

# THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



## ***Gilbert & Sullivan ... and Irving Berlin and Lerner & Loewe and Meredith Willson and more!***

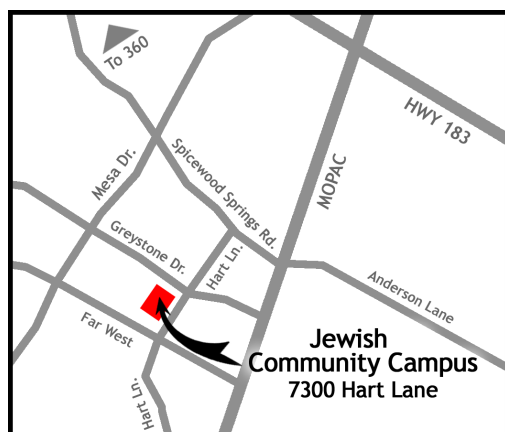
Sunday, March 12, 2 pm

Shalom Austin Jewish Community Center  
7300 Hart Lane

W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan thought they were creating high quality entertainment reflecting the current issues and foibles of their Victorian society. We know they were doing that and so much more. They changed English musical theatre forever. We are still reaping the benefits and hearing their influences today. Even when it's not acknowledged or even noticeable, the Savoy operas had an enduring impact on musical theatre.

Join with Gilbert & Sullivan Austin on March 12th as ten talented singers connect the dots between the works of our favorite Victorian pair and some of the most popular Broadway songs.

Patter songs and topsy turvy plots had existed for a long time but were usually rather silly and possessed little or none of the elegance and virtuosity of Gilbert's. GSA's Music Director **Dr. Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** points out that "Sullivan was among the most conscientious of text-setters—his airs 'sing' rather comfortably—no small accomplishment as English is a very difficult language to sing in."



Gilbert's lyrics move the plot and characterize the personnel. He is credited with giving his choruses character, that is, specific types of people logically present for the action, instead of a horde of villagers, for instance. They were sailors, pirates, dragoons, members of Parliament, etc.

This free program, produced by **Leann Fryer** and directed by **Janette Jones**, will be held Sunday, March 12, 2 pm, at the Epstein Family Community Hall / Gloria & Harvey Evans Performance Center at the Shalom Austin Jewish Community Center, 7300 Hart Lane. It is co-sponsored by the Program Department of Shalom Austin. Donations will be gratefully accepted.

A reception will follow the performance. Please bring munchies to share (no meat or shellfish, please).

### Performers in **G&S and Sondheim**



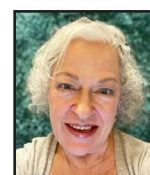
Andy Fleming



Leann Fryer



Gregory A  
Hilliard, Jr.



Janette Jones



Josué Hernández



Karl Logue,  
pianist



June Julian



Patricia Combs



Sarah Manna



Stephen Maus



Susan Johnston  
Taylor

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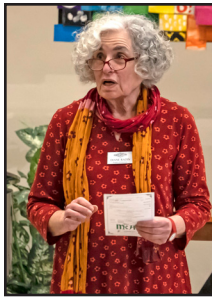


## GSA's Got Talent

by Mary Hendren

Wouldn't it be lovely if all the world's annual meetings were as brief and amicable as the one we experienced on January 8? In a matter of minutes we gratefully approved the Board of

Directors for 2023. We have confidence in the men and women who will handle the elements that help make live theater, Gilbert & Sullivan style, possible.



President Diane Radin calls for the vote ... and the ayes have it

After this brief but important business, **Leann Fryer** directed the entertainment, organized as previews of upcoming events: **Gilbert & Sullivan and Sondheim** (March); **The McAdo** (June); and **Esther, The Clever Queen** (fall). She introduced Lord High Pianist **Karl Logue**, who provided the accompaniment.



