

GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

DECEMBER 2006 NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING and MUSICALE

Monday January 15, 2007, at 7:30 PM
at the home of Benny and Nancy Jay
4305 Hyridge Drive
343-8408

Come help us Run our Society — Elect our Directors and Start the New Year. **Note the change in date!** Nominations for the slate of Directors will be announced in the January Newsletter. If you have suggestions call the Society at 472-4772. Pay your dues now, and earn the right to vote! Entertainment will take the form of G&S sing-alongs presented by Libby Weed, Benny Jay, Allan Longacre, and Larry Shepley; they will direct our singing.

SAVE THE DATE!

30th Anniversary Celebration

Reba Gillman

The Gala Celebration of *30 Years of Musical Merriment* was a delightful party. Our Musical Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** planned the program and secured the performers and accompanist. Our Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, flew in from Virginia to serve as Master of Ceremonies and illuminated the occasion with his humorous and cogent remarks. **Libby Weed** arranged the presence of the honorees and presented lovely awards in her usual gracious and well-researched manner. In addition, a silent auction offered some unusual items for purchase, and the refreshments were delicious. Special mention goes to the birthday cake provided by **Pat Hobbs**, who is a master cake baker. It was a warm and friendly gathering for the family that our Society has become.

Many thanks go to the singers who contributed the delightful entertainment and reminded us of how talented our performers are. We were especially glad to welcome back some we haven't heard in many years. Master of Ceremonies Rafe noted that we all had tales to tell of working and playing together, "united through the years by a shared love for the Savoy Operas — the works of Gilbert & Sullivan." And it is true that those of us who have sung in any of the operas have a very special knowledge of G&S and a warm feeling for our fellow performers. We were sad that our diva **Claire Vangelisti** was ill and could not perform, but happy that our Music Director had been persuaded on a moment's notice to substitute for her and sing with June Julian the delightful "*Duetto Buffo di due Gatti*", ascribed to Rossini in the program, apparently erroneously. The performance was one more bit of evidence of Jeffrey's far-reaching musical talents.

From Rafe comes the final thought: "Have you ever noticed that there are no Lerner & Loewe societies? Rogers & Hammerstein societies? Andrew Lloyd Weber societies? There is something about the Savoy Operas that is enduring and endearing — they are ties that bind together people who love literate wit, charming music, inspired nonsense, and colorful theatre, and without the shared affection for works written over a hundred years ago, we wouldn't be here today."

Executive Vice President's Message

Allan Longacre

Substituting for President **Bill Hatcher** since August has been an eye opening experience — to see all that he has done for the Society during, and I'm sure prior, to his tour as President. We are fortunate that he continues to serve on the Board of Directors, where we benefit from his knowledge and experience. How lucky can an organization be? Three other former presidents, **Reba Gillman**, **Libby Weed**, and **Larry Shepley** continue to provide guidance through their participation on the Board.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter is a report about the 30th Anniversary Party. In addition to the wonderful concert prepared and presented by our Music Director, **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** and numerous G&S performers, with the enlightened, witty and informative introductions by our Artistic Director, **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, and the entertaining, historic introductions to our honorees by **Libby Weed**, I want to recognize the efforts of Board members **Nanci Jay** and **June Julian** for sticking with this project and the support they received from **Cecily Johnson**, **Pat Hobbs**, **Benny Jay**, and **Patricia Kaplan**. Without their efforts the Party could not have happened.

Now, to current affairs:

The major issue facing the Society at this time is trying to locate a theater for next summer's production of *Ruddigore*. High school auditoriums have become increasingly difficult for us to access. The schools have become extremely busy during the summer months with everything from sports camps to arts competitions, so that even if the theaters are available, there isn't the staff available to deal with us. G&S Society members, and those concerned about our future performances, need to help the Board locate a reliable, available theater space.

For the past two productions, *The Mikado* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*, the production income — ticket sales, grants and gifts — have exceeded the production expenses. This increase has been reinvested to increase the quality in subsequent productions and will be again for *Ruddigore*. The newest area for support has been group sales. G&S members need to get involved to extend this group sales project for *Ruddigore*. You need to contact church groups, civic clubs, neighborhood associations, and employee organizations. We provide tickets and publicity and a discount to their members. They sell the tickets, collect the money, and settle with you after the production is over.

The Board has preliminarily approved funds in the 2007 budget to hire four performers and a pianist to tour a sampler of Gilbert and Sullivan music and scenes. The troupe will prepare an approximately one-hour performance for schools, businesses, and community organizations. Anyone knowing of potential locations and/or sponsors for performances should contact the G&S office.

