The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin September 1996 Newsletter

Reba Gillman, Editor

• Next Meeting -- Our Monthly Musicale •

- The Second Monday September 9 1996 at 7:30 pm at Pearl Amster's, 2304 Hartford Road, 472-7028. Please bring munchies as usual.
- Our next production will be *The Yeomen of the Guard*, perhaps the most serious of the G&S operas, and yet lots of fun. David Beussman, Katharine Shields, Frank Delvy, and Janette Jones, will sing excerpts from the opera to help us get acquainted with it.
- · Come and enjoy this wonderful music.
- · Coming Events: Mark your calendars now!
 - · Monday October 7th John Bustin Night
 - · Monday November 4th Musicale
 - December 1st Our Annual Holiday Season All Star G & S Revue, and perhaps a special treat too.

Many Thanks Many Thour Corporate Sponsors

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• Message from your President •

The intermission for a Saturday evening performance of *Pirates of Penzance* had just ended. Groups of theatregoers in summer garb had drifted back into the theatre from the moon-drenched patio, where they had been enjoying the breath-taking view of Lake Austin. Others had finished their cold drinks or had completed their purchases at the T-shirt table, and all had returned to their seats as the orchestra began the strains that introduce Act II.

Closing the doors to the lobby quietly, I went over to the soft-drink table where Robert Mellin was already beginning to tidy up and take stock. We talked about how many more Sprites and Dr. Peppers we needed to pack in the ice chest to be ready for the next day's matinée, and we began to fill the ice chests from our stock.

Suddenly Robert looked up from his packing and said, in those rather melodramatic accents we know so well, "This is a good thing we're doing, Libby!"

Prone to be a little short-sighted and focused on the immediate task, I wondered if he meant icing the drinks down early or choosing Sprites over Cokes for this chest. But his next sentence gave me to understand that he was speaking of something far grander than either of these.

"This is a beautiful show, and people are enjoying it thoroughly. The Gilbert & Sullivan Society is really making a lot of people happy with this show!"

Robert was absolutely right, and I heartily agreed. Seeing the smiling faces and hearing the cheerful voices after each performance, accepting congratulations and thanks from both first-time G&S attendees and long-time aficionados, I knew that *Pirates* was making a lot of people happy. I hope you were one of them!

Whether you were or not, as a member of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin, you helped make this marvelous performance possible. Your dues, along with ticket sales and donations from our supporters, enabled us to produce a stunning show that, from its orchestra to its chorus to its principals, from its stage sets to its costumes to its props, brought beauty and enjoyment to our community for three weekends this summer. Over three thousand audience members were entertained royally over the course of the eleven performances.

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• Soon we will announce new fall office hours • In the meantime call any time and leave a message • Newman Hall, Room 309, 2026 Guadalupe St., Austin TX 78705

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President's Message cont.

I wish to express profound thanks to Robert for his oversight of the production; to our stage director, Tim Campbell; to our musical director, Jeffrey Jones; to all of the actors and chorus members; to all of those who were on the stage crews; and to our members who volunteered as ushers and in the front of the house. Good show, all -- and don't you *dare* miss next year's grand performance!

* * * * * * Libby Weed * * * * * *

Last Meeting and Musicale

Long ago on Monday June 3, 1996 at 7:30 pm, 33 people attended the last Musicale of the season at Pearl's. Present were members Pearl Amster, Marilyn Babcock, Reba Gillman, Loel Graber, Bill Hatcher with Lisa & Lauren, Joyce & George Lloyd John, Allen Lawshae, Victoria LeBlanc, John Mast, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Kay Novak, Bee Harris Polomé & Chuck Kraus, Bob Sharron, Larry Shepley, Robert Spiegel, Lydia Storey, Jess & Emma Walters, Tasha Waring with her Dad Sam, and Theresa Wilson. Guests were Don & Cathy Crandall, Karen Janson & Cosette V. Pharr, Jerry Marco & Linda Erhardt, and Jamie Walker.

Executive Director Robert Mellin began the meeting with a quick report on *Pirates*, set to open in two weeks and four days. Robert said "We have a great orchestra and wonderful principals. If you haven't made your reservations please make them now! And try to come to the Opening Night Gala. It will be lots of fun: a party for the cast, and a fund raiser for the Society." He told us that our production follows the original D'Oyly Carte, not the recent Joseph Papp version. Taking inspiration from photos of an early production, our Pirates will wear skirts. Russell Gregory, a big man, will be the Pirate King, wearing a skirt and long tresses.

