

The

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

Welcome to a new year with the Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society—one that promises to be full of delightful entertainment! Be sure your calendar is cleared for **Sunday, March 8, 3 pm**, when you can join lovers of music and

magic at our Spring Magicale. Please see the notice on page 5 with full details about this event.

Why are we calling it a magicale instead of a musicale? Our esteemed artistic director, Rafe MacPhail—an amazing magician along with all his other talents—will pull out his bag of tricks (by popular demand, since he charmed us at an earlier event) and present for us another exciting display of illusion. Then Eva Laskaris, Janette Jones, Dan Girardot, and David Fontenot will bring us a show of enchanting music that goes right along with the magical theme. Master of ceremonies for the afternoon's entertainment will be our resident Brit, Chris Buggé. If all of that doesn't get us in the mood for the magical *Iolanthe*, I don't know what will!

This year started well with our annual meeting January 12 at Harris Bell Hall, when we elected our board members for 2009. The following week the board elected its officers, named below. To give you a picture of the variety of talents and personalities we have on our board, look at this partial list of vocational and avocational activities of our board members in addition to their involvement in and love of G&S:

Byron Arnason – Mineral and geothermal resource explorer; author of numerous papers dealing with the physics of communication of animals (especially elephants and fish)

Christopher Buggé – Chemist who co-founded a bioanalytical laboratory and grew it from six to over 400 employees in 17 years; a governor of his alma mater, Christ's Hospital in Britain

Reba Gillman (Historian) – Educated in music and early childhood; has worked extensively in the field of education for low income children; has long experience as a "Math Wife," a surprisingly interesting and rewarding experience

June Julian (Membership Chair) – Opera singer/arts administrator; has performed with Austin Chamber Ensemble, Austin Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of San Antonio, and Conspirare; Managing Director and founder of Pinkstone Productions

David Little (Publicity Chair) – Employee of KVUE-TV for 23 years; now Director of Media Services with the Texas General Land Office; father of a budding opera star residing in New York City

Allan Longacre (Executive Vice President/Production Chair) – Commercial realtor; had a 36-year career in the arts and arts management, including theatre directing at the community and university levels

Stephen Reynolds – A historian by education who has become a devotee of the theatre; works for the University of Texas by day and pursues theatrical interests evenings and weekends

Kathryn Saar (Secretary) – Directs Neighborhood Housing Services (a non-profit organization) and specializes in fund-raising; taught English in Nancy, France; is a member of Alliance Française

Libby Weed (President) – Principal/Academic Vice President at Brentwood Christian School; educated in educational administration and English literature; former editor; author of *Read and Grow Children's Bible*

Dave Wieckowski (Treasurer) – In financial management at Whole Foods Market; came to G&S through an organization that provides accounting assistance to non-profits; plays several musical instruments

Ingrid Yaple – Born in the Netherlands; has a political science degree; has served on several homeowners' association boards; organic gardener and permaculture practitioner

With this variety of personnel, you can well imagine that our board meetings are never boring! ...Well, hardly ever.

Libby Weed

NEW MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society welcomes the following new members to the board: (left to right) Kathryn Saar, Stephen Reynolds, and Ingrid Yaple.



Audition Parts for *Iolanthe*

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Anticipation of auditions is always exciting for Yr Fthfl Stg Drctr. It's always grand to see so many friends who've participated in earlier shows—and to make new ones.

My purpose this month is to provide information for auditionees concerning the auditions and also concerning the characters in the wonderful show slated for production this summer.

Musical Director and Conductor Jeffrey Jones-Ragona and I request that auditionees memorize a song from Gilbert & Sullivan or something similar and provide a copy of the music for the auditions accompanist. (You must sing from memory and to an accompaniment.) After singing, I'll request people auditioning for a speaking/principal role to read from the libretto with me. I may also ask the ladies to follow some basic stage movement directions.

If *Iolanthe* is not in your library, you can download the libretto from The Gilbert & Sullivan Archive (<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/iolanthe>). You can also download printed music from the opera from this website, and karaoke-like and midi accompaniments for each of the musical numbers.