Karl Logue



Amy Selby

**Amy Selby** began the program with a wonderful performance of "The hours creep on apace" from **H.M.S. Pinafore**. As a change of pace, **Susan Johnston Taylor** sang the humorous "My Mother's Wedding Day" from **Brigadoon** (Lerner & Loewe) and Leann Fryer sang the frenetic "Another Hundred People" from **Company** (Sondheim). Switching back to Gilbert



Susan Johnston Taylor



Leann Fryer

& Sullivan, **Janette Jones** sang "When a merry maiden marries" from **The Gondoliers**. Why the mixture of Victorian and Broadway songs? Is it possible that *a city of staring strangers, geese*



Janette Jones

*becoming swans, and wedding brawls* have anything to do with Gilbert & Sullivan? That's the focus of the March 12 production—recognizing what has been carried forward from Gilbert & Sullivan to our time. President **Diane Radin** stated that the March show would connect "the dots between the works of our favorite Victorian pair and some of the most popular Broadway tunes."



Andy Fleming and Patricia Combs

**Patricia Combs** and **Andy Fleming** began the second group of songs with an old favorite from **The McAdo**, "Willow, tit-willow," a touching search for the origins of a loved one's sadness. "Is it weakness of intellect,

birdie?" I cried, "Or a rather tough worm in your little inside?"

They followed this lament with "There is beauty in the bellow of the blast." **Carlee Abschneider** performed a commanding "Oh, goddess wise" from **Princess Ida**. Then **Sam Johnson** joined Patricia and Andy in "My mind is fully open" from **Esther, the Clever Queen**.



Carlee Abschneider



Sam Johnson, Patricia Combs, and Andy Fleming

The third group of songs began with an apparent no-show. Alice May, listed on the playbill to sing next, was not sitting with the other performers. This initially disappointed many of us, since we'd never heard her sing before.



## Gilbert & Sullivan Austin presented *GSA's Got Talent* on January 8, 2023

photos on pages 2, 3, and 5 courtesy David Little

see more at [gilbertsullivanaustrin.smugmug.com](http://gilbertsullivanaustrin.smugmug.com)

However, Leann stepped into her spot and did a beautiful job of "Oh, happy young heart" from ***The Sorcerer***. Later we learned that Alice May's last performance with Gilbert & Sullivan was in 1877, so no wonder she didn't make it! Three cheers to all the Savoyards who recognized the name of the famous English soprano of yesteryear and caught the joke.



Sam Johnson

Sam swung right into the role of pirate king waving his black flag for "Oh, better far to live and die" from ***The Pirates of Penzance***, then led the traditional group sing of "Hail, Poetry" and "Now to the banquet we press." And we did, as always, enjoy the food and conversation after.



closing with "Hail, Poetry"

we pressed to the banquet, sharing a wonderful spread provided by members and friends



It was good to see friends like **Libby Weed** and **Gary Hallock** again. Gary commented that Gilbert & Sullivan operettas appeal to all ages. Gary, his mother Enid, and his son Andrew have all performed with Gilbert & Sullivan Austin. Over the years, Gary has created special activities for the Sunday matinees, giving children a hands-on experience of live theater. What a nice connection to think about.



(clockwise from lower left) Chris Hallock, Tomas Kardos, Gary Hallock, Andrew Hallock, Loel Graber, Libby Weed



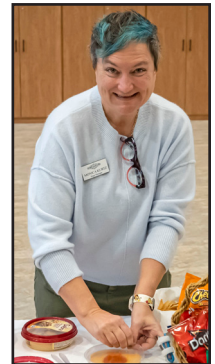
Sam and Cecily Johnson



Janette Jones and Derek Smootz



Spencer Reichman and Pixie Avent



Monica Kurtz



Sue Caldwell and Allan Longacre



Sarah Slaughter and Mary Hendren



Dave Wieckowski, Ira Forman, and Bill Hatcher

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by **Diane Radin**

Not to get too Biblical about it, but was it a coincidence that our ice storm occurred just after Jews around the world read the portion of Exodus about the ten plagues in Egypt, one of which was hail? At my house it seemed that ice cubes were coming down for hours. Then, with the power outages, we had the plague of darkness, too. Not to mention all those tree limbs.

I hope all in our GSA "family" came through these plagues without too much damage.