Finally, mark 7:30 PM, Monday January 15 on your calendar. That is the G&S Society's annual meeting, to be held at Nanci and Benny Jay's house. In addition to the election of the 2007 Board of Directors, the current Board members are planning an unusual musical event for all to enjoy.

The Gilbert & Sullivan
Society of Austin
Celebrating

30 Years of Musical Merriment

Presented at the
Austin Woman's Club Chateau Bellevue
708 San Antonio Street
Sunday, November 5, 2006, 3pm

With

Producer & Music Director
Dr. Jeffrey Jones-Ragona

Master of Ceremonies
Prof. Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Starring

**Stacey Amorous • Trey Deason
Frank Delvy • Arthur DiBianca
David Fontenot • Todd Galbraith
Russell Gregory • Dan Girardot
Michelle Girardot • Holton Johnson
Sam Johnson • Janette Jones
Jeffrey Jones-Ragona • June Julian
Claire Vangelisti • Katherine Wiggins**

Accompanist **Karl Logue**

We wish to thank the 30th Anniversary Gala
Committee:

**Nanci Jay, Chair
Cecily Johnson • June Julian
Allan Longacre • Libby Weed**

Additional thanks to:

**Chris Buggé, • Jim & Sue Ricket Caldwell
Pat Hobbs • Benny & Nanci Jay
Patricia Kaplan • Nancy McQueen
Donors for the Silent Auction**

PROGRAM

Welcome **Bill Hatcher, President**
Introductions **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**

ACT I

I Am So Proud-----**Mr. Deason, Mr. DiBianca, & Mr. S. Johnson**----*The Mikado*, G&S
Chacun à Son Gout-----**Ms. Wiggins**-----*Die Fledermaus*, Strauss, Haffner, & Genée
The Gnu-----**Mr. Gregory**----- Flanders & Swann

Honors Presented by **Libby Weed**
Sue Ricket Caldwell & Rosemary Russell-Vines

She's My Girl ----- **Mr. Delvy** -----Lehrer
The Crossword Puzzle ---**Ms. Amorous** --- *Starting Here, Starting Now*, Shire & Maltby
My Name is Allison ----- **Mr. Deason** ----- *City Life*, Phillips
For Love Alone -----**Mr. H. Johnson** -----*The Sorcerer*, G&S
Anything You Can Do-----**Mr. & Ms. Girardot** ----- *Annie Get Your Gun*, Berlin

Honors Presented by **Libby Weed**
Enid Hallock & Katharine Shields

The Air is Charged with Amatory Numbers-----**Mr. DiBianca** -----*The Sorcerer*, G&S
Shadrach ----- **Mr. Gregory** ----- MacGimsey
C'est Moi-----**Mr. S. Johnson**-----*Camelot*, Lerner & Loewe
A Private Buffoon-----**Mr. Delvy**----- *The Yeomen of the Guard*, G&S

ACT II

Somebody's Birthday, I Suppose? **Ralph MacPhail, Jr., Artistic Director**

Sunday in the Park-----**Mr. Jones-Ragona**-----Lehrer
Someone to Watch Over Me ----- **Ms. Amorous**-----*Oh, Kay!*, Gershwin & Gershwin

Honors Presented by **Libby Weed**
Robert Mellin & Russell Gregory

Rising Early in the Morning-----**Mr. Fontenot**-----*The Gondoliers*, G&S
Alfie -----**Ms. Julian**----- *Alfie*, Bacharach & David
As Long as He Needs Me-----**Ms. Jones**----- *Oliver!*, Bart

Honors Presented by **Libby Weed**
Frank Delvy & Janette Jones

Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes----- **Mr. Girardot**-----*The Gondoliers*, G&S
The Impossible Dream ----- **Mr. Galbraith**----- *Man of La Mancha*, Leigh & Darin
I Once Was a Very Abandoned Person-----**Ms. Jones & Mr. Delvy**----- *Ruddigore*, G&S
Duetto Buffo di due Gatti--- **Ms. Julian, Mr. Jones-Ragona** -----Rossini

Honors Presented by **Libby Weed**
Reba Gillman & Len Gillman

My Eyes Are Fully Open - **Ms. Jones, Mr. H. Johnson, Mr. Fontenot** - *Ruddigore*, G&S
Hail, Poetry! ----- **Everyone!**----- *The Pirates of Penzance*, G&S
Now to the Banquet We Press----- **Everyone!**-----*The Sorcerer*, G&S



Honors

Libby Weed, Board Member

What makes an organization great is people. Today we will pay special recognition to ten people who have played significant roles in the first 30 years of this organization. It would be impossible to recognize all of those who have been instrumental in making the Austin G&S Society one of the paramount organizations of its kind.

