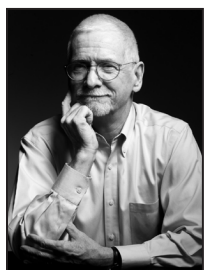


# THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



## Fresh Takes and Transmutations

by Michael Meigs



Episode 2 of our **Fresh Takes on Gilbert & Sullivan** will premiere on Saturday, August 15 and run for one month. In this episode, we'll be experimenting with language, converting the familiar witty and erudite English lyrics into art that's new, strange, and wonderful.

We start with **H.M.S. Pinafore**—and welcome you aboard *el buque Parasol*, somewhere in the Americas, far away from Portsmouth Harbor. Argentinian director and musical performer **Sebastian Vitale** heads a cast of ten who celebrate the opening numbers of the show, translated freely into Spanish. **Alejandra Maguire** appears as "La Mariposa" (Little Buttercup).

Directors **Lisa Scheps** of Ground Floor Theatre and **Brian Cheslik** of Deaf Austin Theatre meld entirely different performance styles doubly to transform village tailor Koko and the formidable Katisha in their Act II sequence of **The Mikado**—matching singing performers with ASL-signing performers.

As we've developed these ideas, I've come to reflect how very G&S this topsy-turvy process has been. As a linguist and consumer of foreign-language literature, I've long been involved in literary translation and live-voice interpretation. It occurred to me that those terms—**translation** and **interpretation**—apply to our **Fresh Takes** venture in different but very precise ways.

For the past two decades, GSA has been **interpreting** these fine comic operas under the leadership of the accomplished director/scholar **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.** We've interpreted the roles and the G&S playbooks so as to reproduce as vividly and exactly as possible the original stagings in 19th-century London.

In contrast, to conclude this past season without live performance, **Fresh Takes** is **translating** their art from those original venues to worlds new and strange, settings that audiences of Victorian London could never have imagined.

Episode 1 made it clear that talented Austin artists and directors see the good gentlemen's works with different eyes. Participants in Episode 2 also respect and preserve the comedy, satire, and social commentary, applicable to any age, while translating them into the contemporary globalized world of difference and diversity.

Also on the generous menu of Episode 2 is a trio of singers serving up special numbers in vaudeville style, including some of the rapid "patter songs" for which W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan became justly famous. And Austin theatre comedian and performer **Kirk Kelso**, recently in **Greater Tuna** at the Georgetown Palace Theatre, will top off the offerings with another "Little list," this one in the character of a theatre performer with some comments to make about audiences and fellow thespians.

¡Bienvenidos a todos! All aboard, everyone, for another wild ride!

## Fresh Takes Episode 2

August 15 to September 15

## GSA's 2021-22 Season

It is with pride (and a little trepidation) that we announce our planned schedule of performances for the coming year:

**Saturday and Sunday, October 23-24 – GSA: Back on the Boards and Better Than Ever.** Location: Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School.

**Sunday, January 9 – Annual Meeting and Sing-Along with Holton Johnson.** Location: Genesis Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall.

**Thursday, February 24 – 45th Anniversary Gala.** Location: Chez Zee.

**Saturday and Sunday, March 5-6 – Mid-Season Production: The Sorcerer in Concert,** directed by Jeffrey Jones-Ragona. Location: Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School.

**Friday, June 10, through Sunday, June 19 – Summer Grand Production: The McAdo.** Location: Worley Barton Theater at Brentwood Christian School.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Abounding Talent in Austin by Diane Radin

Securing talent for our *Fresh Takes of Gilbert & Sullivan* has been a challenge and also a blessing. See the last *Savoyard* to learn from **Michael Meigs** about “the challenges.” (Past issues are on our website—in color.) Why a blessing? We have gotten to know so many incredible directors, singers, performers, videographers, and choreographers right here in Austin, Texas, who are interested in working with GSA to produce our *Fresh Takes*. And they have gotten to know GSA. All the work they are doing for *Fresh Takes* is compensated—we hope that our contribution will help them make it through these difficult times.

