

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society

September 1989 Newsletter

FLASH ! — THE SORCERER !

Change of Plans: *The Gondoliers* is put on hold

The Sorcerer will be our production at Live Oak Theatre,
November 10 - December 3, 1989

Director: Dr. Marian Hampton, UT Drama Department
Musical Director: Eric Daub, Doctoral candidate in the
UT Music Department

FLASH !

Auditions ... For *The Sorcerer*:

Saturday, September 9	1 - 4 pm
Sunday, September 10	1 - 4 pm
Thursday, September 14	7 - 10 pm

At the home of Enid Hallock, 4001 Cherrywood
For information call Enid at 477-0858 or 453-4431

FLASH !

DIRECTOR TAKES DIVE !

Jacki Chapman, Vice President for Production and Director of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, started August off with a diving accident. The good news is that she is expected to make a full recovery. The bad news is that following surgery she was put into a severely restrictive neck brace for 8 weeks.

In order to assure her rapid and complete recovery she has regretfully resigned from her assignment as Director of our November production.

REPORT

At a production meeting on Wednesday August 30 the Executive Committee discussed our options and firmed up our plans. Present were President Bob Kusnetz; Jacki Chapman; Michael Drousche; Reba Gillman; Enid Hallock and Bill Hatcher.

We considered the difficulty of trying to continue with the production of *The Gondoliers* when we have lost our director and are behind schedule, and agreed not to try. We discussed several other possibilities thoroughly. We are excited at the prospect of a continuing relationship with Live Oak Theatre, and its director, Don Toner. We talked about substituting *The Pirates of Penzance* now, but concluded that it would be better to work toward that production for next year. Discussion of other operettas brought us repeatedly to *The Sorcerer*, and finally we voted to make that our November production.

We were then joined by Marian Hampton, whom Jacki had invited to come to talk with us. Marian teaches Drama and Speech at UT. She also has had musical training and plays the piano and sings. She performed in *Pinafore* and *Ruddigore* in her high school days, and is familiar with several D'Oyly Carte recordings and non-D'Oyly Carte productions of Gilbert & Sullivan. At UT she has directed *Dracula* and *Do Patent Leather Shoes Really Reflect Upward*, both musicals. After an informal interview in which we asked Marian several questions about her philosophy and preferred ways of working, and she asked us about our setup and procedure, we voted to offer Marian the job of Director and she accepted.

A schedule was set up for auditions. Bill Hatcher, Vice President for Publicity, will get a notice into the Austin American Statesman.

For Music Director, Bob and Jacki have been talking to Eric Daub, who was interested. Several of us had enjoyed Eric's playing for Jess Walters' recent production of *Rigoletto*. He was recommended by Bill Girard.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 11 at 7:30 pm, at Enid Hallock's
4001 Cherrywood; 477-0858
Come catch up on what's going on. Bring Munchies and Dues.

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Saturday September 9 Sunday September 10 Thursday September 14

At Enid Hallock's 4001 Cherrywood; For Information Call 477-0858 or 453-4431; Also See Page 1

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Last Meeting

Twelve members met on Monday, June 12th at the home of Jacki Chapman. The meeting place was changed at the last minute from the home of Enid Hallock because of her illness. Those present were: Jacki Chapman, Michael Drousche, Reba Gillman, Bill Girard, Loel Graber, Bob Greenwood, Bill Hatcher, Bob Kusnetz, Allen Lawshae, Bob Mellin, Judy Scott, and Katharine Shields.

In corrections to the minutes President Bob K. noted that the original opening date for *The Gondoliers* was December 7, 1889 (incorrectly given in the Newsletter). Reba apologized for any person or deed inadvertently omitted from her list of acknowledgments. Jacki's informal video tape of backstage life at *H.M.S. Pinafore* was a great hit at the Strike Party. Enid made up the original *Pinafore* flyer which Len Gillman later revised and used during the run. She spent a lot of time calling people to urge them to audition for the show. Enid did so much work for the production that it was hard to get it all listed. Bob K. thanked Reba and Len for the Strike Party. Bob Mellin commended the G&S Society for their wonderful production of *Pinafore* with special praise for Bob Kusnetz and Jacki Chapman, and everyone associated with the show.

Treasurer Judy Scott passed out a 3-page financial report and explained it. We did very well on *Pinafore* and now have some money in the bank.

Discussion of the show: There was a good response to our mailout requesting sponsorships for the show. The Director was not paid — Jacki volunteered her services. Problems with Musical Director Jerry Peperone were discussed. Jerry left the show before it opened. Several people felt that he did a good job until then. Bob K. reminded us that anyone volunteering for the Society should keep a record of mileage for tax deduction purposes (12 cents a mile is the current rate). Also keep a record of any other donations.

Hyde Park Theatre is a small house, but 1592 people saw the show over five weekends. This was an average attendance of 80% of the house, which is almost unheard of in theatrical circles. Out of 20 performances there were 8 sold-out nights; some of these were complimentary tickets (100 in all). Contributing factors were:

1. The Gala mailing. There were 107 prepaid reservations as a result.
2. Group Sales were tremendous. Cast and crew arranged many of them.
3. Publicity was all free. KMFA and KUT gave us many announcements. KMFA gave away free tickets for Thursday and Sunday performances.
4. *H.M.S. Pinafore* is a much loved opera. Word of mouth sold the show.

