

The

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

The evening of January 11 was a positive start to a new year for Austin G&S. It was good to have several new-to-our-Society folks, along with a great group of familiar faces. After our brief business meeting, we held a sing-along that ended up with just about everyone helping to raise the roof.

The business portion of the meeting included reports on our sound financial condition and on our membership, which has grown since *Iolanthe*. Then we elected the following people to our board:

Christopher Buggé – Analytical 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; has served for several years on the board and is our "resident Brit"

Reba Gillman – 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" at the side of her late husband Len, for many years an Austin G&S luminary himself

Pat Hobbs – A frequent G&S volunteer and former board member returning to serve again; has background as a metrologist and electronic technician; creates magnificent cakes for our special events and coordinates volunteers for the Society

Leonard Johnson – Associate Professor of Voice at the UT Butler School of Music; has played numerous roles with ALO and G&S in recent years; has served as choral conductor for the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club

David Little – Director/Production Manager at KVUE-TV for 23 years; now Director of Media Services with the Texas General Land Office; heads the Society's publicity efforts and serves as webmaster; father of a budding opera star (and former Austin G&S Yum-Yum) Christiana Little, residing in New York City

Roberta Long – CPA and adult educator who teaches Hebrew, Jewish liturgy, and accounting; wife of frequent G&S chorister Mark Long and mother of Steven (about whom see note on page 5); serves as office manager for the Society

Randall McIntyre – Child psychiatrist who has also served as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the UT Galveston medical branch; has appeared in the chorus of five previous Austin G&S shows and has served for two years on the board

Michael Meigs – Theatre journalist who maintains "Austin Live Theatre" site, posting news and reviews for local theatrical events; a veteran of the U.S. diplomatic corps from 1978-2007; a polyglot who speaks several languages but claims he does not sing

Kathryn Saar – An employee of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs who specializes in affordable housing; is trained in grant writing and strategic planning; has entertained us at G&S musicales with her lovely soprano voice

Libby Weed – Principal/Academic Vice President at Brentwood Christian School; educated in educational administration and English literature; has served for several years on the board and has sung in the chorus of shows in past years

Dave Wieckowski – 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 and performed with his son Brian in our last *Pinafore*

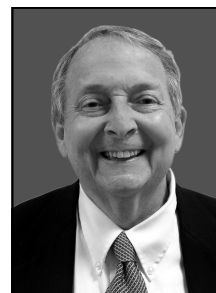
Ingrid Yaple – Born in the Netherlands; has a political science degree; has served on several homeowners' association boards; is a self-employed grant writer who provides invaluable assistance to Austin G&S along these lines; backstage assistant (and stage mother to Dirk, the train-bearer) in *Iolanthe*

At the meeting, we expressed our profound appreciation to **Byron Arnason, June Julian, Allan Longacre, and Stephen Reynolds**, stepping down as board members, and to **Larry Shepley, Enid Hallock, and Allan Longacre** (again), the nominating committee. We're off and running for another great year!

New Board Members



Pat Hobbs



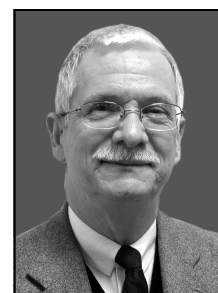
Leonard Johnson



Roberta Long



Randall McIntyre



Michael Meigs

Musicale on Sunday, March 7, 3 pm
see pages 2 and 5 for details!

March Musicale Preview: Some Musical Rarities from *The Yeomen of the Guard* by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

The Yeomen of the Guard has its secrets. Did you know that two soli for major characters were cut, one before the opening night and one after? Each song arguably helps to more fully round out its singer—but gone they’ve been, usually, for well over a century. Did you know that Sullivan set *thrice* that tenorian favorite, “Is life a boon?”—and at Gilbert’s behest? Did you know that the original production had soli for a Third and Fourth Yeomen in addition to the First and Second? Do you know what is probably the “real” reason for the Sergeant Meryll/Dame Carruthers duet, “Rapture, rapture,” at the end of the opera?

All of these numbers will be featured at the Musicale on Sunday, March 7, at 3 pm in the sanctuary at Genesis Presbyterian Church. For now, here’s a brief preview.

The loutish, love-sick Wilfred Shadbolt, Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor at the Tower of London, originally had a song, which began:

When jealous torments rack my soul,
My agonies I can’t control,
Oh, better sit on red hot coal
Than love a heartless jade.

