

THE

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

MARCH 2000 NEWSLETTER

★ Our Next Musicale ★

Monday March 6, 2000
7:30 pm at Paula Tyler's
4400 Balcones Drive, 459-4639

A special program featuring **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**,
Director & Choreographer of our up-coming production of

H.M.S. Pinafore

Plus Frank Delvy, Leslie Salas, and a few surprises,
including a

RAFFLE

of memorabilia from **TOPSY-TURVY**
(tickets will be 25¢, not half a guinea).

Come join us and visit with Rafe!
Please bring munchies.

Coming Events

Our Musicale on April 3 will feature an all *Princess Ida* show, organized by Enid Hallock and Sue Caldwell, and also featuring Jim Robinson, Carolyn Gregory, and Cynthia Hill, plus even more surprises!

The G&S Society of Shreveport will perform *Ruddigore* March 16-19, 2000. Please call (318) 868-1429 or contact Reba Gillman for further information.

Future of The Society

By your Board of Directors

As many of you may know, for the past several months **Allan Longacre**, retired from a long career in arts administration, has been conducting a review of The Gilbert & Sullivan Society, including many interviews with members and performers. He presented his Report to the Board on December 13, 1999, and we extensively reviewed it at our meeting of January 10, 2000. Here is a summary:

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society serves its members, who are dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan. Another way to describe The Gilbert and Sullivan Society would be to say it is a "club," with all the problems of a club. That is: "not all of the members are as dedicated as they ought to be," "only a few members do all the work," "the person who is willing to do all of the work ends up with all the power," etc.

Recognizing this to be a normal condition for most volunteer organizations, The Gilbert and Sullivan Society is just fine. It has

Message from Your President

Larry Shepley • President

I've now seen ~~Topsy-Turvy~~ twice, once at the preview screening sponsored by The Society on January 25 and a second time in Washington, D.C. Although I had poor seats and there were problems with the sound in both theaters, I thoroughly enjoyed the picture, the second time even more than the first. Everyone I talked with did, too. A few people thought it a bit long (but I didn't find it tedious at all) and wondered why the director included the couple of scenes which earned the movie an "R" rating (these scenes actually are quite tame compared to other "R" movies). I definitely recommend it (it's at the Arbor Theater). ~~Topsy-Turvy~~ has garnered four Academy Award nominations.*

A lot of people have been thanking me for arranging last month's free screening, but really thanks are due to **Sally Smolenski** of **Moroch & Associates** and to the management of the **Arbor Theater**. Sally also provided the goodies we will be raffling off at our next Musicale. Thanks, too, to **Courtney Davis** of **Austin Film Festival**, which also sponsored the screening. **Winston Bode** of **Channel 8** featured video shots taken at the show as part of his very nice piece on The Society, which aired on January 31. You may have noticed my Bugs Bunny tie.

I do like to hear from our members — ideas, hopes, criticisms. My home phone is 327-1511, and my e-address is larry@helmholtz.ph.utexas.edu.

* ~~Topsy-Turvy~~ has been nominated in the categories Art Direction, Costume, Makeup, and Original Screenplay — those who have read how Mike Leigh developed the script for this movie will recognize how justified this last nomination is.

weathered a difficult situation and seems to be on its way to continue to serve its members and achieve its purpose. There is much good feeling throughout the community toward the organization and its members. Therefore, my major recommendation is to keep on "keeping on." For the immediate future, that means one major production a year, monthly musicales, a newsletter, and outreach through in-school performances.

The G&S Society has three components, which could almost be considered three different organizations, each with different and probably often conflicting needs and purposes. These are:

1) The membership — those who pay dues, go to the musicales and performances, receive the newsletter, and in some cases also volunteer.

