



GILBERT & SULLIVAN AUSTIN

APRIL-MAY 2017 NEWSLETTER



THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

The Pirates of Penzance Cast

Major-General Stanley – **Arthur DiBianca**

The Pirate King – **Sam Johnson**

Samuel – **Jake Jacobsen**

Frederic, the Pirate Apprentice – **Danny Castillo**

Sergeant of Police – **Russell Gregory**

Ruth, piratical maid of all work – **Patricia Combs**

General Stanley's Daughters:

Mabel – **Suzanne Lis**

Edith – **Teri Johnson**

Kate – **Jaimie Lowe**

Isabel – **Sarah Manna**

Chorus of General Stanley's Daughters:

**Eleanor Anderson, Hannah Boyd,
Rosa Mondragon Harris, Abigail Jackson,**

Janette Jones, Susan Meitz,

Jenny Ohrstrom, Iona Olive,

Erica Salinas, Rachel Silvers,

Sarah Steele, Brittany Trinité

Men's Chorus of Pirates & Police:

Brenham Adams, Garrett Cordes,

Andy Fleming, David Kaufman,

Robert LeBas, Luke Pebler,

Glenn Russell, Trevor Senter,

Ian Stilwell, Charles Vazquez

Buy Tickets Now!

Tickets are now on sale for *The Pirates of Penzance*. Purchase online at www.gilbertsullivan.org or by phone at 512-474-5664. Ticket prices are \$27 adults, \$16 students, \$8 children. For that special Savoyard, there are \$100 VIP tickets—see the website for details.



The Pirates of Penzance the Caribbean Preview Musicale

Sunday, May 21, 3 p.m.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

200 West Anderson Lane (see map on back page)

Join us for a sneak preview of our summer Grand Production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, but with a topsy-turvy twist that places the action not on the coast of Cornwall but in “the Caribbean.” You’ll hear many of the familiar musical numbers from the show, and meet the cast that will perform in June.

You’ll also find answers to such pressing questions as:

Is Captain Barbossa or Captain Jack Sparrow the Pirate King?

Is Frederic really Will Turner in disguise?

Can Elizabeth Swann really sing all of Mabel’s coloratura?

Come to our New World look at the Old World Pirates. What a great excuse to dress like a pirate or mermaid while enjoying a preview of our summer production!

As usual, *please bring munchies to share after the musicale!*

Admission: Free to the public

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GSA Presents *Cox and Box* by Rosa Mondragon Harris



For this year's winter production, Gilbert and Sullivan Austin selected *Cox and Box*, Arthur Sullivan's first comic opera. Written within a decade of Sullivan's return from musical studies in Germany and several years before he met W.S. Gilbert, this one-act opera was based on an 1847 farce by John

Maddison Morton titled *Box and Cox: A Romance of Real Life*. The story concerned an old soldier who let the same room to two lodgers: Mr. Box, a printer who was out all night, and Mr. Cox, a hatter who worked all day. Whenever either of them asked any awkward questions, Sergeant Bouncer would break into song about his days in the militia to avoid discovery of his scheme. When Mr. Cox is unexpectedly given the day off, they meet each other in the room and tempers flare.

Two performances were offered to enthusiastic audiences on Saturday evening, March 4, and Sunday afternoon, March 5, at the Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School. The cast featured familiar faces to GSA audiences: **Julius Young** as James John Cox, **Andy Fleming** as John James Box, and **David Fontenot** as Sergeant Bouncer. Pianist **Jeanne Sasaki** (assisted by page-turners **Bailey Adams** and **Zimm Davis**, both middle-school piano students) opened the opera with a short and delightful overture. The first scene found Mr. Cox rushing to dress for his day. As his



*Our intrepid pianist,
Jeanne Sasaki*



*Sergeant Bouncer
(David Fontenot)*

landlord, Sergeant Bouncer, helped him to get ready, Mr. Cox complained about an uncomfortable pillow and an excessively short haircut, which he felt made him look as though he were in the army. Triggered by Mr. Cox's remarks, Sergeant Bouncer sang endlessly about his militia memories with "Rataplan." Mr. Cox next questioned Sergeant Bouncer about why his room always reeked of tobacco smoke followed by why his supplies seemed to be disappearing in "Stay, Bouncer, Stay!" When Mr. Cox refused to accept Sergeant Bouncer's false explanations, Sergeant Bouncer would reprise with "Rataplan." Late for work, Mr.

