

The GILBERT & SULLIVAN

JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

Dear GSSA Members and Friends,

Would you like to be a little more involved with The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin?



Maybe you attend a performance of our annual June production, and you know that we put on a terrific show. If you regularly attend musicales throughout the year, you know the group better. But many of our biggest fans do not know the breadth and depth of all the activities of our Austin G&S society.

Would you like to get to know us better? I hope so, and I have a suggestion. Join us Sunday, January 10, 2016, at 3 pm 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—September's "A Topsy-Turvy Bard," featuring G&S songs in Shakespearean settings, and November's "Lady Jane's G&S Salon Concert," at which we heard some brand new talents and also enjoyed singing along—were tremendously enjoyable occasions. We are pleased to offer these lovely afternoons as a gift to the Austin community. We invite you each time to bring something to add to the refreshment table and enjoy visiting after the musicale.

The last newsletter included information about our February production of "Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan." Read about it in this newsletter. And next month's newsletter will give even more enticing details about this special occasion. This is a "suggested donation" event, and it is really a great way to get to know us—and Gilbert and Sullivan—much better.

If you read this newsletter, you know that we also have a traveling performance ensemble, the Wand'ring Minstrels, a group that brings music and joy to schools, retirement centers, social groups, and parties throughout the year. We also have a scholarship program, through which we are able to assist aspiring musicians every year. 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 really 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 10, whether you are a diehard Savoyard or a newcomer, and let's enjoy a feast of music together while we share a bit of news about the Society.

Yours for innocent merriment,

Libby Weed



The Society holds its annual meeting of the membership each January, but the business is short and to-the-point and the fun is plentiful. This year's meeting will be held on Sunday, January 10, at 3 pm in the fellowship hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church (1507 Wilshire Boulevard).

After a brief report from our treasurer and the election of a board of directors for 2016 (see nomination slate and procedures on page 4 of this newsletter), we will enjoy a *Pirates of Penzance* Revue. You'll hear some great GSSA talents sing a number of favorites from this beloved opera. Scheduled performers include **Holton Johnson** as Frederick, **David Fontenot** as the Pirate King, **Arthur DiBianca** as Major General Stanley, **Janette Jones** as Ruth, **Carol Brown** as Mabel, and **Russell Gregory** as the Sergeant. You'll have the opportunity to join in as a pirate or a policeman or a daughter of General Stanley in some choral responses. If you prefer just to sit back and listen, that's fine as well. Don't forget to bring something tasty to add to the refreshment table. This event will surely be fun for all!

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Lady Jane's Salon by Rosa Mondragon Harris



On Sunday, November 8 at 3 pm, 82 people gathered for the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's second musicale of the season, at the Iva Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School. The sunny afternoon promised to be a fun one, as the format of the day's program would be different from previous musicales. That day would be an "open mic" gathering held by none other than the Duchess of Dunstable!

G&S President **Libby Weed** welcomed the afternoon's attendees and gave us the background on the event that Lady Jane had invited us to. You might remember that Lady Jane married the Duke of Dunstable at the end of *Patience*. Since her nuptials, our Lady Jane's dull and grey life has blossomed into a garden of social gatherings and parties. She has become quite the hostess, holding salons on a regular basis. While the Duke is abroad entertaining ambassadors and handling Parliamentary matters, the Duchess has decided to throw a Salon Concert in the very large parlor of Dunstable House. She has invited several of her favorite musician friends to perform, and she also invited anyone who wishes to sing any pieces from the G&S repertoire to join in on the festivities. Lady Jane also procured hats that would be available for purchase after the concert.

Our hostess, Lady Jane (**Janette Jones**), appeared and greeted her guests, telling us that she is looking forward to hearing the song selections chosen by everyone. She asked for any last minute volunteers who would like to sing and then placed each name into one of two hat boxes – one with the ladies' names and another with the names of the gentlemen. To add some suspense to the day's lighthearted occasion, Lady Jane told us that she would choose one name at a time, alternating between the two hat boxes, beginning with "ladies first." Who would be the first person picked from the hat box?

