

THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed



As another year ends and we anticipate the adventures of the coming year, I have had occasion to give some thought to an interesting question: What kinds of backgrounds and interests lead a person to enjoy the works of Gilbert & Sullivan?

Not long ago I visited with a couple who have attended our shows for years. The husband is distinguished in the field of physics, having served universities and the government as a teacher, researcher, and authority in his scientific field. After talking with them and hearing how much they loved the G&S canon, I began to think of other scientists who have been drawn to our productions.

The late professor **Lawrence Shepley**, also a physicist, served on our board for years, including some years as president. Many others from physics and other scientific fields have been on the board and/or attend our productions regularly.

I also think of many mathematicians. Dr. **Leonard Gillman** performed in our shows (both at the piano and on the stage) and served in consulting roles; he was a renowned mathematician at the University of Texas, Rochester, and Purdue. He and his beloved wife **Reba**, a longtime board member and leader, were in the inaugural GSA Hall of Fame and were widely seen as the First Couple of Gilbert & Sullivan Austin during their lifetimes. One of our current board members, **Diane Radin**, served on the UT mathematics faculty for many years, along with her husband **Charles**.

Why do so many scientists and mathematicians love G&S? It is an interesting question. Reginald Smith Brindle wrote in *The New Music* published by Oxford University Press in 1987 that music theory has no axiomatic foundation in mathematics, yet the basis of musical sound can be described mathematically and exhibits "a remarkable array of number properties." Clearly, music and mathematics are kin, and many with an affinity for one also enjoy the other.

Another large contingent of Savoyards are people who love words—wordplay, clever phraseology, agile writing, and

simple fun with language. I know many literary types—writers (including poets) and lovers of books—who thrive on G&S because of William S. Gilbert's remarkable facility with words and ideas. And then there are those who just crave beautiful, singable, memorable music. They take delight in Sullivan's melodies, harmonies, and rhythms. How could they not?

"It takes all kinds," as the saying goes, and our fellowship includes all kinds. This was an interesting train of thought for me on a cold afternoon. I could put myself in several of those groups, and I am thankful for the joy that the music, wit, and fun of Gilbert & Sullivan have brought to me.

Warm winter regards,

Libby Weed



Sunday, January 5, 2 pm

Genesis Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall
1507 Wilshire Blvd. (see map, page 6)

Another year, another chance to sing some Gilbert & Sullivan!

The annual Sing-Along Musicale is our version of an "open G&S no-mic" and business meeting, and we are inviting you to participate in the joy of singing some of the best songs ever written.

Do you have a beloved G&S song you're just itching to sing? Email your requested song to **Leann Fryer** at sing@gilbertsullivan.org. Songs are first come, first served—so be sure to sign up right away!

To add to the delight, our multi-talented and charismatic Wand'ring Minstrels director, **Robert Schneider**, will be there to lead the audience in a sing-along of G&S favorites. **Jeanne Sasaki** will be our accompanist.

Of course, there can't be any play without some work first! We will precede the rousing renditions with the ever-important election of the Board of Directors for 2020 and other GSA business. (See page 5.)

Come celebrate another wonderful year of G&S with all of us! As always, bringing munchies to share is highly encouraged.

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Name That G&S Character!

by Mary Hendren



Wouldn't it be great if all game shows were as rewarding and entertaining as **Name That G&S Character**? Throw in added benefits such as no tickets, no commercials, and no dull moments. The folks who attended the November 10th performance will remember its surprise ending. The Contestant, **Monica Ballard**, competed under an assumed identity, with a secret motive, quite in the Gilbert & Sullivan style of mayhem.



Monica Ballard

Plus everyone got into the act when the knowledgeable audience shouted out identities from tunes and text. The game show host, **Dave Wieckowski**, had several great lines ... something about "three legal aides." But you'll have to ask him about that joke since he and **Janette Jones** wrote the script. Producer **Leann Fryer** said it was fun to give chorus members a chance to sing Gilbert & Sullivan songs as soloists. Janette predicted that the audience would be delighted with the talent on display, and she was right!



