

**The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company
Annual Meeting**

May 15 - 29, 2020

Due to the Coronavirus or COVID-19 Pandemic, the Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company's 2020 Annual Meeting was held virtually, through a series of emailed communications, as Facebook discussion page and a digital ballot.

On April 19, 2020, that Board held a virtual meeting in which the members agreed to the following:

1. The Board would issue initial email communication on May 8, 2020 to all current members, plus all participants in *The Mikado* 2019 and *Ruddigore* 2020, inviting them to become company members for the 2020 – 2021 Season by paying \$5.00. Paying their dues would allow them to vote in the Annual Meeting. Dues could be paid mailing John Orbison, Treasurer a check for \$5.00 or paying on our website at <https://gsvloc.org/company-members/pay-your-dues/>.

Those who have recently paid dues would be told that those dues would count toward the 2020 – 2021 Season. These included:

Maggie Benham
Clyde Gerber
Deb Haas
Gabe Heffernan
Kevin McBeth
Kali McMillan
Blanka Melbostad
Lowell Rice
Cassie Utt

Those who chose to become company members would have a week to do so.

2. The Board would issue a second email communication to all company members on May 15, 2020. This email would constitute the official start of the 2020 Annual Meeting.

The agenda would include the following four topics:

1. Treasurer's Report: Company members could comment and ask questions through the Facebook discussion page.
2. Board Election: The current member of the Board would be presented as a slate of candidates. Company members would have the opportunity to submit other candidates through the Facebook discussion page.

3. Discussion of a Contingency Vote: If we cannot stage *Ruddigore* in the fall of 2020 due to Coronavirus or COVID-19 Pandemic, this pending vote would be for the company members to decide whether we would do *Ruddigore* in the Spring of 2021 or cancel the remount of *Ruddigore* and proceed, as currently scheduled, with *The Sorcerer*. Company members could comment and ask questions through the Facebook discussion page.
4. Selection of 2022 show: The company members would be provided with information and descriptions of *La Belle Helene* and *Utopia, Limited* as the two primary candidates for the 2022 show. Company members could comment and ask questions through the Facebook discussion page.

The company membership would have a week to comment and ask questions through the Facebook discussion page.

3. The Board would issue a third email communication to all company members on May 22, 2020, which would include a digital ballot, providing company members to vote on the following four topics:
 1. Acceptance or Non-Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report
 2. Board Election-acceptance of slate, or vote for positions in contention
 3. Contingency Vote: If we cannot stage a *Ruddigore* in the Fall of 2020, do we stage *Ruddigore* or *The Sorcerer* in spring 2021?
 4. Selection of the 2022 Spring show: *La Belle Helene* or *Utopia, Limited*?

The company membership would have a week to vote, using the digital ballot.

4. The Board would issue a fourth email communication to all company members on May 29, 2020 detailing the results of votes.

On May 8, 2020, Stephen Hage issued the following email, on behalf of the Board, to all current members, plus all participants in *The Mikado* 2019 and *Ruddigore* 2020:

Hello Everyone,

The members of the Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company hold an Annual Meeting every spring to discuss company business and vote on matters regarding the company and our plans for the future. The Annual Meeting is open to all who've participated in one of our productions and who've paid the annual dues of \$5.00, required to become a company member for the season.

Annual Meetings are usually been held in a company member's home. Under the current circumstances, however, we'll need to hold this meeting virtually and the Board has decided to do so through a series of four emails.

Email 1: This email! We invite you to become a company member by paying your annual dues, for the 2020 – 2021 Season. You may do so either by mailing John Orbison a check (101 Main Street North East #11, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413) or paying on our website at <https://gsvloc.org/company-members/pay-your-dues/>. In order to be included in the Annual Meeting and to receive voting privileges, you must pay your dues by May 14th.

Email 2: This email will be sent on May 15th and will present the meeting's agenda and provide an opportunity to discuss the matters on the agenda. This email will only be sent to those who've paid their dues and have become company members for the season.

Email 3: This email will be sent on May 22nd and will include a ballot to vote on the matters discussed in the previous email.

Email 4: This email will be sent on May 29th and will detail the results of votes.

Please let us know if you have any questions about this process. Otherwise we look forward to hearing from you with your dues and to communicating with you in the emails that will follow.

Thanks so much,

Stephen,
on Behalf of the GSVLOC Board

During the week that followed, the following individuals paid their dues and became company members. Note: This list includes those who had recently paid dues and who were told that their dues would count toward the 2020 – 2021 Season:

Joe Andrews
Mary Benbenek
Waldyn Benbenek
Maggie Benham
Scott Benson
Maureen Kane Berg
Tom Berg
Maggie Burr
Clyde Gerber
Alexander Gerchak
Maya Gitch
Mary Gregory
Deb Haas
Stephen Hage
Gabe Heffernan
Rylan Hefner
Lesley Hendrickson
Shawn Holt

Barb Hovey
Malka Key
Brian Krysinski
Holly MacDonald
Anna Maher
Kevin McBeth
Kali McMillian
Sarah Mehle
Blanka Melbostad
Charlotte Morrison
John Orbison
Eric Pasternack
Jo Pasternack
Richard Rames
Lowell Rice
Charley Rich
Steve Schellenberg
Briana Sullivan
Rhea Sullivan
Lara Trujillo
Cassie Utt
Holly Windle

On May 15, 2020, Anna Maher created and posted [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#) Facebook page providing company members with a medium on which they could comment, ask questions and discuss the matters on the agenda.

