

# THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



**Saturday, March 7, at 7:30 pm  
and Sunday, March 8, at 2 pm**

Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School  
11908 North Lamar Blvd., Austin (see map, pg. 6)

Advance purchase tickets: \$20 for adults, \$15 for  
students over 18, \$8 for 18 & under; VIP tickets \$50

from [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org)

## ***A Day at the Savoy Theatre; or, Who is Mr. Jericho?***

**by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**



Mark your calendars: Gilbert & Sullivan Austin's mid-season show, ***A Day at the Savoy Theatre***, combines history and entertainment in the best Victorian fashion and will be presented at Brentwood Christian School on March 7th and 8th. Our Chief Financial Officer, **Dave Wieckowski**,

has written a wonderful narrative telling the tale of the first theatre in the world to be lit entirely by electricity. It was the Savoy in London, and it was built by impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte expressly to present the original runs of the Gilbert & Sullivan operas, now known collectively as the Savoy Operas (even though several earlier works by G&S premièred before the Savoy was built).

The name of the theatre is also found in the word "Savoyard," which has traditionally been applied to people who perform Gilbert & Sullivan and to admirers of the Victorian duo's works (like us). And of course, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin has used the term in the new name for its venerable newsletter, now known as ***The Austin Savoyard***.

Working with Dave was **Janette Jones**, who accepted the pleasant task of selecting musical numbers from the Savoy operas that opened at this theatre between 1881 and 1889. As she wrote, "I selected the songs for the beauty and fun. My intention was always to show off the talents of the wonderful performers singing in ***Mr. Jericho***." (Mr. Jericho? Who is Mr. Jericho? Read

on!) Those wonderful performers are **Patricia Combs, Reagan Murdock, Taylor Rawley, Amy Selby, and Julius Young**, who will be accompanied by **Jeanne Sasaki**. **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** will serve as Music Director. The numbers Janette selected run the Gilbert & Sullivan gambit, as some of my students used to say, from the patter of "When I first put this uniform on" from ***Patience***; the ebullient trio from ***Iolanthe***, "If you go in"; through Nanki-Poo's famous self-introduction, "A wandering minstrel, I" from ***The Mikado***; Sir Roderick's ghostly "When the night wind howls" from ***Ruddigore***; to poignant numbers from ***Iolanthe, Princess Ida, The Yeomen of the Guard, and The Gondoliers***. And it will be my great pleasure to share Dave's research with you as master of ceremonies, along with the dozens of images Dave collected to enhance his narrative.

But that's just Act One! The second part of the program will be a performance of ***Mr. Jericho***, written by Harry Greenbank and composed by Ernest Ford. It was first presented at the Savoy as a curtain-raiser (see last month's column) for Sullivan's ***Haddon Hall*** (libretto by Sydney Grundy) and later at the Savoy for an ill-fated work by Sherlock Holmes's creator Arthur Conan Doyle and Peter Pan's creator J. M. Barrie called ***Jane Annie***. (And the less you know about that, the better.) ***Mr. Jericho*** was briefly in print, but for decades languished in obscurity until a recent republication in a scholarly edition (including the orchestration) spread the word of this delightful work. We believe our production will be its Texas première, and may be among the first half-dozen ever presented in this country.

So the real question is not *who* is Mr. Jericho, but *what* is ***Mr. Jericho***? The answer is that it's a charming work filled with pleasant musical numbers and funny characters and dialogue poking fun (as Gilbert & Sullivan often did) at class distinctions and their impediments to "true love." It will be colorfully costumed and fully staged with the suggestion of a set, and will be performed with grand-piano accompaniment by Jeanne Sasaki. And to finally answer my question, the eponymous Mr. Jericho is actually the manufacturer of "Jericho's Jams," a popular breakfast staple, and we guarantee you'll be singing his advertising jingle long after the curtain rings down!

***A Day at the Savoy Theatre*** will offer familiar Gilbert & Sullivan numbers as well as some new (to us) music and theatrical delight from two of Gilbert & Sullivan's dramatic and musical friends. Join us at Brentwood for the fun!

