

THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Diane Radin



Now that the temperature has finally dropped below 100°, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin is ready to jump into our programming for the 2023-24 season. The magic ingredient for a successful season is YOU. You fill the venues and applaud the performers (no one likes to sing to an empty house); you make generous donations so we can compensate those performers for their talent and the time they devote to rehearsals; you bring all sorts of goodies and treats to our annual meeting and performance; you renew your membership. YOU are the key to the success of GSA. Thank YOU for your support and interest and for attending our events.

There are other ways to help GSA thrive. A major one is joining our small (15-member) but mighty board of directors or volunteering in other ways. We are a working board – everyone pitches in using their special talents and sometimes learning new skills.

Among other things, they create newsletters and playbills

& write thank you letters for donations

& create videos and take photographs

& secure donations from businesses

& haul and shlep props and supplies between venues and our office

& help prepare or serve food for the cast and crew on long days at the theater

& maintain our website and social media

& keep the books and determine our budget

& write grant requests and grant reports

& create and perform at educational events at area schools

& usher at shows

& send out membership renewals

& keep our storage room and meeting room in good order

& mail out fundraising letters

& come up with creative ideas for programs

& maintain our database

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Salon of the Roses: When Victoria Met Tudor Sunday, October 29 at 3pm

Building on the success of last fall's Victorian London Salon, we will hold another salon concert, ***Salon of the Roses: When Victoria Met Tudor***, at a beautiful private home off Westlake Drive in October 2023. Refreshments will include some of the treats that were most popular at the English tea at last year's Victorian Musical Salon, and will also draw inspiration from the culinary traditions of the Tudor period. Wine and sherry will be served.

Maestro **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** is selecting the G&S songs and other musical numbers and finding the best talent to perform them.

Please note that seating for this event is limited. The private location will be provided to ticket purchasers. Tickets are on sale now for \$65 at www.gilbertsullivan.org.



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& help keep productions on track
& arrange for publicity for events
& oversee our scholarship program
& _____ (insert your talent and interest here).

If you want to literally “get behind the scenes” and have some fun at the same time, consider joining the GSA board of directors. Let me know at diane@gilbertsullivan.org if you are interested in having a conversation over coffee with me to see where your talent and interest can find its place in GSA. Don't be shy.

This is the season for the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. It is customary to eat apple slices dipped in honey symbolizing our hopes for a sweet and prosperous and healthy year – all of which I wish for our GSA family.



After our **Gilbert & Sullivan and Sondheim** concert, Lynn Greenblatt of the Caregiving Cafe approached us to ask if we would be able to send a couple of our amazing singers to contribute a 15 minute set to a concert she was organizing to honor caregivers. The concert, called **Serenade of Gratitude**, will be held November 4 at the Lakeway Activity Center.

Any musician who has ever been a caregiver could not help but be moved by this opportunity to contribute a musical offering.

We are happy to send **June Jullian, Holton Johnson,** and **Jeanne Dayton Sasaki** to represent Gilbert & Sullivan Austin with a charming selection from **The Pirates of Penzance**. Frederic will ask if there is not one maiden who would marry him. Mabel will reply that she's ready to help a "Poor wand'ring one." And they will round out the set with one of the most humorous and romantically heart warming duets ever written.

News of Members

Austin Shakespeare commissioned GSA board member **Michael Meigs** to translate Pierre Corneille's 1636 classic **Le Cid** from French to English and Spanish for the opening of the company's season. **El Cid** features a cast of leading local bilingual actors and will play in the Rollins Theatre, Long Center, November 10 - 26.

Austin Arts Mixer



On August 17, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin participated in the Austin Arts Mixer, sponsored by KMFA and the Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce. This event brought together representatives from over two dozen Austin arts organizations for networking and camaraderie. **Aletha Read, Diane Radin,** and **Monica Kurtz** distributed flyers for GSA and chatted with many other folks about a shared love of the arts.

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/.

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in late December; the deadline for submissions is **December 6**. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!

In Sentimental Mood: D'Oyly Carte and Me

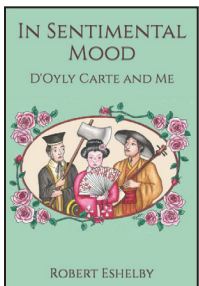
by Robert Eshelby

Reviewed by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.



