

THE
GILBERT & SULLIVAN
SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

JUNE 2000 NEWSLETTER

• **Our Next Musicale
and Special Event** •

• Sunday June 4, 2000 •

• 4:30 to 6:00 pm •

At the Preece Recital Hall of the new Armstrong Community Music School in the just opened Mary Ann Heller Opera Building of the Austin Lyric Opera, 901 Barton Springs Road. Ample parking is available across Barton Springs Road.



Ralph MacPhail

Director Rafe MacPhail will give us background information from his inimitable store of G&S lore and will take questions from the audience. This will be a PR Event with illustrious members of the community invited (and who can be more illustrious than members of The G&S Society?).

Please Bring Munchies



Looking ahead — SAVE THE DATES

Next Musicale: in September to open the Season

Monday September 11, 2000 at 7:30 pm

Place to be announced

Our annual Fundraiser will take place in October this year.

Watch for date, time, and place!

Message from Your President

Larry Shepley • President

One of the best things that Robert Mellin did for our Society was to introduce Rafe MacPhail to us and to persuade him to become our director for *The Mikado*. As you may know, Rafe is a traditionalist (with perhaps a few, but very few, modernist touches); no Japanese gentlemen clutching lap-tops nor intrusions from *The Pirates of Penzance* for us! Just a great show as G&S themselves would have liked, and as G&S knew would be a great success. Rafe, last year, did his magic (he is, after all, a magician on the side) for *Patience*. I was out of town until after the roof caved in at the Helm Fine Arts Center, so I only saw *Patience* in St. Stephen's gym — but it, too, was fresh, musical, traditional, and most of all entertaining.

Professor Ralph MacPhail, Jr., to be formal, is on the faculty at an excellent liberal arts college, Bridgewater College, in Virginia (although he holds a Texas driver's license, through some rather Gilbertian circumstances). He is used to dealing with all kinds of people, including students, and I presume their parents, plus colleagues and even administrators. I am especially looking forward to *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which he will direct, along with Jeffrey Jones-Ragona, our musical director of rather long standing. Both Rafe and Jeffrey drive the performers hard and exact only the best from them — under the circumstances, it is amazing how well liked they are by the company.

And our next Musicale will be an unusual lecture and discussion headed by Rafe, an event you will not want to miss. Rafe knows all about G&S, and better, can talk about it most entertainingly. All of our Musicales are free, so here is your chance to learn something, to enjoy a nice Sunday afternoon, and remeet your G&S Society friends. Oh yes, here, too, is your chance to take a look at the newly opened Mary Ann Heller Opera Center, where festivities will take place in the Preece Recital Hall starting at 4:30 pm on Sunday June 4.

Order your tickets now for *H.M.S. Pinafore*!

Reserve now for the opening Gala with champagne buffet

Gather after the show to eat, drink, and meet the cast

8:00 pm • Friday, June 30 • \$30 per ticket

Send your order and check
(before June 9) to:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
2026 Guadalupe Street, #309
Austin, TX 78705

For more information please see the notice on page 3.

6/10

Last Musicale

Reba Gillman • Secretary

On Monday May 1, 2000, we gathered at Paula Tyler's home for a taste of *Pinafore*, and a charming presentation by 14 fifth graders from Kay Greenhaw's music class at Doss Elementary School.

To start things off President Larry Shepley introduced Janette Jones, who plays Little Buttercup in our production of *Pinafore*. She gave us a brief outline of the story and launched into the well-known song, "I'm called Little Buttercup," in which Buttercup sells her wares to the sailors aboard the good ship Pinafore. We were happy to have our trusty Lord High Pianist Bob Wall at the piano. Jim Hunter then stepped forward as Sir Joseph Porter, KCB, the First Lord of the Admiralty. He explained that to understand Sir Joseph you should think of him as being the superintendent of the AISD. He then sang "When I was a lad," in which Sir Joseph explains how he got to his exalted rank, and gives the advice "Stick close to your desks and never go to sea, And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee." Brian Gaston, our General Manager and Producer, explained that several other members of the cast had been scheduled to appear, but were tied up in rehearsal.

