Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society presents:

The Enduring Genius of Gilbert & Sullivan

A VIRTUAL SHOWCASE
October 24, 2020 8:00 pm EDT
Premiering on YouTube
A Note from the Producer

Each year since our founding in 1980 we have taken great pleasure in bringing one of Gilbert & Sullivan’s ingenious comic operettas to the stage. And in this our 40th anniversary year, our performers and crew were greatly looking forward to a new season and our planned production of Ruddigore.

When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in mid-March and everybody forced to hunker down, we held out hope that things might improve enough and do so in time for us to stage the show in the fall.

Alas, it was not to be. Like virtually all performing groups, we were forced to cancel our plans.

Unable to perform on stage in front of a live audience, we looked for other ways to engage our talented performers and our audience. Thus began our efforts to bring you virtual entertainment on YouTube. These include clips of numbers from our past shows and regular releases of full length videos of one of our full productions. To date we have released full length videos of Iolanthe, The Pirates of Penzance, and Princess Ida.

We also created some original virtual entertainment. In June we released Two Musical Musings About Our Isolation Frustration, which contained two parody numbers: “Into quarantine we must go” (sung to “Into parliament he shall go” from Iolanthe) and “For a month to dwell in domestic hell” (sung to “For a month to dwell in a dungeon cell” from Princess Ida).
A Note from the Producer, continued

Our latest virtual entertainment offering is this month’s virtual showcase video: The Enduring Genius of Gilbert & Sullivan.

The idea for this virtual showcase came from our Music Director, Dr. John Dreslin. In it featured cast members perform a song from each of the 14 shows in the G&S canon. As in our live showcases, along with those songs we fill you in on the show’s story line and the scene and situation from the show leading to the song.

We have also included some interesting backstories about Gilbert and Sullivan’s brilliant collaborations with one another (under the management of Richard D’Oyly Carte), their often strained relationship, and the events and ideas of the time that lead to the creation of each show. Those things, and the unique talents of these two men, are the things that inspired and shaped the shows. The shows’ whimsical stories and enchanting music charmed and delighted the audiences of the day and continue to capture our hearts today.

We look forward to performing for you live on the stage in 2021 with a full production of Ruddigore. Until then, we hope you enjoy this latest virtual showcase and the other streaming videos on our YouTube channel.

John Freedman
Vice President, Producer
Climbing Over Rocky Mountain
THESPIS (1871)

**Story Bite:** An acting troupe, headed by Thespis, temporarily trades places with the Greek gods, who have grown elderly and ignored by the people. The actors are comically inept rulers – even worse than the gods themselves (even though they cleaned up the temple on Mount Olympus). Seeing what a mess the actors have made, the gods retake their rightful place, and send the actors back to earth as “eminent tragedians, whom no one ever goes to see”.

**Introduction**

JOHN E. DRESLIN has been music director for the Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society for 30 seasons. During that time, he has conducted most of the Gilbert and Sullivan canon multiple times. He has participated in over 100 productions across Connecticut and the Eastern United States as music director, conductor, accompanist, or actor in various genres of musical theater, from opera to Broadway musicals. He has received nine Eugene O’Neill awards for excellence in Community Theater, and a Lifetime Achievement award from Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society. He is also a recognized scholar and lecturer on Gilbert and Sullivan. He has been the organist at the Union Baptist Church in Mystic, CT for the last twenty-eight years. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Wagner College and a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from Tufts University. He retired from Waterford Dental Associates in 2011 and now considers himself a musician by profession. He resides in Stonington, CT with his wife, Monika.
JOHN FREEDMAN has been performing with CG&SS since 2012. He appeared as Apollo in 2019's Thespis, Pooh-bah in 2018 CG&SS Production of The Mikado, as King Gama in CG&SS 2017 production of Princess Ida and was Sergeant of Police in the CG&SS 2016 production of The Pirates of Penzance. Other roles he has undertaken with the group are: Private Willis in Iolanthe, Don Alhambra Del Bolero and Giorgio in The Gondoliers, First Yeoman, and understudy for Wilfred Shadbolt, in The Yeomen of the Guard, Bob Becket in H.M.S. Pinafore, and Jury Foreman in Trial By Jury. He has also played the Sergeant of Police in the Greater Meriden Concert Chorale’s production of The Pirates of Penzance, and the Mikado in their production of The Mikado. In addition to producing the show, John is also on the CG&SS Board of Directors, works on their Marketing Committee, and administers CG&SS on-line ticketing and phone systems. Now retired (but busier than ever), John is a former IT Director at Foxwoods. He and his wife Judy live in Preston, CT.
THE ENDURING GENIUS OF GILBERT & SULLIVAN

