

The

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

MAY 2010 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin has a new headquarters!

Very few of our members and friends have any dealings with us in our office, and there is no one person who keeps regular office hours daily. However, our office is a hub of quiet activity in numerous ways,

with board members and volunteers dropping in from time to time. We are very pleased to be able to conduct our business now in a fresh and spacious setting.

Our new office is located in a former choir room at Genesis Presbyterian Church, at 1507 Wilshire Boulevard in Austin. To many this location will have a familiar sound, because we have held numerous musicales in either the sanctuary or the fellowship hall of this church.

Before the move, board members **Roberta Long** and **Ingrid Yaple** spent many hours sorting through files and stored materials. With the expert help of our treasurer, **Dave Wieckowski**, they determined what records needed to be kept and what could be discarded, and boxed up everything that needed to be moved.

Meanwhile, board member **Pat Hobbs**, after conferring with Roberta and making some decorating decisions, spent several days painting the clean new space. A new area rug was installed, and the room was ready to be inhabited.

On Saturday, May 1, board members Ingrid, **David Little**, and **Michael Meigs** joined my husband **Michael** and me to make the official move. By 11:00 that morning, all our belongings were in the new office, thanks to this super-efficient crew.

Now office manager Roberta will begin the task of unpacking all the boxes and storing everything in its proper place. Regularly, our database manager and faithful volunteer **Arthur DiBianca** will drop by the office to leave items picked up from the post office for various board members. We'll be stopping in during the week to take care of our assigned tasks; and when we do, we might be tempted to stay a little longer to work in this cool, airy, pleasant space.

Our stage director, **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, has expressed his pleasure that the new office adjoins the space where most of the staging rehearsals take place. He'll be able to come to the office after his evening meal and spend some time there preparing for the evening's work.

Our phone number, post office box, and website remain the same. But the physical location of our office has changed, and for the better. If you'd like to drop in and visit us some time, give us a call first and we'll plan a time when you can have a guided tour!



Tickets Available for *The Yeomen of the Guard*

Tickets can now be purchased for our summer production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, either online at www.gilbertsullivan.org or by calling 1-800-494-TIXS. Tickets purchased in advance are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students over 18 with ID, and \$5 for those 18 and under; however, there is a small service charge. Tickets at the door are \$25 for adults, \$20 for students over 18 with ID, and \$8 for those 18 and under. For group sales of 10 or more, contact Michael Meigs at michael@gilbertsullivan.org or (512) 472-4772. Performances are:

Thursday	June 10	8 pm	Preview (all tickets \$5, advance or at the door)
Friday	June 11	8 pm	Opening Night (free Gala follows performance)
Saturday	June 12	8 pm	Evening Performance
Sunday	June 13	2 pm	Children's Activities
		3 pm	Matinee
Thursday	June 17	8 pm	Evening Performance
Friday	June 18	8 pm	Evening Performance
Saturday	June 19	3 pm	Matinee
		8 pm	Evening Performance
Sunday	June 20	3 pm	Matinee (closing performance)

September 12 Musicale

Please save the date — our next Musicale will be on Sunday, September 12, at 3 pm. Look for more details in your September newsletter!

“We, Gilbert and Sullivan, Have A Song to Sing, O!”

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.—and W. S. Gilbert!

In *The Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan*, Ian Bradley notes that the duet for Jack Point and Elsie Maynard in Act I of *The Yeomen of the Guard* “is, perhaps, the best-loved of all Gilbert and Sullivan’s songs.”

I’ve never tried to decide on the one I like best, but I think “I have a song to sing, O!” would rank in my favorite 25—or *maybe* favorite dozen. Or baker’s dozen.

The lyric is a complex one, with each verse building on the one before it by an additional two lines. Because of this, it has frequently been compared in style to the old nursery rhyme, “The House that Jack Built.”