Cox left Sergeant Bouncer, who hurriedly re-arranged the room for Mr. Box's upcoming arrival.

Mr. Box entered, lit the fire, and sang an amusing lullaby, "Hush-a-bye, bacon," as he cooked a rasher of bacon on the gridiron. Exhausted from his day, he lay down for a quick nap. During Mr. Box's slumber, Mr. Cox reentered the room to enjoy his unexpected day off, singing "My master is punctual." Finding the fire already lit, Mr. Cox assumed that Sergeant Bouncer had been using the room in his absence; he took the bacon off of the gridiron and replaced it with a mutton chop. He headed off to his dressing room and slammed the door, which awakened Mr. Box. Mr. Box returned to the gridiron

to check on his bacon and was surprised to see the mutton chop in its place. Annoyed that it might be Sergeant Bouncer's, Mr. Box threw the chop out the room's window and hit a pedestrian. Again he placed bacon on the fire and returned to his dressing room, slamming his door behind him. Hearing this, Mr. Cox scurried back into the room. He saw bacon on the gridiron and tossed it out the window, hitting the pedestrian for a second time.

Mr. Box re-entered from his dressing room. The two finally confronted each other for the first time and sang "Who are you, sir?"

Naturally, each ordered the other to leave. To prove that the room was his, Mr. Cox produced his receipt for rent, but Mr. Box did likewise. Realizing they had been duped, they called for Sergeant Bouncer. When he arrived, he promptly tried to change the subject with yet another reprise of "Rataplan! Rataplan!" But Sergeant Bouncer had to admit that the room was rented to both of them.



*Mr. Cox (Julius Young) meets
Mr. Box (Andy Fleming)*

To alleviate the situation, he said that he would have a small room



"Rataplan! Rataplan!"

on the second floor available later in the day for whoever wanted it. Both lodgers said that they would take it, so Sergeant Bouncer left them to decide which would vacate the current room. Each suggested the other should leave, but neither would budge. They placed the blame on Sergeant Bouncer for the situation and decided that they

may as well be friends. With "The Buttercup," both men serenaded each other on the guitar. The new friends began to learn more about each other. Mr. Cox admitted that he had a fiancée, but as she was the proprietor of bathing machines some distance away, she was unlikely to make an appearance. As he sang "Not long ago," Mr. Box said that he was neither single nor married nor widowed, but had been "defunct for the last three years." Mr. Cox admitted that he would not mind being defunct himself if it would allow him to escape from unwanted matrimony. Mr. Box revealed that he had been in exactly the same predicament several years earlier. On the eve of marriage, he left his possessions at the edge of a cliff with a suicide note. Everyone assumed he had jumped, and so he was freed of his intended bride, Penelope Ann. At the mention of that name, Mr. Cox realized that his present intended was the same fiancée whom Mr. Box had eluded. Mr. Cox then declared that he would restore Mr. Box to Penelope Ann, while Mr. Box said that he would not dream of taking her away from Mr. Cox.

GSA Presents *Cox and Box* (continued from previous page)

Unable to resolve the matter, the men first suggested dueling, but they decided on a gentler solution. As they sang “Sixes,” Mr. Cox and Mr. Box threw dice, but each man had trick dice that only threw sixes. They next tried tossing coins, but each one kept throwing only “heads.” Sergeant Bouncer returned with a letter from Margate, which they assumed to be from Penelope Ann. However, the letter informed them that Penelope Ann had been lost in a sailing accident and had left her entire estate to “my intended husband.” As the two men next tried to resolve which of



throwing only “Sixes”



a letter arrives

them was the beneficiary, Sergeant Bouncer arrived with a second letter, informing them that Penelope Ann had survived after all, and would be arriving later that day.

