



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 3, 2009

Media Inquiries: David Little
Phone: (512) 970-5883
E-mail: dilittle@gilbertsullivan.org
www.gilbertsullivan.org

IOLANTHE; or, the Peer and the Peri **Gilbert & Sullivan's Classic Operatic Comedy** **Opening in Austin June 11**

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin Presents Its Summer 2009 Grand Production

WHO: The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
WHAT: *IOLANTHE; OR, THE PEER AND THE PERI*
WHEN: Preview June 11. Opening Night June 12. Runs thru June 21.
Evening performances Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays at 8pm.
Sunday matinees at 3pm June 14 & 21. Saturday matinee at 3pm June 20.
Special Children's Activities Sunday June 14 at 2pm.
WHERE: Travis High School Performing Arts Center / 1211 E. Oltorf
INFO: Visit www.gilbertsullivan.org or call (512) 472-4772
TICKETS: \$25 adults / \$20 students over 18 with i.d. / \$8 for 18 and under
\$5 discount on adult & student tickets - \$3 discount 18 and under - when purchased online in advance. Additional discounts available for preview night Thurs June 11.
Purchase tickets online at www.gilbertsullivan.org, or call 1-800-494-TIXS
For group sales of 10 or more, contact Allan Longacre at (512) 472-4772 or info@gilbertsullivan.org

AUSTIN, TX – The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin proudly presents for 2009, *Iolanthe; or, the Peer and the Peri*. This fanciful comedy is considered by many to combine Sullivan's finest opera compositions with another of Gilbert's comic plots and his witty and waggish dialogue. *Iolanthe* presents a topsy-turvy love story involving fairies and members of the House of Lords – a political fairy tale that only Gilbert & Sullivan could conceive, and which will delight Austin audiences of all ages.

First performed in 1882, *Iolanthe* (“eye-oh-LAN-thee”) is one of Gilbert & Sullivan’s fourteen musicals, (including *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, and *HMS Pinafore*) and is universally regarded as one of Sir Arthur Sullivan’s most beautiful scores - a high water mark in terms of music, wit, cleverness, and color – with incredible choruses, wonderful solos and orchestration beyond compare. Peers, British noblemen and honorable members of Parliament, encounter Peris, lovelorn fairies from a golden glen – a collision of powerful mortals with feet of clay and immortal beings wielding magic wands. The result - havoc is wreaked in the House of Lords!



Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr. returns for his 9th summer with the Society, along with Jeffrey Jones-Ragona enjoying his 13th season as Music Director. The cast includes: June Julian (Iolanthe), Arthur DiBianca (The Lord Chancellor), Lisa Alexander (The Queen of the Fairies), Derek Smootz (Strephon), Meredith Groeschel Ruduski (Phyllis), David Fontenot (Earl of Mountararat), Andy Fleming (Earl Tolloller), Russell Gregory (Private Willis), Natalie Wilemon (Celia), Patricia Combs (Leila), and Katherine Wiggins (Fleta).

Special Children's Activities begin at 2pm prior to the Sunday June 14 matinee. Captioning will be available on June 13 at 8pm, June 14 at 3pm, June 18 at 8pm, and June 19 at 8pm.

In honor of the years he blessed us with his talents, the Summer 2009 production of *Iolanthe* is dedicated to the memory of Frank Delvy, an accomplished performer of Gilbert & Sullivan operas and other musical theatre, and "Dowser Dan" as a member of the City of Austin's Water Conservation troupe. Frank won an ACOT B. Iden Payne Award for his performance as the Lord Chancellor in our 1993 production of *Iolanthe*.

Synopsis

When a young shepherd falls in love with a Ward of Chancery, will he have the "chance" for a lifetime of happiness? Yes – after all, his mother is a fairy! After 25 years of banishment for committing the capital offense of marrying a mortal, Iolanthe, a fairy, finds herself pardoned by the Queen of the Fairies. With her new found freedom, she and her fairy brood set out to help her son Strephon in winning the hand of Phyllis, the girl of his dreams. But being half mortal, half fairy, Strephon soon finds himself in a pickle with Phyllis when he is seen with his mother, Iolanthe (who still looks seventeen – fairies never age!), and whom Phyllis mistakes as another young girl. Strephon struggles to win Phyllis back for he not only has to convince her of his fidelity, but must also compete with every member of the House of Lords, and the Lord Chancellor himself, who have all fallen in love with her. With the aide of the fairies' powers of persuasion, Strephon becomes a member of Parliament and takes a stand for the love of his life (and meanwhile carries every bill he chooses!). The clash of mortal and immortal, peer and peri, make for another topsy-turvy ending in this fantastic musical comedy of all's-well-that-ends-well in the madcap world of Gilbert & Sullivan.

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin was founded in 1976 with the purpose of education by preserving and presenting the works of Gilbert & Sullivan. Known for its highly acclaimed annual grand productions from the G&S repertoire, the Society is also dedicated to spreading and teaching the joys of G&S through school and community presentations.

GSSA is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts which believes that a great nation deserves great art. Media sponsors for *Iolanthe* are News8Austin and KMFA 89.5 Classical Radio.

