

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society

July 1992 Newsletter

• Next Meeting •

• **Monday, September 14th, the second Monday,** at 7:30 pm. Come help us work on plans for the year: a big production in June, and perhaps a smaller one in December. More information in the September Newsletter.

• Princess Ida •

The Houston Gilbert & Sullivan Society will be performing *Princess Ida* July 17 - 26 in the Wortham Center in downtown Houston. Tickets are \$10 to \$25, with a \$1 discount per ticket for groups of 20 or more. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 2:30 pm. Get together with some other members and go as a group!

For reservations call or write Mary Metz, at:
11806 Spruce Hill Drive
Houston, TX 77077-4927
Phone: (713) 496-5780

• News of Members •

• We were delighted to welcome Judy and Al Rellstab to the Saturday, June 27th performance of *The Mikado*. Al underwent surgery for an aneurism a year ago, and is still working hard to regain his strength and skills. He is doing very well, but it's a long haul!

• Erstwhile Treasurer, Amy Young, packed up her goods and left us for London, Paris, and other exotic cities. She would love to hear from us. Until further notice she can be reached through her Austin firm. Address mail to:

Amy Young
c/o Landmark/Zycor
220 Foremost Drive
Austin, TX 78745

• Congratulations to our New York City member Marcy Berman. She has married Marc Shepherd and moved to:

205 10th St, #4H
Jersey City, NJ 07302

• Note new address for Jacki Chapman:

2207 South 5th St, #232
Austin, TX 78704 444-7212

• Congratulations to Frank and Donna Delvy, who have bought a house. New address:

1509 Romeria
Austin, TX 78757 Same phone: 451-3710

• Message from your President •

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You,

Even though I write this on Sunday night, June 21, 1992, and we have played only two weeks of our four week run of *The Mikado*, I believe that this production is a success. The number of people attending each performance so far has been good. Saturday and Sunday performances, the 20th and 21st of June, had just about full houses. Comments from those attending have been positive. If past experience holds true, the attendance for the remaining nine performances should be excellent. This means that the production of *The Mikado* will be a modest financial success.

The goal I had set of raising \$10,000 before opening night had been surpassed, largely due to our major underwriters, grants, sponsors, and advertisers. Mainly I feel that the reason for this success is the material contributions and good will generously given by you, the members of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin. So many of you helped that I won't even attempt to thank you all by name here. But I must describe the kinds of help given. There were cash contributions, large and small, and I was emotionally touched by even the smallest offering. I know these people must love Gilbert and Sullivan as I do. There were those members who helped in the many areas of publicity necessary to let Austin know about our show. And God Bless all those that contributed to our opening night Gala. If I had to add up numbers, I would guess that at least half our membership made some contribution.

I must also thank the talented directors, musicians, technical personnel (some of whom were unpaid volunteers), and a marvelous cast of performers.

Now we must start planning for the future. We will resume regular monthly meetings in September. And I promise to make these meetings fun to attend, heavy on entertainment and light on business.

Our players will participate in various musical affairs that are deemed appropriate. Your Board of Directors will work on proposals for a future production for your consideration. Suggestions are welcome.

Again, I thank you for your support in the production of *The Mikado*. It has been a pleasure to serve with you.

««««« Robert Mellin «««««

♪ ♪ ♪ Living Room Light Opera ♪ ♪ ♪

Many people have said they would enjoy the sing-along format suggested by Harold Gilbert in the June Newsletter. What we need are a few people to help organize it. Call Harold, 512-858-1704; or Allen Lawshae, 459-4858.

7/92-1

And thank you very much, to all who have responded promptly!

• Last Meeting •

On Monday, June 1st, Nine members gathered at Pearl Amster's home: Pearl, Harold Gilbert, Reba Gillman, Doug & Sheila Glenn (with their son, Topher), Loel Graber, Robert Mellin, Larry Shepley, and Anne Collins Smith.

- Loel announced the big news: IBM, through its Funds for Community Service, had granted us \$1,000 for the production of *The Mikado*. This is given through an employee who is active in a community organization, and Loel had applied for it. Before this and some other funds came through we had already reached the \$7,000 mark, so we were doing well in our fund raising.

- President Robert brought us up to date on the *Mikado* production. Everything was moving along. We needed volunteers to help build the set during daytime (working) hours. The label-affixing party for over 2500 flyers had taken place yesterday, but the mailing was delayed because of an error in the return address. Members asked for flyers to distribute, and Robert provided some of the red and white inserts. The flyers designed by GSD&M were not yet available.

Publicity was proceeding well. The American-Statesman had promised us about \$900 worth of advertising. We will use material designed by GSD&M free of charge. Robert had arranged an interview with John Aeilli on KUT for June 9th sometime after 11 am. Robert and the Drama and Music directors were to appear on this program. Robert had talked with Michael Barnes (Drama critic for the American-Statesman), who said he thought that our idea of inserting flyers in programs for other shows around town was good.

Robert said he wanted to have a G&S representative set up in the lobby for every performance, to sell T-shirts and posters, take money and names for membership and mailing list, and give information about the Society.

Volunteers for ushering and working the concession booth were to be organized by Alex Alford at Zach Scott Theatre. Robert had given him a list of Society members who wanted to usher, but we need to follow that up.

