

THE

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

JUNE 2003 NEWSLETTER

Call AusTix (454-TIXS or 454-8497)
or visit us on-line (www.gilbertsullivan.org)
for reserved seats to

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

June 12-29, 2003, the Helm Fine Arts Center of St. Stephen's School
Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays at 8:00 pm; Sundays at 3:00 pm

Special events:

Half-price Preview Thursday June 12 at 8:00 pm

Gala Champagne Buffet after the show on Friday June 20
Meet the company at our traditional lavish party

Family Fun Special Matinee Saturday June 28
Gary Hallock is organizing special activities for young people of all
ages starting at 2:00 pm — the show starts at 3:00 pm



All-Star Direction & Cast

Stage Director: **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**
Music Director: **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**
Executive Producer: **Dan Smith**
Major-General Stanley: **Jim Hunter**
The Pirate King: **Frank Delvy**
Samuel (his Lieutenant): **Tom Lawshae**
Frederic (the Pirate Apprentice): **Holton Johnson**
Sergeant of Police: **Russell Gregory**
Mabel: **Claire Vangelisti**
Edith: **June Julian**
Kate: **Kristina Horacek**
Isabel: **Jeanette Franz**
Ruth (a Pirate Maid of all Work): **Janette Jones**

Ticket prices for Pirates

Adults: \$20 advance (\$24 at the door)
Youths 17 & under: half price
G&S or KMFA Members: 10% discount
Groups of 10-19: 10% discount
Groups of 20 or more: 20% discount

Half-price Preview: 50% discount

Gala Champagne Buffet & Show:
Adults: \$30 advance (\$34 at the door)
Youth and other discounts do apply

All Seats Are Reserved

Call AusTix: 454-TIXS (8597)
On-line: www.gilbertsullivan.com

Your membership may have expired!

If the date on your mailing label is earlier than May 2003, then your membership has expired, and you will not be listed in the *Pirates* playbill. Renew your membership, support G&S, and be listed. Mail the renewal form (page 3) with your check before June 5 to guarantee it will be processed in time for the opening of *Pirates*. Thank you for your support, which we need — very much!

Pirates, Police, and Papp

Larry Shepley • President

A few years ago, Joseph Papp produced a very lively version of *The Pirates of Penzance* on Broadway, and it became a popular film. I thoroughly enjoyed it, but I would not want The G&S Society to imitate it. Gilbert's characters are sincere and should be played so. His police are real human beings, who desire to enforce the law and protect the public at great personal sacrifice, and yet who have sympathy even for the criminal. His pirates commit acts of theft and pillage — but spare orphans (too often). When the pirates hail poetry, they mean it as an honest sentiment of homage to a lofty ideal. They are not clowns, and the police are not Keystone Kops. This is an opera, not a burlesque.

Yes, *Pirates* is an opera, a comic opera. Laugh. Enjoy. (You will!) Rafe MacPhail likes to call the G&S works “operas” rather than “operettas.” He is right. The Oxford English Dictionary says that an “operetta” was “originally and properly of one act.” (I suppose *Trial by Jury* should be called an operetta; ironically, it is the only G&S work which is completely musical — a “dramatic cantata.”)

Pirates opened in New York City on December 31, 1879. Two days before the first performance, the orchestra threatened to strike, on the grounds that the piece was an opera, not an operetta, and they should be paid more. Sullivan countered by saying he would bring to the U.S. the Covent Garden Royal Opera House orchestra, which would be glad to play, and in the meantime would have piano and harmonium accompaniment. The play worked (although even Sullivan described this idea as absurd), and the musicians backed down, though I suppose they did have a point.

We can't afford to pay our orchestra — or Rafe or Jeffrey or Dan or the cast — what they deserve, either. We do give honoraria to all concerned and add in some perks, but even so the company is working hard mainly because a G&S opera is so gratifying and so much fun.

Even with a frugality which Gilbert could well lampoon, even with ticket sales promising to be high, we need your support. We have kept our ticket prices low to encourage as many people to attend as possible. We offer a 50% discount for Young Persons. We offer discounts for groups. As members you get a discount, too. So please be supportive. We can well use any contribution you give, and of course we will be effusive in our thanks.

If you would rather (or also) like to volunteer, we can use you. You will enjoy the experience. Please see information on volunteering elsewhere in this Newsletter.

As I said, I enjoyed the Papp version, but I think ours will be even more fun. You all know Rafe MacPhail and Jeffrey Jones-Ragona. And frankly, I think Claire Vangelisti is a better singer than Linda Ronstadt and Janette Jones is a better Ruth than Angela Lansbury. Perhaps Kevin Kline was slightly more of a bouncy swashbuckler than Frank Delvy, but Frank makes a much better (and authentic) Pirate King. I don't even remember who the Broadway Frederic was (Reba says he was a crooner), but I certainly will remember Holton Johnson's performance. The chorus, both the men and the women, are the best I've ever heard. And nobody can top Jim Hunter as Major-General Stanley or Russell Gregory as the Sergeant of Police!

