

THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Diane Radin

Why all the interest in G&S?

Have you been reading the book reviews that our dear friend **Rafe MacPhail** has been contributing to every issue of *The Austin Savoyard*? What amazes me is that they keep coming. Is there no end

to the interest in Gilbert and Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte and company? Gilbert and Sullivan's collaboration started in 1871 and ended with *The Grand Duke* in 1896. A twenty-five-year partnership that ended 130 years ago!! And yet people are still digging up the bodies.

I asked Perplexity if there are books about other famous composer-lyricist pairs that I admire. Here's what Perplexity came up with:

Rodgers and Hammerstein - two books about them (Note that there is a recent movie about Rodgers' first collaborator, Lorenz Hart – *Blue Moon* – which I highly recommend).

Ira and George Gershwin - two books.

Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein - 'most in depth accounts appear in biographies and scholarly collections rather than in a single stand alone book solely about "Bernstein & Sondheim".'

Yip Harberg collaborated with lots of composers, but I suspect many of our readers do not even know what he wrote – check him out and you will be impressed.

All of which makes it even more amazing that G&S have continued to be of so much interest that authors keep finding new angles at which to observe them.

Of course, Rafe does not praise every one of the books about G&S. The review in this issue is a case in point. Is there a university specializing in Ph.D. dissertations about Gilbert & Sullivan? Are publishers hoping to make a killing with a G&S best-seller?

I scratch my head in amazement. But of course, the works of G&S still captivate and entertain modern audiences, so perhaps audience members are intrigued about them once they get hooked on the topsy-turvy libretti and memorable music.

And there is no better show to whet your appetite to learn more about G&S than our summer grand production of *Patience, or Bunthorne's Bride*. Even the title is topsy-turvy because, spoiler alert, poor Bunthorne does not get the bride he desires after all.

There is a good synopsis of the show and its context in contemporary Victorian society in Wikipedia; search for "Patience (opera)". Although not as well-known as *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, or *The Mikado*, *Patience* deserves your attention and will easily earn your high praise. Its two acts are filled with amusing characters, beautiful and clever

songs, and gorgeous period costumes all accompanied by an 18-piece orchestra.

If you were at our annual meeting, you had a sneak preview of three songs from *Patience* in the *Love is in the Air* program. Bring the family and friends to meet the cast and crew of *Patience* at the free picnic at the Vortex on March 7 and you just might get to hear some *Patience* melodies there, too. And a few more *Patience* songs will be part of the *Mezzo Madness & Other Follies* salon concert on April 12.



Picnic with Patience Players

by Monica Kurtz

You're Invited: *Patience* Cast & Crew Picnic

Join us for a relaxed, family-friendly afternoon celebrating the wonderful cast and crew of *Patience* by Gilbert & Sullivan!

We're hosting a cheerful picnic on **March 7** from **2 to 5 pm** at **The Vortex** in Austin, and everyone is welcome. (See map on page 6.)

This is a chance to meet the artists and behind-the-scenes magic-makers of our upcoming grand production, share some good food, and enjoy an easygoing time together. It's a **potluck**, so feel free to bring a favorite dish or treat to share—totally optional, but always appreciated.

We'll have **activities for families**, plenty of space to mingle, and that unmistakable Gilbert & Sullivan spirit in the air. Bring your picnic blanket, your curiosity, and your appetite for camaraderie.

We can't wait to celebrate *Patience* with you—see you at the picnic!



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Love was in the Air

by Janet Forman

At the Annual Meeting and Musicale on Sunday, January 11, members gathered to celebrate another year of music and camaraderie as we



Diane Radin

celebrate our 50th year of presenting Gilbert & Sullivan to Austin. President **Diane Radin** welcomed us and conducted the annual Board of Directors elections. Congratulations to new and returning Board members. (See article on page 4 to meet the new Board members, and the list at the bottom of page 3 for the list of members.)

This year's opening musicale embraced the theme **Love Is in the Air**, a fitting tribute to the many shades of love so delightfully explored and expressed in the works of Gilbert & Sullivan. From romance to friendship to playful satire, the program showcased how richly their music captures the human heart. Janette Jones served as the program's Master of Ceremonies.



