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Operetta Highlights

PRO ARTE CHORALE

Steven Fox, *Conductor*Janet Montgomery, *Accompanist*Richard Holmes, *Baritone Soloist*Laurelyn Watson Chase, *Soprano Soloist*

1st Act Gondoliers

Rising Early Gondoliers

Anxious for to Shine Patience

When Britain Really Ruled the Waves Iolanthe

ം Interval യ

1st Act Finale Yeoman of the Guard

1st Act Finale Patience



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About Pro Arte Chorale

Pro Arte Chorale, an all-volunteer chorus now celebrating its 53rd season, is one of New Jersey's most prominent choral organizations. The Chorale has appeared in major concert venues across the region including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, and the South Orange Performing Arts Center. In addition to its own subscription series in Bergen County, the Chorale has appeared with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, American Symphony Orchestra, Westfield Symphony Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Company, and the New York Chamber Symphony. Currently under the musical direction of Steven Fox, the Pro Arte Chorale has also been conducted by Joshua Greene, David Crone, Roger Nierenberg, Bart Folse and John Nelson. In addition, the Chorale has sung under the batons of Nicholas McGegan, Zubin Mehta, Julius Rudel, Hugh Wolff, Zdenek Macal, Yuri Temirkanov, Leon Botstein, Gerard Schwartz, and David Wroe.



Conductor Steven Fox is now in his sixth season as Artistic Director of the Pro Arte Chorale. He is the Artistic Director of The Clarion Choir and The Clarion Orchestra, and Founder of Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg, which he established as Russia's first period-instrument orchestra at the age of 21. A 2017 GRAMMY®-nominee, he has appeared as a guest conductor with many renowned ensembles such as Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco, Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, Juilliard415 at Lincoln Center, the

Charleston Symphony Orchestra, the Quebec Symphony Orchestra, l'Opéra de Québec, Music of the Baroque in Chicago and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. His performances have also taken him to some of the most prestigious halls internationally, such as the Grand Philharmonic Hall and Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Rachmaninoff Hall in Moscow, the Duke's Hall of London, and the Vatican.

From 2008 to 2013 he was an Associate Conductor at New York City Opera, and he has served as Assistant Conductor for the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artists Program and Juilliard Opera. He has also been Music Director of the Taghkanic Chorale in Westchester since 2007.

Recognized as a leader in his generation of conductors, Steven has been called 'an esteemed director' by *The New Yorker*, 'visionary' by *BBC Music Magazine*, and 'a conductor to watch' by *Seen and Heard International*.

Steven was named an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, in 2010 'for significant contributions to his field in music.' He has given master classes and clinics at Dartmouth College, The Juilliard School and Yale University, where he served for two years as preparatory conductor of the Yale Schola Cantorum.

About the Artists



Janet Montgomery has won acclaim as a pianist, organist, coach, and conductor. She has appeared in concert at venues ranging from Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center to Washington National Cathedral, and the Juilliard School. She has accompanied such groups as the New York Choral Society, the Gregg Smith Singers, Musica Sacra, and the Masterwork Chorus. She is a founding member of the Serafini Brillanti Trio; the group has recorded a CD and has performed extensively in New Jersey, Florida, and the Chicago area. Ms. Montgomery is

the director of music at the Community Church of Glen Rock and is the accompanist and keyboard assistant at the Barnert Temple of Franklin Lakes. She is also on the music faculty of the Dwight Englewood School. Ms. Montgomery graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory with a bachelor's degree in piano performance and has a master's degree in accompanying from the Manhattan School of Music. She also holds the AAGO certification from the American Guild of Organists.



Richard Holmes has sung principal baritone roles in all of the G&S operas: Counsel (Trial by Jury), Dr. Daly and JW Wells (Sorcerer), Captain Corcoran (HMS Pinafore) — 207 times to date, Major-General Stanley, Pirate King, Sergeant of Police, and Frederic (!) (Pirates of Penzance), Grosvenor and Bunthorne (Patience), Strephon and Mountararat (Iolanthe), Florian (Princess Ida). Ko-Ko, Pish-Tush (Mikado), Despard and Robin (Ruddigore), Sergeant Meryll and Jack Point (Yeomen of the Guard), Giuseppe and Don Alhambra (The

Gondoliers), Mr. Goldbury (Utopia Ltd.), Ludwig and Dr. Tannhauser (The Grand Duke) as well as the principal baritone roles in Sullivan's Cox and Box, The Emerald Isle, The Rose of Persia, Haddon Hall, The Martyr of Antioch, The Golden Legend, and The Prodigal Son. In this repertoire, he is most closely associated with New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players, with which he has been a principal artist for the past 34 years. However, he has sung many of these roles with other companies throughout the United States.

