Gondoliers*. She’s also been seen in *Trial by Jury* as the Lady with the Green Bag (for lack of a name), *Cousin Hebe* in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Isabel* in *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Fleta* in *Iolanthe* and *Aunt Eadie* and *Gossip #3* in *A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol*. She was also set to perform as the performing understudy for *Pitti-Sing* in the now-postponed 2020 production of *The Mikado*. Tamara was also a part of the Harlem ensemble in *Star Playhouse’s* 2010 production of *Ragtime*. Offstage, she is a longtime member of the company’s executive board, including two stints as president, and works as a graphic designer (visit at www.tdsgraphicdesignstudio.com)

MIRIAM SMIAROWSKI (Louise Scott Russell) joined the company in 2008, and has performed in a number of productions in subsequent years—most notably playing *Angelina* in *Trial By Jury*. She is thrilled to be reunited with the company, if only virtually, and to be singing with so many familiar faces once again.

ANTHONY STELMACH (*The New York Mirror* 1) is a very lucky man. He gets to spend his time with the most wonderful wife around (Elizabeth Stelmach) and their two small dogs (Teddy and Bean). He has traveled around the sun more than 45 times already. During those revolutions he has been active in various aspects of theater including acting, playing in pits, conducting pits and assistant directing. He has also enjoyed sharing his knowledge of music with many students through the years.

LIZ STELMACH (*The New York Sun*) is a “Jill of all trades” both onstage and off. She worked as a stage manager and backstage crew for several Long Island venues while earning her education degrees. Through the years she has performed in classical, medieval/Renaissance, a cappella and barbershop groups. Liz now enjoys singing in the ensemble for the Light Opera Company, but her favorite role is and always will be as a special-education teacher.

TOM TREMPY (*Hilarion/Luiz*) grew up in Massapequa, Long Island and was a member of the company from 1974 to 1984, singing tenor roles including *Edwin* in *Trial by Jury*, *Ralph Rackstraw* in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Frederic* in *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Lord Tolloller* in *Iolanthe*, *Nanki-Poo* in *The Mikado* and *Marco* in *The Gondoliers*. He then moved to the other side of the podium, serving as music director and conductor for his final three years with the group. He left the company to pursue opportunities with other local and regional opera companies, and now does church and temple work.

KARINA VARTANIAN (Princess Kalyba) is thrilled to be a part of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan! She is a senior in high school and plans to attend college and major in classical vocal performance. Her past credits with the company include Cheapside Jackie in A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol and ensemble work in The Gondoliers, Patience and The Pirates of Penzance. She was excited to be playing Peep Bo in The Mikado, but unfortunately that production was postponed due to the pandemic. She was a solo finalist in the Armenian Youth Talent Competition in 2019, which brought her to the stage at Carnegie Hall, and also was a solo finalist in the Elite Music Competition, whose April concert at Carnegie Hall was canceled, as was the April performance of the Concert Festival Competition (in which she was a second-place solo finalist). In June she composed, performed, and produced an original composition and video entitled “Thank You for the Memories,” a tribute to her school’s teachers and the graduating class of 2020. She is excited to share her love of Gilbert & Sullivan with a talented cast of people who love it as much as she does!

KARA VERTUCCI (Chief Mourner), classically trained in voice at the University of North Texas, is thrilled to be performing once again with the Light Opera Company after performing the roles of Prettia in Thespis, Josephine in H.M.S. Pinafore, Mabel in The Pirates of Penzance, Patience in Patience, Phyllis in Iolanthe and Gianetta in The Gondoliers, as well as playing Bella in two productions of A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol and starring in both The World According to Gilbert & Sullivan and the stage version of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan. She is so grateful to God for the opportunity to perform virtually despite COVID restrictions and is looking forward to resuming live performances of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert and Sullivan in the future. Her favorite opera and musical-theater roles include Sharon Graham in Master Class, Tuptim in The King and I, Mrs. Nordstrom in A Little Night Music, Maria Rainer in The Sound of Music, Antonia in Man of La Mancha, Hodel in Fiddler on the Roof, Dorabella in Mozart’s Cosi Fan Tutte, Erste Knabe in Mozart’s The Magic Flute, and Prima Cercatrice in Puccini’s Suor Angelica. Vertucci has been heard as the soprano soloist in Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater, Beethoven’s Mass in C Major and Beethoven’s Choral Fantasy, and has sung at Carnegie Hall in a John Rutter conducted performance of Verdi’s Requiem.