Janette Jones

You can see the video of this production for free on our YouTube channel. This show is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9wH086hzEA



Rebecca: *If we're weak enough to tarry*



Susan: *Here's a how-de-do!*



Sam: *I know a youth*



Leann: *I know a youth*



Jeffrey: *A magnet hung in a hardware shop*



Andy: *A man who would woo a fair maid*



Rosa: *Rapture, rapture!*



Haley: *Dear friends, take pity*



Garrett: *Titwillow*

The theme was brought vividly to life by a talented ensemble of performers: **Garrett Cordes, Andy Fleming, Leann Fryer, Haley Malin, Rosa Mondragon Harris, Rebecca Harris Tulbah, Sam Johnson, Jeffrey Jones-Ragona, and Susan Johnston Taylor** provided 20 solos, duets, and trios with sensitive and spirited accompaniment by **Jeanne Sasaki**. Their performances were a true delight, and the audience was thoroughly charmed.

The afternoon concluded, as tradition happily dictates, with everyone joining together to sing "Hail Poetry," our salute to Gilbert & Sullivan, followed by an enthusiastically rendered "Now to the banquet we press." This set the perfect tone for enjoying the many delicious offerings provided by attendees, donor sponsors, and the Board of Directors.

Thank you to all who contributed to making this celebration such a memorable occasion. Love was truly in the air.



the audience joins the performers in singing our traditional closing songs of *Hail, Poetry!* and *Now to the banquet we press*



Haley, Sam, Chorus: *Dear friends, take pity*



pianist Jeanne Sasaki



to the banquet we pressed!



Rosa, Women Chorus: *Oh, foolish fay*



GSA 2026-27 Board of Directors elected at the Annual Meeting:

(front, l-r): Janet Forman, Leann Fryer, Hannah Neuhauser,
 Diane Radin, Sue Caldwell, June Julian

(back, l-r): Aletha Read, Janette Jones, Loel Graber,
 David Wieckowski, Bill Hatcher, Linda Johnson

not present: Monica Kurtz, Michael Meigs

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Patience Cast

Patience – **Sarah Hernandez**
Colonel Calverley – **Ayden Crocker**
Major Murgatroyd – **Arthur DiBianca**
Lt., The Duke of Dunstable – **Brian Minnick**
Reginald Bunthorne – **Aaron Matijasic**
Archibald Grosvenor – **Ashton McKenzie**
Lady Angela – **Paige Patrick**
Lady Saphir – **Annisha Mackenzie**
Lady Ella – **Carlee Abschneider**
Lady Jane – **Jessica Doklovic**

The Chorus: **Brenham Sean Adams,**
Alisa Black, Patricia Combs,
Garrett Cordes, Kayla Ehrlich,
Andy Fleming, Esther Hernandez,
Kat Larkin, Kaley McDonald,
Francis José Nieves, Jeff Phillips,
Paul Provence, Amy Selby,
Alaithia Velez, Jay Young, Julius Young

A Note from Patience Director Carol Brown

This year's auditions brought the largest turnout in Gilbert & Sullivan Austin's history, a meaningful milestone as we step into our 50th anniversary season. We were thrilled to welcome back many of our cherished GSA performers, artists whose talent and commitment have helped shape the company over decades, while also discovering an exciting wave of new performers joining us for the first time. Drawing from both longtime collaborators and artists new to GSA, this cast reflects the strength, generosity, and creative spirit of our local theatre scene.

We look forward to bringing this new production of *Patience* this summer, which will be filled with sparkling wit, bold comedy, and musical range; a celebration not just of 50 years of GSA, but of the vibrant community that continues to make it possible.

GSA Offers Scholarships for 2026-27

GSA is pleased to offer \$1,500 scholarships for up to four music students in the 2026-27 academic year: two each of the *Dr. Robert O. and Mary Ann Kerr Music Scholarship*, named in honor of two devoted, longtime members of GSA, and the *Gilbert & Sullivan Austin Libby Weed Scholarship*, funded by GSA and by the proceeds from Ralph MacPhail, Jr.'s *Only Idle Chatter*.

Recipients will also be invited as honored guests to our grand production of *Patience* in June, where they will be recognized during the curtain speech.

Applicants must: be at least a graduating high school senior; be pursuing a professional career in music or musical theater (preferably vocal performance); be enrolled or enrolling in

GSA Board Welcomes New Members

As is our GSA tradition, we held our required Annual Meeting at the start of the January musicale. Board nominees present were introduced. The board candidates were elected unanimously. There are two new members on the board:

Dr. Hannah Neuhauser received her Ph.D. in musicology from The University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on music and childhood. Her forthcoming book project, *Golden Melodies* (University of Mississippi Press), explores how nineteenth century philosophy impacted music for children and the ideology of childhood itself. Excerpts of her work have been transformed into a single-authored publication in *Children's Literature Quarterly*, a children's recital for Austin Public Libraries, a spotlight digital exhibit on music and childhood at UT Libraries, and a special topics course dedicated to children's music and culture. In her spare time, she volunteers as an improv theatre teacher and stage manager in Austin's artistic community. She has served as assistant stage manager for our last three summer productions.