The Chorus of *Iolanthe* is composed of the Chorus of Peers (the gentlemen) and the Chorus of Fairies (the ladies). The Men can be of assorted ages and body-types and must be able to march; however the women should be—well, they describe themselves “dainty little fairies”—and should be able to move balletically.

When I thought of this month's column, I recalled that about twenty years ago, my friend Jim Ellis (the editor of *The Bab Ballads* to whom I referred in an earlier column) put together some helpful if general “character sketches” for the Valley Light Opera (of Amherst, Massachusetts) *Newsletter*, and he and the editor Bill Venman have given me permission to reproduce it here. Bill (also known as SavoyNet's founder) wrote the introductory paragraph.

Iolanthe offers ten singing roles and one which has a short speaking part. Jim Ellis has given us the following brief descriptions of the characters. He says that none of these are absolute prerequisites [with which I agree. *R.M.*]. He has just seen, for instance, a Pooh-Bah who was tall, limp, fey, and exceedingly good.

Iolanthe (mezzo-soprano) – a figure of pathos or tragedy who has wandered into a G&S opera; elegant of movement; capable of sustained emotional highs and lows; poses like the figures on a Greek grave stele.

Phyllis (soprano) – clear, flute-like voice; picturesque; Dresden china doll; naturally temperamental (like spring days of sun and showers); perfectly matched with Strephon; delicately determined.

Fairy Queen (contralto) – commanding presence; powerful voice and gestures; fearful yet lovable; a cross between Margaret Dumont and Brunhilde, but far more attractive and amorous.

Celia (soprano) – perhaps small and quick; airy and flitty; delicate gestures; staccato (but not shrill) in voice and manner.

Leila (mezzo-soprano) – perhaps taller and lithier, more

sinuous in gesture and movement, more languorous in tone, than Celia; perhaps, if Celia is fair, Leila is dark (cf. Hermia and Helena in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is *Iolanthe* without the music and Peers).

Fleta ([chorister with a] speaking part) – should be fleeter, no doubt (English pronunciation), than her fellow fairies; all three of the principal fairies should be good dancers.

Strephon (high baritone) – resonant, clear voice; broadly graceful; “inclined to be stout”; confident; unabashed; your all-round Arcadian shepherd, good on the pipes.

Lord Chancellor (baritone) – flawless, effortless diction; stamina; perfect timing; “a clean old [gentle]man”; gouty but agile; deliberate yet ebullient; irascible yet benign.

Lord Mountararat (baritone) – rich, full voice; perhaps a bit of the walrus or Colonel Blimp about him; slightly ponderous; possibly drawly; discreetly arrogant.

Lord Tolloller (tenor) – aristocratic to the point of effeteness; supercilious; possibly stiff-necked and myopic; one of these two lords should, ideally, have the classic equine physitonomy (horse face) of the English aristocracy.

Private Willis (bass) – *not* like the Lords; low-born, possibly cockney; imperturbable; matter-of-fact; perhaps lacking a marble or two; good, but stiff, bearing; not necessarily tall.

Now you can see why I remembered this after all these years. And you can also now realize why I'm looking forward to auditions with such keen anticipation. (If you have any questions, please write: RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com.)

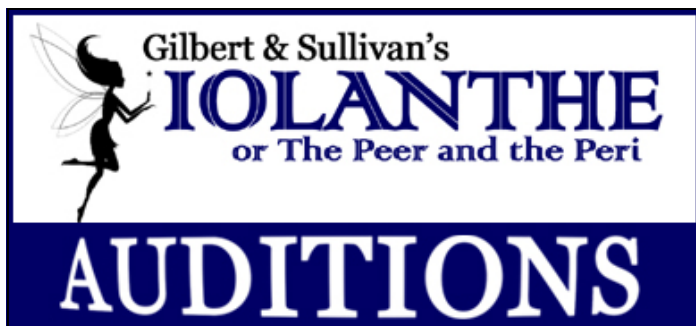
Please see the article on page 3 for details on how you can sign up for a slot, and please encourage a friend to audition so that even more can share the delight of Gilbert & Sullivan.