Megan Sherrod's name was called and she began our concert with "When a merry maiden marries" from *The Gondoliers*. We were delighted to be joined that afternoon by two guests from Dallas Opera. **Christopher Leach**, one of our visitors, next offered us "Oh, is there not one maiden breast" from *The Pirates of Penzance*. In an amusing coincidence, the next song was from the same G&S opera as **Rachel Silver** was called upon to sing us her selection, "Poor wand'ring one."

The afternoon was off to a lovely start, and the next person chosen offered us a selection that several in the audience had not heard before. **David Treadwell** sang "The Elements Song" by musical humorist Tom Lehrer. Written in 1959, the song recites the names of all the chemical elements known at the time of writing, up to element number 102, nobelium. The song is sung to the tune of "I am the very model of a modern Major-General" from *The Pirates of Penzance*. After David's mirthful rendition, Lady Jane led everyone in singing "I'm called Little Buttercup" from *H.M.S. Pinafore*. The next name was **Carol Brown**, who performed another piece from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, "The hours creep on apace." In our only duet of the day, **Alissa Roca** and **Christopher Leach**, our visitors from Dallas, sang "Oh, admirable art" from *Utopia, Limited*. **Steven Long** next sang "Oh, better far to live and die" from *The Pirates of Penzance*.

As more gentlemen than ladies had volunteered to sing in her concert, Lady Jane proceeded to choose another gentleman to come forward to sing the next selection: **Gary Preuss** offered us "Rising early in the morning" from *The Gondoliers*, the second and last selection of the day from our upcoming 2016 Grand Production. **Rosa Harris** followed with "Alone, and yet alive" from *The Mikado*. Coincidentally, the next two singers had both chosen songs from *Patience*. **Mark Long** sang "A magnet hung in a hardware shop," followed by **Alissa Roca**, who performed "I cannot tell what this love may be."

As names continued to be drawn, **Bill Hatcher**, decked out in a fine blue coat, sang "When Britain really ruled the waves" from *Iolanthe*, followed by **Jamieson Taylor** with "If somebody there chanced to be" from *Ruddigore*. **Robert L. Schneider** sang "When I, good friends, was call'd to the Bar" from *Trial by Jury*, complete with enthusiastic participation from the audience on the chorus part. **Wayne Davis**, our final soloist of the afternoon, sang "Fair moon" from *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

Lady Jane and Libby gave thanks to all of the guests who sang for us as well as to our wonderfully talented pianist **Jeanne Sasaki**, assisted by page-turner **Kristin Gengler**. To conclude our musicale, Steven Long sang the Pirate King's lead-in to "Hail, Poetry" from *The Pirates of Penzance*. The audience joined in, and then sang "Now to the banquet we press" from *The Sorcerer* to close the concert.

The audience proceeded to the lobby for refreshments, mingled with the singers, and viewed Lady Jane's array of hats for purchase. Many tried them on, deciding which fit his or her style and personality best. I left the musicale with a light and summery black hat—a charming memento from a lovely afternoon!



