



# GILBERT & SULLIVAN AUSTIN

JUNE 2017 NEWSLETTER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

How did you first become acquainted with Gilbert & Sullivan? Are you a long-time Savoyard, or did you just fall in love with G&S at last year's production of *The Gondoliers*? Did you perform in G&S shows in high school or college or community theater? Did you hear references to Gilbert & Sullivan by Groucho Marx long ago or on *The Simpsons* more recently and want to learn more about them? Did your parents or some other important influence—relative, teacher, mentor—introduce you to the wonders of the Savoy operas when you were a child?



Visiting recently with one of the cast members of this summer's production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, I asked her how she had come to know G&S. She said she had seen a performance of *Pirates* when she was in second grade, and she fell in love with the music and the humor. I told her that as a first-grader I had seen an elementary school performance of *H.M.S. Pinafore* (yes, really, elementary school!) with my older brother as a sailor, and that hooked me. The fact that my mother had performed in *H.M.S. Pinafore* and my father in *Trial by Jury* when they were in college was another factor that made the operas a part of our family lore.

I am confident that there are surely quite a few good stories among our members regarding how they came to know and love the G&S canon. It would be great fun to share some of these in future issues of the newsletter, so drop me an e-line at [libby@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:libby@gilbertsullivan.org) or send me a snail mail at Post Office Box 684542, Austin 78768-4542. Tell me what drew you to G&S, and maybe what keeps you coming.

Is this airy persiflage? Well, at least it should be fun!

### September Musicale

After our grand production of *The Pirates of Penzance* in June, G&S Austin will take its traditional summer holiday. We will return with a musicale on Sunday, September 10, at 3 pm at the Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School. Watch for information in our September newsletter, and on the website in August.



### *The Pirates of Penzance*

Our Grand Production of *The Pirates of Penzance* will have nine performances:

- Thursday June 15 7:30 pm Opening Night
- Friday June 16 7:30 pm Gala Performance—Free Buffet with Cast Follows Performance
- Saturday June 17 7:30 pm
- Sunday June 18 2:00 pm Children's Activities at 1 pm
- Thursday June 22 7:30 pm
- Friday June 23 7:30 pm
- Saturday June 24 2:00 pm
- Saturday June 24 7:30 pm
- Sunday June 25 2:00 pm Closing Performance

### Buy Tickets Now!

Tickets are now on sale for *The Pirates of Penzance*. 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.

For the first time, we also offer VIP tickets. Purchase a VIP ticket for \$100 and also receive reserved premium parking, seat draping, program and stage recognition, and access to the directors and cast at an exclusive rehearsal event.

### 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!

### In This Issue

- The Pirates of Penzance the Caribbean* ..... pp. 2, 3
- News of our Members ..... p. 3
- Wand'ring Minstrels ..... p. 3
- A Pass Exam on *The Pirates of Penzance* ..... pp. 4, 5
- Book Report: *Cookery à la Carte* ..... p. 5

## *The Pirates of Penzance the Caribbean* by Rosa Mondragon Harris



On Sunday afternoon, May 21, 128 people gathered at Gethsemane Lutheran Church for Gilbert & Sullivan Austin's summer production preview musicale.

To add a twist to this year's preview, the setting was not on the coast of Cornwall, but in the Caribbean. The musicale's theme was based on *Pirates of the Caribbean*, a series of fantasy swashbuckler films produced by Jerry Bruckheimer and based on Walt Disney's theme park ride of the same name. The cast was matched to characters in the film series and included **Arthur DiBianca** as Governor Swann (Major-General Stanley), **Sam Johnson** as Captain Jack Sparrow (The Pirate King), **Jake Jacobsen** as Joshamee Gibbs (Samuel), **Andy Fleming** as Will Turner (Frederic), **Russell Gregory** as Commodore Norrington (Sergeant of Police), **Suzanne Lis** as Elizabeth Swann (Mabel), **Teri Johnson** as Tamara (Edith), **Jaimie Lowe** as Syrena (Kate), and **Patricia Combs** as Tia Dalma (Ruth). The Pirates of the Caribbean (Pirates of Penzance, Police) included **Garrett Cordes**, **David Kaufman**, **Robert LeBas**, **Luke Pebler**, **Scott Poppaw**, **Glenn Russell**, **Trevor Senter**, **Ian Stilwell**, and **Charlie Vazquez**. The Mermaids (General Stanley's Daughters) included **Hannah Boyd**, **Rosa Mondragon Harris**, **Abigail Jackson**, **Janette Jones**, **Sarah Manna**, **Susan Meitz**, **Ellie Mellen**, **Jenny Ohrstrom**, **Iona Olive**, **Erica Salinas**, **Rachel Silvers**, **Sarah Steele**, and **Brittany Trinité**.