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin has an antidote for those winter plagues—our next musicale: ***Gilbert & Sullivan and Sondheim***. Bring your friends who love G&S and/or Broadway. Either way they will be happy with the selection of tunes from both repertoires. And they will get an early preview of the beautiful new buildings at the J as they walk through to the refurbished community hall with comfortable stadium seating—every seat provides a great view of the stage. After the music, there will be time to socialize over treats provided by the GSA board and generous audience members. The program is free; donations are gratefully accepted.

As I write this, our June grand production of ***The McAdo*** is moving forward. **Jennifer Rogers**, formerly the lighting designer, is now production manager. **Michelle Haché** is returning to direct the show with music director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**. Most of ***The McAdo*** 2022 cast is returning; several new singers will make their debut in ***The McAdo*** 2023. Save the dates: June 9-18, 2023.

I realize that some have their doubts if ***The Mikado*** can successfully make the transition from Japan to Scotland. From the standing ovation received by the one performance in 2022, I can assure you that you need not worry. In fact, check out [www.gilbertsullivan.org/shows/the-mcado-2022/](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org/shows/the-mcado-2022/) — the last video at the site consists of audience reactions to that performance.

GSA needs your support to make all this beautiful musical theatre happen. Just as with everything else, show expenses (theater rental, rehearsal space, pianist, COVID testing, and more) have increased. Many thanks to all who have made a gift to GSA. If you have not, now would be a good time to do so if you are able. GSA is a 501(c)(3) organization, so your gift is tax deductible. Also, if you are aware of, or have a connection to, a foundation that supports the arts, please let us know so that we can apply for a grant.



## Annual Meeting

As is our GSA tradition, we held our required Annual Meeting at the start of the January musicale. Board nominees present were introduced. The board candidates were elected unanimously. There are two new members on the board:

**Monica Kurtz** has worked with GSA since 2004, and been stage manager for countless productions; our audiences may not know her face, but casts and crews are beholden to her. She has been involved in theater for 33 years. She is also a member of The Vortex and Shrewd Productions. In addition to theater work, Monica is a Behavior Specialist with a degree in Trauma and Resiliency in Curriculum. She works at the state's Education Service Center 13 specializing in work with students with multiple disabilities.



**Derek Smootz** has been in a dozen or so productions with GSA since 2000, when he was in the chorus of ***H.M.S. Pinafore***. You may remember him as Strephon in ***Iolanthe*** (2009), Florian in ***Princess Ida*** (2013), and Giuseppe Palmieri in ***The Gondoliers*** (2016). He is an award-winning participant in the greater Austin live theatre community. He recently launched his "The Community of Theatre" podcast, with the aim to celebrate and improve live theatre at the local level. He plays Irish traditional music with the San Marcos-based band O'Malarkey. Derek is the manager of a team of software developers for BMC Software.

Officers of the Board of Directors are elected by the board at their first meeting following the board elections, in accordance with our bylaws. The following officers comprise the Executive Committee and will serve for 2023:

President: **Diane Radin**

Executive Vice President: **Sarah Slaughter**

Treasurer & Chief Financial Officer: **Dave Wieckowski**

Secretary: **Aletha Read**

Production Chair: **Michael Meigs**

Since that time, board member **Holton Johnson** has resigned, due to the press of other commitments. GSA offers many thanks to Holton, who has served on the GSA Board of Directors since 2020 as chair of the GSA Scholarship Committee. Although he is stepping off the GSA board, Holton will continue to serve on that committee which awards up to four scholarships per year to students of music and voice. Holton is probably better known to fans of GSA for his starring tenor roles in many past productions including as Pubagh in ***The McAdo*** (2022), Strephon in ***Iolanthe*** (2019), Marco Palmieri in ***The Gondoliers*** (2016), Alexis in ***The Sorcerer*** (2015), and Hilarion in ***Princess Ida*** (2013).

All board members are listed on the last page of ***The Austin Savoyard***. This is a working board, since GSA has no paid staff. If you would like to volunteer in any capacity, please email [volunteer@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:volunteer@gilbertsullivan.org).



