
The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company's
Production of

RUDDIGORE
OR THE WITCH'S CURSE

WHEN THE NIGHT WIND HOWLS

WILLIAM S. ARTHUR JOE RANBAL
GILBERT SULLIVAN ANDREWS BUIKEMA
BOOK & LYRICS MUSIC DIRECTOR MUSIC DIRECTOR

March 13-April 5, 2020
Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, Minneapolis • Visit gsvloc.org for information and tickets

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN
VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

January to April 2020

A Word of Welcome!

Welcome to the Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company and to our production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*. We are very excited to have you with us!

We have prepared this Survival Guide to help orient you to the company and to our policies, practices, and procedures as we begin our work on this production. While we try to be as complete as possible, there is much that this Guide does not cover. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions that you might have of the Production Staff, the members of the Board, or any other member of the company. We will do all that we can to answer your questions, address your concerns, and make you feel very much "at home."

A Word about Our Company

The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company (or the GSVLOC) was founded in 1979. In its forty-year history, the company has presented fully staged productions of all thirteen Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, as well as works by other authors and composers. This is the fourth time that the company has produced *Ruddigore*!

Our company also appears regularly with the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra at the Lake Harriet Bandshell in the summer to present a concert version of one of the better known Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The concerts take place on a Saturday and Sunday in mid-July, every other year. Currently, there is no concert scheduled for the summer of 2020, but that could change! Participation is open to all who've performed with us in the past and we hope that you will be able to join us for this event when it occurs next.

The hallmark of our company has always been to achieve the highest production values in our shows and to have a wonderful time doing it! The company has always been run in a very "hands-on" manner. We rely on the members of each year's cast to share in all aspects of the production. We also welcome other volunteers to help out behind the scenes. We will ask all cast and crew members to assist in set construction, props gathering, load-in, and, particularly, with the strike and load-out of the set at the theatre, as well as set-up and clean-up of the dressing rooms during the run. We strive to make these activities both fun and productive.

Our Philosophy

Our company has a longstanding tradition of presenting delightful shows of the highest quality, and our culture is exemplified by camaraderie, warmth, and a spirited loyalty to the organization. A few of the cast members for this show are founding members of the company while other cast members joined as recently as last year's production. All are welcome, and it is our sincere hope that many of you joining with us for the first time this year will come back and join us again in future productions.

Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*

Ruddigore, or The Witch's Curse, is a comic opera in two acts, with music by Arthur Sullivan and libretto by W. S. Gilbert.

Ruddigore, or The Witch's Curse, is Gilbert and Sullivan's parody of Victorian melodrama, traditionally set in the Regency Period, decades before Gilbert and Sullivan's time. Director Joe Andrews will take us decades before our time with his vision of *Ruddigore* set as a 1940s film of the golden age of cinema with elements of classic MGM musicals, *film noir*, and the screwball comedies from Hawks, Vidor, and Capra.

Ruddigore tells the story of Robin Oakapple, a young farmer who has a dark secret. He is really Sir Ruthven (pronounced "Rivven") Murgatroyd, the rightful Baronet of Ruddigore, who has gone into hiding. The Baronets of Ruddigore are cursed, and anyone who succeeds to the title has to commit a crime every day, or perish in agony. His younger brother, Despard, believing Ruthven to be dead, has assumed the title and its curse. Robin is in love with Rose Maybud, a beautiful village maiden, but Richard Dauntless, Robin's foster brother, who is seeking Rose for himself, tells Despard of Robin's deception. Robin is forced to accept his true position as the cursed Baronet of Ruddigore, losing Rose to Richard in the process.

Once Robin becomes the Baronet of Ruddigore, he must face the ghosts of his ancestors who confront him to ensure that he commits his daily crime. In the week that Robin's been the Baronet, he's done so half-heartedly at best! Robin eventually discovers a legal loophole in the curse, which leads to a typically Gilbertian happy ending!

