

# THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Diane Radin

The flowers that bloom in the spring—have everything to do with the case!! Those flowers mean that our grand summer production is almost here. Are you ready for *The McAdo*?

We have kept the ticket prices what they were back in the BC days, \$27 for adults down to \$8 for school-age children. Although our expenses have increased, our goal is to fill the house for all nine shows so that as many people as possible can enjoy this world premiere.

If your pockets are deep, consider purchasing VIP tickets. For \$100 per ticket, you will have a reserved parking spot, recognition in the program book and from the stage, and as a special treat, an invitation to attend the last staging rehearsal, on June 3, with a light buffet included.

The cast of *The McAdo* has been in rehearsal since February; staging rehearsals begin in mid-May. As the temperature heats up, so does the schedule for the performers and musicians.

**Reagan Murdock**, besides playing Coco, is coaching the cast's Scottish accents. **Jeanne Sasaki** is the piano accompanist for all the *McAdo* rehearsals. She, music director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, and chorus master **Andy Fleming** make a tight-knit team that brings out the best in the cast. All eagerly await the arrival of Artistic Director **Michelle Haché**, who will begin staging rehearsals in mid-May. Choreographer **Christine Jean-Jacques** will join Michelle to enhance the show by leaps and bounds.

Those kilts don't just appear on their own—**Jennifer Rose Davis** and her team have measured every moving part of every cast member and are busy sewing appropriate and fitting Scottish-themed costumes for the 31-member cast.

You will see familiar faces among the cast and several who bring new talent to the Worley Barton Theater.

The flowers are blooming, the show is in rehearsal, the costumes are being sewn—the only thing left is for you to purchase your tickets and to spread the word that Gilbert & Sullivan Austin is back on the stage, in person, with a treat of a show. We depend on your word-of-mouth to help fill those seats.

Some of the performances include an additional feature: from a pre-show talk to children's activities to a show dedicated to our long-time popular performer and friend **Russell Gregory**. Opening night, June 10, includes a lavish post-show buffet joined by the entire cast. Having a hard time deciding which show to attend? I usually attend all nine and enjoy every one of them. It is interesting to see how the interactions among the cast and the audience responses change from performance

to performance. One way to see multiple performances is to volunteer to usher for a show or several. Volunteers see the show at no charge, of course. Contact **Saundra Ragona** (saundra@gilbertsullivan.org) and let her know you want to be part of our cadre of volunteers. For me there is only one downside to attending all nine performances—the music plays in my head for months afterward! Now if only I could actually carry a tune....

## The McAdo Cast

Pretty Jean — **Julie Allison**

The McAdo — **Bob Beare**

Katishagh — **Patricia Combs**

Nanky Doug — **Michael Dixon**

Pubagh — **Holton Johnson**

Wynn Somme — **Mary Kettlewell**

Coco — **Reagan Murdock**

Wee Jo — **Amy Selby**

Pischtusch — **Julius Young**

The Chorus: **Carlee Abschneider, Brenham Sean Adams, Megan Barham, Bonnie Bogovich, Garrett Cordes, Andy Fleming, Leann Fryer, Brett Hardy, Janette Jones, Steven Long, Sarah Manna, Ron McCormack, Chaz Nailor, Jim Newsome, Sydney Pérez, Mindy Rast-Keenan, Lauren Ryan-Holt, Trey Shonkwiler, Ian Stillwell, Stephanie Taylor, Susan Johnston Taylor, Jay Young**

## In This Issue

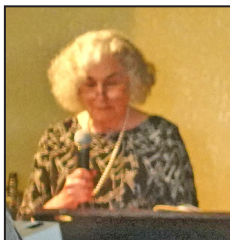
GSA's 45th Anniversary Gala .....	pp. 2-3, 6, 7
Honoring Libby Weed .....	p. 4
Wand'ring Minstrels .....	p. 4
Remembering Chuck Antonie .....	p. 4
Scholarships Offered .....	p. 5
Book Report: <i>Engaged</i> .....	p. 5
Ad Space for <i>The McAdo</i> Playbill .....	p. 5
The Hidden Artists of <i>The McAdo</i> .....	p. 6
<i>The McAdo</i> Show Schedule .....	p. 6
New Hall of Fame Members .....	p. 7



## GSA's 45th Anniversary Gala by Mary Hendren

"The entertainment for the evening," **Diane Radin** remarked, "will amplify... four classic films noir with appropriate songs from the G&S repertoire."