Stephen Hage issued the following email, on behalf of the Board, to all company members:

Hello Fellow GSVLOC Company Members and Welcome to this Virtual Annual Meeting!

As we shared with you in last week's email, GSVLOC Annual Meetings have always been in-person meetings. Under the current circumstances, however, we need to hold this meeting virtually and will do so through a series of four emails.

Last week's first email was an invitation for you to become a company member by paying your annual dues for the 2020 – 2021 Season. If you're receiving this email, you did so. Thank you!

This second email presents the meeting's agenda and provides the link to [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#) Facebook page, where you can comment, ask questions and discuss the matters on the agenda.

Next week's third email will include a ballot to vote on these matters. The fourth email will be sent on May 29th and will detail the results of votes.

"And now, my Lords, to the business of the day!"

An Explanation

The Annual Meeting marks the end of one GSVLOC company season and the beginning of the next. Our [company bylaws](#) require us to hold this meeting in the spring in order to vote for Board Members and to conduct other company business. This year, in addition to the vote for Board Members, there are three other important matters for your consideration. These include a review of the Treasurer's Report, a Contingency Vote regarding the remount of *Ruddigore*, and the selection of the 2022 show.

We will present the agenda items in this email, below and with attachments. As noted, we've created [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#) Facebook page as a medium for comments, questions and discussion. It's a closed group, open to company members, strictly for the purposes of this meeting.

Agenda Item 1: The Treasurer's Report

John Orbison, our Treasurer, has completed Treasurer's Report, which includes the following three attached documents for your review.

The Treasurer's Report is our financial picture for the fiscal year to date, the Budget Analysis is the *Ruddigore*-specific spreadsheet showing what we had budgeted versus what we have spent to date, and the Notes on the Treasurer's Report are John's notes, including a breakdown of refunds and donated tickets for *Ruddigore* and activity-specific information about our non-*Ruddigore* activities for the fiscal year.

Appendix 1: The 2020 Treasurer's Report is available on the company website's [Treasure's Report page](#). The Notes on the Treasurer's Report are included below.

John points out that these reports are preliminary, as our fiscal year has no yet ended. When our fiscal year officially ends on May 31, John will prepare an updated Budget Analysis for the Board to review and a final Treasurer's Report to be posted on our [website](#) for all company members.

Your comments and questions are welcome via [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#). The ballot to be issued next week will provide you with the opportunity to vote to approve the Treasurer's Report or not.

Agenda Item 2: *Ruddigore* Contingency Vote

The company members voted to remount our production of *Ruddigore* this fall, in the hope that conditions at that time would allow us to do so safely. The Board will decide in the late summer whether conditions will allow us to do so or not. If the Board decides that conditions will not allow for us to remount *Ruddigore* in the fall, the company membership must decide what we will do next.

One option would be to remount *Ruddigore* in the spring of 2021, postponing our production of *The Sorcerer* until the spring of 2022. The other option would be to cancel

the remount of *Ruddigore* entirely and to stage our production of *The Sorcerer* in the spring of 2021 as currently scheduled.

Your comments and questions are welcome via [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#). The ballot which will be issued next week will provide you with the opportunity to vote for one of the two options.

Agenda Item 3: Election of the GSVOC Board for the 2020 – 2021 Season

All current Board Members have expressed their interest in remaining on the Board in their current positions. These include the following:

Producer	Stephen Hage
Secretary	Shawn Holt
Treasurer	John Orbison
Publicity	Waldyn Benbenek
Labour Pool Coordinator	Malka Key
Orchestra Rep.	Barb Hovey
Female Chorus Rep.	Anna Maher
Male Chorus Rep.	Alexander Gerchak

Other company members may be submitted as candidates, with their consent, for any of the positions via [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#). The ballot which will be issued next week will provide you with the opportunity to vote for any positions in contention or, if no other candidates are submitted, to vote for the current slate of candidates.

Agenda Item 4: Selection of the 2022 Show

We have selected *The Sorcerer* as the show that we will produce in the spring of 2021. We will now select the show that we will produce in the spring of 2022.

It is possible, however, that that we will be unable to remount *Ruddigore* this fall and may choose to do so in the spring of 2021. In that case, we would postpone *The Sorcerer* until the spring of 2022. If that happens, we may decide to reevaluate the selection of the 2022 show at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

The Board suggests the following two for your consideration for the 2022 show:

***La Belle Helene*:** Lesley Hendrickson has proposed that the GSLVOC produce *La Belle Helene*, by Jacques Offenbach. The GSVLOC held a reading of the operetta last fall and voted, at a General Meeting, to stage *La Belle Helene* in the future. Lesley's provided us with a synopsis of the *La Belle Helene* and a discussion about the benefits and challenges of producing the operetta. The document is attached.

Appendix 2: The *La Belle Helene* synopsis and discussion about the benefits and challenges of producing the operetta is included below.

Utopia, Limited: The GSVLOC last produced a *Utopia, Limited* in [2008](#). While the original version of *Utopia, Limited* is considered to be one of Gilbert and Sullivan's weakest, the GSVLOC's 2008 production was a success due to the company's substantial [revision](#) of the libretto. A committee of company members made further revisions to the libretto to address additional concerns with the piece. The committee has provided an explanation of these revisions and a recommendation that the show be the next to be produced in the attached document.

Appendix 3: The explanation of *Utopia, Limited's* revisions and a recommendation that the show be the next to be produced is included below.

It should be noted that any company member may make a recommendation for another show, along with any other comments and questions, via [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#). If there is a "second" in support of an additional recommendation, it will be included on the ballot. The ballot which will be issued next week will provide you with the opportunity to vote for one of the two, or more, options.