Robert then welcomed Marilyn Babcock, Lord High Substitute Pianist, and Bill Hatcher gave us a sweet "Fair moon to thee I sing" from *Pinafore*. Victoria LeBlanc volunteered to sing "The moon whose rays" from *Mikado*. And Robert asked if anyone knew of any other references to the moon in the G & S operas. Visitor Jerry Marco immediately suggested the defendant's song in *Trial by Jury*, and was pressed into singing it for us. "Oh, gentlemen, listen, I pray, Tho' I own that my heart has been ranging, Of nature the laws I obey, For nature is constantly changing: The moon in her phases is found, The time and the wind and the weather, The months in succession come round, And you don't find two Mondays together."

Jess Walters then sang a group of old favorites, with his guest Don Crandall at the piano, and Don's wife Cathy,

turning pages. First came "The Road to Mandalay", words by Rudyard Kipling and music by Oley Speaks, which Jess said he first sang 55 years ago. [I loved singing a choral version of this song when I was in the eighth grade.] Next the moving spiritual "Water Boy", calling up the image of chain gang prisoners in the sweltering heat, calling for the "water boy" to assuage their thirst. Next Jess sang the Venetian scene "Serenata Gelato", evoking the bitter cold as a youth serenaded his young lady on a winter night; as each guitar string breaks he sings faster and faster. Jess advised us to sing it often when we were cold. And finally a favorite with audiences, "Shortnin' Bread.'

When our laughter and applause died down Robert asked Loel Graber to give us a song. With Marilyn back at the piano Loel sang "There lived a King" from *Gondoliers*. Then we plunged into a lusty rendition of "Hail Poetry" (*Piraies*). That proved to be the magic required to produce our guest artists of the evening, Robert Rudié and Kathryn Mishell, who arrived at that moment.

Robert Rudié explained that in *Amadeus* Peter Shaffer tells the story of Antonio Salieri, and his battle with God. With Kathryn at the piano, Robert put on a wig and began a scene. Salieri is old and sick, in a mental hospital. He rails against God, saying he has devoted his life to serving God with his music, and now here comes the frivolous young genius Mozart, and God shows Salieri that he is just mediocre. Salieri shouts, "Now You are the enemy! After all, what is man for if not to show God His faults!"

After this rousing dramatic scene we all joined in singing "Now to the banquet we press" (*Sorcerer*) and adjourned to the dining room for food and conversation. The evening provided a delightful close to one more season of G & S.

• Wish List •

Needed: A volunteer Photographer to record
our events
A Volunteer Costume Mistress
A Volunteer Technical Worker
Volunteer Office Workers

Laser Printer
TV
VCR
Touch Tone Telephone

Pick Up Truck or Van

Call 472-4772

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It appears that our recent production of *The Pirates* of *Penzance* at Saint Stephen's was probably the most successful in our 20 year history. More people saw this show than any before, and most agreed on its high artistic merit.

Pirates • Most Successful Run •

Thanks partly to our individual member contributors, who made a special financial donation to the production, we showed a modest profit. We are also very appreciative of our generous corporate sponsors. And a big bravo to our performers, directors, and designers for ;their great work -- to all the staff and volunteers mucho gracias.

* * * * Robert Mellin, Executive Director * * * *

Many Thanks to the loyal members who helped out in the front of the house during the run of *Pirates*: Wren Andersen with Joy and siblings; Chris Buggé; Reba Gillman; Susie Grubbs (formerly Jacobson); Bill Hatcher with Nan, Lisa and Lauren, and friend Carolee Poschman; Ed Kluth; Paula Tyler; and Libby Weed.

Thanks to Jean & Chris Buggé for the use of their Mac, while mine is in the hospital. Thanks also to LCRA who will print this Newsletter.

G & S Executive Board

| | President | Libby Weed | 837-5441 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Executive V.P. | Paula Tyler | 459-4639 |
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| Executive Director Robert Mellin | | | |
| | | | |

• FLASH •

Amy Baker Stinson, most recently our Mabel in *Pirates*, will appear as Johanna in *Sweeney Todd*, which opens Friday September 6th at the Live Oak Theater. Congratulations, Amy! (For tickets call 499-8497)

Joe York will play the Demon Barber, and Jackie Roach will play Mrs. Lovett. As some may recall, this somewhat gruesome opera was done a few years ago at Capitol City Playhouse with Michael Lucas (the Grand Inquisitor in our *Gondoliers*) as the Barber, and Kristina Havenhill (Josephine in our *Pinafore*) as Johanna. Linda Nenno was a fine Mrs. Lovett in that production.