Not having watched the movies before the gala, I read plot synopses and explanations of Hollywood film noir. A few titles from this genre allude to things dark and existential: **Nightmare Alley**, **Dead Reckoning**, **Touch of Evil**, **Killer's Kiss**."



Diane



Janette

From this category, director and narrator **Janette Jones** selected four movies on which to build the evening's entertainment. She challenged herself and colleagues to find in the Gilbert & Sullivan repertoire witty songs to brighten Hollywood's moody themes. And they did it! Bravo, Janette, pianist **Jeanne Sasaki**, singers **Leann Fryer**,

**June Julian**, **Robert LeBas**, and **Josue Hernandez**, and projectionist **Aletha Read**, for a job well done! Each singer performed four selections to Jeanne's accompaniment. I highlighted samples that show Gilbert & Sullivan's comic genius to lighten our perspective, to be an antidote for gloom.



Jeanne



Leann

In the 1944 film **Double Indemnity**, Phyllis, a calculating wife, plots to kill her husband and live off the insurance. Leann's performance of "The sun, whose rays" (**The Mikado**) speaks, perhaps, to the insurance payment Phyllis anticipated.

*I mean to rule the earth,  
as he the sky—  
We really know our worth,  
the sun and I!*

From **Princess Ida**, Robert LeBas performed "If you give me your attention," a song befitting the character of Waldo Lydecker, gossip columnist in **Laura**, a 1944 classic.



Robert

*A charitable action I can skillfully dissect;  
And interested motives I'm delighted to detect;  
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!  
And I can't think why!*



Leann and Josue

In the 1948 movie **Key Largo**, veteran Frank McCloud leaves lovely Nora to take out an evil gangster. Josue Hernandez and Leann Fryer performed "Stay, soldier, stay," paraphrasing Frederic's sense of duty in **The Pirates of Penzance**.

*Tonight I quit these walls,  
The thought my soul appalls,  
But when stern Duty calls,  
I must obey.*

Norma Desmond in the 1950 movie **Sunset Boulevard**, refuses to age gracefully. Her failure to face facts ends in delusion. From **Patience**, June Julian performed "Sad is that woman's lot."

*Fading is the taper waist,  
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,  
And although severely laced,  
Spreading is the figure trim!  
Stouter than I used to be,  
Still more corpulent grow I—  
There will be too much of me  
In the coming by and by!*



In keeping with a tradition started in 2006, we inducted new members into the GSA Hall of Fame, presenting each with a medal and certificate. This year's honorees were **Andy Fleming** (presented by **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** as channeled by **Diane Radin**); **June Julian** (presented by **Bill Hatcher**); **Michael Meigs** (presented by **Dave Wieckowski**); and **Jeanne Sasaki** (presented by **Janette Jones**). Awards and music alternated, keeping the evening moving at an entertaining pace. (See more on the honorees on page 7.)



*Diane wears  
her dad's hat  
as she presents  
Jeffrey's  
comments  
about Andy*

*Bill welcomes June into the  
Hall of Fame*







*Dave presents  
Michael with  
his Hall of  
Fame medal*

For the first time at a gala, a three-course dinner was served to the guests. Chez Zee outdid itself in providing three delicious menu choices, all bountiful, as well as special meals for several people with special requirements. Their décor, tiny lights, and excellent service made this a fine setting for celebrating the 45th anniversary.

The silent auction, overseen by **Saundra Ragona**, provided something for everyone at a wide range of prices and to suit different tastes. Bidding was fierce for some items. Saundra also provided movie-themed silvery centerpieces for the dining tables.



*some silent auction offerings*

*Janette  
extols  
Jeanne's  
contributions*



Congratulations, Janette, Leann, Josue, June, Robert, Jeanne, and Aletha, for "The Musical Evening." Many thanks to the Gala Committee (chair **Robert Kerr**, Janette Jones, Saundra Ragona, Diane Radin, and Dave Wieckowski) for their hard work in preparing this happy occasion.

Diane surprised all, especially **Libby Weed**, in her opening remarks, announcing that in recognition of Libby's contributions to Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, our scholarship program is being renamed in her honor (see page 4).

