

Innocent Merriment:

An Evening of
Gilbert & Sullivan

*Songs and Scenes from the Savoy Operas
with Martha Fischer and Bill Lutes*



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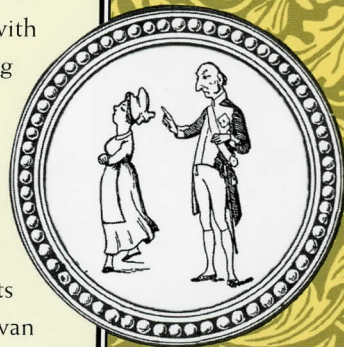
A Program of Gilbert & Sullivan

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FTER MORE THAN A CENTURY, the comic operas of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan continue to be "a source of innocent merriment" for audiences with their unique blend of wit, satire and enchanting melody. Martha Fischer and Bill Lutes sing, act and play the piano (sometimes together and simultaneously), drawing on their extensive musical and theatrical backgrounds to bring to life a bouquet of the best-loved moments from the Savoy Operas, including excerpts from *HMS Pinafore*, *Iolanthe*, and *The Mikado*. The presentation, complete with costume pieces and props, includes commentary that "sets the stage" for each scene, while shedding light on Gilbert and Sullivan as collaborators, and the Victorian age that witnessed their triumphs.

Since its inception in 1995, Innocent Merriment has been a success with audiences throughout North America. For three years, the program has been a centerpiece for the Gilbert & Sullivan weekend at the Old Rittenhouse Inn in Bayfield, Wisconsin, one of the premiere inns in the United States. In addition to their Saturday afternoon concert, Lutes and Fischer have been the resident G&S gurus/performers on these occasions, providing additional performances and piano accompaniment for the rest of the weekend's activities. Lutes and Fischer also provide a traveling library of G&S books, tapes and CD recordings for the enjoyment of the participants. One of the guests at the 1998 G&S weekend referred to the event as "one of those occasional gems of satisfaction and fulfillment that stands out as signal events in life. This one seemed to be over almost as soon as it began. It was truly a 'flow experience.'"



INNOCENT MERRIMENT — SAMPLE PROGRAM

- The Yeoman of the Guard* — Overture (piano 4-hands)
Iolanthe — “When Britain Really Ruled the Waves” (duet)
Thespis — “Little Maid of Arcady” (Fischer)
Trial by Jury — “When I Good Friends Was Called to the Bar” (Lutes)
The Sorcerer — “Welcome Joy, Adieu to Sadness” (duet);
“My Name Is John Wellington Wells” (Lutes)
HMS Pinafore — “I’m Called Little Buttercup” (Fischer)
Patience — “Am I Alone and Unobserved?” (Lutes);
“Sweethearts” or “The Lost Chord” (Fischer)

INTERMISSION

- Iolanthe* — “Oh Foolish Fay” (Fischer); “Love Unrequited...
When You’re Lying Awake” (Lutes)
Princess Ida — “A Lady Fair of Lineage High” (Fischer)
The Mikado — “Tit Willow” and “There Is Beauty in the
Bellow of the Blast” (duet)
Ruddigore — “If Somebody There Chanced to Be”
(Fischer); “The Ghost’s High Noon” (duet)
The Yeoman of the Guard — “A Private Buffoon Is a
Lighthearted Loon” (Lutes)
The Gondoliers — “There Was a Time” (duet)
Ruddigore — “My Eyes Are Fully Open” (trio!)



ILLUSTRATIONS: W. S. GILBERT. BAR ILLUSTRATIONS ARE SKETCHES DRAWN BY TO ILLUSTRATE HIS WORKS. THE “BAR” DESIGNATION COMES FROM THE SIGNATURE THAT HE USED ON HIS ILLUSTRATIONS. “BAR” WAS GILBERT’S PET NAME AS A BABY.

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ARTHA FISCHER teaches piano at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she heads the accompanying program. A busy collaborator with singers and instrumentalists, she has been the artistic and music director of Opera for the Young, an organization which tours schools throughout Wisconsin and Illinois with specially adapted productions of opera for children. Ms. Fischer holds degrees in piano from Oberlin College and the New England Conservatory of Music. A favorite of her Gilbert & Sullivan roles is that of the Fairy Queen in *Iolanthe*, which she sang with the Victorian Lyric Opera Company of Washington, D.C. Recently, she has appeared as Pitti-Sing in the *The Mikado* and Lady Psyche in *Princess Ida*.

**B**

ILL LUTES has appeared in numerous Gilbert & Sullivan patter roles, including Sir Joseph Porter in *HMS Pinafore*, the Major General in *Pirates of Penzance*, the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, and most recently with the Madison Savoyards as Ko-Ko in *The Mikado*, Jack Point in *Yeoman of the Guard*, and Bunthorne in *Patience*. He has stage directed productions of *The Gondoliers* and *Princess Ida*. Bill is also a classical pianist, with degrees in music from the Universities of Kentucky and Wisconsin-Madison and the Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music. From 1987 until 1999, he was an on-air personality and music director at Wisconsin Public Radio. Bill has toured as a singer and pianist with Opera for the Young and served as musical adapter for three OFY productions.



Martha Fischer and Bill Lutes are "connubially linked" in real life. They have two budding Savoyards, Katie and Nathaniel.



BOOKINGS, FEES & ARRANGEMENTS

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*Program can be adapted to fit
a variety of venues and lengths.*

*"We cover just
about everything
you can do with
two people and
a piano ...*

*we do solos, duets,
and even a trio."*