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## The Sing-Along

by Mary Hendren

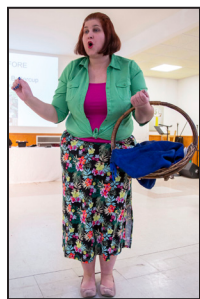


It's a truism: the more you put into something, the greater return you'll receive. This nugget of truth was amply demonstrated at the January 5th Gilbert & Sullivan Austin Sing-Along. All the ingredients for a delightful afternoon were present:

a good turnout of G&S fans, the enthusiasm of Master of Ceremonies **Robert L. Schneider**, a line-up of talented vocalists, and a remarkable chorus. With **Katie Schneider** projecting lyrics, the audience became a loyal chorus, supporting Bob's selections from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Trial by Jury*, *The Mikado*, *Princess Ida*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*.

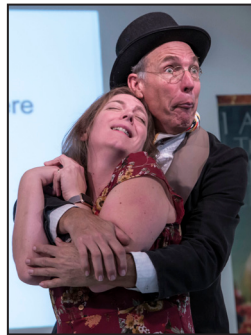


Robert L. Schneider leads the sing-along



Jennifer Haston

Lovely ladies opened the musicale with "I'm called little Buttercup" (**Jennifer Haston**), "If somebody there chanced to be" (**Natalie Baker**), and "Silvered is the raven hair" (**Michelle Vanecek**). Michelle reminded us "there will be too much of me in the coming by and by." **Wayne Davis** filled the hall with a grand performance of "Take a pair of sparkling eyes," and **Noelle Forestal** dramatically portrayed Katisha's "Alone, and yet alive!" **Gary Hallock** and **Iona Olive** teamed up with a selection from *The Sorcerer*, "Dear friends, take pity on my lot," and **Jacob Williams** sang the haunting "On a tree by the river" from *The Mikado*.



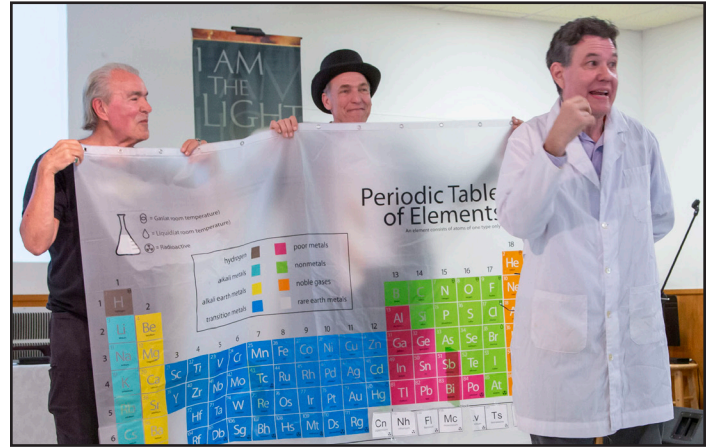
Iona Olive and Gary Hallock



Leann Fryer

Other memorable moments included: **Russell Gregory's** bold, reverberating "Five golden rings." Thank you, Russell, for upholding that pivotal turn! **Leann Fryer's** lovely singing of "Poor wand'ring one" lifted us into elevated heights ... she nailed it again! Then there was **David Treadwell's** shower curtain. Amazing! If you didn't

see the curtain or hear him sing the periodic table to the tune of "I am the very model of a modern Major General," do ask him about it. David was thanked for his years of service on the GSA board and wished well as he relocates to Vermont.



David Treadwell lists "The Elements"

Along with the pleasure, some business was accomplished. The members of Gilbert & Sullivan Austin confirmed a proposal to increase the maximum number of members from twelve to fifteen and gratefully approved the nominees for the Board of Directors 2020. The 2020 board is listed on the last page of this newsletter.



