

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

APRIL 2005 NEWSLETTER

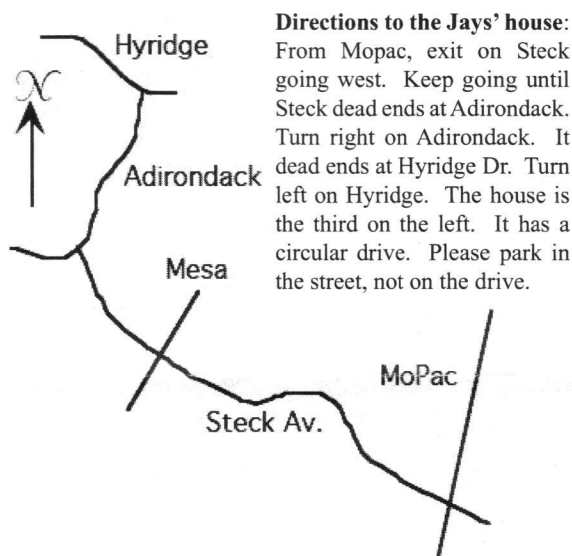
Our next Musicale

Monday April 11th at 7:30 PM

at the home of
Nancy & Benny Jay
4305 Hyridge Drive
343-8408

Please bring munchies!

Ann Coltman is organizing another Sing-Along for our joyful participation. Come lift your voices in song — we'll do each piece three times so we'll have a chance to do a good job.



From Your President

Dear Friends:

Let me tell you — the weekend of February 26 and several days afterwards were a whirlwind of exhilarating activity. A VIP arrival at the airport, scores of wonderfully talented singers, theater visits, important phone calls — but wait. I'm getting ahead of myself.

Our good friend and Lord High Director (Ralph MacPhail, Jr.) arrived by plane from Virginia on February 25. (Thank you Larry for picking him up at the airport). My wife (the first lady) and I and Larry and Reba and Lenny Gillman took him to dinner that night. It was an enjoyable evening of getting reac-

(Continued on page 2)

The Mikado

to be presented June 16 - July 3, 2005

Stage Director/Choreographer **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**Music Director/Conductor **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**Production Manager **Natalie George**

The Mikado of Japan **Russell Gregory**Nanki-Poo (*his Son, disguised as a wandering minstrel, and in love with Yum-Yum*) **Holton Johnson**Ko-Ko (*Lord High Executioner of Titipu*) **Trey Deason**Pooh-Bah (*Lord High Everything Else*) **Sam Johnson**Pish-Tush (*a Noble Lord*) **Arthur DiBianca***Three Sisters — Wards of Ko-Ko*Yum-Yum **Christiana Little**Pitti-Sing **June Julian**Peep-Bo **Meredith Groeschel**Katisha (*an elderly Lady, in love with Nanki-Poo*) **Rose Taylor**

.....

Chorus of School-girls, Nobles, Guards, and Coolies

Juliann Albaugh, Nancy Arnold, Kathleen Atwell, Stephen Bates, Jenna Beaird, Stephanie Blackwood, Daniel Brookshire, Andy Fleming, Taylor Garrison, Cecily Johnson, Amy Kelley, John Lopez, Randall McIntyre, Scott Poppaw, David Smith, Derek Smootz, Mandy Summers, Hilary Young

From Your President (Continued from page 1)

quainted. Following this we took him to his apartment behind Sue Caldwell's home. (Thank you so much Sue. He enjoys staying there.)

The next day brought a full schedule of audition appointments. (Thank you Chuck Antonie for coordinating this. And thank you Larry and Reba and Jean for staffing the table at Haris Bell Hall.) You know, it really is fun to work at auditions. The people auditioning are always so cheerful and many of them are friends who are happy to talk (nervously) as they await their audition time. During the breaks Jeffrey and Rafe told us how fortunate we are to have so many talented people who want to perform in our shows. Natalie George, our Production Manager, was also there, beginning the planning to get *The Mikado* on stage in June.

Sunday was a shorter day, but still much the same. (Thank you Larry and Nancy for your service on Sunday.) There was cordial chatter outside the audition room and lovely music drifting all around.

Monday was a busy day, as I had made appointments for Rafe to see four theaters. His preference and our preference is the same — the Austin High School Performing Arts Center. This is where we expect to be, though purists may note that a legal binding contract has not yet been received. However, there are assurances and good will moving this forward.

On Monday many of you attended Rafe's presentation at the Unitarian Church entitled *The Mikado: Red Hot and Swing!* It was a fascinating survey of non-traditional productions of *The Mikado*. In fact, there have been so many non-traditional productions that I would say it represents a secondary "tradition." Thank you Rafe very sincerely for this wonderful evening.

