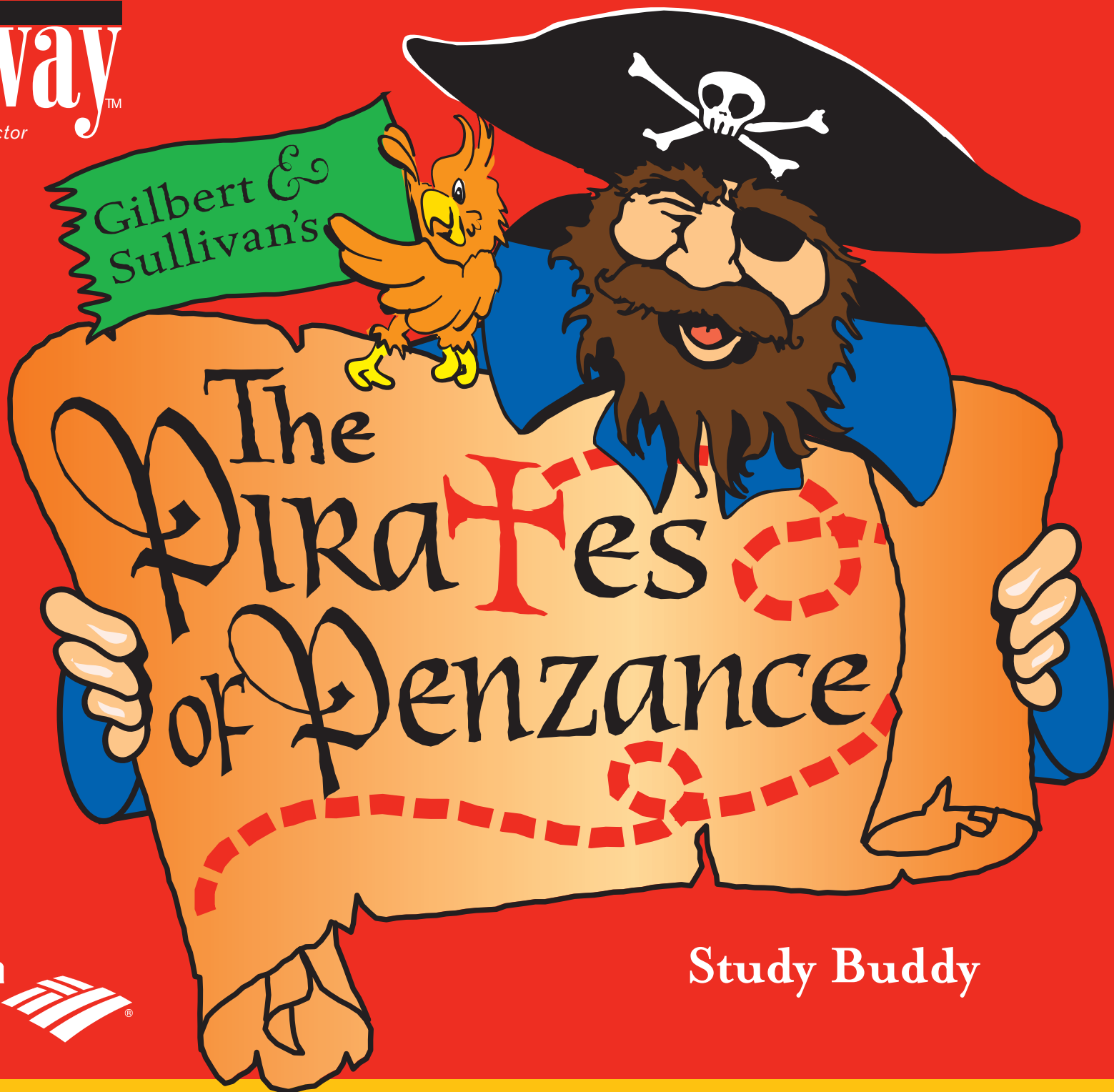


**INSIDE**  
**broadway**<sup>TM</sup>

Michael Presser, *Executive Director*

*Presents...*

Gilbert &  
Sullivan's



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**Study Buddy**

# LOOK OUT!! Vocabulary Quicksand!

Gilbert and Sullivan loved to play with words. For example, when the hero was a little boy, he was supposed to become an apprentice to a “pilot” (which, before airplanes were invented was the captain of a sailing ship), but instead, his father’s hard-of-hearing servant, gave him to a “pirate,” and so he has spent his whole life learning how to be a dishonest pirate instead of an honest pilot. There are many more fun and unusual words in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Choose the correct meaning for these few:

