

Betchworth Village Memorial Hall, 7-10th Nov 2018

David Longes

David's long association with BODS began in 1964, since when he has played many roles in plays, musicals and G&S, including most recently the Beggar in *The Beggar's Opera*, Jack Point in *Yeomen of the Guard*, the Preacher in *Silas Marner*, Bunthorne in *Patience* and various characters in *The 39 Steps*. He's also directed BODS and when not performing enjoys travel, good food and wine.



Margaret Longes

Margaret has been a member of BODS and of several other local societies for over 30 years, during which time she has sung and danced in a wide variety of shows. Favourite roles have included Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Valencienne in *The Merry Widow*, Flora in *Cold Comfort Farm*, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Aline in *The Sorcerer*, Casilda in *The Gondoliers*, and Rose Maybud in *Ruddigore*. Margaret is also a keen skier and mountain walker.



Jane Seymour

This is Jane's third G&S with BODS, having played a fairy in *Iolanthe* and Lady Angela in *Patience*. Now she's been typecast (her words) as a drunk ... no acting required! She hopes you'll enjoy the show and she'll see you at the bar afterwards, strictly for research purposes of course!



Stephen Tickell

Since joining in 2009 for *Viva Mexico*, Stephen has been involved onstage and backstage in most Bods productions, most recently in *Silas Marner*, *A Handful of Plays*, *Patience* and *The 39 Steps*. He's also found at MADS and other local groups on sound and lights



Julian Warner-Edney

Julian joined BODS in 2013 for *The Sorcerer*, has just finished *Gondoliers* with Bookham Light Operatic and is delighted to tick another G&S off the list with Lynda and Ian's unique/original production of *Thespis*, leaving only *The Grand Duke* to finish the set. He hopes you enjoy this chance to see a rarely performed G&S production and that Diana, Selene, Phoebe, Artemis, or Hecate will light your way home !



B.O.D.S.

Betchworth Operatic & Dramatic Society Presents

A unique production of the 'lost' G&S opera, with later music by Arthur Sullivan arranged to the libretto of W.S.Gilbert, by Lynda Barrett-Mercer and Ian Stone

THESPIS

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noda

Be inspired by amateur theatre

Welcome to this evening's performance. Following on from our premiere of *Silas Marner* and other original works which BODS has staged in recent years, it's very much in our tradition to tackle unfamiliar musicals rather than just the staple diet of popular shows to which many amateur operatic groups stick. Having never really looked at *Thespis* until Lynda proposed the concept, I was pleasantly surprised. As the very first G&S, the libretto is certainly less refined than later operas, not to mention mixing Greek/Roman mythology, but the style and humour are immediately recognizable

As Lynda and Ian set out to create their score (to replace Sullivan's original lost after the short opening run of *Thespis* 1871-2) I think we were all intrigued as to how it would turn out. Not surprisingly it took them many months of research and discussion about the choice of music, and for Ian to produce the arrangements, but it was certainly worth waiting for. If you're a G&S aficionado you might find the juxtaposition strange at first, but hopefully you'll appreciate, as we have in the course of rehearsing, the skill with which meter and mood are matched to Gilbert's libretto, and the seamless links where different tunes are woven together.

The cast is perhaps a little smaller than originally envisaged, and also Pam Patch had to reluctantly withdraw at the last minute to look after a family member, so the part of Diana is being played by Lynda instead. But our director and MD have made great use of the forces available, and on a positive note it's been rewarding to work in a tightly-knit team (including new members Matt and Patrick) where everyone's performance is crucial - no easy ride at the back of the chorus ! And as with other recent shows, this one is staged with a minimal production crew. Fortunately David is used to working his stage-lighting magic single-handed, while most other tasks have been done by the director and members of the company. Of course we couldn't manage without our Front of House helpers looking after you so efficiently.

Although we're fairly used to multitasking, we would certainly welcome more helpers for backstage and other production duties, so please do get in touch if you're interested, or would like to perform with us. In November 2019 we plan to stage Lehar's *The Merry Widow*, directed by Alison Cooper Stephen Tickell (chairman)

Julie Bickerdike

Julie has been involved with most BODS shows and events for the last few years, as actor, director, dancer, chorus, front of house manager, make-up and committee member ! She co-directed our last show *The 39 Steps*



Colin Bousfield

Colin has been a member of BODS for a number of years, appearing most recently in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and *Silas Marner*. He's also a member of several other societies and enjoys performing so much that he regularly appears in 5 or 6 shows in a year !