above, Roberta Long sells hats from Lady Jane's closet

below, Eve Schwartzman, Libby Weed, and Janette Jones model some of the hats



Lady Jane's Salon

photos of the event courtesy Steve Schwartzman

see more at gilbertsullivanaustin.smugmug.com



Janette Jones



Megan Sherrod



Christopher Leach



Rachel Silver



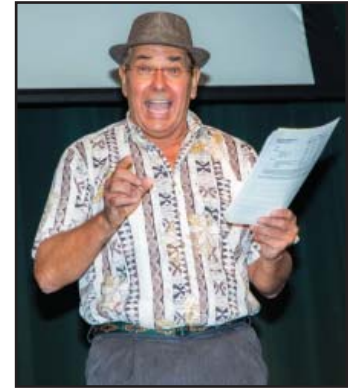
David Treadwell



Carol Brown



Steven Long



Gary Preuss



Rosa Mondragon Harris



Mark Long



Alissa Roca



Bill Hatcher



Jamison Taylor



Robert L. Schneider



Wayne Davis

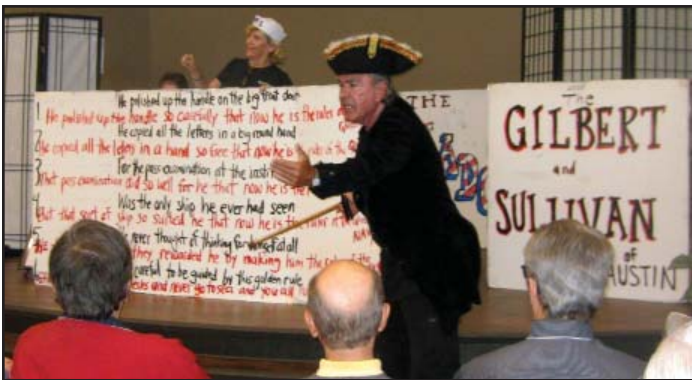


pianist Jeanne Sasaki

Wand'ring Minstrels

The GSSA's Wand'ring Minstrels are busy rehearsing for their December 13th Christmas Show at Westminster.

If you would like to have the Wand'ring Minstrels perform at your school, retirement center, civic club, business meeting, or private party, please see the web site, www.gilbertsullivan.org, for information, or contact Robert Schneider at minstrels@gilbertsullivan.org.



The Bright Horizons Group at Emmaus Catholic Parish recently enjoyed the visit by the GSSA's Wand'ring Minstrels (l-r): Robert L. Schneider, Martha Mortensen Ahern, Katie Schneider, and Janette Jones

Annual Meeting and Elections

Our Society will elect a Board of Directors for the calendar year 2016 at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 10, at 3 pm. **Please come** to this important gathering in the Fellowship Hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church, 1507 Wilshire Boulevard.

Andy Heilveil, Chair of the Nominating Committee, was successful in securing the agreement of the twelve current members of the Board of Directors to continue their service in 2016. These nominees are:

Rosa Mondragon Harris	Diane Radin
June Julian	Robert L. Schneider
David Little	Charles Smaistrila
Roberta Long	David Treadwell
Allan Longacre	Libby Weed
Michael Meigs	Dave Wieckowski

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor; 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.

After elections are concluded, the meeting will continue with our *Pirates of Penzance* Revue (see page 1).

Props Needed for Musical Production

Ralph MacPhail, Jr., and **Bill Hatcher**, our Artistic Director and Production Manager respectively, are looking for several items that will be needed for our February 21 production of *Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan*. They have provided this list in hopes that our members may be able to help.

- A wooden Victorian podium with a single standard. The single standard would be a post or column which is narrow enough not to hide the speaker's body. We could use as many as three and they don't have to match.
- Three matching academic robes, but not black. A high school graduation robe would be fine as long as it is not black.
- Two "dance" parasols which should match in size but not color. These aren't umbrellas but rather something that would be seen in a dance show with long handles and a relatively small diameter top.
- Two cameras which look old enough to be from the 19th century.

If you have any of these items and are willing to lend them to our production, please call Bill Hatcher at (512) 771-1115. **Thanks!**

At the Lady Jane's Salon musicale, President Libby Weed reminds guests to purchase the official Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin 2016 Calendar



NEWS of our MEMBERS

Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** will return to Bryan, Texas, on Friday, February 26, to give a pre-performance talk at St. Michael's Episcopal School. The event is an opening-night gala for the school's 38th annual G&S production: *Ruddigore; or, The Witch's Curse*. (Information and reservations: www.stmes.net/operetta; (979) 822-2715; mary.brown@stmes.net.)

On Thursday, November 11, one of 3M Austin's most prolific volunteers received 3M's highest service leadership award, the 2015 3Mgives Volunteer Award. GSSA member **Dave Gutman** is one of only 30 3M employees in the world to receive the award this year for improving and enriching lives in their local communities.

For more than a dozen years, Gutman has provided one-on-one mentoring, coaching and financial support to the students of Wooten Elementary School in Austin. He is an accomplished potter, and a percentage of the money raised by selling his art buys clothing,



shoes and umbrellas for Wooten students in need. In 2014 he funded low-income student athletes to participate in state meets. He also was instrumental in fundraising for and organizing a mobile pottery workshop for weekly after-school classes.