To quote one director: “I am absolutely thrilled at the notion of re-examining the works of Gilbert & Sullivan and presenting them through a non-traditional gaze. As a director it is my mission to celebrate the foundations on which Musical Theatre was built, and find ways of presenting them that reflect where we are in our current society. ... The work you are doing is important and it inspires me greatly.”

One of the “sailors” in the Episode 2 *H.M.S. Pinafore* scene commented that she was grateful to get away from the kids and do something creative. Note that she said this after 7-plus hours working through dance routines outdoors in the Texas heat.

We hope they all will continue their relationship with GSA as we plan for a future filled with in-person performances. You can get a quick view of our upcoming 2021-22 season on page 1. We hope you will mark your calendars for all we are offering—we miss seeing you, we miss your laughter at the clever lyrics of Gilbert, we miss you tapping your feet to the melodies of Sullivan. And, I have to admit, we miss the income from ticket sales, too.

Did you know that GSA was founded in 1976? That makes 2021 our 45th anniversary. We are planning a gala celebration of this anniversary on February 24, 2022 at Chez Zee. There will be food and drink, singing, of course, and the induction of the newest members of our GSA Hall of Fame. We would not have made it this far without our loyal members and donors. Thank you all. A special thanks goes to GSA members **Chris and Susan Buggé** who graciously allowed the *H.M.S. Pinafore* crew to film at their home on Lake Austin for *Fresh Takes* Episode 2.

### Join Us!

We encourage you to join our Society to help GSA keep the joys of Gilbert & Sullivan alive. We offer many levels of membership, starting with basic member at \$30 per year. To join, renew, or donate, please visit

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

## GSA Scholarships Awarded

Each spring, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin awards one or more scholarships to individuals who are pursuing a professional career in music, preferably vocal performance. Applicants must be enrolled or planning to enroll in a course of study through a college music degree program, apprenticeship program, etc. Please join us in congratulating our four scholarship recipients, each of whom will receive a \$1,000 scholarship for the 2021-2022 academic year.

**Bradley Boatright** graduated from Smithville High School this spring. He's been studying classical voice for five years, the last four with our own **Michelle Haché**. He was also in the GSA concert production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Bradley will attend Oberlin Conservatory of music in the fall.



**Sabrina Ellis** began her musical journey at the tender age of nine. Opera came as an abrupt surprise for her after beginning her undergraduate studies in Choral Music Education. She plans on using her scholarship money to further her continuing education at University of Texas Butler school of Music.

**Alexis Lemus** is a first generation college student and is about to approach her senior year at Southwestern University, majoring in Music Education. This scholarship means she can focus more on finding a school and school district that she loves so she can pour her entire self into teaching kids music.



**Paiton Eleise Seals** is a third year Texas State vocal performance major with a minor in Opera. Her goal is to become a successful opera singer and she feels this scholarship will help her partly pay for her tuition next year. Furthermore, this scholarship will enable her to be a representative for both the black and queer community that is a part of the opera world.

We congratulate our scholarship recipients and wish them the very best in their future endeavors. We thank our members, who make these scholarships possible!



## Deep Indigo:

Lady Dorothy D'Oyly Carte and St. Yves  
de Verteuil in Tobago 1933-1978

by Elizabeth Cadiz Topp

Reviewed by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.



As noted in my review of Olivia Williams' *The Secret Life of the Savoy* in the last issue of *The Austin Savoyard*, the three generations of the D'Oyly Carte Family tended to focus publicity on their enterprises (the hotels, the opera company) and away from their personal lives—often with good reason. If Ms. Williams' book raised the curtain on some of these reasons, several of them have been greatly expanded by Elizabeth Cadiz Topp's biographical study of Rupert D'Oyly Carte's wife, Lady Dorothy, who was the mother of Bridget, the last D'Oyly Carte to run the family businesses.

Why Lady D'Oyly Carte? She was the daughter of an English lord and married the untitled Rupert in 1907. The couple had two children, Michael and Bridget. Michael, though younger, of course was being groomed to take over the family businesses, until a tragic automobile accident in 1932 ended his life at age 21, and, evidently helped to end the D'Oyly Carte marriage.

A trip to Trinidad and Tobago captivated Lady Dorothy, to which she relocated following her divorce from Rupert. She married again and devoted her time (and fortune) to charitable work in her adopted community.