In Closing

Thank you for your commitment to the GSVLOC and to this year's unusual Annual Meeting process. May we return to our usual Annual Meetings ... and to the stage! ... sooner than any of us are expecting!

Thank you,

Stephen,
on behalf of the GSVLOC Board

During the week of May 15, 2020 to May 21, 2020, 26 of the 40 company members joined [The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#) Facebook page.

Appendix 4: The content of these discussions is included below.

On May 21, 2020, that Board held a virtual meeting to discuss, finalize and approve the ballot that Anna Maher had prepared. The Board agreed to hold the next virtual meeting in mid-June to discuss the results of the vote and the company's future plans, including when to make the decision about whether or not to proceed with the fall production of *Ruddigore*.

On May 22, 2020, Stephen Hage issued the following email, including the ballot, on behalf of the Board, to all company members.

Hello Everyone,

The GSVLOC Annual Meeting continues with this third email!

We would like to begin by thanking all those of you who participated in the discussions this past week on the GSVLOC Virtual Meeting Group Facebook page. It resulted in some interesting developments which we'll detail for you below.

Now that that discussion has taken place, this email provides you with the **GSVLOC Annual Meeting Ballot** (below) to vote on the issues.

In last Friday's email, we discussed four items upon which we'd vote this week, including the Treasurer's Report, the election of the GSVOC Board for the 2020 – 2021 Season, the *Ruddigore* contingency vote and the selection of the 2022 show.

The first two agenda items on the ballot are as presented in last week's email. The Treasurer's Report remains a straightforward **Yes / No** vote to accept the report. The election of the GSVOC Board for the 2020 – 2021 Season is also a **Yes / No** vote to accept the current slate of Board candidates, as no additional candidates were nominated. As a result of the discussions that took place this past week on the GSVLOC Virtual Meeting Group Facebook page, however, the last two agenda items have changed significantly.

Company members have proposed three additional options for future shows for us to consider, regarding the potential staging of *The Pirates of Penzance* as our spring 2021 show, as a fall 2021 show or as our spring 2022 show. What had been two votes on the original agenda has now become a set of nine votes. We understand that that might feel a bit overwhelming at first, but we're confident that everyone can understand these votes and their implications. We encourage you to review the of the questions before voting.

The nine votes are as follows:

If we cannot stage *Ruddigore* in the Fall of 2020, should we stage it in the Spring of 2021? **Yes / No**

If *Ruddigore* is staged in spring of 2021, do you support staging of *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021? **Yes / No**

If *Ruddigore* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?
Please mark your preference from most favored (1) to least favored (3).

La Belle Helene / The Sorcerer / Utopia, Limited

If *Ruddigore* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* is NOT staged the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?
Please mark your preference from most favored (1) to least favored (4).

La Belle Helene / The Pirates of Penzance / The Sorcerer / Utopia, Limited

If the company chooses not to stage *Ruddigore* in the spring of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2021?

The Pirates of Penzance / The Sorcerer

If *The Sorcerer* is staged in spring of 2021, do you support staging of *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021? **Yes / No**

If *The Sorcerer* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?

La Belle Helene / Utopia, Limited

If *The Sorcerer* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* is NOT staged the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022? Please mark your preference from most favored (1) to least favored (3).

La Belle Helene / The Pirates of Penzance / Utopia, Limited

If *The Pirates of Penzance* is staged in spring of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022? Please mark your preference from most favored (1) to least favored (3).

La Belle Helene / The Sorcerer / Utopia, Limited

We're certainly challenging ourselves with this series of votes, but we're confident that we'll all be able to manage it! If you have any questions, however, please don't hesitate to ask any member of the Board.

Please vote at your earliest convenience. We've set a deadline of next Thursday evening for you to do so. Next Friday's fourth email will detail the results of votes and the 2020 GSVLOC Annual Meeting will be officially adjourned.

Thank you, once again, for your participation in this year's very unusual Annual Meeting process and for your ongoing support and commitment to the GSVLOC!

Stephen,
on behalf of the GSVLOC Board

The GSVLOC Annual Meeting Ballot: [HERE](#)

By May 28, 2020, when polling closed, 38 of the 40 company members had voted.

On May 29, 2020, the ballots were counted, including John Orbison's calculation of the ranked voting items, using the Borda count methodology. Stephen Hage issued the following email, on behalf of the Board, to all company members.

Hello Everyone,

Thank you for your participation in this very unusual virtual GSVLOC Annual Meeting. It was a challenge, but we rose to the occasion and the meeting was a success!

We voted on a number of questions this past week and the full ballot and vote totals are included below.

Here are the key results:

The company unanimously accepted the Treasurer's Report.

The company unanimously accepted the current slate of candidates for the GSVLOC Board of Directors.

If we stage *Ruddigore* in the fall of 2020, the company voted for the following:

Spring 2021 - *The Sorcerer*

Fall 2021 - *The Pirates of Penzance*

Spring 2022 - *Utopia, Limited*

If we cannot stage *Ruddigore* in the fall of 2020, the company voted for the following:

Spring 2021 - *Ruddigore*

Fall 2021 - *The Pirates of Penzance*

Spring 2022 - *The Sorcerer*

The key question before us now is whether we'll be able to remount *Ruddigore* in the fall or not. **The Board will continue to monitor the situation and will make a decision by the late summer.** If we are unable to remount *Ruddigore* in the fall, we will immediately notify the company members, as well as the *Ruddigore* cast, orchestra and production staff, and in accordance with the company vote, we'll plan to remount *Ruddigore* in the spring of 2021.

