

THE

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

MAY 2000 NEWSLETTER

• Our Next Musicale • Excerpts from *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Monday, May 1, 2000 • 7:30 pm
At Paula Tyler's • 4400 Balcones Drive • 459-4639
At the corner of Shinoak & Balcones
Between 35th St. & Perry Lane (45th St.)
Please Bring Munchies

We will sing choruses and hear excerpts from *Pinafore*.
There will also be a short presentation by a group of Doss
Elementary School children, arranged by Bee Harris Polomé.
They will perform selections from their production of

Aida Spaghetti.

Coming Attractions SAVE THE DATE

Sunday Afternoon June 4
Place to be announced

Brian Gaston is planning a program highlighting our production of *Pinafore*, with principals singing excerpts and Director Rafe MacPhail giving us background information from his inimitable store of G&S lore. This will be a PR Event with illustrious members of the community invited.

Message from Your President

Larry Shepley • President

I recently gave a talk at LAMP (Learning Activities for Mature People, a UT Austin-sponsored lecture group, of which I am a member) on "The *H.M.S. Pinafore* Craze". Of course, I mixed in a bit of physics and technology: For example, Samuel Morse is known to have invented the telegraph in the mid-1840s, and yet in the 1820s there were many newspapers with "telegraph" in their names (such as "The Daily Telegraph"). Actually, what Morse had invented was the *electric* telegraph; the word itself had previously been used to designate a system of semaphore signalling devices. Similarly, Alexander Graham Bell supposedly invented the telephone, first demonstrating it to a wide audience at the centennial exhibit in Philadelphia in 1876, but the word "telephone" had been applied to a system of transmitting signals by musical tones. Anyway, by 1878, just two years after Bell's exhibition, towns all over the U.S. and Britain had started installing telephone systems, and so Gilbert included a reference in *Pinafore*: As Ralph is led away to the dungeon, the chorus sympathizes,

He'll hear no tone
Of the maiden he loves so well!
No telephone
Communicates with his cell!

Now why did I bring up the telegraph? It was because Bell really was trying to improve the telegraph when he invented his telephone. And the Western Union Telegraph company thought so little of Bell's invention that they rewarded him by making him the ruler of his own company — in other words, they turned him down, forcing him to go out on his own, a business decision widely accepted as one of the most short-sighted ever.

This upcoming Musicale will be in part a look forward to our own production of *Pinafore* (get your tickets early and often — we expect this to be a popular show). And we will have more. Pooh-Bah sneered at "young persons" (in his eyes they occupied a rank below that of Stockbroker), but we reach out to them. Some of these young persons, from Doss Elementary School, will be performing and will join us in the social hour afterwards. I hope you will be there, too.

Order your tickets now for *H.M.S. Pinafore* from the Society Office!

Guarantee good seats and save surcharges!

We especially encourage you to reserve now for the opening Gala (\$30 per ticket) on
Friday, June 30

Send your order and check to
The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
2026 Guadalupe Street, #309
Austin, TX 78705

For more information on tickets, please see the notice on page 3.

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Last Musicale

Reba Gillman • Secretary

About 42 people gathered on Monday April 3, 2000, at Paula Tyler's house for an evening planned by Enid Hallock and Sue Caldwell, devoted to excerpts from *Princess Ida*. Present were members Byron Arnason, Sue Ricket Caldwell, Lucian Chimene and guest, Frank Delvy, Wyndy & Edgar Ellis, Harry & Shirley Ellison with granddaughter Lela Ellison, Harold Gilbert with guests Sue Fairbanks & Paula Wiesner, Len & Reba Gillman, John & Carolyn Gregory with her sister Molly Tower, Sandra Grimes, Bruce & Enid Hallock, Cynthia Hill, Janette Jones, John Mast, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Maurie Ommerman, Bee Harris Polomé & Chuck Kraus, Jim Robinson, Mary Roche, Margie Saad with her sister Rose Marie Paykin, Ida Scott, Larry Shepley, Andrée Sjoborg, Leland L. Smith, David Tampke with guest Carol Davis, Paula Tyler, Lord High Pianist Bob Wall, Libby Weed, David Wieckowski with son Brian, Theresa Wilson, and our new General Manager Brian Gaston.

As we took our seats Lord High Pianist Bob Wall was playing the overture to *Princess Ida*. When President Larry opened the meeting he introduced Brian Gaston, our new General Manager, who said everything was going fine at the office and he was glad to have the opportunity to greet us all again. A few announcements followed: Lucian Chimene said he was working on publicity and needed some volunteers who would sit down with him and plan what to do — "no envelope stuffing". Reba announced that *Topsy-Turvy*, the Mike Leigh film about Gilbert and Sullivan and the making of *The Mikado*, had won two Oscars (for costumes and make-up) and was still playing at the Arbor 7 theater in the Arboretum. [Update: *Topsy-Turvy* finally played its last show on April 13th after a ten-week run.] Harold Gilbert said he was going to sing that Wednesday for the Wednesday Morning Music Club. Bee Polomé said that a group of children she knows from her work at Doss Elementary School was going to sing for us at our May Musicale. They go by the name "Aida Spaghetti", and have set new words to old G&S tunes.

