

# THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed

Please read through to the end for a special announcement! But first, something to think about.

If you have read Jim Collins's best-seller *Good to Great*, you know about what Collins called the Stockdale Paradox. This concept may be on many minds during this coronavirus spring.

Admiral James Stockdale survived eight years in a prison camp during the Vietnam War. He lived through savage torture with no assurance that he would ever see his family again. Bearing the burden of command, he devoted himself to creating conditions that would help his fellow prisoners to survive, while at the same time fighting his captors' attempts to use the prisoners for propaganda.

The inconveniences and deprivations we have had to endure for many weeks now because of COVID-19 can hardly compare with the atrocities faced by Stockdale and his cohorts. But perhaps we can learn something from his bitter experience and miraculous survival.

Stockdale knew that he could not give in to despondency if he wanted to survive his imprisonment. But he also knew he had to face the brutal facts of his daily existence and find ways to counter the pain and hopelessness. He stayed alive by balancing harsh reality and hope.

The prisoners who didn't make it, according to Stockdale, were either consumed by the brutality and lost all sense of hope—or determinedly and unrealistically optimistic.

If we can apply anything from this brave man's experience to our current situation, we can start by facing the hardship and admitting that we don't know when we might return to normal. We can't say "All the churches will be open by Easter" or "We'll have a big swim party on Memorial Day." The first didn't happen, and we've gotten wise enough to know that the second is unlikely.

But then we need to hold fast to that other side of the paradox—the optimism that there will be an end and that we will survive it. Like Stockdale, we need to remind ourselves of our goals and purposes and find ways to keep them alive.

Your Gilbert & Sullivan Austin Board of Directors has found a great way to make some of this in-between time not only bearable, but enjoyable. Beginning in May, we will select one opera a month and release on our website a series of scenes from a GSA production of that opera, along with some related videos, culminating in the release of the complete opera. This month, you can look forward to sitting back in your living room and enjoying, at no cost, all the wonderful songs, beauty, laughter, and fun of our 2014 *H.M.S. Pinafore*! Previously



available only by purchase as a DVD, this show will be shared with you digitally for a limited time as you #StayHomeStaySafe.

If you are not on our email list, please go to [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org) today and sign up. Then you'll receive information about the great things in store for you to watch. We will release another great opera and related clips each month through the summer. You won't want to miss any!

We're facing the brutal facts—isolation and fear of disease—while maintaining our commitment to spread the topsy-turvy humor and joyful music of Gilbert & Sullivan in every way we can. Join us!

*Libby Weed*

## Important Notice about *The McAdo*

These are troubling times, and life has been disrupted in an unsettling manner. It is our hope and prayer that each of you is well and is continuing to be safe and careful.

After much consideration, the Gilbert & Sullivan Austin Board of Directors has, with great reluctance, decided that **we must postpone our production of *The McAdo* until June 2021.**

We firmly believe that when this show is produced, it will make history and will bring immense delight to large audiences. We have a stellar cast and production crew in place, and if all goes as we hope, every one of them will be able to stay with us through next summer's production.

In the meantime, we are not going away, and you will not be entirely deprived of the joys of G&S. Watch your email and check the President's Message for exciting news about how you will be able to revisit many numbers from our treasure trove of videos from previous grand productions and musicales. We have something very special in store for you in the month of May, with more to follow in the ensuing months.

Please stay safe and be careful, as we look forward to seeing every one of you in a happier and healthier time!

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## A Day at the Savoy Theatre

by Mary Hendren



Congratulations to the cast and crew for two delightful performances of **A Day at the Savoy Theatre**, March 7 and 8. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, Artistic and Stage Director, said that G&S Austin had a two-fold purpose for the March production: "to offer an appealing array of familiar musical numbers that were first presented at the Savoy...and then... to present the Texas premiere of **Mr. Jericho**."



Rafe

For the first half of the show, **Dave Wieckowski** put together an overview of the halcyon years of Gilbert, Sullivan, and the Savoy Theatre. **Reagan Murdock**, **Patricia Combs**, **Julius Young**, **Taylor Rawley**, and **Amy Selby** performed favorite selections from G&S operettas, giving a musical context to Rafe's narration.



Amy, Julius, Reagan, Taylor, and Patricia

One of the benefits of a smaller production is showcasing individual talent. **Janette Jones** had a hand in selecting G&S tunes suited to each performer. Thanks to Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** and the five performers. Their singing was balanced,



emotive, and spot on. At the March 8 performance, GSA President **Libby Weed** remarked that some of the old favorites "bring tears to my eyes."

After intermission, Reagan, Taylor, Julius, Patricia, and Amy stepped into their roles for **Mr. Jericho**. This one-act musical comedy, written and

composed in the style of Gilbert & Sullivan, is truly a "little gem of an operetta." With characters like the Earl of Margate (Reagan), an irresponsible spendthrift; Horace (Taylor), an ardent omnibus driver; Winifred (Amy), a regular shopper at Snelgrove's; Lady Bushey (Patricia), a middle-aged romantic; and Mr. Jericho (Julius), a powerful



promoter of self, the play involves absurdities that audiences have come to expect with G&S.

