

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

How well do you really know your Austin G&S Society?

If you attend our major production each June, you know we produce excellent shows, but you still may not be closely acquainted. If you are one of our regulars at musicales and performances, you may know the group better. But many of our biggest fans do not know the breadth and beauty of all the activities of The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin.

Would you like to get to know us better? I hope so, and I have a suggestion. Join us Monday, January 17, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church for our annual meeting. Of all our gatherings during the year, this one is the most informal and the easiest at which to get acquainted with others and learn more about the doings of the Society.

Our most recent musicales—the classy September event and the November sing-along *Mikado*, both of which were planned and coordinated by board member **Leonard Johnson**, were showcases of the marvelous vocal talent we have contributing to our productions. The latter was also a delightful opportunity to participate, as everyone was invited to sing along in the choruses of that wonderful opera. We are deeply indebted to regular chorus member **Mark Long**, who prepared the abridged version of the script. You can read all about that lovely afternoon elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our two spring events hold great promise. Please mark your calendar now for the 35th anniversary gala at Chez Zee on Thursday, March 3, 2011 at 7:30 pm. And hold a spot for the May 1 event, about which you will learn more soon.

These events, all open to the public, are important aspects of our Society. But we also have a traveling performance ensemble, the Wand'ring Minstrels, a group that brings music and joy to social groups, parties, and schools throughout the year. We also have a scholarship program, through which we are able to assist aspiring musicians from time to time. There is really quite a lot to know about Austin G&S!

Like *Katisha*, G&S may be “an acquired taste”—one that many of us acquired in our youth and that others acquired within minutes of hearing their first tuneful song or bit of witty dialogue. *Katisha* went on to say, “Only the educated palate can appreciate me.” We don't think it takes that much education to appreciate the works of William S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, but we find that the more education we receive, the more we enjoy the operas and all the fun that goes along with them.

So please join us January 17, whether you are a die-hard Savoyard or a newcomer, and let's enjoy a feast of music together while we share a bit of news about the Society.



In closing, I would like to extend hearty appreciation to two board members retiring from their roles in January. **Ingrid Yaple** is an imaginative, forward-thinking dynamo who has served us well, especially in development and fund-raising activities, during the past two years. She now must give more attention to running the PTA at her children's school, but she promises to continue as an active member and volunteer. **Nancy McQueen** graciously stepped back onto the board this year when we needed to replace our secretary, agreeing to fill that role for the remainder of 2010. We count on Nancy also to continue to be a regular volunteer, especially adding flair to the serving tables we enjoy after our musicales.

Thank you, Ingrid and Nancy!

Annual Meeting and Elections

Our Society will elect a Board of Directors for the calendar year 2011 at our Annual Meeting on Monday, January 17. Please come to this important gathering at 7:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church, 1507 Wilshire Boulevard.

Following the election, we will join in singing some of the great G&S choruses. You may also suggest a chorus to be sung, and you may volunteer to lead a chorus. **Bill Hatcher** and **Robert Schneider** are among those who have volunteered to lead a chorus. As always, **please** bring munchies to share!

GSSA Board of Directors Nominees

The Nominating Committee, consisting of **Byron Arnason**, **Enid Hallock**, and **Larry Shepley**, has provided the following list of nominees for the 12-member 2011 GSSA Board of Directors:

Chris Buggé	Robert Long
Reba Gillman	Randall McIntyre
Pat Hobbs	Michael Meigs
Leonard Johnson	Libby Weed
David Little	Dave Wieckowski

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor during the Annual Meeting on Monday, January 17; self-nomination is permitted. (Of course, nominees must be members.) Each paid-up member is entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of Directors to be elected, but is not permitted to vote more than once for a given candidate. The candidates receiving the most votes are elected. In accordance with our by-laws, officers are elected by the Board during their first meeting after the Annual Meeting.