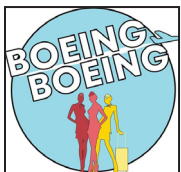
We also learn (perhaps too many) details of Bridget D'Oyly Carte's brief marriage to her first and titled cousin, and her reluctant sense of duty in carrying on successfully in a male-dominated business world following the death of her father in 1948. There are details of Dame Bridget's attempt to destroy personal papers and mementos—last attempts to protect the desire for privacy that was evidently in her DNA.

Well written and illustrated, this book also places Lady Dorothy's story in the context of Gilbert & Sullivan from the earliest days of their association with the earlier generation of D'Oyly Cartes. Lady Dorothy died in 1977, just eight years before the death of her daughter. Bridget, who supported her mother when needed financially, did not attend her funeral.



Ms. Topp's *Deep Indigo* (2020) is available from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). (Note: there are several other books at Amazon with the same title.)

## News of Members



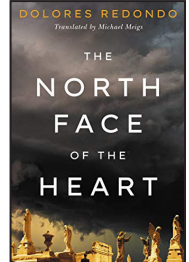
GSA Board Member and frequent cast member **Leann Fryer** is performing in the delightful comedy *Boeing Boeing* at the Georgetown Palace Theatre on weekends through August 22.

## News of Members (continued)

GSA Secretary and Bursar **Michael Meigs** has a new book out: his translation of Dolores Redondo's *The North Face of the Heart* (Amazon Crossing, 2021). Reviewer E. M. Powell describes Michael's contribution to the book:

*The North Face of the Heart* is translated from the Spanish original. From a reader's perspective, translator Michael Meigs has done a wonderful job, with the prose lyrical and rich.

"To have Michael Meigs as my translator into English is like a wonderful gift," she says. "I feel honored and extremely lucky to have him. He was the recipient of the 2020 Lewis Galantière Award given by American Translators Association (ATA) for his translation of my previous novel *All This I Will Give to You*."



Meigs shares the same approach as Redondo to immersive research. "He did so much for that book, even traveling to the remote Ribeira Sacra in Galicia (northwest Spain) to better 'feel' the landscape and the characters," she says. "I love being in touch with the translators of my work when they need to resolve some doubts. I have 36 translators, into 36 different languages, which is a lot! But Michael Meigs is special: firstly, because for any writer, the English language is the gateway to a huge amount of possible readers across the planet, and also because he really understands my writing."

"During the translation of *The North Face of the Heart* I was aware that he double-checked all of the data: he lives in Austin (where the 'grand finale' takes place), and he is also very familiar with the places described in the novel and was engaged personally. I don't read English properly, so I can't read the result of the translation, but everybody tells me it's just brilliant."

Well done, Michael!

Celebrated physicist, Nobel laureate, and University of Texas professor **Steven Weinberg** died July 23 at the age of 88. Honored for his studies in theoretical physics, Weinberg is the author of many esteemed books and published papers. A recent issue of *The Austin Savoyard* featured his most recent award, the Special Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics for his leadership in the field over his career.

As noted in an article by Heather Osbourne and Michael Barnes in the *American-Statesman* on July 25, "Weinberg had many passions." A close associate in the UT physics department, Willy Fischler, said, "He had a very good sense of humor. He was somebody who—besides physics—loved poetry, history, music. He was a well-rounded human being."

That love of music, history, and poetry, as well as his sense of humor, led Weinberg and his wife Louise, a UT law professor, to maintain membership in Gilbert & Sullivan Austin during their years in Austin and to be a part of the audience for every summer production. Dr. Weinberg will be missed in our association as well as in the global scientific community. He was truly a giant among men.

## Fresh Takes on Gilbert & Sullivan by Gilbert & Sullivan Austin



*The company's series of unconventional spins on the comic operas actually do the duo a service*

**Reviewed by Robert Faïres**

**Friday, July 2, 2021**

**The Austin Chronicle**

*reprinted with permission of the author*

Ah yes, that's "Fair moon, to thee I sing" from *HMS Pinafore*, a number sung by that ship's commander, Captain Corcoran, and the singer here, wearing the kind of naval uniform we expect the good captain to wear, is capturing Corcoran's melancholy in the loveliest mezzo soprano ... wait, *what?* The captain's part was written for a lyric baritone. This seaman is a she, man. What's more, there's no sea to see, only rusted old buses, trailers, and cars in an automotive graveyard.

