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### Good Evening-

Once again the Schenectady Light Opera Company is performing a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. "The Mikado," significantly, is appearing in our 35th anniversary year. One of the most entertaining, and certainly the most elaborate of G&S shows, it marked the beginning of our six years in the old Erie theatre (1950) and was included in the 15th anniversary year (1941). We hope you enjoy our interpretation this evening and will tell your friends about it—as a way of showing your approval.

As a special feature of this commemorative event, we invite you to read a resume of Company history, material for which has been diligently gleaned from the archives. It encompasses many years of trials, tribulations, and of course, many triumphs. This glowing heritage reflects in our current efforts expended to bring Schenectady area audiences the finest in artistic achieve-

ment.

Please note the information regarding our scholarship auditions in June and encourage any talented young vocalist who has not previously won an award to apply. This is just one of the ways in which contributions from our Special Members are utilized. Also, the local business people who advertise in our program assist financially, in addition to making this program possible.

in our program assist financially, in addition to making this program possible.

We are proud to announce next season's productions—"The King and I"
in November. "The Gypsy Baron" next May, and hope that you will plan to

attend both.

Beverly Jasake
President

### Schenectady Light Opera Company

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### Story of "The Mikado"

Nanki-Poo, the son of the Mikado, has disguised himself as a wandering minstrel and travels around Japan in an effort to escape marriage to the unattractive Katisha. He falls in love with Yum-Yum who at the time is engaged to her guardian, Ko-Ko. Ko-Ko has been condemned to death for flirting. Act I opens as Nanki-Poo goes to the court of Ko-Ko to see if Yum-Yum is now free to marry him.

It is learned that Ko-Ko has been made Lord High Executioner, thus reprieving him, and is going to marry Yum-Yum that very afternoon. A letter comes from the Mikado ordering Ko-Ko to execute somebody within the next month or lose his new exalted position. Nanki-Poo plans suicide since he can't have Yum-Yum. Ko-Ko sees his opportunity to turn the suicide into an execution and thereby obey the decree. Nanki-Poo consents on the condition that he be married to Yum-Yum for one month. Katisha suddenly appears, recognizes Nanki-Poo, and attempts to stop the wedding.

Act II opens with the young couple anticipating their month of happiness. Then Ko-Ko announces his discovery that Nanki-Poo's widow will have to be buried alive when he is executed. Nanki-Poo decides to kill himself at once. Ko-Ko bribes Pooh-Bah to fake an affidavit of execution.

The Mikado, Katisha and entourage enter, the falsified certificate is presented, and Katisha reveals Nanki-Poo's true identity. The Mikado orders that all involved be boiled in oil. Much confusion ensues—and then to solve the problem, Ko-Ko offers his hand to Katisha and she accepts. Nanki-Poo then appears with his bride and reveals himself as the son of the Mikado. All ends happily with a wedding toast.

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### Cast in Order of Appearance

Nanki-PooWilliam Nickerson
Pish-TushAllan Foster
Pooh-BahDrew Mills
Nicki-PooLozere Thompson, IV
Ko-KoRonald Fragomeni
Pitti-SingAnne Brickley
Yum-Yum Joan Sauter
Peep-BoVivian Tice
KatishaSara Roche
Mikado Peter Clemm
Umbrella BearerBetty Greenamyer

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Marie Cannon, Louise Centofanti, Gladys Iler, Janet Nickerson, Myrna Lee Smith, Ann Tetrault, Nancy Toporowski, Irene Bowen, Del Carlson, Marion Foster, Marcia Perry, Sally Ann Spaugh, Carol Thatcher, Lois Thompson.

