

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

APRIL 2007 NEWSLETTER

Our major production of 2007:

Ruddigore

The Texas School for the Deaf
1102 South Congress Avenue

Thursday June 7 (Half-price Preview), 8 pm
Friday June 8, 8 pm
(With complementary opening night gala)
Saturday June 9, 8 pm
Sunday June 10, 3 pm

Friday June 15, 8 pm
Saturday June 16, 8 pm
Sunday June 17, 3 pm
Friday June 22, 8 pm
Saturday June 23, 8 pm
Sunday June 24, 3 pm

Ticket prices: \$5 for youths 18 and under or students with ID; \$20 for advanced sales; \$25 at the door; \$18 for group sales of 10 or more.

Principals

Robin Oakapple/Ruthven Murgatroyd — **Trey Deason**
Richard Dauntless — **Michael Borysow**
Sir Despard Murgatroyd — **Frank Delvy**
Old Adam Goodheart — **David Fontenot**
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd — **Russell Gregory**
Dam Hannah — **Patricia Combs**
Mad Margaret — **Janette Jones**
Rose Maybud — **Glady Marie Posch**
Zorah — **Christine Walsh**
Ruth — (to be determined)

Chorus & Ghosts

Daniel Brookshire • Art DiBianca • Andy Fleming
Janet Forman • Taylor Garrison • Meagan Higgins
Angela Irving • Alicia Jumonville • Bob Kieras • Mark Long
John Lopez • Jennifer McKenna • Ann Moeller
Christy Munger • Rain Nox • Erin Pivek • Ariel Rios
Mark Rodman • Derek Smootz • Mandy Summers
Katherine Wiggins • Jay Young

Message from your President

Time has flown swiftly since the last newsletter issue. It has been an extremely busy time for everyone, both personally and professionally. For myself, I speak especially about my recent election as President of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society. One cannot fully appreciate the efforts of past Presidents until one has stepped into this role, and with that I again applaud my predecessors, Bill Hatcher, Larry Shepley, Libby Weed, Robert Mellin, *et al.* Their strong leadership has held this Society together and has grown our audience in Austin over the years.

I often ask myself what will I contribute to the G&S Society in my tenure as President? What can I do to make a positive and lasting impact on this group, and to our community as a whole? The answer came to me while listening to a news story on NPR in February. While driving home from work, I happened to turn on the radio just as an *All Things Considered* story began. There was a recent survey of 21 industrialized countries that ranked the U.S. at number 20, one of the lowest ranking countries, with respect to our treatment of children. It went on to say that, "One of the key things is that the role of government is important, but the entire society must have at its heart the idea of improving child well-being."

There was the answer to my question: The *entire* society must have at its heart the idea of improving child well-being. It is my hope that we contribute to this "well-being" in some small way by bringing the magic of Gilbert & Sullivan to all those around us; to use our artistic abilities and talents to influence children and adults in a positive light. I am thankful for Todd Galbraith who has taken on the task of producing our *Wand'ring Minstrels* program for the schools (see page 2). The effect of positively influencing even just one child can be exponential.

In a nutshell, I will strive to bring to the forefront the mission of our Society, which is to educate the public and preserve the works of Gilbert & Sullivan, and add to this the desire to improve the public well-being by bringing them, through this art, the joy of life. I encourage all of you, whether or not you are a member of this Society, to participate and be a part of this greater cause. Whether by generating new ideas for the Society, or by volunteering in some capacity, or through a donation to our programming — you know that the rewards can far outweigh the contribution.

Since February, we held a successful round of auditions for this summer's production of *Ruddigore*, and even had time to enjoy an evening musicale with our Artistic Director, Ralph ("Rafe") MacPhail, Jr. The cast has been selected and rehearsals are underway. We are fortunate to have the talents of Jeffrey Jones-Ragona as our music director, and Natalie George returning as our production manager, to help keep things in order as we work towards our goal of putting together another fine show. Rafe will return in May to begin staging rehearsals and then our show begins with a preview on June 7. So save the dates on your calendars now! Performances will run through Sunday, June 24. Check our website in the next few weeks for more information and where to purchase tickets. And join us in our mission to enrich the lives of those around us.

Sincerely yours, *June Julian*

Last Musicale

Report by Reba Gillman

June Julian, our new President, says that when people ask her how a person with a full time job, a family, and active involvement in many projects, can take on the Gilbert & Sullivan Presidency, she replies, "Like the Bad Baronets of *Ruddigore*, who are doomed to commit a crime a day, I am driven to do one good deed a day."

