

THE AUSTIN SAVOYARD



Patience: Performance, Perfection, and Perspective

by Carol Brown

This year's production of *Patience* is set in a storybook, stylized world around Castle Bunthorne; a perfectly imperfect setting to imagine a brilliant, self-absorbed, and

hollow man who invites devotion from the noble women who flock to him because of his eloquent flair for all things aesthetic and poetic, but who is utterly uninterested in any of it. The monotony of all of this luxury and melodrama leads him to seek challenge beyond his perfectly picturesque surroundings and set his sights on the village milkmaid, Patience. Why? Perhaps because she speaks plainly, finds the entire aesthetic craze to be nonsense, and is entirely unimpressed by him which, in Bunthorne's world, makes her the most interesting person in it. She, in turn, reconciles that loving someone so complicated and imperfect must be an entirely selfless act, and is therefore worthy of being deemed "true love," which can, of course, only be found through sacrifice and suffering.

Bunthorne is not without devotion when we meet him, though; there are the Rapturous Maidens led by the devoted Lady Angela, who are true believers (in a sense); fiercely loyal to whichever poet is currently trending, and all perfectly willing to abandon one obsession the moment a more compelling one presents itself. This doesn't bode well for the 35th Dragoon Guards, who return from duty find they have been dropped by the maidens for the next best thing. These brave, sincere men know exactly who they are (save for Lieut. the Duke of Dunstable; green but already an officer, who seeks to experience a less privileged life because he desperately wants to feel "real"), and that suddenly becomes a disadvantage when battling with artifice and lilies.

And there is Lady Jane: the matriarch of the maidens, steadfast, wise, and dismissive of fads, who loves Bunthorne not because she has been swept up in all of the aesthetic craze, but because she genuinely sees him: the posturing, the vanity, the hollow charm, and that small flicker of truth underneath it all. She may be his best match, if only he can realize it before that flicker dies out.

In the midst of Bunthorne's scheming to woo everyone (but mostly Patience), Archibald Grosvenor arrives as his opposite; modest, mild, and magnetically likeable (oh, and his past provides an added plot twist), and proceeds to steal every follower in the room without appearing to try, when sadly all he wants is to connect with Patience, who sees him as just too plainly perfect (and which he cannot deny). Whether that makes him more authentic than Bunthorne, or simply better at hiding it is left to the audience to decide.

Everyone, it seems, is performing something: devotion, sophistication, normalcy, desire; a perfectly curated image of

themselves. Everyone, that is, except the milkmaid watching quietly from the edge of it all, for whom none of it makes any particular sense. But Patience doesn't argue with any of them. She simply seeks truth without calculation and, in doing so, holds up a mirror to the elites around her who find her search for truth and authenticity utterly baffling. The question is, will they all be able to stop performing, reject the façade of perfection, and find true love and happiness, or will they settle with what feels right to them in the moment?



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Diane Radin

Down the *Patience* Rabbit Hole

As I sat thinking about what I should say in this column, my husband suggested I ask Perplexity for some ideas. For the next few hours, I tumbled through the internet rabbit hole learning all sorts of obscure (to me at least) tidbits about this show that I loved even before being enlightened. I hope this column will enrich your appreciation for *Patience* rather than try your patience.

To me, the most interesting bits come from Peter Hilliard. He compares *Patience* and *The Music Man*. For Savoyards, it is a given that G&S were the precursors of modern musical theater and here are more reasons. (Remember GSA's show *Gilbert & Sullivan and Sondheim* in 2023?)

First he compares G&S sopranos with ones in more modern shows.

Gilbert's Soprano leads make for an interesting type. They are not tragic heroines, nor particularly crafty as in the Italian operatic models. They also aren't the strong, assertive type who command the stage and tell everyone what to do. They are usually a little 'off' from the rest of the ladies in town, but they're generally right about the situation at hand. This makes the G&S soprano heroine a model for some of the sopranos in American musical theatre, like ... Marian in *The Music Man*.