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#### **UNDERSTUDIES**

	Albert Gluck
Nanki-Poo	Charles Elsen
Ko-Ko	Richard Traver
Pooh-Bah	John Hennessey
Pish-Tush	John Hennessey
Yum-Yum	Honey Templeton
Pitti-Sing	Honey Templeton
Katisha	Jean Cayey

### Musical Numbers

#### ACT I

#### Courtyard of Ko-Ko's Official Residence

If You Want to Know Who We Are	Chorus of Men
A Wand-ring Minstrel I	Nanki-Poo and Chorus
Our Great Mikado, Virtuous Man	
Young Man Despair	
And Have I Journeyed for a Month	
Behold the Lord High Executioner	
I've Got a Little List	
Comes a Train of Little Ladies	
Three Little Maids from School	
So Please You, Sir	Yum-Yum, Peep-Bo, Pitti-Sing, Pooh-Bah and Chorus of Girls
Were You Not to Ko-Ko Plighted	Yum-Yum, Nanki-Poo
I Am So Proud	
Act I Finale	

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#### ACT II

#### Ko-Ko's Garden

Braid the Raven Hair	Peep-Bo and Chorus of Girls
The Sun Whose Rays are All Ablaze	
MadrigalYum-Yum, Pitti-S	
Here's A How-De-Do!Yu	m-Yum, Nanki-Poo, Ko-Ko
Mi-ya Sa-ma	Chorus
Mikado Entrance M	ikado, Katisha and Chorus
A More Humane Mikado	
The Criminal Cried as He Dropped Him Down	Pitti-Sing, Ko-Ko Pooh-Bah and Chorus
Glee Pitti-Sing, Katisha,	Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, Mikado
The Flowers That Bloom in the SpringNa	nki-Poo, Ko-Ko, Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, Pooh-Bah
Alone, and Yet Alive	Katisha
Tit-Willow	Ко-Ко
There Is Beauty in the Bellow of the Blast	Katisha, Ko-Ko
Act II Finale	Entire Company

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### Schenectady Light Opera Company — A 35-Year Review

by GLORIA B. ERICSON

When the curtain rises on the Mikado on May 17th, it will be performance No. 161 for the Schenectady Light Opera Company. It will also mark the 35th anniversary of this volunteer cultural group, affectionately known as SLOC. Not all the productions have been as lavishly staged and costumed as this one, but all have been produced and performed by non-professionals for the sheer love of musical and theatre arts.

SLOC is a membership corporation, governed by a board of directors elected by the membership, whose purpose is to foster light opera and related arts in Schenectady. The Company was born in 1926 when a group of Van Corlaer and Draper alumni joined together to "present short plays containing songs and comedy acts." The group was directed by Mrs. Etta Moore, a music teacher in the Schenectady schools, and was known as the Bellevue Young Peoples Chorus. Within a few years the group scheduled public concerts and short operettas.

In 1936 the Bellevue Young Peoples Chorus changed its name to the Schenectady Light Opera Company because its membership had increased to include persons from all parts of the city. Its skill had increased, too, as the more difficult Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were presented.

In the spring of 1942, the Company reluctantly disbanded as Uncle Sam had more important roles for the male members. The ladies tried to carry on, but however proficient they may have become at toting scenery, light

carpentry, etc., they just couldn't make convincing baritones.

Four years later the group got together again and presented H.M.S. Pinafore at Mont Pleasant High, the Company's adopted home. To the astonishment and delight of the cast, the performance was compared most favorably with D'Oyly Carte. The man-power situation still posed a problem. A note in the group's newsletter stated, "To maintain the balance of the parts, no new sopranos will be admitted unless they bring a male."

For reasons of health, Mrs. Moore resigned as director and Ed Hatfield took over the reigns of the fast-growing Company. Under his direction, the group became an incorporated, non-profit organization devoted entirely to community service. SLOC soon developed a social conscience—a realization

that with community acceptance and support come responsibilities.

Box office appeal was important, but so too was the challenge of purely artistic and less familiar shows. The Company departed from the familiar Gilbert and Sullivan and tried *Chanticleer Hall*, an original script and score by Schenectady's Bob Stone, followed by *Chimes of Normandy*. The Company also instituted its annual vocal scholarship award to help deserving young people continue their musical training.