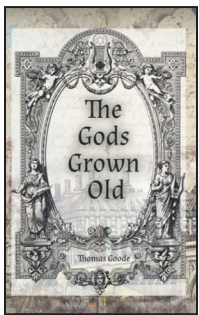


## ***The Gods Grown Old* by Thomas Goode**

Reviewed by **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**

In this series, we've examined many books on the history of Gilbert & Sullivan. This column discusses a mystery centered on a G&S play!

The title of this book is the subtitle for Gilbert & Sullivan's first collaboration, ***Thespis***, which was produced by John Hollingshead at the Gaiety Theatre on 26 December 1871, four years before Richard D'Oyly Carte reunited the dramatist and composer for that string of musical delights that unites readers of these pages.



Mr. Goode knows his G&S history and uses it in amusing ways: his fancy characterizes Arthur Sullivan as a collaborator with Scotland Yard in solving mysteries, and the composer draws the librettist of ***Thespis*** into solving a murder at the Gaiety. John Hollingshead also figures in the tale, as well as other historic characters along with those of Mr. Goode's fancy—such as a mentioned gentleman named Fitzaltamont.

I found the use of the name Fitzaltamont to be Mr. Goode's most arcane reference. For decades, early D'Oyly Carte touring programs listed "Master Fitzaltamont" as the child playing the Midshipmite in ***H.M.S. Pinafore***. In actuality, while the company was on tour, various male children were recruited from local cities and towns to play this part. But no matter what his actual name was, he was always "Master Fitzaltamont" in the program (which probably enabled theatres to meet printing deadlines).

Savoyards who know the operas well will enjoy finding bits of dialogue and situations that bear striking similarities to such delights in the better-known Gilbert & Sullivan operas, and knowledgeable readers with a deeper knowledge of the few facts we have concerning the disappearance of most of Sullivan's score for ***Thespis*** will have nits to pick.

But this is a work of fiction, and if Mr. Goode occasionally bends history to serve his purposes, he gives us a plausible if impossible answer to the age-old questions, "What happened to Sullivan's score for ***Thespis***?" and "Is it possible it will eventually turn up one day?"

If I've not said much about the plot—well, it's a mystery, and I leave the clever plot for discovery by its readers.

Thomas Goode's ***The Gods Grown Old*** (2022) is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



## **Auditions for *The McAdo***

GSA will hold auditions for ***The McAdo*** on Saturday, February 25, from noon to 6, and Sunday, February 26, from 2:30 to 5:30. While many cast members from our 2022 production are returning, the lead roles of Coco and Pubagh are open, along with other possible lead roles and a number of chorus positions.

Auditions are by appointment only. Please text (or call) Sarah Slaughter at 512-703-0015 (7 am-8 pm) or email her at [audition@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:audition@gilbertsullivan.org) to reserve a time slot. The deadline to sign up is noon on Friday, February 24. Auditions will be held at Abiding Love Lutheran Church, 7210 Brush Country Road, in south Austin.

## **More Views of GSA's *Got Talent***



*an audience of about 100 people enjoyed our musicale  
at St. Matthew's Huffman Hall*

## **Send Us Your News!**

The next newsletter should arrive mid-April; the deadline for submissions will be about March 20. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!



## Coming Events

Feb. 25-26 auditions for ***The McAdo*** (see page 5)

Mar. 12 ***Gilbert & Sullivan and Sondheim***  
(see page 1)

June 9-18 ***The McAdo*** summer grand production

For more information, please visit our website at

[www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org)

## Join Us!

We encourage you to join GSA to help keep the joys of Gilbert & Sullivan alive. We offer many levels of membership, starting with basic member at \$30 per year. To join, renew, or donate, visit [www.gilbertsullivan.org/join/](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org/join/).



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**THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD** - FEBRUARY 2023

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**Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**

Database Manager

**Leann Fryer**

Newsletter Editor

**Sue Ricket Caldwell**

This project is funded and supported in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department. Visit Austin at [NowPlayingAustin.com](http://NowPlayingAustin.com)



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

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Interim Artistic Director

**Michelle Haché**

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