When both lodgers tried to leave, Sergeant Bouncer brought a third letter: “Being convinced that our feelings, like our ages, do not reciprocate, I hasten to apprise you of my immediate union with Mr. Knox.” The men rejoiced that their predicament with Penelope Ann had at last been resolved. Mr. Box observed that Mr. Cox must surely be his long-lost brother, and Mr. Cox replied that he was about to make the same

observation. Mr. Box asked if Mr. Cox had a strawberry mark on his left arm, and Mr. Cox confirmed that he did not. Because of this similarity, both were convinced that they must indeed be long-lost brothers! The two agreed that they would remain in the same room for good with “My hand upon it.” Bouncer added a final “Rataplán!” reprise and the opera concluded with Sergeant Bouncer, Mr. Cox, and Mr. Box all rejoicing.

I rate *Cox and Box* as one of my favorite mid-season Gilbert and Sullivan Austin shows. “Hush-a-bye, bacon” was a highlight of the evening, and I left wondering: if I, too, sang a lullaby to my bacon, would it perhaps make it taste even better? The audience proceeded to the theater’s foyer and mingled with the cast and crew. Director **Ralph McPhail, Jr.**, talking with me about the opera’s details, shared that some of the props had been making their appearances in productions since 1972. Imagine the stories those props could tell!



final pose: Mr. Cox, Sergeant Bouncer, and Mr. Box rejoice

see more at gilbertsullivanaustrin.smugmug.com

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed



What’s in a Name?

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin—it’s our new name!

It’s just a slightly new identity for a long-time, treasured friend. Check out our new logo, shown above, and look for it on everything *G&S Austin*.

“The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin, Inc.,” is still the full name of our organization (we are registered under both names with the Secretary of State), founded in 1976 by a band of Savoyards who had just produced a rollicking show and believed Austin deserved to enjoy G&S on a regular basis. The groundwork laid by these founding members and the attention of a dedicated board since then have brought us to the point that *G&S Austin* is an established presence on the Austin cultural scene.

Did you know *Gilbert & Sullivan Austin* is the second-largest of the half-dozen opera companies in Austin? Did you know we provide annual scholarships to young musicians to support their studies? We engage in cooperative efforts with Austin Opera, KMFA, Texas Early Music Project, Spotlight on Opera, Chorus Austin, and others. We work with area schools and universities providing opportunities for students to audition and perform in professional productions—helping to develop the next generation of musicians and performers in our area.

As Austin has grown exponentially, *Gilbert & Sullivan Austin* has expanded and flourished. A small, informal company has become a professional organization with a year-round season of offerings to the community: the grand production of a Gilbert & Sullivan opera in the summer; a mid-season production of a one-act opera; a series of first-class musicales, presented free to the public, throughout the rest of the year; and the publication of a highly regarded newsletter.

Look for more exciting developments in the coming months, as we continue to enlarge our presence in the cultural arts community. And, whatever you do, don’t miss *The Pirates of Penzance* in June, brought to you by *Gilbert & Sullivan Austin*!

Libby Weed

Fighting Piracy with *The Pirates*

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.



The Pirates of Penzance premièred at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York on New Year's Eve 1879. It was directed by Gilbert and Sullivan themselves—but the London première would not come until April of the following year.

The reasons for this unique première are two: the lack of an international copyright agreement at the time and the phenomenal success of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in America in 1878-79. This combination led to literally hundreds (if not *thousands*) or productions of *H.M.S. Pinafore* presented in this country in venues ranging from church basements to opera houses—all without a dollar being returned to the Englishmen across the pond. "It's not that I miss the money," Gilbert snorted. "It upsets my digestion."

Gilbert, Sullivan, D'Oyly Carte, music director Alfred Cellier, and valued members of their *Pinafore* company in London sailed to New York in early November of 1879. The given reason was that they wanted Americans to know what the authentic *H.M.S. Pinafore* was like—with Gilbert's stage direction and Sullivan's orchestration. If there was an ocean between London and the United States, there was an ocean of differences between the original production running merrily in London at the Opéra Comique and the countless pirated productions in the U.S., cobbled together from libretti and vocal scores imported and then published without authorization (but quite legally).