On Wednesday Rafe returned to Dulles Airport and his hearth and home. (Thank you Larry for taking him to the airport. Thank you Alice MacPhail for sending him out of town during Spring Break and retrieving him at Dulles. I know the weather and highway conditions were dreadful.)

All of this is very promising groundwork for our upcoming *Mikado* in June and July. Other space in the Newsletter will inform you of the complete casting. I will mention here that the irrepressible Russell Gregory will be *The Mikado*. The renowned Rose Taylor will be *Katisha*. *Nanki-Poo* and *Yum-Yum* are favorites Holton Johnson and Christiana Little. The cast is talented and excited. Perhaps it is a stretch, but I'd say they "glory all effulgent." Have you marked your calendar?

Best wishes to one and all, Bill

Last Musicales

Reba Gillman

On Monday at 7:30 PM, on the last day of February 2005 (no Leap Year this), we gathered about 50 strong at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in two classrooms put together for the occasion. After President Bill Hatcher did the honors with introductions and thank you's, the meeting was turned over to Rafe MacPhail with Larry Shepley running the fancy projector. We embarked on a delightful and enchanted evening with one happy surprise following another, as Rafe presented *The Mikado: Red, Hot, and Swing!*

Rafe introduced us to a period in the 1930's and 40's when a *Mikado* craze hit this country, and variations of all kinds appeared on the stages of New York, Chicago, and other cities. There was the *Red Mikado*, the *Hot Mikado*, the *Swing Mikado*, and several *Black Mikado*'s. *Katisha* was played by a black torch singer, and Yum-Yum, Peep-Bo, and Pitti-sing were referred to as the Japanese Andrews Sisters. In 1939 the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union "Titi-pu Chorus" sang the opening chorus from *The Red Mikado*, commenting on the pretty state of theatrical affairs in New York.

Rafe's extensive research on *The Mikado* has turned up a wealth of interesting concepts, and he presents them in such a light-hearted stream of ideas and images that the depth and basic truths do not weigh you down. Only later do you understand the prolonged, intensive study that went into his presentation. To put the twentieth century craze into perspective Rafe goes back to the beginnings when the first productions of *The Mikado* were staged in 1885. America went *Mikado-mad* and burlesques of the opera began appearing immediately. In the 1920's *The Mikado* met American jazz, which produced a new stream of emulations.

In short, in the 120 years of its existence, *The Mikado* has been adapted to a variety of presentations more frequently than any other dramatic work except Shakespeare's. That it survives these assaults and still draws an admiring audience for the traditional version is a tribute to the sturdiness of the original. Come see our traditional version in June of this year!

Forgoing the usual finishing touches ("Hail Poetry" and "Now to the banquet we press"), Rafe took a few questions, and we then all adjourned to the back of the room for the customary munchies. We hope to present this talk again in June, perhaps after our production of *The Mikado* has opened. If you didn't make it this time don't miss the June event. It is truly a wondrous experience!

For the record, those present were: Chris Buggé, Allise and Nancy Burris, Bill & Ruth Ann Coffey, Ann Colman, Judy Donaldson, Len & Reba Gillman, Loel Graber, Roz Gutman, Bruce & Enid Hallock, Gary & Chris Hallock, Lisa Harris, Dick & Ethel Harvey, Bill & Nan Hatcher, June Julian, Craig Kugler, Richard & Julie Lary, Misook Lee, Allan & Barbara Longacre, Jack & Myrna Longnecker, Vivian Mansell, Norman & Emilia Martin, John Mast, Nancy McQueen, Charles Polachek, Bee Polomé & Milt Weiss, George & Marge Reiter, Steve & Eve Schwartzman, Andrée Sjöberg, Leland Smith, Libby Weed, Dave Wieckowski, Theresa Wilson and Antonio Fuentes, John S. Wood, and of course, Rafe MacPhail and Larry Shepley.

Member of the Month

All dues-paying members are eligible to be our "Member of the Month" (who is randomly selected). The Member of the Month is entitled to receive a CD of our 1998 *Mikado*. The Member of the Month for April is:

Dudley & Mari Houghton

Congratulations! Please call our office (472-4772) to let us know where we should send your CD.

News of Members

Russell Gregory and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** recently put on a G&S show at the UT Joe C. Thompson Center for "Quest," a group in the College of Continuing Education. They talked about the music and performed six pieces, including "Tit Willow" and "A More Humane Mikado" from *The Mikado*. They were very well received by over 100 people. This sort of thing is very good publicity for our upcoming *Mikado*. Russell says his favorite G&S line is "She may very well pass for 43 in the dusk with the light behind her."