The following year the position of director was abolished and a producership created. A new producer was appointed for each show, with responsibility

for coordinating all the artistic phases of a production.

By this time, the group had accumulated vast quantities of sets and costumes and the problem of "in whose garage is that item stored" became paramount. Obviously, a central headquarters was imperative. A search was made and the old Craig Schoolhouse on Balltown Road seemed the ideal home. But before the happy housewarming, several difficulties were encountered. The school was restricted because of zoning laws, and several months passed before the re-zoning was approved. The state supreme court had to be

### A 35- Year Review (continued)

petitioned in order to allow a membership corporation to own property. Henceforth, the old Craig School was to be known as the Light Opera House, a headquarters where all the activities of the Company, except the final performances could be centralized and coordinated. The purchase also made possible the Light Opera Workshops, where qualified instructors in voice, dance and dramatics could offer training to young people to better prepare them for participation in the shows.

Until 1950, productions were given at Mont Pleasant High School, with the exception of 'on the road' shows at Cobleskill, Schoharie and East Greenbush. But the group longed to perform in a real theatre. In November of 1950, SLOC presented *The Mikado* on the boards of that *real* theatre, the old Erie. The Erie performances "separated the men from the boys" as far as SLOC's backstage workers were concerned. Friday evening found every able bodied "SLOCer" loading scenery at the Opera House for arrival at the Erie as soon as the late movie ended. The crew worked all night with the hope that the nine a.m. curtain would rise on properly assembled scenery. Most times it was touch and go. Ardent "SLOCers" were hard put to explain to 'unbitten' friends just what it was that motivated their willingness to relinquish a night's sleep so the show could go on.

The Mikado was followed by Chocolate Soldier for which SLOC played host to the Schenectady Folk Dancers, the Company's first guest performing artists. Box office continued good, so the three-night stand grew to four. Back to G & S for Iolanthe.

The following year an original show School for Wives, based on a comedy by Moliere, written by two Schenectadians, Bob Stone and Barbara Gervais, was well received.

Perhaps the most spectacular production to date was The Red Mill. This show made necessary the acquisition of an "SRO" sign (standing room only, for those not acquainted with this phenomenon). It was estimated that 25,000 man hours of volunteer work went into it. Then came Brigadoon — now there was a show! Again — back to G & S for Yeoman of the Guard. New Moon holds the record for the largest opening night audience in the Company's history. Next appearance — Sweethearts.

For Music in the Air, SLOC audiences were treated to something new as the Company tried the modern theatre method of scene transition without lowering the curtain. To this day, there is a difference of opinion as to whether the audience understood or thought it all a big mistake. Although modesty would prevent any cast member from mentioning it, a professional theatre artist in the audience for Carousel, made the heartwarming statement that Schenectady's production rivalled the original Broadway show.

Between scheduled shows, SLOC members remain actively involved with the many facets of running a Company of 300 members. The Show Selection Committee continuously studies the problem of maintaing a good balance between popular type good-box-office shows and artistic shows that offer a challenge to the performers and adhere to the policy of bringing the best light opera available to Schenectady.

In 1954 the Company inaugurated its annual Christmas TV Show over WRGB. In 1956, the Company presented Kaleidoscope, a potpurri of the best SLOC shows, for the benefit of the Schenectady Museum's Piano Fund, in appreciation for the excellent cooperation of the museum in providing rehearsal facilities.

Spring of 1956 found SLOC wholeheartedly supporting the sentiment of

### A 35- Year Review (continued)

the times for a civic auditorium and offered its help as a control center for ideas on the project. In view of the probable demise of the Erie Theatre, every conceivable possibility was investigated. SLOC's persistence helped spark an investigation by the County Planning Board and much publicity was given the effort for several months. Obviously, the time was not ripe.