Thank you again for your active participation in this year's Annual Meeting process and for your ongoing commitment to the GSVLOC!

Meeting adjourned!

Stephen,
on behalf of the GSVLOC Board

GSVLOC Annual Meeting Ballot Results

The winning votes indicated in red. In ranked voting results are explained below.

Do you accept the Treasurer's Report as prepared by John Orbison?

Yes: 38 votes (unanimous)

Do you accept the current slate of candidates for the GSVLOC Board of Directors?

Yes: 38 votes (unanimous)

If we cannot stage *Ruddigore* in the Fall of 2020, should we stage it in the Spring of 2021?

Yes – 30 votes 78.9%
No – 8 votes 21.1%

If *Ruddigore* is staged in spring of 2021, do you support staging of *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021?

Yes – 30 votes 78.9%
No – 8 votes 21.1%

If *Ruddigore* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?

La Belle Helene
The Sorcerer #1 below
Utopia, Limited

If *Ruddigore* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* is NOT staged the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?

La Belle Helene
The Pirates of Penzance #2 below
The Sorcerer
Utopia, Limited

If the company chooses not to stage *Ruddigore* in the spring of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2021?

The Pirates of Penzance: 18 votes 47.4%
***The Sorcerer*: 20 votes 52.6%**

If *The Sorcerer* is staged in spring of 2021, do you support staging of *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021?

Yes – 29 votes 76.3%
No – 9 votes 23.7%

If *The Sorcerer* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* in the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?

La Belle Helene: 13 votes 34.8%
***Utopia, Limited*: 25 votes 65.8%**

If *The Sorcerer* is staged in spring of 2021 and *The Pirates of Penzance* is NOT staged the fall of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?

La Belle Helene
The Pirates of Penzance #3 below
Utopia, Limited

If *The Pirates of Penzance* is staged in spring of 2021, which show should be staged in the spring of 2022?

La Belle Helene
The Sorcerer #4 below
Utopia, Limited

Ranked Scores Explained (John Orbison can provide a fuller explanation of the voting methodology if interested):

- #1 On the first ballot, *The Sorcerer* received 24 of 38 first place votes, a clear majority. (*La Belle Helene* 8, *Utopia, Limited* 6)
- #2 On the first ballot, *The Pirates of Penzance* had 16, *The Sorcerer* 14, *Utopia, Limited* 6, and *La Belle Helene* 2. Eliminating *La Belle Helene* and reallocating the 2 *La Belle Helene* ballots to their next choices, the second round results were *The Pirates of Penzance* 17, *The Sorcerer* 14, *Utopia, Limited* 7. Eliminating *Utopia, Limited* and reallocating the 7 *Utopia, Limited* ballots to their next choices, the third and final round results were *The Pirates of Penzance* 20, *The Sorcerer* 18.
- #3 On the first ballot, *The Pirates of Penzance* received 20 of 38 first place votes, a clear majority. (*Utopia, Limited* 13, *La Belle Helene* 5)
- #4 On the first ballot, *The Sorcerer* received 24 of 38 first place votes, a clear majority. (*La Belle Helene* 7, *Utopia, Limited* 7)

Appendix 1:

Notes on the Treasurer's Report

Ruddigore Cancellation Effect

Ticket Sales Before Cancellation	\$42,692.38
Ticket Refunds To Date	\$7,309.00
Ticket Sales Converted to Donations	\$18,564.01
Net Ticket Sales To Date	\$16,819.37

Notes to Ruddigore Budget Analysis and Preliminary Treasurer Report

1. Ticket refunds and donations continue to trickle in, so anticipate further reduction in Ticket Fees and increase in Contributions. (Note that Contributions have been outnumbering Refunds by more than two to one.) At this point there appears to be about 400 tickets held by people who have not responded to our cancellation notice. The above summary shows that our ticket sales at the time of cancellation were well below our budget of \$60,180.
2. Contributions consist of the usual donations plus Cabaret income (\$2,457.25) and ticket sales converted to donations (see above). Our donors and patrons have been exceedingly generous, and the Cabaret performances were an outstanding success financially as well as artistically.
3. Stage Manager Fee includes \$334.87 of expenses for office supplies she purchased.
4. Costume Designer is owed \$1,000 to be paid upon receipt of her invoice. (Costume Expenses TBD as well.)
5. Still awaiting possible invoices for Accompanist (Norquist) and Orchestra, but most of these expenses are in.
6. Ticketing and House Manager donated her stipends, as did many cast and orchestra members. There were also several donations in the form of purchases of things like props which we were not asked to reimburse.
7. Awaiting Rehearsal Space invoice from LHUMC.
8. Vocal Scores expenses include, besides *Ruddigore*, purchases for the Sing Thru and Summer Show, as well as the printing of scores for the table reading of *La Belle Helene*. Except for *Belle Helene*, the scores purchased will be mostly available for future use.