## “orphan”

- a) something that happens a lot
- b) a boy or a girl with no parents
- c) a flying fish
- d) a musical instrument with keys and pedals

## “constable”

- a) a mathematical equation
- b) sturdy dining room furniture
- c) a police officer
- d) a city in Turkey

## “indenture”

- a) false teeth
- b) to be made someone's servant for a period of time
- c) to put a big dent in the car
- d) to make a plan to do something

## “sanctimonious”

- a) a pretty musical sound
- b) rich
- c) smug and self-righteous
- d) a rare cat

## “apprentice”

- a) someone learning a trade from a master tradesman
- b) a newspaper publisher
- c) to raise the rent
- d) crabby

## “tarantara”

- a) a big spider
- b) a festive dance
- c) a bunch of bushes with sticky things on them
- d) the sound a trumpet makes

## “paradox”

- a) two shoes with big heels
- b) a mountain range in Switzerland
- c) something that appears to be one thing but it actually is something else
- d) a bird with colorful spotted feathers



Aargh!!

# Pirates seen on Broadway!!

**CAUTION!**  
Look before  
you "leap"!!

*What is a "leap" year, and why do we have them?*

In *The Pirates of Penzance*, Frederick was born twenty-one years ago, but he has only had seven birthdays because he was born on "leap" day, February 29th. Does that seem unfair to you?

Well, there's a reason we have leap years, and it has to do with how long it takes for the earth to go around the sun. Our regular calendar year is 365 days, but it actually takes the earth just a little longer than that to get all the way around so every four years our calendar is adjusted by one day (adding February 29th), in order to make up the time and keep the calendar accurate. Hmmm.

There are lots of good sites on the internet that explain "leap" year in more detail. Check them out!...

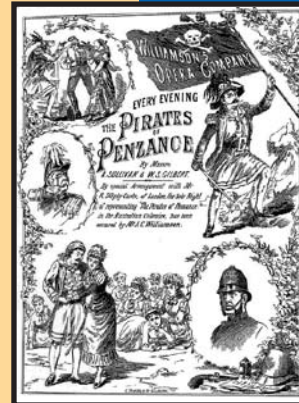
<http://www.timeanddate.com/date/leapyear.html>

<http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/LeapYear.html>

<http://chemistry.csudh.edu/oliver/smt310-handouts/calendar.htm>

*If you became a pirate  
what would your name be?*

*What would you look like?*



When it came to *Pirates*, the authors took no chances, in England or America. The first performance of the play actually took place in New York, at the Fifth Avenue Theater, in December of 1879. One single performance was also presented in London in order to get the English copyright, but the play ran in America first, for three months before opening for a long run of 363 performances in London.

And *Pirates* is still popular well over a hundred years later. Among many other productions, a play and a movie, starring Kevin Kline and Linda Ronstadt was presented with great success in the early 1980's.



Looking at the background and history of a 135 year old play, and at the people who made it possible, then and now, can be like a treasure hunt.



An "opera" is a kind of play that is presented through singing. For many years before *The Pirates of Penzance* was written, the Italian "Grand Opera" presented sung stories, often retold from ancient classics. These operas were either tragic or comic, but were always meant to be "high" art, or art which enriches the mind and the soul of the audience....

In France in the early 1800's a different kind of operatic entertainment came to be: the light opera, or **operetta**. The operetta told simpler comic stories full of clowns and heartsick lovers whose songs were the bright, popular melodies (yes, the "pop" tunes!) of the day. In Paris, a composer named Jaques Offenbach made the operetta very popular. One of his plays, "*Orpheus in the Underworld*," even used a popular dance craze: the "Can Can"...



