

THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Diane Radin

A Missing Generation

Who introduced YOU to the works of Gilbert & Sullivan?

Growing up with immigrant parents from Hungary, I did not know anything about Gilbert & Sullivan and their comic operas. Then I met my future husband, Charles. Charles' mother, Matilda, had all the G&S works on LPs (that is long playing records, for those of you too young to remember vinyl records) and he grew up hearing them at home. How Matilda, an immigrant from Greece, knew G&S is a mystery to us and she is no longer around to ask.

On our first visit together to New York City over our Thanksgiving break Charles took me to see a D'Oyly Carte production of **The Pirates of Penzance** and I was hooked. From then on, wherever we lived, we looked for a Gilbert & Sullivan group and attended their performances. We were thrilled to find that Austin had such a group and saw its 1977 production of **Ruddigore** at the Creek Theatre and almost every production thereafter.

I am always so happy to see adults who attend with their children – they want their kids to have the same joyful experience as they themselves have at G&S productions.

When I mention to people younger than about 40 that I am president of Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, they invariably ask what or who that is. After a short explanation, they often express interest in giving GSA's production a chance. And when they do, they are pleasantly surprised and come back for more of the same.

How can we bring in that missing generation? Can you be a G&S ambassador? Might it help to call the shows romantic comedies instead of comic operas?

There is no better show to "hook" others onto G&S than our upcoming production of **H.M.S. Pinafore**. Every song is a hit, the story is easy to follow yet still full of surprises and humor, and for children whose attention span is short, so is this two-act production.

I ask you to reach out to someone among your friends and acquaintances and tell them about G&S and GSA and **H.M.S. Pinafore**. Don't be shy – they will thank you for the information. You will have given them the potential for many future hours of pleasure.

And don't wait any longer to purchase your tickets to **H.M.S. Pinafore**.

See you soon at the MacTheatre at the McCallum Fine Arts Academy.

A Fresh Look at **H.M.S. Pinafore**

by Carol Brown, Director of
H.M.S. Pinafore



For nearly 150 years, **H.M.S. Pinafore** has delighted audiences worldwide—and it's easy to see why. This comic masterpiece from W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan has been staged in countless ways and remains a staple in both theatre history and pop culture. But beyond its toe-tapping tunes and topsyturvy humor lies something deeper.

Gilbert's parody of nautical melodrama wasn't just a clever jab at the Royal Navy—it was a bold, satirical look at the rigid class structures of Victorian society. By placing exaggerated characters into a grounded, believable world—with realistic sets and costumes—Gilbert gave audiences permission to laugh *and* reflect. Underneath the jokes and catchy refrains, we find questions of social status, morality, and even identity.

Many of the characters were inspired by recognizable figures from 19th-century British life: the blustering upper-class officer, the underestimated working-class woman, the hopelessly romantic sailor. Even the name "Pinafore" pokes fun at the era's seriousness. But Gilbert gave these caricatures emotional weight and complexity. The "villain" Dick Deadeye may actually be the one who sees things most clearly, while beloved Little Buttercup quietly holds a secret that could upend the entire ship.

This year's grand production brings fresh energy to the quarter deck. With a custom-built set for the MacTheatre and beautifully detailed costumes, we pay tribute to Gilbert's original vision while also offering something new. You'll hear rarely performed music and restored dialogue, and find subtle nods to real-life naval history that add texture to this timeless tale.

At its heart, **H.M.S. Pinafore** reminds us how arbitrary the barriers between people can be—and how love, with all its courage and chaos, might just level them. Whether you're a lifelong G&S fan or stepping aboard for the first time, we invite you to sail with us and see if love truly levels all ranks.