*more Gala photos by Sue Caldwell, Andy Heilveil,  
and Matt Julian on pages 6 and 7 and at  
[gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com](http://gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com)*



*Hall of Fame members present (front row, l-r): Libby Weed, Michael Meigs, Jeanne Sasaki,  
Andy Fleming, June Julian, Rosemary Russell-Vines, Sue Caldwell  
(back row, l-r) Bill Hatcher, Dave Wieckowski, Janette Jones  
(not shown: Katharine Shields)*

*photo by Matt Julian*



*Gary Hallock wears  
the Hall of Fame medal  
of his late mother,  
Enid Hallock,  
so that she could be  
represented  
at the Gala*





### Honoring Libby Weed

At the GSA 45th Anniversary Gala, **Libby Weed** was surprised by President **Diane Radin's** announcement that henceforth, GSA's scholarship program would be named in her honor. This ties together two important strands in Libby's life: she is a dedicated and respected educator, and she has devoted many years to Gilbert & Sullivan Austin. She is a member of the GSA Hall of Fame, but over and above that, has been an inspired and inspiring leader within GSA. **Gilbert & Sullivan Austin Libby Weed Scholarships** benefit young singers and musicians as they further their music education.



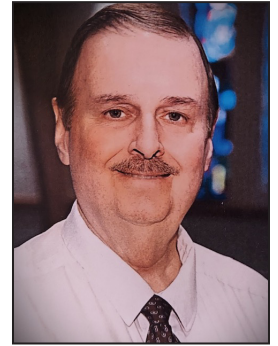
*Wand'ring Minstrels: Marti Mortensen Ahern, Robert L. Schneider, Janette Jones, and Katie Schneider*

### Wand'ring Minstrels

GSA's Wand'ring Minstrels played an Easter Show at Westminster on Sunday, April 17. The show featured popular Gilbert & Sullivan songs and arias.

## Charles Henry (Chuck) Antonie 1951-2022

Anyone who has attended a production by Gilbert & Sullivan Austin during the past two decades is likely to remember a genial man who oversaw the concession table, finding ways year after year to make that operation run more smoothly and efficiently. More often than not, he was overseeing a group of young people who were eager to serve and greet customers.



That kind man was **Chuck Antonie**, and he was directing young people because he was a man given to service. He made a lifelong project of seeking out people with needs, especially young people, and endeavoring to help them. Chuck's volunteerism was driven by a dedication to his faith and a desire to make a real difference in the lives of others. Not surprisingly, his daughter Kelly, a middle school educator in Wisconsin, carries on her father's dedication to volunteerism and community impact where she lives.

Chuck earned a BS in mathematics and an MS in math and physics from Georgia State University. He worked for years in Research and Development for IBM, but his later career was spent in academia, teaching math, physics, and astronomy, most recently at Austin Community College. He was also an avid reader. He was a true gentleman.

Wherever his career took him, Chuck found a G&S society and became involved, including acting in some productions. Here in Austin, he served for a time on the Board of Directors. Those who were present will never forget the delightful "campaign speech" he wrote when he was nominated to serve, a three-verse rendition of "I am the very model of publicity vice-president." His streak of zany humor was a part of him to the very end.

Chuck, we will miss you.

### Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in early June; the deadline for submissions is May 11. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!

### 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/)

## The Gilbert & Sullivan Austin Libby Weed Scholarships Offered

GSA intends to offer \$1,000 scholarships for up to four recipients for the 2022-23 academic year. **At least one of these scholarships will be specifically designated for members of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) community.** 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, defined as the counties of Travis, Williamson, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Blanco, and Burnet)
- 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 May 21, 2022.

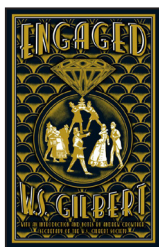
### Sixty-Second Book Reviews, #13



#### **Engaged** by W. S. Gilbert Edited and Introduced by Andrew Crowther Reviewed by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Andrew Crowther is an Englishman who may be regarded as today's foremost W. S. Gilbert scholar. His articles regularly appear in *The W. S. Gilbert Society Journal*, the publication of the organization which he serves as Secretary. His biography of the master, *Gilbert of Gilbert and Sullivan: His Life and Character* (Stroud, Gloucs.: History Press, 2011), was met with critical enthusiasm. And now he has persuaded an English publisher to make Gilbert's comedy *Engaged* (1877) available in a paperback edition for students of theatre and of Gilbert, and, perhaps more importantly, for acting companies who might use it as a script for production.

Mr. Crowther provides "A Brief Introduction" to the dramatist, along with a slightly longer one to *Engaged* itself. Notes at the back clarify references that may be mysterious to the modern reader, and there's even "A Glossary of Stage Scots" written with the help of Derrick McClure, editor of the *Gilbert Journal*, for one of the challenges of this play is the



May 2022

characterization of Scottish folk with their distinctive accent and idiom.

In the last several decades, *Engaged* has been occasionally performed with critical success by professional companies, and with this publication, this director hopes there will be many more on both professional and non-professional stages.