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The Mikado Sing-Along

by Reba Gillman

On Sunday, November 21, we gathered for a gala event, hitherto untried in our history. It was enthusiastically received and raises possibilities of new activities in the future. Over 90 persons assembled at 3 pm in the comfortable and spacious sanctuary of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, some wearing kimonos and a few other Japanese-oriented costumes. Colorful parasols decorated the merchandise-sales area; fans were displayed, along with other Japanese mementos, and a friendly, informal spirit prevailed. A few children circulated, active, happy, but never obtrusive. A very good time was had by all!

President **Libby Weed** greeted the assembled multitude with her usual good cheer, and invited anyone who wished to contribute alternate lines for the list in the song, "I've got a little list," to hand them in. As I came down the aisle to my second row seat I heard her saying that to honor the birthday of a notable G&S Society member, all were invited to sing Happy Birthday, which they did -- to me! This was a total and very enjoyable surprise. I thought it a lovely and very reasonable tribute to add to the other simple celebrations of my 94th birthday the day before. As the singing ended, I turned to blow kisses to the audience.

At the front of the sanctuary the key singers were assembled, at the left the ladies, in colorful kimonos, compliments of **Nanci Jay**: Yum-Yum - **Michelle Haché**; Pitti-Sing - **Angela Irving**; Peep-Bo - **Diana VandeWater**; Katisha - **Janette Jones**. At the right, the gentlemen, nicely dressed in black pants and shirt or jacket: Pooh-Bah - **David Fontenot**; Ko-Ko - **Arthur DiBianca**; Nanki-Poo - **Holton Johnson**; and **Russell Gregory** as The Mikado in a fine, mostly black, costume, lent by **Randall McIntyre**. Libby introduced each singer (men first, as Gilbert always did), with interesting tidbits about each. Libby also introduced **Martha Dudgeon** at the piano, and **Leonard Johnson** who was to direct singers and chorus. Most of the audience had chosen their seats in choral sections, although they were free to sit where they wished, and to sing or not. There were many strong singers in the women's sections; section-leaders **Mark Long**, tenor; and **Randall McIntyre**, bass, helped the men keep pace. Each person present had received a copy of the music to be sung by the chorus, and a program containing the solos listed for each singer. The stage was set!

Libby thanked **Mark Long**, who had produced a wonderful abbreviated script of story and score, complete with explanations and quotations. The program got under way as Libby read Mark's description of the beginning of the story. The piano began the overture, followed by the opening men's chorus, "If you want to know who we are, We are gentlemen of Japan," sung by the full-throated audience-chorus Men. Next came "Gentlemen, I pray you tell me" sung by Holton (Nanki-Poo) and David (a noble, in this one song), with appropriate bits of the story inserted where necessary as the plot progressed; "A wand'ring minstrel I" sung by Holton (Nanki-Poo) and Men of the chorus; "Behold the Lord High Executioner" and "As someday it may happen that a victim must be found, I've got a little list" sung by Arthur (Ko-Ko) and men's chorus. Then, at last, the ladies were heard in "Three little maids from school are we" sung by Michelle (Yum-Yum), Diana (Peep-Bo), Angela (Pitti-Sing) and the women's chorus; and the always delightful "Were you not to Ko-Ko plighted" with Michelle and Holton demonstrating what they would not do. Ko-Ko, worried that he must execute someone to satisfy the Mikado, made a pact with Nanki-Poo, to let him marry Yum-Yum, but be executed at the end of the month. Enter the Act I Finale, "The

threatened cloud has passed away," joyfully begun by the three little maids, the full chorus, Nanki-Poo, and Pooh-Bah (David), and brought to a dramatic climax when Janette came stomping down the aisle as Katisha, to confront the unknowing crowd and reveal who Nanki-Poo really was. The act ended as the maidens and their friends repeatedly sang down the vengeful Katisha so that she was never able to get out the words, "the son of the Mikado," and stormed away in frustration.