He goes on to compare his jealousy with the Tower’s bone-breaking rack, and possibly gains some audience sympathy in the process.

I’ve often wondered if the song was cut because of a somewhat pedestrian lyric, and a somewhat pedestrian setting—or because of its sadism—or perhaps because it included perhaps the most sensuous lyric in all Gilbert & Sullivan:

The bird that breakfasts on your lip,
I would I had him in my grip,
He sippeth where I dare not sip,
I can’t get over that.
The cat you fondle soft and sly,
He layeth where I dare not lie.
We’re not on terms, that cat and I.
I do not like that cat.

Gilbert cut it before opening night—but it will be sung at our next musicale in March.

Sergeant Meryll’s song wasn’t cut until after opening night. It doesn’t advance the plot or tell us anything about the good sergeant that we don’t learn elsewhere. I like it better than I used to—probably because through it we learn something about the fast passage of time as perceived by a gentleman of a certain age as he reflects on Leonard, his son, who has “come to join the Tower Wardens”:

A laughing boy but yesterday,
A merry urchin blithe and gay,
.....
Today a warrior all sunbrowed,
When deeds of soldierly renown
Are all the boast of London town,
A veteran tomorrow!

The lyric also reflects a father’s pride in the accomplishments of his son:

When at my Leonard’s deeds sublime,
A soldier’s pulse beats double time,
And grave hearts thrill

As brave hearts will
At tales of martial glory.
I burn with flush of pride and joy,
A pride unbittered by alloy,
To find my boy – my darling boy –
The theme of song and story!

Well, this superannuated stage director and father understands Meryll’s “proper pride”!

One of the most famous tenor songs in G&S is Colonel Fairfax’s first-act aria. Ariel Rios sang it at a recent musicale—and we shall hear it again—but twice. Sullivan actually composed it three times, and we will hear it once as Sullivan originally composed it the second time (the first setting does not survive), and then as he composed it once again—again at the behest of his collaborator, who didn’t think the original settings were “quite right” and “upbraided.” (Reba printed the lyrics in the January issue.)

Years later, Gilbert was asked for a quotation from the Savoy operas for Sullivan’s memorial, and he selected the opening words of this song:

Is life a boon?
If so, it must befall
That Death, whene’er he call,
Must call too soon.

(This inscription can be read on the monument any day of the week in London outside the Riverside Entrance to the Savoy Hotel in the Embankment Gardens.)

Gilbert & Sullivan further cut the first act by tightening the Finale. The one we’re familiar with today features soli by the First and Second Yeomen lauding Leonard Meryll’s heroics through rhetorical questions, but Gilbert originally had declarations instead of questions for two other Yeomen:

3RD YEOMAN. You, when brought to execution
Like a demigod of yore,
With heroic resolution
Snatched a sword and killed a score. . . .
4TH YEOMAN. Then escaping from the foemen,
Bolstered with the blood you shed,
You, defiant, fearing no men,
Saved your honour and your head! . . .
FAIRFAX. (*aside*) True, my course with judgement shaping,
Favoured, too, by lucky star,
I succeeded in escaping
Prison-bolt and prison bar!
(*aloud*) Oh! the tales that are narrated
Of my deeds of derring-do
Have been much exaggerated,
Scarce a word of them is true!

(When Gilbert proposed this cut to Sullivan, he reminded his collaborator that he was suggesting cutting his words, not Sullivan’s music!)

Jeffrey and I have not decided just which of these numbers to restore to the production in June. The arguments pro and con are many and varied—and some convincing!

But we know that we will include the rollicking but off-cut duet for Dame Carruthers and Sergeant Meryll at the end of Act II. It features one of Gilbert’s favorite words (“Rapture, rapture”!), and not only does it “soften” Gilbert’s dénouement of four principal characters ending up in two “forced marriages,” but there is another and rather pragmatic reason for its inclusion. That reason? (Shhh! It’s a secret. It gives Fairfax and Elsie more time to change for their wedding!)

JUNE 2010 GRAND PRODUCTION

Gilbert & Sullivan's

The Yeomen of the Guard

AUDITIONS

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 27 & 28

Auditions are by appointment only
Call Chuck Antonie at (512) 733-1006 or (512) 825-5187
or email cantonie@yahoo.com to reserve audition time

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin will hold auditions for its June 10-20 production of *The Yeomen of the Guard* on Saturday and Sunday, February 27 and 28. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** will be returning as artistic and musical directors, respectively. The Society's former President, **Bill Hatcher**, returns as production manager.