The last two shows in the Erie were "first ventures" for the Company. Die Fledermaus was grand opera and its successful run verified that Schenectady could take grand opera and like it. Showboat had a mixed cast of white and colored performers. It was probably the busiest show on record for backstage workers as there were seven scene changes per act.

On December 10, 1956 the Erie Theatre closed. No history of the Schenectady Light Opera Company could omit mention of that sad day. The old Erie was 'home' to SLOC for six years during which time the audiences doubled and the performances came as close to professional as any amateur

group is likely to become.

The next year was known as the "year of crisis." A show was scheduled, but where would it play? Nothing suitable was available in Schenectady, so the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake High School welcomed the *Merry Widow*.

However, since Burnt Hills is not exactly the heart of the city, some regular customers were unable to see the show. So, back to Schenectady for the fall show in the new Niskayuna High School. Finian's Rainbow, Naughty Marietta and Fanny followed. La Perichole again reminded the public that SLOC is indeed an opera Company. This show marked the first of the Schenectady Civic Ballet's appearances with the Company.

Then came SLOC's first venture into modern opera with the presentation of *The Telephone*, along with two other short operas, *Down in the Valley* and *RSVP*. Song of *Norway* was well-received by the audience even though the cast was firmly convinced that Mr. Greig never had intended his music for

the human voice.

In September 1960, SLOC was invited to appear on the GTS television show and was happy to contribute its talents to that civic venture—and surprised to find its participation reviewed in *Variety*.

This year also marked the end of feminine discrimination as the Com-

pany elected Beverly Fasake its first woman president.

The Company's last production, *Oklahomal*, was an exuberant treat for the musical comedy lovers and for the fun and relaxation of the entire company. And, after all, this is why the old Bellevue Chorus was formed in the first place.

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#### Who's Who in the Cast

- PETER J. CLEMM (Mikado)—A native of Stuttgart, Germany, he played Macbeth in college and sang with the Bach Choir in London. Peter also played Vicomte Ribaud in New Moon and Pisoni in Song of Norway, both SLOC productions. He is a metallurgist with General Electric.
- WILLIAM NICKERSON (Nanki-Poo)—Earned a degree in music from Ithaca College and is resident music teacher at Washington Irving School. His SLOC show participation includes singing in the chorus in Sweethearts, Oklahoma! and Music in the Air, for which he was also assistant conductor. He played Balanard in RSVP and has served as a member of the social committee.
- RONALD FRAGOMENI (Ko-Ko)—First participated with the Company in Gilbert & Sullivan's Patience (1946) and in Robin Hood. Ron sang the role of Count Pepi in Song of Norway and understudied the peddler and sang in the chorus of Oklahoma! He is in GE's Advertising & Sales Promotion Department and holds a private pilot's license.
- E. DREW MILLS (Pooh-Bah)—Sang with the Syracuse University Glee Club and locally sings with the Mendelssohn Club of Albany. Drew is also a soloist in St. George's Church Choir and played in Guys and Dolls when presented by the Musicals Under the Stars group. With SLOC, he has sung Don Pedro in Perichole and has done art work for the Company. He is chairman of the art department at Mohanasen Central School and has directed high school musical productions.
- ALLAN FOSTER (Pish-Tush)—Sang in several Gilbert & Sullivan productions at Yale and also did church solo work in Bristol, England. His previous SLOC show participation includes singing deCascada in Merry Widow, Dick Warrington in Naughty Marietta, Paquillo in Perichole and working with the chorus in Oklahoma! His other Company activities include serving as vice president-facilities in 1959-60 and currently serving as a Board member. Allan plays soccer with the Schenectady Rangers and is a metallurgist with General Electric.
- JOAN SAUTER (Yum-Yum)—Holds a degree in music from Potsdam State Teachers College and studied voice for a year in Italy and Austria. She has also studied in New York City with Maria Kurenko. Joan has sung the lead in two Mozart operas, Madame Silvertone in The Impressario and the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro, and has also played the part of Kate in Kiss Me Kate. She has taught vocal music in the Schenectady schools and understudied Lucy in The Telephone with SLOC.
- ANNE BRICKLEY (Pitti-Sing)—Sings with the Thursday Musical Club and appeared in the Civic Playhouse production, Separate Tables. With SLOC, Anne has worked with the social and costume committees and appeared as the Lady in Waiting in Perichole and as Margareta in Song of Norway.
- VIVIAN TICE (Peep-Bo)—Likes to write popular music and was a church soloist in Cobleskill. Vivian has appeared in General Electric Christmas Shows and played Mother Greig in the SLOC production, Song of Norway. She is a secretary at G.E.
- SARA ROCHE (Katisha)—Has sung professionally with New York opera companies, including three years with the Comic Opera Guild and as a member of the Savoy Dramatic Company. She also participated in Opera in the Round with the Ansonia Opera Circle in New York City. Sara is presently studying with Gordon Mason and was alto soloist with the Octavo Singers in their performance of Elijah last fall. This is her first appearance with SLOC.

