

THE

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

MARCH 1998 NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting - Our Monthly Musicale

Monday - March 2, 1998, at 7:30
at Pearl Amster's
2304 Hartford Road, 472-7028

Bill Hatcher and Larry Shepley are planning the program, with **Lord High Pianist Bob Wall**

Come join the fun! Please bring munchies

We'll be singing choruses from
The Pirates of Penzance
so bring a score if you have one

Volunteers are requested - all voices
G&S or other musical offerings
Call Bill (892-3722) or Larry (327-1511)

Future Monthly Musicales
April 6, May 4, and June 1, 1998

Coming up for *The Mikado*:

Have you ever wanted to **visit Japan**?

Bid for a **walk-on role**!

Have you ever wanted to **own a flute**?

Sponsor an **orchestral chair**!

Watch for details!

Jeffrey Jones, Music Director for *The Mikado*

Dan Smith, Executive Director, and the Executive Board are pleased to announce that **Jeffrey Jones** will be the Music Director for *The Mikado*. Jeffrey has a doctorate from UT Austin and is Artistic Director for the Capital City Men's Chorus. In 1994 he led The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* and in 1996 was Music Director for our *Pirates of Penzance*. We are looking forward to working with him!

Auditions for *The Mikado*:

Saturday April 4, Noon - 6:00

Sunday, April 5, 2:00-6:00

At the former Presbyterian Church, 5801 Westminster Drive

Call our office, **472-4772** to schedule an audition

(Call-backs, Monday April 6, evening, as scheduled)

The Mikado will open Thursday June 11 and run Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays through June 21, 1998, at St. Stephens School's Helm Fine Arts Center

URGENT

Frequent Flyer Miles needed to bring Ralph McPhail, our *Mikado* Director, from Virginia to Texas. Three round-trips will be needed in all. Please make contributions in increments of 30,000 miles. Call the Gilbert & Sullivan office at 472-4772.

MANY THANKS!

Dan Smith, Our New Executive Director

The Executive Board is very pleased to announce the hiring of Dan Smith as our new Executive Director. Dan has been a lover of Gilbert & Sullivan and a member of the Society for a number of years. He performed in *Iolanthe*, *Pinafore*, *Gondoliers*, *Penzance*, and *Yeomen*—one of those bass-baritones we always love to see at auditions!

Dan is eminently qualified for an executive position for many reasons other than his association with G&S. He owns Wordsmith, a business specializing in writing, editing, desktop publishing, and job search assistance. His many clients include DuPont, ConAgra, the Texas Department of Transportation, 3M, Trammell Crow, Dallas Trade Market, and the Austin Parks and Recreation Department.

The holder of a master's degree in speech communication, Dan taught speech and coached debate at the college level for eight years. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at St. Edward's University; he also teaches computer courses for seniors and is active in his church.

When he's doing "what's really important," Dan is singing with the Austin Lyric Opera Chorus and Genesis Presbyterian Church Choir. He has appeared in various other music productions, including last summer's Zilker musical, *Guys & Dolls*. His hobbies (as if he needed any with all this going on!) include watching birds, riding bicycles, and running ("but not very fast"). You may see him on the Town Lake trail—you'll know him by the G&S T-shirt.

Dan is already hard at work preparing for auditions for *The Mikado* and taking care of the myriad tasks associated with producing a G&S opera. Welcome aboard, Dan!

Last Musicale • Reba Gillman • Secretary

A jolly crowd 41-strong gathered on Monday February 2, 1998, at Pearl Amster's to enjoy the program planned by Larry Shepley and Bill Hatcher. Present were members Pearl Amster, Byron Arnason, Chris Buggé, Doug & Yvonne DeLay, Frank Delvy, Harold Gilbert, Reba Gillman, Enid Hallock with son Gary and grandson Andrew, Bill Hatcher, George & Joyce John, Janette Jones, *Pat Kaplan, *Peter Langlois, Allen Lawshae & Kay Novak, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Joan Pearsall, Bee Polomé & Chuck Kraus, Gary Preuss, Bob Sharron, Larry Shepley, Leland L. Smith, Bob & Martha Spiegel, Paula Tyler, Lord High Pianist Bob Wall, Jess & Emma Walters, Libby Weed, and Benné Willerman (* denotes member attending for the first time). Guests were Walter Reeves, who joined on the spot, Karron Lewis, Les Marshall, and Mark & Marcia Mitchell.