Auditions are about 10 minutes long, by appointment only. Call **Chuck Antonie** at (512) 733-1006 or (512) 825-5187, or email cantonie@yahoo.com to reserve an audition time slot.

All roles are open for casting, including principals, comprimarios, and chorus. A small honorarium will be paid to all performers.

A memorized aria or art song (English language preferred) is required. An accompanist will be provided, although singers may bring their own pianist if they wish. Please note that unaccompanied (a cappella) auditions are not permitted, nor are self-accompanied auditions.

A completed Audition Form (available at the website www.gilbertsullivan.org) is required, and a résumé and headshot are requested if available.

Auditions will be held at the University Lutheran Center at 2100 San Antonio - the NW corner at the intersection of 21st and San Antonio. Rooftop parking at the Lutheran Center is accessible from the alley that runs behind the building.



"Now to the banquet we press!"

Members and guests enjoy munchies after the Annual Meeting.
photo courtesy David Little

Important Information for Auditionees Regarding Rehearsals and the Rehearsal Schedule for *The Yeomen of the Guard*

Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** says music rehearsals begin Thursday, March 6. In general, evening rehearsals are from 7 to 9:30 pm; Saturday rehearsals are 1 to 3:30 pm. Rehearsals marked below with * must not be missed by those called. Rehearsals are:

Thu March 11, 7 pm – Entire Cast read-through

*Sat March 13, 1 pm – Women's chorus and principals

*Tue March 16 – Men's chorus and principals

Sat March 20 – Act I finale, and opener if time permits

*Tue March 23 – Full cast, Act I opening, finale, Act II finale

Sat March 27 – Women's chorus, all numbers, review

Tue April 13 – Men's Chorus, all numbers, review

Sat April 17, 2:30-5 pm – Principals only, TBD

Tue April 20 – Act I, Chorus and chorus w/ principal numbers only (no airs or duets).

Thu April 22 – Act II ditto—review of Act I choruses as time permits.

Sat April 24 – Principals, TBD

*Tue May 4 – Act I Clean up, Entire cast

*Thu May 6 – Act II Clean up, Entire cast

*Sat May 8 – Run entire show off book.

Staging rehearsals begin on Monday, May 10, and continue as run-throughs and dress rehearsals until the opening on June 10. Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, divides each show into rehearsal segments so the full cast is not called to every rehearsal and so that each individual's time-investment is well spent. "Rafe" also tries to keep the rehearsals productive and fun for all, and end on time, realizing that all participants have other responsibilities in their lives outside the theatre.

Rehearsals will be held in three-hour blocks, Monday-Friday 7-10 PM; Saturdays 10-1 and 2-5, and Sundays 2-5 and 6-9.

Auditionees will be asked to list conflicts with the above dates and times on their audition forms; these conflicts will be taken into consideration at auditions, and will be used for structuring the staging rehearsal schedule, which will be distributed ASAP after auditions.

Once a role is accepted, the Society expects that each individual will consider the show to be of primary importance and not accept other obligations that will interfere with the above rehearsal times. Once the rehearsal schedule is posted and distributed, cast members will know the dates and times they will definitely be called (and the ones for which they will not), and will not accept obligations interfering with their calls.

Rafe welcomes questions. Send e-mail to:

RafeMacPhail@yahoo.com

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

Annual Business Meeting and Musicale

by Reba Gillman

On Monday, January 11, about 38 people gathered in the comfortable Fellowship Hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church for our Annual Business Meeting. President **Libby Weed** presided in her usual efficient and friendly way. About 25 paid-up members had signed in and provided the quorum needed to transact business. After various preliminary announcements, Libby gave a brief report on the success of last June's production of *Iolanthe*, and introduced Production Manager **Bill Hatcher**, who brought us up to date on plans for our June 2010 production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. He said that he is working on lining up costumes, set design, and other technical matters. Auditions will take place at the University Lutheran Center at 2100 San Antonio Street on Saturday and Sunday, February 27 and 28. We expect to perform again in Travis High School Performing Arts Center, although the final contract has not yet been signed. Treasurer **Dave Wiekowski** reported briefly on the Society's finances, and noted that our production of *Iolanthe*, a less well-known Gilbert & Sullivan opera, had done well, clearing expenses and bringing in extra money, which supported the idea that we should stage another less well-known opera this year, delaying a return to the production of *The Mikado*, one of the best known G&S Operas. **Arthur DiBianca** was happy to report that as a result of a fund-raising letter our membership had significantly increased this year.