President **Libby Weed** welcomed the afternoon's attendees. Led by Joshamee Gibbs, the Pirates kicked off our musical afternoon with "Pour, O pour the pirate sherry." Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, next spoke about piracy in the new world, and provided a brief history of *The Pirates of Penzance*, sharing that the music from the chorus of "With cat-like tread," which begins "Come, friends, who plough the sea," was used in the popular American song, "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here." He also noted that four staging rehearsals have already been completed for the show, and that he was pleased with the work that **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** had done thus far with the cast. Ralph proclaimed "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here," and the musical merriment continued.



(l-r) Luke Pebler, Arthur DiBianca, Ian Stilwell, Garrett Cordes, Scott Poppaw, Charlie Vazquez, Trevor Senter, David Kaufman, Jake Jacobsen (not shown: Sam Johnson, Andy Fleming, Russell Gregory, Robert LeBas)



(l-r) Teri Johnson, Janette Jones, Rachel Silvers, Rosa Harris, Jenny Ohrstrom, Brittany Trinité, Sarah Steele, Iona Olive, Abigail Jackson, Eleanor Anderson, Hannah Boyd, Jaimie Lowe, Patricia Combs, Suzanne Lis (not shown: Erica Salinas)

Captain Jack Sparrow proceeded to ask a very important question of the audience: "Who wants to be a pirate?" Hands were raised, and Captain Sparrow mentioned two criteria needed to become a pirate: 1) being able to say "Aargh!" and 2) the existence of a pirate tattoo.



He then offered pirate tattoos to anyone interested in one. Next, Captain Sparrow sang "Yo Ho (A Pirate's Life for Me)" and conducted the cast and audience on the choruses. This tune, written by George Bruns and Xavier Atencio, is the theme song for the Pirates of the Caribbean attractions at Walt Disney theme parks.

**Janette Jones**, who produced and directed the musicale, told us of her memories of Disneyland and the Pirates of the Caribbean ride as a child. With the film series' popularity in recent years, she thought it would make for an entertaining twist to move the setting to the Caribbean with the Pirates theme threaded throughout the production. The cast certainly seemed to enjoy themselves, as many were colorfully dressed as pirates and mermaids.



Tia Dalma sang "When Frederic was a little lad." Captain Jack Sparrow and the Pirates next took to the stage and offered us "Oh, better far to live and die." Giggling and swimming through the center aisle of the church, Tamara, Syrena, and the



Mermaids came in singing the effervescent "Climbing over rocky mountain." Confronted with the possible outcome of his daughters' impending marriage, Governor Swann elicits the Pirates' sympathy, as he and the



Company sang "Oh, men of dark and dismal fate." Of course, Governor Swann knew that lying was wrong, but he had done what he felt he needed to do. Feeling sorry for Governor Swann, the Mermaids and Elizabeth Swann

## The Pirates of Penzance the Caribbean (continued from previous page)

surrounded and serenaded him with “Oh, dry the glistening tear.”



But who could be enlisted to help fight these Pirates? Commodore Norrington and his Pirates team up with Elizabeth Swann, Tamara, Governor Swann, and the Mermaids for “When the foeman bares his steel.” Would everything eventually work out, or would it all fall apart? There was doubt for a happy ending when



swords were drawn for “Now for the pirates’ lair” / “When you had left our fold,” the next musical offering by Tia Dalma, Captain Jack Sparrow, and Will Turner. Alas, our lovers had to be parted, as Elizabeth Swann and Will Turner concluded the preview with “Stay, Frederic, stay!”



Libby gave thanks to the cast members who sang as well as to Janette for putting together yet another fun and delightful show. Our wonderfully talented pianist **Jeanne Sasaki** as Davy Jones took a bow with her apprentice, **Bailey Adams**, her piano and voice student. Captain Jack Sparrow sang the Pirate King’s lead into “Hail, Poetry,” my favorite of the GSA traditions.