For 11 years, Gutman has designed and contributed pottery to the Austin Empty Bowl Project fundraiser, benefiting the Capital Area Food Bank. He promotes and donates funds for the Austin Chamber Music Center and the Balcones Community Orchestra. He also occasionally works with students promoting science, technology, engineering and math for Discover Engineering. And he volunteers, promotes and supports the Austin Cactus and Succulent Society and the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin.



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:

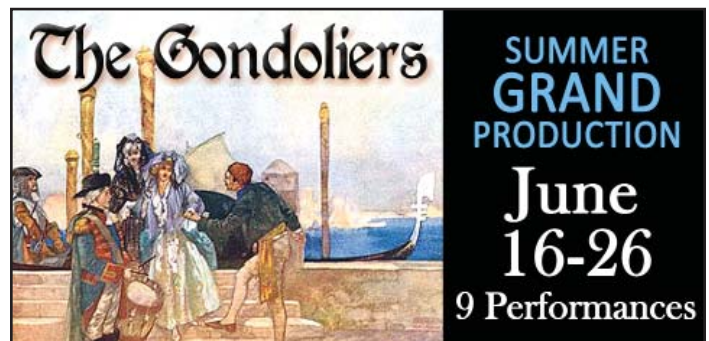
We are proud to list our members in our programs, but if you would prefer NOT to be listed in our programs, please check here:

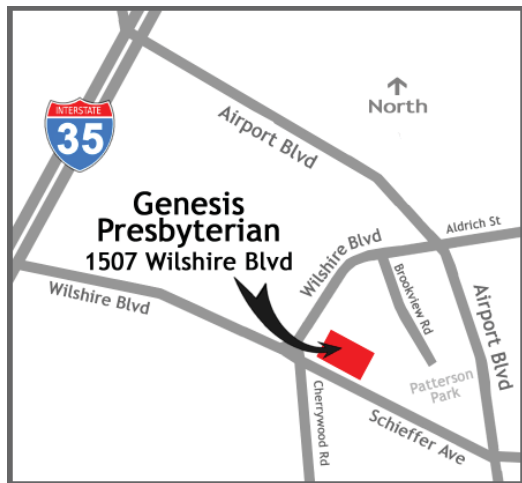
The Sorcerer Receives Central Texas Excellence in Theatre Nominations for Alexandra Reilman, Ralph MacPhail, Jr., and Jeffrey Jones-Ragona

The nominations for the Central Texas Excellence in Theatre Awards are gathered by Austin theatre writers from Austin Entertainment Weekly, Central Texas Live Theatre and Broadway World Austin. Our 2015 summer grand production of *The Sorcerer* received three nominations: **Alexandra Reilman** for Best Actress in a Musical; **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, for Best Direction of a Musical; and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** for Best Music Direction. Also, GSSA Board Member **Michael Meigs** was nominated for Outstanding Contribution to Central Texas Theatre. Winners of the awards will be announced in January, 2016.

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive around the beginning of February; the deadline for submissions is January 12. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!





*Map to Annual Meeting –
See details on page 1!*

Coming Events

- Jan. 10 Annual Meeting and *Pirates of Penzance* Revue (see page 1)
- Feb. 21 Mid-season production: *Very Truly Yours, Gilbert & Sullivan*
- Feb. 27-28 *The Gondoliers* Auditions
- May 15 *The Gondoliers* Preview Musicale
- June 16-26 *The Gondoliers* summer production



At the Lady Jane's Salon musicale, Christopher Leach and Alissa Roca sang a duet from Utopia, Ltd. (see article on page 2)

The Gilbert & SULLIVAN Society
OF AUSTIN
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JANUARY 2016

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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**

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This project is funded and supported in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and in part by the City of Austin Economic Development Department/Cultural Arts Division, believing that an investment in the Arts is an investment in Austin's future.
Visit Austin at NowPlayingAustin.com



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

Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**
Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

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