9. Miscellaneous expenses were well below budget, thanks to the lack of a matinee dinner and LGCB. Concessions expenses were even lower than expected thanks to our shortbread supplier waiving her invoice.
10. Have not yet seen invoice from TWS for videotaping. I don't expect it to be more than about \$2,000.
11. Treasurer's Report shows a loss of \$2,161.22 from Interest and Dividends from our Vanguard funds. At the end of 2019 this number was about \$5,000 in our favor, but our Vanguard Lifestrategy MG Fund lost almost \$8,000 in the first three months of 2020 due to the market decline resulting from the pandemic. On the positive side, our Vanguard Money Market Fund increased as the result of the transfer of \$7,000 from our checking account made possible by the financial success of our 2019 production of *Mikado*, and thanks to the generosity of our donors, patrons, cast, orchestra and crew, our checking account has not been depleted as a result of the cancellation, though there are still unpaid expenses for our cancelled show:
12. Remaining expenses are somewhat difficult to estimate, but the biggest are Rehearsal Space, Costumes and Costume Designer fees, and MTN (TWS) video recording and copying expenses. A rough guess of the amount of these expenses would be about \$7,000 or more. The positive profit shown in this Treasurer's Report would then become a loss of a few thousand dollars. The Minnesotan's favorite assessment, "Coulda been worse," would be an understatement.

Sing-Through, Cabarets, and Summer Concert, *La Belle Helene* Results

Sing-Through

Income	\$380.00
Expenses	
Accompanist	\$200.00
Rehearsal Space	\$0.00
Food	\$27.42
Vocal Scores	<u>\$181.12</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$408.54</u>
Net Income	(\$28.54)

Cabarets

Income	\$2457.25 (Reported as contributions in annual report)
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Expenses

Accompanist	<u>\$700.00</u>
Net Income	\$1757.25

Summer Show

Income	\$0.00
Vocal Scores	\$ 20.00

Expenses

Accompanist	\$450.00
Vocal Scores	\$575.71
Audition Notices	<u>\$55.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$1080.71
Net Income	(\$1060.71)

Belle Helene Reading**Expense**

Accompanist	\$450.00
Vocal Scores	<u>\$534.80</u>
Total Expenses	\$984.80
Net Income	(\$984.80)

Appendix 2:***La Belle Helene***

Composer Jacques Offenbach
Book & Lyrics Henri Meilrac and Ludovic Halevy
English Adaptation Jeremy Sams for the English National Opera

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: Chief Priest Calchas is disappointed with the chorus's offerings to Jupiter, but must get ready for the temple's busy morning. First is the arrival of Queen Helen and her ladies to celebrate the death of Adonis and the dearth of love. Next, Orestes and his partying friends tell us more about Helen's sordid past. Then a shepherd comes down from Mt. Ida to share his experience as judge of the goddesses' beauty contest. He chose Venus, who promised him the love of the most beautiful woman on earth. Of course, this is Helen, who is a bit annoyed that the goddess has so little care of her reputation. The Kings of Greece arrive to tell us who they are and to compete in a contest of wits. This does not go well as the Kings are not that bright. The shepherd is the only one smart enough to win, and promptly reveals that he is Paris, Prince of Troy. Helen realizes Paris expects to claim her as his prize, but her clueless husband, Menelaus, welcomes him to the palace. Calchas further undermines Helen with a last minute decree from Jupiter that Menelaus must leave immediately for the isle of Crete. As everyone sings a farewell to Menelaus, Helen is left to ponder just how strongly she wants to defend her virtue.

ACT II: Helen's handmaidens urge her to wear one of her lovely, revealing outfits, but Helen wants head to toe coverage to protect herself from Paris, who is disappointed by Helen's avoidance. The Kings arrive for a night of gaming and feasting. Helen decides not to participate, confiding in Calchas her commitment to remain faithful to Menelaus. She asks that he pray the gods send her sweet dreams of Paris. Paris, having bribed the guards, appears in Helen's bedroom. Helen, happy to assume it's all just a dream, welcomes him warmly. Menelaus returns early from his trip and pitches a fit. The entire palace rallies to his cry and agrees that, while Menelaus himself is not without blame, Paris must leave immediately.

ACT III: The gods react to the thwarting of Venus's wishes by sowing chaos: Greece is cursed with rampant infidelity. Helen refuses to talk to Menelaus, who still isn't clear what is going on and why everyone is blaming him for it. Agamemnon and Calchas convince Menelaus he must make a sacrifice to save Greece. He sends for the Chief Priest of Venus, who offers a surprisingly painless solution. All's well if only Helen makes a quick trip with him to a nearby island. Of course, the priest turns out to be Paris in disguise, who carries off Helen with hilarious consequences. Or rather, the Trojan War.

WHY DO BELLE HELENE?

So why the heck would GSVLOC do Offenbach? Don't we do, like, just G&S? Well, yes. But Offenbach is the reason G&S exists. Both Gilbert and Sullivan were, as young men, deeply influenced by the operettas of Jacques Offenbach. *Orpheus* was his first hit, in 1858, when Gilbert was about 22 and Sullivan just 16 years old. Offenbach went on to write many more hits before his death in 1880. Both G & S travelled to Paris frequently (Gilbert as a reviewer if you can believe it), as well as swooning over *Orpheus*'s 1865 London debut. Gilbert especially was keen to reproduce Offenbach's unique combination of music and humor -- but in a distinctly British style. Gilbert had a prudish side, and wanted to avoid any jokes that might be "too French" (e.g. no sex before, and indeed no romance after, marriage). Gilbert wanted no situations that might make a gentleman sorry he brought his wife or daughter to the theatre. Nor would he ask chorus ladies to appear in costumes they would not comfortably wear to a costume ball

(e.g. no legs, no bosoms). So, in a sense, G & S is 'cleaned up' Offenbach. Bottom line: we get to do stuff that would make William Schwenk Gilbert rather uncomfortable. But that he would secretly love.

Offenbach and his librettists created more consistently interesting and intelligent female characters than the ingenues and battle-axes of G&S.