2) The performers, musicians, and technicians — those who

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Preview of *Topsy-Turvy*

Last Musicales

Reba Gillman * Secretary

On Tuesday, January 25, 2000, at 7 pm a happy crowd gathered at the Arbor 7 movie theater for a free preview of *Topsy-Turvy*, the new film about Gilbert and Sullivan. President Larry Shepley and Executive Vice President Libby Weed sat at a table in the lobby to hand out the free passes, and give out information about our Society. Later we were told that the ticket taker at the door had admitted around three hundred people. These were mostly, but not all Society members: Larry had invited the members of the UT adult group LAMP to attend, and a local Film Society had also invited their friends and members. We have a tentative list of people who called the G&S office for tickets, and some who showed up at the door, but many people did not check in at the table. Some people were seen by one member but not by others, and we haven't tried to compile a list of those present.

We all enjoyed the film thoroughly, and hardly noticed that it was very long. The music was delightful, although there were some complaints about a faulty sound track. The picture of Victorian London, and the very different lifestyles of the two main characters (Gilbert and Sullivan, of course) was very interesting and colorfully presented. As noted in reviews, the main body of

the film concerned the process of producing *The Mikado*, with great attention to detail and some surprising revelations. To answer the question raised by quite a few people, it appears that the movie was on the whole quite accurate in its depiction of individual characters. It is a commentary on the different standards of that day and ours that many viewers commented that our 1998 *Mikado* had been a really much better production! Well, after all, a cast of ladies used to wearing corsets but asked to move in the fluid Japanese style might have had a long way to go to achieve Gilbert's goals.

Afterward 15 of us assembled informally at the coffee shop in the Barnes & Noble Bookstore next door. They were members Lucian Chimene, Len & Reba Gillman, John & Carolyn Gregory, Allen Lawshae & Kay Novak, Michel & Majorie Saad & friend, Steve & Eve Schwartzman, Larry Shepley, David Tampke & friend, and Libby Weed. In addition two other couples were there but did not join the larger group: Joan Piersall & Carla Cerisa, and Sue Gordon & friend. As a variation on the usual G&S Musicales this was a very successful event.

Note: *Topsy-Turvy* is just entering its third week at the Arbor 7. If you want to catch it again, or for the first time, it would be worth checking the papers, or calling the theater, to see if it is held over still longer. After all, the film did receive four Oscar nominations.

Future of The Society (continued from page 1)

put on the annual productions, the musicales, and the in-school performances.

3) The Board of Directors — those ten individuals who worry about all and do most of the work associated with the activities, finances, and policies of the organization.

However, many members recognize that there are four areas that threaten the survival of The Society. They are:

1) The membership is aging. If the organization continues as it has, in another decade or so the majority of its members will be unable to participate.

2) The board members find themselves expected to do most of the work of the organization that cannot be contracted out to paid individuals or organizations.

3) The organization is at or just past the point of development where its members and participants can be confused about its direction and future. Misunderstandings and disagreements can easily lead to conflict.

4) The Society, for a non-profit organization, has been financially solid, or at least, it has that reputation. Members and participants have expressed an almost "smugness" about being solvent. When the reality of the costs of running the organization become apparent, the Society's ability to continue could be at risk.

In response to this analysis of the situation the Board voted:

1) To hire a paid manager or coordinator to oversee on behalf

of the Board of Directors the ongoing business of the Society and the office worker (who might be an Arts Intern). This person's responsibilities will include oversight of those in charge of the Musicales, annual productions, in-school programs, the performing ensemble mentioned below, and any committees we establish. We agreed with Allan's recommendation that we not use the title of Executive Director for this person, since this title might imply artistic and administrative power over an organization that at present operates successfully as a club. We also agreed with his assessment that a paid coordinator or manager would better serve the organization by keeping its three components focused and moving forward cooperatively

2) To form a small ensemble, which we would pay, to perform in schools and other community outreach activities. These performers might serve as a core group for major productions and could perform at Musicales and Galas.