Dave Wieckowski

New to this area are **Mary Elisabeth Kettlewell** and **Bryce Bartu**. Bryce and Mary moved to Austin from Colorado, already fans of Gilbert & Sullivan. They hope to perform in the January **Sing-Along** and audition for **The McAdo**. Mary and **Garrett Cordes** sang two lovely duets, "I have



Mary Elisabeth Kettlewell and Garrett Cordes - "Prithee, pretty maiden"



Bonnie Bogovich, Mary Elisabeth Kettlewell, and Jennifer Conte - "Three Little Maids"

a song to sing, O!" and "Prithee, pretty maiden." Mary, **Jennifer Conte**, and **Bonnie Bogovich** sang a lively "Three Little Maids." Bryce cut an amusing figure in both "Spurn not the nobly born" and "Would you know the kind of maid."



Bryce Bartu

It was a pleasure to hear G&S regulars sing some of our favorites: **Jay Young** and **Linda Grace Perez**, "I once was a very abandoned person!"



Jay Young and Linda Grace Perez

Great job, **Jim Newsome**, in the John Wellington Wells patter song.



Jim Newsome

What a delightful and balanced duet by Bonnie and **Chrishawn Michelle Floyd**, "Now wouldn't you like." When it came to "Poor wandering one," Leann ascended lightly and fearlessly into the higher realms!



(left) Chrishawn Michelle Floyd and Bonnie Bogovich



(right) Leann Fryer

Fairly new to Austin, **Taylor Rawley** performed the role of Cyril in **Princess Ida**. In the game show he brought exuberance to the nautical role, sensitivity as the wand'ring minstrel, and fleetness of foot when pursued by Katisha.



Taylor Rawley

With attentive accompaniment, **Jeanne Sasaki** set a pace of happy confidence; she was assisted by page-turner Devan Shane, high-school pianist and singer. Thanks goes to **Claire Pittner**, projectionist, and **Michelle Vanecek**, sound operation, for their work that supported the show's success.



Jeanne Sasaki

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin presented *Name That G&S Character* in November

photos courtesy Steve Schwartzman and Dierk Meyer see more at gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com

Gilbert & Sullivan performances are characterized by a good measure of giving—Board members helping with set up and take down, folks bringing refreshments, fans meeting and greeting one another, and the cast chatting with the audience after the show. This all builds anticipation for the next event on January 5th. As **Libby Weed** summed it up, “I was proud of everyone in this show.”



Contestant Kate Shaw reveals herself as Katisha to Host Dave D'Oyly Carte



Mayhem breaks loose as Katisha ropes in her "Little Nanki-Poo"



the cast (l-r): Jay Young, Garrett Cordes, Bryce Bartu, Bonnie Bogovich, Chrishawn Michelle Floyd, Linda Grace Perez, Mary Elisabeth Kettlewell, Jennifer Conte, Jim Newsome, and Leann Fryer

Auditions for *The McAdo*

Auditions will be held on Saturday, February 1, from 10 am to 6 pm, with callbacks on Sunday, February 2, from 2:30 to 6 pm, at Abiding Love Lutheran Church at 7210 Brush Country Road in South Austin. **Michelle Haché** and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** will be artistic and music directors, respectively, and **Bill Hatcher** will be the production manager. Gilbert & Sullivan Austin has reset *The Mikado* in the Scottish Highlands and retitled the show as *The McAdo*. The libretto and score will remain virtually intact.

Auditions are approximately ten minutes long and are by appointment only. Call **Sarah Slaughter** at (806) 557-0306 between 7 am and 9 pm or email audition@gilbertsullivan.org to reserve a time slot. All roles are open for casting including principals and

chorus. All performers will be compensated.

Those auditioning should memorize a song from Gilbert & Sullivan or something similar that will show their voice and range to best advantage. **It is mandatory to provide a copy of the music for the accompanist. Please note that no unaccompanied (a cappella) or self-accompanied auditions will be heard.** Although an accompanist will be provided, singers are welcome to bring their own if they wish. Please visit our website at <https://www.gilbertsullivan.org/auditions> for a libretto, and a complete description of the opera and its characters, including characters' vocal ranges. A completed audition form (available from the site) is required, and a résumé and headshot are requested.