Then on to *Princess Ida*, with Jim Robinson explaining the action and introducing the songs. Jim sang the part of Hilarion in the Houston G&S Society production some years ago, and as the evening progressed he provided many interesting details about the characters and music. There was discussion as to why *Princess Ida* is so rarely performed. Perhaps the serious subject (edu-

cation — emphasis on women vs men), perhaps its length — three acts. Jim opened the opera singing Hilarion's "Twenty Years Ago." It was a pleasure to hear his sweet and musical tenor again. Other songs as they appeared in the opera, and their performers, were:

"If you give me your attention" (Gama)
Frank Delvy

"Oh goddess wise" (Princess Ida)
Cynthia Hill

"A lady fair" (Lady Psyche)
Janette Jones

"Now wouldn't you like to rule the roost"
(Melissa and Lady Blanche)
Carolyn Gregory & Sue Caldwell

"Would you know the kind of maid?" (Cyril)
Jim Robinson

"When-e'er I spoke Sarcastic joke" (Gama)
Frank Delvy

"This helmet I suppose" (Arac)
Harold Gilbert

Those who saw *Topsy-Turvy* probably recognized two songs from the film: "If you give me your attention" and "This helmet I suppose." Jim pointed out the Handelian musical take-off in the latter song, and Frank noted that Gilbert had said of the first that it represented his opinion. "If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am: I'm a genuine philanthropist — all other kinds are sham. Each little fault of temper and each social defect in my erring fellow-creatures I endeavour to correct. To all their little weaknesses I open people's eyes; And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise; I love my fellow creatures — I do all the good I can — Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man! And I can't think why!"

As the program ended Larry invited Frank and Janette to sing the Pirate King's introduction, and we all launched into our traditional rousing "Hail Poetry" (*Pirates*), followed by "Now to the banquet we press" (*Sorcerer*). There followed happy conversation and delicious comestibles, with Paula's signature limeade to wet our whistles.

KMFA Members

Your membership entitles you to a 10% discount
on all G&S Society merchandise
(including tee shirts, videos, CDs, libretti, etc.)

Golf Cart?



We really need a golf cart to ferry customers up the hill at St. Stephen's for the run of *H.M.S. Pinafore*! If you have one you would be willing to lend us, please, please call us!

Please call our office: 472-4772

Late Newsletter?

Please help us by calling our office (or dropping us a post card or an e-mail missive) to tell us of unsatisfactory delivery of your Newsletter.

And while you're at it, please check your mailing label for your expiration date, and send in that check NOW! Thanks.

Tickets for *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Opening Night Grand Gala and Champagne Buffet — \$30
8:00 pm Friday June 30

Other performances are \$18 (half price for young persons 17 & under).
Call our office for discounts for groups of ten or more.

Performances will be:

Saturday July 1 3:00 pm Matinée & 8:00 pm Evening
Sunday July 2 3:00 pm Matinée
Thursday July 6 8:00 pm Evening
Friday July 7 8:00 pm Evening
Saturday July 8 3:00 pm Matinée & 8:00 pm Evening

at Helm Fine Arts Center, St. Stephen's School. There will be a half-price Preview on Thursday June 29 at 8:00 pm. Tickets will be available at AusTix, 454-TIXS [454-8497], which can accept credit cards. Save their surcharges by ordering direct from our office by check (we can't accept credit cards) at 472-GSSA [472-4772].



UNITED AIRLINES

Official Airline of The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

Summer Vacation A week in Connecticut G&S Elderhostels with Rafe MacPhail

Plan an unusual vacation now — join Rafe at the idyllic Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, Connecticut for a week's immersion in *Princess Ida* (July 16 – 22) or a second week (July 30 – August 5) devoted to "The Big Three" *PiraMikaFore*. For more information call Reba Gillman, 327-2277; or see the Elderhostel Summer 2000 Catalog (under Performance, page 186) — their on-line catalog is at <http://www.elderhostel.org>.

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 1:00–5:00 pm.

2026 Guadalupe Street, Suite 309 • Austin, Texas 78705

(512)472-4772 [472-GSSA]

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

E-mail: gilbsulv@altavista.com



Our next production • June 29 – July 8, 2000
The first G&S international blockbuster!

H.M.S. Pinafore

or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor

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

THE
GILBERT
&
SULLIVAN

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2026 GUADALUPE ST, #309

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78705

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