Larry then introduced Carrie Hays and Kay Greenhaw, with their pianist Dr. Larry Lake (UT Professor of Petroleum Engineering). Carrie proceeded to read us the synopsis of their seriously comic opera *Aida Spaghetti*, while their enthusiastic students performed at the appropriate moments. This opera consists of new words set to familiar tunes, mostly from Gilbert and Sullivan, with a touch of Verdi, Wagner, Rossini, and Bizet, strung together on an ingenious and novel plot, all invented by Carrie and Kay. My favorite was "I am the very model of a Pizza Shop Proprietor," which was spit out with clarity and confidence by the young patter singer. We all enjoyed the kids' obvious delight in the clever words and tuneful music. This is one very effective way to ensure a continuing audience for the Gilbert and Sullivan operas — hook'em while they're young! We thank Bee Polomé who alerted us to this group. She learned of them when they performed at school with a small orchestra in which she played the viola.

To round out the evening Jim Hunter sang the familiar Pirate King lead in and we all rose to sing "Hail Poetry" (*Pirates*), followed by an enthusiastic "Now to the banquet we press" (*Sorcerer*). There followed munching and chatting with our young guest performers.

Present were 24 members: Byron Arnason, Sue Ricket Caldwell, Lucian Chimene, Reba Gillman, Loel Graber, Bill & Nan Hatcher,

Jim & Patrice Hunter, Janette Jones, John Mast, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Bee Harris Polomé & Chuck Kraus, Steve & Eve Schwartzman, Mary Roche, Larry Shepley, Leland L. Smith, David Tampke, Paula Tyler, Lord High Pianist Bob Wall, and Theresa Wilson, and General Manager Brian Gaston. Guests were Eva-Marie Gortner, and 14 youthful performers (Bonnie Bacarisse, Travis Baird, Walt Lengel, David McDonald, Matthew Myhra, Shaley Netanel, Nick Podrebarac, Scott Riepen, Quint Simon, Caroline Strand, Kaitlin Travis, Pen Vineyard, Travis Wilson, and Kristin Worley), and adult members of the troupe, Kay Greenhaw, Carrie Hayes, and Larry Lake. Other guests were assorted friends and relatives of the performers and included (as near as I could read their signatures) Mary Lengel, Ellen McDonald, Jennifer Myrha, Murray, Rosalie & Jessica Patton, Jan Riepen, Cam Rossu, and Jim Travis.

News of Members

Congratulations to **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** He has been nominated by The Austin Critics Table Awards for Best Director of a Musical for our 1999 production of *Patience*.

We thank Board Member **Sue Ricket Caldwell** for generously providing Rafe MacPhail with an apartment and the use of a car during his stay in Austin for rehearsal and performance time in June and July.

Pearl Amster will welcome visitors and mail at her new residence:

Garden Terrace Health
and Rehabilitation Center
1015 West William Cannon
Austin, Texas 78745

Golf Cart

We 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 call us! We will give the generous lender four tickets to the Saturday night July 1 performance of *Pinafore*.

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. Before June 9, save their surcharges by ordering direct from our office by check (we can't accept credit cards) at 472-GSSA [472-4772].

Wedding Bells

Mandy Henderson and Richard Summers (aka Williford) will be married in June. They met in our 1996 production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. After the honeymoon, they invite all their G&S friends to a wine and cake reception at Russell's Bakery and Cafe on the corner of Hancock and Balcones in west Austin, at 7:00 pm, Saturday June 17. If you would like to attend, please leave a message at 349-0172 or at moonflame@hotmail.com.

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

Last July Reba visited Rafe and Alice at the idyllic Incarnation Center, in Ivoryton, CT. The grand tour included the rustic dormitory facilities with all meals provided, walking trails in the woods, a lovely lake with swimming and boating, and other vacation features. All this is a charming backdrop for total immersion in Gilbert and Sullivan, with Rafe leading the way. And the cost? Just \$425 per person for one week, truly a bargain vacation.

The schedule calls for concentration on *Princess Ida* (July 16 – 22) and a second week (July 31 – August 4) devoted to "The Big Three" *PirMikaFore*. More information available from Reba Gillman, 327-2277. Or see the Elderhostel Summer 2000 Catalog (under Performance, page 186); on-line 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

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G&S Office:

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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
Join us for our opening Gala & Champagne Buffet, Friday June 30.

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
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&
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