There are a wide variety of roles, offering opportunities to voices and types not always featured in the G&S canon. There is great chorus music and dancing as well as multiple opportunities for chorus members to shine. The chorus is onstage and active for better than two thirds of the show.

Offenbach is inexplicably underrepresented in the US. A quick Google search reveals how widely he is performed in Europe in a variety of languages (my quick video search shows French, German, Russian, Greek, Czech, and several English versions for *Helene* alone) and styles. American audiences will find the *Belle Helene* story accessible and the music surprisingly familiar, featured regularly on classical radio stations.

“Do you like toffee?” We all love G & S, but even Shakespeare festivals do more than Shakespeare. We need to stretch our artistic muscles and offer our audiences a little more variety.

COSTS

Royalty: because we are using an English adaptation, we will need to contact Jeremy Samms to ask permission and probably pay some level of royalty. This is a typical expense for most performing companies — GSVLOC is uniquely lucky in performing only public domain works of a long dead creative team.

Score production costs: we will need to use proper music software to create piano vocal scores. The public domain P/V score is in French, and in a very dated and partially illegible format. Other versions I have seen are merely copies of that French score. The task of fitting the English lyrics has been largely completed.

Orchestral scores: are available on a number of free music download sites, but I am guessing are of a similar vintage as the P/V — which means we will need to create our own. Considering the number of errors in the P/V it is probably advisable no matter how legible. GSVLOC has done this before with G&S scores as well as the Orpheus parts. Upside: we now own full orchestral sets that can be rented out.

PRODUCTION

The three acts (temple, palace, seaside) can be depicted with shared scenic elements (ruins of a Greek temple?) that are rearranged in front of a sky drop. As in Shakespeare, we are always told exactly where we are, and additional clues are provided by actions and a few props. Given how full and active the cast, it is probably wise to keep the set simple, given the size of our stage.

Costuming will be eclectic, combining elements of classic Greek drapery with character specific pieces of modern and period costume. I can envision throwing in everything from Hawaiian shirts to bustles, top hats to baseball caps. Excepting Helene, no one needs multiple costumes.

LISTENING/VIEWING

Aaagh, it appears the Jessye Norman full audio recording (Orchestre Toulouse, 1985) is no longer available on Youtube, though some of Helene's solos are still out there. Too bad, as this is an almost complete recording and the best one I know of currently available. It cuts a little of the choral music, but less than any other recording I've heard. New copies of the CD are pricy, but used ones are on Amazon starting at about \$15.

The best video recording is from Paris in 2000 with Felicity Lott <https://www.operavideo.com/la-belle-helene-paris-2000-lott-beuron-senechal-naouri-le-roux-todorovitch-doustrac-minkowski/>. Please note that it cuts some of the choral sections we would chose not to cut!

For more videos search the title plus 'Offenbach' (otherwise you get some lovely dessert recipes). There are LOTS of weird and wonderful productions out there from dull to frankly racy. The German ones, especially can get bizarre. Remember, we are GSVLOC and we do not frighten the horses.

Appendix 3:

***Utopia, Limited* A Recommendation for Our Next Show!**

Introduction

Many companies stage the occasional Gilbert and Sullivan operetta ... or in the case of the Guthrie or Park Square, a vague approximation of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta! When they do so, they inevitably stage one of the "big three" operettas ... *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Mikado*. One of the many things that makes our company so wonderfully unique is that our mission includes producing the full canon of Gilbert and Sullivan's works.

We've done so successfully for many years, following a pattern of staging one of the "big three" operettas followed by three of the lesser known operettas. For example, we staged *The Mikado* in 2019. The three lesser known operettas that would follow in our current rotation include *Ruddigore*, which we'll remount, *The Sorcerer*, which we've selected as the following show, and, potentially, *Utopia, Limited*.

Utopia, Limited, however, has a reputation as one of Gilbert and Sullivan weakest operettas and there is a tendency to hesitate to select it as the "next show." Given our commitment to perform the full canon of Gilbert and Sullivan's works, the GSVLOC substantially revised [Utopia, Limited](#), and staged a very successful production in [2008](#), which was very well received by company members and our audience alike.

The Problem

Given that *Utopia, Limited* is the “next show” in our rotation and that we have a revised version of the operetta that we used for a successful staging, *Utopia, Limited* would appear to be the obvious choice to follow *The Sorcerer*.

There is, however, a significant problem with *Utopia, Limited* that we didn’t consider and didn’t address when we revised and staged the show in 2008. As originally written, most of the cast would portray Polynesians, a practice that, as we came to understand with *The Mikado*, is racist and simply unacceptable.

The Solution

Many suggestions have been made to address the problem of this racism in the piece, most of which would have required a very significant rewrite of the entire operetta. A committee of company members, including Malka Key, Alexander Gerchak and Stephen Hage, was formed last year to address the issue. Together, they arrived at a solution that required minimal changes to the piece.

In this revised version of *Utopia, Limited*, the operetta still takes place on the South Pacific island of Utopia. The difference is that the inhabitants are of British descent, the descendants of convicts who had been transported to the island over a century ago. This concept is based on historical examples of British penal colonies such as [Botany Bay](#), as well as originally uninhabited and “lost” island colonies such as [Pitcairn Island](#). During the years before the story takes place, Utopia developed into an independent nation, which has recently renewed its relations with Britain.

The character’s British descent was easily established by changing or assigning British first names. For example, the Wise Men, Scaphio and Phantis, become Edward Scaphio and Henry Phantis, while the Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba become the Princesses Natasha and Katherine.

