



GILBERT & SULLIVAN AUSTIN

APRIL - MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

What a busy time is spring! While nature unfolds her abundant beauties and cheers the earth, the gang at Gilbert & Sullivan Austin is similarly engaged, and I believe we will see comparably charming results.



Preparations for **Ruddigore** are in full swing. Our leadership is hard at work, and each board member and many volunteers are involved in various ways.

- Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** has been working for months on blocking schemes, staging diagrams, and prop minutiae, refining every detail in the manner of W. S. Gilbert himself. Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** has conducted numerous music rehearsals, and reports that the voices in the cast are superb and the music will be lovely and rich. Production Manager **Bill Hatcher** has a crack team of artistic professionals preparing sets, lighting and sound design, props, and other technical aspects of the show.

- **David Little** and **Dave Wieckowski** orchestrated the presale of tickets for members only and got ticket sales off to a roaring start. (Sales continue apace, so call or go online and choose your seats quickly!) David L. and **Kent Smith** have launched an array of publicity announcements. **Michael Meigs** has made arrangements for several groups to attend for reduced prices.

- **Diane Radin** and **David Treadwell** are completing an application to the City of Austin for the next two years, having been awarded a grant to support **Ruddigore** from the City's admirable Cultural Arts Division.

- **June Julian** is producing a radio-theatre musicale at the Georgetown Public Library on May 20, directed by **Janette Jones** and featuring singers from the **Ruddigore** cast.

- Board member **Rosa Mondragon Harris** is rehearsing as part of the cast for the show (as well as for Austin Opera's **La Traviata**) while also coordinating our scholarship competition.

- **Sarah Slaughter** is lining up personnel for the front of the house during the show, including regular volunteers **Bob Schneider** and his wife **Katie**. Sarah and **Charles Smaistrle** are making arrangements for the various ways we honor our VIP ticket holders.

- Other exceptional volunteers have taken on big tasks. Newsletter editor **Sue Ricket Caldwell** is preparing the 32-page playbill you will hold in your hand at the theater. **Pat Turpin** is selecting sumptuous buffet food for our gala on June 15, **Saundra Ragona** has ordered merchandise for the lobby table, and **Chuck Antonie** will again oversee the concession table. Over 30 other folk will serve as ushers and sales assistants.

A lot of work is involved, but all of us enjoy the effort and gain a great deal of satisfaction from spreading the joys of Gilbert & Sullivan in our community. Once again, expect a June show that will be "welcome as flowers that bloom in the spring." Tra la la la la!

Libby Weed



Sunday, May 20, at 2pm

Georgetown Public Library

402 W. 8th Street in Georgetown

Join the cast of Gilbert & Sullivan Austin's production of **Ruddigore** as we travel back in time to present an "old time" radio show. "G&S Radio Mystery Theatre presents **Ruddigore**" is a musical revue comprised of G&S favorites as well as musical highlights from G&S Austin's summer production of **Ruddigore**, a Victorian melodrama with villains, innocent maidens, dashing heroes, and ghosts. You are the audience and can meet the Radio Ruddigore stars in person.

This afternoon of merriment is sure to delight with fun audience interaction, classic British comedy, and catchy tunes.

This performance is free. *Please bring munchies to share!*

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Gilbert & Sullivan Austin presents *Trial by Jury* by Rosa Mondragon Harris

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin treated audiences to their mid-season production, *Trial by Jury*, on Saturday, March 3, and Sunday, March 4, at the Worley Barton Theater. An audience favorite, this opera was the only Gilbert & Sullivan work written in one act and without any dialogue. The delightful music and staging more than made up for the lack of dialogue, all sewn together by Artistic and Stage Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, Music Director and Conductor **Jeffery Jones-Ragona**, and grand-piano accompaniment by **Karl Logue**. GSA last performed *Trial by Jury* in 2014 at First Presbyterian Church. This year's venue seemed more fitting for this fully staged short production. The set, costumes, and lighting were more vibrant, and the voices, as always, sounded strong and melodious.



Karl Logue



*Angela Irving as
The Plaintiff*

The show's cast included **Angela Irving** as The Plaintiff (Angelina); **Andy Fleming** as The Defendant (Edwin); **Arthur DiBianca** as The Learned Judge; **Janette Jones** as Counsel for the Plaintiff; **Robert L. Schneider** as Usher; **Robert LeBas** as Foreman of the Jury; **Leann Fryer**, **Sarah Manna**, **Ellie Mellen**, and **Sarah Steele** as Bridesmaids; **Jake Jacobsen**, **Scott Poppaw**, and **Jay Young** as Jury Members; and **Garrett Cordes**, **Anthony Fuller**, **Jennifer Garza**, and **Rosa Mondragon Harris** as Members of the Public.