Wand'ring Minstrels

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's Wand'ring Minstrels are the ambassadors for the Society to the Central Texas community. Their programs serve as an educational outreach tool that provides an introduction to the genre that is distinctively Gilbert & Sullivan. Programs range from a lively recital of Gilbert & Sullivan's most popular tunes to interactive, mini-productions of the Society's full summer productions. The Wand'ring Minstrels are available for private parties, school shows, and corporate events. We also offer Fairies in the Schools, an interactive mini-production of *Iolanthe* for all ages.

The Wand'ring Minstrels will custom design a program for any event where G&S would be appropriate for a wide variety of budgetary considerations. You'll hear great voices, skilled in the G&S style, presenting satirical, sentimental, and rousing Gilbert & Sullivan favorites with style and flair.

For bookings or additional information, please contact **Eva Laskaris** by email at minstrels@gilbertsullivan.org, or at 512-350-4935.



Saturday February 28
and Sunday March 1
University Lutheran Center
2100 San Antonio
(21st St. and San Antonio —
just west of the UT campus)

Call Chuck Antonie at (512) 733-1006 or email cantonie@yahoo.com to reserve a 10-minute audition time slot. For more information, visit our website at www.gilbertsullivan.org.

Audition requirements: Prepare a 2- to 3-minute aria, either from opera or operetta in any language (English is preferred). For female auditioners, a background in ballet is helpful but not required. Download an Audition Form from the website and bring it to the audition, as well as one headshot, three copies of your résumé, and a copy of your sheet music for the accompanist. Audition pieces must be memorized, and a *cappella* auditions are **not** permitted. Those auditioning for principal roles should be prepared to read dialogue from *Iolanthe*. See the article on page 2 for a description of roles.

Music rehearsals begin in late March; staging rehearsals begin in May. A small honorarium will be paid to all performers.



NEWS of our MEMBERS

Just in time for Valentine's Day—Music Director Jeffrey Jones-Ragona announces an upcoming concert by the Austin Chamber Ensemble, entitled *Unlucky in Love – Let's Do It Together*. It features G&S pianist Martha Mortensen Dudgeon and Stephen Burnaman on piano, and vocal duets and solos by frequent G&S lead soprano Claire Vangelisti and tenor Jeffrey Jones-Ragona (in his first vocal recital in 6 years!). Highlights include selections from *HMS Pinafore* as well as selections from *Carmen* by Bizet. Concerts are:

8 pm Thursday, Feb. 12, at Seabrook Chapel, Huston
–Tillotson University, 900 Chicon Street; free—
donations benefit the HTU music scholarships,

8 pm Friday, Feb. 13, at First Presbyterian Church,
8001 Mesa Drive; tickets \$20/\$15/\$5.

For more information, please go to www.austinchamberensemble.com.

Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr. is having a busy 2009. In January he staged a new song cycle based on the writings of Marie Curie, arranged by Tom Noe and composed by Larry Taylor. The work had its premiere at James Madison University on Jan. 20, and will be performed again at the JMU Contemporary Music Festival in February. Following *Iolanthe* auditions and the *Magical* in Austin, Rafe will travel to Shreveport to direct W. S. Gilbert's "Dramatic Contrast" in two acts, *Sweethearts*, for the G&S Society of North Louisiana; the play will run March 19-21. He will return to Virginia on March 23 in time for a performance of *Marie Curie* at Bridgewater College that evening.

June Julian, past President and current Board member, is a featured artist on a new children's CD, *Aesop's Fables for the 21st Century*, written by Cy Young. The CD incorporates 6 of Aesop's Fables included in the narrative describing how Aesop came to write his stories. The fables are fun, silly, and informative. The 10 clever, melodic songs usher the story line swiftly along and contain lots of laughs. Great for kids from 3 to 10. Available at www.watchfiremusic.com (select "genre," then "children").

Allan and Barbara Longacre are singing in the chorus for the Texas Choral Consort's *Judas Maccabæus* by George Frideric Handel. Brent Baldwin conducts, and David Stevens is the featured soloist. The performances are at the Northwest Hills United Methodist Church on Friday, Feb. 13 at 8 pm and Sunday, Feb. 15 at 3 pm.

