



Newsletter Spring



2023

Welcome to our spring 2023 newsletter, keeping you in touch with what's happening at Stewartby Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and our friends in other societies.

This is an electronic newsletter which can be delivered automatically to your email inbox or downloaded from the website. To sign up, go to

www.saods.org.uk, scroll to the bottom of the page and enter

your email address. We promise that we will not use your email address for any purpose other than the delivery of the newsletter.

Last November

The Society's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* was something of a gamble which turned into a great success. Being our first full scale production after the pandemic lockdown restrictions there was no guarantee that our audience would return. After much debate it was decided to trial a change in performance days and times: the Tuesday performance was scrapped and Saturday's was moved to the afternoon slot.

It may have been the popularity of *The Mikado*, it may have been the performance changes, it may have been post-pandemic release but the production was a great success, playing to full or nearly full houses for each performance, gaining two award nominations from NODA and, for the first time for many years, making a profit at the box office.

If anyone would like to re-live the occasion there are dvds of the show for sale (£20) and a few programmes remaining (free). Please contact stewartbyoperatic@saods.org.uk.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held at Stewartby United Church Hall on Thursday 18th May at 7.30pm. Members will receive appropriate papers by email, where possible, in advance of the meeting.



Many thanks to those who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. If you would like to send in something for the next newsletter please email your text(s) or image(s) to stewartbyoperatic@saods.org.uk.



Spring Concert



popular songs and choruses
both classic and classical... with chips

Friday 12th and Saturday 13th May, 2023
at Stewartby Village Hall



www.saods.org.uk

Facebook:

@StewartbyOperaticSociety

Rehearsals are well under way for the Spring Concert on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th May at Stewartby Village Hall. Tickets cost £16 which includes a fish and chip supper and we will be running a licensed bar serving a limited range of drinks for your refreshment.

The concert has been masterminded and is led by Colin Jones with Pam Rogers at the

piano. The music on offer is all opera based, as befits an operatic society. We don't want anyone to think that it is going to be a totally highbrow evening, however, so there is a wide variety of well-known songs and choruses... with chips! From traditional opera comes the Easter Hymn from Cavalleria Rusticana and the Flower Duet from Lakme; from operetta there is a medley from The Merry Widow and songs by Offenbach; from the more modern versions of opera are pieces from Miss Saigon and the Threepenny Opera. There will also be some surprise inclusions!

Tickets can be obtained by contacting Mike Cocke, our Business Manager, on 07557 670703 or at boxoffice@saods.org.uk, from members or online at www.saods.org.uk.

Parking at the Village Hall

If you are attending a performance or rehearsal at Stewartby Village Hall please remember that there is parking next to the shop on Stewartby Way and also in front of the Stewartby Club. If you park on the road please take care not to block driveways and to avoid



damaging the grass verges. Please also remember to leave the village hall quietly so as not to disturb local residents. Thank you.



Jumble Sale

Another successful jumble sale was held at Houghton Conquest Village Hall in March yielding a record profit of over £500. Thanks go to Pam Massey for organising the event and to all the helpers and contributors. Our jumble sales are our main fund raising events of the year and help to support the Society to put on the spring concerts and the November shows. As such all contributions are gratefully received and all help is much appreciated.



Annual Dinner, March 2023

The annual dinner turned into Sunday lunch this year but otherwise there was no change to the format. With a three course meal with beef or vegetarian bourguignon and entertainment from four of the Society's members accompanied on the piano by Pam Rogers the event, organised by and with thanks to Pam Massey was a great success.



Musings re his contribution to the next Spring Concert, from Peter Davis

In 1997 the films Volcano and Dante's Peak came out. Coincidence? So too did Deep Impact and Armageddon. The same with A Bugs Life and Antz. Themes pop up and they are everywhere for a while. Likewise, in the 1820s 'sleepwalking' or 'somnambulism' was a thing. Various theses on it were written and fictional novels. This led to Bellini agreeing to write an opera based on it and thus La Sonnambula was born.

When you hear the name Bellini, maybe you think of Giovanni Bellini the famous painter from Venice, in fact from a famous family of painters. Maybe, you think of the Bellini cocktail made of prosecco and peach puree, created in Harry's Bar in Venice as a tribute to one of the paintings by Giovanni Bellini. Or, maybe you misheard and thought of the blini, a little pancake. This is none of those, this is Vincenzo Bellini the famous composer, who died tragically young at 33. When one hears the phrase 'bel canto', Italian for 'beautiful singing', then one automatically thinks of Rossini and Donizetti, but most of all Bellini.

La Sonnambula is a simple tale of a woman on the day before her wedding meeting up with the other villagers and her fiancé. A stranger arrives, asking the way to the castle. This being an opera he starts singing. He remembers this place. The briefest of recitatives – "Il mulino, il fonte...il bosco!... E vicin la fattoria!..."

"The mill...the stream...the woods!... and the farm nearby..."

And then we are off into the aria –

"Vi ravviso, o luoghi ameni," "Again I see you, O lovely scenes,..."

This is the aria that I will be singing, I hope you enjoy it. I was asked to sing it at the Gala night for the Beds Music festival a few years ago. The adjudicator told me I had a beautiful cadenza. I felt like saying that hers wasn't too bad either, but I held my tongue and checked on the definition of this musical term. Apparently, it means an improvised or written-out

ornamental passage sung by a soloist, usually in a 'free' rhythmic style, and often allowing virtuosic display. So now you know, and I hope that I can live up to it.

As for La Sonnambula, she sleepwalks into Rodolpho's bedroom, which causes all sorts of ructions, and they are a bit more serious than Gilbert would have set them!

Peter

Quiz Night

During lockdown there were two online Quiz Nights, both won by the Hodges family. The next quiz night, an evening of (hopefully) not too difficult questions and a lot of fun, will take place in person on Saturday 20th May at Stewartby United Church Hall. Tickets are £3 per person with teams of up to six players. Bring your own drinks, bring your own nibbles, bring your own feast if you wish and bring some money for the raffle.

Contact members of the Society or Mike, our Business manager, on 07557 670703 or at boxoffice@saods.org.uk, for tickets.



**STEWARTBY
AMATEUR
OPERATIC &
DRAMATIC
SOCIETY**

first rehearsal on
Thursday 25th May at
7.45pm,
Stewartby United
Church Hall

new members welcome

The Gondoliers

November 2023

Gilbert & Sullivan's **PBGS** Putteridge Bury G&S Society
HMS PINAFORE
Sailing the ocean blue
12th-15th April 2023

The Queen Mother Theatre
Walsworth Road, Hitchin, Herts SG4 9SP

www.pbgs.org
Contact PBGS: info@pbgs.org
Follow PBGS:
www.facebook.com/pbgands
& Twitter @pbgands



To stop receiving the newsletter please send an email to stewartbyoperatic@saods.org.uk with the word UNSUBSCRIBE as the subject.

If you wish to suggest items for or make contributions to future newsletters or to comment on this newsletter please email stewartbyoperatic@saods.org.uk

Information about Stewartby Operatic Society can be found at our web site at www.saods.org.uk and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/stewartbyopearticsociety. Queries about tickets should be sent to boxoffice@saods.org.uk. Any other queries should be sent to information@saods.org.uk.