NOTICE: Date on mailing label indicates when your membership expires.

If you are receiving the Newsletter on an introductory basis the date on the label indicates the last free Newsletter. We welcome contributions, upgrades, and dues from ALL our readers.



If you like Gilbert and Sullivan, and want to support our efforts ...

... you can do so by becoming a member of our society for a mere ten dollars.

Members receive a monthly newsletter with information about G&S, our activities and our members.

Our monthly informal G&S musicales are open to the public at no charge.

• Your tax-deductible contribution in any of the other categories are welcome and will help us mount our yearly productions and pay our monthly expenses •

| O Savoyard \$1,000 O Grand Duke \$100 - \$249 O Member \$10 | O Pooh-Bah \$500 - \$999 O Lord High Patron \$50 - \$99 O I prefer to keep my identity anonymous | O Major General \$250 - \$499 O Patron \$25 - \$49 O I do not wish to receive the Newsletter |
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Report on G & S International Festival by Robert Mellin

In July I had the pleasure of attending the eight-day G&S International Festival in Philadelphia, which was as enjoyable as any lover of G&S could hope for. I got to see nine properly staged productions performed by mostly very accomplished groups from various places, including Australia and the U.K. I even saw Ruddigore and The Sorcerer staged by former stars of the D'Oyly Carte company. It was quite a treat! The remaining G&S repertory that was not staged, I got to hear (and sometimes participate in) in "Sing Throughs" of the works later in the evening at "Cabaret". These works includeded Pirates, Mikado, The Grand Duke, and Utopia Limited. Sometimes the "Cabaret" didn't finish until 1:30 or 2:00 in the morning. Did I get a little tired from all this G&S? Not really, and the fact that I stayed practically across the street from the hotel where the "Cabaret" happened could not have been more convenient. I was a guest of my brother Ray and sister-in-law Bernice, who live in a high rise in down town Philadelphia. I thank them for their hospitality.

As good a time as I had I think the things I learned and contacts I made were even more important. For example, most society productions are performed and mostly financed by society members, as opposed to ours where casting is open to all. But most G&S groups have their own unique characteristics. I also got to meet and talk with many interesting and knowledgeable people from the world of G&S, including Ian Smith, the Englishman who founded these festivals that can only become more popular and grow by leaps and bounds each year. I talked with Harry Benford, the G&S authority whose "Lexicon" was so popular with our members. (There will not be any more available until he gets around to making planned revisions.) Stanton Taylor, a member of our Society from Louisiana, appeared as a peer in the festival production of Iolanthe (put together in a week). Both he and the production were quite commendable.

Another of our out of town members, Ralph ("Rafe") McPhail from Virginia, I learned is a stage director as well as a highly regarded expert on G&S. He told me to say hello to Reba for him.

Seeing and hearing how other societies present their shows gave me valuable ideas about costuming, sets, casting, and staging. I am hoping for more communication with some of these individuals and groups, probably using the SavoyNet. But I must say, as much as I enjoyed what those groups did, I truthfully feel that our productions on the whole are as good as and sometimes surpass what I saw in Philadelphia. Maybe some year we will be eager and ready to present our efforts at an international festival.

Many thanks to the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin for paying my way to this exciting festival.

Welcome to Our New Members

29 new members have signed up as a result of their pleasure in our production of *Pirates*. That is always one of the exciting bonuses of putting on a good show.

Welcome!

Grand Duke: William & Greta Curtis, Bob & Cynthia Hormell, M.D. Levy, Jr. MD, and Pat Wedel.

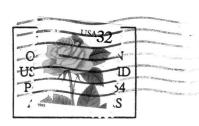
Lord High Patron: Susan Lubin, Mary & Edward Munzer, Bernadette Tasher, and John F. Yeaman.

Patron: Allise Burris, Yvonne & Doug DeLay, Brian & Diane Haight, Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Howe, Mr & Mrs. Eugene Ripperger, Leland L. Smith, Mary C. Turbiville, Darrel & Donna Webber, and Carl & Mary Woodring.

Members: Vaughn Alexander, David Beer, Rachel Dolan, Henry & Norma Fischer, Scott Guthery, Richard Hartley, John E. Oliphant, Bob Pendleton, Elizabeth Smith, Mrs. Dale Tucker, Ernie Welch, and Arthur R. Woods.







Come to our Monthly Musicale Monday, September 9 1996 at Pearl's 7:30 pm