When everything comes together (the skills of writer, composer, director, producer, actors and

support team) as they did on March 7 and 8, the audience laughs at human nature from a safe and improbable space—just as Gilbert intended.

Thanks to Rafe for supertitles to the songs in **Mr. Jericho** and to the actors and sound personnel for clearly



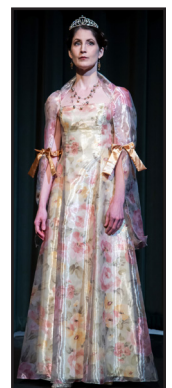
Jeanne

projecting the spoken words. As always,

**Jeanne Sasaki** provided excellent accompaniment with the assistance of her students turning pages: **Zimm Davis** on Saturday and **Bailey Adams** on Sunday.



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



## The McAdo Cast

The McAdo — **Russell Gregory**  
Nanky Doug — **Taylor Rawley**  
Coco — **Reagan Murdock**  
Pubagh — **Holton Johnson**  
Pischtusch — **Julius Young**  
Go-To — **Jay Young**  
Wynn Somme — **Mary Kettlewell**  
Pretty Jean — **Angela Irving**  
Wee Jo — **Amy Selby**  
Katishagh — **Bethany Ammon**  
Jean Brodie — **Patricia Combs**

Chorus of Villagers: **Trinidad Agosto, Jeffrey C. Brister, Garrett Cordes, Andy Fleming, Brett Hardy, Reese Landis, Matthew Leary, Ron McCormack, Sean Ryan Moran, Ian Stillwell, Corin Vandenberg**

Chorus of School-Girls: **Natalie Baker, Megan Barham, Megan Conlon, Sabrina Ellis, Leann Fryer, Bailey Maxine Gilmore, Grace Giramma, Janette Jones, Sydney Pérez, Mindy Rast-Keenan, Stefanie Taylor**

*This spectacular cast was assembled and had begun rehearsals when the COVID-19 pandemic caused the production to be put on hold, then postponed until June 2021.*

## 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:

- ☐ **Member** (\$30-\$49)
- ☐ **Patron** (\$50-\$99)
- ☐ **Grand Duke or Duchess** (\$100-\$249)
- ☐ **Major General** (\$250-\$499)
- ☐ **Pooh-Bah** (\$500-\$999)
- ☐ **Pirate King** (\$1000-\$2499)
- ☐ **Savoyard** (\$2500 & up)

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☐ I'd like to volunteer. I'm interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

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: ☐

## GSA Offers Scholarships

GSA intends to offer \$1,000 scholarships to two recipients for the 2020-21 academic year. Payments will be made directly to the student's school of study or program. GSA reserves the right to modify the amounts and number of recipients based on the recommendation of the GSA Scholarship Committee.

Applicants must:

- Be pursuing a professional career in music or musical theater (preferably vocal performance)
- Be enrolled or enrolling in a professional course of study in the United States (university, college, or conservatory music degree program, apprenticeship program, Young Artist Program, etc.)
- Have an affiliation with Central Texas (resided, studied, or performed in the Central Texas area)
- Be at least a graduating high school senior

Preference will be given to applicants who have performed Gilbert & Sullivan.

To apply, please visit our website at [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org), select About, then Scholarships. Applications must be submitted by **Friday, May 15, 2020**, to be considered.

## Free Money for GSA

Did you know that you can make ongoing donations to Gilbert & Sullivan Austin without it costing you a penny?

Amazon will rebate 0.5% of eligible purchases to the non-profit organization of your choice. Just go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com); on your first visit, it will prompt you to select a charitable organization. If you search for Gilbert & Sullivan, you'll find us listed as "Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin Texas Inc." After that, when you go to Amazon via [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), it will let you know if an item you're looking at is eligible, and will tell you how much your purchases have contributed to GSA. It is free money that will help underwrite **The McAdo** and all future GSA productions.

Thanks for thinking of GSA every time you buy from Amazon.

## More Free Money for GSA

Did you know that you can make ongoing donations to Gilbert & Sullivan Austin without it costing you a penny?

Randalls will rebate 1% of your purchases to the non-profit organization of your choice. Just fill out a short form one time at their customer service counter, and then present your Randalls card when you shop there. The form requires GSA's vendor number, 230090. It is free money that will help underwrite **The McAdo** and all future GSA productions.

Thanks for thinking of GSA every time you buy your groceries.



P.O. Box 684542  
Austin, Texas 78768-4542



## Send Us Your News!

The next issue of *The Austin Savoyard* should arrive in mid-summer, when our plans for the fall have been set; the deadline for submissions will be announced by email. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!

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**THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD** - MAY 2020

## Gilbert & Sullivan Austin

Entertaining and educating Texas audiences since 1976, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin is dedicated to spreading the topsy-turvy humor and joyful music of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan.

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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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