The original publication of *Engaged* led the dramatist to pen what we might call his "credo" for actors and directors producing Gilbertian comedy—including his comic operas:

It is absolutely essential to the success of this piece that it should be played with the most perfect earnestness and gravity throughout. There should be no exaggeration in costume, make-up or demeanor, and the characters, one and all, should appear to believe, throughout, in the perfect sincerity of their words and actions. Directly the actors show that they are conscious of the absurdity of their utterances the piece begins to drag.

I refrain with difficulty from discussing the play itself, feeling that those not familiar with it should experience it for themselves. But here's a teaser: students of Oscar Wilde and admirers of *The Importance of Being Earnest* will find in *Engaged* possible sources of plot and character elements for Wilde's most popular play.

And what better way to become acquainted with Gilbert's most popular play than by reading this welcome 21st-century edition?

Andrew Crowther's edition of W. S. Gilbert's *Engaged* (London: Renard Press Ltd., 2021) is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

### Ad Space Available in the Playbill for *The McAdo*

Consider purchasing an ad for your business, practice, service, etc., in the playbill for *The McAdo*. It will be seen by several thousand G&S aficionados.

Ads come in several different shapes and sizes, all at reasonable rates:

- Full page 4½"x7½" @ \$300,
- Half page 4½"x3¾" @ \$150, and
- Quarter page - vertical or horizontal - 2¼"x3¾" or 4½"x1½" @ \$75.
- The one and only Full Back Page (in color!) can be yours for \$500.

Invite the people with whom you do business to purchase an ad and help support this production.

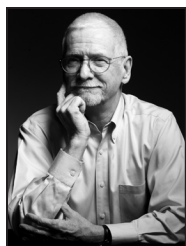
You can see previous playbills on our website ([www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org)): Click Shows, then select a show under Past Productions and click on the Playbill.

To reserve ad space in the playbill for *The McAdo*, or to ask questions and get more information, please contact ad manager Aletha Read at [media@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:media@gilbertsullivan.org).

The deadline for ad commitment (both size and format) is May 5, and final copy is due by May 20.



## The Hidden Artists of *The McAdo* by Michael Meigs



Transporting the grand production from a mythical Japan to a mythical Scotland isn't as simple as substituting those twenty words and phrases, waving a magic wand, and muttering "eye of newt and toe of frog!" This Scottish play is taking on substance through hard work and the clever craftsmanship of many—the thirty-one-member cast, of course, but also that of specialists and technicians whose aim is to dazzle while remaining undetected.

You'll recognize some of the names: **Bill Hatcher**, production manager; **Monica Kurtz**, stage manager; **Michelle Haché**, stage director; Dr. **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, music director.

Others may be less familiar. **Christie Jean-Jacques** choreographed our 2016 *The Gondoliers*, directed by Michelle Haché, memorable especially for overture antics before the curtain that established vivid individual personalities for ensemble members. Michelle and Christie are creating identities for chorus members in *The McAdo* in similar fashion, endowing them with distinctive personalities and roles within the plot. Christie, by the way, directed the very first of our 2021 *Fresh Takes*, her clever reimagining of this show's "Three Little Maids from School."

Set designer **Patrick W. Anthony** has consistently racked up nominations and wins (2012, 2016, 2020) from Austin's B. Iden Payne theatre awards committees and praise from reviewers for lighting designs for many Austin companies, among them Austin Shakespeare, Different Stages, Street Corner Arts, Teatro Vivo, the Vortex, and Zilker Theatre Productions. Expect lighting to play a major part in the visuals for *The McAdo*, particularly since the Worley Barton Theater is now equipped with high-quality projection equipment.

You've already laid eyes on some of the work of **Jennifer Rose Davis**. She created the two graphics for *Fresh Takes* and poster images for *The Sorcerer in Concert 2022* and our "film noir" 45th anniversary gala. Jenn is on board for the graphic designs for *The McAdo*—and more. She has the experience. Her costuming of Zilker Theatre Production's 2018 outdoor staging of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* won a B. Iden Payne (BIP) award. A 2019 BIP award was given for her translation of the magnificent *Cyrano de Bergerac* she directed for her own Archive Theatre Company. Instead of renting from a large costume house, as GSA done in the past, we've commissioned Jenn, **Star Maddox**, and their colleagues at Pilgrimage Design to tailor the costumes of all the cast, done to measure and color-coded to traditional Scottish tartans that identify status and the family groupings defined by Michelle and Christie.

