



The

Gilbert & Sullivan Society

of Austin

May 1998 Newsletter

All-Star Cast of 40 Heads Up 1998 *Mikado*!

This year's production of *The Mikado* promises to be a special event for all Gilbert & Sullivan fans. Beginning with the direction of the show, the Society has assembled a truly all-star cast and crew. The Stage Director, Ralph MacPhail, Jr., of Bridgewater College, Virginia, is one of the world's most widely recognized authorities on the amusing, and still-topical operas of Gilbert & Sullivan. Bringing to his work both an appreciation of their originality and wit, as well as a keen sense of artistic integrity, Mr. MacPhail promises a production that will uphold the vision of the original artists while revealing the continuing relevance of Gilbert's brilliant satire and grasp of human nature.

Jeffrey Jones Ragona is already well known to Austin Savoyards. He has been the music director for two of the Society's recent productions, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *Pirates of Penzance*. From the pit at the Helm Fine Arts Center at St. Stephen's School, he will lead an orchestra of strings, brass, winds and percussion in accompaniment.

Some of the most beloved performers in Austin will join with exceptional new talent and an outstanding chorus to bring a special sparkle to this production. *The Mikado*, himself, is our own Russell Gregory, who last graced the Society's stage as the Pirate King. Janette Jones, who does it all, reprises her role as Katisha, while the redoubtable Frank Delvy, reluctantly wields the High Executioner's ax as Ko-Ko. Threatened by that very ax is Dan Giradot, as Nanki-Poo. Amy Stinson, who was last with us as Mabel in *Pirates*, and more recently was Aldonza in the Live Oak production of *Man of La Mancha*, is Yum-Yum. Stacy Amorous is Pitti-Sing, and Corey Rooney is Peep-Bo.

Joining the Society for the first time as Pooh-Bah is Brett Barnes, a member of the Austin Lyric Opera's Young Artists Program. You have seen him most recently as Fiorello and the Captain of Police in the ALO production of *Barber of Seville*. New to Austin and the Society, but not to Gilbert & Sullivan, is Matthew Grace. At the University of Michigan Gilbert & Sullivan Society, he played many of the major roles in Gilbert & Sullivan, and here he joins us as Pish-Tush. Backing them all up will be a 31-voice chorus that is among the grandest assembled on any Austin stage. The vocal quality of the entire cast, in fact, is such that the Society has decided to produce its first-ever CD set.

Dan Smith, Executive Director

THE MIKADO

Directed By:
Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Music Director:
Jeffrey Jones Ragona

Where: Helm Fine Arts Center, St. Stephen's School

When: June 11-21, Thursdays through Sundays

Tickets: \$20.00, \$16.00, \$12.00 (Under 16: ½ Price)

Times: 8:00 p.m.; Sunday Matinees, 3:00 p.m.
Additional Saturday Matinee: June 20

★ Gala Champagne Buffet & Reception ★

★ Following Friday, June 12, Show ★

★ Show & Reception: \$30.00 ★

The Mikado	Russell Gregory
Katisha	Janette Jones
Yum-Yum	Amy Stinson
Nanki-Poo	Dan Giradot
Ko-Ko	Frank Delvy
Pooh-Bah	Brett Barnes
Pish-Tush	Matthew Grace
Pitti-Sing	Stacy Amorous
Peep-Bo	Corey Rooney
Go-To	Davis Tucker

With 31-voice Chorus & Orchestra

★ ★ ★

Advance Tickets

For the Very Best Seats send check to:

G&S Society
2026 Guadalupe Street #309
Austin, TX 78705

Order Your CD Advance

To place an order for the 2-CD set or video from this production, send your check for \$25.00 to the G&S Society at the above address.

Next Musicale: 2304 Hartford Road, May 4, 7:30 pm
Members of the cast will perform!

Reception for Ralph MacPhail Jr.

Reba Gillman • Secretary

Our last Musicale took the form of a grand reception for our eminent visiting Stage Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr. This festive occasion was held on Friday April 3, 1998 at the home of Paula Tyler, who welcomed us at 8 pm. She invited us to spend a happy musical time while we awaited the arrival of our guest who was just flying into the Austin airport, where he was to be met by President Libby Weed, and Board members Robert Mellin and Chris Buggé. He was then to be whisked to our reception in Chris' historic, restored, easter egg blue Rolls Royce.

