

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

The royal wedding of Harry and Meghan in England captured the interest of the world. Royal families tend to attract a great deal of attention and admiration, don't they?

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, throughout its 42-year history, has been a family affair in many ways. For example, **Mark Long**, a member of the *Ruddigore* chorus and one of our longest-serving chorists, has been joined by son **Stephen** in the cast in past years, and his late wife **Roberta** was a longtime board member. **Allen Lawshae**, one of our founders, played many notable roles including the first Sir Roderic, and his daughter **Julia** also played several key roles; his son **Tom** and daughter-in-law **Laurel** play cello and violin in our orchestra, where Laurel serves as concert master. **Dan Girardot** and his daughter **Michelle** have graced our stage often. **Jamieson Taylor**, a frequent singer with our choruses as well as Austin Opera's, performed first for G&S Austin with her father **Joe Taylor** and her brother **Joe, Jr.** Board member **Dave Wieckowski** and his son **Brian** appeared together in a couple of shows, and my daughter **Susan** and I sang together in the chorus years ago. There are numerous other G&S Austin family connections.

But then there are royal families. Two families come to mind when I think about royalty in our group, and they are the **Gillmans** and the **Hallocks**.

**Reba and Leonard Gillman** were among the earliest performers and supporters in our early days. Beginning in the 70s, Reba's lovely soprano voice was featured in many shows, and Leonard served as pianist or music director for a number of productions. Len was cast as the Lord Chancellor in the 1978 *Iolanthe* production, while Reba played Celia. Reba came onto the board in 1980 and served there continuously the remainder of her life. She was newsletter editor for many years and wrote an engaging column for every newsletter. After Reba's passing in 2015, following Len's in 2009, we dedicated our 2015 production of *The Sorcerer* to this royal couple. Today Reba and Len's daughter **Miki** can be spotted at virtually every summer performance, often with her daughter **Aletha Read**. This royal family continues to be the primary financial support for our remarkable GLOO, the Gillman Light Opera Orchestra.

**The Hallock family** has had a similarly distinguished history with us. **Enid** and her son **Gary** were founding members in 1976, and Enid sang many principal roles over the years. She was Little Buttercup (and Gary was a sailor) in the 1976 production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* at Zach Scott Theatre—the show that led to the formation of The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin. In the ensuing years she lit up the stage as Lady Sangazure in *The Sorcerer*, Dame Hannah in three different productions of *Ruddigore*, and the Duchess of Plaza-Toro in *The Gondoliers*. Gary also continued to perform in other



shows and is the mastermind behind our superb children's activities each year; and Enid's grandson **Andrew**, now a highly honored singer living and performing in Europe, performed with us as well. Enid's husband **Bruce**, an aeronautical engineer and executive pilot, applauded his family's performances from the audience. Bruce died in 2005, and Enid, at age 95, this April. Our 2018 production of *Ruddigore* is dedicated to our second royal family, the Hallocks.

I hope to see you during the June 14-24 run of the show—to enjoy the performances on stage, to revel in the wonderful orchestral accompaniment we owe to the Gillmans, and to learn more about Enid Hallock in the program of this production dedicated to her and her family.

*Libby Weed*



## Ruddigore

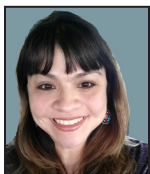
Our Grand Production of *Ruddigore* will have nine performances:

Thursday	June 14	7:30 pm	Opening Night—Reduced Price tickets
Friday	June 15	7:30 pm	Gala Performance—Free Buffet with Cast Follows Performance
Saturday	June 16	7:30 pm	Pre-Performance Talk – see below
Sunday	June 17	2:00 pm	Children's Activities at 1 pm
Thursday	June 21	7:30 pm	
Friday	June 22	7:30 pm	Pre-Performance Talk – see below
Saturday	June 23	2:00 pm	
Saturday	June 23	7:30 pm	
Sunday	June 24	2:00 pm	Closing Performance

There will be a pre-performance talk by Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr., from 6:30 to 7 pm on June 16 and 22.