Loel Graber has been a member of GSA since 1982 and has held several offices on the Board of Directors, including Treasurer and Vice President. He has appeared in GSA productions of *The Gondoliers* and *Ruddigore*, and *A Gilbert & Sullivan Sampler*. He has sung in numerous GSA soirees. His first G&S performance (*The Gondoliers*) was in Zaria, Nigeria, in 1973. Loel came to Austin in 1978 to participate in the technology economy and worked as a systems programmer for 44 years. Loel has sung in the Conspirare Symphonic Choir for over 25 years, and has sung in at least 5 other community choruses. He served on the B. Iden Payne awards committee for many years. Loel's retirement identity is player of board games.

Note: We do not elect officers of the Board at the Annual Meeting; they are chosen by the Board members at their first meeting after the Annual Meeting. Officers remain the same this year as last, except that Leann Fryer has the added role of President Elect, since Diane Radin is term-limited as President; Leann will work closely with Diane to prepare. See the full list of Board members at the bottom of page 6.

a professional course of study in the United States; and have resided, studied, or performed in the Central Texas area (Travis and adjacent counties).

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

To apply, please visit our website, www.gilbertsullivan.org, select **About**, then **Scholarships**. Applications must be submitted by **April 24, 2026**.

The Ultimate Gilbert & Sullivan Quiz Book

By **Huw Watkins**

Reviewed by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

I found this little book under the Christmas tree. I can't say I was surprised for, truth to tell, I gave Santa some help in making it possible for it to come my way. By tradition my Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a Savoy opera-related gift.

So with delight I opened the book and began to test my knowledge, but what I had was a topsy-turvy experience, for reading this book quickly became an exercise in separating legitimate questions with accurate answers from the wrong-headed ones with either incorrect answers or no correct answers at all.

I suppose there are "300+ Trivia Questions" between its covers as advertised (I've not counted them), but a huge percentage of them are downright laughable. Some examples:

"In H.M.S. *Pinafore*, who turns out to be Sir Joseph Porter's true nephew? a) Ralph Rackstraw b) Captain Corcoran c) Dick Deadeye d) Josephine." The author's answer: **"a) Ralph Rackstraw"**—revealed as noble-born, while Captain Corcoran is of humble stock." We know a lot about Sir Joseph's female relatives, but the males?

"Which song includes the chorus line 'What never? Well hardly ever'? a) 'A British Tar' b) 'I Am the Captain of the *Pinafore*' c) 'When I Was a Lad' d) 'Carefully on Tiptoe Stealing'" The author's answer: **"c) 'When I Was a Lad'"**—the chorus replies 'What never? Well hardly ever!'" (Take that, Captain Corcoran!)

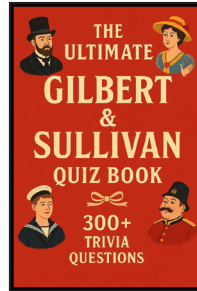
"Which later Gilbert & Sullivan opera reuses the leap-year joke? a) *The Gondoliers* b) *Ruddigore* c) *Iolanthe* d) *Princess Ida*" The author's answer: **"c) *Iolanthe*"**—Another opera with playful jokes about law and logic." Pardon?

"Who is the title character, *Patience*? a) A shepherdess b) A maid c) A poet d) A noblewoman" The author's answer: **"a) a shepherdess"**—Simple and innocent in contrast to the pretentious aesthetes." I thought she was a maid—a dairy maid.

"Which patter number [from *The Gondoliers*] lampoons political office? a) 'When the idle poor are clad in silk and satin' b) 'A More Humane Mikado' c) 'I've Got a little list' d) 'I am the very model of a Modern Major-General'" The author's answer is **"a) 'When the idle poor are clad in silk and satin'"**—Comic song satirizing office and social class"—and even a Google search doesn't turn up the location of such a song—anywhere.

"Who is the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*? a) Samuel b) Major-General Stanley c) Frederic d) The Pirate King" The author's answer (surprise!) is **"d) The Pirate King"**!