Carolyn Burnley

Carolyn first sang with BODS as Kate in *Yeomen of the Guard* (2015). She's since appeared as Phoebe in *Yeomen* at AIMS; Mad Margaret in *Ruddigore* with Utopians (she's been asked to sing it several times since, but can't think why!) and Mistress of the Novices/Abbess in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* with Porcupine Productions.



Carolyn also gives recitals, most recently as one half of "The Two Divas" and enjoys singing oratorio. She also sings with Stag Montem Chorem - a cathedral visiting choir. As a mezzo soprano Carolyn has sung many 'trouser roles' such as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, but *Thespis* is the first show where she has also had to act the part.

Jane Johnson

Jane joined BODS in 2005 for *50s Showtime*, and has performed in many productions since then, including as Sergeant of Police in *Pirates*, and Phoebe in *Yeomen of the Guard*



Jane Khan

Jane joined BODS in 2015 for *Patience*. Before that she had not performed any Gilbert & Sullivan for over 20 years, since playing Tessa in *The Gondoliers* and Leila in *Iolanthe* with Oxford University G&S Society.



Lynda Barrett-Mercer - Director

We welcome Lynda back to BODS after a gap of around ten years. Since first joining BODS at the age of 18, she's performed in and directed many shows with us. Lynda is delighted to be collaborating on *Thespis* with Ian Stone, as it's a show many G&S fans want to do, but most don't get the opportunity.



Lynda is a very experienced and versatile performer in her own right, (she trained vocally under Angela Barker) and has played, among others, the roles of Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance*, Katisha in *The Mikado*, Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, Killer Queen in *We Will Rock You*, Nettie in *Carousel* and Prince Oreste in *La Belle Héléne* to name but a few. She also performs in daytime concerts and on the 'lunchtime circuit', as well as regularly broadcasting her own, live, solo singing performances on the internet, for people all over the world to listen to. She gained a BA Hons in 'Film and Video Production' from The Surrey Institute of Art and Design in 2001. Although her formal training is film-based, she much prefers the immediacy and thrill of 'live theatre', although she regrets its transient nature.

Lynda has been directing in the Surrey, Kent and Croydon area since the 1990s, her first full production being *Yeomen of the Guard* for BODS. A few of the other shows she has directed are *Jane Eyre - The Musical*, *Return To The Forbidden Planet*, *Carousel*, *Christopher Columbus* and the entire G&S repertoire, including the NODA award winning *Broadway Pirates* in 2016.

She ran the company Utopians Unlimited, with Jon Fox, for 21 years and now plans to start up her own company called "A.T.O.M.S", in Kent, where she has recently moved with her devoted husband and 8 gorgeous cats.

Ian Stone - Musical Director

Ian joined BODS for the 1973 production of *The Grand Duke* and since then has taken a part in nearly all the musicals (including all 13 G&S operas), initially on stage taking many principal roles, but more recently as accompanist or musical director. He also accompanies for other local societies, providing the music for several Shakespeare productions at Polesden Lacey Open Air Theatre, and he's half of the duo *Vintage Tea*, playing mainly songs from the 1920s/30s with jazz singer Maxine Dye.



Thespis or 'The Gods Grown Old' - synopsis

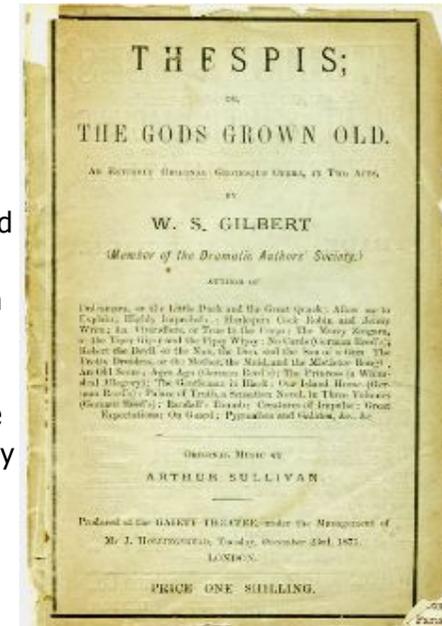
Act I - The Gods on Mount Olympus complain how duties have become arduous due to old age, and the boy God Mercury complains he now has to do all their work. The Gods then discover a troupe of actors led by Thespis, climbing up the mountain for a picnic to celebrate the marriage of Sparkeion and Nicemis, two of their number. When Thespis eventually realizes the gods are real and hears of their problems, he suggests the actors take over their roles for a year, so they can enjoy a holiday on earth

