



**Gilbert & Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* and "The Trials of Love in the Spring!"**  
– ***Favorite Light Opera Excerpts***

May 4 & 5, 2024 Trinity Church, Lakeville, CT and Saint James Place, Great Barrington, MA

**THE PROGRAM**

*Trial by Jury*

"The Trials of Love in the Spring!" - excerpts from:

*Ruddigore, The Mikado, H.M.S. Pinafore, Iolanthe. Patience, The Pirates of Penzance, Princess Ida, The Gondoliers*

**THE CAST**

***Crescendo Soloists and Section Leaders***

*Sopranos:* Rebecca Palmer - *Plaintiff (Angelina), Yum-Yum* • Christiane Olson - *Ella, Mabel, Princess* • Margie O'Brien - *Saphir*

*Mezzo Soprano:* Sarah Bleasdale - *Buttercup, Queen, Angela*

*Alto:* Max Rook - *Pitti-Sing*

*Tenors:* Igor Ferreira - *Defendant (Edwin)* • Kevin Ray - *Nanki-Poo, Ralph Rackstraw, Hilarion* •

Doug Schmolze - *Duke*

*Baritones:* Stephen Quint: *The Learned Judge, Lord Chancellor, Major General* • John-Arthur Miller:

*Sergeant, Ko-Ko* • Joseph Klebanoff: *Counsel to the Plaintiff*

*Bass:* Gabriel Garcia: *Foreman of the Jury, Ko-Ko, Boatswain, Colonel*

***Crescendo Chorus***

*Sopranos:* Louise Brown, Kathy Drake, Emily Elliot, Peggy Heck, Sarah Melcher, Roberta Roll

*Altos:* Traudi Chiaravallotti, Debby Mark, Martha Nesbitt, Susan Pettee, Mary Sullivan

*Tenors:* Gordon Gustafson, Joe Kolodziej, Richard Vreeland

*Basses:* Andy Kettler, Rene Milo, Tom Schindler

David Baranowski, piano

Kathleen DeAngelis, costumes and props

Christine Gevert and John-Arthur Miller, co-directors

## PRESS RELEASE

The award-winning chorus Crescendo concludes its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season with two semi-staged performances of light opera compositions by the famous English librettist/composer duo: Sir W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Their works feature intentionally absurd plots in which authority and the rigid norms of society are cleverly made fun of, as the music combines elements of the parlor ballad, Victorian church music, and the operas of Donizetti, Bellini, and Verdi. The program showcases some of their most beloved choral numbers, and a few of the most famous solo roles from several of their fourteen operettas, loosely tied together by brief narration, and the complete one-act operetta *Trial by Jury*. The Crescendo chamber chorus of 18 amateur and 12 professional singers is joined by soloists and actors from New York City to Europe who specialize in this genre.

*Trial by Jury* is a satirical setting for a “breach of promise” trial, ridiculing the British judicial system and the double standards of Victorian society. The second half of the program will feature popular selections from *The Mikado*, *Patience*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Iolanthe*, *Ruddigore*, *Princess Ida*, and *The Gondoliers*. The change of scenes will be enhanced by costumes and props designed by Kathleen DeAngelis.

The production is co-directed by John-Arthur Miller, an experienced Gilbert & Sullivan performer and long-time soloist and section leader at Crescendo, together with Crescendo’s founding artistic director, Christine Gevert.

Among the principal soloists is comic baritone Stephen Quint as The Learned Judge. Quint is a long-time New York Gilbert and Sullivan performer, described as “a comedian: elfin, waspish, agile, and blessed with a pleasantly lean-textured voice that articulates notes and words with absolute clarity,” in a review by *New York Magazine*. Austria-based soprano, Rebecca Palmer, plays the role of Angelina (The Plaintiff). Ms. Palmer, who has performed both opera and sacred music in the U.S. and Europe, is described as having “impeccable technical aptitude complemented by smooth and mature tone, displaying a level of communication unparalleled among her fellow soloists” by *The Boston Musical Intelligencer*. The lyric tenor, Igor Ferreira, playing Edwin (The Defendant), has performed in many productions of *Carmen*, *Lucia de Lammermoor*, *Porgy and Bess*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *The Flying Dutchman*, and *Norma* in his native country, Brazil. The cast of soloists also includes – among others – tenor Kevin Ray, who has appeared as a soloist with The Metropolitan Opera, Portland Opera, Arizona Opera, and New Orleans Opera, and was praised by *Opera News* for his “commendable style” and abilities with “subtle coloristic nuance.”

“It seems that we all need a bit of levity and just plain fun in our lives,” says artistic director Gevert, who collaborated with the Salisbury CT Light Opera Company (LOCOS) for five years, and was able to gain members and followers for Crescendo through them in those early years.

Part of Miller’s background was with the Ohio Light Opera Company, where he sang the entire Gilbert & Sullivan collection. “Performing this repertoire,” he says, “is a wonderful way for young singers to gain stagecraft experience and to develop good and lasting vocal technique.”

Gevert continues, “The music is lighthearted, lyrical, sometimes martial, and always melodious. Sullivan knew how to write for the voice, and uses the chorus as an integral part of the action. Its singing emphasizes the drama, whether responding in dialogue with the principals, or commenting on the action. In addition to major orchestral works, operas, and ballets, Sullivan wrote some very well-known church hymn tunes, including ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ and the Christmas carol, ‘It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.’” Gilbert’s mastery of the English language, together with Sullivan’s skilled composition of serious music and beautiful melodies, changed the English theater during the Victorian era with the added talents of producer and impresario Richard D’Oyly Carte. This triumvirate’s 20-year collaboration is unique and still remains a popular form of entertainment in many circles.

These concerts have been made possible in part with support from funding provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature.

There will only be two performances: on **Saturday, May 4 at 6:00 PM at Trinity Church, 484 Lime Rock Rd., Lakeville, CT**, and on **Sunday, May 5 at 4:00 PM at Saint James Place, 352 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA**. Tickets are \$40 (general seating), \$75 (preferred seating), and \$10 (youth under 18 years). **Purchase your tickets online at [www.crescendomusic.org](http://www.crescendomusic.org)**. A limited number of tickets will be available to be sold at the door, starting 45 minutes before each performance.

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**IMAGES**



Rebecca Palmer, *soprano*



Igor Ferreira, *tenor*



Stephen Quint, *baritone* (Photo by Garry Gold)



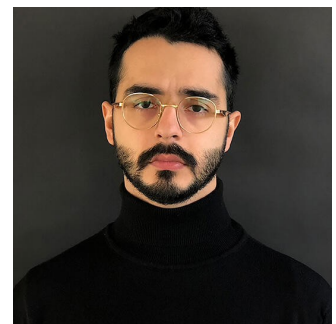
Christiane Olson, *soprano*



Kevin Ray, *tenor*



Sarah Bleasdale, *mezzo soprano*



Gabriel Garcia, *bass-baritone*





Doug Schmolze, *tenor*



Margie O'Brien, *soprano*



Max Rook, *alto*



Joseph Klebanoff, *baritone*



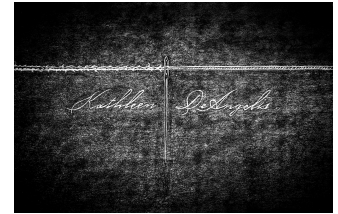
John-Arthur Miller, *co-director*  
*Photo by Ben Garver, The Berkshire Eagle*



Christine Gevert, *co-director*



David Baranowski, *piano*



Kathleen DeAngelis, *costumes*



Crescendo Singers in *Acis y Galatea*  
*Photo by Stephen Potter*