### Who's Who in Production

- MARIE PLETENIK (Producer)—Holds a degree in music from the University of Rochester and a MS in education from Oneonta State Teachers College. She has taught elementary classes in the Schenectady Public Schools and serves on the Boards of the Junior League and the Civic Music Association. Her SLOC participation includes being a chorus member in Sweethearts and Music in the Air and has accompanied for five shows. She has been a vice president on the Board of Directors and is presently serving a term on the Board.
- BRUCE THATCHER (Director)—Bruce is a graduate of Iowa University. He has done work with television and has been very active with SLOC since coming to Schenectady last year. Bruce participated in the singing and dancing choruses of Oklahoma! as well as understudying the part of Will. In addition to his work as director of The Mikado, Bruce is serving as vice president in charge of relations and publicity. He is a copy writer for G.E.
- LOZERE THOMPSON III (Conductor)—Has an extensive background of radio, TV, concert and church work as a singer and conductor. He has participated in the production of many Gilbert & Sullivan shows in various capacities including playing lead roles in six of them. He has worked with church choirs locally and presently is with the Bellevue Reformed Church. His SLOC participation includes singing in the Musical Kaliedoscope in 1955 and more recently taking part of deJolidon in Merry Widow and serving as conductor for The Telephone. He is the vocal teacher at McKinley Junior High School.
- LAWRENCE S. PIVACEK (Assistant Conductor)—Is a graduate of Potsdam State Teachers College where he majored in vocal and instrumental Music. He is working on a Master's degree in composition. While at college, he worked as stage and production manager for various shows. He teaches music in the Schenectady Junior High Schools and is responsible for the recent Junior High Instrumental Festival.
- TRUMAN DRAPER (Stage Manager)—Has done TV production work and in interested in modern dance. As a newcomer with SLOC last fall, Tru sang and danced in Oklahoma! He is currently on the Advertising and Public Relations training program with General Electric.
- EDWARD KAO (Set Designer)—Eddie grew up in the Orient and has given our sets authentic simplicity and charm. He also designed sets for SLOC's production, RSVP. At the Playhouse, he did sets for the recent George Washington Slept Here. Professionally, Kao does free-lance display work for area stores.
- WILLIAM E. FASAKE (Production Manager)—Has worked with SLOC since 1952 in many capacities—publicity, stage crew, set construction, tickets. Bill was stage manager for Perichole and produced Oklahoma! He is also slated to produce SLOC's The King and I next fall. He is currently Business Manager for the Company.
- EDITH NORTON (Wardrobe Mistress)—Was active in theater groups in Germany and participates in church work. With SLOC, Edith has served on the costume committee for Song of Norway and was the costume designer for Oklahoma!
- WILLY WILLENDRUP (Construction Designer)—A former SLOC orchestra member, Willy constructed sets for Song of Norway and was construction designer and set technician for Oklahoma!
- GARRETT REILLY (Set Technician)—Active with the Company for several years, he did publicity for Merry Widow, was the priest in Fanny, and has served as a Board member, as Business Manager, and as a member of the organization study committee.