Gilbert and Sullivan is only one facet of Richard career. In the operatic repertoire, among his roles are Figaro in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Malatesta in Don Pasquale, Belcore in L'Elisir D'Amore, Schaunard in La Boheme, Sharpless in Madama Butterfly, Ping in Turandot and, perhaps his favorite, Dandini in La Cenerentola, with companies such as Glimmerglass Opera, Virginia Opera, Opera Saratoga, the opera companies of El Paso, Natchez, San Antonio, Dayton, and Columbus, Light Opera of New York, and New York Grand Opera. He has created several roles in world premieres such as the Sergeant Duffy in Jack Beeson's "Sorry, Wrong Number" and numerous operas by Seymour Barab. With Center for Contemporary Opera and other companies he has sung the baritone leads in Conrad Susa's Transformations, Britten's Noye's Fludde, Weill's Der Jasager, Rorem's The Robbers, and Douglas Moore's Carry Nation and Gallantry, the latter recorded by Albany Records.

Upcoming events on Richard's schedule are performances of Ruddigore with New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players in April, soloist in the Monteverdi Vespers with Amor Artis and a one-man show based on his life in Gilbert and Sullivan at the International G&S Festival in Harrogate this August.

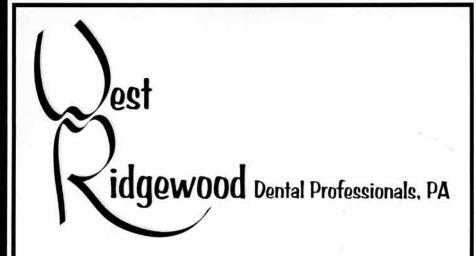


Lauded by the New York Times for her "pure," "agile," and "winningly sweet-toned lyric soprano," and described by Opera News as "sheer delight," **Laurelyn Watson Chase** has appeared regularly with regional opera companies and orchestras and is leading soprano with New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players. She has frequently performed three signature roles as Josephine in *HMS Pinafore*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* for

many seasons at home in New York City and on extensive tours throughout the United States and the United Kingdom. Additional Gilbert and Sullivan roles include Gianetta and Casilda in *The Gondoliers*, Elsie in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Angelina in *Trial by Jury*, Princess Zara in *Utopia Limited*, Rose Maybud in *Ruddigore*, Constance and Aline in *The Sorcerer*, Phyllis in *Iolanthe*, and The Sultana Rose-in-Bloom in the Sullivan/Hood opera, *The Rose of Persia*.

Laurelyn holds a Bachelor of Music degree from University of North Texas, a Master of Music from Manhattan School of Music, and attended Bel Canto Institutue. Winner of the National Arts Club Voice Competition, a grant from Performing Arts Foundation, and NYGASP's Isaac Asimov Award for Artistic Achievement.

Laurelyn's favorite and most demanding role to date is Mom to Lochlan!



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Program, Notes

The operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, generally regarded as the forerunner of the American Broadway musical, occupy a position somewhere between Broadway and "grand opera". Among these fourteen shows are the famous ones, *H.M.S. Pinafore, The Pirates of Penzance*, and *The Mikado*. But if your familiarity with "the Savoy operas", as their joint work is known, is limited to these particular operettas' hit tunes – "I'm Called Little Buttercup", "I Am The Very Model of a Modern Major General", and so forth – then you are missing composer Sullivan's finest work. Consequently today's program, drawing from the slightly less-well-known *Patience, The Gondoliers, Iolanthe* and *The Yeoman Of The Guard*, features Sullivan in his more "symphonic" mode, which also makes more prominent use of the resources of a choral ensemble. Gilbert's story lines, dialogue and, especially, lyrics – though designed to project situations sometimes absurd or silly – are, perhaps surprisingly, carefully crafted.

THE GONDOLIERS, a rich, late work in the partnership, is suffused throughout by the sunny climate and musical joy of its Italian setting. The operetta opens in a way unique to the repertory: in place of a succinct opening chorus followed immediately by a dialog scene that gets the story going, here is a 15-minute unbroken stretch of music, as in proper opera, designed mostly to set the scene, but also to advance the plot through its first issue: two Gondoliers, twin brothers, are about to choose brides from among the local peasant girls. Soon after, the audience – but also the brothers themselves – will learn that they are not brothers at all, and that one of them (but it is impossible to determine which!) is actually the soon-to-be crowned King of Barataria, a Spanish island, and moreover was married in infancy! Consequently, plenty of trouble ensues.

Later, in Act II, the twins are on their Mediterranean island, where they temporarily reign jointly as king pending the determination of who it really is.

One brother, Giuseppi, sings today's song "Rising Early In The Morning," describing what their day is like as joint monarch of a kingdom fashioned on awkwardly democratic principles.

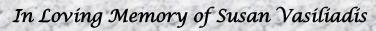
We have one selection from **IOLANTHE**, a political farce that pits the peers of the House of Lords against a band of fairies. This song, "**When Britain Really Ruled The Waves**", may sound like a national anthem, but pokes fun at The House of Lords – which, "throughout the war, did nothing in particular – and did it very well!"