## In This Issue

G&S Radio Mystery Theatre: <i>Ruddigore</i> .....	pp. 2,3
Setting Contrasts .....	p. 4
<i>Ruddigore</i> Ticket Information .....	p. 5
Wand'ring Minstrels .....	p. 5



## G&S Radio Mystery Theatre presents *Ruddigore* by Rosa Mondragon Harris

On May 20, an eager and appreciative crowd braved traffic and thunderstorms to join GSA at a new venue, Georgetown Public Library. This musicale was presented in an inventive format, with a topsy-turvy spin on old-time radio shows. Complete with sound effects, **G&S Radio Mystery Theatre presents *Ruddigore*** was a musical revue comprising G&S favorites as well as musical highlights from GSA's upcoming summer production of *Ruddigore*, a Victorian melodrama with villains, innocent maidens, dashing heroes, and ghosts.



David Kaufman  
as Radio Host

The show's cast included **David Kaufman** as Radio Show Host and Narrator, **Bonnie Bogovich** as Foley (named after sound-effects artist Jack Foley), **Corinna Browning** as Rose Maybud, **Patricia Combs** as Dame Hannah, **Shelby Schisler** as Mad Margaret, **Arthur DiBianca** as Robin Oakapple, **Danny Castillo** as Richard Dauntless, **Sam Johnson** as Sir Despard

Murgatroyd, and **Julius Young** as Sir Roderic Murgatroyd. Rounding out the cast were the Radio Commercial Sponsors and Chorus: **Abigail Adams**, **Bethany Ammon**, **Andy Fleming**, **Leann Fryer**, **Rosa Mondragon Harris**, **Mark Long**, **Sarah Manna**, **Ellie Mellen**, **Reagan Murdock**, **Jim Newsome**, **Alexandra Roubinek**, **Amy Selby**, **Ian Stillwell**, and **Jay Young**.



Bonnie Bogovich as Foley

After President **Libby Weed** welcomed the audience, music from the opening of Act II from *Ruddigore* began playing as the Radio Host stepped up to the microphone. He spoke of witches' curses and ghosts of those long gone all being figments of our imaginations. But were they, really? In the show's first scene, the audience was introduced to Richard Dauntless and Sir Despard Murgatroyd in his picture gallery. Despard spoke of his deceased elder brother, Ruthven, who should have inherited his title, and with it, its curse. Richard informed Despard that he was, in fact, alive in their village under the name of Robin Oakapple, and that he was to marry Rose Maybud that very day.



Sam Johnson as Sir  
Despard Murgatroyd

Before the radio show's tale continued any further, all stars of the mystery and members of the chorus introduced themselves. Our Radio Host then announced that we would hear from the show's first sponsor, Major General Encyclopedia. The audience was treated to the always popular G&S favorite, "I am the very model of a modern Major-General" from *The Pirates of Penzance*, sung by David Kaufman.

Now on to Dame Hannah's story. Our Radio Host told us of the fishing village of Rederring, in Cornwall, where an endowed corps of professional bridesmaids was on duty every day. They were hoping that "Sweet Rose Maybud" would marry and make use of them, but alas Dame Hannah, who looked after Rose as she would a dear niece, said that Rose was still "heart-free." Dame Hannah



Patricia Combs as  
Dame Hannah



Julius Young as Sir  
Roderic Murgatroyd

herself was betrothed, but discovered on her wedding day that her husband-to-be was none other than Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, one of the bad Baronets of *Ruddigore*. Much to the horror of Zorah, Ruth, and the other bridesmaids, Dame Hannah said that his line was accursed and therefore he was not a good suitor for her. He died and she never saw him again. She told of the legend with "Sir Rupert Murgatroyd" from *Ruddigore*.

Just as the audience was about to meet the show's heroine, Rose Maybud, the show was interrupted by its next sponsor, Yum-Yum's Day-to-Night Beautiful Face Powder. After a few words about her loveliness, Leann Fryer sang one of my favorite G&S selections, "The sun, whose rays are all ablaze" from



Corinna Browning as  
Rose Maybud



Arthur DiBianca as  
Robin Oakapple

*The Mikado*. The show returned to find Dame Hannah and Rose discussing young Robin. As she flipped through her book of etiquette, Rose sang "If somebody there chanced to be" from *Ruddigore*. Rose's beloved Aunt left her, and Robin appeared. The pair nervously discussed that each had a friend that they would consult the other about as they offered us the lovely duet, "I know a youth" from *Ruddigore*.

The next commercial was brought to us by Buttercup's Perfect Peppermint Drops. The Radio Host asked Miss Buttercup if she could provide us with her insight into the love affair of our story's Rose and Robin. Taking advantage of the moment to market her product, Buttercup said she wondered if worries about possible bad breath could be inhibiting the lovely pair from getting together. Rosa Mondragon Harris sang of her "Peppermint Drops" with "I'm called Little Buttercup" from *H.M.S. Pinafore*.