Bill Hatcher and Dan Smith also greeted us, and Reba reported that she had just arrived in Austin that afternoon on the last leg of her journey home from a nine-day visit to Japan. A highlight of her trip was a stop in the Yamaha headquarters in Tokyo. There she found a well stocked music store, with pianos, other instruments, CD's, and sheet music, including two Schirmer scores of *The Mikado*, and one Chapell score -- all in English, of course -- and she was looking for the alleged Japanese version!

Dan called our attention to two special oportunities, the chance to bid in a silent auction for:

1) A very special ride for two to the Gala Buffet performance of *The Mikado* chauffeured by Chris in his beautiful Rolls Royce. A shot at two tickets for this gala event, with a classy ride thrown in for fun.

2) A very special non-speaking, non-singing role to appear on stage as the Mikado's assistant. Here's your chance to be part of the action!

Dan called on Jess to sing, with Lord High Pianist Bob Wall at the piano. Jess said "Spirituals are my favorite; they're real music, sung by real people," and sang "Go Down Moses" followed by another favorite, "Shortnin' Bread." John Gregory then took over the piano, with his wife Carolyn to sing. She said nervously, "I always feel as though this was a voice jury ..." but what followed was relaxed and friendly: "I love a piano" (Irving Berlin), "Kitten on the keys," "Storybook Ball," and "Stars in my eyes" (words by Dorothy Fields and music by Fritz Kreisler). We all joined in to sing along with some other old favorites, and in the midst of this lusty chorus our guest arrived.

"Rafe" as he prefers to be called (see the character in *Pinafore*), proved to be a charming gentleman who made us feel immediately at home with him. He gave us a quick rundown on some of the many versions of *The Mikado* the world has experienced, including *The Not Mikado* played by Nanki-Poo on roller skates. Rafe assured us that his production would follow the time-honored Savoy traditions, which have been handed down for 113 years by word of mouth and people like us. He said that it was groups like our Society that have kept Gilbert and Sullivan alive. He thanked us for our warm welcome, starting with the ride in Chris' wonderful Rolls Royce. He thanked Pearl Amster at whose home he was to stay, Paula Tyler for hosting the reception, and Robert Mellin for arranging it all.

Bob Wall returned to the piano and Amy Stinson sang "Show me!" from *My Fair Lady* by Lerner & Lowe, followed by "If I loved you," from *Carousel* by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Debra Mandel, a new voice from the UT School of Music, sang an aria from *Trouble in Tahiti* by Leonard Bernstein. Len Gillman remarked that he and Rafe had discovered a common interest in the songs of Tom Lehrer. Len passed out Lehrer's words to "The Elements", as set to the music of the Major General's song from *Pirates*, and proceeded to play and sing it with everyone providing a happy helping chorus. He said this wasn't typical Tom Lehrer, so he essayed a sample of the "real thing", singing "I hold your hand in mine, dear." Back to Gilbert & Sullivan, with Bob Wall at the piano, and Amy singing "Poor wand'ring one" from *Pirates*, with everyone singing the ladies chorus parts. Dan Smith gave us the Pirate King's introduction and we all stood to sing "Hail Poetry." This was followed by a lusty "Now to the banquet we press"; helpers surged forward to clear away the chairs and bring out the food, and all fell to with good appetite. There was a wonderful spread provided by Randall's, embellished with Texas French Bread -- hearty thanks to both these kind supporters!

After some happy munching we gathered again informally to hear Len and his flutest friend, Adrienne Inglis, play the first movement of Bach's G Minor Sonata # 7 for Flute and Piano. "The Flight of the Bumble Bee" followed. Written originally for orchestra by Rimsky-Korsakoff, this version is adapted for the flute by Geoffrey Emerson, and for the piano by Rachmaninoff. These works played simultaneously constitute an astonishing tour de force, which was repeated by popular demand. All in all a delightfully diverse evening, which provided much opportunity for individuals to chat with Rafe and for him to get to know us.

There were 46 people present: members Pearl Amster, Chris Buggé, "Deacon" Crain, Yvonne & Doug DeLay, Frank Delvy, Harold & Eve Gilbert with friends Anna Jobe, Shirley Martin & Kit Natwig, Len & Reba Gillman, John & Carolyn Gregory, Bruce & Enid Hallock with grandsons Andrew & Robert, Bill & Nan Hatcher with daughter Lauren, Peter Langlois, Allen Lawshae & Kay Novak, Rafe MacPhail Jr., John Mast & Annette LeZotte, Robert Mellin, Maurie Ommerman, Lord High Physician Blair Protzman & Joyce, Bob Sharron & guest Barbara Fraus, Executive Director Dan Smith, Leland L. Smith, Paula Tyler and her sister Marcia Eyrich and brother Davis Gueymard & wife Lynn, Lord High Pianist Bob Wall, Jess & Emma Walters, Libby Weed, and guests John & Amy Stinson.