My Name is John Wellington Wells
THE SORCERER (1877)

ALLAN CHURCH is very happy to be participating in this Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society production. He has acted for nearly 30 years in a variety of venues, including, notably, CG&SS, where he played, besides Wells, such types as Koko, Bunthorne, Dick Dead-Eye, the Duke of Plaza Toro, the Lord Chancellor, and the Sergeant of Police. He is also a past president of CG&SS. Church has also appeared with Wallingford Community Theater, Saybrook Stage Company, Actors’ Ensemble of Branford, ArtFarm, Elm Shakespeare, and Simsbury Light Opera. Retired from 35 years as a daily newspaper editorial page editor, he has served as Transit Administrator for the City of Meriden for the last seven years. He substitutes as his church’s organist and serves as a Simulated Patient at Fairfield University’s School of Nursing. His home is in Meriden with wife, daughter, dog, and cats. Thanks to all the folks who have been working hard to make this production a success.

Story Bite: The story line that Gilbert devised was one he would often return to, revolving about a magic love potion that causes whomever partakes of it to fall madly in love with the first person he or she should see. Of course, in true Gilbert fashion, this leads to a lot of comical mismatches.
**Story Bite:** The story satirizes the English social class system by setting a love story aboard a British Man of War moored in Portsmouth harbor. An ordinary seaman, Ralph Rackstraw, and the wealthy captain’s daughter, Josephine, have fallen in love. There are plot twists with the First Lord of the Admiralty involved, and a case of babies switched at birth.

**Kathleen Thompson** is no stranger to the CG&SS stage. She has performed most of the leading soprano roles with the group, including Yum-Yum in *The Mikado*, Josephine in *Pinafore*, Rose Maybud in *Ruddigore*, Phyllis in *Iolanthe*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Patience in *Patience*, and Aline in *The Sorcerer*. You may also remember her as a valiant Lady Psyche in *Princess Ida*, where she donned a leather vest and armor to protect the women’s university from the men. Her love for G&S came through her late voice teacher, Leighton Phraner. Kathleen has sung with Leighton and Bob Cumming in the Gilbert & Sullivan Trio, performing to diverse audiences around Connecticut. She also performed with the Valley Opera Quintet. A retired banker, Kathleen has now gone back to one of her first loves, songwriting. She is making her own album, and writes songs for others who have a special message they want put to music.
JANET ALDRICH is a CT-based soprano who holds a BA in Voice from the University of Connecticut. While at UConn, she was the soprano soloist in Schubert's Mass in G and sang in various Songfests and honors recitals, as well as singing roles with UConn's Opera Outreach Program. She has performed in various roles and productions with UConn Opera Theater, Simsbury Light Opera, and the CT G&S Society. Janet is no stranger to the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire, having sung Isobel and Mabel in The Pirates of Penzance, Melissa in Princess Ida, and Gianetta in The Gondoliers.

**Story Bite:** The theme of the story is steadfastness to duty. Frederic, a young apprentice pirate has reached 21 years and wishes to leave the life of piracy for a more respectable career. He falls in love with Mabel and is about to marry her, when he finds out that he was born on Leap Year, and won’t reach his 21st birthday until 1940! Frederick’s devotion to duty forces him to join the band of pirates once more, and hilarious fighting ensues between the pirates and police.

**Poor, Wandering One**

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE (1879) Janet Aldrich

JANET ALDRICH is a CT-based soprano who holds a BA in Voice from the University of Connecticut. While at UConn, she was the soprano soloist in Schubert's Mass in G and sang in various Songfests and honors recitals, as well as singing roles with UConn’s Opera Outreach Program. She has performed in various roles and productions with UConn Opera Theater, Simsbury Light Opera, and the CT G&S Society. Janet is no stranger to the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire, having sung Isobel and Mabel in The Pirates of Penzance, Melissa in Princess Ida, and Gianetta in The Gondoliers.
Am I Alone and Unobserved?

PATIENCE (1881)

SPENCER M. REESE received his undergraduate degree in voice at UConn in 2013, where he was a University Scholar in the Honors Program. In 2015, he earned a master’s degree in opera stage directing at the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Steven Daigle and Jan Opalch. While there, he assistant directed two complete opera seasons, directed a double bill of The Old Maid and the Thief and La voix humaine, and choreographed the musical She Loves Me. Dr. Reese then returned to UCONN where he completed his doctoral studies achieving a DMA in vocal performance. Dr. Reese has spent summers in residence with the Ohio Light Opera since 2014, serving as the company’s assistant director and choreographer in 30+ shows including over half the Gilbert and Sullivan canon. Also a familiar face on the OLO stage Dr. Reese appeared in 2019 as Danny Churchill in Girl Crazy, Jack in Into the Woods, and Frederic in Pirates of Penzance. Dr. Reese brought his skills in opera production and his experience with the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire to his home state for CG&SS’ production of Thespis in the fall of 2019.