Ruddigore was Gilbert and Sullivan tenth collaboration, following *The Mikado* and preceding *The Yeomen of the Guard*. It opened on January 21, 1887 at the Savoy Theatre and ran for 288 performances.

Our Production Staff

The staff for this production of *Ruddigore* includes:

Stage Director:	Joe Andrews
Music Director:	Dr. Randal Buikema
Stage Manager:	Katie McLean
Choreographer:	Penelope Freeh
Set Designer:	Larry Rostad
Costume Designer:	Barb Portinga
Lighting Designer:	Alex Flinner
Props Designer:	Katie Phillips
Set Builder	James “Jay” Scoggin
Audio / Visual Technician:	Bob Johanneck
Orchestra Manager:	Ann Marie McIntire
House Manager	Julia Ockuly
Assistant Stage Manager	Malka Key
Assistant Stage Manager	Brianna Sullivan
Follow Spot Operator / Asst. Stage Manager	Samuel Joseph

As Stage Director, Joe is responsible for the overall concept of the show and for bringing that concept to life through the sets, costumes, and cast.

Our Music Director, Randy, will lead the music rehearsals for both principals and chorus and will conduct the orchestra in rehearsal and performance.

The directors and all staff will work together to ensure that what begins on the page ends up on the stage in a wonderfully creative way!

Our Company Board of Directors

Our company is an organization that is run by its members, and you are very welcome to become a member! Once a year, at the company's Annual Meeting, the company elects a volunteer Board from among its membership to facilitate the production of the next show. The members of the Company Board for this production of *Ruddigore* are:

Producer:	Stephen Hage
Secretary:	Shawn Holt
Treasurer:	John Orbison
Labour Pool Coordinator:	Malka Key
Publicity:	Waldyn Benbenek
Women's Chorus Representative:	Anna Maher
Men's Chorus Representative:	Alexander Gerchak
Orchestra Representative:	Barb Hovey

The duties of the various members of the Board may be summarized as follows:

The Producer is the Board of Directors' representative to the production staff.

The Secretary handles company correspondence, keeps minutes and acts as company historian.

The Treasurer handles money, collects dues and keeps financial records for the company.

The Labour Pool Coordinator recruits workers to make materials and handle them at show time, including sets, props and costumes.

The Publicity person plans and handles publicity for the company and manages correspondence with the news media.

The Women's Chorus Representative represents the female chorus to the Board.

The Men's Chorus Representative represents the male chorus to the Board.

The Orchestra Representative represents the orchestra to the Board.

The Chorus Representatives, Anna and Alexander, will be the primary persons to assist chorus members with questions. Please feel free to talk with them during the production process if you have concerns or input that you would like brought to the Board.

Anna's contact info: 952-529-8561 (cell) / annakmaher27@gmail.com.

Alexander's contact info: 701-799-8076 (cell) / agerchak01@hamline.edu.

The rest of the Board members will make periodic announcements about production details and company information and will be available to field questions about the production as we go along.

We are always looking for new people to run for Board positions. If you think you might be interested, please talk to a current member of the Board about what we do.

Our Rehearsal Space, Lake Harriet United Methodist Church

We spend the first six weeks of rehearsal at Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, located at 4901 Chowen Avenue South, in south Minneapolis. The church is three blocks east of France Avenue, one block north of 50th Street. It is easily accessible from the west off of Highway 100 and the 50th / Vernon Avenue exit, as well as from the east, heading west from Lyndale Avenue on 50th Street.

We will rehearse at Lake Harriet United Methodist Church from Monday, January 20th through Saturday, February 29th after which we move to our theater, **the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, located at 1900 Nicollet Avenue South, in Minneapolis.** We begin rehearsing in the theater on Monday, March 2nd.

Since we can expect wet and snowy weather in January and February, as a courtesy to our hosts, Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, we encourage you to bring a second pair of shoes for rehearsal in order to keep the floors in the space clean, dry and free of salt.

Rehearsals

All rehearsals from Monday, January 20th through Saturday, February 29th will be held at Lake Harriet United Methodist Church.