We are indeed fortunate that she is performing those good deeds for our Society with her customary energy and good cheer, and we welcomed her enthusiastically as she presided over our first Musicale under her Presidency. June outlined the cast of our upcoming *Ruddigore* (see list elsewhere), and our member Dave Gutman invited us all to attend the 50th Zilker Garden Festival on March 31 and April 1, 2007 from 10 AM to 5 PM. June noted that pottery by Dave would be available on April 14 and 15 at the Cactus and Succulent show and sale of plants and pottery at Zilker. Then with Ralph MacPhail, Jr. presenting his delightful program on *Ruddigore*, we went on to a wonderful evening.

It was Monday March 5, 2007, when we gathered 29 strong in the lovely home of Benny and Nancy Jay. We assembled downstairs in front of the Jays' magnificent large screen TV, in order to view the 1967 animated cartoon of *Ruddigore*, made in England with a soundtrack recorded by the original D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Never released commercially, this video was not of high quality, but Nancy Jay had spent hours using her knowledge and skill to upgrade the material, and we watched an excellent film. Rafe did his usual fine job of imparting well-researched information in an amusingly light-hearted way. He told us that *Ruddigore* was Gilbert's parody of Victorian Melodrama, which evolved to meet the needs of nineteenth century England's large working-class audiences, offering theater they could understand and relate to. "Melodrama" means "music drama," and the music enhances the emotional impact of the presentation. Rafe observed that it was most popular in the 1840's, but is still very much present today in row after row of paperback romance novels (sometimes called "bodice rippers") displayed in bookstores and supermarkets. Rafe said that while we still know some of the characteristics of melodrama: villains with handlebar moustaches and capes, pure-as-the-driven-snow heroines, and manly heroes, there are some characteristics of Victorian melodrama that might not be familiar to us today, although they were to Gilbert's audience. He added that fortunately Gilbert wrote so well that *Ruddigore* is a rollicking wonderful show, whether or not the audience is steeped in Melodrama, and informed by the historical material Rafe was about to present.

As the program ended and we rose to press to the banquet (without singing this time) Janette Jones told us some bad news (see item about Frank Delvy in **News of Members** on this page).

Those present were: Arthur DiBianca, David Fontenot with daughter Katy, Reba Gillman, Loel Graber, Russell & Kay Gregory, Dave & Ros Gutman, Enid Hallock, Gary & Chris Hallock, Benny & Nancy Jay, Janette Jones, June Julian, Ralph

MacPhail, Jr., Vivian Mansell, Jennifer McKenna, Nancy McQueen, Steve & Eve Schwartzman with Steve's sister Marcia Levy, Bob Sharron, Milt Weiss with guest Jeanette Springer, and Dave Wieckowski with son and midshipmite Brian.

* * * * *

News of Members

We are happy to report that **Pat Hobbs** has agreed to serve as a Director on the G&S Board.

Frank Delvy, cast as Sir Despard Murgatroyd, fell on Monday, March 5th and in a freak accident jabbed his elbow sharply into his abdomen and injured his kidney. He was taken to the emergency room where a scan revealed an enlarged kidney. Surgery was prescribed but had to be delayed because Frank had been taking aspirin. Cancer is suspected, and removal of the kidney is the only option. Frank has regrettably withdrawn from the cast of *Ruddigore*, and will undergo surgery on Thursday, March 29th. We hope for the best and wish Frank a speedy recovery.

Treasurer **Dave Wieckowski** reports the following story about his son, **Brian**, who at the age of eight performed as midshipmite in our June 2006 *Pinafore*. Brian went far beyond the call of duty last June. He learned all the chorus music, words, and motions, and got permission to perform with the chorus, which he did enthusiastically. This fall Brian's 4th grade class studied the struggles for justice and equality of a group of Native Americans in the late 1800s. In February a report came home quoting Brian's response to a test essay on the subject. It ended with a resounding, "A man is but a man, whether he hoists his flag at the fort, or his slacks on the prairie."

Allan Longacre, Executive V.P., had a very successful meeting with **Tiffany Webb**, the Activity Director at **Westminster Manor**, and was able to arrange some valuable — and much appreciated — rehearsal time, with presentations open to Westminster residents.

The Wand'ring Minstrels

Board member **Todd Galbraith** has worked very creatively and with much energy to organize a new outreach program to perform for schools, businesses, and community organizations. A 45 minute presentation, based on material from *Pinafore* and *Ruddigore*, is followed at school performances by a question and answer session. Performances already scheduled are: April 10, two shows in a row at Georgetown High School; May 3, Brentwood Christian School; May 20, Church of the Holy Spirit in Dripping Springs. Suggestions for other contacts are very welcome. Please get in touch with Todd at

989-3317 or galbraithproducts@yahoo.com.