- We owe great debts to **Jess Walters**, bass-baritone extraordinaire; **Pearl Amster**, legendary hostess; and we'll never forget **Lucy Shoe Meritt**, who graced every single production and musicale well into her nineties—all of whom have passed away.
- **Bob Kusnetz** was a most influential early president, now our only Lifetime Member in recognition of his many contributions.
- **Linalice Carey** initiated the formation of the Society with several others, earned us early credibility with our first production of *Ruddigore* at her Creek Theatre, and gave important support in the first years.
- The **Coltman** family (**Felicity, Ann, Heather**) has been important to Austin G&S from the very beginning, serving as piano accompanists, cast members, and board members.
- **Allen Lawshae** was a phenomenal performer, beginning with his role as Dick Deadeye in the 1976 *H.M.S. Pinafore* and continuing through more than 15 principal roles over most of our thirty years.
- **Bob Wall** was given the title Lord High Pianist because of his astonishing sight-reading and graceful accompaniment at many a musicale. (Bob wanted to be here today, but he could not arrange a flight from San Francisco around his teaching responsibilities.)
- Numerous others have become very important to us in the second half of our history and will surely earn their own places in the Austin G&S Hall of Fame—including many of tonight's performers and our music director and artistic director, and also such performers and board members and supporters as **Larry Shepley, Bill Hatcher, Leland Smith, Paula Tyler**, and now **Nancy and Benny Jay**, who have picked up Pearl's mantle as hosts.

Now we will honor two of the founding members of our Society: **Rosemary Russell-Vines** and **Sue Ricket Caldwell**.

Rosemary Russell-Vines helped found our Society, serving on the Board of Directors for many years between 1977 and 1988, holding the positions of President, Executive Vice President, Publicity Vice President, Secretary, and Historian/

Parliamentarian over the years. She also performed in ten productions during those years, singing in many choruses and playing principal roles in *The Sorcerer* and *Iolanthe*. (Rosemary's certificate: "In for a penny, in for a pound," as the trio of lords sing in *Iolanthe*—once committed, she gives her all, whether as an organizer, a performer, a house manager, or a board member. We depended on her, and she helped us establish ourselves during our first decade.)

Sue Ricket Caldwell was another of our original members, a founder and organizer. Sue was the first secretary of the board, and she returned to serve on the board as Vice President for Production in 2000 and 2001. She performed in three shows in the early years, after having enjoyed performing in seven different G&S shows with the Los Angeles Savoy-Artes. Her first date with husband-to-be Jim was the first day of rehearsal for the 1976 *Pinafore*, so her relationship with him and with Austin G&S coincide completely. In recent years, Sue and Jim have shown great hospitality to our artistic director, Rafe MacPhail, providing lodging for him during his Texas stays. (Sue's certificate: Pooh-Bah, speaking as Ko-Ko's Private Secretary in *The Mikado*: "Don't stint yourself, do it well!" Sue never does anything halfway or half-heartedly; she always does it well.)

Enid Hallock is another of our founders, performing as Buttercup in the first *H.M.S. Pinafore*, playing principal roles in numerous others shows over the next fourteen years, and serving as Executive Vice President on the board for four years. Enid has also served as prop mistress and musicale hostess, and she has involved numerous members of her supremely talented family in various ways (although it was really her son Gary who got *her* involved in the first place, calling her as she returned to town from a trip about *Pinafore* auditions; both of them were cast). (Enid's certificate: "Pert as a schoolgirl well can be, filled to the brim with girlish glee"—though she has not played one of the three little maids in *The Mikado*, she has remained as pert as those schoolgirls throughout our history.)

Katharine Shields was a star in our early years, beginning as a lovely Aline in *The Sorcerer* in 1977 and also playing Phyllis, Lady Ella, Casilda, Rose Maybud, and Pitti-Sing over the next several years. At holiday specials and musicales she has also sung Mabel and Josephine and several other roles. For many years, whenever a pulchritudinous and melodious leading lady was needed, Katharine Shields was there to set a high bar for soprano leads for the rest of our history. (Katharine's certificate: "A maiden fair to see, the pearl of minstrelsy, a bud of blushing beauty"—fair praise for Josephine in *H.M.S. Pinafore* and for our beautiful Katharine.)