President Libby Weed started off by asking new people to introduce themselves. When Les Marshall announced that he was an Englishman, the stirring words "For he is an Englishman" (*Pinafore*) burst from the group in enthusiastic song, demonstrating that we know our G&S. Then Libby announced a Lost & Found Department: Harold Gilbert has LOST his score of *The Sorcerer*; if anyone comes across it please restore it to Harold! It's been missing a long time, and may have been left at Pearl's. FOUND is a handsome pottery bowl, which Libby held up for all to see. It was left at the December Gala, and if no one claims it we may have to auction it off. Libby then turned affairs over to Larry Shepley.

Larry announced that he was the Society Historian and Parliamentarian, although he claimed to know nothing about History or Parliamentary rules. He passed out two sheets of words, all from *The Mikado*, and asked us all to join in singing "Mi-ya Sa-ma", the choral entrance of the Mikado and his entourage in the second act, with the Lord High Pianist Bob Wall in his proper place. This march led into the duet "From every kind of man obedience I expect" with Frank Delvy as the Mikado and Enid Hallock as Katisha. This was followed by Libby Weed and Bill Hatcher singing "Were you not to Ko-Ko plighted" — a charming pair. Larry then introduced Karron Lewis, to lead us in part singing. She had us sing through "Brightly dawns our wedding day," then practice our parts, and finally join in singing a full version. It is written for four solo voices, but we sang all the parts and enjoyed the practice thoroughly. It was a great help that many had brought their scores of *The Mikado*.

Next Larry turned matters over to Bob Wall who had worked up a little musical quiz for us. Saying that there is lots of music in the operettas that everyone hears, but no one listens to, he proposed to play some of those passages and ask us to identify the opera and what is going on. As an example he played a fancy bass line that turned out to introduce the well-known tune "A policeman's lot is not a happy one" (*Pirates*). His first question took the form of music associated

with "little Phoebe" when first introduced to her supposed brother Leonard in *Yeomen*. Of course Janette recognized this instantly. Next came music from the overture to *The Mikado*, which Paula Tyler immediately identified. There followed five excerpts, all maddeningly familiar, but not easily placed. But the clincher was the last, a very fetching and lively introduction none of us recognized, which turned out to be the music that just precedes the very familiar "Now to the banquet we press" from *The Sorcerer*. We hung our heads in shame as Bob explained that since he never plays that introduction we haven't heard it very often.

Larry then introduced Frank and Janette, who proceeded to give us a full scene from *The Mikado* with song and dialog. They began with Katisha's dramatic aria "Alone, and yet alive," worked their way through the "Tit-willow" song, and ended with a magnificent "There is beauty in the bellow of the blast."

Jess then took the stage saying he was sorry to go so far afield — no Gilbert and Sullivan to sing for us — instead to Venice where Harlequin serenaded his Columbine in two feet of snow: "Serenata Gelato", strumming his mandolin and getting colder by the minute.

Reba announced that like Little Buttercup she had a lot of goodies to offer: the handsome brochures sent every year to publicize the Berkshire Choral Festival, the words to "The Cherry Tree Story, Texas Style" provided by Russell Gregory, and a Gilbert & Sullivan crossword puzzle from the newsletter of the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Society (answers next month). These will all be available out in the other room when we finish the program (and see Note below). And finally, "I am going to Japan!" On March 23rd for just over a week, Reba will travel to Japan with her daughter to visit her granddaughter Aletha, who is spending the year in Kakamigahara teaching English in the JET program.

With this exciting news we plunged into the choruses of nobles from *The Mikado*, all singing vigorously "If you want to know who we are" (actually the opening of the opera). Allen Lawshae sang the Pirate King's opening and we

followed with a lusty "Hail Poetry" all standing as usual (although the score plainly says "all kneel"). Bob Wall then played the little recognized introduction and we went on to sing "Now to the banquet we press" to end the program.

Note: If anyone would like copies of Reba's goodies, please call 327-2277 with your request.



A policeman's lot is not a happy one.