*Andy Fleming as
The Defendant*

The show began with the Jury Members and Public arriving at the Court of the Exchequer. As they sang "Hark, the hour of ten is sounding," they told us that we would soon be hearing a case of "breach of promise of marriage" between Edwin and Angelina. The Usher began the



The Public (l-r): *Garrett Cordes, Jennifer Garza, Anthony Fuller, and Rosa Mondragon Harris*



The Jury (l-r): *Jake Jacobsen, Jay Young, Scott Poppaw, and Foreman Robert LeBas*

proceedings by discussing the case as the Jury and Public agreed that "From bias free of every kind, this trial must be tried!" Hurriedly arriving, The Defendant (Edwin) appeared and claimed that he was a "lovesick boy" as he sang "When



*Arthur DiBianca
as The Judge*

first my old, old love I knew." The Usher became impatient with the ruckus created by Edwin's entrance and called for "Silence in Court!" as The Judge was to soon make his way into Court. The Public and Jury stood and sang "All hail, great Judge!" as The Judge entered.

He gave thanks for the kind words, and offered to tell us how he came to be a Judge. The Jury and Public became a bit too excited to hear the Judge's story and he impatiently asked for them to let him speak as the Usher once again demanded silence in the courtroom. The Judge then sang "When I, good friends, was called to the bar."

We had been introduced to The Defendant and, now The Judge, but where was The Plaintiff (Angelina)? The Counsel entered and asked for her to be brought. The Bridesmaids arrived and began singing "Comes the broken flower." Making a dramatic entrance in her lovely wedding gown and alongside her Bridesmaids, Angelina finally appears. It was time for The Counsel to plead her client's case with "May it please you." Angelina burst into tears as Edwin



the Bridesmaids (l-r): *Sarah Manna, Ellie Mellen, Sarah Steele, and Leann Fryer*

sheepishly sat nearby (and seemed to become rather chummy with one of the members of the Public). The Foreman and Judge offered a visibly distraught Angelina a shoulder to lean on as the ensemble called on Edwin: "Oh, perjured lover, atone! Atone!" Things were not looking promising for Edwin, and he next defended himself with "Oh, gentlemen, listen, I pray." He offered to marry both Angelina and his new love. The Judge found this "a reasonable proposition," but The Counsel argued that "to marry two at once is burglary!"

Upon this, the ensemble next sang my favorite musical moment from the opera, "A nice dilemma." The *Trial by Jury* score contains two parodies or pastiches of other composers: "All hail, great Judge" is an elaborate parody of Handel's fugues, and "A nice dilemma" parodies "dilemma" ensembles of Italian opera in the bel canto era, in particular "D'un pensiero" from Act I of Bellini's *La sonnambula*. "A nice dilemma" also uses the dominant rhythm and key of "D'un pensiero" and divides up some of the choral lines between the basses and higher voices to create an oom-pa-pa effect common in Italian opera choruses.



*Robert L. Schneider
as The Usher*



*Janette Jones as
Counsel for the
Plaintiff*



confusion in the court



happily ever after

Trial by Jury continued from p. 2

Angelina claimed “I love him” and bemoaned her loss, stating that Edwin “must pay” damages. Edwin retorted that he was a smoker, a drinker, and a “very bad lot.” Therefore, Angelina would not have endured him long and so the damages would be minimal. In “The question, gentlemen, is one of liquor,” The Judge suggested that Edwin be made “tipsy” to see if he would really “thrash and kick”

Angelina. Everyone, except for Edwin,

objected to this ridiculous idea, and The Judge became frustrated, stating “no proposal seems to please you.” To everyone’s surprise (and delight), The Judge declared that *he* would marry The Plaintiff. The Defendant did not leave the Court alone: he was paired with a member of the Public. As is often the closure of a Gilbert & Sullivan opera, all ends well, and the ensemble concluded the show with “Oh, joy unbounded.”

Yet another successful GSA show is now in the books. Although it was a shorter show, attendees will not have to wait very long before hearing more Gilbert & Sullivan melodies. Audiences’ appetites will soon be sated when GSA presents ***Ruddigore*** in June. See you soon!

photos courtesy Steve Schwartzman

see more at gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com

Ad Space Available in the Playbill for *Ruddigore*

Consider purchasing an ad for your business, practice, service, etc., in the playbill for ***Ruddigore***. 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”x1⅞” @ \$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 previous playbills 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 ***Ruddigore***, or to ask questions and get more information, please contact **Saundra Ragona** at saundra@gilbertsullivan.org.

The deadline for ad commitment (both size and format) is May 9, and final copy is due by May 30.