Full Cast Introductory Rehearsal: Monday, January 20th, from 7:00 to 10:00 pm.

The chorus generally rehearses on Mondays and Thursdays. Those rehearsals begin promptly at 7:00 pm and run until 10:00 pm on Mondays and Thursdays. The Directors may call the chorus to rehearse on Tuesdays and Saturdays, as necessary.

Principals generally rehearse on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Those rehearsals will be scheduled by the Directors and occur on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 10:00 PM and Saturday mornings from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Principals will be added to the Monday and Thursday rehearsals, as scenes which include them are rehearsed.

While these are the typical times cast members are usually called, **all cast members** must understand that they might be called and should be available all Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. A rehearsal schedule with reasonable lead time will be provided to help with your personal scheduling. **Prompt and consistent attendance and attention at rehearsals is crucial.** The Directors make every effort to call people only when they are needed and to use their time well.

The **Understudy Rehearsal** is scheduled for **Sunday, March 8th** with an estimated call of 6:30 pm. This is a mandatory rehearsal for everyone. All understudies will go on for a run through of the show, all other chorus members will join them on stage. All principals will attend to assist their understudies as necessary, both with blocking and adding their vocal support. A small invited audience will be in attendance.

The rehearsal schedule will change during the first week in the theater, the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, at Plymouth Congregational Church, beginning Monday, March 2nd. Parking at the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center is discussed on page 9. Rehearsals will begin earlier and end later. The same will be the case for Tech Week, Sunday, March 8th (the Understudy Rehearsal), Monday, March 9th and Wednesday, March 11th (Tuesday, March 10th is a night off). The estimated call is likely to be 6:30 to 11:00 pm. The Preview Performance / Final Dress Rehearsal will take place on Thursday, March 12th, with an estimated call of 6:30 pm.

Punctuality

All cast and production staff members are expected to arrive as early as necessary in order to be in the rehearsal space and ready to rehearse at the start time for all rehearsals. Rehearsals begin promptly at 7:00 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 10:00 am on Saturdays. **It is our expectation that all cast members will be at the rehearsal space, as called, ready to begin on time.** Please give yourself enough time to arrive, take off your coats, socialize with others, take care of any show related business, and otherwise prepare, so that you are able to begin rehearsing with the rest of the cast on time.

If you have a scheduling conflict with a rehearsal or performance, or if you are going to be late for any reason, you should notify Katie McLean, the Stage Manager. Katie's phone number is 813-523-7644 and her email address is katiemclean.sm@gmail.com . If you must speak with someone immediately and are unable to reach the Stage Manager, you may call Malka Key, Assistant Stage Manager, at 612-999-5271.

Attendance

It is our sincere hope that everyone will understand the importance of being on time and at rehearsal. Our ability to stage a production of the highest quality depends on every cast member's reliability. **All cast members are expected to attend every rehearsal to which they are called, unless their absence has been approved in advance or due to illness or emergency.** Those who miss more than two rehearsals may expect a significant reassignment of blocking and business on stage.

Scheduling conflicts were solicited and have been recorded. Any additional conflicts require the approval of the Stage Director and require you to notify the Stage Manager, as noted above. In particular, if you are ill and believe that you may be contagious, please contact our Stage Manager and stay home.

If a member of the cast's tardiness or absenteeism is deemed to be excessive, the Directors, with the support of the Company Board, are authorized to dismiss that person from the cast. Let us all see that this never occurs.

Attendance for Tech Week rehearsals and all performances are **mandatory**, except for only the most serious circumstances of illness or emergency, or in the very exceptional event that the role has been cast with the understanding that a person will be missing a specific performance. Without any exception, however, the Directors or Stage Manager must be notified by the cast member of a pending absence. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the cast.