Rosa Mondragon  
Harris as Buttercup

Robin's foster brother, a gallant sailor named Richard, now entered the story. With the women of the chorus joining him, he sang "From the briny sea" and "I shipp'd, d'ye see, in a revenue sloop" from *Ruddigore*. Robin and Richard shared a joyous reunion and Richard was surprised to learn that Robin loved Rose in vain, as he was a Baronet. Robin confided to Richard that to escape his family curse, he had assumed another name and let the curse fall to his

## G&S Radio Mystery Theatre *continued from p. 2*

younger brother, Despard. Richard agreed to help Robin win the love of Rose as Richard seemed fearless when talking to the ladies. This led us to the next commercial. Andy Fleming stepped up and asked, “And where does this fellow get such confidence? Could it be from my Penzance Pirates’ Hair Pomade?” He then sang “Oh is there not one maiden breast” from *The Pirates of Penzance*.



*Andy Fleming as a Penzance Pirate*

The Radio Host next introduced us to a new character in the story, a poor mad woman. Mad Margaret offered us “Cheerily carols the lark” from *Ruddigore*. Rose reentered, and upon seeing Margaret in tears, offered her an apple. Margaret refused, and said that she heard “Sir Despard and his evil crew!” who “sing choruses in public” approaching them. She urged Rose to hide away or she would be seized. Wouldn’t you run from a chorus singing in public? How utterly frightening! Upon his arrival, Despard sang “Oh, why am I moody and sad?” from *Ruddigore*.



*Shelby Schisler as Mad Margaret*

By now, we had been presented quite the twisted plot, with Robin being the bad Baronet in hiding and Despard thought to be the villain. This was all one big mess, and led to the final commercial of the afternoon from Three Little Maids Cleaning Service. Leann Fryer, Sarah Manna, and Ellie Mellen next sang the delightful “Three little maids” from *The Mikado*.



*Ellie Mellen, Leann Fryer, and Sarah Manna as Three Little Maids*

It was doubtful that Three Little Maids Cleaning Service would be able to clean up Robin’s deception. He would have to deal with the curse himself. He pleaded to the ancestral portraits hanging in his hall as he fell on his knees. Robin, Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, and the men of the chorus offered us the spooky “Painted emblems of a race” and “When the night wind howls” from *Ruddigore*.

In the show’s next scene, Despard and Margaret confronted Robin. Despard told his brother that Robin had been a bad Baronet and that he was responsible for the misdeeds committed by others in his place. The trio of Robin, Despard, and Margaret sang the final song of the show with “My eyes are fully open” from *Ruddigore*.

Our Radio Host ended the show by thanking the audience and acknowledging the show’s wonderful sponsors: Modern Major General Encyclopedia, Yum-Yum’s Day-to-Night Beautiful Face Powder, Buttercup’s Perfect Peppermint Drops, Penzance Pirates’ Hair Pomade, and Three Little Maids Cleaning Service.



*Libby Weed*

Libby thanked the show’s host and narrator, David Kaufman, and invited the audience to see GSA’s production of *Ruddigore* in North Austin next month. She thanked the Georgetown Public Library for hosting as well the show’s producer, script writer and music

arranger, **June Julian**; stage director and script writer **Janette Jones**; music director and accompanist extraordinaire, **Jeanne Sasaki**; page turner **Zimm Davis**; in-house Foleyist, **Bonnie Bogovich**; sound technician, **Robert Schneider**; sound engineer, **Alexandra Roubinek**; and videographer, **David Little**.



*June Julian and Janette Jones*

**Reagan Murdock**, who will play Old Adam in this year’s summer production, led the cast and audience in singing “Hail, Poetry” from *The Pirates of Penzance*. Everyone then sang “Now to the banquet we press” from *The Sorcerer* and retreated to the refreshment table. Members of the cast and audience commented on how much they enjoyed the “radio show” format for this musicale, wittily sprinkled with sound effects to enhance the story for the audience. The musicales consistently present Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire in imaginative ways, and this was no exception. If you couldn’t join us for this one, be sure to catch it on YouTube on our Gilbert and Sullivan Austin channel—**GandSofAustin**.



