

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

NOVEMBER 2001 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

• Next Meeting •
• Our Monthly Musicale •

Monday November 5, 2001, at 7:30 pm

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

Allen Lawshae is planning the program.

• Please bring Munchies •

Looking ahead • Save the dates

Tribute to Jess Walters

Sunday November 18, 2001

One World Theatre

7701 FM 2244 (Bee Caves Road)

(on the left side about a mile past Loop 360)

Time to be announced — in the newspaper, on the radio,
or call 472-4772 (our office) for information.

December Musicale

Monday December 3, 2001, at 7:30 pm

Looking ahead!

**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 have lots to say:

Musicales

I have now organized several Musicales, and it's fun. If you would like to organize one, please let us know. I and the rest of the Board will welcome you and give you all the help you want. My personal preference when organizing the entertainment is to plan on involving the audience as much as possible and to experiment a bit. For example, I wanted to concentrate on *Princess Ida* at our last get together, and I thought it would be interesting to download music from the G&S web archive — readily available — for both chorus and solo numbers. That home-grown *karaoke* worked to some extent (and so I wasn't all that upset when our pianist couldn't make it at the last minute), though a real, live piano player is better, I will agree. You, too, can experiment, be creative, and have fun: Organize a Musicale!

Pirates in School

We need contacts. Jean Smootz has sent out lots of letters to elementary school principals. When Louise Geil followed up with phone calls, a common response was that we should contact P.T.A.s; and Jean is in the process of doing just that. Martha Schumacher, too, is poised to help. (A huge Thank You to Jean, Louise, and Martha!) But the main need is to find the appropriate person or persons to talk with. In the past, our in-school programs have been reviews, with various G&S songs, and now we have a scripted version of *Pirates of Penzance*. In either format, G&S appeals to kids (of course!). Please, if you know whom to call at a school, or if you yourself are a school contact person, let us know!

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Janette Jones reads dialog from *Princess Ida* at our last Musicale

Photo by Maurie Ommerman

Last Musicale

Reba Gillman • Secretary

On Monday October 1, 2001, we gathered at Paula Tyler's house for the monthly Musicale, advertised as "Everything you always wanted to know about *Princess Ida*."

Present were 39 members: Christine & Rick Alan, Jean Buggé, Sue Caldwell, Lucian Chimene, Arthur DiBianca, Len & Reba Gillman, John & Carolyn Gregory, Sandra Grimes, Enid Hallock, Gary Hallock, Bill Hatcher, Jim & Patrice Hunter, Holton Johnson, Janette Jones, Allen Lawshae & JoAnn Reeves, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Maurie Ommerman (thanks for taking pictures), Barbara (Bee) Harris Polomé, Russell Prickett, Martha Schumacher & Errol Olson, Larry Shepley, Andree Sjoberg, Leland L. Smith, Derek Smootz, Ed & Jean Smootz, Paula Tyler, Sofia Voloch & Jane Ross, Libby Weed, Dave Wieckowski, and Theresa (Terri) Wilson.

President Larry Shepley opened the meeting by calling on Reba Gillman. She announced that the Jess Walters Tribute would take place on Tuesday, November 20 at the One World Theatre, and would be entirely planned and performed by Jess's son, Emil Wolk. More information, including the time, will be announced when it becomes available. [This date has now been changed to Sunday November 18th, which is Jess's birthday.]

Larry thanked volunteers Arthur DiBianca and Jean and Derek Smootz for their hard work in the Society office. He also wished Derek a happy birthday on October 6th.

Proceeding to the main subject of the evening Larry stated that *Princess Ida* first appeared in 1884, right after *Iolanthe*. He asked how many of us had ever seen *Princess Ida*. A few had, and most of those had actually performed in it. There was speculation on why the opera was so seldom performed. Allen Lawshae said he had found it very boring, although things picked up in the last act. He thought the main problem was the subject. Larry said that the opera was three acts long, and written in iambic pentameter; also the subject was hopelessly out of place today (making fun of women who aspire to an education) but said he liked it anyway. Janette Jones who had performed in the opera in New York City, where she sang with the Light Opera of Manhattan, defended *Princess Ida*, saying it contained some of the best music, and that it made fun of men, too.

Larry briefly outlined the plot and asked for volunteers to read some dialog later on. He also informed us that unfortunately our pianist, Leslie Salas, would not be present, so he would have to use some accompaniments he had recorded from the G&S Archives on the Internet, supplemented by live flute music, played by himself or Bill Hatcher. With this accompaniment Holton Johnson sang Hilarion's song "Ida was a twelve-month old, Twenty years ago!" and Art DiBianca sang King Gama's song "If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am." Then Larry said "Those of you who are old enough remember Tom Lehrer, and if you're even older you remember Len Gillman, Reba's husband."

Len came forward and read all three verses of "The Professor's Song," by Tom Lehrer (to the tune of King Gama's song, just performed by Art). It starts:

"If you give me your attention I will tell you what I am.
I'm a brilliant math'matician — also something of a ham.
I have tried for numerous degrees, in fact I've one of each;
Of course that makes me eminently qualified to teach."

[This was published in 1974 in the *American Mathematical Monthly*. Copies may be obtained from Reba at 327-2277.]

Len then gave us a little background on Tom Lehrer whom he met back in the '60's. Tom is now 73 years old; he studied Math and Statistics at Harvard, where he got a Master's degree. He began performing his clever songs at parties while he was a graduate student, and later did many more public performances and recordings. For many years he has spent half the year in Cambridge, MA, and the other half teaching at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Len then proceeded to sing the first verse of the Major General's song from *Pirates*, coming to the words "I'm very well acquainted too with matters mathematical, I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical, About binomial theorem I'm teaming with a lot of news — With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse." And at last "I'm very good at integral and differential calculus" upon which he stopped and looked at the audience with a twinkle in his eye and said, "By the way, I really am." He held up a heavy tome entitled *Calculus* which he had written with one of his PhD students, Robert McDowell.