Katie Schneider projects lyrics as the audience sings the familiar closing song, "Now to the banquet we press"

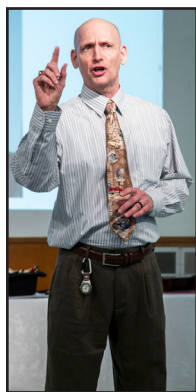
It was fitting to close the Sing-Along with "Now to the banquet we press" because no one was disappointed with the spread of refreshments and the generous contributions.

As acting host, **Diane Radin** commented that we owe a big thanks to all "the singers who sang and made our day so joyful." Special thanks also to **Leann Fryer** for producing and directing the sing-along, and to pianist **Jeanne Sasaki** and page turner **Devan Shane** for their flexibility and attentive accompaniment. We appreciate **David Little**, **Michael Meigs**, and **Steve Schwartzman** for capturing the moments we will enjoy as memories.



## Gilbert & Sullivan Austin's Sing-Along

photos courtesy Steve Schwartzman see more at [gilbertsullivanaustrin.smugmug.com](http://gilbertsullivanaustrin.smugmug.com)



Wayne Davis



Michelle Vanecek



Jacob Williams



Noelle Forestal



Natalie Baker



Jeanne Sasaki and  
Devan Shane



Diane Radin



Bill Hatcher (producer of our  
summer productions) and  
Russell Gregory



Robert L. Schneider as  
*The Learned Judge*



GSA 2020 Board of Directors:  
front (l-r): Leann Fryer, Michael Meigs, Michelle Vanecek,  
Diane Radin, Sarah Slaughter  
back (l-r): outgoing member David Treadwell; David Little,  
Robert L. Schneider, Robert O. Kerr, David Wieckowski  
absent, but (re)elected: Sue Caldwell,  
Holton Johnson, Charles Smaistrla, Libby Weed

## G&S Austin's Musical Director in Concert

GSA Musical Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** along with Wand'ring Minstrels pianist **Marti Mortensen Ahern** and Artisan String Quartet will perform one of the masterpieces of English vocal music, "On Wenlock Edge" by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Jeffrey says, "On Wenlock Edge has been a favorite of mine, and a 'bucket list' item for over 20 years. I'm very excited to be performing this beautiful music with such top notch musicians, and I really hope to see many of my Gilbert and Sullivan family there to enjoy this exquisite music. The poetry is by A. E Housman, and reflects on love, lost love, and life transitions as we find our way through the world. There's even a ghost scene! And a couple of wry laughs along the way."

February 2020



Two performances only, February 28 and 29, 7:30 pm, at First Presbyterian Church (8001 Mesa Drive), a lovely venue with plenty of free parking. Tickets are available at [www.austinchamberensemble.org](http://www.austinchamberensemble.org)

*The Austin Savoyard*

# The McAdo

A NEW BEGINNING JUNE 2020

## So What Exactly Is Different About *The McAdo*?

by Dave Wieckowski



If you've been following these articles then you're up to speed on why we needed to make some adaptations to our 2020 *Mikado*, why we decided to set it in Scotland as *The McAdo*, and how we gained community feedback and support for the process (please check out our newsletter archives at [gilbertsullivan.org](http://gilbertsullivan.org)

if you need a refresher). In this edition I'd like to talk about what specific edits will be made to the show in order to create a Scottish setting. In my second article I stated that one of our committee's guiding principles was to attain this change in setting "with the minimum possible amount of change to the libretto and score," and I think we've stayed true to that goal.

The most notable changes will be in the costumes and sets, which will reflect Scotland instead of Japan. Our production team is already working hard to source appropriate costumes and sets that will be both beautiful and professional. Regarding the libretto, I think you'll be amazed at how few changes are required to the actual spoken text. We tackled those changes in two categories: character names, and other spoken words and phrases. For character names, there will be only three substantive changes: Nanki-Poo becomes Nanky Doug (pronounced NANKEE Doog), Yum Yum becomes Wynn Somme (pronounced Win-SOME), and the town of Titipu becomes Ballydew (pronounced BALLY-Dew). All other character names either remain unchanged, are spelled in a Scottish style but are pronounced exactly the same way (e.g. Katisha becomes Katishagh, Pooh-Bah becomes Pubagh, and Mikado becomes McAdo), or are listed in the playbill but never spoken on stage.