Our Performance Schedule

Thursday, March 12, 7:30 PM	Preview Performance
Fridays, March 13, 20, 27, April 3, 7:30 PM	Evening Performances
Saturdays, March 14, 21, 28, April 4 7:30 PM	Evening Performances
Saturday, March 28, 2:00 PM	Matinee Performance
Sundays, March 15, 22, 29, April 5, 2:00 PM	Matinee Performances

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
MARCH 2020						
8	9	10	11	12 PREVIEW 7:30 pm	13 7:30 pm	14 7:30 pm
15 2:00 pm	16	17	18	19	20 7:30 pm	21 7:30 pm
22 2:00 pm	23	24	25	26	27 7:30 pm	28 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm
29 2:00 pm	30	31				
APRIL 2020						
			1	2	3 7:30 pm	4 7:30 pm
5 2:00 pm						

Call is **one hour** before the performance, unless we are otherwise instructed by the Directors or Stage Manager. Earlier calls often occur on Fridays, for “brush up” warm ups, or in the event that an understudy will be replacing a principal for a performance.

Our Performance Space: The Howard Conn Fine Arts Center

We will begin rehearsals at the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center on Monday, March 2nd.

The Howard Conn is a part of the Plymouth Congregational Church complex and is located at 1900 Nicollet Avenue South, in Minneapolis.

The parking lot for the church and theater is available for public use, and there should be enough room for most of us to park there. Certain spots are reserved for church staff and local businesses. These are clearly posted, and the reservations are strictly enforced. **Your car will be towed if you park in a reserved spot.** Occasionally, another event at the church causes the parking lot to be crowded. There is another lot available for overflow parking at Plymouth, and it is on the corner of Franklin Avenue and Blaisdell Avenue, kitty-corner from the Plymouth lot. Street parking is also available, and meters should all be past enforcement hours by the time you arrive for rehearsals and performances.

A parking map can be found on the Directions and Parking page of the GSVLOC website at:

<http://gsvloc.org/tickets/directions-parking/>

It is important to note that, with the exception of water, we are prohibited from eating or drinking on the stage or in the house. You are free to do so, however, anywhere in the backstage area, hallways, or lobby.

Ticket Requests for Cast Members

Cast and Company members can purchase their tickets on the Company Member section of the website, at <http://gsvloc.org/company-members/cast-and-crew-ticket-order-page/>. Doing so allows one to purchase tickets without having to pay the processing fee.

As a part of their consideration, cast members receive two comp tickets to the show, for Opening Night, Friday, March 13th or Friday, March 20th.

For our general audience members, tickets are available online at our web site at **gsvloc.org**. Mail orders are also available. Please encourage your “slow-to-order-tickets” friends and family members to buy tickets early, as this production of *Ruddigore* will likely sell out!

Sometimes cast members' families and friends, often those with small children, come to watch the dress rehearsal on Wednesday of Tech Week, at no cost. They are welcome to do so.

The tickets are very reasonably priced, at **\$26.00** for adults and **\$16.00** for children 12 and under. The Preview Performance is **\$16.00**. Rush tickets are sold as available half an hour before curtain for **\$16.00**.

Communication

One of the company's central goals is to communicate continually with the cast and production staff members. Communication is done primarily via email, followed by announcements at rehearsals. When necessary, we also communicate via phone. Those who will communicate most regularly will be the Stage Manager and Stephen Hage, the Producer. Communications may also come regularly from the directors and the members of the Board.

Tech Week: Security

During our two weeks of rehearsal at the theater, from Monday, March 2nd to Wednesday, March 11th, please confine yourselves to the immediate theatre area and do not roam the halls. Security alarms are usually armed at approximately 9:30 pm, and setting one off would mean a visit from the police. Furthermore, we must never prop open the doors to the building, as that will set off the alarms as well.

Personal Security

It is best not to leave valuables anywhere backstage during performances, as there have been thefts from these rooms in the past. There have also been occasional car break-ins in the parking lot. Your best option is to leave valuables at home or find a hiding place backstage. The backstage costume / dressing rooms are usually in view of the backstage crew, but we can't guarantee that they'll be watched at all times.