- After discussion of the alternatives, Pearl volunteered to organize the food for the Opening Night Gala. Karen Collier had offered to help, and several members present agreed to help with the phone calls to solicit donations of food from the membership.

- Robert told us that we had been invited to participate in the SOS (Save Our Springs) program to take place on Sunday, June 7th in the Zilker Park Hillside Theater. It was to begin at 2:30 pm, and we were to provide 30 to 40 minutes of G&S music around 6 pm.

- In other business we quickly ran through a number of items. We agreed to provide a 30 minute program of G&S music, as requested by the University of Texas Ladies Club. This would be at a regular meeting of the Ladies Club, next March or April, probably around noon.

- Our organizational membership in the Austin Circle of Theatres (ACOT) is due. Loel was requested to send a check.

- We approved Harold Gilbert's suggestion for Living Room Light Opera, as it appeared in the June Newsletter.

- We agreed to plan to do a show next June; *Iolanthe* was suggested, but no final decision was made. In discussion of what theater to use, Robert stated that he thought the Zach Scott Kleburg Theater too expensive; he favored using the Dougherty Arts space at 1/3 the cost. (This space has been closed for over a year because of a fire, and is only now available again).

Robert also suggested that we look into the possibility of doing a smaller show in December at the Dougherty. He had made a tentative reservation in our name for the Dougherty space in December, no money required at this time.

- Finally, we agreed that our next meeting would be on September 14th (the second Monday because Labor Day falls on the first Monday of September). We then adjourned for refreshments and sociability.

• Executive Committee Meeting •

On Monday, June 29th, at Robert Mellin's: President Robert, Executive Vice-President Bob Kusnetz, Secretary Reba Gillman, Treasurer Loel Graber, and Historian Anne Collins Smith met. Allen Lawshae was also present by invitation. Robert gave us a report on the box office receipts to date for *The Mikado*. It appears that we will come out ahead, with some money to invest in our next show.

Robert reminded us that our group performed on May 3rd for the Pun Off at the O. Henry Museum, and on June 7th for the SOS program in Zilker Park. We have also been invited to sing on July 13th at the Lomax Room at UT, and to work up a program for The Forum, a retirement community with 200 residents.

We discussed plans for a big production next June. Allen urged that we emulate the Houston G&S Society and plan one show a year several years ahead, performing on the same

Attention All Members

Help keep our members informed. Pass on news and information for publication in the Newsletter.

Call me at 327-2277, or drop me a note.

7/922

• MORE THANKS •

dates and in the same place every year, if possible. Bob K. agreed that we needed to plan several years ahead in this way, so that the community knows what to expect. He also favored keeping our name in the public eye with smaller performances, some in the format of the Gilbert & Sullivan Sampler. He thought we should use volunteer talents like Jess Walters, Rose Taylor and Leonard Johnson for such performances. He also urged that we work with the schools, as well as plan membership involvement with the Living Room Light Opera.

Robert agreed with these ideas, except that he emphasized that it was vitally important to present some first class G&S to the public in December. Reba, however, felt that we should aim for one major show a year, leaving more energy for work in the schools to develop the audience of the future, planning Living Room Light Opera sessions for our members, and performing scenes and excerpts whenever and wherever we were invited.

Loel moved, and Bob K. seconded the motion that we authorize Robert to look into a smaller production in December. The vote was 3 in favor, with 1 abstaining. (Anne Smith had already left the meeting, and Allen was a non-voting guest.)

It was noted that we needed to fill the two open spots on the Executive Board: Vice President for Production, and Vice President for Publicity. We need active, energetic members who would add creative ideas and work hard for the Board.

Reba

Reba Gillman, Secretary

• For donations for the *Mikado* production received since the last Newsletter, we thank members Reba Gillman for \$500, Amy Young for \$100, Harry & Shirley Ellison and Robert & Helen Jones for \$50 each, and Kate Hendricks and Claire Weinstein for smaller amounts.

• Thanks also to Flyer label stickers: Hugh & Ruth Eckols, Reba Gillman, Bob & Maudi Greenwood, Allen Lawshae, Frances Lockhart and Bill & Nan Hatcher with Lisa and Lauren and Lisa's friend Melissa Mason,.

• And still more thanks to those who sat in the lobby for each performance, selling T-shirts and posters, and dispensing information: Reba Gillman (5 times), Hugh & Ruth Eckols (2 times), Enid Hallock (2 times), Susie Jacobson (2 times), and once each for Mary Lu Barras, Sue Ricket Caldwell, Jacki Chapman, Julia Frank, Nan Hatcher, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Diane Simpson, and Anne Collins Smith.

• Welcome to New Members •

To date eleven have joined, and more keep coming: as **Grand Duke**, Thad Bynum; as **Lord High Patron**, Jess & Emma Walters; as **Patrons**, Susan Pryor and Richard Boner; and Michael & Alice Kuhn. And as **Members**: Dawn Bezviner, Mrs. Kay Graner, Sean & Anna Hand, Patricia Lane, Mrs. Pat Roeder, Katherine Staples, and Theresa Wilson.

If I have missed anyone I'm very sorry. Do let me know!

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Reba Gillman, Secretary
1606 The High Road
Austin, TX 78746