Russell Gregory was surely created to play the title role in *The Mikado*. His appearance, his voice, his laugh, and his "entertaining snigger" have delighted many an audience. Russell has also amused and captured audiences over the years

with his portrayals of Dick Deadeye, the Pirate King, Don Alhambra, and Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., from the 1980s to the present, but the Mikado is the role he has stamped in such a profound way. He has been a featured performer in many a holiday special and musicale as well. (Russell's certificate: "Come, come, don't fret—I'm not a bit angry," one of my favorites of his lines as the Mikado.)

Robert Mellin has come all the way from Philadelphia to be with us today, and we are truly honored by this. Robert first joined our Society in 1988 after seeing Jess Walters in *Trial by Jury*, and he soon became a vital part of our organization. He was cast as the Notary in the 1989 *Sorcerer*, and beginning in 1992 he played many roles on the board and in our leadership, from at-large member to President and then Executive Director and Producer. Under Robert's leadership, our Society moved toward more and more professional productions with stronger and stronger production values. He insisted that we must have an orchestra, and a good one. He called forth talents and put them to use—for example, Larry Shepley preparing playbills. It was Robert who first formed a friendship with the estimable Rafe MacPhail and prevailed upon Rafe to leave his home in Virginia for a slice of the summer of 1998 to come and direct our *Mikado*. This smash success left us wishing for more and, after several more great shows, led to the appointment of Rafe as our artistic director. (Robert's certificate: "His energetic fist should be ready to resist a dictatorial word," along with a Bab drawing of a British tar, symbols of Robert's pride and spirit.)

We have had many remarkable performers in our 30-year history, but no one has played as many roles or has come to "own" as many roles as the incomparable **Frank Delvy** and **Janette Jones**.

Frank Delvy first performed with us in 1983, as Giorgio in *The Gondoliers*. Since that time he has performed nearly every show in the G&S repertoire, playing different principal parts in several and making some of them "his own" in a profound way. A master patter-singer, he has a gift of precise diction that combines with his rich baritone, his phenomenal memory, and his comedic skills to make him the perfect actor for the George Grossmith roles. He has played Captain Corcoran four times—three of them to Janette's Buttercup—and has set a standard that will make it difficult for anyone else to assay that role in central Texas. (Frank's certificate: "I've jibe and joke and quip and crank for lowly folk and men of rank," from his moving portrayal of Jack Point in *Yeomen of the Guard*—surely true of Frank as of Jack.)

Janette Jones began appearing with us shortly after Frank did, and with her stirring mezzo she has masterfully played roles including bridesmaid, Cousin Hebe, Lady Angela, Mad Margaret, Katisha, the Duchess of Plaza-Toro, Ruth (the maid of all work), Phoebe, and of course Buttercup—many of these roles two or more times. She is, indeed, a maid-of-all-work, but one who performs her work with consummate artistry. Like Frank, Janette has singing, acting, and projection talents that

would have thrilled Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan. (Janette's certificate: "Things are seldom what they seem," from her haunting duet as Buttercup with the Captain in *H.M.S. Pinafore*.)

Leonard and Reba Gillman were not among the founders of our Society, but they had been Savoyards long before coming to Austin, and they attended the very first production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in 1976, becoming members in 1978. Since that time, no two people have come to symbolize the wonders of Gilbert & Sullivan as much as these two have. It would be difficult for any of us to imagine our Society without them.

Len was present for the auditions for *Iolanthe* in 1978, where he volunteered his services as a pianist. At one point, the director looked at him and said, "You look like the Lord Chancellor; I want you to audition." And so it happened that mathematician and Juilliard-trained pianist Leonard Gillman, who thought of himself as a non-singer, played that part in the production. Len was music director for *Trial by Jury* in 1982 and *The Gondoliers* in 1983. Over the years, he entertained us often at musicales with piano numbers ranging from Tom Lehrer to Bach, Schubert, and Rachmaninoff.

Reba was Celia in the *Iolanthe* production where Len was the Lord Chancellor, and she continued to be in the cast of every show over the next seven years. She has served on the Board of Directors continuously for over a quarter of a century; she was secretary in 1980, president in 81-82, and secretary again from 1984 to 2009, taking the major role in creating our delightful, informative, and literate newsletter. Reba has continued on the board after others took over the secretary role, still as newsletter editor. Anyone who has attended a musicale remembers Reba with her roll, and anyone at one of our productions over the past thirty years has seen both at virtually every performance. Reba has been a fixture in the lobby, selling merchandise and signing up new members. Always believers in having strong orchestral accompaniment to our shows, in recent years the Gillmans have underwritten the Gillman Light Opera Orchestra, greatly enhancing this aspect of our performances.