"Who is Sir Despard Murgatroyd? a) Robin Oakapple in his true identity b) A supernatural fairy c) The Lord Chancellor d) The Pirate King." The author's answer: **"a) Robin Oakapple in**



his true identity—He becomes Sir Despard when revealed." But how does Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd fit into this?

"Which patter song does Sir Despard sing? a) 'When the night wind howls' b) 'I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General' c) 'When I Went to the Bar' d) 'A More Humane Mikado'" The author's answer (but don't tell Sir Roderick!): **"a) 'When the night wind howls'"**—Sir Despard's famous ghostly patter number." (And is it a "patter number"?)

[This is a tough one.] "Which opera features Venetian gondoliers who unexpectedly become royalty? a) *Patience* b) *The Gondoliers* c) *Ruddigore* d) *Iolanthe*." I'll leave it to you to puzzle that one out.

"Which opera is the last full collaboration between Gilbert & Sullivan? a) *The Mikado* b) *The Gondoliers* c) *Ruddigore* d) *Utopia, Limited*" The author's answer: **"d) *Utopia, Limited*"**—Their final full-scale collaboration." Here and elsewhere, the author displays no knowledge of *The Grand Duke*.

"Which opera was subtitled 'The Orphan and the Pirates'? a) *The Pirates of Penzance* b) *Patience* c) *Iolanthe* d) *Ruddigore*" The author's answer is **"a) *The Pirates of Penzance*"**—Frederic is the titular orphan apprentice." The question is unanswerable, since no G&S show bore that subtitle. *Pirates*, briefly subtitled "Love and Duty," was thereafter subtitled "The Slave of Duty."

As the book nears its end, the questions become even stranger. "Round 12—Famous Cameos & Guest Appearances" contains 20 mostly poorly worded questions, many of which are all but impossible to answer. In "Round 13—Songs and Duets" we're told that Captain Corcoran sings "A British Tar"; that "Braid the Raven Hair" is a duet sung by Ko-Ko and Yum-Yum; that *Patience* features a duet called "A Dance in the Old Fashioned Way" sung by *Patience* and Grosvenor; and—well, I've marked five more, but I'm about out of space, so I can't even comment on the howlers in Round 14—Famous Quotes and Sayings.

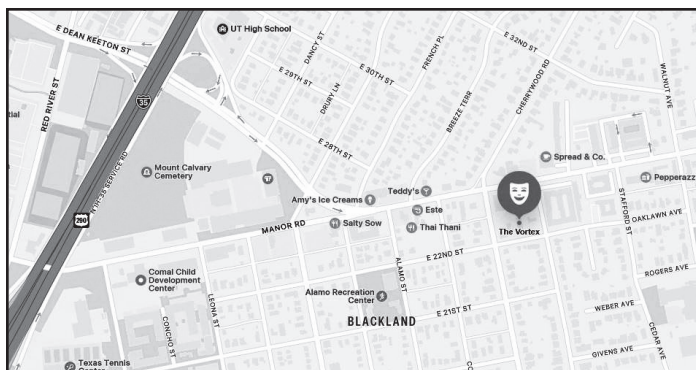
I know for a fact that Santa acquired ***The Ultimate Gilbert & Sullivan Quiz Book*** from Amazon. It is now listed there as "September 1, 2025" (which is the first edition date) and "Revised & Updated Edition January 2026"; it's unclear which version is being offered. It is doubtful that the "revised" version is a significant improvement. There's really no reason to find a copy, unless one is a "completist" or just enjoys laughing at a truly mess of a book, which may have been assembled by Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Ignorance?).

NOTE: My copy of the "Revised and Updated Edition" arrived just as this issue was going to press, and I've not had time to read it. It appears to be a thorough revision. Please "watch this space" in the next issue for what I hope will be a brief but positive report on this edition.

*Reminder: You can see the **Savoyard** with all the pictures in glorious color in the newsletter archive on our website, www.gilbertsullivan.org*

Send Us Your News!

The next newsletter should arrive by the end of March; the deadline for submissions is March 9. Please send your news to news@gilbertsullivan.org. Thanks!



*map to The Vortex, 2307 Manor Road
half-mile east of I-35
between Chestnut and Maple Streets*



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

Coming Events

- March 7 ***Patience Picnic***
Saturday, 3-5 pm
The Vortex Theatre
- April 12 ***Mezzo Madness & Other Follies***
Sunday, 3 pm
Private home
- June 12-21 ***Patience*** summer grand production
McCallum Fine Arts Center

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/.

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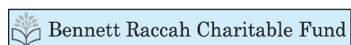
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