Story Bite: Gilbert turned to the aesthetic movement which was sweeping artistic circles at the time, personified by the poet Swinburne, artist Whistler, and playwright and author Oscar Wilde. The result was Patience, a tale of two rival poets. All the upper-class young ladies are enraptured by these esthetes, and have turned their collective backs on their former love interests, a troop of Dragoon Guards. However, the poets have set their eyes on the innocent (and rather clueless) village milk maid.
DAVID SCHANCUPP has appeared in countless musical and nonmusical productions across the state including Hillhouse Opera, News Britain Opera, Westport Country Playhouse, Nutmeg Players, Orange Players, Something Players, and Castle Craig Players. Select roles include the Commendatore (Don Giovanni), Benoît and Alcindoro (La Bohème), Ali Hakim (Oklahoma), J.B. Biggley (How to Succeed in Business), Hines (Pajama Game), Tito Merelli (Lend Me a Tenor), Teddy (Arsenic and Old Lace), Herr Schultz (Cabaret), and his favorite role, Tevye (Fiddler on the Roof). He has appeared in virtually all the bass-baritone roles in the Gilbert and Sullivan Repertoire, performing with not only Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society, but also Simsbury Light Opera, and Troupers Light Opera with whom he recently appeared as the "Ducato" in their production of The Mikado re-set in Renaissance Italy. He also appeared as Pooh-Bah in our 2018 production of The Mikado, celebrating his 20th anniversary with CG&SS. In his non-theatrical life, David practices law in New Haven.

**Story Bite:** This time the satirical target would be the British Parliament, in particular the House of Lords. The story centers around Strephon, whose father was mortal and whose mother (the title character, Iolanthe) was a fairy. He is in love with the shepherdess Phyllis, who has also completely captivated all of the peers. However, being a ward of the Lord Chancellor, she cannot marry without his consent, which he withholds since he himself is smitten by her. In revenge, the Queen of the Fairies sends Strephon into Parliament where, because of his magical powers, he can make them vote any way he wants.
A Lady Fair of Lineage High

PRINCESS IDA (1884)

**Story Bite:** The theme is women’s education. The story was based on a narrative poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson which Gilbert had previously adapted as a tongue in cheek stage play. In a nutshell, the story concerns the princess, Ida, who wants nothing to do with men and has founded a women’s boarding school in a fortified castle where even the mention of men is forbidden. The problem is that she was engaged as a baby to Prince Hilarion. When she doesn’t show up for the scheduled wedding, Hilarion and two friends decide to infiltrate the school. After painfully scaling the walls, they disguise themselves as female students in hopes of winning over the princess.

**ERIN ALDRICH** received her Bachelor’s of Music from The Hartt School. She has performed in four shows with CG&SS. She has appeared in The Mikado as Pitti-Sing, Princess Ida as Lady Psyche, and the Pirates of Penzance as Isobel. Erin’s other credits include Into the Woods, The Merry Widow, Iolanthe, Amahl and the Night Visitors, and Les Miserables. She has also appeared as a soloist in the Manchester Community College Chorale and the Hartt Choir. She has received the Certificate of Achievement in Music at Manchester Community College in 2014, and 2015.
THE ENDURING GENIUS OF GILBERT & SULLIVAN

The Sun Whose Rays
THE MIKADO (1885)  

Sierra Manning

**Story Bite:** Gilbert happened by chance to visit a Japanese Exhibition in a London suburb and was greatly impressed with displays of Japanese cultural life. He was inspired by this experience to set a story in Japan. The result was The Mikado, the story of the romance of Nanki-Poo, the son of the Emperor of Japan, disguised as a wandering minstrel, and the lovely school girl Yum-Yum. Unfortunately, Yum-Yum is claimed in marriage by her guardian, Ko-Ko, the lord high executioner. As always, there are plot twists, political satire, and all (mostly) ends well.