Douglas Charles Earley

We are sorry to learn of the recent death of Bill Hatcher's cousin Douglas Earley in Austin at the age of 88. He was for many years President of the Cleve H. Tandy Foundation and supporter of our G&S shows with several yearly donations. Mr. Earley was born in Olean, New York, and moved to Brownsville, Texas, when he was 12. He lived in Brownsville for 63 years and was an upright and active member of his community. He was involved with professional societies and charitable organizations and served on the Board of the Brownsville Society for Crippled Children, United Way, Palmer Drug Abuse Program, the Valley Zoological Society, and Texas Commerce Bank. His special interests were to support children, theater, and those who need cheering in hospitals and hospices. Bill took Cousin Doug to our G&S shows, which he thoroughly enjoyed.

Member of the Month

All dues-paying members are eligible to be our "Member of the Month". The Member of the Month (who is randomly selected) is entitled to receive a CD of our 2005 *Mikado*. The Member of the Month for this month is:

Becky & Larry Brenner

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

Relive *H.M.S. Pinafore!*

Nancy Jay's excellent DVD's and CD's of our 2006 production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* are available at \$20 and \$15 respectively. Please call our office 472-4772 or visit our website www.gilbertsullivan.org to order your copies.

An outstanding Gift for any occasion!

Rafe to Direct Gilbert Play in Shreveport

Ralph MacPhail, Jr., our Artistic Director, has been engaged to direct Gilbert's short burlesque of *Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* [not to be confused with Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* — Ed.] for a single performance in April for The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of North Louisiana. The performance will be April 16th at 7:30 PM at the Strand Theatre in Shreveport and will serve as a curtain-raiser for the Carl Rosa Opera Company's touring production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. See www.thestrandtheatre.com [and see below for a special discount for our members to see this company at the Paramount in April.]

Gilbert wrote *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, which he called "A Tragic Episode in Three Tableaux, Founded on an Old Danish Legend," in 1874 as a satire on Henry Irving's *Hamlet* at the Lyceum Theatre. It wasn't produced until 1891, and before his death Gilbert himself appeared as King Claudius in several charity matinee performances.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was a part of Rafe's Master of Fine Arts thesis production in 1972, and in 1986, he gave a paper on the play (and other Gilbert references to Shakespeare) at M.I.T. as a part of the W.S. Gilbert Sesquicentennial Conference. Rafe and Alice would love to see some familiar faces at the Strand Theatre on April 16th!

Pirates at the Paramount!

An exclusive offer from The Paramount Theatre to Gilbert & Sullivan Society members for the upcoming performances of *The Pirates of Penzance* by the Carl Rosa Opera Company for two nights only, April 12th and 13th, 2007, at the Paramount Theatre. Visit <http://www.austintheatre.org>, and follow the instructions to purchase your tickets; enter "GANDS" as the promotional code to receive \$5.00 off the price. You must purchase tickets online to receive the discount. Visit www.gilbertsullivan.org for more details.

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 with your check, payable to "GSSA":

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
P.O. Box 684542
Austin, Texas 78768-4542 Phone: 472-4772 (472-GSSA)

Name & Address:

Phone(s): _____

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Does your company match donations? _____

I'd like to volunteer. I'm interested in: _____

Please check a membership category.

- Individual** (\$20-\$29)
- Family/Group** (\$30-\$49)
- Patron** (\$50-\$99)
- Grand Duke or Duchess** (\$100-\$249)
- Major General** (\$250-\$499)
- Pooh-Bah** (\$500-\$999)
- Pirate King** (\$1000-\$2499)
- Savoyard** (\$2500 & up)

We are proud to list our members in our programs, but if you would prefer NOT to be listed in our programs, please check here:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

Since 1976, we have been spreading the joys of G&S through
**Annual Grand Productions • G&S in School
Musicales • Musical Scholarships
Monthly Newsletters • Holiday Season Shows**

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E-mail: info@gilbertsullivan.org



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.



Artistic Director
Music Director
Database Manager
Web Master

Ralph MacPhail, Jr.
Jeffrey Jones-Ragona
Arthur DiBianca
Cecily Johnson

Board of Directors

June Julian	President	627-3482
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Pat Hobbs		259-9169
Nancy Jay	Office Manager	343-8408
Larry Shepley	Grants Writer, Layout	327-1511
Libby Weed	Volunteer Coordinator	837-5441

Our Next **Musicale** will be
Monday May 7.

Watch for an announcement in the next Newsletter of what will be a delightful prelude to

Ruddigore



Spring and summer pleasure you,
Autumn, aye, and winter too—
Every season has its cheer,
Life is lovely all the year!

Our Grand Production in June, 2007

Ruddigore
Or, The Witch's Curse

A Gilbert & Sullivan send-up of Victorian Melodrama— with Wicked Baronets, a Damsel in Distress, a Jolly Jack-Tar, a Virtuous Maiden, and an entire gallery of Ghostly Ancestors that comes to life at midnight! And lots of Sullivan's sparkling music! Plus a Family Curse.

The
Gilbert & SULLIVAN Society
OF AUSTIN

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Are you the Member of the Month?
See inside!

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April 2007