The story of Sullivan’s difficulty in setting the lyric has been told often, but never better than by Gilbert himself. Ian Bradley quotes Gilbert’s recollection of how this well-loved duet came about:

The verse always preceded the music, or even any hint of it. Sometimes—very rarely—Sullivan would say of some song I had given him, “My dear fellow, I can’t make anything of this”—and then I would rewrite it entirely—never tinker at it. But, of course, I don’t mean to say that I “invented” all the rhythms and stanzas in the operas. Often a rhythm would be suggested by some old tune or other running in my head, and I would fit my words to it more or less exactly. When Sullivan knew I had done so, he would say, “Don’t tell me what the tune is, or I shan’t be able to get it out of my head.” But once, I remember, I did tell him. There is a duet in *The Yeomen of the Guard* beginning:

I have a song to sing, O!
Sing me your song, O!

It was suggested to me by an old chantey I used to hear the sailors on board my yacht singing in the “dog-watch” on Saturday evenings, beginning:

Come, and I will sing to you—
What will you sing me?
I will sing you one, O!
What is your one, O!

And so on. Well, when I gave Sullivan the words of the duet, he found the utmost difficulty in setting it. He tried hard for a fortnight, but in vain. I offered to recast in another mould, but he expressed himself so delighted with it in its then form that he was determined to work it out to a satisfactory issue. At last, he came to me and said: “You often have some old air in your mind which prompts the meter of your songs; if anything prompted you in this one, hum it to me—it may help me.” Only a rash man ever asks me to hum, but the situation was desperate, and I did my best to convey to him the air of the chantey that had suggested the song to me. I was so far successful that before I had hummed a dozen bars he exclaimed: “That will do—I’ve got it!” And in an hour he produced the charming air as it appears in the opera. I have sometimes thought that he exclaimed “That will do—I’ve got it” because my humming was more than he could bear, but he always assured me that it had given him the necessary clue to the proper setting of the song.

Here is Gilbert’s last verse of this duet as it appears in Act I:

ELSIE. I have a song to sing, O!
POINT. Sing me your song O!
ELSIE. It is sung with a sigh
And a tear in the eye,
For it tells of a righted wrong, O!
It’s the song of the mermaid, once so gay,
Who turned on her heel and tripped away
From the peacock popinjay, bravely born,
Who turned up his noble nose with scorn
At the humble heart that he did not prize:
So she begged on her knees, with downcast eyes,
For the love of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad, and whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a lady!

ALL. Heighdy! Heighdy!
Misery me, lackadaydee!
His pains were o’er, and he sighed no more,
For he lived in the love of a lady!

By the end of the opera, we learn that the lyric is more than just a lovely duet by an itinerant jester entertaining a crowd with his partner. Elsie the “mermaid” is happily united with Colonel Fairfax (her “lord”), and Jack Point is left, sad and alone, his jokes against love for Elsie and matrimony long forgotten. Originally Gilbert had Elsie sing:

It’s the song of a mermaid, peerly proud,
Who loved a lord and who laughed aloud
At the moan of the merryman moping mum,
Whose soul was sad and whose glance was glum, [etc..].

But at the first revival of *The Yeomen of the Guard* at the Savoy in 1897, nine years after the première, Gilbert softened Elsie’s “farewell” to Jack Point considerably—and the words invariably leave audiences with lumps in throats if not tears in eyes—as they lead to a conclusion unique in Gilbert & Sullivan:

It’s the song of a mermaid, nestling near,
Who loved her lord—but who dropped a tear
At the moan of the merryman, moping mum,
Whose soul was sad and whose glance was glum,
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,
As he sighed for the love of a lady!