Act II takes place a year later, when the actors have been enjoying their positions as Gods and taking it easy, although some are confused as to whom they are supposed to be married in mythology or real life ! Mercury was left behind by the Gods to help keep things running smoothly, but explains how they have been anything but. The Gods return rejuvenated from their holiday, and after appearing in disguise to hear petitions from Earth about the chaos, reveal themselves, angrily banishing Thespis and the actors from Olympus, to be forever 'eminent tragedians'.

Mezzo Soprano and Trouser Roles - a note by Carolyn Burnley

Mezzo sopranos (who have lower voices than sopranos) are traditionally known for playing witches and bitches in opera. However they not only play these character parts but sometimes they are called upon to perform trouser roles. Trouser roles are where a woman plays the part of a teenage boy, such as Cherubino in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, or a man as in Julius Caesar in Handel's opera of the same name.

In the 18th century it was quite normal for the male hero to be a soprano part sung by a castrato, but as time moved on castrati were replaced by mezzo sopranos. In later operas the tradition of a man played by a woman continued for comic effect. In *Thespis*, Gilbert and Sullivan continued this tradition by having both Mercury and Sparkeion played by women, although this was not perpetuated in their later operas



A note from our Musical Director

All but two of the musical numbers of the original *Thespis* have been lost. There have been many attempts to produce a performing version of *Thespis*, and ours is one more in a long line! Some versions use only Sullivan's music to complete the missing numbers, some include music from other composers such as Offenbach, and some recompose the music from scratch. We decided that we wanted to use only Sullivan's music: one of the numbers (Climbing over rocky mountain) was re-used in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and who is to say that Sullivan didn't recycle other pieces as well? It is just possible that the music we've used (or at least some of it) is the original music of *Thespis*, recycled by Sullivan into another opera! At least, that's what we'd like to think....

We looked at the meter of the songs, and tried to find the best fit within Sullivan's other works. Some fitted well, some needed a bit of tweaking to make them fit! In several instances our version uses the same music as other versions – in every case this is because it's by far the best fit – and in every case it was derived independently of other versions (I made a point of not listening to any other version so we couldn't be accused of pinching someone else's ideas....)

There are a few links which I've had to write myself – and some places where I've had to write harmonies for music which was unison in the original. However, in one case I was very fortunate – I thought I'd have to write tenor and bass parts for 'Climbing over rocky mountain' (full chorus in *Thespis*, ladies' chorus in *Pirates*) until I found a facsimile of the composer's score for *Pirates*, which incorporates a few pages from an original copyist's score of *Thespis* (at least for the beginning of the number) – and there were Sullivan's missing full chorus parts, crossed out since they no longer applied in a ladies' chorus....

All of the added music in our version (apart from my links) derives from other Gilbert and Sullivan operettas – the one exception is the opening chorus, which derives from a part-song, *The long day closes*.

We hope you enjoy the show!

Ian Stone

Cast

Jupiter (<i>Father of the Gods</i>)	Patrick Gallagher
Mars (<i>God of War</i>)	Matt Stainer
Apollo (<i>God of the Sun</i>)	Colin Bousfield
Diana (<i>God of the Moon</i>)	Lynda Barrett-Mercer
Mercury (<i>God of thieves and Messenger</i>)	Jane Khan

Thespians

Thespis (<i>manager of the acting troupe</i>)	David Longes
Daphne	Jane Johnson
Nicemis	Margaret Longes
Sparkeion	Carolyn Burnley
Tipseion	Jane Seymour
Preposteros	Julian Warner-Edney
Prettiea	Julie Bickerdike
Timidon	Stephen Tickell

Production

Lighting and Sound	David Ames
Costumes	Lynda Barrett-Mercer
Set and poster design	Lynda Barrett-Mercer
Set construction	The company
Photos and video	Mick Mercer, Jonathan Bickerdike
Front of House	John Bryant, Sally Coleman, Alison Cooper, Kate Cottrell, Jane Flanders, Fiona Garner, Selena Hegarty, Linda King, Jane Sillett, Ann Staddon, Sheila Staples, Shirley Trower, Neil Williams