

**Audition Notes for
The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's June 2012 production of**

Patience

by Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

Patience is a high-spirited send-up of artistic affectation. Originally it poked fun at the pre-Raphaelite "brotherhood" in London of the 1870s and '80s, but Gilbert's wit transcends the original target and Sullivan's tunes have remained ever funny, martial, sentimental, poignant—whatever the moment in the plot demands. My purpose here is to provide information for auditionees concerning the auditions and also concerning the hilariously funny and incredibly tuneful show we will present this summer. If you're planning to audition, please read this in its entirety.

INFORMATION ON AUDITIONS:

Auditions will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 3rd and 4th. Music Director and Conductor **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** and I request that each auditionee memorize a song from Gilbert & Sullivan or something similar that will show their voice and range to best advantage. *It is also mandatory to provide a copy of the music for the auditions accompanist. No a cappella auditions will be heard. An accompanist will be provided, but singers will be welcome to bring their own if they wish.*

If *Patience* is not in your library, you can download the libretto from The Gilbert & Sullivan Archive (math.boisestate.edu/gas). You can also download some printed music from the opera from this website, read a plot synopsis, or download audio files. And there's more, too!

THE ROLES:

Patience is filled with fun-to-act roles, incredible singing opportunities, and requires actors who can sing well as well as singers who can act well. And nowhere was Gilbert more trenchant (and amusing) in his satire of artistic affectation or Sullivan more tuneful. (*Patience*, of course, has another of those wonderful Act I finales.)

THE CHORUS is composed of the **Chorus of Dragoon Guards** (12 gentlemen, resplendent in scarlet and gold uniforms, who know how to march and perform facing movements) and the **Chorus of Rapturous Maidens** (12 languid and limp ladies, over-the-top in their expressions of unrequited love, dressed in "aesthetic draperies" of muted colors, playing "archaic instruments," and speaking with the latest "aesthetic slang," which is "too, too utter"!).

Colonel Calverley (bass or "dark baritone"). He is commanding officer of the Dragoons, stuffy, lacking a sense of humor, "in charge," and with two challenging patter-songs in Act I, so he must also have excellent diction. A large man. Dances in Act II.

Major Murgatroyd (baritone). A rather small part with excellent comic possibilities, such as his leg cramp that gives him so much trouble when he tries to imitate the aesthetic poets! Dances in Act II.

Lieutenant, the Duke of Dunstable (tenor). An aristocratic soldier, who joined the army because he wearied of toadies. He finds military a good change-of-pace from aristocratic living. Dances in Act II.

Reginald Bunthorne (light baritone). One of Gilbert's great comic creations, Bunthorne is a sham "aesthetic poet," who affects the dress, behavior and writing abilities of a poet in order to get the admiration of the village maidens. The opera centers on Bunthorne's quest for the love of the village milkmaid, Patience, and he is content to change his ways in order to get it. He finds out as so many others do that the path to true love doesn't run smooth—and

in fact, *his* is bumpy indeed. The sub-title of *Patience* is *Bunthorne's Bride*—but who (or what?) ends up as his bride?

Archibald Grosvenor (high baritone or tenor). He's also a poet: "the Apostle of Simplicity." He loved *Patience* when but a tot, and *Patience* loved him, but his path to true love crosses *Bunthorne's*, and for a while it's equally bumpy. He has better fortune, however, than his rival, even if he has to cast off his poetic trappings and become "an every-day young man" in order to claim his bride.

Mr. Bunthorne's Solicitor (silent role). He appears in the Act I finale to run the raffle (*Bunthorne* attempts to raffle himself off as a bridegroom to one of the maidens since he can't have *Patience!*), and in the Act II finale. He has no speaking or singing, but a mobile face and good acting skills are musts.

The Lady Angela (mezzo-soprano). An important singing and acting role, she rather sets the tone for the lovesick maidens. Lovely singing and a good comic sense are essential.

The Lady Saphir (mezzo-soprano). Another aesthetic maiden, a follower. Something of a scholar and user of arcane expressions. A good actor and singer.

The Lady Ella (soprano). Still another aesthetic maiden, with a short but dynamic solo as a part of the opening chorus, calling for a beautiful and strong singing voice.

The Lady Jane (contralto). One of Gilbert's great creations, the part calls for a commanding contralto voice and a great sense of humor. She's another of those ageing females, but loves to sing about her fading charms and growing proportions while accompanying herself on a 'cello. She loves *Bunthorne*, too—much to his chagrin.

Patience (lyric soprano). She is a simple and naïve dairy-maid who has no idea "what this love may be" that's so captured the rapturous maidens, but when she learns that it's her duty to love, she sets forth to fall in love with all her heart. Alas, that road on which she sets forth is that same bumpy one that *Bunthorne* and *Grosvenor* are using, and—well, her perseverance is rewarded.

Important information regarding rehearsals & the rehearsal schedule

Staging rehearsals begin on Monday, May 7, and continue as run-throughs and dress rehearsals until the opening on June 7th. Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr., divides each show into rehearsal segments so the full cast is **not** called to every rehearsal and that each individual's time-investment is well spent. "Rafe" also tries to keep the rehearsals productive and fun for all, and end on time, realizing that all participants have other responsibilities in their lives outside the theatre.

Rehearsals will be held in three-hour blocks, Monday-Friday 7-10 PM; Saturdays 10-1 and 2-5, and Sundays 2-5 and 6-9. Some "days off" for all will be planned into the schedule.

Auditionees will be asked to list conflicts with the above dates and times on their audition forms; these conflicts will be taken into consideration at auditions, and will be used for structuring the staging rehearsal schedule, which will be distributed ASAP after auditions.

Once a role is accepted, the Society expects that each individual will consider the show to be of primary importance and not accept other obligations that will interfere with the above rehearsal times. Once the rehearsal schedule is posted and distributed, cast members will know the dates and times they will definitely be called (and the ones for which they are not), and will not accept obligations interfering with their calls.

Rafe welcomes questions. Send e-mail to this address: RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com.