Arthur DiBianca as Jack Point and Michelle Haché as Elsie

Contributions to *The Yeomen of the Guard*

Pirate King

Stanley Bullard
Reba Gillman

Kay & Russell Gregory

Pooh-Bah

James A. Hitt

Libby & Michael Weed

Major-General

Marion W. DeFord
Dan Jacobson
Trish Merrill

Anna Miller
Lewis Smith
Mary & William Weaver

Grand Duke

Jim & Peggy Aldridge	Eva Laskaris
Vaughn Alexander	Dale Lipsett and Linda Creel
Emily & Ken Ashworth	Robert & Martha
Dudley Baker	MacDonald
Ola Bell	Alice & Ralph MacPhail, Jr.
Amy & Gary Bennett	Randall McIntyre
Richard Boner and Susan J. Pryor	George & Nancy McQueen
Mr. & Mrs. John G. Bordie	Milton Miller
Christopher Buggé	Marcus & Lucille
Kathy & Jimmy Clark	Montondon
Ria Corbett	Gerrell D. Moore
Dixon & Gail Coulbourn	Timothy Moore
Bill & Helen Fletcher	Pat & Fred Neff
Carol Whitcraft Fredericks	Jim & Phyllis Plugge
Miki Gillman	Thurman & Wanda Pylant
Lino & Carolyn Graglia	Mr. & Mrs. R. Robert
John & Carolyn Gregory	Rackley
Cindy Hager and Dick Metzger	Lee W. Rahe
Enid Hallock	James V. Robinson
Tom & Barbara Hamff	Karen & Willlliam Sage
Cynthia Hanes	Ida Calhoun Scott
Betty R. Hatcher	Larry Shepley
Earl R. Hunt and Susan C. Spruance	Katharine & Greg Shields
Nancy Idlet	Andrée F. Sjoberg
Blain & Debbie Keith	Jean & Ed Smootz
Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Kellogg	Becky Stewart
D. Krause	Jamee & Charlie Stewart
Michael & Alice Kuhn	The Delphi Groupe - Green Building
	Louise & Steven Weinberg
	Donald Wertz
	Constance Wood

Patron

Anonymous	Jim & Sue Caldwell
Richard & Jennifer Arndt	Florence Castle
Natalie Blaie Baker	Dr. & Mrs. William J. Crowley
Jonathan Bard	Anita Rawson Edwards
Joe, Trish & Nicole Bennett	Christie Fisher
Jack & Doris Besperka	Charlotte Flynn
Steve Bodkin and Kathy Stone	Janet Forman
Kate Bracher	Phil & Pam Friday
John F. & Edna M. Bradshaw	Eve Gilbert
Hugh L. Brady	Gail Gordon
Becky & Larry Brenner	David & Roslyn Gutman
Julian & Lillian Bucher	

Patron (continued)

Don Hill	Pat & R. B. Rudy
Pepper & Maitland Huffman	Kathryn Saar
George Kennebeck	Wade D. Shaw and Patricia L. Meador
Steve Kubenka	Gary & Grace Silcott
Patrick Liddy	Dr. & Mrs. John B. Smith
David & Peggy Little	Col. & Mrs. Phillip D. Snyder
John & Marjorie Loehlin	Patricia O. Spurr
Roberta & Mark Long	Faith Steinberg and Richard Fitzpatrick
Allan & Barbara Longacre	Cathie & Bob Tull
Guy & Jane Manaster	Dr. Claire Ellen Weinstein
Norman & Emilia Martin	Stramer & Linda White
Chuck & Rae McCartney	David Wieckowski
Mary M. Metz, MBE	Jill Wiggins
Joseph J. & Joanne Moldenhauer	Roxanne Kuter Williamson
Judy & Tom Morris	John & Betty Wood
Bernie & Trudy O'Neill	John S. Wood
Bill & Suzy Reid	

