

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

OCTOBER 2001 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

• Next Meeting •
• Our Monthly Musicale •

Everything You Always Wanted to Know
About Princess Ida*

Monday October 1, 2001, at 7:30 pm

At Paula Tyler's: 4400 Balcones Drive;
459-4639

• Please bring Munchies •

*But Were Afraid to Ask

Looking ahead: Save the date for the November Musicale: November 5, 2001, at 7:30 pm.

Save the Date!

OUR GRAND & GLORIOUS GALA FUNDRAISER & LAVISH CHAMPAGNE BUFFET

Saturday January 12, 2002
at 8:00 pm

Sanctuary of the Unitarian Church
3700 Grover Street

Directors: Frank Delvy & Jeffrey Jones-Ragona

Message from Your President

• Larry Shepley

I suppose I could quote any number of Gilbert's words to express my sorrow and disgust at last week's events, for he expressed himself so well about tragedy, but I won't. The G&S operas should be treasured, either as a diversion or as an example of the basic optimism we all should enjoy. After all, when we poke fun at a pirate apprentice who is a slave to duty, we certainly do not advocate shirking our duty. One of my favorite operas is Princess Ida, which lampoons feminism, and yet I consider equal opportunity and encouragement for women to be of great importance. The English, during the Blitz, sang to lift their spirits; we should do the same — American songs, Texan songs, and English songs.

The Board of Directors heard, in its last meeting, of progress and problems. The Pirates in School production is doing well, and has one engagement with others sure to follow. We have booked the Unitarian Church Sanctuary for our *Gala* on January 12, 2002, and you all should attend what will be a delightful presentation, directed by Frank Delvy and Jeffrey Jones-Ragona.

We also have set dates for our major production of next summer, *The Pirates of Penzance*. These dates include:

Auditions: Saturday, Sunday, March 2,3, 2002.

Opening Gala Performance: Friday June 14, 2002

The Helm Fine Arts Theater, St. Stephen's School

We will run for two weeks, but will have more shows than in previous two-week schedules. For example, the first Saturday (June 15, 2002) will feature a family matinee, with especially reduced prices for children (even lower than our normally discounted children's prices). Rafe MacPhail and Jeffrey Jones-Ragona will once again do their magic.

A personal comment: After seeing Rafe's direction of *The Mikado*, in 1997, I particularly wanted him to direct *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which of course he did excellently in 1999. As it turns out, *Pirates* is one of the ones Rafe himself wants to put on, and so our 2002 production will be a block-buster. But don't look for an Elvis Presley-type interpretation or the Keystone Kops; this will be a show in the Gilbertian style — or more precisely the MacPhailian style!

As I mentioned at the Musicale on September 10, we lost money on *The Sorcerer*. We keep track of these things, and when the video of the show starts to sell, some of the figures will change, but not by much. The upshot was we lost \$12,000. The big problem was not the expenses — we had a reasonable

Continued on page 3

Last Musicale

Reba Gillman • Secretary

At 7:30 pm on Monday September 10, 2001, forty of us gathered at Paula Tyler's house for what proved to be a delightful season-opening Musicale. The next day the world was a different place, and we have all been coping with that in our own ways. The ramifications and sequelæ of this body blow to our country are tremendous. It is clear, however, that nothing is served by allowing oneself to be overwhelmed. Life must go on. Our Gilbert and Sullivan Society is part of the arts culture of the world that is always dedicated to serving people by offering music and drama to relieve feelings and energize our ability to do what is necessary. So, back to Monday September 10th.

Present were members Marilyn Babcock, Chris Buggé, Sue Caldwell, Lucian Chimene, Frank Delvy, Wally & Ruth Ellinger, Len & Reba Gillman, John & Carolyn Gregory, Sandra Grimes, Enid Hallock, Gary Hallock, Marshall & Cynthia Hill, Janette Jones, Robert Mellin, Brad Merrell, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Larry Oubre, Joan Pearsall, Barbara (Bee) Harris Polomé, Martha Schumacher & Errol Olson, Steve & Eve Schwartzman, Larry Shepley, Andree Sjoberg, Jean Smootz, Sofia Voloch & Jane Ross, Libby Weed, Dave Wieckowski, and Theresa (Terri) Wilson. Performing guests were Faith DeBow and Leslie Salas, and other guests were Christine & Rick Alan, and Don Wise.