# Production Staff

Producer
DirectorBruce Thatche
Asst. to the Director Carol Thatche
PrompterPeggy Bramha
Rehearsal Secretaries Jean McDonald, Richard Trave
ConductorLozere Thompson II
Asst. Conductor Lawrence S. Pivace
Orchestra ManagerJohn Gedde
Accompanists Joan Ham, Virginia Icke, Alice Luetzel, Man Montgomery, Joann Rautenberg, Carol Roberts, Phyllis Olin, Haz Bundy
Stage ManagerTruman Drape
Stage Crew
Set Designer
Set Painting
Production ManagerWilliam E. Fasal
Set Construction DesignerWilly Willendry
Set TechnicianGarrett Reil
Set Construction
Costume Committee Edith Norton (chairman) Jan O'Neill, Lee Cheatham, Adrienne Grenfell, Jill Grenfell
Lighting Technicians
Properties
Make-upGladys Luthy, Ruth Consalvo (co-chairmen), Louise Heir miller (workshop director), Grace Atwell, Rita Ciampa, Mary Cripino, Barbara Draffen, Ann Gurdak, Katsy Hagel, Dorothy Jacob son, Dorothy Kerr, Lillian Kline, Fern Larking, Muriel LaTourrette Pauline McLeod, Phyllis Manley, Esther Rorich, Jane Rowan, Iren Scott, Luia Scott, Loan Spannelle, Edith Standie

# Company Operations

President Beverly A. B. Fasake
Secretary Florence McGinley
Historian Gloria Ericson
Treasurer
Auditor
Business Manager
Vice President—Production Development Jack D. Bryne Casting Committee—Elizabeth Coe (chairman), Jack Harrison, Dorothea Hilbert, Joann Rautenberg  Producer's Staff Committee—Jack D. Bryne (chairman)  Show Selection Committee—Sylvia Horwitz (chairman), Gloria Ericson, Ronald Fragomeni, Richard Lange, Charles McGarrahan.  Technical Committee—Tom Benn
Vice President—Relations and Publicity
Vice President—Personnel Joann Rautenberg Special Membership Committee—Gay Lehrman, Elaine Rinaldi (co-chair- men) Talent—Marie Cannon General Membership—Esther Rorich (chairman), Edith Struglia Social—Elizabeth and George Finch (co-chairmen), Marion Foster, Jack Mango, Jean McDonald, Janet Nickerson, Ann Tetrault, Carol Thatcher, Nancy Toporowski, Richard Traver Scholarship—Irma Hamilton (chairman), Jean Cayey, Nancy Rynning
Vice President—Facilities

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This Spring will mark the fourteenth year for these scholarships. Auditions for the 1961 awards will be held on June 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the Schenectady Museum. Applications will be accepted until May 24 and are obtainable at Van Curler Music Company and Roberts Piano Store. The public is cordially invited to attend auditions.

#### USHERETTES

Chairman—Virginia Mills
Barbara Bieganski
Michele DeMarco
Pat DiVito
Betty Jean Doran
Drusilla Fagel
Florence Fritz
Agnes Frost
Mary Ann Havill
Barbara Hayward
Thelma Hill
Joan Holter
Patricia Howard

Maureen Kelleher Gay Lehrman Carol Leitch Marion Leonard Carolyn Lewinski Mary Ann Lommel Phyllis MacKenzie Betsy Martiny Mair Morgan Marilyn Ostrander Barbara Pieronet Connie Rehberger Bernice Silver

#### USHERS AT THE DOOR

Chairman—Virginia Mills
John Ericson
Harold Holt
Warren Holter
Phillip MacKenzie

Chris McCann John Thurlow Donald Leva Jack Byrne Jack Gingrich

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