Who's tinkering with Gilbert & Sullivan?

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, that's who. The very group that for 45 years has prided itself on hewing to tradition in its productions of G&S' popular comic operas is getting all experimental with them. The evidence is its new video series *Fresh Takes on Gilbert & Sullivan*, in which the first episode treats us not only to a female Captain Corcoran roaming a junkyard but also Mad Margaret with an iPhone, an accordion accompanying the ingenues in *Ruddigore*, a present-day doctor at Austin City Hall whose "little list" calls out pandemic deniers and liars, and three little maids from school, one of whom works at an office, one of whom lifts weights, and one of whom is a drag queen. And that's just the tip of this topsy-turvy iceberg. The end of the first episode promises future installments with G&S performed in Spanish and American Sign Language, with revised orchestrations, with rewritten lyrics, and with improv.

The party most responsible for all these G&S variations – whether you give him credit or blame may depend on how much of a purist you are – is the man puckishly enticing us with those fresh takes to come: Michael Meigs, a member of the company's board (and a colleague of mine in the Austin Critics Table), who approached some local directors and performers about putting their own spin on a musical number from the duo's repertoire and making a video of it. Meigs isn't one to tear down the edifices of theatre, as readers of his considered, generous criticism on [ctxlivetheatre.com](http://ctxlivetheatre.com) will know, and these directors reflect that. However far they may stray from the D'Oyly Carte model, they aren't savaging the source.

On the contrary, they're doing G&S a service. In Margaret Jumonville's medley of numbers from *HMS Pinafore*, Ellie Jarrett Shattles' tender rendition of "Fair moon, to thee I sing" renews one's appreciation for the beauty of Sir Arthur Sullivan's music. It's further energized by Abigail Jackson's impassioned delivery of "The hours creep on apace." The same goes for Meigs' own fresh take on the solo "The sun, whose rays are all ablaze," where Susan Johnston Taylor performs before landscape paintings by

Barb Jernigan, so that Taylor's bright, fluttering soprano seems to be chasing Sullivan's soaring music high into the sky.

Rudy Ramirez takes on a scene from *Ruddigore* in which the shy ingenues who have yet to express their love for each other talk around their feelings by asking for advice about their lovesick friends, and his staging of it as a late Twenties talkie – shot in black and white with title cards – distills the scene to a rom-com and reminds us how deftly W.S. Gilbert wrote them before Hollywood was ever a thing. Even when Gilbert's words are taken away, as they are in Trey Deason's scene about the COVID-times M.D. at the press conference, we're reminded that he wasn't penning comedy about some distant past but was satirizing his own time. When the front-line physician namechecks "the pestilential nuisances who write the news for Fox, and the proud boys who're so smug and self-important with their talks, and all the rumormongers and the plotters who persist" as folks who won't be missed, "they'll none of 'em be missed," we may be reminded that "the very model of a modern Major General" was mocking an actual general, and so were many of G&S' other greatest hits.

These excerpts from the originals may not look like Gilbert & Sullivan as we think of them, and yet they're true in spirit to the originals: questioning social customs, spoofing authority figures and those who lord it over others, finding beauty in music, making us laugh. As with a lot of productions of Shakespeare that strip it of Elizabethan garb, these nuggets of Gilbert & Sullivan in reworked settings create a different context that help us see and hear the original work better, maybe even get close to it for the first time. It seems of our time, something new. Fresh, indeed.

## The Silent Auction by Sandra Ragona

As chair of the committee to organize the silent auction for our 45th Anniversary Gala, I am asking for donations to stock our table. These can be things like a basket of non-perishable goodies such as wine and cheeses; a certificate to a restaurant; a local gym membership; a book of movie passes; or a special item you may own and want to donate—an original art work, or a classic of some kind.

We want a minimum of \$25 value, but there is no limit on the high side. We are a 501(c)(3) organization, and will provide a receipt for your donation.