There are additional changes to the script, such as a shift in the emphasis as to why the British experts, or “Flowers of Progress,” have been invited to bring reforms to Utopia. This revision minimizes the reason that was primary in Gilbert’s original version, that Utopia was striving to “better itself” by adopting British institutions, with its imperialistic implications, and maximizes Gilbert’s secondary reason, Princess Zara’s plan to free her father, the King, from the Wise Men who have had power over him.

The revision is still a “work in progress,” with discussion still taking place about the time period in which the piece should be set and the extent to which the dialogue should be revised to fit that setting. As noted above, however, the concerning issues of racism and imperialism have been addressed and solved with this version.

Proposal

With these revisions made, *Utopia, Limited* becomes a piece that the GSLVOC can, once again, stage successfully, proudly presenting it to our audiences as a delightful part of the full canon of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan.

We encourage your vote in support *Utopia, Limited* as our next production!

Thank you!

***Utopia, Limited* Videos**

If you aren't familiar with *Utopia, Limited*, the following selection of videos may be helpful as they represent the show well in terms of the charm and beauty of Sullivan's music and the comedy of Gilbert's lyrics.

Videos from the GSVLOC's 2008 production of *Utopia, Limited*. You may see a few familiar faces!

["Society Has Quite Forsaken"](#)

["Eagle High"](#)

["A Tenor All Singers Above"](#)

From other company's productions of *Utopia, Limited*

["Of Native Maids the Cream"](#)

["Sweet and Low"](#)

Appendix 4:

[The Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Virtual Meeting Group](#) Facebook Page Discussions

On May 15, 2020, Cassie Utt wrote:

Hi all! I would like to raise a potential option for our 2022 production - *Pirates of Penzance*.

It seems that by 2022 we might be in a position where we need a boost financially and for morale. This will bring us back in the spotlight as the G&S leaders in the Twin Cities and will be a lovely opportunity to increase excitement after a year of sad news!

I believe *Pirates* was already in the near future within the lineup and would require only a slight shift. Then, we could resume with either *La Belle Helene* or *Utopia Limited* for 2023.

Please comment with opinions and if you'd like to second *Pirates* to be included in the vote/discussion for 2022.

In response, Anna Maher seconded the motion and wrote:

... with something that "big" we could make it a fall show as well, which would keep us on the "schedule"

In response, Stephen Hage wrote:

John Orbison would like to propose *The Pirates of Penzance* for our consideration as well. With this proposal, seconded by Anna, *The Pirates of Penzance* will be included on the ballot, along with *La Belle Helene* and *Utopia, Limited*.

On May 15, 2020, Lowell Rice wrote:

I believe I've found the mentioned production recording, if someone could verify: <https://youtu.be/31XMIOVlt4>

In response, Lesley Hendrickson wrote:

Yes -- good searching!

and

I used to find by searching Jessye Norman, but it doesn't come up there anymore.

In response, Lowell Rice wrote:

If you look for "jessye norman *la belle helene*" on YouTube, it's the third result.

On May 17, 2020, Joe Andrews wrote:

Please be so kind as to look under Cassie Utt's stellar suggestion for *Pirates* to see a series of suggestions that build on this idea from li'l ol' me.

In addition, Joe Andrews wrote:

I would like to offer a "build" to this suggestion -- which will require a few "if/then" considerations. When *The Sorcerer* was chosen, I suspect it was because it was next in the line-up. But I would suggest that we consider replacing *Sorcerer* with *Pirates*. I think that we should swap in a big, well-known show to fill the seats and coffers. This would, no doubt, require an unheard of re-voting regarding *Sorcerer*. So, a likely scenario might be that the Fall remount isn't going to happen due to COVID, so:

Spring 2021 *Ruddigore*
Fall 2021 *Pirates*
Spring 2022 *The Sorcerer*

or (also possible due to COVID)

Fall '20/Spring '21 NO SHOW
Next Show: *Ruddigore*
Next Show: *Pirates*
Next Show: *The Sorcerer*

Any thoughts or "seconds"?

In response, Stephen Hage wrote:

I usually agree with Joe on pretty much everything! Like Joe, I'm also concerned about the likelihood that we will be able to remount *Ruddigore* this fall and perhaps even next spring. I'm in the very unusual position, however, of disagreeing with him and his suggestion of replacing *The Sorcerer* with *The Pirates of Penzance*. As noted in the document presenting *Utopia, Limited* for our consideration, many companies, such as Guthrie or Park Square, stage Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. When they do so, however, they inevitably stage one of the "big three" operettas, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado* or *The Pirates of Penzance*. It would be very easy for us to slip into the same pattern because, yes, those shows do fill seats and coffers, and they're always popular with performers and audiences. Is that, however, what we're about as a company? What has always distinguished our company has been our mission to produce the full canon of Gilbert and Sullivan's works. We've done so successfully, both financially and artistically, for many years by following a pattern of staging one of the "big three" operettas followed by three of the lesser known operettas. I would encourage us to keep our plans as they are, with *The Sorcerer* as the show to follow *Ruddigore*. Thanks!

In response, Joe Andrews wrote:

And I, too, almost always agree with Stephen Hage and regard his opinion as ones that we should all consider fully -- this one included. That said, I would argue that this is not a normal time -- it's an extraordinary, once-in-a-century time where theaters are suffering and many will fold. By modifying our schedule ever so slightly (pushing the show out a year doesn't seem like a betrayal of our mission) -- we are acknowledging that perhaps in these dark times, a rollicking masterwork with scads of roles and terrific material for the chorus, too, is the right choice at the right time.