Coming to the important business of the day, Libby introduced the nominating committee: **Larry Shepley**, Chair, and **Enid Hallock** and **Allan Longacre**. She then listed the twelve nominees to the Board of Directors, asking that each stand when called. She mentioned some identifying information as she called each name. Those present were continuing members **Chris Buggé**, **Reba Gillman**, **David Little**, **Michael Meigs**, **Libby Weed**, **Dave Wiekowski** and **Ingrid Yaple**; and new nominees **Leonard Johnson** and **Roberta Long**. Three nominees were unavoidably unable to be present: **Kathryn Saar**, and new nominees **Pat Hobbs** and **Randall McIntyre**. As there were no nominations from the floor, Libby called for a motion, and **Bill Hatcher** moved that these nominations be accepted by acclamation. **Larry Shepley** seconded the motion, which passed by a show of hands.

Now for the fun: a sing-along, with music provided, and explanatory remarks by Libby. The accomplished accompanist for all the music was a new-found G&S enthusiast, **Paul Pew**, who teaches and directs productions at the McCallum High School Fine Arts Academy. The audience ended up standing for each chorus, sang parts lustily, and seemed to be enjoying themselves thoroughly. (We ought to do this more often!) First came the familiar "He is an Englishman" from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, directed by Libby Weed, and featuring **Bill Hatcher** as Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., and **Katherine Wiggins** as Cousin Hebe. Next came the wonderful chorus from the first act finale of *Iolanthe*, directed by **Bill Hatcher**. The women sing "With Strephon for your foe, no doubt, A fearful prospect opens out! And who shall say What evils may Result in consequence!" while the men sing "Young Strephon is the kind of lout We do not care a fig about! We cannot say What evils may Result in consequence!" Then came "Miya Sama" from *The Mikado*, directed by **Arthur DiBianca**, featuring **Art** as the Mikado and **Katherine Wiggins** as Katisha. This is the only place in *The Mikado* where supposedly Japanese words are given, and the accepted knowledge is that the tune was a real Japanese military march written after 1868. Some members of our audience wondered about the meaning of the words, but no one seemed to have any information. **Ian Bradley**, in his book *The Complete Annotated Gilbert & Sullivan*, states that the words are Japanese, and translates them: "Your majesty, your majesty, what is that fluttering in front of the stallion?" He says that the answer is given in the second verse, which is not used by Gilbert: "Do you not know that it is the imperial banner of silken brocade, signifying our intention to defeat the enemies of the crown?"

At this point **Chris Buggé** came "on stage" looking very British in his jacket and tie and bowler hat. In his inimitable British accent he invited us to do the proper thing and join him in singing "God save the Queen," -- "and mind you do it right!" We sang three verses, and apparently satisfied our resident Brit. The program ended with our traditional "Hail, Poetry," and "Now to the banquet we press," with **Art** singing the Pirate King's introduction to "Hail, Poetry." We then retired to the delicious munchies laid out on tables at the back of the hall, to chew and chat.



Counterclockwise from left: Libby Weed directs "He is an Englishman" with **Bill Hatcher** and **Katherine Wiggins** performing; **Paul Pew** accompanies the *Iolanthe* finale, as **Bill Hatcher** directs; **Arthur DiBianca** and **Katherine Wiggins** perform "Miya Sama," as **Art** also directs; **Chris Buggé** leads a rousing "God Save the Queen;" and audience members enjoy participating.

photos courtesy David Little



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 _____
 Address _____
 State _____
 Phone number(s) _____
 E-mail address _____
 Employer _____
 Does your company match donations? _____

☐ 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: ☐

Steven Long Sings from Austin to Jerusalem

Steven Long, son of members Roberta and Mark Long, performed the part of the Pirate King in the Jerusalem G&S Society production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. Steven received his B.M. at the University of Texas and his M.M. at the Chicago College of Performing Arts (at Roosevelt University). He is currently in his first year of Cantorial School in Israel. The Long family has had a long relationship with the GSSA. Steven sang in the chorus of our 1999

Patience and 2000 *Pinafore*.

Mark has been in our 1997 *Yeomen*, 1998 *Mikado*, 1999 *Patience*, 2000 *Pinafore*, 2003 *Pirates*, 2006 *Pinafore*, 2007 *Ruddigore*, and 2009 *Iolanthe*. Roberta (a non-singer) has recently become a member of the GSSA Board of Directors.