Member

Byron Arnason	Robert Mellin
Susan Bassion	Katherine Meyer
Sam & Otto Benner	Nancy Morse
James Black	Miriam Mosher
Lena M. Brooks	Katie Z. Nesbitt
Rebecca Brown	Wynnell Noelke
Lucian & Vera Chimene	Maurie Ommerman
Candice Clark	Janette Parker
Claire & Art Cunningham	James S. Parks
David & Patricia Davidson	Joyce & Mac Payne
Arthur DiBianca	Eileen & Mike Pestorius
George & Barbara Douglas	Paul Pew
Lon Gee	Diana Phillips
Michael H. Goldstein	Milbrey Raney
Loel Graber	Spencer Reichman
Ethel Harvey	David Reynolds
Bill & Nan Hatcher	Stephen Reynolds
Eileen Hawlk	Betty Ripperger
Pat Hobbs	Margaret Rodgers
William B. Hooper	Mrs. Pat Roeder
Robert Hormell	Eve & Steven Schwartzman
Dudley & Mari Houghton	Lenoir Seelhorst
Zada Jahnsen	Dorothy Serna
Benny & Nanci Jay	Robert C. Sharron
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Johnson	Charles Smaistrtra
Edward Kimball	Martha K. Smith
Edward O. Kluth	Ronald Snell
Lorna LaRue	Anne Souby
Martha Leipziger	Linda & Joe St. Clair
George & Nancy Lowe	Ruth Sullivan
The Rev. Alexander D. MacPhail	Dr. Stanton A. Taylor
Luetta Maixner	Trudy Tommeraasen
Vivian Mansell	Tom & Pam Turner
Peter Flagg Maxson and John C. R. Taylor III	Dana & John Wagner
Doug McCowan	Tom Westrup
Michael Meigs	David J. White
	Theresa Wilson
	Darrell Word

Note: Categories above represent the aggregate of membership dues and donations to the production of The Yeomen of the Guard as of publication date.

G&S Mother's Day Musicale

by Reba Gillman

A very happy Mother's Day was celebrated on Sunday, May 9, at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. Nearly 80 people gathered to enjoy the program with the enthusiasm commonly associated with anything our Gilbert & Sullivan Society attempts. We were pleased to see a goodly number of children in the audience. The first part of the program consisted of excerpts from our June production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Then came songs to celebrate Mother's Day. As usual, President **Libby Weed** welcomed us; she announced that as a special Mother's Day treat there would be a rose for every mother. She introduced **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, our peripatetic and very busy Artistic Director, who arrived on Saturday from New York City, where he had delivered the first Jay Newman Memorial Lecture on Gilbert & Sullivan to a receptive crowd at the Pierpont Morgan Library.

Rafe told us that at a tender age he learned that operas are filled with special songs, such as lullabies and drinking songs. He then introduced **Patricia Combs**, as Phoebe Meryll, to sing the opening solo from *The Yeomen of the Guard*, "When maiden loves, she sits and sighs." Rafe told us that it is highly unusual to open a show with a solo rather than a choral number, and this is the only G&S example. Next came the well known duet "I have a song to sing, O," sung by **Michelle Haché** as Elsie Maynard and **Arthur DiBianca** as Jack Point, the jester. Michelle and Arthur were then joined by **Richard L. Schneider**, as Lieutenant Sir Richard Cholmondeley, to sing "How say you, maiden, will you wed?" Perhaps it should be noted at this point that the correct British pronunciation of this complicated name is Leftenant Chumly. Sir Richard invites Elsie to marry the prisoner Fairfax, who is to die "within the hour." Both Elsie and Jack Point express doubts about this arrangement, but Elsie agrees because she sorely needs the hundred crowns offered to buy medicine and food for her ailing mother. While Elsie is taken off to be blindfolded and married, Arthur, as Jack Point, explains his profession, singing "I've jibe and joke." Michelle returns to sing, "Tis done! I am a bride!" The act ends with much excitement as Fairfax escapes and his cell is found empty when the Yeomen go to escort him to his execution.