We were very pleasantly surprised at how few changes were required to other spoken words and phrases. In the entire spoken libretto, there are only fourteen occurrences of the words "Japan" or "Japanese." These are easily replaced by Scottish themed words such as Gaelic, Highlander, and Clan. In addition, there were just four phrases that we felt evoked a Japanese theme and they were edited as well (e.g. "With many a screen and fan" becomes "With many a tartan grand"). So that's it! Out of the entire show, aside from the three character names mentioned above, there are a total of only eighteen spoken changes to words and phrases required.

The last category is the musical score, and I suspect many of our audience would consider this the most important of them all. Perhaps Sullivan's most recognizable music, I hear passages

from *The Mikado* regularly in movies, television, and other media. I'm happy to say that this wonderful score will remain virtually intact for *The McAdo*. The only song that we believe will need editing is "Miya Sama," which has a decidedly Japanese feel to it in melody and orchestration. Our esteemed Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** is pondering this challenge, and I'm certain will come up with a successful solution. But all other music in the production is assured to remain intact.

I hope you'll find that everything that makes *The Mikado* such a great show will also be found in *The McAdo*!

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed



Perhaps speaking more meaningfully than he realized, Ko-Ko averred, "Now every man to aid his clan should plot and plan as best he can." On the board of directors of Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, we believe that every man and every woman plays a vital role in the continual improvement of our association—our "clan"—so each member has several vital responsibilities.

Vice President **Diane Radin** explained at the January sing-along that we are an unpaid but extremely involved board. As our productions have continued to increase in value and our outreach to the community has grown, we have found that we need more people to take on significant roles. Therefore, the membership approved at the January meeting a change in the by-laws to increase the maximum number on the board from 12 to 15.

The membership also voted to add two outstanding members to the board: **Holton Johnson** and **Dr. Robert O. Kerr**. Both have, in different ways, been avid supporters of GSA for some time. The continuing board members are extremely pleased to welcome them to our fellowship.

**Holton Johnson** is well known to all Austin Savoyards, as he has performed with our company since 2001, inhabiting almost every tenor lead, and is a member of our Hall of Fame. Holton attended Boston Conservatory of Music and received a degree in vocal performance from the University of Arizona. We are not the only G&S group that has benefited from his talents: Holton has performed in and directed a variety of G&S shows in Boston, San Diego, and Los Angeles. He has also performed for Austin Opera for the past 15 years. At present he is giving serious consideration to obtaining his teaching certification in hopes of teaching music on the middle school or high school level. To that, all of us who value music and education say, "Hip, hip, hooray!"

**Bob Kerr** came to love the Gilbert & Sullivan canon through the influence of his wife, Mary Ann. They met on the first day of classes when they enrolled in Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, and they married between Bob's junior and senior years in medical school at the University of Pittsburgh. Together they have lived an adventure including medical residency, parenthood, military service, private medical practice, the founding of the Southwest Regional Cancer Center, and the institution of a clinical research program. Bob has served as Chief of Medical Staff at both Holy Cross and Seton Northwest Hospitals. During all these years, he also served on several boards of trustees, including service as chairman of the board at his alma mater, Elizabethtown College.

Both Holton and Bob enjoy a wide range of interests. Holton is

*continued on page 5*



**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE** *continued from page 4*

involved in animal welfare and conservation, volunteering with the Austin Animal Center, Austin Wildlife Rescue, and Central Texas Pig Rescue. Bob and Mary Ann love spending time with their two daughters and three grandchildren, traveling (104 countries so far!), photography, and education. They have already been instrumental in widening the scope of our G&S scholarship program.

As we welcome these two, we bid a fond farewell to **David Treadwell**, who has served ably in many roles for some years on our board, as well as on the stage. David is moving to Vermont, but he assured us he will continue writing our donor and membership letters. Look for an unusual postmark on your envelope!

