



I dare not show myself in this alarming costume! --*The Pirates of Penzance*

Our Mission

Opera-Lytes was founded in 1994 with the mission of staging the works of Gilbert and Sullivan.

The company brings light opera, operetta and classic musical theater to audiences in Western New York through staged performances, concerts, recordings, and educational programs.

Opera-Lytes, which holds advertised auditions for all staged productions, is a not-for-profit organization.

How to contact us:



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“For there’s no blue Monday in your Sunday clothes!” --*Hello, Dolly!*

2015-2016 Opera-Lytes Needs Your Help to



Preserve our COSTUME COLLECTION

The History of the Opera-Lytes Costume Collection

The core of the collection was created by Pat Dybowski, who costumed 10 shows for the Amherst Gilbert & Sullivan Players (1978-1988). These costumes (for all shows except *Princess Ida*, *The Grand Duke*, and *Utopia, Ltd.*) were generously donated to Opera-Lytes. For many years, Pat spent weekends combing flea markets, cut-rate fabric outlets, and yard sales for accessories, notions and material. Mary Atwood added



to the inventory by making 68 children's costumes for a lavish production of *The King & I* (2001) and eliciting a donation from Yolanda's of 20 formal dresses for *The Merry Widow* (2000).

**We're rigged out in magnificent array
(Our own clothes are much gloomier),
In costumes which we've hired by the day
From a very well-known costumier!**

-- The Grand Duke

Shirley Schlimgen completed the Gilbert and Sullivan costume set with girl graduate gowns for *Ida* (2004) and striking replicas of Star Trek uniforms for an outer-space version of *Utopia* (2002), to say nothing of kilts and sporrans for *Brigadoon* (2008). Other members and friends donated vintage 1950s garments for *Pajama Game*, *She Loves Me*, and *Kiss Me, Kate*, and the collection continued to grow.

The Future of the Opera-Lytes Costume Collection

By May 2015, our storage space was so full we couldn't step inside. So we moved to temporary storage, bringing all our costumes together for the first time. Costumes were aired, washed, set aside for mending, and in some sad cases, discarded due to mold, sunlight or water damage.

The collection is astonishing! Opera-Lytes owns 65 large storage bins of clothes, 25 feet of clothes on hangers, and about 25 bins of hats. We have two dozen crinolines, 6 wedding gowns, 6 Victorian and 15 modern police uniforms, pajamas, kilts, fairies, hippies, strippers, gangsters, gondoliers, peasants, aristocrats, spacemen, a jester, a witch, and two potato outfits!



How You Can Help

Our collection is housed in donated space that is available only until November 2015.



We must find and maintain a permanent, climate-controlled, accessible storage space.

- Do you have vacant space?** Rent it to Opera-Lytes at a discounted rate (the difference is tax deductible).
- Do you need space?** Clean out your closets and donate vintage clothing, hats, fabric.
- Do you sew?** Join the costume crew for our next production!
- Are you organized?** We need to create an online costume inventory.
- Can you help with the bills?** Storage, dry cleaning, and new costumes all cost money. Your contribution is tax-deductible.