*Reagan Murdock as The Pirate King*



*(back, l-r) Alexandra Roubinek, Jim Newsome, Jay Young, Abigail Adams, Rosa Mondragon Harris  
(front, l-r) Bonnie Bogovich, Jeanne Sasaki, Zimm Davis*



*(back, l-r) Amy Selby, Bethany Ammon, Mark Long, Ian Stilwell, Sarah Manna, Ellie Mellen, Leann Fryer  
(front, l-r) Julius Young (obscured), Sam Johnson, Shelby Schisler, Danny Castillo, Arthur DiBianca, Corinna Browning, Patricia Combs*

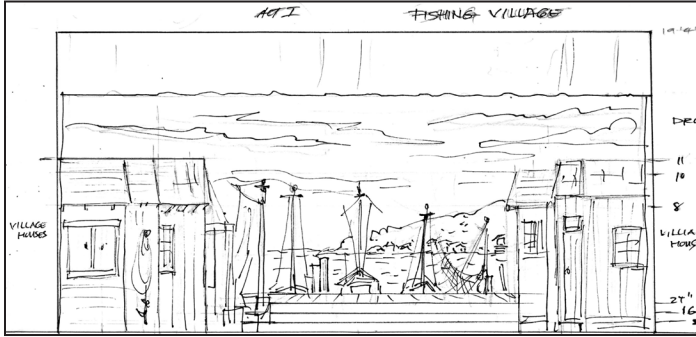
*photos here and on page 5 courtesy Steve Schwartzman  
see more at [gilbertsullivanatx.smugmug.com](http://gilbertsullivanatx.smugmug.com)*



## Setting Contrasts by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Ann Marie Gordon's wonderful set designs for *Ruddigore* arrived in Bridgewater two weeks ago, and I was filled with delight—not only with the designs themselves and the suggestions they convey for what we'll all be seeing onstage in June, but also because they suggested the idea for this column.

As a dramatist, W. S. Gilbert was well aware of the value of contrast as a dramatic device and the many ways contrast can be used to add variety, make points, provide humor, and—well, the list could be as long as Ko-Ko's!



Ann Marie's renderings started me thinking about the string of Savoy operas, focusing on how Gilbert used contrast in his settings. In *Thespis* (1871), the "Ruined Temple on the Summit of Mount Olympus" for Act I is the same for Act II, but with the "Ruins Restored." Skipping over the one-act *Trial by Jury* (1875), it is interesting to point out that the original version of *The Sorcerer* (1877) moved from the "Grounds of Sir Marmaduke's Mansion" to the "Market-Place of Ploverleigh;" however, when Gilbert & Sullivan revised the show in 1884, both acts took place "Exterior of Sir Marmaduke's Mansion," Act I at Midday and Act II at Midnight.

Perhaps one reason for this change was that in the two works that followed *The Sorcerer* (*H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1878, and *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1879), Gilbert contrasted the times of day in the two acts to provide very atmospheric second acts as he would do in the revised version of *The Sorcerer*: moving the action from "Noon" to "Night" (aboard the ship) and from "half-past-eleven-ish" at the sea-shore in the morning to "A Ruined Chapel by Moonlight" in the piratical work. *Patience* (1881) shifts locations near Castle Bunthorne, but both acts take place during the day. *Iolanthe* (1882) moves from "An Arcadian Landscape" by day to "Palace Yard, Winchester" by moonlight. All three acts in *Princess Ida* (1884) take place outside and during the day, though the location shifts from King Hildebrand's Castle to Castle Adamant. The action of *The Mikado* (1885) takes place in Titipu in the Courtyard of Ko-Ko's palace and in his garden, each in daytime.

Next in the series is *Ruddigore* (1887), and what makes it unique is that for the first time Gilbert moves his action from *outdoors* to *indoors*, providing a shift of setting that is not only very dramatic but also sets the stage for one of the most memorable scenes in all of Savoy opera: the Baronets of Ruddigore Past animate, step from their frames, and threaten the current holder of the title with unspeakable agonies.