And so we will “plot and plan as best we can,” to paraphrase Ko-Ko. We are delighted to have the company and efforts of Bob and Holton as we keep our trajectory on an upward course. And don’t forget—you don’t have to be a member of the board to volunteer and support GSA. **Sarah Slaughter** is delighted to hear from anyone who would like to pitch in and be a part of the action.

I hope to see you when we enjoy **A Day at the Savoy Theatre!**




*The Wand’ring Minstrels (l-r: Janette Jones, Robert L. Schneider, Marti Mortensen Ahern, Katie Schneider)*

**Wand’ring Minstrels**

The Wand’ring Minstrels love February! 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 our website, [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org), for information.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

We encourage you to join our Society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal 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 “GSA,” or call to join (512) 472-4772 (GSSA).

Please check a membership category:

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- Savoyard** (\$2500 & up)

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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:

**O. Henry in Austin: A Musical Love Affair**



William Sydney Porter (a.k.a. O. Henry) lived in Austin from 1884-1897, easily the happiest years of his short life. This “dramatic reading” includes several traditional turn-of-the-century tunes, a rousing barroom drinking song, a few vaudevillian numbers penned by O. Henry, and of course features a healthy mixture of recognizable solos, ensembles and comedic dialogue

snippets from a variety of Gilbert & Sullivan shows. All of this music and drama has been artfully woven into the real-life love story of the young O. Henry meeting and wooing his future bride Athol Estes, the “Songbird of Austin.” Their budding romance thrives between the musical acts at Austin’s historic Millett Opera House and culminates in a daring



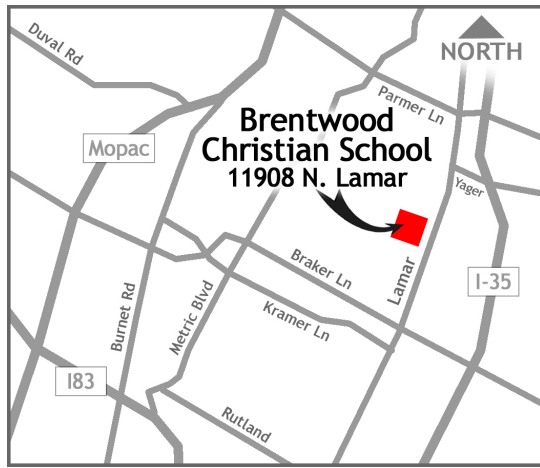
**H.M.S. Pinafore**-style elopement where they go “carefully on tiptoe stealing.”

The actors/singers, most with strong connection to GSA, include: **Rick Perkins** (author and stage director); **Janette Jones** (musical director, who selected the G&S songs); **Gary Hallock** (producer); **Bonnie Bogovich**; **Jim Newsome**; **Robert L. Schneider**; and **Jennifer Haston**. **Felicity Coltman** (GSA’s first pianist) will provide the piano accompaniment.

The production was commissioned by the Brush Square Museums Foundation (BSMF), a non-profit group that supports both the O. Henry and Dickinson Museums in Downtown Austin.

This 50-minute musical treat will have one performance only, as a part of the annual meeting of the BSMF. The event includes light refreshments and other informative presentations between 2 and 4 pm on Sunday, February 23, at the Austin History Center, 810 Guadalupe St., Austin 78701. Free admission and free Sunday street parking!

*photos courtesy of Austin History Center*



Map to *A Day at the Savoy*  
 – details on page 1!

## Coming Events

Mar. 7-8 Mid-season production: *A Day at the Savoy Theatre* (see p. 1)

June 12-21 *The McAdo* summer production (see p. 4)



### Send Us Your News!

The next issue of *The Austin Savoyard* should arrive in mid-April; the deadline for submissions is March 30. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!



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*THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD* - FEBRUARY 2020

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This project is funded and supported in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts and in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department. Visit Austin at [NowPlayingAustin.com](http://NowPlayingAustin.com)



The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.  
 Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**  
 Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

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