THE YEOMAN OF THE GUARD is the pair's most serious work — complete with bitter-sweet ending — and its book inspired Sullivan's most sustained "symphonic" writing. In its First Act Finale the "Beefeaters" who ceremonially guard the Tower of London (as they still do today) are preparing to welcome to their ranks a famous war hero, Leonard Meryll, son of their own Sergeant Meryll. But the audience knows the newcomer is really a Tower prisoner who is supposed to be executed within the hour — a stratagem worked out by the sergeant himself and his daughter Phoebe, who has become besotted with the prisoner. Consequently, for example, the prisoner does not recognize his own "sister" when their "father" points her out to him before the crowd. When soldiers are dispatched to fetch him from his cell, "He is not there!". Pandemonium erupts — the assembled characters and populace all being shocked and upset for their own reasons — when "the grave is cheated of its due," and the Act ends dramatically with the offer of a thousand marks as reward to whoever "brings him here alive or dead!"

PATIENCE was written immediately following the two early works that solidified the pair's international fame, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Pirates Of Penzance*, and represents a clear step forward in both musical and dialogue sophistication. The piece caricatures the then-current Pre-Raphaelite "aesthetic" movement, and features two rival "aesthetic" poets, rivals also for the hand of Patience, the village milkmaid. In the solo "If You're Anxious For To Shine" one of the poets, Bunthorne, reveals that his aestheticism

is only a pose, "born of a morbid love of admiration" (a pose which works perfectly well on the silly upper-crust ladies of the chorus, but not on the down-to-earth Patience herself). In the Act I Finale we see Bunthorne, having been spurned by Patience, offering himself as husband to whichever lady wins a lottery he is organizing for the purpose. The proceedings stop before even getting under way because Patience, having just been taught that true love has to be truly selfless, suddenly announces that she will accept Bunthorne after all, because he is so repulsive in his posing that any love for him must be selfless indeed. The local ladies, thus disappointed, then decide to return to the gentlemen of the chorus, who are soldiers locally stationed, to whom they had all been engaged the year before, but had abandoned due to their infatuation with Bunthorne. All seems about set to be well, when suddenly in comes our other poet, Grosvenor, recently arrived in the village - at which point the ladies, succumbing to his announcement that he too is "aesthetic... and poetic!", promptly turn away from their soldiers in favor of Grosvenor – to the consternation of all present, if for a variety of quite different reasons.

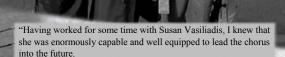




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Although I continued to sing and act as Artistic Advisor, it was Susan that was steering the ship, and how well she did it!"

~ John Coulter, Pro Arte Chorale Founder

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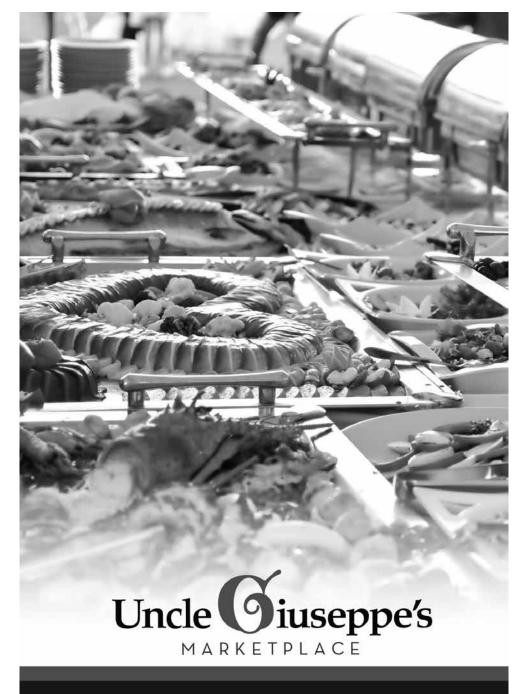
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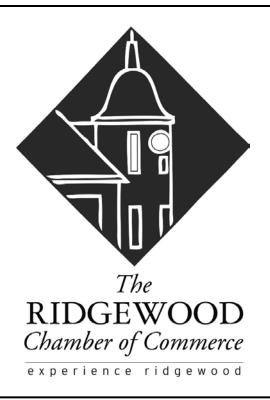


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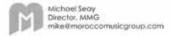
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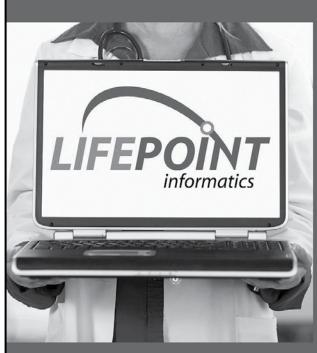
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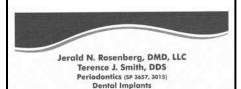


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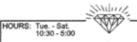
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