Hilliard contends that "the River City Ladies are the lovesick maidens of *Patience*, transplanted to America."

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Mezzo Madness

by Sue Caldwell

About sixty Gilbert & Sullivan fans assembled at the beautiful home (almost a mansion!) of **Ion Ratui and Simone Scumpia** for our spring fundraiser, **Mezzo Madness**. President **Diane Radin** welcomed us. GSA's music director, **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, introduced our talented accompanist, **Andrea Pobanz**, joining GSA for the first time. Jeffrey worked with six mezzos to



celebrate a sometimes-overlooked group in a field favoring lead sopranos. He quoted his first voice teacher, Twyla Smith: "Mezzos and sopranos have about the same range; the difference is sopranos live above the staff and mezzo just like to pop up and say hi occasionally."



Bonnie Bogovich set the tone for the program with Heisler and Goldrich's "Alto's Lament." While sopranos soar with beautiful melodies, she complains, altos parts tend to be monotone. She



gave examples of the dull alto line from a number of songs, including **Oklahoma's** title number, "Memory" from **Cats**, and "Three little maids from school are we." **Hillary Schranze** entered as Mad Margaret from **Ruddigore**, performing her signature "Cheerily carols the lark." She perfectly captured poor Meg's broken mind, flitting from thought to thought.



June Julian embodied the Duchess of Barataria in "On the day when I was wedded" from **The Gondoliers**. Beginning demurely, she switched to tricornered hat and riding crop to explain how she tamed her husband (using her husband Matt, seated front and center, as



stand-in for the Duke). As she hit a high note on the last line, Bonnie came in to tsk, "no soprano notes!"

Jessica Doklovic sang the highly amusing "Tell me the truth about love" from Benjamin Britten's **Cabaret Songs**. It plaintively asks, "When it comes, will it come without warning just as I'm picking my nose? O tell me the truth about love!" **Patricia Combs** sang "Pauline's Aria" from Tchaikovsky's **The Queen of Spades**. I didn't understand the Russian, only the emotions reflected in them. Patricia tells me the words reflect Pauline's happy youth, but then: "Love, seen in

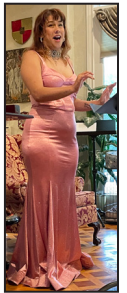


golden dreams, promised me happiness, But what was to be my portion in those happy spots? A grave...."



golden dreams, promised me happiness, But what was to be my portion in those happy spots? A grave...."

Annisha Mackenzie followed with the delightful "Were I thy bride" as Phoebe from **The Yeomen of the Guard**. Her sprightly, teasing manner would surely succeed in its purpose of distracting her would-be suitor. June Julian returned with the melancholy "Losing my mind" from Stephen Sondheim's **Follies**. It includes the repeated, "You said you loved me, Or were you just being kind? Or am I losing my mind?"



Mad Margaret (Hillary Schranze) came back on the arm of Sir Despard Murgatroyd (Jeffrey Jones-Ragona) to provide some of the dialogue from **Ruddigore**, including creating a code word to pull Margaret out of relapses; instead of "Basingstoke" they selected "Pflugerville"! Then they sang and danced "I once was a very abandoned person."



Bonnie Bogovich provided Lady Psyche's song, "A lady fair of lineage high," from **Princess Ida**. She donned a top hat, white gloves, and moustache to signify the ape's hopeless attempt to rise to the level of the lady. Patricia Combs as Katisha lamented that she was "Alone, and yet alive!" (from **The Mikado**), having lost her prey, er, hoped-for love.



Jessica Doklovic, who will be seen as Lady Jane in our summer production of **Patience**, sang Jane's aria, "Silvered is the raven hair." She presents a paradox: "Little will be left of me In the coming by and by," yet also "There will be too much of me in the coming by and by!" Annisha Mackenzie provided "*Chacun a son goût*" ("To each his own taste") from **Die Fledermaus** by Johann Strauss II. The song, in German despite the French title, is a celebration by a woman of her free-spirited, and inebriated, life, which she lives precisely to suit her own tastes.