...which is still performed today, in a slightly different way, by the Radio City Rockettes:

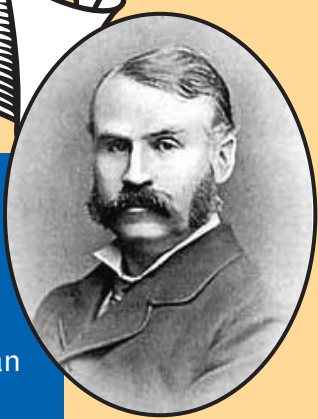


The idea of the operetta soon spread across the English Channel...

...where two men, W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, teamed up to write many popular operettas...

**William Schwenk Gilbert**

(1836 – 1911) was a very well-known playwright before he met Arthur Sullivan and started to write stories and lyrics (or libretto) for the famous Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. He was also a stage director, and an artist. He liked to draw pictures of the characters he invented. (He also had a reputation for being sort of grumpy; maybe it was just the whiskers...)



**Richard D'Oyly Carte**

(1842-1900) had an Opera Company in London. He is the man who hired Gilbert and Sullivan to write their operettas, and he produced them in London for twenty years, mostly in the theatre he built called the Savoy.



The work that brought Gilbert and Sullivan together made them rich and famous, but it also raised the operetta to new artistic and popular heights. They wrote fourteen light operas between 1871 and 1896, the most well-known of which are *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879), and *The Mikado* (1885). Most of their operettas are still performed all over the world. Their work is characterized by Sullivan's bright charming melodies and the extra-clever rhyming word-play of Gilbert's lyrics. Love songs and sweet ballads are varied with fast talking, tongue-twisting songs, known as "patter" songs.

The English military and the police for (the "Constabulary") were in charge of keeping the law and maintaining the order of society. And where there are laws and rules, there are outlaws and rule-breakers. A particular breed of outlaw were the PIRATES!!!



**Queen Victoria**

Victoria was queen of England from 1837-1901. During her 64 year reign she was beloved by supporters and despised by enemies (who tried to assassinate her six times). She was known for her rigid belief in the English class structure, where the upper classes ruled, the middle classes prospered and the lower servant classes "kept their place." And, of course, everyone knew their duty to Queen and country.



Queen Victoria made both Gilbert and Sullivan knights of the English Crown for their great accomplishment, and they became known as Lord Gilbert and Lord Sullivan.

**The Pirates of Penzance or The Slave of Duty**

"Oh better far to live and die,  
Under the brave black flag I fly.  
Than play a sanctimonious part  
wit a pirates head and a pirates heart!"

In 1879, Gilbert and Sullivan followed the success of their play, *H.M.S. Pinafore* with *The Pirates of Penzance*. They used their witty talents both to make fun of and to celebrate Victorian English society that their audience knew so well. It almost became a "duty" for the audience to laugh at the picture of itself. But Gilbert and Sullivan plays didn't just appeal to English audiences....

**FACT:** When a writer or composer creates an original work, they must get a "copyright" which means that no one has the right to publish or present the work without first getting the author's permission. Check your school books for copyright!

*H.M.S. Pinafore* was such a success across the sea in America, that American companies started doing that play without paying for it, because *Pinafore* had no American copyright. This was because there had really been no "official" American premier performance of the play.

**Beware singing Sea Serpents!!!!**



**Crossing the Atlantic Ocean...**

Some pirates, like Captain Kidd, "Blackbeard" (Edward Teach), and Francis Drake (the "Gentleman Pirate") were real people, but some of the most famous pirates are from stories. Match the famous pirate to the story he comes from:

- Long John Silver "The Pirates of Penzance"
- Captain Hook "Treasure Island"
- The Pirate King "The Pirates of the Caribbean"
- Jack Sparrow "Peter Pan"

Can you think of any other fictional pirates?

Answers: Long John Silver...Treasure Island and Captain Hook...  
Peter Pan...The Pirate King...The Pirates of Penzance...  
Jack Sparrow...Pirates of the Caribbean