JESSE WALDINGER (Arthur Sullivan) joined the Light Opera Company in 1978. The following year, during a critical period for the company, he served as president for a brief time, stepping down when matters settled. A baritone, he sang in the chorus and in minor principal roles, such as the Notary in The Sorcerer, the Bos’n in H.M.S. Pinafore, Samuel in The Pirates of Penzance and Pish-Tush in The Mikado, as well as Shloyme the Shlemiel (an alternate-universe Dick Deadeye) in Der Shirtz, the Yiddish version of H.M.S. Pinafore. Except for a 1993 cameo as a fill-in for the Notary in The Sorcerer, his company swan song came in 1988 as Major-General Stanley in The Pirates of Penzance. Fifteen years later he returned to reprise his role as Pish-Tush in the company’s 50th-anniversary reunion production of Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan, in which he and Marty Fuller (later Gilbert to his Sullivan) performed in the “Chippy Chopper” trio. A medical malpractice attorney, Jesse retired and relocated with his wife to his present home in the Berkshires in 2013. There he continues to write plays, mostly short ones on historical subjects, which enjoy local productions.

GAYDEN WREN (Author/Director/Narrator) is a New York-based journalist, theatrical director and country singer/songwriter who has been a member of the Gilbert & Sullivan Light Opera Company of Long Island since 1976. Besides this play, his works include A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol (1994) and the critical work A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Art of Gilbert & Sullivan (2001). He is currently writing Only in Theatrical Performances: The Art of ‘The Mikado’ and co-writing Thomas Z. Shepard’s Recording Broadway: A Life in Cast Albums. For information on his country music, visit www.TennesseeWalt.com.



A Note on Sources

Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan is based on the diaries and correspondence of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, as well as contemporary letters, memoirs, newspaper articles and other documents.

In the case of the letters of Gilbert and Sullivan, I am indebted to New York's Pierpont Morgan Library, and to Frederic Wilson, for many years the curator of its Gilbert & Sullivan collection, for making its unique assortment of documents available to me.

Quotations from other documents have, for the most part, been acquired through other people's books. I am particularly indebted to Jane W. Stedman's *W.S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian and His Theatre* (Oxford University Press, 1996) and to Arthur Jacobs' *Arthur Sullivan: A Victorian Musician* (Oxford University Press, 1984) and its informative bibliography. Reginald Allen's *The First Night Gilbert & Sullivan* (Heritage Press, 1958) provided many telling newspaper reviews.

Most of the readings are from longer documents, and have been edited for considerations of length. With few exceptions, I have neither added nor changed a word in any of the readings; when I have, it has been simply in the interest of condensation—I will warrant that none of my sparse alterations have changed the point of the quotation in question.

I should acknowledge one exception which is perhaps trivial, but certainly pervasive. Gilbert and Sullivan most frequently signed their letters "Very truly yours," but used a number of other sign-offs at least occasionally. For dramatic purposes (and to validate my title) I have standardized this usage.

This show also reflects insights that I picked up in conversations, back in the 1980s and 1990s, with Janette Kennedy, Ralph MacPhail Jr., Stephanie M. Muntone, Raymond J. Osnato and too many others to list. We are all of us products of the worlds in which we live, and I'm blessed to live in one that's filled with brilliant and talented people. Much of what I've seen originated in someone else's eyes.

--Gayden Wren, February 2021

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Check www.gaslocoli.org for information on our next virtual performance, *Trial by Zoom*, coming June 2021 and *The Mikado* coming in 2022.