Bob K. reported several enthusiastic comments he had received. He quoted warm letters from Teresa Norman of Tymlabs, who sent a generous contribution, and Sally Bartkowiak who became a member.

Katharine Shields volunteered to take the lists of people who came to the show and go through the mailing list to reduce it to the good prospects. Allen Lawshae and Bob Mellin volunteered to do anything we need done.

Next Production: Bob K. reported on his agreements with Don Toner, Director of Live Oak Theatre. Our production will open on Friday, November 10 and run through Sunday, December 3. (Note: although we have since changed the operetta, these agreements still hold.) We will be able to move into the theater on October 30. We will run Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with the option to play Thursdays in addition. We will certainly omit a performance on Thursday November 23, Thanksgiving Day. We decided to run three performances a weekend with two extra Thursday shows, for a total of four weekends.

IN MEMORIAM

With great sorrow we have received news of the death of Benjamin Meritt on July 7, 1989. He was 90 years old. Ben and Lucy Shoe Meritt, ardent G&S lovers, were among the first to become Lord High Patrons of our Society. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Lucy.

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The contract calls for a minimum fee, of which half must be paid in advance. Bob K. put up this money on May 8th. Live Oak agrees to provide administrative and staff support, such as lights and back stage facilities, and outlines other rules of the house. We are responsible for the program, and will receive any income from advertising. We need to work hard on selling ads. We decided on ticket prices, but authorized Bob K. to discuss this further with Don Toner.

We wholeheartedly authorized the Executive Committee to offer the position of Director to Jacki, after they have discussed conditions with Jacki as she has requested. The question of Music Director is still open. Bill Girard has stated that he cannot do it, because he is Assistant Director for the Lyric Opera production of *Carmen*, which will be performed on November 17 and 18. He gave Jacki a list of possibilities.

We need a logo and a flyer for publicity for the show. Production planning will go on all summer. We need to start lining up crews for various jobs.

Announcements: Three people from last year's G&S production are in *Anything Goes*, playing through June 17 at Live Oak Theatre. Members were urged to go see it.

Bob K. is donating tapes of *Pinafore* and *Trial By Jury* to the Society. He has extra copies of *Pinafore* for sale.

The meeting adjourned for refreshments and conversation. Many thanks to Jacki for having the meeting at her house on such short notice. Enid was much missed, and a card was passed around for signatures.

HYDE PARK THEATRE CHANGES NAME

Musical Stage! is the new name for Ken Johnson's theater. Currently running is *Little Mary Sunshine*, reported to be delightful. In the cast are 4 of our members and Susan Pauley, the delightful girl with the dimples in *Pinafore*. Frank Delvy has the leading male role, and Judy Scott, Michael Drousche, and Bob Mellin also appear. The female lead is played by Tana Cochran, a fine young soprano from UT, who recently charmed audiences as Gilda in Jess Walters' production of *Rigoletto* at the Capitol City Playhouse. You can still see it in its final weekend. It plays on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, September 7, 8, and 9, at 8 pm; and at 3 pm on Sunday, September 10. Call now (452-6688) and make your reservation.

H.M.S. Pinafore Is Nominated for ACOT Awards

On August 24 the Austin American Statesman carried the announcement of nominations for the annual ACOT B. Iden Payne Awards. Our production of *Pinafore* received 6 nominations, an alltime high for the G&S Society. Nominations were in the Musical category for "Best Production"; Jacki Chapman for "Director"; Frank Delyv for "Lead Actor" (he also received the nomination for his part in Ken Johnson's production *Jacques Brel is Alive ...*); Andrea Austin Jones for "Leading Actress"; Russell Gregory for "Featured Actor"; and Jerry Peperone for "Musical Director". This last must be considered a vote for the overwhelming excellence of the whole production.

Members of ACOT are now in the process of voting by mail. The results will be announced at the ACOT celebration on Monday, September 18th at Laff Stop. This will be open to the public for a fee. More information later.

Note: Congratulations to Ken Johnson, whose productions (including ours) received a total of 24 nominations!



Oh! my name is John Wellington Wells
The Sorcerer

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News of Members and Friends:

Welcome to our new members. Enjoy the Newsletter and come to our meetings and performances!

Jan Jones has the title role in a liturgical drama: *Ruth: A Musical*. It opened on August 26 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. It will be presented at other Austin locations during September. Call 251-0698 mornings.

Barbara Irvine, Music Director for our production of *Ruddigore*, has written an open letter to the Austin Theatre Community. She sends greetings from New York, where she has been living and working since last December. She describes the excitement of working in the city, and the fears and pains of living there. I have a copy of the letter if anyone wishes to read it.

Jacki Chapman has a new address:
9024 Northgate Blv'd, #260
(Windmill Apartments)
Austin, TX 78758

Bob Kusnetz has a new work phone number:

838-4919

Come to the meeting on Monday, September 11th!

Reba Gillman, Secretary

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society
1606 The High Road
Austin, Texas 78746



November 21, 1789
North Carolina