The McAdo

A NEW BEGINNING JUNE 2020

Mikado, McAdo, Let's Not Call the Whole Thing Off!

by Dave Wieckowski



In previous articles I wrote about how our June 2020 grand production will be **The McAdo**, set in Scotland, instead of **The Mikado**, set in Japan. I also conveyed the very diligent process we went through in order to reach that decision. In short, we concluded that it is simply not possible to present a traditional Japanese **Mikado**

in Austin at this time, and therefore it would be irresponsible for us as a board to move forward in that direction. While it's impossible to say with certainty what the result would have been, we concluded there was a credible risk of significant negative media for GSA, loss of much-needed grant funding, and even possible disruptions at shows. I know that some will be disappointed by this decision, and we certainly understand that. But we feel very strongly that it is the right decision for this production, and for the long term stability of GSA.

Once we had decided on our intention to set **The McAdo** in Scotland, we moved to the very important phase of soliciting feedback from representatives of groups we felt would be critical to our success. We held a series of meetings with influential members of the Austin theater community, the Asian-American community, and even the Scottish community. Although these people were generally opposed to us staging a traditional **Mikado**, we were thrilled to hear their unanimous enthusiasm for **The McAdo**! Comments such as "That's a brilliant move," "You're going in the right direction," "I'm into it, sounds like fun," and "I would want to go to this show because it means that I can enjoy seeing **The Mikado** without feeling guilty about it" were typical of the feedback we received. We think this validates our decision with **The McAdo**, and it also gives us an opportunity to expand our audience for GSA shows. We are very appreciative of these community representatives for meeting with us and sharing their feedback, as well as giving us some valuable roll-out and production tips for the show. We'll be enlisting some of these individuals to participate in panel discussions during the production run, where they can share their views on the issue and help us communicate the key points involved in transitioning from a Japanese **Mikado**.

The next step for our **McAdo** Committee was to determine what edits would be required in order to set the show in Scotland, and I'll talk more about that in our next newsletter. Can you guess how many changes were needed to the libretto? I'll bet it's a whole lot less than you're thinking!

Mr. Jericho: A "Curtain-Raiser"

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.



A "curtain-raiser" sounds like a stagehand who operates the grand drape in a theatre, and that's exactly what it is.

Or can be. But the term can also denote a short dramatic work that precedes the main work of an entertainment.

When our Victorian forebears went to the theatre, they might have gone for a full evening's entertainment roughly analogous to screenings in cinemas that those of us of a certain age may remember (previews, newsreel, cartoon, feature). The bill might have included a short dramatic work not related to the featured piece (a curtain-raiser), the main attraction, and an "after-piece" or another short dramatic work to conclude the performance. Newspaper advertisements often carried start times for the featured work so that playgoers could decide which piece(s) they wished to see, and in long runs, the curtain-raisers and after-pieces might (and frequently did) change.

And sometimes these shorter "ephemeral" works outlived the featured attractions they accompanied.

In recent years, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin has presented three short works by Gilbert and/or Sullivan which have served as curtain-raisers and after-pieces. **Trial by Jury** began its long life in 1875 as an after-piece but has spent more than a century as a curtain-raiser for shorter Gilbert & Sullivan operas. The slightly longer **Cox and Box**, originally written for private performance, was shortened twice for use as a curtain raiser and, like **Trial by Jury**, toured for years by the original D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. And **The Zoo**, rescued from obscurity and published for the first time several decades ago, started life as a part of a longer bill and is frequently used today by companies devoted to Gilbert & Sullivan as a curtain-raiser.

Which brings us to **Mr. Jericho**, a very funny one-act operetta which was not written or composed by Gilbert or Sullivan, but which was written in 1893 by Harry Greenbank and composed by Ernest Ford for the Savoy Theatre's production of Sullivan and Sydney Grundy's **Haddon Hall**. It was published at the time, but fell into obscurity until published in a new scholarly edition in England only last year.