Sign In Sheet

The Stage Manager will post a Sign In Sheet for dress rehearsals and performances at the theatre. All cast members and production staff members are required to sign in upon arrival for Tech Week rehearsals and performances. All cast and production staff members are expected to arrive **one hour** before the performance, unless otherwise instructed by the Directors or Stage Manager.

Company Photography and Recordings

By participating in any Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company production, you are agreeing that all photographs, films or recordings of you taken in connection with the production are owned by the company, and are granting the company the perpetual right to use and publish your picture, likeness, voice, performance and action on its website, in social media, and for promotional or any other purpose deemed by the company as appropriate and necessary to serve and advance its interests.

Our Web Site

The web site can provide you with an extraordinary amount of information about The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company and this production of *Ruddigore*.

The web site may be found at www.gsvloc.org.

Many of you may have used this site to find information about the company at the time of your auditions. In the weeks ahead, it will be updated to include performance information, including a guide as to which of our shows still have seats available and which are sold out. It also provides a brief history of the company, photos from previous productions, a means for people to put themselves on our mailing list, and contact information.

A portion of this site is the Company Members Area. To log in, click “Company Members Area” in the upper right corner of the main website’s Home Page.

The username is “**Member**” and the password is “**Dean**” (case sensitive).

This portion of the site includes information intended for cast members and members of the company. This includes the rehearsal schedule, company announcements, company rosters, maps, director’s notes, and many other items, including our company’s Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Vocal Scores, CDs, Cast Photos, DVDs and Souvenirs

Vocal Scores are available for \$5.00. The company subsidizes the cost of the scores, but will do so only once. If you lose your score and need to purchase another, it will be at full price of \$25.00! The company will also provide you with a free CD of selected music from the show, if you’d like to have one.

Other items which you may want to plan for include the cast photo and a DVD of the production. There is more information about this below. Company t-shirts, sweatshirts and mugs, as well as show posters and other items, will be available for sale in the lobby during the run of the show.

Costumes, Props, Hair and Make-up

All cast members are expected to take proper care of all costumes, including properly hanging all costumes on the racks after every rehearsal and performance. All cast members are to report any repair needs to the costume staff immediately. Cast members may make no unauthorized changes in costume, make-up or hairstyle.

Most costume and prop items will be provided by the company during the run. The most notable possible exception is likely to be footwear. The Costume Designer will let us know what will be expected from us. Occasional announcements will be made at rehearsals if we are searching for certain prop items, and you are encouraged to lend them for the run if you are able to do so. The Directors will discuss the make-up needs and expectations with the cast as we draw closer to the performance dates.

Performance Expectations

All cast members have the responsibility to perform the show as directed and rehearsed and to give the best possible performance every time. Ad libs or changes to the blocking or choreography are not permitted. All cast members are expected to appear and conduct themselves in curtain call as directed.

Additional Duties

All cast and production staff members will be assigned one or more nights of clean-up duty following performances and must complete all assigned tasks satisfactorily. Whenever possible, cast and production staff members should assist in costuming, set construction and painting, props, and publicity. All cast and production staff members are expected to participate in the strike, and are to complete their individual assignments satisfactorily.

Alcohol and Illegal Substances

Alcohol and illegal drugs, including marijuana, may not be consumed or used in the rehearsal or performance spaces by a cast or a production staff member at any time. Cast and production staff members may not arrive at any rehearsal or performance intoxicated or impaired in judgment and/or behavior to any degree. Cast and production staff members are to avoid the use of all such substances prior to a rehearsal or performance, as it impacts one's ability to rehearse or perform and may pose a safety hazard to one's self or to others.

Harassment

The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company maintains a standard of respect for all involved in a production. All cast and production staff members are to refrain from behavior that could be considered offensive or harassing, including, but not limited to, conduct or remarks related to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, age or economic status. A violation of this expectation may result in dismissal from the cast and production staff.