I thank you now for your generosity. We will start collecting these items in January of 2022.

You have plenty of time to think about what you want to donate. If you need further information, feel free to contact me at [ssragona@gmail.com](mailto:ssragona@gmail.com).

## Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in early October; the deadline for submissions is September 20. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!



# Fresh Takes on Gilbert & Sullivan, Episode 1

June 15 - July 15, 2021

## H.M.S. Pinafore



**Ellie Jarrett Shattles**  
Captain Corcoran



**Natalie Joy**  
Buttercup



**Abigail Jackson**  
Josephine



**Pei-Jun Wang**  
Sir Joseph

songs: "Fair moon, to thee I sing;"  
"Things are seldom what they seem"  
"The hours creep on apace"  
"Never mind the why and wherefore"

director: **Margaret Jumonville**

piano: **Jeanne Sasaki**

photos: @margejumonville, Instagram

## Ruddigore



**Malysa Quiles, Chris Humphrey, Luke Linsteadt**  
Rose Maybud, Dame Hannah, Robin Oakapple



dialogue plus songs: "If somebody there chanced to be"  
"I know a youth"

director: **Rudy Ramirez**

accordion: **Chris Humphrey**

venue: **Austin Scottish Rite Playhouse**

## Ruddigore



**Bonnie Bogovich**  
Mad Margaret

song: "Cheerily carols the lark"

concept and editing: **Bonnie Bogovich**

piano: **Jeanne Sasaki**

**August 2021**

## The Mikado



**Susan Johnston Taylor**  
Yum-Yum

song: "The sun, whose rays are all ablaze"

watercolors: **Barb Jernigan**

orchestra recording: **Ameritz Music**



**Amy Downing**  
Yum-Yum

**Ismael Soto III**  
Pitti Sing

**Stephanie Chavez Noel**  
Peep-bo

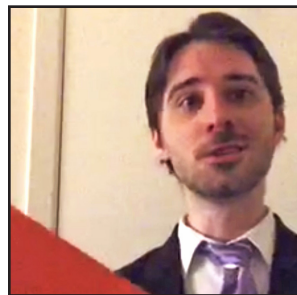
non-singing roles (not pictured):

**Queen Williams**  
**Elodie Jean-Jacques**  
**Jonah Jean-Jacques**  
**Sir Jonah Colbert**

song: "Three little maids from school are we"

director: **Christie Jean-Jacques**

## The Mikado parodies



**Trey Deason**  
Austin Health Czar (Ko-Ko)

songs: "Waiting in a virus ward" ("Taken from the county jail")  
"As some day it may happen" (a.k.a. "I've got a little list")

piano: **Jeanne Sasaki**

## Episode 1 production credits

editing: **Marcelo Teson**

recording studio for many segments: **Queen Deelah**



**Michael Meigs**  
our genial host

*The Austin Savoyard*

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You can also register on the Amazon app by clicking on the three lines in the lower right corner of the home page. Scroll to "Programs & Features" and click on Amazon Smile. Follow on-screen instructions and choose "Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin Texas Inc."

Once you become an Amazon Smile member, you will help underwrite **The McAdo** and all future GSA programs and productions with each eligible Amazon purchase. Thank You!



P.O. Box 684542  
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## Coming Events

- Aug. 15 **Fresh Takes Episode 2** online for one month (see p. 1)
- Oct. 23-24 **GSA: Back on the Boards and Better Than Ever**
- Jan. 9 **Annual Meeting and Sing-Along**
- Feb. 24 **45th Anniversary Gala**
- Mar. 5-6 **The Sorcerer in Concert**
- June 10-19 **The McAdo** summer grand production

*please see page 1 for more details  
of our 2021-22 season*

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**THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD - AUGUST 2021**

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Phone: (512) **472-4772** (GSA-GSSA)

Website: [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org) E-mail: [info@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:info@gilbertsullivan.org)

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



Artistic Director Emeritus  
Database Manager  
Newsletter Editor

**Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**  
**Leann Fryer**  
**Sue Ricket Caldwell**

The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

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**Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

Interim Artistic Director

**Michelle Haché**

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