INFORMATION: Many in the audience were interested to hear about *Chaski*, Adrienne's Latin American music group. They will perform on Thursday May 28, 1998 at noon at the Central Presbyterian Church at Eighth and Brazos Streets in Austin. Their e-mail address is:

chaski@smart1.net

Message From Your President • Libby Weed

Our Society lost three dear friends and supporters during one week in the month of April. We are much the poorer for their loss but greatly enriched by having known them.

John Bustin, eminent entertainment critic and supporter of the arts, was one of the most prominent of our friends in the Austin area; his coverage of cultural performances over a period of many years earned him the title "The Dean of Austin Entertainment." At our musicale in his honor held at Paula Tyler's house in October of 1996, many of our members and guests recounted being entertained and enlightened by John's criticisms and reviews over the years. Songs were dedicated in his honor, and we recalled with him some of the many performances he had attended and critiqued for local media. In fact, John Bustin never missed a Gilbert & Sullivan production by this Society, and we could count on his reviews to let us know how close we came to the mark of satisfying a true Savoyard. John, we will miss you.

W.H. "Deacon" Crain was a member of long standing who not only never missed a performance but very rarely missed a musicale, meeting, or any other gathering of our Society. Described by Ann Ciccolella of ACOT as "the grand old man of Austin theater" he was truly a fixture in the cultural community. Recipient of a doctorate in drama and playwriting from the University of Texas, "Deacon" (whose nickname derived from an early role he played) was a force on the local theater scene during six decades of this century. His influence included acting, serving as curator for theater collections, giving generously to the arts and to scholarship funds, and serving on various boards, including our advisory board. Five days before his death, he was enjoying our April musicale with us. We'll miss him greatly at the next one.

Dr. Steward Blair Protzman was not only a long-time member but also served as Lord High Physician of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin. He and his wife Joyce were always bright faces at our musicales and performances. In his supportive physician role, Blair helped on occasion

shortly before a performance when a cast member was suffering from a throat ailment. At the April musicale, he and Joyce were delightfully present, serving up a gay and beautiful Sally Lunn that Joyce had baked for the reception. Two days later, a singer with a lovely coloratura auditioned for *The Mikado*; since none of the members of the audition committee knew her, we asked where she heard about the auditions. "Blair Protzman sent me," she said. To the last few days of his life, Blair was working to encourage young talent and match it with musical opportunity in groups like ours. How we will all miss him!

Please join us at Pearl Amster's home on Monday, May 4, when we will honor the memory of these three friends and enjoy the music they loved so much.

♪♪ Next Meeting Our Monthly Musicales ♪♪

Monday • May 4, 1998 at 7:30 pm
At Pearl Amster's, 2304 Hartford Road
472-7028

Executive Director Dan Smith is planning the program to highlight some of our talented *Mikado* cast. This will serve as our tribute to the memory of John Bustin, "Deacon" Crain, and Lord High Physician Blair Protzman.

Come join us, and please bring munchies.

COMING

♪♪ Save the date ♪♪

Monthly Musicales
In honor of Pearl Amster • Monday, June 1st
Place to be announced

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:

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Austin, Texas 78705 Phone: 472-4772

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The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

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

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NEWSLETTER

EDITOR REBA GILLMAN

OFFICE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DANIEL SMITH

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AUSTIN, TEXAS 78705
(512) 472-4772

<http://members.aol.com/mhltabel/gassa/home.html>

Ko-Ko



Singing "Willow, titwillow, titwillow"

URGENT

A CAR is needed for about SIX weeks
for the use of Director Rafe MacPhail during
rehearsal and performance time for
The Mikado

If you can supply one please call Robert
Mellin at 345-5950

OUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOUR HELP!

We expect this production of *The Mikado* to be our
best ever, but it will be an expensive venture.
Individual Contributions are very welcome,
and Tax Exempt, too.

Send your checks to the G&S Society
2026 Guadalupe Street, Suite 309
Austin, TX 78705

THE
**GILBERT
&
SULLIVAN**

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