If you feel that you have been subjected to harassment of any kind, please report the harassment to a member of the Board.

Company Photo

A company photograph will be scheduled. The cast, crew, orchestra, and production staff will all be included in an on-stage portrait. It will be necessary for the cast to arrive early that day in order to be in costume and makeup in time for the photo. If you want a photograph, you should bring payment on that Saturday, or in advance if you prefer. Stephen Hage will have a sign-up sheet available before opening night. The cost is estimated to be \$20.00.

DVDs of the Show

A crew from the Minneapolis Television Network (MTN) will record a DVD of our performance, most likely on a Sunday matinee performance, early in the run. This is a four camera production and the final results have been very nice. It will be edited for broadcast on Minneapolis cable, and the company will make DVD copies for anyone who wants one, which will cost an estimated \$15.00, when they become available.

It should be noted that Bob Johanneck, our Audio / Visual Technician, records every performance from the light booth, as a part of his regular video monitoring duties. Bob is happy to make copies of these recordings available to company members. As a courtesy, we encourage anyone asking for a copy to reimburse Bob for the disk, for a suggested \$1.00.

Consideration

The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company expects its cast and production staff members to maintain the highest standards of courteous and respectful conduct, as well as theatrical professionalism. These expectations include, but are not limited to, those detailed in this Survival Guide. Those who meet these expectations receive the following consideration:

1. Two comp tickets to the show, which can be used by those designated on Opening Night, Friday, March 13th or Friday, March 20th.
2. A stipend of \$200.00, to be paid following Strike on Sunday, April 5th.

Cast and production staff members sign a document at the beginning of the rehearsal process which provides them with the opportunity to choose to receive the stipend as noted above, or to consider their time and efforts to be a contribution to the Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company.

Dismissal

Cast or production staff members who violate or otherwise fail to meet the company's standards, may be dismissed from the production. Those with the authority to make this decision include the Director, the Music Director and the Stage Manager, with the support of the company's Board, as well as the Board itself. They may do so based on their best judgment and by no other standard. Dismissal from the production, at any time during the production, will result in the forfeiture of all consideration for participating in the production, including comp tickets and the stipend.

Production Evaluation Survey

Once performances begin, we will announce and explain the online Production Evaluation Survey, which will ask for your opinions and feedback on all aspects of the production.

The Survey helps the company to understand what went well with a production and what we need to improve. Your participation is encouraged and appreciated.

Company Parties

Post-performance parties are a long-standing tradition with The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company. If you can, please make plans to come out for an hour or two, or more, after the show and enjoy the company of ... the company!

Please bring some food or drink to share, and you are welcome to bring family and friends along as well. If you host a party, please remember to provide plenty of copies of maps to your place so we can get there. A sign-up sheet will be posted for those interested in hosting.

Of special note is the party we have after our first Sunday matinee. Traditionally, we have a pot-luck dinner and then watch a DVD of one of the first weekend's shows. It's a fun opportunity for us to see ourselves on stage doing the show!

The Closing Night Party, or “Last Gasp Cast Bash!”

Following the final performance on Sunday, April 5th, all cast and crew will be expected to assist in striking the set, sorting costumes, and props. Plan to change into work clothes immediately after the performance and bring whatever tools you can. We'll have more information as the date approaches. Remember that many hands make light work. Once the work is done, we can commence with the "Last Gasp Cast Bash!"

The “Last Gasp Cast Bash” is a formal party. You are encouraged to dress for the occasion! The party is a terrific way to close out our production. While the company provides some food and drink, this, like all our parties, is a “potluck” event. Yes, it's a formal potluck!

One of the highlights of the “Last Gasp Cast Bash” is a mini-concert of "alternate lyrics" to songs from the show. Usually these are about the production, but they can be personal or political as well. An accompanist will be provided, and cast members can be recruited to perform the new version of the song. You can go to our website to see examples from other productions, at <https://gsvloc.org/about-us/our-collection-of-whimsy-fun/alternative-lyrics/> .