For the grand finale, the six singers and our wonderful accompanist donned cat's ears for Rossini's "*Canzona per sei gatti*" ("Song for Six Cats"). Well, it's technically "*Duetto buffo di due gatti*" ("Humorous duet for two cats"). But as the lyrics consist of the repeated word "meow," expanding the song to a sextet of cats all striving to top one another worked beautifully!

Dr. Scumpia invited us to tour their beautiful gardens before we moved to the feast that awaited in the large kitchen area, and a few did, but the weather did not cooperate – it was soon raining heavily. We consoled ourselves with scrumptious meat

Gilbert & Sullivan Austin presented *Mezzo Madness* on April 12, 2026

photos by Andrea Pobanz, Bill Hatcher, and Sue Caldwell see more at gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com

pies, sausage rolls, and sandwiches; cheese platters, fruit bowls, and veggie trays; assorted cookies; and Diane's spectacular trifle (barely a trace left). **Aletha Read** and **Tom Holmes** ran the wine and soft drink bar; hot coffee and tea were available. We wandered about, chatting with old friends and meeting new ones, enjoying the spacious covered patio. It was an afternoon to remember!



potato pies, meat pies, and sausage rolls; a cheese board; and a table laden with sandwiches, fruit, and an assortment of desserts including the trifle



the audience awaits the show, in the main salon (top) and the the entry hall



the beverage service area was popular

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



many of us wandered onto the patio, sheltered from the rain



formal and informal cast photos



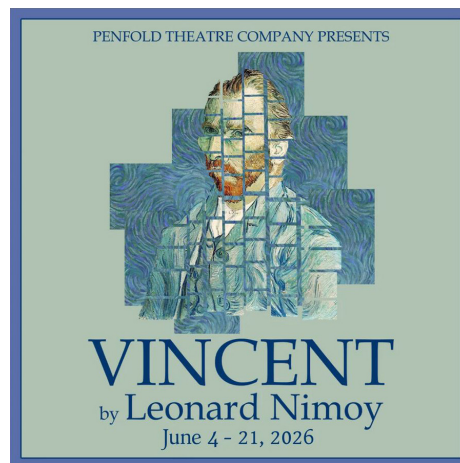
Productions from our friends

Austin Playhouse



June 2026

Penfold Theatre Round Rock



The Austin Savoyard

The Alchemy Theatre May 29 - June 14



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

He also notes that early in both *The Music Man* and *Patience* there is:

a flim-flam artist who is conning most of the people in a small town amusingly. Both shows then have the con artist comically attempting to woo the one woman in town who doesn't return their affection, women who are in both cases totally bewildering to all the other women in town. Both are rejected amusingly. *Patience* says: "I am quite certain that, under any circumstances, I couldn't possibly love you." Bunthorne: "Oh, you think not?" *Patience*: "I'm quite sure of it. Quite sure. Quite." In both sequences, the young lady is counseled about the joys of love by an older woman, and in the close of each sequence, the young woman agrees that under the right circumstances, love is a great idea.

In Victorian England, the flim-flam artist needs poetry and intellectual artifice to bamboozle the ladies.

In 1912 in *The Music Man*'s America, the con artist appeals to their irrational cultural fears.

In England, the heroine longs for the simplicity of an unaffected childhood romance.

In America, the heroine wants someone who has read a book.

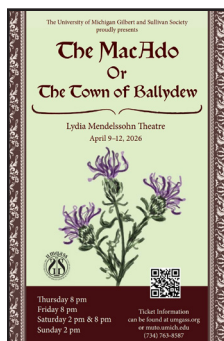
This comparison gave me a greater appreciation for both *The Music Man* and *Patience*.

See you at *Patience*!