After a pleasant intermission, exchanging friendly greetings, and purchasing DVDs,

All congratulate Reba Gillman on her 94th birthday

parasols, fans, and other choice items, we gathered again for Act II. With Libby continuing to fill us in on the plot Michelle happily sang, "The sun, whose rays are all ablaze." As complications arose Michelle, Holton, and Arthur sang "Here's a how-de-do! If I marry you, When your time has come to perish, Then the maiden whom you cherish Must be slaughtered, too!" Problems multiplied—the Mikado (Russell) entered, as the full chorus sang "Mi-ya-sa-ma, mi-ya-sa-ma" and the Mikado sang "From every kind of man Obedience I expect" with Janette (Katisha, his "daughter-in-law elect") joining in obtrusively. Russell and the full chorus continued with "A more humane Mikado ... My object all sublime." Arthur (Ko-Ko), Angela (Pitti-Sing), David (Pooh-Bah), and full chorus sang "The criminal cried as he dropped him down," describing the alleged execution of Nanki-Poo. It was then discovered that the supposedly executed person was the son of the Mikado (the heir apparent), and that the punishment included something lingering, with boiling oil or melted lead, so that reviving him became a necessity. Michelle, Angela, Holton, Arthur and David sang "The flowers that bloom in the spring" as they tried to convince Ko-Ko that if he married Katisha, Nanki-Poo would feel free to come to life again. Desperately wooing Katisha, Ko-Ko sang "Willow, tit-willow." His suit was successful, and Janette and Arthur sang "There is beauty in the bellow of the blast," and rushed off to marry. Nanki-Poo came back to life and presented his father with his "daughter-in-law elected." The opera ended with the full chorus and all the principals singing the Act II Finale, "For he's gone and married Yum-Yum -- Yum-Yum! Your anger pray bury, For all will be merry, I think you had better suc-cumb -- Cumb-cumb!" Everyone was happy except Katisha who knew she had been deceived, and possibly Ko-Ko.

The program ended as Libby invited all to join in singing "Hail, Poetry" from *The Pirates of Penzance* and "Now to the banquet we press" from *The Sorcerer*, and the hard-working audience trouped out to enjoy the sociability and delicious munchies.

A Next-Generation Savoyard

In June 2005, when we last produced *The Mikado*, Libby's family attended a Sunday matinée. A few days later, Libby's well brought up daughter, Susan, was working in her kitchen when something fell to the floor with a crash. Susan politely exclaimed, "Mercy!" and her five-year-old daughter, Mary, said, "Mercy even for Pooh-Bah."



Angela Irving (Pitti-Sing), Diana VandeWater (Peep-Bo), Michelle Haché (YumYum), Holton Johnson (Nanki-Poo), Russell Gregory (The Mikado of Japan), Janette Jones (Katisha), Arthur DiBianca (Ko-Ko), and David Fontenot (Pooh-Bah) performed The Mikado for our sing-along version.



"... beauty in the bellow of the blast"



Libby Weed explains how the sing-along works



Pat Hobbs shows off her kimono



Mercy even for Pooh-Bah!



"Three little maids..."



"The flowers that bloom in the spring"

Mikado Russell Gregory in a fine Japanese groom's wedding robe, lent by Randall McIntyre

*photos courtesy Nanci & Benny Jay
see more at gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com*



I would kiss you fondly thus



35 Anniversary Gala

MAID in the GSSA

G&S and Austin – *MAID* for each other for 35 years! It's time to celebrate the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's 35th Anniversary on Thursday evening, **March 3**, at 7:30 pm. This gala event will be hosted in the Gallery at Chez Zee – a *MAID* - for-Austin venue! Come hear “three little *MAID*s” – **Patricia Combs**, **Eva Laskaris** and **Tamsen Cohagan** (who formerly sang the role of Mabel with Amarillo Opera)– as well as the men “who would woo fair *MAID*”ens – **Holton Johnson**, **Bob Schneider** and **Arthur DiBianca** – and other GSSA regulars. You'll enjoy excerpts from last summer's hit production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, get a preview of *The Mikado*, and hear tunes from other Gilbert & Sullivan favorites while savoring scrumptious Chez Zee- *MAID* tapas and desserts. Plan to join us as we toast 35 years of GSSA- *MAID* fun!