In Act II, Arthur, as Jack Point, and **David Fontenot**, as Wilfred Shadbolt, Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor, sing "Hereupon we're both agreed" as they plan to tell a story about seeing the fleeing prisoner escaping, shooting him, and seeing him drop dead to the bottom of the river. They sing the refrain "Tell a tale of cock and bull." Next, **Holton Johnson**, as the escaped prisoner Colonel Fairfax disguised as a Yeoman, reflects on his position, free but married to an unknown woman, "Free from his fetters grim ... Ah, is not one so tied A prisoner still?" Rafe murmured

concern at a husband who on Mother's Day thought of marriage as a prison. There followed the quartet "Strange adventure!" sung by **Kate Clark** as Kate, **Janette Jones** as Dame Carruthers, Holton as the disguised Fairfax, and **Russell Gregory** as Sergeant Meryll. And finally a trio, "A man who would woo a fair maid," sung by Michelle as Elsie, Patricia as Phoebe, and Holton as the disguised Fairfax. Throughout, the excellent cast often turned toward each other with bits of interaction. Rafe said, "They can't wait to get into staging!" Those rehearsals began the next day.

Moving into the Mother's Day part of the program, **Leonard Johnson** came forth to sing "Songs my mother taught me," by Antonin Dvorak. He thanked Janette Jones for the planning and producing of the program. He was grateful that Janette had taken over the entire program when he had been unable to help her. He also said that when he was 4 years old his grandmother used to sing Gilbert & Sullivan to him, so that connection went way back. Robert L. Schneider came out carrying his guitar to sing "Mother," by Howard Johnson. He said he had sung it in church that morning and everyone loved it. "M is for the million things she gave me" He encouraged us all to sing along at appropriate spots. Rumor has it that had he wished he could have had us all dancing in the aisles. Next Kate Clark sang a song she said her mother had sung to her many times, "'Goodnight, My Someone" from *The Music Man* by Meredith Willson. She said that when she was older she had realized that the song had a romantic love section in the middle that her mother left out, so she had always thought that she was that special someone. Russell Gregory came on stage then. He said Janette Jones wanted him to sing the song her mother, who very recently died, used to sing to her, "It ain't necessarily so," from *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin. Russell did his very good best, asking us to chime in on some choruses "Wadoo, zim bam boddle-oo, Hoodle ah da wa da, Scatty wah! Oh yeah!" It was a delightful hint of the talent and showmanship of our wonderful Janette Jones.

Then a contribution from Patricia -- a song she said she first heard when she was a college student, and immediately loved: "Songs My Mother Taught Me" by Charles Ives. It was indeed a lovely song, and served to bring this part of the program to a very orderly close. The full cast assembled on stage and Libby stepped up to invite all to sing along with the cast, and to make sure copies of the music were available to all. David sang the Pirate King's introduction and lusty singing followed, first "Hail, Poetry" from *The Pirates of Penzance*, and then "Now to the banquet we press" from *The Sorcerer*. A pleasant social time followed as we assembled in the lobby for various delicious munchies and especially wonderful cakes, a specialty of board member, **Pat Hobbs**. Many thanks to St. Matthew's Episcopal Church for the use of their commodious space.



Performers in the Mother's Day Musicale included (l-r): Martha Dudgeon, Robert L. Schneider, Russell Gregory, Patricia Combs, David Fontenot, Arthur DiBianca, Janette Jones, Leonard Johnson, Holton Johnson, Michelle Haché, and Kate Clark. *Photos here & next page by Sue Caldwell. More photos (by Nanci Jay) are available from the Performance & Event History link on our website, www.gilbertsullivan.org.*

MEMBERSHIP FORM

We encourage you to join our Society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal on the top of the mailing label. If expired or near expiration, your membership needs to be updated! To correct your address, renew your membership, or become a member, complete this form, and mail it to us with your check, payable to "GSSA", or call to join (512) 472-4772 (GSSA).