***Ruddigore* Cast and Staff**

Sir Roderic Murgatroyd – **Julius Young**
 Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd – **Arthur DiBianca**
 Sir Despard Murgatroyd – **Sam Johnson**
 Richard Dauntless – **Danny Castillo**
 Old Adam Goodheart – **Reagan Murdock**
 Rose Maybud – **Corinna Browning**
 Mad Margaret – **Shelby Schisler**
 Dame Hannah – **Patricia Combs**
 Zorah – **Abigail Adams**
 Ruth – **Sarah Manna**

Women’s Chorus:

Bethany Ammon, Bonnie Bogovich, Hannah Cooper, Chantal Freeman, Leann Fryer, Rosa Mondragon Harris, Janette Jones, Ellie Mellen, Iona Olive, Alexandra Roubinek, and Amy Selby

Men’s Chorus:

Brenham Adams, Garrett Cordes, Andy Fleming, Jake Jacobsen, David Kaufman, Mark Long, Jim Newsome, Ian Stilwell, and Jay Young

Artistic Director: **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**

Music Director: **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

Production Manager: **Bill Hatcher**

Stage Manager: **Monica Kurtz**

Set Designer: **Ann Marie Gordon**

Lighting Designer: **Jennifer Rogers**

Costume Coordinator: **Pam Fowler**

Rehearsal Pianist: **Jeanne Sasaki**

Chorus Master: **Andy Fleming**



A Genealogical Fantasy

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Pity the poor Artistic Director who must come up with an idea for a column but whose well is dry! Then he remembered an article he published in *The Savoyard*, the magazine published in London for

Associate Members of The D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust—way back in 1970.

He hopes that his readers will understand the necessity for this bit of literary recycling—and perhaps even enjoy the result. He begs to remind them that *Ruddigore* takes place in the fishing village of Rederring, Cornwall, and he invites them to think back on our recent productions of *Trial by Jury* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* as he weaves again, 48 years later, the yarn he called

TRIAL BY JURY—A Sequel to *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Over the years, *Trial by Jury* has been frequently played as a curtain-raiser to *H.M.S. Pinafore*—a decided mistake, for evidence is great proving the Dramatic Cantata is clearly a brief but important sequel to the romance of Josephine and the lowly tar turned Captain from the Original Nautical Comic Opera. An examination of the two libretti makes this clear.

Mrs. Cripps (“Little Buttercup”) reveals in her song concerning her early experiences as a baby farmer that she mixed the captain and the tar in infancy, making Rackstraw Edward Corcoran (later to become Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B.—see *Utopia Ltd.*) and Corcoran Ralph Rackstraw.*

Throughout *H.M.S. Pinafore* there are hints that Josephine is not Edward’s (Ralph’s) first love: “Unlearned he in aught save that which love has taught (for love had been his tutor),” “A British tar is a soaring soul, as free as a mountain bird,” and so forth. It is therefore not surprising to find that Angelina, a lovely fishing village girl and one of Edward’s many girls in many ports, has been jilted for the *Pinafore* Captain’s daughter. (This knowledge of Edward’s Rederring fiancée gives new insight to Edward’s “I am but a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms” speech.) Josephine, who loves Edward well, has probably heard the scuttlebutt of his Rederring lover—possibly from Mrs. Cripps—and seizes upon this knowledge when she tries to conceal her affection by bursting forth, “Go, sir, and learn to cast your eyes on some village maiden in your own poor rank!”

Of course, the difficulties of unequal rank are solved by Buttercup, and Edward Corcoran’s marriage to Josephine Rackstraw is considered imminent at the end of the opera, probably to be solemnized by a Doctor of Divinity who resides in the vicinity of Portsmouth.

But just as Mrs. Cripps heard in Portsmouth the gossip of Ralph’s—that is Edward’s—promise of matrimony to Angelina in Rederring, the news of the impending marriage between Edward and Josephine in Portsmouth was conveyed to Angelina

and the “corps of professional bridesmaids” in Rederring, possibly by man-o’-war’s man Richard Dauntless, who undoubtedly heard naval gossip of the Rackstraw/Josephine/Porter triangle aboard the “Pinafore.” Angelina, having already bought her trousseau, decides to bring immediate suit against Edward—formerly Ralph. (Unfortunately the Court records in Rederring are no longer extant, but it is a fair assumption that Angelina misunderstood the true name of her former fiancé, and mistakenly filed suit against “Edwin” Corcoran.) Edward is subpoenaed to Court in Rederring by Angelina’s solicitor as the final plans are being made for his marriage to Josephine.