Anyone who's performed in a Gilbert & Sullivan production knows that Gilbert's published libretti are rather threadbare regarding stage directions, and yet the fun of traditional production is knowing the "whys and wherefores" that the author/stage director originally provided. (Former GSA Executive Director Robert Mellin calls this "knowing where the diamonds are buried.") So while anybody could present an *H.M.S. Pinafore*, virtually nobody in this country knew the little bits of staging, the quirky dances, the interpolations to the published "script," and perhaps most important, the Gilbert dictum that "All humour, so-called, is based upon a grave and quasi-respectful treatment of the ridiculous." And of course when one of these productions used an orchestra, their arrangement was that of pirate orchestrator, *not* that of Arthur Sullivan.

So in many of the productions that proliferated here in the late 1870s there were "improvements" that would have turned Gilbert's and Sullivan's (and D'Oyly Carte's) hair grey—songs were interpolated, and men played Little Buttercup to name but two. *H.M.S. Pinafore* was translated into Pennsylvania "Dutch." It was, legally, in the public domain, so anybody could twist and adapt the original and present it with impunity. If Gilbert called the work "only burlesque of the lowest possible

kind," he was being ironic. *H.M.S. Pinafore* is certainly in many ways burlesque, but not of the lowest possible kind. In fact, Gilbert's stagecraft, revolutionary for its time, is what insured the success of his work with Sullivan, who of course brought his own considerable talents to the collaboration with his lyric-setting and masterful orchestrating.

But the Triumvirate had another and secret mission to accomplish when they came to America in 1879: to present the first performances of their new work, and thus to secure the American copyright. (A "scratch" and imperfect performance was given in Paignton, Devon, a day earlier by actors from one of D'Oyly Carte's touring *Pinafore* companies to secure the English copyright. The lore tells us that the chorus men wore their *Pinafore* costumes with bandanas tied around their heads to suggest pirates! And of course they were using early materials left behind by the creators, who continued writing and refining their work in New York.)

So as the "authorized" *H.M.S. Pinafore* ran at night (it opened on December 1), Gilbert & Sullivan were completing the creation of and rehearsing their new opera, which came to be known as *The Pirates of Penzance; or, Love and Duty*. It was, of course, a success, and if it did not become the rage on the magnitude of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, this was probably because the vocal score was not published until the London première in April in order to protect it from the American pirates.

Gilbert & Sullivan pulled off another remarkable coup during their busy stay: they rehearsed and sent out on tour *four complete companies* of *The Pirates of Penzance* in an attempt to reap their rewards before their work could be pirated; these companies covered the nation literally from coast to coast, performing the work "more than 550 times in more than 100 cities within the first seven months of 1880," according to Reginald Allen (in *Gilbert & Sullivan in America*).

There are some interesting things to be learned by studying the version of the show first presented in New York and on tour. For instance, the original subtitle for the show, *Love and Duty*, was changed to *The Slave of Duty* by the time it opened in New York. Two characters had "Christian" names that disappeared by the time of the London première. "Richard, The Pirate Chief," became "The Pirate King," his name having vanished. (Maybe this was because the part was originally played in London by Richard Temple?) And the timid Sergeant of Police whose "lot is not a happy one" was known as "Edward" in the playbills in New York and on tour, but his name was missing in London—and has been ever since.