President Larry Shepley opened the meeting with announcements. He noted the fine display of G&S Polo Shirts offered for sale on the coffee table. He introduced Frank Delvy, who told us that our Fund Raiser would take place on Saturday January 12, 2002, at the Unitarian Church on Grover Street, and that he is in charge of planning the program; Jeffrey Jones-Ragona will be the musical director. Frank said that he is building the program on large choral pieces, especially from *Pinafore* and *The Sorcerer*.

Larry announced that our program *Pirates in School* had been organized by Derek Smootz, and was to perform the next week at Libby's school, Brentwood Christian Elementary School. Anyone who knows of a school that would like to put on this program should call the office and leave a message. It was noted that we charge \$450 per show, but perform at a discount or free when necessary. It was also noted that the long-term benefit occurs when as a result children learn to love Gilbert & Sullivan.

Larry introduced Faith DeBow, our pianist for the evening, who told us about a program being put on in San Antonio to revive the fortunes of that G&S group. Faith is serving as musical director of the revue *Precious Nonsense*, which will play on four weekends (Fridays and Saturdays) from September 21 through October 13, 2001. She particularly invited us to consider attending the final performance, at 2 pm on Sunday October 14, with a lunch served before and Tea and Crumpets after the show. Chris Buggé asked if a group would be interested in riding to the show in his restored Rolls Royce.

Larry announced that the October Musicale (Monday, October 1 at 7:30 pm) would be partly a planning session for his project "A Night at the Operetta" (title suggested by Jean Smootz), which would be an informal presentation of a concert

version of *Princess Ida* at the March 2002 Musicale. He also announced that a video tape of the first 30 minutes of our production of *The Sorcerer* would be playing in a room down the hall after this evening's program. He told us that the *Sorcerer* cast picture would be mailed out to all cast members, and that copies of the many pictures of the show taken by Ernie Welch were now available on a CDROM at \$1 a piece.

Robert Mellin asked for a report on *The Sorcerer* and was told that the show lost \$12,000. When he asked why he was told it was chiefly because we had not raised money from other sources, such as corporate donors.

Reba reported that the UT Jessen Series concerts this year have been dedicated to the memory of Jess Walters, and that the final program on Saturday April 13, 2002, would be a Tribute to Jess, performed by the UT Voice faculty. Frank told us that he had talked to Rafe MacPhail in Virginia, who is looking forward to being here to direct *Pirates*. He said the big encore piece would be "When the foeman bares his steel." Rafe was busy casting for his upcoming Bridgewater production of *Pinafore*; men are needed ... does anyone want a trip to Virginia? (Frank says he's on call as cover for the Captain.) Rafe says Joyce Wead is the musical director for this show — some of you may remember Joyce way back when she lived in Austin. She played Yum Yum in our 1978 *Mikado*.

The new faces in our audience were asked to introduce themselves. Rick and Christine Alan said they learned about the Musicale from our website. Jane Ross said she came as chauffeur and mom to Sofia Voloch, our youngest member. (We've had other youngest members, but they grow up.) Don Wise said his teacher, Larry Oubre, told him to come.