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Meet Dr. Hannah Neuhauser



Hello, my name is Hannah Neuhauser, and I am an Assistant Stage Manager for **H.M.S. Pinafore**! This is my third year with Gilbert & Sullivan Austin. Although I spend my summers behind the scenes, I take center stage during the school year as an Assistant Instructor in Music History at The University of Texas at Austin. My research lies in the intersection of musicology, literature, and sociology, with a focus on children's media. I am the Co-Chair of the American Musicological Society Childhood and Youth Study Group, as well as a former Co-Chair of Society of American Music (2022-24) and AMS Student Representative (2021-23). When not presenting at conferences like Music and the Moving Image or Children's Literature Association, I volunteer in Austin's artistic circle, either stage managing local concert productions or at Hideout Improv Theatre for their summer camp programs.

My successfully defended dissertation, ***The Hums of Childhood***, tells the story of how pastoralism became the quintessential technique for children's music in musical adaptations of British and American children's literature. If children's literature is never without an ideological dimension, so too, music fortifies the ideological constrictions of Westernized Romantic childhood through pastoral sentimentalism, conveying a societal domestication of analogously white, middle-class children. Drawing on archival research, literary criticism, and theoretical music analysis, my work offers a historical examination of the socio-political factors, cultural influences, and authors' childhood experiences that have shaped not only their literary contributions, but the idyllic ideology embedded in future adaptations from A.A. Milne's song cycle ***The Hums of Pooh*** (1929) to animated musicals like ***Charlotte's Web*** (1973), which continuously reinforces these imaginary bucolic worlds as a collective space for youthful mediation. Thus far, this project has yielded a forthcoming single-authored publication in ***Children's Literature Quarterly***, as well the Rainwater Grant for Innovative projects, which fostered a public children's recital at Little Walnut Creek Library Branch, a UT Library digital spotlight exhibit on Music and Childhood Culture, and my special topics class on Children's Music.

I may not be a local Austinite (I'm from Winston-Salem, North Carolina), but in the past four years, I have built strong ties with twenty of Austin's non-profit organizations, from Ballet Austin to Inversion Ensemble to Congregation Agudas Achim, wearing multiple hats. I see Austin as a culmination of ABC favorites – Arts, Bluebonnets, and Community. I look forward to what I have no doubt will be another amazing production and am ready to set sail!

Join Us!

We encourage you to join GSA to help 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, visit www.gilbertsullivan.org/join/.



Welcome to the MacTheatre, Our New Home for Grand Productions by Dr. Jeffrey Jones-Ragona Music Director and Principal Conductor



As Music Director, I'm very pleased to be in our new theatrical home at McCallum Fine Arts! The MacTheatre provides greater visibility from the pit, a state-of-the-art sound system, roomier dressing facilities, and "wing space." There is also plenty of parking and from the seats, improved sight lines and spacious rows. We can't wait to see you there at the McCallum Fine Arts Academy, 5600 Sunshine Dr. (See map on page 6.) Be sure to reserve your tickets at www.gilbertsullivan.org



***The Yeomen of the Guard* Garner's Austin Theatre Critics Award Nominations for Kristin Bilodeau, Sam Johnson, Trey Deason, and Liz Fisher**

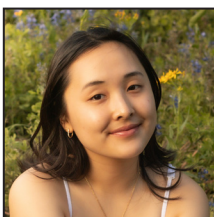
The Austin Theatre Critics Awards announced nominations for the 2024-2025 Season Awards. Our 2024 grand summer production of ***The Yeomen of the Guard*** received four nominations: **Kristin Bilodeau** for Outstanding Actress in a Musical; **Sam Johnson** for Outstanding Actor in a Musical; **Trey Deason** for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Musical; and **Liz Fisher** for Outstanding Director of a Musical. Congratulations to all! Winners of the awards will be announced on Monday, June 9, at The 04 Center.

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 \$1,500 scholarship for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Dr. Robert O. Kerr and Mary Ann Kerr Music Scholarship winners

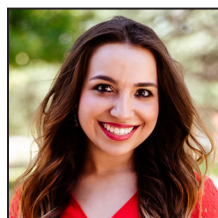
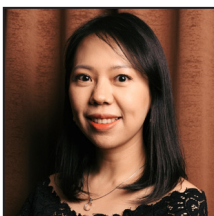
Diane Shim is a sophomore at The University of Texas at Austin. During her freshman year at UT, she became a finalist in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competition, performed in three Butler Opera Center productions, and sang as a soloist with the university chorus. She is committed to using her voice to uplift underrepresented perspectives and help shape a more inclusive future for classical music.