The audience joined in and then sang “Now to the banquet we press” from *The Sorcerer*. The cast and attendees mingled at the refreshment table in the church’s foyer. Great excitement was definitely in the air for our upcoming summer production and the return to the coast of Cornwall!



*photos courtesy Steve Schwartzman*

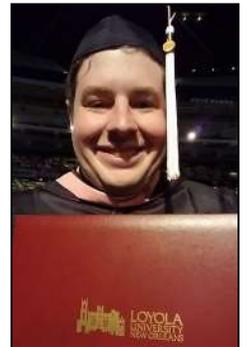
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## NEWS of our MEMBERS

Capital City Men’s Chorus presents *Legends of Broadway!*, which will feature GSA’s Musical Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, and GSA regular **Scott Poppaw**, along with **Meredith Ruduski** (Patience in GSA’s 2012 production) and Austin Chronicle’s **Robert Faires** as guest artists, performing song selections of the Broadway tradition and some modern favorites, too! Music of Lerner and Loewe, Rodgers and Hart, Kander & Ebb, along with songs made famous by legendary performers like Liza Minnelli, Elaine Stritch, Nathan Lane, and of course, Barbra Streisand and Julie Andrews! A great evening of singing and dancing to some of America’s favorite theatrical music, accompanied by an outstanding instrumental ensemble. Information and tickets available at [www.ccmcaustin.org/tickets](http://www.ccmcaustin.org/tickets)

GSA Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, gave two presentations at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, in late April: “The Secrets of *H.M.S. Pinafore*” for a Life-Long Learning Class and “Directing Gilbert and Sullivan with Reflected Light,” part of a day-long forum with four speakers including GSA friend **Scott Hayes**. Rafe also participated in a panel discussion at the end of the forum, “Gilbert and Sullivan: Nineteenth Century Opera for Twenty-first Century Audiences.” These events are parts of a year-long celebration of the donation of David and Annabelle Stone’s Gilbert & Sullivan collection to the university library.

Congratulations to **Spencer Reichman** on his graduation from Loyola New Orleans with a Masters in Music in Vocal Performance. Spencer was a District finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in February and performed the role of Wagner in the New Orleans Opera production of *Faust*. In addition, he will be a studio artist this summer at the acclaimed Chautauqua Opera and will be a Resident Artist beginning late August for the 2017-2018 season with the Shreveport Opera.



Austin Opera’s recent production of *Madame Butterfly* included a number of GSA regulars in the chorus: **Carol Brown, Danny Castillo, Patricia Combs, Andy Fleming, Paul Halstead, Rosa Mondragon Harris, Holton Johnson, and Jamieson Taylor**.

Secretary of the Gilbert & Sullivan Austin board **Michael Meigs** will be onstage in the City Theatre production of Shakespeare’s comedy *The Taming of the Shrew* June 2 - 25. He will appear as Gremio, the aged neighbor of the Baptista family who hopes to see shrewish Katharina married off to Petruchio so the younger daughter Bianca can be courted. Directed by Kevin Gates, the production runs Thursdays - Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. The City Theatre is at Airport Road and 38 1/2 street. More information is available at [www.citytheatre.austin.org](http://www.citytheatre.austin.org).

## 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 the web site, [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org), for information.

## A Pass Examination on *The Pirates of Penzance*

by **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**



This exam (unlike those I had the great pleasure of administering when I was teaching at Bridgewater College) is designed to be fun to take. It will never be turned in or graded. It's actually designed to impart knowledge, rather than test it. (I'm anxious to acknowledge my debt to Ken Levine's "Put Yourself to the Test" test, which appeared in the June '87 issue of *Reader's Digest*. Mr. Levine's test has nothing to do with Gilbert & Sullivan, but its format has been adapted to what follows. Thanks, Ken!)

**1** In the Gilbert & Sullivan collaboration, which came first?

- |       |          |
|-------|----------|
| Words | Go to 12 |
| Music | Go to 6  |

**2** Although Sullivan often made *suggestions* for the plotting of the operas, the plots invariably originated with Gilbert. Skip to **Question 8** for another question.

**3** No, "Talk Like A Pirate Day" came along decades after Frederic turned 21 (in 1940). Please go back to **Question 8** to continue with this arduous examination.

**4** No, Bridget (later Dame Bridget) D'Oyly Carte was the granddaughter of the original producer. Slip back down to **Question 10** and make another selection. (HINT: He was Bridget's grandfather, and his name starts with an R.)