Sierra Manning is a Music Education graduate of Central Connecticut State University. As a soprano soloist, she performed in CCSU’s spring 2015 and 2016 honors recitals, and has placed in the Upper College division of the CT NATS Competition in October 2016. Ms. Manning has had the pleasure of performing with multiple theater companies, including the CT Lyric Opera, Simsbury Light Opera Company, Connecticut Theater Company, and the Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society. Recent performances were Lady Psyche in Princess Ida, and Yum-Yum in The Mikado.
**Story Bite:** For his new project, Ruddigore, Gilbert turned to satirizing popular melodrama, with its stock characters of evil landowners, maidens in distress, heroic seamen, and the supernatural. An etiquette-loving young woman is in love with a shy young man, who turns out to be hiding from his true identity as one is cursed to do a crime per day or die. Plus, there’s a mad woman, the younger brother who doesn’t want to keep doing the crimes, and ghosts.

**MICHAEL E. LOOMIS** is a native of Guilford, CT. He was a full-time performer with Capitol Steps, Washington, DC’s musical political comedy troupe. During that time he starred in and directed more than 5,000 performances. In addition, he performed in more than 40 productions with many community theater groups in the DC area. He has sung principal roles in every G&S operetta (except for Grand Duke) multiple times. His television and radio credits include performances on PBS, The Today Show, Good Morning America, Nightline, and World News Tonight. He also performed off-Broadway at the John Houseman Theater and Kennedy Center Opera House. He also has the distinction of being Guilford’s last official Town Crier. With CG&SS he was Don Alhambra in the 2014 Gondoliers. He was artistic director from 2016 -2018, directing The Pirates of Penzance, Princess Ida, and The Mikado while also having stage roles in all three.
Story Bite: This work is considered the most operatic of all their joint ventures, and indeed is of a much more serious nature. It is set during the 16th century, with a nobleman condemned to death by a scheming relative on a trumped-up charge of sorcery. To foil this kinsman, he marries a wandering player so that his inheritance will go to her. However, another plot is also afoot, as some of his friends have engineered an escape for him, disguising him as a member of the Yeomen who guard the tower. Now both partners find themselves trapped in the bonds of marriage to a stranger. This leads to many unexpected consequences.

JULIE RUMBOLD – a Connecticut native. Julie has worked with Berkshire Opera Festival, The Whitney Center for the Arts, Lollipop Opera, Contemporary Theater Company, CT Lyric Opera, Simsbury Light Opera Company, and CT Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Julie has studied and performed with New England Opera intensive program in Boston and at the International music festival in Vols am Schlern, Italy. In 2016 she was a finalist for American opera Idol with Opera Connecticut. Julie was also the proud organizer and key soloist for a benefit concert for Cystic Fibrosis in 2017. Last year Julie debuted the role of Marie-Therese in the world premiere of the new opera The Weeping Woman by Michael Dilthley (composer) and Brian Leahy Doyle (librettist). Some other notable roles include Dorabella (Cosi fan tutte), Eboli (Don Carlo), Elle (La voix humaine), Hansel (Hansel and Gretel), Prince Orlofsky (Die Fledermaus) Princess Ida (Princess Ida), Phoebe (Yeoman of the Guard), Plaintiff (Trial by Jury), Iolanthe (Iolanthe).
**Story Bite:** The story satirizes the appeal of a republican monarchy where all offices, from Lord Chancellor to cooks and cleaning staff, are considered equal. Two brother gondoliers discover that one of them is of royal blood and should be a king, but nobody knows which one, and, until his identity is found out, they must reign jointly “as one individual.” Meanwhile, they’re married, but one of them was secretly wed at birth. So two men are married to three women!

NATALIE WOOD, a music scholarship recipient with a BFA in Theatre, has appeared in performances in CT, RI, and MA including A Christmas Carol (Christmas Past), Passion Play (Mary Magdala), The Fantasticks (Louisa), The King of Hearts (Jeunne Fille), The Music Man (Marion Paroo), Fiddler on the Roof (Tzeitle), West Side Story, Titanic and Oklahoma; and stage productions including The Matchmaker (Minnie Fay), The Importance of Being Earnest (Cecily), Time of the Hand and Eye (Charlotte Stewart), and The Imaginary Invalid (Louise). A classically trained dancer, her performances include Snow White (Snow White), Peter and the Wolf (Cat), Pas de Quatre (Lucile Grahn), and The Nutcracker (Russian Dance Soloist, corps). As a clarinetist she has performed with orchestras in the tri-state area. She has directed and choreographed musicals and performed in several televised solo benefit concerts featuring works from opera and the musical stage. In ‘real life’, she is a Project & Program Manager, and practiced law in Glastonbury and Simsbury. She resides in Hebron with her wonderful husband, Scott, and their two boys.
TIM THROCKMORTON has been seen on various stages, including portraying almost all of the leading tenor roles in Gilbert & Sullivan operettas in all three CT G&S companies and was a founding member of the Bucks (PA) G&S Society. Besides portraying Nanki-Poo in 2018’s The Mikado, some of his favorite G & S roles are Fairfax in The Yeomen of the Guard, Marco in The Gondoliers, Lord Tolloller in Iolanthe, Box in Cox & Box (S without G). He also had the good fortune to play roles in many other musical productions, including a recent production of I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change at Arts at Angeloria’s, Eisenstein in Die Fledermaus, and Richard Henry Lee in 1776. When not on stage Tim is a recovering attorney and the Director of Fiduciary Services at Webster Private Bank. Tim lives in Middle Haddam, CT with his wife Kathi, and their fourteen furry and feathery substitute children.

