

# The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

## April 1994 Newsletter

Reba Gillman, Editor

### • Next Meeting - Our Monthly Musicale •

• On Monday, March 4th, 1994 at 7:30 pm. at Pearl Amster's, 2304 Hartford Road, 472-7028. Come to enjoy the company of fellow Gilbert and Sullivan lovers, and the musical program Allen Lawshae is putting together. Please bring munchies.

### • Last Gathering and Musicale • Monday March 7, 1994

Well, that was a bang-up, delightful Celebration and Song Fest! 39 people gathered in Pearl's music room. We welcomed new members Byron Arnason, Ben and Carmela Nardone, and Dan Smith, attending for the first time. Other members and their guests were Pearl Amster with daughter Nancy Owen and grandson Matt Kaplan; Wren Andersen with her mother Joy; Frank and Donna Delvy; Harold Gilbert with his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson from Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Reba Gillman; Loel Graber; Bill Hatcher with wife Nan, and daughters Lisa and Lauren; Janette Jones; Allen Lawshae with daughter Julia, and friend Fran Peters; Robert Mellin; Lucy Shoe Meritt; Al and Judy Rellstab; Lord High Pianist Bob Wall; Theresa Wilson; and Deborah Zallen. Other guests were Libby Bunch and Patricia Moore. And Most Special of All, members and new Advisory Board Members: Richard Anderson, W.H. "Deacon" Crain, Enid Hallock, and Jess (and Emma) Walters.

Matt Kaplan opened the program singing the Pirate King's song "Oh better far to live and die" from *The Pirates of Penzance*, with all joining in on the chorus of pirates. President Robert then offered to introduce everyone in 90 seconds (I think he ran over). He reported on the success of *H.M.S. Pinafore*: we put on an excellent show, we may have broken our own box office records, and we came out in the black. He stated that the five ideas we need to pursue now are: 1) Go into schools with G&S presentations. 2) Help promote music in the schools generally, particularly in the lower grades. 3) Provide a musical scholarship. 4) Provide for a paid Artistic Director, to give some continuity; or 5) Hire some kind of clerical help to do the Society's routine work.

When Robert said "That's enough speechifying for now" the immediate chorused response was "Well spoke!". [to p.2]

### • Message from your President •

Whither our Gilbert and Sullivan Society now? I tell you again, our recent *Pinafore* was a success, artistically as well as being a crowd pleaser. And yes, we made money too. This is part of a delicious dilemma that I will address shortly. However, the success of *Pinafore* was not an isolated fluke. Over the past 18 months we have had a string of successes, starting with *The Mikado* in June/July 1992 and including the lesser known *Iolanthe* in April/May 1993. Interspersed with these hits we had two Gilbert and Sullivan All Star Fund Raiser Revues which were very well received as well as profitable. Additionally we performed mini-concerts at various venues about town, as well as at our increasingly popular free monthly Musicales.

Our Society's membership roll has increased by half, and we have a better financial footing than many local theater groups, including some that are well known.

So where do we go from here? I believe we must choose to go forward. We should begin to implement some of the ideas that have been talked about. Ideas such as musical scholarships, a Gilbert and Sullivan regional convention, mini G & S concerts in the public schools, and the promotion of general music education in the lower grades. Of course plans for our next major production need to be started now. Also, it seems inevitable that the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, for the first time in its 18 year history, will need to hire someone on a part-time basis to help do the many chores necessary to carry on with our needs and desires.

These thoughts as of now, are only those of one person. Even though I would like to think that I played a positive part in our successes and plans for the future, I need your input to let me know what you want your Gilbert and Sullivan Society to be.

\*\*\*\*\* Robert Mellin \*\*\*\*\*

### • Correction to March Newsletter •

• Listed Among the Society's Future Plans:  
To help promote music in Elementary and Junior High Schools. [Not to help provide.] Sorry about that!