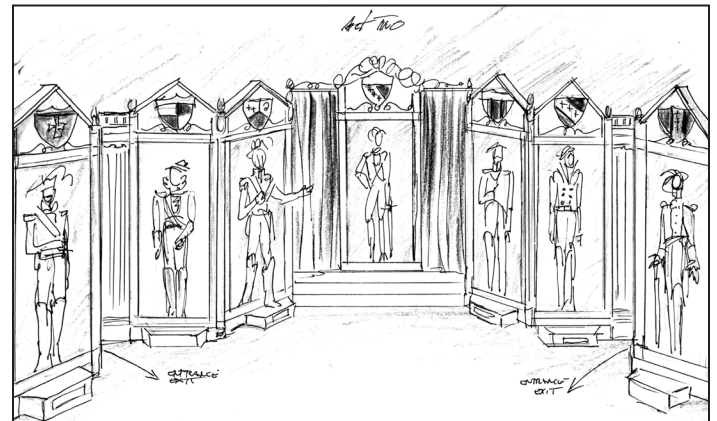
If *Ruddigore* was the first of the operas to shift from outdoors to indoors, we should note that the following one (*The Yeomen of the Guard*, 1888) does not. *The Gondoliers* (1889) *does*—sort of—for Act II is set in a pavilion (like Act I of *Princess Ida*), which according to my online Merriam-Webster is typically "a large often sumptuous tent."

Gilbert moved his plot from outdoors to indoors in his penultimate work with Sullivan, *Utopia Limited* (1893), with the action moving from "A Utopian Palm Grove" to the "Throne Room in King Paramount's Palace," and the time from clearly daytime to "Night." *The Grand Duke* (1896) moves from a daytime celebration in a Market-Place to a Throne room "the next morning."

I would argue that *Ruddigore* stands alone in terms of the contrast between the act settings in Gilbert & Sullivan.

But Gilbert set contrasts in other ways as well. The operas from *The Sorcerer* through *Ruddigore* consistently contrasted the tall, fleshy, lumbering, stolid Rutland Barrington with the short, thin, agile, witty George Grossmith (best examples: Captain Corcoran and Sir Joseph Porter, the Sergeant of Police and Major-General Stanley, Grosvenor and Bunthorne, King Hildebrand and King Gama, Pooh-Bah and Ko-Ko, and, finally, Sir Despard and Sir Ruthven (Robin) in *Ruddigore*). Note, too, how Gilbert often contrasts the silliness of his characters with the impeccable correctness of their dress and demeanor, especially those wearing uniforms.

I leave this theme to interested readers to pursue further on their own (and suggest that Sullivan often used contrast between his music and Gilbert's lyrics to humorous effect), but first suggest that Gilbert's main approach to comedy, often described with the term "topsy-turvy," is essentially based on contrast. As the Master himself said, "All humour so-called is based upon grave and quasi-serious treatment of the ludicrous," a concept Sullivan often embraced.



Libby and I have both written elsewhere that part of the delight of seeing *Ruddigore* is discovering the differences between who the characters *profess to be* and the sorts of people they *actually are*. *Ruddigore* is based upon the "stock, two-dimensional characters" of melodrama (virtuous heroes and heroines and evil villains, for instance), but we learn when we get to know them that none are as they seem to be at first, for Gilbert has worked his topsy-turvy magic.

Yes, *Ruddigore* is full of contrasts, set by both Gilbert and Sullivan. Discovering them is a lot of fun and one of the many sources of delight in this funny, delightful, and tuneful comic opera.

## Buy Tickets Now!

Tickets are now on sale for *Ruddigore*. Purchase online at [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org) or by phone at 512-474-5664. Advance purchase ticket prices are \$27 adults, \$16 students, \$8 children (18 and under). Prices at the door are \$32 adults, \$21 students, and \$11 children. We also offer VIP tickets—see box, right.

### Visit Our Sales Table ...

Join in the fun of *Ruddigore*, and take something home to remember the show. In addition to *Ruddigore* T-shirts and Gilbert & Sullivan Austin T-shirts (\$20), our sales table will have lots of fun, inexpensive items for the young and young-at-heart (moustaches, parasols, headbands, etc). CDs and DVDs from past shows will be available and orders for *Ruddigore* CDs and DVDs will be taken.

### ... and Don't Forget Refreshments

Remember, all drinks and snacks are just \$1, so enjoy them while you browse!

## 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!

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The Wand'ring Minstrels include (l-r) Robert L. Schneider, Marti Mortensen Ahern, Janette Jones, and Katie Schneider

## Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in early September; the deadline for submissions will be in mid-August. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!



G&S Radio Mystery Theater presents *Ruddigore* entertained a large audience at Georgetown Public Library (see article, pages 2-3)



Our venue this year is again the Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School. *All seats reserved.*



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