(continued on next page)

Fifth Avenue Theatre.	
NEW YORK, DECEMBER 31, 1879.	
FIFTH WEEK OF THE	
Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Season	
D'OYLY CARTE'S LONDON OPERA CO.	
Five productions of the most successful Opera in Two Acts, by the author and composer of "Pinafore," revised and arranged specially for production in the United States.	
The Pirates of Penzance;	
Or, The Slave of Duty.	
WRITTEN BY W. S. GILBERT.	
COMPOSED BY ARTHUR SULLIVAN	
RICHARD, a Pirate Chief	Mr. BRACOLINI
SAMUEL, his Lieutenant	Mr. FURBER
PAUL, a Pirate	Mr. HUGHES
MAJOR GEN. STANLEY, of the British Army	Mr. J. H. RYLEY
EDWARD, a Sergeant of Police	Mr. F. CLIFTON
MABEL, General Stanley's youngest daughter	Miss BLANCHÉ ROOSEVELT
KATE, General Stanley's	Miss BODINE
EDITH, daughter	Miss JESSIE BOND
EDWARD, a Pirate	Miss RALPH
RUTH, a Pirate	Miss ALICE BARNETT
General Stanley's daughter, Pirates, Policemen, etc.	
On the OPENING NIGHT the Orchestra will be conducted by Mr. ARTHUR SULLIVAN.	
ACT I.—A ROCKY HEADLAND	On the Coast of Cornwall, England.
ACT II.—A RUINED CHAPEL	On General Stanley's Estate.
The Opera is produced under the personal direction of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan.	
Unlabeled costumes, improved new songs, revised by Miss L. L. B. of the Opera, Miss ALICE and Mr. STANLEY, of London, have designed the "Pirates." Ladies' dresses by Misses. Moore of New York.	
The Society of the "Pirates" is by Mr. J. A. Thompson.	
Master Musicians: Mr. BENNETT STEWART	
Stage Manager: Mr. ARTHUR LINDSAY	
MATINEES New Year's Day and Saturday.	
The WEEK-END Performances are held at the Theatre.	
The magnificent Pavilion used at this Theatre is from A. Lawrence and Sons, 21 West 4th Street.	
Open House in the Theatre Lobby.	
Donations of 25c. to the Charity are in priority.	
Copyright, 1879, by W. S. Gilbert & A. Sullivan.	

There were differences in the libretto as well, one of the most interesting being the reprise of the Major-General's famous patter-song in the Act II finale. (To learn more, find a copy of Reginald Allen's wonderful *First Night Gilbert and Sullivan*.)

Gilbert & Sullivan did not again take America by storm until 1885 when *The Mikado* became a success from sea to shining sea. This work even led a few steps further toward the achievement of an international copyright agreement (D'Oyly Carte's name is found frequently in court records), but not in time to protect the majority of Gilbert & Sullivan's works in this country from falling into the public domain.

If *The Pirates of Penzance* did not duplicate the overwhelming success of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, it has certainly found its way to the top or near the top of most fans' lists of favorites. The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as well as Gilbert & Sullivan Austin and countless other production groups have certainly found that "piracy pays"!

Wand'ring Minstrels

The Wand'ring Minstrels have their Easter Bonnets ready for Easter concerts.

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.



The Wand'ring Minstrels (l-r): Martha Mortensen Ahern, Robert K. Schneider, Janette Jones, and Katie Schneider

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).

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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: ☐

Ad Space Available in the Playbill for *The Pirates of Penzance*

Consider purchasing an ad for your business, practice, service, etc., in the playbill for *The Pirates of Penzance*. It will be seen by several thousand G&S aficionados.

Ads come in several different shapes and sizes, all at reasonable rates:

- Full page 4½"x7½" @ \$300,
- Half page 4½"x3¾" @ \$150, and
- Quarter page - vertical or horizontal - 2¼"x3¾" or 4½"x1½" @ \$75.
- The one and only Full Back Page (in color!) can be yours for \$500.

Invite the people with whom you do business to purchase an ad and help support this production.

You can see playbills from our last six productions on our website (www.gilbertsullivan.org): Click Summer Grand Production, then select a show under Recent Summer Productions and click on the Playbill.

To reserve ad space in the playbill for *The Pirates of Penzance*, or to ask questions and get more information, please contact **Diane Radin** at diane@gilbertsullivan.org.

The deadline for ad commitment (both size and format) is May 10, and final copy is due by May 31.



*Map to Preview Musicale –
See details on page 1!*



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APRIL-MAY 2017

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

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

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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.

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