Elli Mendoza will be attending Texas Tech University as a Freshman in the fall, pursuing a double major in Choral Music Education and Vocal Performance. She is a graduate from Vandegrift High School, where she participated in the 2025 All State Treble Choir, and also had the opportunity to student teach her school's Non-Varsity Treble Choir.

GSA Libby Weed Scholarship Program winners

Cindy Tannos is an Indonesian soprano currently pursuing a Master of Music in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy at Texas State University. She earned her Bachelor's degree in South Korea and later completed a certification in opera repertoire in Austria. She served as a lecturer at the Pelita Harapan University Conservatory of Music. There, she produced and directed several opera adaptations, including *The Mikado*.



Mikaela Pace is a soprano from Carrollton, TX, and has been performing and teaching voice in Austin since the Fall of 2023. She completed her Bachelor of Music Performance degree at Texas Tech University (2021) and her Master in Music degree at Baylor University (2023). In June, she will participate as a young artist in the Taos Opera Institute in Taos, New Mexico. Her website is www.mikaelapace.com.

The McAdo in Calgary

The McAdo topped out the 30th-anniversary season of the Morpheus Theatre in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with a three-weekend run in April and May of 2025. On their final Friday evening, director **Sean Anderson**, set designer **Janos Zeller**, and costumer **Christie Johnson** warmly welcomed Austin visitors to the company's vigorous and clever staging of our Scottish version of "your favorite comic opera, as you've never seen it before." The twenty-five-member cast reminded us of Calgary's internationalism and ethnic diversity, and it included both veteran performers and younger ones, some of whom first met G&S in the company's annual "G&S Junior" productions of the past fifteen years.

What a pleasure it was to meet these familiar comic characters embodied by a new set of performers! Leads **Jared Atkin** as Nanky Doug and **Aly Carrigan** as Wynn Somme were enchantingly tuneful and, respectively, lankily comic and winsome. **Gary Silberg's** Pubagh was clever and cunning; **Teresa Byrne** was ferocious as Katishagh. Each of the principals was fully imagined and delivered.



Gary Silberg (Pubagh),
Reid Childry, and
Sarah Nearing (Pretty Jean)

Lively and focused every moment, **Adanna Nowalkowski** in the women's chorus was a joy to watch onstage.



Adanna Nowalkowski,
Mike Johnson (The McAdo),
MJ Batalla, Suzanne Berg



Teresa Byrne (Katishagh)

And there was welcome localization of this ever-sparkling comic work. **Mike Johnson** did *The McAdo* as a painted warrior cheerfully threatening miscreants with being forced to ride on the bumpers of Calgary railway trains. **David Hume** evoked roars of laughter from the Canadian audience by ending *Coco's* "little list" of those who never would be missed by including "those who wish to claim you as their prized fifty-first!"

Thanks to our friends at Morpheus Theatre for sharing the fun of *The McAdo*!

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive in early September; the deadline for submissions will be in early August. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!

News of Members

Byron Arnason, one of our most dedicated Savoyards, has passed away.

In 1995, engineer and geophysicist Byron Arnason spotted a flier for GSA's **The Gondoliers** in his daughter Sophia's school. He thought at the time, "Well that's something I've never done, and it's way out of my comfort zone—I should attend a show."

After seeing the production of **The Gondoliers**, he was hooked! He joined GSA that very year and attended the musicales as well as the summer productions. His indomitable spirit volunteered for anything and everything having to do with the society, from transporting backdrops, props, etc., from St. Stephen's waterlogged theater to their gymnasium when the roof developed a massive leak, to eventually accepting a seat on the Board of Directors from 2005 through 2009 and again in 2011.



