

PRESS RELEASE



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Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company blends law, politics, and fantasy in *Iolanthe*

CHICAGO (Hyde Park) – The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company will perform *Iolanthe; or, The Peer and the Peri* – regarded by many as Gilbert and Sullivan's finest and most perfect collaboration. Three performances will take place at the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall on March 10, 11 and 12.

Iolanthe drops England's House of Peers into the middle of a Hans Christian Andersen-inspired forest enchanted by fairies and ruled by a no-nonsense Fairy Queen. Strephon, son of the beloved eponymous fairy Iolanthe, is sent into Parliament as a Fairy Member when the Lord Chancellor and his House of Peers spurn his affections for his love Phyllis.

"*Iolanthe* has the strongest blend of dialogue and music of any other collaboration between this formidable duo," says director Shane Valenzi, returning for a third year with the Company.

Highlighted by the most difficult patter song in the canon, and calling for a top-notch featured male ensemble, *Iolanthe* has long been revered in the United Kingdom as on par with *The Mikado* as one of the best and most popular works of operetta ever produced by the Savoy. And as the chorus has an exceptionally prominent role, Valenzi explains that now is the perfect time to mount this show.

"We've built a tradition of a supremely talented, active chorus over the last few years, and *Iolanthe* is the perfect vehicle for them to shine. I could not be more excited to see how the brilliant, professional-level performers that make up our chorus make this show their own."

Frequent performer Aaron Hunt will take a turn as associate director this year, collaborating with Valenzi. Also returning for a third year is conductor Matthew Sheppard, Director of the University of Chicago Chamber Orchestra. The talented cast includes some of the Company's favorites from past productions as well as



several outstanding newcomers. Nancy Levner will produce, aided by associate producers Trip Driscoll and Roger Huff.

Performances take place at Mandel Hall, 1131 East 57th Street, from March 10 through 12. Friday and Saturday performances begin at 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 general, \$5 for students, \$15 for groups and can be ordered online at ticketsweb.uchicago.edu, or by calling the Logan Center for the Arts box office at 773.702.ARTS. Tickets can also be purchased in-person at the Logan Center box office Tuesday through Saturday from noon through 6 p.m.

2017 marks the 33rd consecutive year the Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company has partnered with the University of Chicago Department of Music for their annual production. The proceeds will benefit the Department of Music's performance program, whose seventeen ensembles and programs present more than a hundred concerts each year.

ABOUT THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA COMPANY

The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company, Inc. is a non-profit, community arts organization dedicated to performing the works of Gilbert & Sullivan to the highest artistic standards. It has been a mainstay of Chicago's Hyde Park cultural scene since it was founded in 1964 by three local G&S fans: Nancy Lorie, Robert Ashenurst, and Roland Bailey. GSOC is supported by member donations, ticket sales, and local grants.

QUICK FACTS

WHAT:

Iolanthe; or, The Peer and the Peri, by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan

WHO:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company
The University of Chicago Chamber Orchestra
Director: Shane Valenzi
Associate Director: Aaron Hunt
Conductor: Matthew Sheppard
Producer: Nancy Levner

WHEN:

Friday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 11, at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 12, at 2 p.m.

ADMISSION:

Tickets: \$25 general, \$5 students
Groups: \$15 for 10+

PRINCIPAL CAST

Lord Chancellor: Matthan Black

www.matthanringblack.com

Iolanthe: Marissa Simmons

www.marissasimmons.com

Fairy Queen: Claire DiVizio

www.clairedivizio.com

Strephon: Matthew Peckham

www.matthewpeckhamtenor.com

Phyllis: Teaira Burge

Lord Mountarat: Aaron Wardell

www.aaronwardell.com

Lord Tolloller: Dennis Kalup

Private Willis: David Govertsen

www.davidgovertsen.com

Celia: Sarah Wasserman

www.sarahlynnsoprano.com

Lelia: Tiffany Orr

Fleta: Heather Keith

www.heatherkeithsoprano.com