



The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Sussex

President: Valerie Masterson C.B.E.

Vice Presidents: Stephen Brown, Simon Butteriss, Barry Clark, William Colbourne, Bruce Graham, Donald Maxwell, Cynthia Morey, Michael Simkins, Richard Suart.

Honorary Members: Christine Colbourne, Clare Samson, Kay Tarran.

NEWSLETTER

Chairperson's Remarks

It has been a very exiting summer starting with an excellent concert version of *The Pirates of Penzance* by our friends, the Godalming Operatic Society. The tickets sales for this concert exceeded all others, which made our Treasurer, Laurence, very happy. Then in June we were all invited to Eyot House, on D'Oyly Carte Island, for a barbecue and a showing of a few items (costumes and memorabilia) from Melvyn Tarran's G & S collection and then, late in the afternoon, we were treated to a concert from D'Oyly Carte Opera Company with songs from most of the G & S operas. It was a perfect end to a perfect day.

Richard and myself were invited to a reception held by the Bishop of Chichester celebrating the Common Good held in the gardens of Chichester Cathedral which gave us an opportunity to meet other people and talk about what we are doing to keep Gilbert & Sullivan alive. The gardens are magnificent and a number of business cards were exchanged.

I thank you for your continued support of our Society and I can assure you that our next year will be just as exciting.

Sylvia (Chairperson)

We had a record attendance at our April meeting when more than 30 members of Godalming Operatic society presented a semi-staged performance of *The Pirates of Penzance* based on their recent production. They included all the music from the opera which was ably woven together with an effective narration summarising the plot as they went along. The standard of singing and diction was very high and helped remind us of Sullivan's musical mastery as well as the wit of Gilbert's libretto. Our enjoyment of the concert was further enhanced by the excellent accompaniment in addition to the fact that all the performers were in full costume and took care to act out their roles so well. Particular highlights included a wonderful performance of "Hail Poetry" and the tomfoolery of the police.

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Remaining events this year for The Sussex Society

10th September 2023

Richard Woodall, Rebecca Hughes and Russell Ablewhite from the Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan Society will entertain us for the afternoon. Those of you who saw their *Ruddygore* in 2022 will no doubt remember Rebecca for her excellent portrayal of Mad Margaret and of the Fairy Queen in this year's *Iolanthe*.

All Things G&S - both locally and further afield

And to round off the year:

26th November 2023

Barry Clark and Friends

We are very pleased that our Vice-President, Barry, will return to give us one of his excellent Christmas concerts. Hopefully some of you will recall his superb event from 5 years ago – I am sure this concert will sell out quickly once tickets go on sale.

Visit to D'Oyly Carte Island

On Saturday 24th June, a number of Society members were privileged enough to attend the visit to Eyot House on D'Oyly Carte Island which was once owned by Richard D'Oyly Carte and is now being lovingly restored by the current owners, Andy and Sheila Hill. It was a balmy afternoon and we were treated to lovely food and drink as we sat in the grounds and enjoyed the company of fellow G & S enthusiasts including people from all around the country, our friends from Godalming Operatic Society, and previous members of the D'Oyly Carte company including Lorraine Daniels who will be joining us for *Topsy Turvy 2*. We were also delighted to have the opportunity to view some of Melvyn's great museum collection which was on display. The day concluded with a wonderful concert, *A la Carte*, which included a mix of Gilbert and Sullivan musical favourites, linked together by extracts from diary records and letters as well as reviews from the time. It gave an amusing overview of the tempestuous relationship between Gilbert and Sullivan and their association with Richard D'Oyly Carte. The soloists were outstanding and consisted of Richard Suart, Yvonne Howard, William Morgan, Rebecca Bottone and John Savournin. They were ably accompanied by Timothy End on Sullivan's 1881 Broadwood piano. A particular highlight of the concert was Richard Suart's performance of *As Some Day It May Happen* with an updated and highly topical *Little List* which had us all in stitches.

It was a highly memorable and most enjoyable visit, and we look forward to further opportunities to visit this idyllic place in the future.

Princess Ida

Princess Ida is rarely performed but many people would suggest it includes some of Gilbert and Sullivan's finest work, so a number of Society members were delighted to attend a semi-staged production of this opera on Wednesday 7th June at Queen Elizabeth Hall in London and we were not disappointed. Simon Butteriss provided an animated narration which summarised the plot and associated dialogue, including some contemporary references such as "years ago in happier times when there were only two genders". The musical accompaniment from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment conducted by John Wilson was very strong, contributing much to the variations in mood within the work. The performance of both soloists and chorus members was commendable and there was much impressive choreography as well as the use of imaginative costumes which added to the fun of the performance.

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Iolanthe

A group of Society members went to see Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan Society's performance of *Iolanthe* on Sunday, 2nd July which was an enjoyable and highly entertaining production. The soloists were all in fine voice but Rebecca Hughes, as a magnificent Fairy Queen, was particularly impressive and we look forward to her visit to us in September. There was also first rate musical direction from Russell Ablewhite. Some of the costumes, including the peers' robes and guardsmen uniforms, were traditional but the fairies had steampunk costumes, and the Fairy Queen sported a Madonna-like cone-shaped bra. The fairies were, however, lit up with fairy lights which was a welcome touch. The set was effective with back projections helping depict Arcadia and the Houses of Parliament for the different scenes. It was good to see such enthusiasm from all performers and their love of the work was clear to see as well as infectious.

Topsy Turvy 2

The follow-up concert to last year's *Topsy Turvy Tea* is progressing well and we have an amazing line-up to entertain you under the direction of Simon Gray. On stage will be Barry Clark, Jane Metcalfe, Martin Milnes, Bruce Graham, Fenton Gray, Louise Crane, Alexandra Hazard, James Cleverton, David Steadman and Elinor Jane Moran and in the audience will be Valerie Masterson, David Mackie, Vera Ryan, Michael Heyland, Lorraine Daniels and Linda Anne Hutchison.

This concert will take place on Sunday afternoon 22nd October in the theatre in Hurstpierpoint College in Mid Sussex.

Tickets are now on sale at £15 each and are going fast. Tickets can be purchased from TicketSource at:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/topsy-turvy-2>

where a booking fee will be charged.

Alternatively, if you prefer, tickets can be purchased (with no booking fee) using cheque or bank transfer by contacting Laurence on topsyturvytea2022@gmail.com or by writing to 6 Longhurst, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 0TG for more details.

Don't forget that as the venue is a little off the 'beaten track', we have made arrangements with a local community transport scheme to provide a direct transfer to the theatre, leaving Haywards Heath Railway Station at 1.45pm and then returning to the station at the end of the concert. The cost for this service is £15 return – the equivalent cost for a return trip by taxi would be c. £42. **This service will only be available if we reach a certain number of people wishing to use it** and must be purchased in advance and by 15th September at the latest. If you are interested in this, please contact Laurence via the address shown above to discuss it further.