New Board member Stephen Reynolds is very busy. He is currently appearing in the Gaslight Baker Theatre's production of *Almost Maine* in Lockhart (through Feb. 14), then appears Feb. 19 through March 1 in the Weird City Theatre Company's *Sherlock Holmes* at the Dougherty Arts Center here in Austin.

The Annual Business Meeting and Musicale

by Reba Gillman

At 7:30 pm on Monday January 12, over 50 people gathered in Harris Bell Hall at Westminster Manor. At least half were society members, providing more than the quorum of 15 necessary to do our business. It was a pleasure to welcome the many residents of Westminster Manor who always seem to enjoy our offerings, and to see the familiar faces of the loyal members who come to help us do our annual business. Our Society used to meet regularly ten times a year and it's always good to see some of our long-time friends.

President **Libby Weed** presided pleasantly and efficiently. She first called on our Treasurer, **Dave Wieckowski**, to report on Society finances. He told us that although our 2008 production of *The Pirates of Penzance* was an artistic success -- our best ever -- we overspent our budget and actually lost money. Note that any member may call our office and ask for a copy of this report. Next, **Allan Longacre**, chair of the nominating committee, announced the suggested slate for the 2009 Board of Directors: continuing members **Byron Arnason**, **Chris Buggé**, **Reba Gillman**, **June Julian**, **David Little**, **Allan Longacre**, **Libby Weed**, and **Dave Wieckowski**; and new members **Stephen Reynolds**, **Kathryn Saar**, and **Ingrid Yaple**. Byron Arnason and Kathryn Saar regretted that they were not able to be present. Libby said a few choice words about each nominee, and asked each to stand for all to see. She asked for nominations from the floor. There were none and Allan moved that we accept the slate as presented. Sue Ricket Caldwell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Libby reminded us that although there were only 11 nominees, the board expected that we would add a member later to fill the 12th space. She then introduced **Bill Hatcher**, long-time member and former President, whom we have hired to be Production Manager. He explained that the main characters in *Iolanthe*, our June 2009 production, are the Fairy Queen and the Lord Chancellor, and that the chorus consists entirely of female Fairies and male Peers. He told us a lot about how the show is shaping up, giving special attention to his research into costume companies, with much historical detail. Some of these colorful companies have been doing business for over 100 years. The venue will be the new theater at Travis High School where our presence has been welcomed warmly. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** is our Artistic and Stage Director and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** is our Music Director. Fifteen musicians will play in the orchestra.

Business accomplished, we took a break for refreshments and friendly conversation, enjoying the tasty munchies supplied by our members. Then we returned to our seats for the musical sing-along led by **Eva Laskaris**, accompanied by Lady High Pianist **Martha Dudgeon**. All joined in enthusiastically singing the

delightful "Soon as we may, Off and away!" the finale from *Iolanthe* (preview of our summer 2009 production); "For he's gone and married Yum-Yum --" featuring Eva Laskaris as Pitti-Sing in the finale from *The Mikado* (preview of our summer 2010 production); and a review of our summer production 2008, *The Pirates of Penzance*, with the familiar songs, "Here's a first-rate opportunity to get married with impunity;" "Hold, monsters!" featuring June Julian as Mabel; and the magnificent patter-song "I am the very model of a modern Major-General," performed flawlessly by **Arthur DiBianca**. To close the program in our traditional way, all stood to sing "Now to the banquet we press," from *The Sorcerer*, and "Hail, Poetry" from *The Pirates of Penzance*, with Art singing the Pirate King's lead-in verse. And so ended another happy Gilbert and Sullivan evening.



Eva Laskaris conducts the sing-along portion of the program



while Lord High Pianist Martha Dudgeon provides accompaniment



Members and guests share scores for an enthusiastic sing-along of Gilbert and Sullivan selections.

Spring Magicale

Please join us Sunday, March 8, at 3 pm for our spring "Magicale" and fundraiser for our summer production of *Iolanthe*. Our stage director and master illusionist, **Rafe MacPhail, Jr.**, will delight the audience with his magic act as our own "Wizard of G&S." Then be transported to the Land of Oz with a music revue of three Broadway shows inspired by the magic of L. Frank Baum's book, *The Wizard of Oz*, including songs from the original *The Wizard of Oz* musical, the 1970s hit *The Wiz*, and the current Broadway sensation *Wicked*. Performances sung by **David Fontenot**, **Dan Girardot**, **Janette Jones**, and **Eva Laskaris** and featuring **Chris Buggé** as the Master of Ceremonies.