President Robert Mellin will be entertaining his brother and sister-in-law from Philadelphia in April for 6 days. Ray is the brother who introduced the 7-year-old Robert to the wonders of Gilbert & Sullivan, when he appeared in a school production of *The Mikado*, and came home singing "If you want to know who we are" and "Mi-ya-sa-ma". Robert was enchanted.

### Musicale. March 7th. cont.

He urged us to go see *The Importance of being Earnest* at The Vortex [Now closed.]. Oscar Wilde's use of language is as witty and delightful as W.S. Gilbert's.

Allen Lawshae took over as MC to introduce the musical program, focusing on *The Yeomen of the Guard*, to acquaint us all with that opera. Julia Lawshae sang Phoebe's song "When a maiden loves, she sits and sighs", which opens the opera. Next came what Allen called The Instructional Trio, "A man who would woo a fair maid" sung by Frank Delvy, Julia, and Janette Jones. Then Allen himself sang The Patter Song, "Oh! a private buffoon is a light-hearted loon" which as he said "all aspiring Jack Points are going to have to learn". Matt and Harold Gilbert sang the conniving duet "Hereupon we're both agreed", which ends triumphantly with "What a tale of cock and bull!" Janette sang "Were I thy bride" to Frank's jailor (no lines).

Finally a digression, first to *The Mikado*, with the famous trio "I am so proud", sung by Allen, Matt, and Frank, and "A more humane Mikado" sung by Harold. Then to *Ruddigore* for the charming duet "I once was a very abandoned person", sung by Frank and Janette. From *Iolanthe* Frank gave us the Lord Chancellor's other song "The law is the true embodiment of everything that's excellent". And then back to finish our understanding of *Yeomen* with Janette singing "When our gallant Norman foes", which expresses the essence of the spirit of the Tower of London. After that grim tale we turned to the Awards.

Robert announced that we had 4/5ths of our honorees present. Bob Kusnetz, the fifth Advisory Board member, had to be out of town on business. He sent his regrets and congratulations. In alphabetical order we then proceeded. Robert presented the first Award to Rick Anderson, whom he met in the course of his "day job" as claims adjuster for insurance companies. Robert had just been elected President, and we were going into our production of *The Mikado*.

Robert was nervous about where to raise the money. Rick, of Armstrong Moving and Storage, had just arrived here from Lubbock, and Robert thought the way to greet him to Austin was to hit him up for some money. Rick came through with a substantial sum which touched Robert, and gave him the courage to go out and get it all together.

"Deacon" Crain was next, with Allen doing the honors. In 1962 Allen moved back to Austin and first encountered "Deacon", who got this nickname when he played the role of Deacon in a womanless wedding in High School. He is the curator of the UT Humanities Research Center, and a long time appreciator and supporter of theater in Austin. Allen said "It makes me very proud to present this token in thanks for your generous support of our Society."

Bill Hatcher then introduced Enid Hallock, a founding member of the G&S Society of Austin, actress and singer, in whose home the Society met for many years. She's not a curator at UT, but she is in charge of the Gilbert and Sullivan archives, which she stores in her home.

Reba made the final presentation: to Jess Walters, internationally known opera singer and true and generous friend. After a distinguished career singing opera in Amsterdam and London, Jess "retired" and came to teach voice at UT. He continues to perform, and that wonderful voice commands the stage whenever he's on it. His first association with the Society came in 1982, when he played the part of the Judge in our first production of *Trial By Jury*. He repeated the role in 1988, and has performed in several of our fundraising events -- whenever we've asked him. Jess's name is a sure-fire audience attraction. We thank you, Jess!

Handsome glass mementos, designed and made by Renaissance Glass, were our gift to each Advisory Board member. We finished up with Frank's perennial tongue-twister from *Iolanthe*. And with a rousing full chorus of "Now to the banquet we press" we adjourned to the goodies.

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin  
Reba Gillman, Secretary  
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Come to our Musicale • April 4th at 7:30 pm • 2304 Hartford Road • Sing • Eat • And Be Merry!

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