At our 30th anniversary gala in 2006, we recognized ten people who had made significant contributions to our Society throughout our first three decades. At this 35th anniversary gala, we will add a few more names to that Hall of Fame. Please join us for the music, recognitions, and tasty food and drink offered on this special occasion. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, our artistic director, will be on hand for the festivities, as he will be in town for auditions for the June 2011 production of *The Mikado*.

Auditions for *The Mikado*

Auditions for next summer's production of *The Mikado* will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 5 and 6. Watch for complete details in the February-March issue. For further information, please contact RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com.

NEWS of our MEMBERS

The Society's Music Director, **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, will be appearing as a harpsichord soloist with La Follia Orchestra, in a concert of Bach harpsichord concertos on Saturday, January 8, at 8 pm, and Sunday, January 9, at 9 pm. Both concerts will be at First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa. Tickets and other information at www.lafollia.org

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in mid-February; the deadline for submissions is January 24. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!

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W.S. Gilbert's *Pygmalion and Galatea*
An introduction to the art, ethics and science of cloning

W. S. Gilbert first produced his most popular play, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, in 1871. It is one of hundreds of recreations of the myth of Pygmalion initially recorded by Ovid at the start of the 1st century. In the play, Pygmalion has made numerous copies of his wife Cynisca, one of which, Galatea, comes to life and falls in love with him.

The play is a convincing metaphor for cloning in our age of the genome. Toward this end Dr. Fred Sander, a psychoanalyst and family therapist, has republished the play in this book. He has invited a group of scholars, journalists and professors to provide a fascinating series of essays reflecting our human instinct to reproduce ourselves in our own images of one another. From biological, to psychological, sociological, cultural and now biogenetic reproductions, we could name our species homo-replicans.

This book is written for the general public, the creative teacher, Savoyard, adventurous dramaturge, and the curious student. This collection takes the reader from a work of art, written in the 19th century, to the emergence of psychoanalysis and nuclear physics in the 20th century, to molecular biology in the 21st century. From God's creation of man in the Book of Genesis to Dr. Frankenstein's creation, to man's quest to become god-like, it continues on a website with the same title as this unique book.

Note: This 189-page paperback book is to be published February 1, 2011, and will be available from IPBooks.net. A blurb recommending the book by our artistic director, **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, appears on the back cover.

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The Austin G&S Society is technologically up-to-date. Most of you probably receive the timely and informative e-newsletters sent out by Board member **David Little** (if not, go to our website and click on “Join The Mailing List”). We now have a Facebook Fan Page, a Twitter Page, and a YouTube Channel. You can access these from the home page of our website, or go to:

www.facebook.com/gandsofaustin

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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)
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The Mikado's Secrets

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

In last issue, I discussed reasons *The Mikado* is regarded as the Gilbert & Sullivan masterpiece. The reasons I gave were no secrets. This time, I'd like to tell you some of the secrets that hide within the libretto.

By "secrets," I don't mean word games. (For instance, do you know where the "hidden character" Ray Zaralla appears in the libretto? His name is spoken by one of the Titipudlians. But *where*?) Rather, by *The Mikado's* "secrets" I refer to some of the facts that few people know about the comic opera—and a couple that *no one* knows—as far as *I* know.

For instance, did you know that Gilbert tried to cut the *Mikado's* song before opening night? 'Tis true (and is beautifully dramatized in Mike Leigh's brilliant film *Topsy-Turvy*). Gilbert's reasons aren't known, but a good guess would be that he feared that the song's list of people worthy of punishment was too similar to Ko-Ko's famous "little list" song in Act I. (But of course the number remained, thus adding "My object, all sublime" to the list of lines frequently quoted from *The Mikado*—the list that includes "I've got a little list.")

Speaking of "I've got a little list," did you know that the original position for it was later in Act I, after the letter arrives from the Mikado threatening dire consequences if someone isn't beheaded within one month? The original first line, "As it seems to be essential that a victim should be found" was changed to "As some day it may happen that a victim must be found" when the song was shifted to earlier in the act, after "Behold the Lord High Executioner" and Ko-Ko's introductory speech (which is—something that people often overlook—more obsequious and timid tailor-like sales-talk than something one would expect from a bloodthirsty Lord High Executioner!).