*Byron stuffs inserts into the playbills for GSA's 2017 **Ruddigore***

Byron always sat front row, center so that he did not miss one expression. His enthusiastic "BRAVO" and "BRAVA" could be heard throughout the show and after the last curtain call.

Byron loved the dramatic and musical productions every summer and the wonderful team of people who collaborated to make them happen. He attended every single performance each season, usually about 16 shows.

This is all the more remarkable since he moved to Salt Lake City in 2001. But continuing professional activities and GSA called, so he would stay in Austin for three months encompassing a grand production, plus visits for midseason shows. He was an active Board member in the days before Zoom. And he probably set a record for attracting the most out-of-state visitors to a single GSA production: ten family members, from Utah, Oregon, and California, joined him for our 2019 **Iolanthe**.

Byron Thomas Arnason died in his Salt Lake City home on April 26, 2025.



Byron with W. Scott Hayes, Sir Arthur Sullivan's great-grandnephew, and Reba Gillman, GSA's long-time newsletter editor and Byron's fellow Board member



Byron with GSA supporter Stanley Bullard (I) and Pat Turpin, Byron's fellow Board member



*Byron attempts to look as dour as Russell Gregory (2019 **Iolanthe's** Private Willis)*

VIP Tickets

If you would like to show a bit of extra appreciation to Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, consider purchasing VIP level tickets for **H.M.S. Pinafore**. At \$125 each, they go a long way to supporting this production. Reserved parking for VIPs is in the closest parking lot, along Sunshine Drive, near the handicap parking area. Before the show, Stage Manager **Monica Kurtz** will treat you to a backstage tour. And you will be recognized from the stage at the start of the performance you attend.

GSA appreciates all its audience members, with special gratitude to its VIP ticket holders.



scenes from staging rehearsals



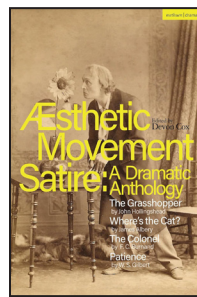
Æsthetic Movement Satire: A Dramatic Anthology Edited by Devon Cox

Reviewed by **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**



Patience; or, Bunthorne's Bride is the most lasting theatrical work that poked fun of the artistic craze in late-Victorian England known as "The Æsthetic Movement." But *Patience* was not the only dramatic work that satirized this mania. Devon Cox has rescued from obscurity three of *Patience*'s predecessors, added to them the Gilbert libretto, and provided an excellent introduction, interesting illustrations, and footnotes to the texts, making the four plays available in a welcome book for theatrical mavens in general and Savoy opera scholars in particular.

The plays are *The Grasshopper* by John Hollingshead, *Where's the Cat?* by James Albergy, and *The Colonel* by F. C. Burnand. All three playwrights had "connections" to the Gilbert & Sullivan partnership: Hollingshead produced the first joint G&S work, *Thespis* (1871); Albergy wrote the libretto for an one-act operetta, *The Spectre Knight*, which accompanied early London performances of *The Sorcerer* (1877) and *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878); and Burnand adapted J. M. Morton's farce *Box and Cox* into *Cox and Box* (1866), Arthur Sullivan's first comic opera.



My perception is that the first two of these plays are remembered only by theatrical scholars specializing in the Victorian theatre, while Burnand's *The Colonel* is often mentioned by Savoy historians as a precursor of *Patience*—but never more than in passing. Indeed, Gilbert felt called upon to proclaim that his work on *Patience* began months before *The Colonel* ran, with great success, on the London stage to avoid a challenge to his originality.

So Devon Cox has done us a great service in gathering the texts in convenient format for interested scholars, in providing a very helpful introduction and illustrations, and in providing revealing footnotes explaining now-arcane references in the four texts to the members of "the inner brotherhood," their lives, their works, and the mania they inspired.