Portrait of a Noteworthy Member: Robert Mellin • Libby Weed • President

If anything rivals Robert Mellin's affection for the works of Gilbert & Sullivan, it could only be his passion for traveling. From his home in Philadelphia, his wanderlust first drew him toward Florida. In Miami, Robert continued in the furniture repair and claims business he and a brother-in-law had begun in Philadelphia, became active in a local G&S group, and began to feel the inexorable pull of foreign climes. All three of these interests have continued to shape his life ever since.

A traveling museum show on "The Art of the Himalayas" in 1969 lured Bob with its art, its evocative music, and its intriguing brochure depicting mountainous scenes unlike anything he had ever encountered. Securing a copy of Arthur Frommer's *Europe on \$5 a Day*, a Eurail pass, and passage on a freighter from Tampa to Rotterdam, he sold his belongings and left for Europe. By 1971, he had visited Britain, Scandinavia, and virtually all of central and southern Europe as well as some of northern Africa. He took in all the culture he could in every locale ("I'm a great tourist," he claims), never missing a museum, concert, historical site, or opera if he could help it. Did he really do all this on five dollars a day? "I figured it hit right about \$7 actually, over a period of a year and a half."

Having pared down from three suitcases to one while still in London, and having given away most of what he had taken with him, he ventured from Greece to Israel and then to Istanbul, the jumping-off place for the exotic Asian locales he had first longed to visit. Now taking with him only one small shoulder bag, he toured Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. He longed to hear classical Indian sitar music; and when he found nothing available, he secured the services of three musicians and produced a concert at a hotel in Benares.

When he was not able to gain access to Tibet, he detoured and spent some time in the Himalayas, returning to New Delhi in early 1972. After a ten-week wait, he finally secured permission for a three-day visit to Sikkim. The story of that visit is a book waiting to be written; suffice it to say

now that it included a personal audience with the Buddhist Karmapa and the taking of vows to become a Buddhist monk ("Most of their vows were things I did anyway — I don't lie, steal, or murder, and I wasn't going to drink any intoxicants while I was there").

The government of India managed to end Robert's refuge in the monastery after about a week, but he did leave in the Karmapa's private Land Cruiser. Travels continued in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe before Robert finally returned to the U.S. in June of 1972, only to head to South America in November of that year. Since that time his travels have continued every year. He has spent time in 59 countries and estimates that he has spent at least twelve years outside the United States since 1970.

What were the worst things that ever happened to Bob during his travels? "Being arrested for being in the wrong place and the wrong time in Bolivia" — or maybe it was "Being mugged in Cuzco, Peru" and having his vocal cords crushed by his assailant's clench.

It was while Robert was an elementary school student that his eldest brother was cast in *The Mikado* and came home singing "Miya sama" and "if you want to know who we are." From that day on, Robert has loved the G&S operas and has taken every opportunity to learn more about them and be involved with productions. In Miami he was a pirate chorus member in *Penzance* and then went on to perform in *Trial by Jury*, *Mikado*, *Pinafore* (he was "Dick Deadeye"), and *Iolanthe*, as well as to serve as President of the Miami G&S Guild. He emphasizes now that his resignation as Executive Director does not signal any loss of interest — he simply needs more time for work and travel.

What does he look forward to in the future? Seeing the Far East and the Pacific, southeast Asia, Indonesia. "I might even teach English in Japan some day."

What is he most proud of? "I think the work that I did for the Gilbert & Sullivan Society." He pauses. "But the traveling was good — very good."

New or renewal membership form

Please check your membership level on the top of the mailing label. If you are in the "Development" category, you will receive three complimentary newsletters. We encourage you to join our society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal date on the top right corner 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 at:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
2026 Guadalupe, #309
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The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

MISSION

SINCE 1976, WE HAVE BEEN DEDICATED TO SPREADING THE JOYS OF GILBERT & SULLIVAN THROUGH PERFORMANCES AND IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

WHAT WE DO

**Annual Grand Production
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Monthly Newsletter
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NEWSLETTER

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<http://members.aol.com/nichitabel/gassso/home.html>

The Pirates of Penzance, June 1996



Russell Gregory



Frank Delvy & Amy Baker Stinson



Photos by Larry Shepley

Janelle Jones & Frank Delvy

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