And for the sounds of Scotland, singer/performer/voice-over and dialect specialist **Reagan Murdock**, our Coco, has coached cast members on the rhythms, vowel shifts, and pronunciation of Highland dialect. Those accents cleverly tweak audience expectations; subtly comic, they're a delight to the ears. Murdock himself, tall, sly, with a cascade of shoulder-length hair, appears to have stepped right out of one of the *Highlander* films.

The *Mikado/McAdo* working committee, established in 2018, was enthusiastic to find we could preserve tradition and still transport this favorite score and libretto to another epoch. And now the 2022 production committee is just as pleased to see our own Scottish play materializing before our very eyes.

# The McAdo



*The comic opera you love  
as you've never seen it before!*



2022 Summer Grand Production

Worley Barton Theater, 11908 North Lamar, Austin

Friday	June 10	7:30	Free Gala Buffet after show
Saturday	June 11	2:00	
Saturday	June 11	7:30	Pre-Show Talk (6:30)
Sunday	June 12	2:00	Russell Gregory Day
Thursday	June 16	7:30	Reduced-Price Thursday
Friday	June 17	7:30	Pre-Show Talk (6:30)
Saturday	June 18	2:00	
Saturday	June 18	7:30	
Sunday	June 19	2:00	Children's Activities (1:00)

For ticket information, please visit our website at  
[www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org)

## Scenes from the 45th Anniversary Gala





## Meet the Newest Members of GSA's Hall of Fame

GSA inducted four new members into our Hall of Fame at our 45th Anniversary Gala on April 7th. Andy Fleming, June Julian, Michael Meigs, and Jeanne Sasaki joined a select group of nineteen individuals who have had a very material impact on the success and direction of GSA through their tangible efforts and who have exerted that material impact over a sustained period.

In case you don't already know them, here's a bit about each honoree:

**Andy Fleming** joined our company in 2004 for a production of *The Gondoliers* and has performed in every grand production and several mid-year shows since that time. He became the Chorus Master / Assistant Conductor in 2012. Andy made his conducting debut with almost no warning when **Jeffrey**

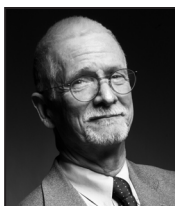


**Jones-Ragona** underwent an emergency appendectomy only three hours before curtain time. During his time with GSA, Andy also earned a Master of Music degree at the University of Texas at Austin and has continued to be an important part of the GSA performing company.



**June Julian** was on the Board of Directors for eight years, serving as president in 2007 and 2008. Under her leadership, the performance values of our shows increased and she improved the professionalism and organization of our operations. With June as producer, our musicales evolved into delightful presentations with catchy titles (remember *Magic and Muggles?*) and well thought-out scripts. She brilliantly performed the title role in *Iolanthe* in 2009 and has had principal roles in other GSA productions. She founded Pinkstone Opera and has been seen in productions by Austin Opera, Austin Chamber Ensemble, Spotlight on Opera, and Zach Scott. Energetic and capable, she has been a major influence on Gilbert & Sullivan Austin for many years.

**Michael Meigs** joined the GSA Board of Directors in 2010, serving as Secretary, Bursar, and most recently as Production Chair. He has been an extremely hard-working board member over that time and has had a profound impact on everything from our production standards to our marketing, talent recruitment, and financial processes. His extensive knowledge of theater and his high standing in the Austin theater community have been incredible assets to GSA, as evidenced by his tremendous work as producer for our recent *Fresh Takes* video series. For more than thirteen years Michael has operated the very well-respected website [CTXLiveTheatre.com](http://CTXLiveTheatre.com), which provides reviews and news of local productions. Michael received a B. Iden Payne Special Recognition award in 2017 for his outstanding contributions to reporting on the arts in Austin.



**Jeanne Dayton Sasaki** has enjoyed serving as a pianist with GSA since 2012, playing for musicales, auditions, rehearsals, and concert productions. Her forty-year career in collaborative piano includes private studio work as well as experience teaching at Butler School of Music at The University of Texas in Austin and Le Chateau de la Voix in Champaign, IL, and performing with Taos Opera Institute in Taos, NM, and One Ounce Opera in Austin.

## Scenes from the 45th Anniversary Gala





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**THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD - MAY 2022**

# The McAdo

## Coming Events

June 10-19 **The McAdo** summer grand production  
show information and cast list ... page 1  
playbill advertising information ... page 5  
background information ... page 6  
performance dates ... page 6

### Gilbert & Sullivan Austin

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

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**Michelle Haché**

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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)