P.S. Hilliard's entire, very long and detailed guide to *Patience* is at peterhilliard.wordpress.com/2015/06/

McAdo/MacAdo/"MacDo" Season

The GSA reinterpretation of *The Mikado* marches on! The long established University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society (UMGASS) presented *The MacAdo* April 9 - 12 at the University Union with a cast of students from The University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. Director/faculty advisor **Lori Gould** and GSA production coordinator **Michael Meigs** spoke to a gathering after the Saturday matinee, and vocal director **Daniel Peisach** recorded and transcribed the session. UMGASS chose to pronounce the clan leader's name as "The MacDo," mirroring a Scottish term of affection. The Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan Society of East Sussex, on the English coast south of London, stages *The McAdo* at the Royal Hippodrome Theatre May 22 - 24, and the Madison Savoyards, associated with the University of Wisconsin, perform *The McAdo* July 29 - August 9.



GSA Scholarships Awarded

Each spring, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin awards 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 \$2,000 scholarship for the 2026-2027 academic year.

GSA Libby Weed Scholarship Program winners

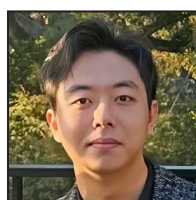
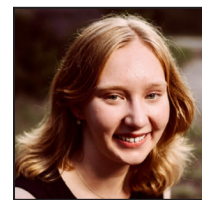
Ashton McKenzie has Masters in both Vocal Performance and Choral Conducting from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN. This summer, he will be appearing as Grosvenor in our production of *Patience*. This fall, he will be a second-year graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a DMA in Vocal Pedagogy.



Claire Tole is from Dripping Springs. She has a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Belmont University in Nashville, TN. This fall, she will be starting her final year at Arizona State University, pursuing a Master of Music in Opera Performance.

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

Kat Larkin is from Austin, a graduate of Anderson High School. This summer, she will be appearing as a Rapturous Maiden in our production of *Patience*. This fall, she will be a second-year student in the Austin Community College music program.



Zhenpeng Zhang has a Master of Music and Professional Studies Certificate in Classical Voice from the Manhattan School of Music. This fall, he will be a second-year graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance.

News of Members

GSA members who attended Austin Opera's recent magnificent production of *La Bohème* enjoyed seeing many familiar faces from GSA productions in their chorus: **Carlee Abschneider**, **Michael Kelley Dixon**, **Esther Hernandez**, **Annisha Mackenzie**, **Stephen Maus**, **Francis José Nieves**, **Mikaela Pace**, **Anneliese Sandoval**, and **Julius Young**.

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!

The McAdo (Piano-Vocal Score)
Adapted by
Gilbert & Sullivan Austin

Published by the
Madison Savoyards



Reviewed by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Since its creation in 2022 and its subsequent general (and generous) release to other producing organizations world-wide, **The McAdo**, Gilbert & Sullivan Austin's adaptation of **The Mikado**, has become the most widely produced modern adaptation of the G&S masterpiece. (And there have been quite a few!)

The project began when GSA's Treasurer and CFO **David Wieckowski** called together and chaired a committee with the goal of developing the libretto for what became **The McAdo**. Production Chair and Bursar **Michael Meigs**, a member of this committee, has been involved since the Austin performances making the adaptation available world-wide to other groups interested in producing it by providing information, performing material, and advice—and even traveling with his wife **Karen** to see as many of the far-flung productions as possible.

Just this morning (I'm writing in early April 2026), I asked Michael for a "little list" of companies that have presented The McAdo, and here it is:

Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company, Minneapolis;
Valley Light Opera, Northampton, Massachusetts;
Morpheus Theatre, Calgary, Alberta, Canada;
Eastbourne Gilbert & Sullivan Company,
Eastbourne, East Sussex, U.K.

Two productions in this country are in preparation:
University of Michigan Gilbert & Sullivan Society,
Ann Arbor, Michigan;
Madison Savoyards, Madison, Wisconsin.