In response, Stephen Hage wrote:

Joe's points are well taken. A second to his suggestion would put it on the ballot for company member's consideration ... and then "to popular opinion thus (we will) yield!" - *The Sorcerer*, Act II

In response, Deb Haas seconded the motion.

In response, Stephen Hage wrote:

With this proposal, seconded by Deb, *The Pirates of Penzance* will be included on the ballot for consideration as a replacement for *The Sorcerer* as the show to follow *Ruddigore*.

In response, Lesley Hendrickson wrote:

May I take a moment to note the small blessing that GSVLOC has minimal ongoing non-production expenses (Acorn Storage being the largest, I'm guessing?). So NOT being in production is not the huge drain that it would be with other companies with major sunk costs. Though depleted of late (some production losses, the relatively recent switch to paying performers) our funds are not dire. So *Ruddigore* is back in fall IF a show is possible. If not, *Ruddigore* is back in spring 2021? Or *Sorcerer*? Or *Pirates*? *Sorcerer* has been 'promised' for spring 2021 -- at least to the few patrons who may have seen it in the *Ruddigore* program. But I'm guessing most arts patrons are fully resigned to future show announcements being wild prognostications at this point for ANY arts group, so are not likely to complain of changes. I guess what I'm driving at is that maybe we are not in a position to take a vote at all at this point. Is there any reason to rush when timing is so uncertain?

In addition, Lesley Hendrickson wrote:

Maybe on a more practical note we can agree on some upcoming deadlines for future decisions, or at least hear from the Board that they have done so: at what date to we go for/kill a fall production? If it goes, we then decide *Sorcerer* or *Pirates*?, depending on how robust the arts renewal is coming along? At what date do we go for/kill the 2021 spring production? Because, of course, that could happen, too.

In response, Stephen Hage wrote:

I believe that we addressed most of these issues in Friday's email. First, Agenda Item 2 notes that the Board will decide in the late summer whether we will be able to stage *Ruddigore* this fall or not. Second, the Contingency Vote is to determine, if we cancel the fall production of the *Ruddigore*, do we stage *Ruddigore* in the spring of 2021 and postpone *The Sorcerer* until the spring of 2022. Joe's proposal today, however, adds to this consideration *The Pirates of Penzance* as the spring 2022 show in place of *The Sorcerer*. We will include that option to the ballot. As noted in Agenda Item 4, we are not considering anything beyond 2022 at this time. Whatever happens in the spring of 2021, we will

reevaluate and revote on our future plans at the Annual Meeting in the spring of 2021.

In response, Eric Pasternack wrote:

I adore our reduced Utopia (and the proposed changes sound perfectly fine), think Belle Helene would be both fun and appropriate, and am looking forward to Sorcerer as well. From a money standpoint, all should be spring shows; I don't care too much about the order. One can make a powerful argument for Pirates as a fall show for 2021 assuming we remount Ruddigore either fall 2020 or spring 2021. Pirates is one of the few shows that could draw a strong fall audience. Two questions: do we want to do a fall show in 2021, and is the Conn available?

In response, on May 18, 2020, Stephen Hage wrote:

Anna also suggests The Pirates of Penzance as a potential fall show. If we were to do so, as you point out, Eric, it would certainly bring in full audiences. The earliest we could stage it, of course, would be the fall of 2021. While I don't expect that YPC has their 2021-2022 season determined yet, I think that we can assume that there would be the standard November opening between their shows. I expect that they might even be open to making, in advance, a mutually workable arrangement. I think it's worth considering.

On May 18, 2020, Anna Maher wrote:

For clarity - *Pirates* is now on the ballot as a spring show, and I'd also like to propose it as a show for Fall 2021. Do I have a second for the fall slot?

In response, Shawn Holt seconded the motion.

In response, Stephen Hage wrote:

With this proposal, seconded by Shawn, *The Pirates of Penzance* will also be included on the ballot for consideration as a fall 2021 show.

On May 20, 2020, Malka Key wrote:

Separating posts by topic here... if the object of doing Pirates is to draw large audiences, it does not make sense to me to vote to do Pirates as a spring or fall show until we can be confident that audience numbers are recovered. Whether because we have to block off seats to meet health requirements or because people are staying away from crowded places because of health concerns, I think there is a very real chance that our next several productions will have lower audience numbers, regardless of the show's popularity.

On May 20, 2020, Malka Key wrote:

If we are not able to remount Ruddigore this fall, it makes sense to me to remount it next spring (2021) instead. It's a production that not enough people got to see, and there are certain costs we would be able to save due to it being a remount, which is obviously a plus.

In response, Shawn Holt wrote:

Having listened to Governor Walz today I would be surprised if we were able to have a show at all this fall.

In response, Malka Key wrote:

I agree, unfortunately, especially when you consider the articles talking about how singing is one of the really efficient ways of generating the aerosol particles that spread the virus.

On May 20, 2020, Malka Key wrote:

On more thought (for now): if we did an uncommon show like Utopia and set up a system to sell streaming tickets (which we should look into anyway), then we might be able to advertise through G&S groups in other cities and draw non-local audience. Most of the other groups haven't done Utopia in years, if ever, so they would be less likely to see it as competing with their audience and more likely to see it as a cool cross-promotion.

In response, Cassi Utt wrote:

I think this is a sweet idea! I help organize live streaming for TEDxMinneapolis and can talk about some low cost to high cost options depending on budget and if we sell tickets, etc.

In response, Malka Key wrote:

The good thing is that since our shows are in the public domain and we are not union, we do not have to deal with a lot of the legal complications that a lot of theaters have with trying to do this kind of thing.