Please check a membership category:

- Individual** (\$20-\$29)
- Family/Group** (\$30-\$49)
- Patron** (\$50-\$99)
- Grand Duke or Duchess** (\$100-\$249)
- Major General** (\$250-\$499)
- Pooh-Bah** (\$500-\$999)
- Pirate King** (\$1000-\$2499)
- Savoyard** (\$2500 & up)

Name _____
 Address _____
 State _____
 Phone number(s) _____
 E-mail address _____
 Employer _____
 Does your company match donations? _____

I'd like to volunteer. I'm interested in:

We are proud to list our members in our programs, but if you would prefer NOT to be listed in our programs, please check here:

NEWS of our MEMBERS

Jeffrey Jones-Ragona, Music Director of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin, recently led the Capital City Men's Chorus in their Spring Concert on May 15. The concert featured one of our Yeomen of the Guard vocalists, **Diana Vandewater**, as Special Guest Performer. The concert was held at University United Methodist Church. Jeffrey arranged for discounted group sales tickets for G&S Society members.

Ralph MacPhail, Jr. will return to Medford, Oregon for a week in July to teach — for the third time! — his "Gilbert & Sullivan and *Pira-Mika-Fore*" course at Rogue Valley Manor, a private retirement community. He will also continue teaching Gilbert & Sullivan at Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, Connecticut this fall.

The course, "Gilbert & Sullivan and *The Gondoliers*" will run September 12-17. The program is now offered by Incarnation Center, rather than Elderhostel. This allows more flexibility in programming and lower costs to attendees. For information, go to www.incarnationcenter.org, click on Conference Center, and then G&S. Additional information and corroborative detail is available from RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com.

Some of you may remember former Lady High Pianist **Gloria Kim**, who was a student at UT. She left us several years ago for graduate study at the University of Minnesota. She achieved her Doctor of Music degree last May and is now doing well in New York City. She is working with the Bronx Opera and Opera New Jersey, and during the audition season plays for the trombone studio at the Juilliard School of Music.



"Strange adventure!"



"Hereupon we're both agreed"



"A man who would woo a fair maid"



Libby Weed welcomed us and Ralph MacPhail provided insightful commentary



Songs in honor of Mother's Day were provided by Leonard Johnson, Robert L. Schneider, Kate Clark, Russell Gregory, and Patricia Combs



Top line of mailing label is date when your membership expires.

MAY 2010

Wand'ring Minstrels

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's Wand'ring Minstrels are the ambassadors for the Society to the Central Texas community. Their programs provide an introduction to the genre that is distinctively Gilbert & Sullivan. Programs range from a lively recital of Gilbert & Sullivan's most popular tunes to interactive, mini-productions of the Society's full summer productions. Costume elements, props and choreography provide the visual pop which turns each event into a celebration, with the camaraderie and spontaneous banter of the Wand'ring Minstrels adding an extra measure of froth to the proceedings!

For bookings or additional information, please contact Eva Laskaris by email at minstrels@gilbertsullivan.org, or at (512) 350-4935.

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in early September; the deadline for submissions will be in mid-August. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!

Tickets On Sale Now!

The **Yeomen of the Guard**

www.gilbertsullivan.org
 Entertaining Austin Audiences Since 1976

See details on page 1!

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

Since 1976, we have been spreading the joys of G&S through

- Annual Grand Productions**
- Educational/Community Outreach**
- Musicales**
- Musical Scholarships**
- Newsletters**
- Holiday Season Shows**

G&S Office: 1507 Wilshire Boulevard, Austin, TX 78722
 Mailing Address: P. O. Box 684542, Austin, TX 78768-4542
 Phone: (512) 472-4772 (GSA-GSSA)
 Our web site: www.gilbertsullivan.org



This project is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts which believes that a great nation deserves great art.



The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**
 Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

Board of Directors

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Libby Weed | President |
| Roberta Long | Co-Executive Vice President |
| Ingrid Yapple | Co-Executive Vice President |
| Kathryn Saar | Secretary |
| Dave Wieckowski | Treasurer |
| Reba Gillman | Historian |
| David Little | Publicity |
| Chris Buggé | |
| Pat Hobbs | |
| Leonard Johnson | |
| Randall McIntyre | |
| Michael Meigs | |

Database Manager **Arthur DiBianca**
 Newsletter Editor **Sue Ricket Caldwell**