We will have three weekends of performances. Opening night is Friday June 13, with a half-price preview on Thursday June 12. Traditionally, we have a Gala Champagne Buffet following one of the performances, and you will be able to enjoy it and meet the company on Friday June 20. As a special treat, this year we will have a Saturday matinee on June 28 with special pre-show family entertainment for Young Persons, organized by Gary Hallock. I'll see you at one of our shows, and if you enjoy it as much as I'm sure you will, I think I'll be seeing you at more than one!



Contributors to Pirates 2003

(Please add your name to this growing list!)

Underwriters: **Chris Buggé**
Larry Shepley

Corporate, Government, and Foundation:

Individual: **Reba & Len Gillman**
David & Roslyn Gutman
Jean & Ed Smootz

**The Still Water Foundation
of Austin**
Priority Copy
Eyes of Texas Laser Center

Cedra Corporation
Westminster Manor
The Cleve H. Tandy Foundation
Genesis Presbyterian Church



The Pirates of Penzance is funded in part by the City of Austin under the auspices of the Austin Arts Commission and supported by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.



News of Members

Ex-Lord High Pianist Bob Wall writes that he is enjoying life in San Francisco, especially "the temperate, even chilly, summers." He finally sold his house in Austin and moved his Steinway grand to San Francisco. His daughter lives nearby; he sees her regularly and is having fun introducing her to opera. He has been teaching part-time in the Computer Science Departments at San Jose State and at San Francisco State; GMAT and GRE math review classes at a local company; and some piano lessons, "recycling all the things I learned from Pearl." He wishes to be remembered to all his friends in The G&S Society, and hopes to make it to an Austin performance of *Pirates*.

Robert Mellin is leaving town June 1st. His extended family in Philadelphia has been urging him to come back to Philly. He came here in 1985 or 86 and says he lived in Austin longer than any other place in his life. He expects to continue his favorite activity: travel. The Society owes a great deal to Robert, who served as President for four years and as Executive Director for two. During the six years of his leadership, we produced better shows each year and grew in astonishing ways. One of his most important achievements was arranging for Ralph MacPhail, Jr., to come to Austin as Director of our 1998 production of *The Mikado*.

Leonard Gillman, long-time supporter of The Society, occasional performer, pianist, conductor, and music director, has won a Lester R. Ford award for outstanding mathematical exposition for his article "Two Classical Surprises concerning the Axiom of Choice and the General Continuum Hypothesis." The article appeared in the June-July, 2002, issue of the American Mathematical Monthly, the flagship journal of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). In August he and Reba will be traveling to the summer meeting of the MAA in Boulder, Colorado, where he will receive the award. This is the second Ford award for Len. The first was for an article in the January, 1993, issue of the Monthly.

Lucy Taxis Shoe Meritt

August 7, 1906 - April 13, 2003

Lucy was a distinguished, internationally known classicist and archeologist, and a remarkable woman. You can read about her life's work and honors in the obituary published on Monday and Tuesday, April 14 and 15, 2003, in the **Austin American Statesman**. You can also find information by searching for *Lucy Shoe Meritt* on the web. She is listed twice: as *Meritt* and as *Meritt*. We knew her because she loved Gilbert and Sullivan, and it gave her great joy to attend our musicales and operettas.

Lucy knew many people and belonged to many diverse organizations. Through her mother's old Philadelphia family she rated membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). In contrast her father was the son of recent, working class immigrants, and rose to middle class status by virtue of a hard earned college education, native intelligence, and hard work.

Lucy never forgot two important precepts of her Bryn Mawr training in the classics and archeology: **See what you look at** and **What is the significance?** She believed in the importance of learning and that you should share what you learned by teaching it. She loved good friends, good music, a good story, a good party, and to teach. She inspired strong friendships, and it was through the help of her friends that she was able to live alone in the family mansion on Judge's Hill in Austin until she was 96 years old. Her last months were spent in the health care facility at The Summit in Westlake. There she maintained her dignity and good cheer, despite daily frustrations.

Lucy's death marks the passing of an era, a time that was more gracious and less hurried than the present. We shall miss her steadfast devotion, her friendship, and her lively presence.

A memorial service is planned at UT in the fall, 2003.

Reba Gillman

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**: **Patron** (\$50-\$99), **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

Pirates in School

Musicales

Musical Scholarships

Monthly Newsletters

Holiday Season Shows

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Newsletter Editor

Reba Gillman

Layout

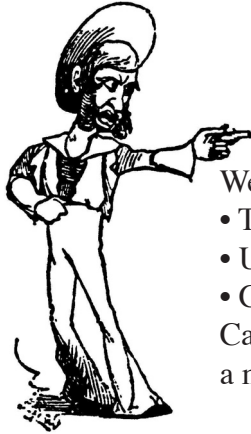
Larry Shepley

Our web site: www.gilbertsullivan.org

E-mail: info@gilbertsullivan.org

The Society holds non-profit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

G&S Society Season Schedule for 2002-2003



Call for Volunteers

We need help for:

- The Gala
- Ushering
- Concessions

Call 327-2277 and leave
a message with Reba.

Please!

Next Musicale

Monday September 8, 2003 — Save the Date

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Iolanthe

Concert performance, coming in October, 2003

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The Pirates of Penzance

Thursday June 12 through Sunday June 29
at the Helm Fine Arts Center, St. Stephen's School

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Next meeting of the Board of Directors

7:00 pm Tuesday June 3 at Paula Tyler's



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