The two are such an institution in the Austin G&S Society, that surely they must have earned a pair of titles. Shall it be:

Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert & Sullivan
Lord and Lady Austin G&S
The Duke and Duchess of Topsy-Turvydom

Regardless, we know that Sir William S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan would have been proud of the way our own Len and Reba have carried the torch for their works here in central Texas and have been instrumental in the continuance and steady growth and development of our Society. Len's certificate: "Of beauty I'm a judge, and a good judge too," from *Trial by Jury*. Reba's certificate: "When a merry maiden marries, sorrow goes and pleasure tarries," from *The Gondoliers*. In the next two months, these lovebirds celebrate two 90th birthdays and a 68th wedding anniversary!

Contributors to *H.M.S. Pinafore* 2006

Patricia Van Buren Almond • Richard & Jennifer Arndt • Ken & Emily Ashworth • Marilyn Babcock • James Black • Jim & Eleanor Cochran • Ray & Keena Cole • Peter & Felicity Coltman • Marion DeFord • Wanda Fisher & Maddie Renbarger • Loel Graber • Maudi Greenwood • Russell Gregory • Chris Hinds • James A. Hitt • Reba & Leonard Gillman • Brent & Una Jacob • Edward Kluth • Rafe & Alice MacPhail • Elaine Martens • Norman & Emilia Martin • Betty B. Morgan • P. S. Neff • James Plugge • Bee Harris Polome & Milt Weiss • Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts • Eugene & Betty Ripperger • Dorothy Rutishauser • Jane Dunn Sibley • Jean & Ed Smootz • Becky Stewart • Still Water Foundation, Inc. • Bernadette Tasher • The Voloch Family • Libby & Michael Weed • Joyce & Wayne Wilson • John Wood

Orchestra sponsored by Reba & Leonard Gillman



This project is funded in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.



Sir William Schwenck Gilbert
1836 - 1911



Richard D'Oyly Carte
1844 - 1901



Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan
1842 - 1900

Relive *H.M.S. Pinafore!*

Nancy Jay's excellent DVD's and CD's of our 2006 production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* are available at \$20 and \$15 respectively. Please call our office 472-4772 or visit our website info@gilbertsullivan.org to order your copies.

An outstanding Christmas Gift!

Member of the Month

All dues-paying members are eligible to be our "Member of the Month" (who is randomly selected). The Member of the Month is entitled to receive a CD of our 2005 *Mikado*. The Member of the Month for this month is:

Donald Wertz

Congratulations! Please call our office (472-4772) to let us know where we should send your CD.

Membership Form

We encourage you to join our Society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal date 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 "GSSA":

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
P.O. Box 684542
Austin, Texas 78768-4542 Phone: 472-4772 (472-GSSA)

Name & Address (if different from label):

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I'd like to volunteer. I'm interested in:

Please check a membership category.

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- Grand Duke or Duchess** (\$100-\$249)
- Major General** (\$250-\$499)
- Pooh-Bah** (\$500-\$999)
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- Savoyard** (\$2500 & up)

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:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

Since 1976, we have been spreading the joys of G&S through
**Annual Grand Productions • G&S in School
Musicales • Musical Scholarships
Monthly Newsletters • Holiday Season Shows**

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E-mail: info@gilbertsullivan.org



The Society holds non-profit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. We are pleased to receive funding from the City of Austin under the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.



Artistic Director
Music Director
Database Manager

Ralph MacPhail, Jr.
Jeffrey Jones-Ragona
Arthur DiBianca

Board of Directors

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Annual Meeting

7:30 PM,

Monday January 15, 2007

Note: This is a major change in date: The National College Football Championship game will be held on Monday evening January 8; therefore, out of respect, we decided at the November Board meeting to hold the annual membership meeting on Monday, January 15th. Mark your calendars.

Our Grand Production in June, 2007

Ruddigore

Or, The Witch's Curse

And I'll wager in their joy they kissed each other's cheek
(Which is what them furriners do),
And they blessed their lucky stars
We were hardy British tars
Who had pity on a poor Parley-vo.

The
Gilbert & Sullivan
Society
OF AUSTIN

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Are you the Member of the Month?
See inside!

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