Len then embarked on the performance of a few of Tom Lehrer's well-known songs; "I hold your hand in mine, dear," "The Irish Ballad," (which brought forth from members of the audience a full chorus of many verses), and "Oedipus Rex." Len finished with his usual rapid-fire rendition of "The Elements" and passed out copies of the words. Later, over munchies, our 10-year-old member, Sofia Voloch, said "He didn't do 'Poisoning Pigeons in the Park.' That's my favorite."

We then continued with *Princess Ida*, singing the female chorus "Death to the invader," followed by women's dialog spoken by Sue Caldwell, Enid Hallock, Janette Jones, Libby Weed, and Terri Wilson, in which Princess Ida finds that none of her lady students are up to a battle with the men. Then we sang the finale "With joy abiding." There followed some dialog for the men, spoken by Lucian Chimene, Gary Hallock, Bill Hatcher, Allen Lawshae, and Derek Smootz. Enid sang "A lady fair, of lineage high," with men's chorus from Allen, Bill, and Gary. At last we all sang Cyril's song "Would you know the kind of maid Sets my heart a-flame-a?"

Larry told us that he had been reading a book by Ian Taylor on how to produce concert versions of operas. He said he wanted to put on "A Night at the Operetta" (title by Jean Smootz), an informal presentation of *Princess Ida*, at our Musicale on Monday March 4. This would be right after the auditions for *Pirates*, and Rafe MacPhail would be in town. Excerpts from each act would be presented, perhaps by different casts. This would require people who could learn the music and words. There should be a narrator, and some acting, with one person in charge of each group. There should be a stage manager and costumes (even if skimpy — Libby said "Sheets will work!"), and a wardrobe manager. For venue Larry said he would try to book us in the big room at the Armstrong Community Music School, or Dougherty Arts Center.

Finally Carolyn Gregory was pressed into service to accompany us in our customary final flourishes: "Hail Poetry" (Russell Prickett sang the Pirate King's introduction), and "Now to the banquet we press," and all gathered to enjoy the munchies and good fellowship.



UT School of Music

Andrew Hallock performs at Bates Recital Hall
November 15, 2001, at 6 pm.

He will be conducting a choral group singing pieces written for the occasion by several student composers.

Help!

We need a copier for the office.

We need volunteers to organize Musicales.

Use your imagination & have a good time!

And we need volunteer performers, too.

We need a backup site for Musicales.

A central Austin location is needed.

We need school contacts for *Pirates in School*.



Janette Jones, Sue Caldwell, Terri Wilson, and Enid Hallock reading dialog from *Princess Ida* at our last Musicale.

Photo by Maurie Ommerman

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Board Actions and Related Items

At our last Board of Directors meeting, we again discussed the need to raise funds. We have now started contacting corporations (**Nancy McQueen** and **Jean Smootz** are providing much appreciated help). We also felt that reminder letters or postcards should be sent to members whose memberships have expired or are about to — I myself could have used such a reminder when mine lapsed last January!. A week or so ago I composed and mailed reminders to a large number of our members, and the response was great! Expect a reminder postcard about a month before your membership anniversary, for we need your dues!

If you have any suggestions for fund raising, please share them with us. If you have pots of money to contribute, please do! And if you want to volunteer in the office, please volunteer! In addition to everybody I've thanked so far, I particularly want to thank **Art DiBianca** and **Derek Smootz** for their volunteer services. **Art**, working with **Reba Gillman**, has improved our data base tremendously, and **Derek** has done a great job in helping organize our office and especially organizing *Pirates in School*. I want to thank again **Jean Smootz**, who has been coming in every week.

We also felt we should firm up **Rafe MacPhail's** position, and I am glad to report that he has firmly committed himself to directing *Pirates* this coming summer. He and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, our Music Director, are a fabulous team, and both are enthusiastic about the opera. **Rafe**, coming from Virginia, needs several round-trip tickets between there and Austin. Please, please, if you have frequent-flyer miles to contribute, please do so. In the past United Airlines has helped us out a lot, but in these days of national and airline crises, we have to think ahead, plan as best we can, and be flexible. I'm sure there is a suitable Gilbertian quotation, but I can't think of one. The nearest I could find is:

The other night, from cares exempt,
I slept—and what d'you think I dreamt?
I dreamt that somehow I had come
To dwell in Topsy-Turveydom!—
Where vice is virtue—virtue, vice:
Where nice is nasty—nasty, nice:
Where right is wrong and wrong is right—
Where white is black and black is white.



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)

Name (as you want it to appear) _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Night) _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

E-mail address _____

What company do you work for? _____

Please check membership category:

☐ Individual: \$20

☐ Family/Group: \$30

☐ Youth (18 & under): \$10

☐ Senior (65 & over): \$10

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

☐ My donation of _____ is enclosed.
(For levels & privileges, see below.)

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

☐ I'm interested in volunteering.

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 Society of Austin

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

Annual Grand Productions
School Outreach Concerts
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Newsletter Editor

Reba Gillman

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Larry Shepley

Our web site: www.gilbertsullivan.org

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Len Gillman with a mathematical illustration at our last Musicale
Photo by Maurie Ommerman



Lucian Chimene and Derek Smootz reading dialog from *Princess Ida* at
our last Musicale
Photo by Maurie Ommerman

THE
**GILBERT
&
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