Story Bite: The story is of a South Sea island that wishes to redesign its customs on the basis of an idealized Great Britain. To further this purpose, a group of British experts are hired to redo society. Every citizen ends up forming his own Company Limited. Not only that, but any action instigated by one party is immediately undone by another. As you would imagine, chaos ensues. And they all live prosperously ever after.
Story Bite: The plot in some ways mirrors that of their very first collaboration, Thespis. But instead of a group of players assuming the duties of the Olympian Gods, this acting company must now take over the running of an impoverished central European Duchy. The plot hinges on the misinterpretation of a 100-year old law regarding statutory duels – which are decided by drawing cards. The leading man of the troupe, spearheads a rebellion against the Grand Duke and becomes engaged to four different women before the plot is resolved.

DAVID HENDERSON has performed as Ko-Ko in The Mikado, as well as countless other leading roles with CG&SS. He has also performed with the Greater Meriden Concert Chorale in semi-staged productions of The Mikado (Nanki-Poo), The Pirates of Penzance (Frederic), and Ruddigore (Robin). Favorite roles at Castle Craig Playhouse include Curly (Oklahoma! which he also directed), Captain von Trapp (The Sound of Music), Tevye (Fiddler on the Roof) and Felix (The Odd Couple). David has toured in the New England Touring Company’s Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and appeared at the New Britain Repertory Theater in They’re Playing Our Song. David is active in the music program of First Church of Christ in Wethersfield where he sings, rings English hand bells and substitutes at the organ. He also enjoys singing with the chamber choir Novi Cantori and the a cappella madrigal quartet Elizabethan Consort. When he’s not actively on stage, he enjoys taking pictures of those who are. He is grateful to God and to his wife for many and varied performing opportunities.
Closing Remarks

MUSIC DIRECTOR

John Dreslin

Hail, Poetry!

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Cast from the 2016 Performance

Production Staff

Production .................... John Dreslin (Music Director), John Freedman (Producer)
Accompaniment ................................................................. John Dreslin
Lighting ......................................................... Craig Dawson
Videography .............................. Lovie Kern, Frank Fulchiero (SEC-TV)
Sound ............................................................ Rich Ives, IDEAS Unlimited, LLC
Video and Audio editing ...... Frank Fulchiero (SEC-TV), Kathleen Thompson, John Freedman
Show program ........................................ Kathleen Thompson
Publicity ......................... Dick Tecca, Ed Kerrigan, John Freedman, Natalie Wood, Tom McCarthy

Our special thanks to Dave Moorehead, Marcia Miller, and the United Methodist Church of Gales Ferry for arranging the use of Koe Hall at UMCGF to record this showcase production.
Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society was founded in 1980, and is dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of the rich heritage of satire and melody that emerged from the unique partnership of William Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan (between 1870 and 1900). The art form they created together, which was nurtured by impresario Richard D’Oyly Carte at The Savoy Theatre, established the underpinnings which sustain the modern-day musical.

We expected to celebrate our 40th anniversary with a magnificent performance of Ruddigore, originally scheduled for October, 2020. The pandemic forced us to cancel the show for 2020. As of now, we plan a belated 40th anniversary celebration and to stage Ruddigore in the fall of 2021. Check our website at CTGANDS.org for more information. And if you want the latest insider information on what we’re up to, sign up for our email list at CTGANDS.org/contact.

As always, we appreciate your support in the form of enthusiastic attendance, inviting your friends, and donations.

Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society

presents

RUDDIGORE
THE ENDURING GENIUS OF GILBERT & SULLIVAN

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Timothy Throckmorton

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ASSOCIATES ($50+)

Kathleen Daniele

Patricia Cyr Devoe

Virginia Evensen

Laura Heckmann

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Gerald Leibowitz

Ronald Luich

Margaret Middleton

Marcia Miller

Jean Shaw

Dutcha Slieker-Hersant

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