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin will present it in March as the feature of a production we're calling **A Day at the Savoy Theatre**. This will include some favorite and familiar musical numbers from Gilbert & Sullivan operas that premiered at the Savoy; the five Austin Savoyards presenting these numbers will then present the fully staged and costumed Texas premiere of **Mr. Jericho**.

More about these performers, their selections, and the history of **Mr. Jericho** will follow in the next issue of **The Austin Savoyard**. In the meantime, please mark March 7th and 8th on your calendars and plan to be present for a performance. We promise you a rollicking good time!

Send Us Your News!

The next issue of **The Austin Savoyard** should arrive in February; the deadline for submissions is January 27. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!

NEWS of our MEMBERS

Our Stage Manager Extraordinaire, **Monica Kurtz**, has received her Master of Education in trauma and resiliency in curriculum from Concordia University - Portland. She loved the experience, and says she is able to use what she learned every day in her position as an education specialist for the Education Service Center Region 13. Of course, the best news for GSA is that she will be back as Stage Manager for **The McAdo**.



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

Wand'ring Minstrels

Merry Christmas from the Wand'ring Minstrels! 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 website, www.gilbertsullivan.org, for information.

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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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:

Notice of Bylaws Change and Elections

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin will hold our required annual business meeting when we gather for a Sing-Along Musicale on Sunday, January 5, at 2 pm in the Fellowship Hall of Genesis Presbyterian Church, 1507 Wilshire Blvd. All members who are current in their dues will be eligible to vote.

We will first consider an amendment to our Bylaws. They currently allow between 7 and 12 Directors on our Board of Directors; the amendment would change the maximum to 15, and would define a quorum as 6 Directors when there are between 13 and 15 Directors in office. After the amendment has been voted upon, we will proceed with elections.

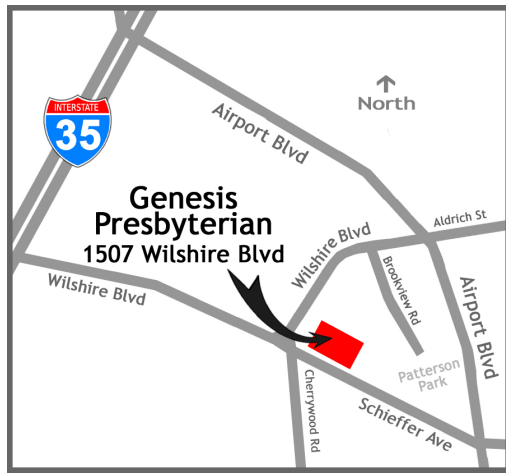
The following people have agreed to have their names placed on the ballot to serve on the board in 2020: **Sue Caldwell, Leann Fryer, Holton Johnson, Robert O. Kerr, David Little, Michael Meigs, Diane Radin, Robert L. Schneider, Sarah Slaughter, Charles Smaistrila, Michelle Vanecek, Libby Weed, and Dave Wieckowski.**

The nominating committee includes **Michelle Vanecek**, Chair; **Jean Smootz**; and **Charles Smaistrila**. Please contact Michelle at (512) 789-8075 or czech64@gmail.com if you wish to have your name added to this slate or to nominate someone else. In accordance with our by-laws, officers are elected by the Board during their first meeting after the Annual Meeting.

After the elections, we will enjoy an afternoon of music. Mark your calendars!

Gilbert & Sullivan Lecture Series

Professor Paul Lehman will continue his lecture series on Gilbert & Sullivan throughout 2020. The next two tentatively scheduled lectures are on **Patience** on February 4 and **Iolanthe** on April 6. The lectures are free and open to the public, at Westminster's Harris Bell Hall (4100 Jackson Avenue, Austin) from 7 to 8 pm. Dates are subject to change; it is recommended that you confirm the date by calling Westminster, (512) 454-4711, a few days in advance.



*Map to Annual Meeting and
Musical – details on page 1!*



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THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD - JANUARY 2020

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin

Entertaining and educating Texas audiences since 1976, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin is dedicated to spreading the topsy-turvy humor and joyful music of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan.

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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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