The statement and resolution of Edward’s dilemma may be examined in the transcription of the trial. Edward informally states his case before the Usher calls for order: “Joy incessant palls the sense; and love, unchanged, will cloy. . . .” When court convenes, Counsel for the Plaintiff enumerates the mental anguish Edward caused Angelina: “Picture him excuses framing—going from her far away.” (Surely she knows that Edward, an “honest brown right hand” at sea, must of necessity cast off for extended periods of time.) Edward, on rebuttal, candidly states that his “heart has been ranging,” that nature’s laws he obeys, “for nature is constantly changing. . . . Consider the moral, I pray, nor bring a young fellow to sorrow, who loves this young lady today, and loves that young lady tomorrow.” In a desperate last attempt to show incompatibility, Edward admits the seafaring traits he has developed: smoking, drinking, and bullying; and ironically states, “I’ll marry this lady today, and I’ll marry the other tomorrow.”

The Judge solves the problem, of course, by marrying Angelina in Rederring, leaving Edward and Josephine free to plight their troth in Portsmouth.

But His Honour the Judge—could he be the same Justice who later was to hand down “judgements in F sharp minor, given andante in six-eight time,” as this breach of promise trial would suggest? The same Justice who watched his “professional advancement with considerable interest”—from the “incubus” to Angelina to Iolanthe? The same susceptible Justice who perpetually seems “quite prepared to marry again?”

“There’s an unbounded field of speculation on which one could discourse for hours!”

* * * * *

The following issue of *The Savoyard* ran a rebuttal from my friend Diana Burleigh in Australia called “But who was Frederic’s Father?” in which she “proves” that “*Trial* does not follow *Pinafore*; it precedes *The Pirates of Penzance*,” along with another article by one Gerald Benson that asks “Who was Josephine’s mother?”

That was followed by a note from the editor: “Readers may now take a rest from these genealogical fantasies”!

**Josephine, ironically, already possesses her future married name, and on becoming conjugally matrimonified, would obtain her maiden name. This is Topsy-Turvydom if there ever was such.*

NEWS of our MEMBERS



Enid in 2013

Enid Hallock passed away in April, at the age of 95. She had been a part of Gilbert & Sullivan Austin since its inception. She appeared as Buttercup in our inaugural production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1976, and appeared in eleven more shows between then and 1999, including playing Dame Hannah in our 1977 and 1990 productions of *Ruddigore*. She also served the fledgling organization as Executive Vice-President from 1979 to 1982. She seldom missed a meeting or production, and enjoyed our recent *Trial by Jury*. Long-time member **Nancy McQueen** passed away in February. She served as Secretary on the GSA Board from 2005 to 2008, and briefly filled a vacancy in that post in 2010. She moved to Missouri two years ago, following a stroke.



Enid (2nd from left) and her son Gary (back row) in 1976 *H.M.S. Pinafore*

GSA's Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** wears many hats. He is about to retire one, as Artistic Director of the Capital City Men's Chorus. After 23 years in that position, he will lead his final concert as CCMC director at St. John's United Methodist Church, 2140 Allandale Rd., on Saturday, April 28 at 7:30 pm and on Sunday, April 29 at 4 pm. The concert will feature Childhood Favorites, the songs that shaped our childhood and provided the soundtracks of our youth. For tickets or additional information, visit CCMCAustin.org

GSA member **Marge Reiter** resides at Brookdale Spicewood Springs Senior Living. At her request, GSA Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, visited the center in February and spoke on "Working and Playing with Gilbert & Sullivan," interspersing music with his talk and even including some singing along.



Rafe with Marge Reiter

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 "GSA," or call to join (512) 472-4772 (GSSA).

Please check a membership category:

- ☐ **Member** (\$30-\$49)
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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: ☐

Wand'ring Minstrels

The Wand'ring Minstrels are always ready to entertain at your function. 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 our web site, www.gilbertsullivan.org, for information.



The Wand'ring Minstrels performed an Easter show at Westminster. The Minstrels include Katie and Robert L. Schneider (left) and Janette Jones (right, with Katie), as well as Lady High Pianist Marti Mortensen Ahern (not shown)

VIP Tickets for *Ruddigore*

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin is offering a special VIP package for our production of *Ruddigore*. The VIP ticket includes:

- reserved seat ticket
- reserved premium parking
- seat draping
- stage recognition
- access to the directors and cast at an exclusive rehearsal event

All this for only \$100 per ticket.

GSA appreciates the support of our VIPs!



Coming Events

- May 20 G&S Radio Mystery Theatre presents
Ruddigore (see p. 1)
- June 14-24 *Ruddigore* summer production

Spring and summer pleasure you,
Autumn, aye, and Winter, too—
Every season has its cheer,
Life is lovely all the year!
Fa-la-la-la.

Ruddigore, Act I Finale

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive at the end of May; the deadline for submissions will be May 16. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!



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APRIL - MAY 2018

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Cultural Arts
CITY OF AUSTIN
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Texas
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The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

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Music Director

Ralph MacPhail, Jr.
Jeffrey Jones-Ragona

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