As for the plays themselves, with the exception of *Patience* I hope never to have to read them again. There are two good reasons, it seems to me, they have escaped even the compliment of revival in academic theatres: large casts and inconsequential plots. All three, like so many Victorian plays, were adapted from other works, usually French. Only Burnand's *The Colonel* was written with an eye on the Æsthetic Movement; the other two seem to have had topical references added to pre-existing translations. Indeed, the footnotes to *Where's the Cat?* reveal that many "æsthetic references" do not appear in the Lord Chamberlain's copy of the play, submitted for approval before production, suggesting that they were added in rehearsal.

Dame Rumour whispers that *Patience* may be returning to Austin in the near future, and anyone of a scholarly bent will find

this book of interest. The essential readings, however, are the Introduction, the footnotes to the plays, and, of course *Patience; or, Bunthorne's Bride*, the last text in the book and perhaps the last word on "Æsthetic Movement Satire." It is certainly the most effective.

Devon Cox's *Æsthetic Movement Satire* (London: Methuen, 2024) is available in print and digital formats from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Support for GSA Grows

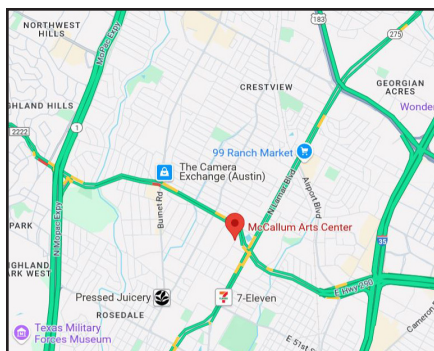
While funding cuts at the National Endowment for the Arts are causing other arts companies to end some programs or close entirely, strong support from GSA supporters has allowed our company to strengthen its own operations. The Still Water Foundation has again generously provided a \$25,000 grant to support the annual grand production, and the McCallum Fine Arts Academy of the Austin Independent School District has worked closely with us to make it possible for us to perform in the 500-seat MacTheatre. The newly established Bennett Raccach Charitable Fund, carrying out its mission of supporting Austin arts to make a difference, also granted \$25,000 for GSA's 2025-2026 season. With these donations and several others from supporters who wish to remain anonymous, GSA is employing additional highly skilled arts practitioners.

For example, **Julie Fiore**, founder of Austin's One Ounce Opera and acknowledged expert in arts promotion, is guiding and reshaping GSA's marketing and publicity. She's a creative strategist, cultural marketer, content producer, and arts copywriter. Perhaps even more important, Julie is a builder of strong, loyal communities.

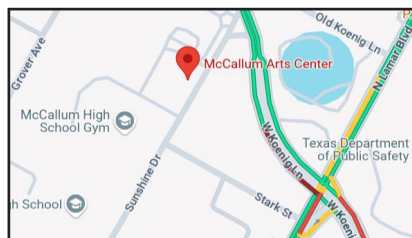


You probably know **Barb Jernigan**'s work, as she's provided the designs for our annual productions' t-shirts and art posters for over a decade. We're lucky that Barb knows the G&S canon and is a solid fan. She's clever, quick, and prolific. Despite relocating to Oregon with husband Russ last year, through the miracle of modern technology, Barb continues to provide graphics for our posters, promos, postcards, tickets, and playbill.





*how to get to
the MacTheatre*



Coming Events

June 13-22 **H.M.S. Pinafore** summer grand production

Fri	June 13	7:30 pm	Free Gala Buffet after this opening night performance
Sat	June 14	7:30 pm	Pre-show Director Talk
Sun	June 15	2:00 pm	Pre-show Children's Activities (Father's Day)
Thu	June 19	7:30 pm	Reduced Price Thursday
Fri	June 20	7:30 pm	
Sat	June 21	2:00 pm	Pre-show Director Talk show ASL interpreted
Sun	June 22	2:00 pm	Closing show

*All performances are at our new location,
the MacTheatre at McCallum Fine Arts Academy,
5600 Sunshine Drive, Austin 78756.*



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THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD - JUNE 2025

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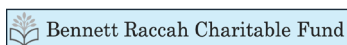
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This project is funded and supported in part by grants from Bennett Raccah Charitable Fund, the Still Water Foundation, and the Texas Commission on the Arts, and in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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

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