This is a remarkable achievement, but it's only the beginning, for I also asked Michael for information on the companies that have inquired about the *possibility* of producing **The McAdo**. He replied: "Several more have asked for materials, including:

Piedmont Opera, Winston-Salem, North Carolina;
New Aquarian Opera, Oxted, England;
Members of a G&S Company in Hull, United Kingdom;
Imperial Productions, St. Andrew's URC,
Frognaal, United Kingdom
and Wellington Light Opera, New Zealand."

Just last week I learned that The Madison Savoyards have produced a vocal score of the show and (continuing the generous GSA tradition) have made it available *free-of-charge* to anyone wishing to download it. Here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/bdepyvp3>.

The score is based on the G. Schirmer vocal score, and so runs to the usual 231 pages; add the front matter (title page, *Dramatis Personæ*, list of Musical Numbers, Synopsis, and Michael Meigs's essay "What Do You Do with a Problem like **The Mikado**?" and list of name changes, and the publication runs to 240 pages.

When I inquired about purchasing a copy, I was told that the

Savoyards had printed some extras for sale at performances, and that I could purchase one (post-paid!) for \$26.00. Considering the cost of printing a 240-page copy on my own printer and without the sturdy coil binding and clear plastic cover page, I leapt at the opportunity, and am glad I did. You will be, too. (Ordering information is at the end.)

I also learned that "Character names and libretto were edited based on the Piedmont 2024 libretto, with some changes from the 2024 GSVLOC production," so it apparently does not strictly conform to the original GSA libretto (which is available with a compendium of other production materials including The Madison Savoyards' score here: <https://tinyurl.com/5f83558c>). Changes include a "new" pronunciation of "Katie-shaw's" name and a restoration of Gilbert's original "And for yam I should get toco" from Schirmer's non-canonical "that." The score also includes, of course, **Dr. Jeffrey Jones-Ragona's** arrangement of "McAdo's Welcome/Scots wha' hae," adapted from Robert Burns, his substitution for "Miya Sama."

I've seen quite a few "cut and paste" scores based on the Schirmer score, and **The McAdo** is by far the most attractive adaptation I've encountered. The editors have taken great pains to duplicate the Schirmer type/faces-fonts and their sizes, and their achievement is most effective.

To order a copy, sent a request with a \$26.00 check and your shipping address to:

Madison Savoyards, Ltd.
P.O. Box 1612
Madison WI 53701-1612

or (and this is what I did) purchase the score online by going to the-madison-savoyards-ltd.square.site, then scroll to the bottom of the page and use the second purchasing option (for non-cast members): \$20 for the score and \$6 for the shipping. (But don't delay; the Madison production will run July 31st-August 9th.)

My very helpful contact was Madison Savoyards Board Vice President, Aimee Teo Broman (aimee.broman@madisonsavoyards.org), who evidently did the lion's share of the work on this project. I am grateful to her and to Michael Meigs for most of the information above.

News of Members

We mourn the passing of **Jerry Young**. He appeared in three of our early productions: as the Earl of Tolloller in **Iolanthe** (1978); as Counsel for the Defendant in **Trial by Jury** (1982), and in the chorus of **The Gondoliers** (1983). He was also a noted music and musical theatre critic for the **Austin American-Statesman**. He and his wife **Helen** have been members of GSA for many years. His son **Julius** ably continues Jerry's GSA connection.



C. P. Cannon and Earl of Mountararat, Leonard Gillman as The Lord Chancellor, and Jerry Young as Earl of Tolloller in **Iolanthe**.



Coming Events

- June 12-21 ***Patience*** summer grand production
McCallum Fine Arts Center
- October 1 ***GSA's 50th Anniversary Gala***
Chez Zee
- Oct. 15-18 Ken Ludwig's ***Sullivan and Gilbert***
Austin Playhouse, West Campus

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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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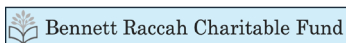
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