Larry then turned the program over to Libby Weed, who had planned it. She introduced her cast of singers and Faith DeBow, pianist for the evening, and the music began, interspersed with interesting asides and snappy remarks from the players. Cynthia Hill, Janette Jones, and Frank Delvy sang "A man who would woo a fair maid," from *Yeomen of the Guard*; Holton Johnson sang "The Nightingale," followed by Leslie Salas singing "Sorry her lot," both from *Pinafore*; Cynthia and Janette sang "Long years ago" from *Patience*; Frank sang "Rising early in the morning," from *Gondoliers* (which he introduced as a favorite song of Lucy Meritt's); Janette sang "Cheerily carols the lark" from *Ruddigore* (complete with wild hair, one shoe off, and clothing in disarray: Mad Margaret, you recall); and Leslie, Janette, Holton, and Frank sang the madrigal "Brightly dawns our wedding day" from *The Mikado*. The final group was devoted to *Pirates*: Janette sang "When Frederic was a little lad," Holton sang "Oh, is there not one maiden breast," Cynthia sang "Poor wand'ring one" and with with Holton "Stay, Frederic, stay," and "Ah, leave me not to pine alone." Frank then sang the Pirate King's introduction and we all rose to sing "Hail, Poetry," followed by "Now to the banquet we press" from *The Sorcerer*. Larry thanked all the performers and asked for a special hand for pianist Faith DeBow, who looked happy all evening, as though she were enjoying herself. A very good time was had by all, not however, including our generous hostess Paula Tyler, who had had to leave to entertain unexpected out-of-town guests ... we missed you Paula!

Continued from Page 1

budget (and paid our tremendously good cast far less than they deserve) and kept to it, but rather the lack of corporate and individual donations as compared to previous years. And the problem there was that these donations were not asked for!

I always get annoyed when the leadership of a group I'm in talks more about money than about the purpose of the group. Here I am harping on funds when I should be singing (sorry about the pun) the praises of our performers and directors. Our productions in the past few years have been superb, our Musicales continue to be enjoyable, and we are reaching out to kids — what more can we demand? Well, it may be love that makes the world go 'round, but it's grease that keeps the wheels from squeaking. We have raised out dues — but not too much, I hope. We have raised our ticket prices — but we want our show to be affordable to all. We must now beat the bushes to encourage our generous supporters to be, well, generous. I actually would like you-all not only to send cash but also to volunteer your time to help us raise money. Or if solicitation isn't your cup of tea, keep your schedule open to help us put on *Pirates*, our January *Gala*, and of course our Musicales. To paraphrase that great pre-Gilbert sage, Poor Richard, "A penny saved is a penny which helps the G&S Society."



Art DiBianca as Dr. Daly in *The Sorcerer* — Photo by Ernie Welch

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

"PRECIOUS NONSENSE"

A MUSICAL REVUE and fund raiser presented by the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of San Antonio, featuring great musical moments from *The Pirates of Penzance*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado*, and more!!!

Sept 21 – Oct 13

Fridays & Saturdays, 8 pm

British Pub Meal at Noon before Matinee

Sunday, October 14, 2 pm

with Tea & Crumpets after the show

Alamo Street Restaurant & Theatre

1150 South Alamo Street

Dinner & Show \$25.95; Show only \$14.00

For Reservations and Information:

210-271-7791

Directed by Diane Malone

Musical Direction by Faith DeBow

UT School of Music The 2001/2002 Jessen Series of Distinguished Faculty Artists is dedicated to the memory of Jess Walters

Five concerts for \$25, or \$7 each at the door; the last concert on Saturday April 13, 2002, at 8 pm will be a Tribute to Jess by members of the Voice Faculty. Call 471-1444 for information.

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

P.O. Box 684542

Austin, Texas 78768-4542 Phone: 472-4772 (472-GSSA)

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Membership benefits include our Newsletter & 10% discount on tickets.

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(For levels & privileges, see below.)

☐ I'm interested in becoming a business sponsor. Please call me.

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Please consider contributing to The Society at one of the following Donor Levels: **Grand Duke or Duchess** (\$100-\$249); **Major General** (\$250-\$499); **Pooh-Bah** (\$500-\$999); **Pirate King** (\$1000-\$2499); **Savoyard** (\$2500 & up). Donors receive various benefits, including membership, listing in programs, and other benefits. Please call our office for further information.

The Gilbert & Sullivan

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G&S

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THE
**GILBERT
&
SULLIVAN**

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

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