Pirate King Steven Long carries off Edith, played by Steven's girlfriend, Sonia Nizny, in the Jerusalem G&S Society's The Pirates of Penzance

G&S at St. Edward's

On Saturday, March 6, at 7:30 p.m., the St. Edward's University Orchestra will perform selections from *The Pirates of Penzance* as part of its "Pirates!" concert (which will also feature music from *The Pirates of the Caribbean*). They will play the overture, as well as several piratey numbers from the opera. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, our artistic director, will introduce the G&S selections. Some of our recent cast members will be singing: Jay Chacon, David Fontenot, Russell Gregory, Janette Jones, Mark Long, Randall McIntyre, Paul Nixon, Kert Peterson, Alan Pochi, and Daniel Stone are slated to perform as pirates and policemen. **Arthur DiBianca**, our database manager and frequent cast member, will be playing clarinet in the orchestra. This will be a rare opportunity to hear Sullivan's music performed live by a full orchestra.

Spring Musicale & Grand Production Preview

Musical Rarities

from *The Yeomen of the Guard*

SUNDAY, MARCH 7 - 3pm

"... little-known secrets of the classic Gilbert & Sullivan operetta, *The Yeomen of the Guard*."

March Musicale

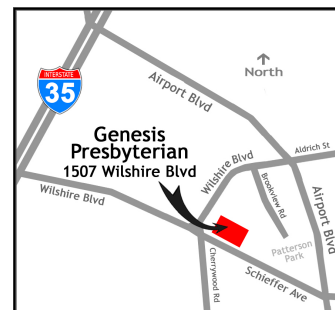
Our next Musicale will emphasize forgotten material from *The Yeomen of the Guard* (see page 2 for details). It will be held in the sanctuary of Genesis Presbyterian Church; refreshments will be enjoyed afterward in the fellowship hall. The Master of Ceremonies for the event is **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** Singers are **Russell Gregory, David Fontenot, Dan Girardot, and Janette Jones**, with Lsdy High Accompanist **Marti Dudgeon**.

Genesis Presbyterian Church

1507 Wilshire Blvd.

Sunday, March 7, 3 pm

Please Bring Munchies!





P. O. Box 684542
Austin, TX 78768-4542
Return Service Requested

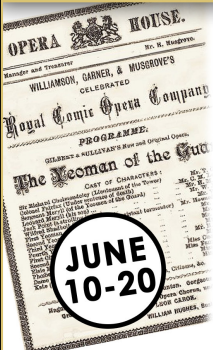
Nonprofit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 2054
Austin, Texas




Top line of mailing label is date when your membership expires.

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2010

Summer 2010 Grand Production





The Yeomen of the Guard

or "The Merryman and his Maid"

Coming Events

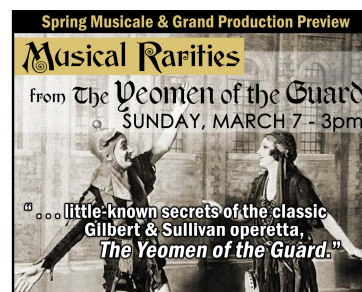
Auditions for *The Yeomen of the Guard*
Saturday and Sunday, February 27 and 28
please see page 3 for details

March Musicale
Sunday, March 7, 3 pm
please see pages 2 and 5 for details

The Yeomen of the Guard
June 10 through 20, Thursdays through Sundays

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in mid-April; the deadline for submissions is March 29. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!



The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

Since 1976, we have been spreading the joys of G&S through

Annual Grand Productions
Educational/Community Outreach
Musicales
Musical Scholarships
Newsletters
Holiday Season Shows

G&S Office: 6901 Lamar Blvd., #139, Austin, TX 78752
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 684542, Austin, TX 78768-4542
Phone: (512) 472-4772 (GSA-GSSA)
Our web site: www.gilbertsullivan.org
E-mail: info@gilbertsullivan.org

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 from the National Endowment for the Arts which believes that a great nation deserves great art.



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

Chris Buggé
Reba Gillman
Pat Hobbs
Leonard Johnson
David Little
Roberta Long

Randall McIntyre
Michael Meigs
Kathryn Saar
Libby Weed
Dave Wieckowski
Ingrid Yaple

Note: Officers of the Board will be elected by the Board at their next meeting.

Database Manager
Newsletter Editor

Arthur DiBianca
Sue Ricket Caldwell