This attractive book is novel when compared to those of other singers with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company: it is the first-ever "memoir" written by a D'Oyly Carte chorister. It is enhanced by the author's poetic verses, and these are in turn enlivened by illustrations the late Geoffrey Shovelton, a fellow tenor with Mr. Eshelby in "The Carte," but a principal, augmented by a handful of illustrations by Mr. Eshelby's second wife Ruth.

We learn of the author's early life and difficult school days in England, his marriages, and path toward a long-held goal to be a professional singer there and in Australia. The highlight of his professional career was certainly his two years with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, performing, mostly on tour, Gilbert & Sullivan 48 weeks each year. His D'Oyly Carte years were bracketed by performances with professional and amateur opera companies—especially amateur Gilbert & Sullivan societies.



The book is chattily written (with perhaps too many exclamation marks!), and highlights of his narrative are illustrated with his poems, presumably (most of them?) written at about the time the original events took place. These are humorous, wry, and occasionally trenchant, and Geoffrey Shovelton's cartoon illustrations are always witty and enhanced by his deep knowledge of G&S and the Carte—and affection for his chorister-friend.

I found Mr. Eshelby's accounts of his work with the Company—auditions, performances, touring—of great interest; they enhance other books reviewed here earlier (by David Mackie, Roberta Morrell, and Paul Seeley) because of his vantage point as a chorister. While the "work was steady," it was all but impossible to support a family "at home" with living expenses and mortgage payments while on the road. Choristers were all but forced to share rooms and skimp on meals to make the proverbial ends meet.

Mr. Eshelby doesn't pull his punches when discussing the appallingly low salaries paid to the choristers of the Company. He served toward the end of his tenure with the Carte as Deputy for the actors' union Equity when

he learned that the standard contract for choristers in other professional opera companies (companies which didn't spend much time on tour) were twice what the D'Oyly Carters were paid. Upon inquiry, he was told that the D'Oyly Carte had always had a "special arrangement" with Equity. Perhaps more hurtful, Mr. Eshelby's fellow choristers did not share his outrage—or at least were not willing to protest and "put their jobs at risk." (They had, as others have pointed out, steady employment in a notoriously risky vocation—and with a "national institution"!)

Mr. Eshelby left the company shortly thereafter, at age 34, in 1981 before the Company closed for financial reasons. Unsuccessful at finding a position teaching, for which he was trained, he served "as a lay clerk at Ely Cathedral and spent a year singing as many services a week as I had sung shows with D'Oyly Carte." He also worked as a care assistant at "a small dementia care home." This led to promotions, more higher education for qualifications in this field, more moves, and, ultimately in 1988, his own dementia-care facility, which he evidently continues to administer to this day.

Mr. Eshelby's career has been varied and clearly at times financially challenging, especially as a D'Oyly Carte Savoyard. But the title for his book suggests a sunny disposition and no regrets. His concluding sentences reflect this: "I've sung professionally for five years, and, as an amateur for decades. I've also achieved success in the world of dementia care. I am proud of both careers. What joy!"

Robert Eshelby's *In Sentimental Mood: D'Oyly Carte and Me* (Barn Arts Publishing, 2022) is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Seeking Members for the GSA Board

The GSA Nominating Committee for 2024 consists of **Diane Radin** (chair), **Sarah Slaughter**, **Aletha Read**, and **Monica Kurtz**. If you would like to serve on the board, please contact Diane at diane@gilbertsullivan.org. The GSA board is a working board—GSA has no paid staff. Board members get a behind-the-scenes look at what makes great theater. The 15-member board consists of a congenial group who are dedicated to presenting the topsy-turvy works of Gilbert & Sullivan in both traditional and contemporary settings to the delight of people of all ages.

GSA will elect members of the board for 2024 at the Annual Meeting, to be held on Sunday, January 7, at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive.



Salon of the Roses: When Victoria Met Tudor
Sunday, October 29, 3pm

Coming Events

- Oct. 29 **Salon of the Roses: When Victoria Met Tudor** (see page 1)
- Jan. 7 **A Gilbert & Sullivan Christmas Carol and Annual Meeting**
- Mar. 30-31 **Trial by Jury ... and More**
- Summer **The Yeomen of the Guard** summer grand production

For more information, please visit our website at www.gilbertsullivan.org



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THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD - OCTOBER 2023

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 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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Educational/Community Outreach
Musicales • Music Scholarships • Newsletters
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 Artistic Director Emeritus **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**
 Database Manager **Leann Fryer**
 Newsletter Editor **Sue Ricket Caldwell**

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The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.
 Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

Board of Directors

Diane Radin	President and CEO
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