3) To establish the following committees: Finance or Fund Raising; Publicity; and Volunteer Coordination. Of course we will make specific what we are asking members to do (make coffee, clean up, etc.), and we will certainly thank volunteers in the Newsletter and the show Playbill.

4) That the Board, with input from the membership, should create and publish short and long range goals for the Society.

5) That the Society should make a greater effort to attract young members.

To help us with these last two items, please take the time to answer the following questions and mail your responses to our office:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin • 2026 Guadalupe Street, Suite 309 • Austin, Texas 78705

Or e-mail your responses to: gilbsulv@altavista.com

1) What should our major short-range (one year or less) goal be?

2) What should our major long-range (over one year) goal be?

3) What other short- and long-range goals should we have?

4) What is the one most important improvement that we should make in The Society?

5) How can we attract young members? Should we aim at elementary school students, teenagers, or young adults?

Do you like to sing? dance? swim?

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin will present

H.M.S. Pinafore or, The Lass than Loved a Sailor

June 29 – July 8, 2000

Directed and Choreographed by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.
Music Director and Conductor: Jeffrey Jones-Ragona
Helm Fine Arts Center, St. Stephen's School

Auditions



for all parts will be

Saturday March 4, 1:00–5:00 pm

Sunday March 5, 2:00–5:00 pm

(call backs, if needed will be Sunday evening)

at the Carriage House at St. Edward's University

Singers should prepare an operatic aria or traditional Broadway song – but no belting. A foreign language aria is okay, and of course a Gilbert & Sullivan song is okay (but not required).

Audition slots will be ten minutes in length.

Please call the Gilbert & Sullivan Society office
between 2:30 & 6:00 pm Monday-Friday:

472-4772

for a 10 minute appointment.

UNITED AIRLINES

Official Airline of The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin



We thank Applied Materials, Microsoft, Samsung Austin Semiconductor, and United Way/Capital Area for a new computer for our office.

News of Members, Former and Present

Matthew Grace, who played Pish Tush in our 1998 *Mikado*, will play the same role in the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society's production of *The Mikado*, April 6-8 at 8 pm, and April 8 and 9 at 2 pm in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Chip Howe, is often seen selling soft drinks at Gilbert & Sullivan Society productions. He is running for Austin City Council, Place 5, on a platform that promotes Quality Neighborhoods, Concern for the Environment, Reducing the Cost of Living, and Improving the Quality of Child Care.

Mary Lu Barras has married Thomas Tanner Walker. She last performed in the chorus of our 1985 *Ruddigore*, then went back to school and later left town to become an Episcopal Minister in Guthrie, Oklahoma. But she still sends in her dues!

Libby Weed contributes this G&S brain-teaser: What opera is an anagram for NAME FOR SHIP? She found this puzzle in "Word Circus" by Richard Lederer.

Many Thanks to the following corporate sponsors of our production of *Patience*

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Many thanks to IBM for a generous donation.

New or renewal membership form

We encourage you to join our Society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal date on the top 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
Austin, Texas 78705 Phone: 472-4772 (472-GSSA)

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The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

Since 1976, we have been spreading the joys of
Gilbert & Sullivan through

Annual Grand Productions

School Outreach Concerts

Free Monthly Musicales

Musical Scholarships

Monthly Newsletters

Holiday Season Shows

G&S Office:

Monday – Friday 2:30-6:00 pm.

2026 Guadalupe Street, Suite 309 • Austin, Texas 78705

(512)472-4772 [472-GSSA]

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Director at Large	Allan Longacre	301-5611

Arts Intern

Brian Cassidy

Newsletter Editor

Reba Gillman

Layout

Larry Shepley

Our web site: members.aol.com/mahitabel/gassa

E-mail: gilbsulv@altavista.com



Audition dates will be March 4-5.
For details see inside this Newsletter.

Our next production • June 29 – July 8, 2000
The opera which brought G&S international acclaim!

H.M.S. Pinafore

or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor



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