LOCATION: Northwest Hills United Methodist Church, 7050 Village Center Drive (near Far West and MoPac).

TICKETS: Only \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. Go to www.gilbertsullivan.org for advance purchase.



Send Us Your News!

We try (within space constraints) to include descriptions of members' performances (past and future) and other activities, and any information related to Gilbert and Sullivan. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!

Donors

We wish to thank the following contributors whose generous support is helping to make our 2009 production of *Iolanthe* possible!

Vaughn Alexander • Jessica Klimek Alexander • Byron Arnason • Richard Arndt • Ken & Emily Ashworth • Amy & Gary Bennett • Joe, Trish & Nicole Bennett • Steve Bodkin and Kathy Stone • Sam Burnes • Barbara Buttrey • Florence Castle • Lucian & Vera Chimene • Jim & Eleanor Cochran • Marion Wier Deford • Conrad & Anna Derdeyn • Delphi - Ron Gauny and Sunny Peer • Lon Gee • Maudi Greenwood • David & Roslyn Gutman • Enid & Gary Hallock • Ethel Harvey • Betty R. Hatcher • Cynthia Hill • Col. & Mrs. Leon Holland • Diana & Sabrina Houston • Earl R. Hunt and Susan C. Spruance • Dr. Peter & Dr. Elizabeth John • Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Kellogg • Deborah L. Kerr • Matthew & Margaret King • D. Krause • Steve Kubenka • Mack & Margery Lindsey • Dale Lipsett and Linda Creel • Allan & Barbara Longacre • Alice & Ralph MacPhail, Jr. • Norman & Emilia Martin • Michael Meigs • Joseph & Joanne Moldenhauer • Gerrell Moore • James S. Moore • Tim Moore • Wilson Nolle • Maurie Ommernan • Diana Phillips • Larry & Donna Roth • Pat & R. B. Rudy • Dorothy Rutishauser • Harriet Rutland • Mrs. Marjorie Saad • The Sage Family • Linda & Joe St.Clair • Cynthia Shelmerdine and Kate Bracher • Jane S. Shepard • Larry Shepley • Gary & Grace Silcott • Andree F. Sjöberg • Linnea Bergquist Smith • Alice Tharinger and Bobbie Erb • Cathie & Bob Tull • Mary & William Weaver • Patricia Wedel • Libby & Michael Weed • Louise & Steven Weinberg • Stramer & Linda White



This project is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and an award by the National Endowment for the Arts which believes that a great nation deserves great art.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

We encourage you to join our Society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal 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", or call to join (512) 472-4772 (GSSA).

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)

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

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

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Phone: (512) 472-4772 (GSA-GSSA)

Our web site: www.gilbertsullivan.org

E-mail: info@gilbertsullivan.org

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The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

Artistic Director

Music Director

Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Jeffrey Jones-Ragona

Board of Directors

Libby Weed	President	837-5441
Allan Longacre	Executive Vice President	301-5611
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Stephen Reynolds		264-4550
Ingrid Yaple		228-0994

Database Manager

Newsletter Editor

Arthur DiBianca

Sue Ricket Caldwell



Spring Magicale



DATE: Sunday, March 8, 2009

TIME: 3 pm

PLACE: Northwest Hills United Methodist Church
7050 Village Center Drive (near Far West and MoPac)

TICKETS: Only \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door!

Go to www.gilbertsullivan.org for advance purchase

FEATURING: Master illusionist Rafe MacPhail, Jr.

Singers Eva Laskaris, Janette Jones,

Dan Girardot, and David Fontenot

Master of Ceremonies Christopher Buggé

COMING EVENTS

Iolanthe Auditions

Saturday, February 28,

and Sunday, March 1

see pages 2 and 3 for details

Iolanthe

or the Peer and the Peri

June 11-21

Thursday through Sunday

Travis High School

The
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