**5** With whom did the plots originate?

- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| Sullivan | Go to 2 |
| Gilbert  | Go to 9 |

**6** This is not the answer you should have picked because, well, er, um, it's, well, incorrect. Slip back to **Question 1** (it'll be our secret), and start over again.

**7** That's correct: Richard D'Oyly Carte united Gilbert & Sullivan for *Trial by Jury* in 1875, and over the next twenty-one years, the duo wrote twelve additional comic operas, most of which continue to be performed frequently today. These three men are frequently referred to as The Triumvirate. Go to **Question 19** for a question about the one G&S opera that Richard D'Oyly Carte did not produce.

**8** In *The Pirates of Penzance*, Frederic was born on:

- |                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| February 29th          | Go to 11 |
| Talk Like A Pirate Day | Go to 3  |

**9** Kee-rekt. Although Sullivan offered *suggestions*, the plots always *originated* with Gilbert, who often adapted ideas from his Bab Ballads, short stories, or plays. Now go back to **Question 8** for a choice two-choice question.

**10** The Gilbert & Sullivan Operas were produced for over one hundred years by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Which D'Oyly Carte was the original producer?

- |         |          |
|---------|----------|
| Bridget | Go to 4  |
| Richard | Go to 7  |
| Rupert  | Go to 14 |

**11** Right! The fact that Frederic only has a "real" birthday every four years is a major plot development in Act II. Continue now with **Question 10**, another question about names.

**12** What a wonderful way to begin this test. You're right: with the exception of a frustrating bit of early work on the Finale to *Utopia Limited*, the words always came before the music in the Gilbert & Sullivan collaboration. Now head to **Question 5** for another question about the working habits of the collaborators.

**13** *Thespis* was produced by John Hollingshead at the Gaiety Theatre in London on December 26, 1871. *Trial by Jury* was originally presented at the Royalty Theatre (1875), and *The Sorcerer* (1877), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880), and *Patience* (1881) all had their London premières at the Opéra Comique. But we've yet to mention the most important theatre of all. See **Question** sweet 16.

**14** No, Rupert D'Oyly Carte was the son of the original producer. Go back to **Question 10** to decide whether his parent was Bridget or Richard.

**15** No, actually *Love and Duty* was a 'working subtitle,' but it was changed before the New York première. That leaves just one answer--the other one you'll find at **Question 18**.

**16** In 1881, Richard D'Oyly Carte moved *Patience* to a new theatre he built exclusively for the production of Gilbert & Sullivan operas. He called it

- |               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| The Sorcerer. | Go to 21 |
| The Savvy.    | Go to 26 |
| The Savoy.    | Go to 29 |

**17** Well, *The Gods Grown Old* is actually the subtitle. But you're close, so go ahead to **Question 16**. (Or you can go to **Question 13** for more fascinating information on *Thespis* and other theatres where early Gilbert & Sullivan productions were originally performed.)

**18** The sub-title of *The Pirates of Penzance* is:

- |                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| The Slave of Duty. | Go to 20 |
| Love and Duty.     | Go to 15 |

**19** What is the name of the Gilbert & Sullivan opera that was not produced by Richard D'Oyly Carte?

- |                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| The Gods Grown Old | Go to 17 |
| Thespis            | Go to 13 |

**20** Absolutely! And if Frederic, the slave of duty himself, were writing this exam, I am sure he would suggest that you trudge along to **Question 30**.

**21** Oops! Actually, *The Sorcerer* is the name of the first full-length comic opera by G&S produced by Richard D'Oyly Carte. Go back to **Question 16** and guess again at the name of the theatre that D'Oyly Carte built. (Hint: the first three letters are "Sav.")

**22** No, it is Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore* who does this. Now that we have that important point straightened out, please go back to **Question 30**.

**23** Right! He knows a lot of other arcane stuff, too—but little about tactics, gunnery, and other military matters. Now that we've clarified that important point, please head for **Question 31**.

**24** Well, Ruth's not too happy in Act I after being spurned by Frederic, but this famous phrase is not associated with her. It's the Sergeant of Police who makes this lament. Are you ready to finish? Whether your answer is Yes or No, please go to **Question 27**.

(continued on next page)





**Buy Tickets Now!**

See details on page 1.



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



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

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Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

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