



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 13, 2009

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ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS REIGNS IN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN'S "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE"

The Rice Light Opera Society will present Gilbert and Sullivan's famous comic light opera "The Pirates of Penzance" in seven performances March 26-29, 31-April 2, 2009.

The highly successful follow-up to "H.M.S. Pinafore," "The Pirates of Penzance" takes place as Frederic, a pirate apprentice, is released from his indentures. What will happen when he tries to leave his job as a pirate to become a respectable gentleman? This satirical farce combines witty social commentary with catchy melodies and is bound to be fun for the whole family.

"The Pirates of Penzance" will be performed on the Rice University campus in the Rice Memorial Center Grand Hall. Performances will be March 26-29 and March 31 - April 2. The March 26 and 27 shows will begin at 9 p.m., and the Sunday show will be a 2 p.m. matinee. All other shows will begin at 8 p.m. After the matinee, the cast, crew, and orchestra will be available for a question-and-answer session for interested parties, with many of the information aimed directly at young performers interested in musical theatre. Tickets are \$10 for the general public and \$5 for the Rice community and children under the age of 12. For directions, parking information, and ticket reservations, please visit <http://www.hailpoetry.com>.

The Rice Light Opera Society has staged productions since 2002, most recently performing "Trial By Jury" in October 2008. The mission of the society is to increase awareness and appreciation of light opera in the Rice and greater Houston communities.

"The Pirates of Penzance" was the fifth collaboration between W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. Gilbert and Sullivan decided to present official versions of "The Pirates of Penzance" simultaneously in England and America. The opera premiered on December 31, 1879 at the Fifth Avenue Theater in New York with Sullivan conducting, but a single performance had been given on the previous day at the Royal Bijou Theatre, Paignton, England, to secure the British copyright. Finally, the opera opened on April 3, 1880, at the Opéra Comique in London, where it ran for 363 performances, having already been playing successfully for over three months in New York. Gilbert, the duo's librettist, was an accomplished satirist known for a series of illustrated verses written under the pen name Bab. Sullivan, the composer, was often called the "English Mendelssohn," but his genius was most evident in the lighter comic songs he wrote with Gilbert. Sullivan's solo works include the opera *Ivanhoe* and the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers." Gilbert and Sullivan's operas were wildly popular in their time and are still performed worldwide today.

Editors: For information and high-resolution photos: www.ruf.rice.edu/~rlos/shows/pirates2/press.html.