



Announcing the **First Parish Spring Musical:**



Ruddigore, by Gilbert & Sullivan

Directed by Cynde Hartman, Dianne Greco, and Vivian Montgomery

There's a place for everyone, ages 6 to 106, in our production of this hilarious spoof of Gothic Melodrama, complete with a haunted castle, ghosts coming out of ancestral portraits, and a madwoman stalking the graveyard. It's also full of jabs at lawyers, opera, the wedding industry, tax codes, and idyllic village life. The characters are Gilbert & Sullivan masterpieces, and, lest you think this will be a dry and formal treatment, we're here to tell you that this is musical theater meant to be messed with. Girls can play boys, boys can play girls, elders can be sprightly bridesmaids while children can be centuries-old ghouls stepping out of paintings. Anyone can sing this stuff, not just the vocally trained, and there'll be a spot in the chorus or the cast for anyone who wants to participate. You just need to be ready to ham it up, work hard, and be part of the team.

The show will take place the weekend of May 22–23, with two evening performances and an “excerpts” performance in church service on Sunday morning. This means that evenings will be COMPLETELY tied up during the week prior to that (May 16–21), and FAIRLY tied up the week before (May 9–15). But that's show biz, and we all know how much fun and bonding happens when we work together this intensively on something this creative!

Interested in helping out with the production? Yes!!!

We need you! (Oh YES!) We're looking for a producer, stage manager, costume designer, set designer, helpers with costumes and sets, hunter/gatherers of supplies and props, kid coordinators, and volunteer coordinators. Please let your interest and area of expertise (or earnestness) be known to Vivian, Dianne, or Cynde as soon as possible, and start talking up this opportunity to others. We encourage ALL members of the First Parish community, from the youngest to the oldest, to become involved in this wonderful intergenerational undertaking! Questions? Contact Director of Music Vivian Montgomery at vmontgomery@verizon.net or 617-223-1627. And stay tuned for participation sign-up sheets and information.

This promises to be a truly multigenerational, cooperative, community-building effort. ALL of you are needed to make it work.

Auditions, casting and rehearsals

Rehearsals will start on the evening of Tuesday, March 9, and will take place on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings, as well as Sundays after church. Schedule conflicts? FEAR NOT! (We're getting into the melodrama already!) When you audition for a speaking/solo role, or sign up to be in the chorus, you'll be given the opportunity to let us know your conflicts, and we'll work around them in casting and scheduling. As is always the case with

shows, the smaller your part, the fewer the rehearsals. Your primary responsibility with scheduling is to tell us UP FRONT what your constraints are, and then be sure you can clear the decks for production week and much of the week before.

So, about those AUDITIONS (OH DREAD!). If you want to be part of the chorus, singing and dancing in the streets, haunting the castle, sailing the seas, no need to audition, you just need to sign up, fill out an information sheet, and show up for our first kid or adult chorus gathering. If you want a solo/small ensemble role, we'll need to hear you sing, harmonize a little, and show us your best theatrical self. Chorus sign-up and audition sign-up forms, along with a list of parts and some details about auditions, will be made available in early February.

Auditions are scheduled for: Thursday 2/18 (4:30–7:30), Sunday 2/21 (12:00–3:00) & Thursday 2/25 (4:30–7:30). *If you are going away for school vacation week*, we can have you audition on Thursday 2/11 (4:30–7:30), or possibly on Sunday 2/14 in the afternoon.

Casting will be announced by Tuesday, March 2

Plot synopsis: It is 1815, in a small English sea town. There's a curse on the nobleman of the village who lives in the haunted castle, Ruddigore. More about the curse later. A bevy of beautiful bridesmaids can't convince Rose Maybud, an eligible soprano, to marry. She is a bit on the fussy side, and the local union of endowed bridesmaids is afraid of losing their jobs. A humble farmer, Robin Oakapple, is available and enthusiastic, but too shy to propose. His lusty sailor half-brother, Richard, offers to do the job for him but, alas, falls for Rose Maybud himself. Unbeknownst to the villagers, Robin is none other than the ACCURSED Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, disguised and in hiding. According to the steadfast-but-anything-but-stodgy Hannah, a terrible curse has been put on the Murgatroyd family, and he who holds the title of Baronet of Ruddigore must commit one TERRIBLE crime a day. The plot thickens when dastardly Sir DESPARD Murgatroyd, Ruthven's younger brother, learns that his elder brother is ALIVE and can now assume the burden of the curse. Also lurking in the shadows is Mad Margaret, who longs, Ophelia-like, for Sir Despard's hand but cannot marry him because of his ignoble heritage. She only suffers from a maddening lovesickness, although she tends to go over the edge now and then (“Basingstoke, my dear, Basingstoke”). The rest is yours to discover, including the classic, inimitable plot twist that frees them all from gloom and doom. This is a show with some of the wittiest, most memorable numbers ever sung, tied in with the brilliant, absurd satire that has made G&S such a staple of musical theater.