Arthur DiBianca and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** are appearing in what sounds like a blood and guts version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. It opens Friday, March 25th, and runs through April 17th, at the Dougherty Arts Center. Jeffrey also directed some music for the production. For reservations and information call the Celtic Cultural Center at 431-6290, or 771-6174.

Janette Jones reports that she misses all her G&S friends, but she is too much involved in caring for her parents to come out for our performances. She is able to keep up her Austin Lyric Opera activities (they're not so time-consuming) and sang in the January production of *Elektra* by Richard Strauss. If you attended the opera you heard Janette's off-stage shriek when the mother, Klytämnestra, was killed (also off stage).

Jeffrey Jones-Ragona also sang recently at UT. He was the tenor soloist in the first performance in its entirety in nearly two centuries of a Catholic mass by the Brazilian composer José Mauricio Nunes Garcia. Jeffrey's a busy man, and I probably haven't managed to find out about many of his activities.

G&S Videos, DVDs, CDs & Memorabilia

Call our office or write us to order our delightful merchandise: T-shirts, librettos, DVDs, CDs, and videos; all at reasonable prices. Phone 472-4772.

Contributors to *Gondoliers* 2004

Underwriters: **Chris Buggé • Larry Shepley • Michael & Libby Weed**. Contributors: **Chuck Antonie • Norma & Floyd Brandt • Barbary Phillips** in memoriam **Lucile Convers • Ann Rogers** in memoriam **Lucile Convers • John, Christie, & Lori Fisher • Russell Gregory • Cindy Hager • William P. & Naomi Haight • James A. Hitt • Benard Laves • Norman & Emilia Martin • George & Nancy McQueen • Joan Pearsall • B.M. Phillips • Priority Copy • Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts • D.A. Rutishauser • Jean and Ed Smootz • Patricia Spurr • Cleve H. Tandy Foundation • Michael & Libby Weed • Dr. Claire Ellen Weinstein • Westminster Manor**. We wish to thank especially the following individuals for their continuing support: **Byron Arnason, Marion DeFord, Russell Gregory, Andrew, Enid, & Gary Hallock, Kristine M. Olson, Allen Lawshae, Barbara Lee, Katharine Shields, Patricia Spurr, Rose Taylor, Steve & Louise Weinberg**.



The Gondoliers 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.



Randalls/Tom Thumb Good Neighbor Program

Please register your Randall's Remarkable Card —Randalls will donate 1% of your bill to us (and up to two other charitable groups, if you wish). To register, visit the customer counter and use our name and number:

Gilbert and Sullivan Society 10090

This is an easy and cost-free (to you!) way to help us out.

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 a membership category. Membership benefits include our Newsletter and 10% discount on tickets.

- ☐ Individual: \$20 or more
☐ Family/Group: \$30 or more
☐ Donation only (no membership)
☐ I'm interested in volunteering.

Please consider becoming a member 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). Donor members receive additional benefits. Please call our office or visit our website (www.gilbertsullivan.org) 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**

G&S Office: 4604 Burnet Road, Austin, TX 78756
Mail Address: P.O. Box 684542, Austin, TX 78768-4542
Phone: (512) 472-4772 [472-GSSA]



The Society holds non-profit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. We are pleased to receive funding from the City of Austin under the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas commission on the Arts.



Board of Directors

President	Bill Hatcher	892-3722
Executive VP	Jean Smootz	259-2373
Secretary	Nancy McQueen	258-2149
Treasurer	Dave Wieckowski	542-0446
Historian	Ann Coltman	394-0852
Web Master	Brad Merrell	257-1742
	Byron Arnason	801-583-8281
	Reba Gillman	327-2277
	Allan Longacre	301-5611
	Randall McIntyre	422-3565
	Larry Shepley	327-1511

Newsletter Editor
Layout

Reba Gillman
Larry Shepley

Our web site: www.gilbertsullivan.org
E-mail: info@gilbertsullivan.org

Coming attractions:

Musicale

Monday April 11th at 7:30 PM, at the home of Nancy & Benny Jay, 4305 Hyridge Drive; see page 1 for details.

Look for an encore presentation of

The Mikado: Red, Hot, and Swing!

by Rafe MacPhail, coming in June.

Our major production of 2005:

The Mikado

or, The Town of Titipu

June 16 - Preview

June 17 - Gala Opening Night (no extra charge!)

June 18 - July 3 - performances Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8:00 PM; Sunday matinées at 3:00 PM

More information in later Newsletters.



PO Box 684542
Austin TX 78768-4542

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 2054
AUSTIN, TEXAS