Did you know that Yum-Yum's brilliant aria, "The sun, whose rays" ("The moon and I") was originally sung in Act I? 'Tis true: it came after "So please you, Sir, we much regret" and an expanded introductory speech and before Nanki-Poo's entrance and dialogue leading to the kissing duet. (Or, for that matter, did you know that that kissing duet was originally twice as long, with a full second verse and chorus for the two?)

Did you know that Pitti-Sing's solo at the start of the Act II finale ("For he's gone and married Yum-Yum") did not originally exist, and the original finale started with Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum singing "The threatened cloud has passed away"?

Have you ever noticed that when Sullivan set the soprano's name to music, he invariably put the accent on the *second* "Yum," but when it's spoken in dialogue, the accent is invariably placed by actors on the *first*?

Two more secrets—so secret that no one that *I* know knows the answers. The first: The Lord Chamberlain's license-deposit copy (submitted on March 11, 1885, to secure copyright and pass the censor) was assembled from galley proofs of the Chappell libretto—until the lyric for "There is beauty in the bellow of the blast" (the last number before the Act II finale). From this point on the libretto is in Gilbert's hand. Why? The only plausible answer is because the ending was changed at least *three days* before the opera was first performed, on March 14, 1885. I have discovered evidence that this ending was being worked on as early as February 16th, but I'm not ready to reveal "corroborative detail." My discovery only tells me that the resolution of the plot was up in the air nearly a full month before the premiere, and we know from the Lord Chamberlain's copy that it was finally decided about three days before opening night. Nothing survives, as far as I know, to suggest the *original* ending of the opera. How I'd like to know what *that* was!

One final mystery: D'Oyly Carte copyrighted a work in America called *Titipu; or, The Lord High Executioner*, according to records at the Library of Congress. However, this title has never been discovered in business papers, press reports, or correspondence relating to the creation of the opera. Was this an attempt to foil those pesky American pirates who were always eager to present their own productions without paying royalties in those pre-international copyright days? No one knows (as far as *I* know).

Now as for that elusive fellow Ray Zaralla: If you've not found the reference to him in the standard libretto of *The Mikado*, and if you find yourself lying awake with a dismal headache trying to think of where he appears, here's a hint: he may have been the brother-in-law to that much-easier-to-find hidden character—this one in *Iolanthe*—named William (Billy, for short) Maywish.

And if you want an even *better* hint, just send a begging e-mail to RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com



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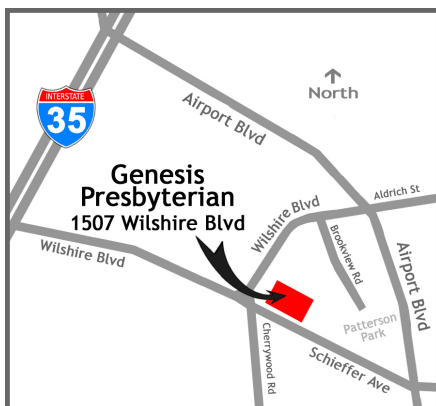
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JANUARY 2011

**Annual Business Meeting
& Sing-Along**
Board of Directors Election
& Classic G&S choruses
Monday - January 17th - 7:30pm
Genesis Presbyterian - 1507 Wilshire Blvd.



Coming Events

January 17	Annual Meeting (see p. 1)
March 3	Gala 35 th Anniversary Celebration (see p. 4)
March 5-6	<i>The Mikado</i> auditions (see p. 4)
May 1	May Day Musicales
June 9-19	<i>The Mikado</i> summer production

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 presentations 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. Costume elements, props and choreography provide the visual pop which turns each event into a celebration, with the camaraderie and spontaneous banter of the Wand'ring Minstrels adding an extra measure of froth to the proceedings!

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

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

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

Annual Grand Productions
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Our web site: www.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.

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