

Savoyardage

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON SAVOYARDS, LTD.

GRACE PRESENTS THE MADISON SAVOYARDS



SATURDAY
APRIL 20 AT 12PM

GRACE EPISCOPAL
CHURCH
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MADISON, WI

FREE MONTHLY
CONCERTS
ON THE SQUARE

GRACEPRESENTS.ORG



UPCOMING EVENTS

**Grace Presents:
The Madison Savoyards**

April 20 at 12:00pm

Grace Episcopal Church

116 West Washington Ave, Madison

**Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience*,
or *Bunthorne's Bride***

August 2, 3, 9, 10 at 7:30pm

August 4, 11 at 3:00pm

The Bartell Theatre

113 E Mifflin St, Madison

Box Office: 608-661-9696

madisonsavoyards.org



Grace Presents: The Madison Savoyards

COST: FREE

Join the Madison Savoyards at Grace Episcopal on the Capitol Square for ***A Marriage of Song and Satire***. Through a selection of songs dealing with the majesties, mysteries, and misfortunes of matrimony, we invite you to celebrate and celebrate the ways wherein Gilbert's lyrics and Sullivan's melodies work in tandem to create the most delectable and enriching of confections: comic opera. From aurally unrivaled arias to patter that may or may not matter, this program shows that with wit and finesse, words and music can coalesce rather than conflict. And who knows; mayhap our crew of Savoyards will find themselves married by the finale!

Jesse Harrison *Soprano*
Kirstin Roble *Mezzo-soprano*
Roland Beach *Tenor*
Mike Brady *Bass-Baritone*
Lisa Erdman *Piano*
Bradley J. Carter *Master of Ceremonies*

Madison Savoyards presents Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience* August 2-11

Patience satirizes the "aesthetic craze" of the 1870s and '80s, when the output of poets, composers, painters and designers of all kinds was indeed prolific, but, some argued, empty and self-indulgent. This artistic movement was so popular, and so easy to ridicule as a meaningless fad, that it made *Patience* a big hit in its day. The operetta remains relevant as it can be understood to satirize the adherents to all fads!

Introducing J. Michael Bruno, *Patience* Stage Director



I'm excited to be the Stage Director for this summer's *Patience*, or *Bunthorne's Bride*.

I was reintroduced to Madison Savoyards last summer when I attended *Pirates of Penzance* at

The Bartell. I was SO impressed with the

high caliber talent and production values that I just had to submit my resume to the company.

Way back in the '70's I was in 2 Savoyards shows; *Iolanthe* and *HMS Pinafore*. I had a blast playing Dick Deadeye, so much so that I became a board member and Treasurer for the company!

I'm always impressed by the copious amount of talent in the Madison area and was delighted with the turnout for auditions for *Patience*. We have such a diverse cast and crew for this show with many actors and crew members that I've had the privilege to work with over the years. That combined with many new faces and talents, it promises to be a memorable summer for Madison audiences.

I look forward to promoting the show on my podcast, *Show Biz Buzz with Bruno* on Madstheatre.com and YouTube.

Looking forward to seeing you in the audience this August!

*Tantara Tantara.....
Tzing Boom!*



Mikado, Madison Savoyards, and Me: Thoughts on a Mikado for 2026

In 2008 I had recently moved to Madison and saw an audition call for *The Mikado*. I remembered seeing a PBS show of *The Mikado* in the 1980's, with funny characters, beautiful Japanese costumes, and soaring arias. I auditioned and joined the chorus under the direction of Terry Kiss Frank. She set the production in a Japanese village, with a layered society, from Geisha and Samurai to fishermen and shop girls. Terry designed the stage and costumes with the intent of presenting a realistic and respectful picture of a Japanese society. A number of the principal singers were students at UW Opera, just beginning their performing careers, and I listened to their arias with the same excitement and appreciation every performance.



In August 2014, following *Iolanthe* performances, the UW Asian Student Association heard that Madison Savoyards was planning to perform *The Mikado* in 2015. The students contacted the Board to voice their dismay about our performing this work, and two board delegates met with them to hear their concerns. My background not being in theater, I was introduced to social-historical problems of *Mikado* for the first time: yellow-face on Caucasian actors being reflective of black-face, character names that were diminutive and derogatory, and the historically and commonly presented mishmash of Asian stereotypes and caricatures flecked through *Mikado* presentations. The students strongly suggested that we use solely Asian actors in the cast, or set the play in a non-Asian setting, with non-Asian costuming. At the time, Madison Savoyards felt that G&S should be presented as it was originally intended, with no changes to words or music. We used the argument that the play is not really about Japan, but a statement about English society. However, we continued to look into what people were saying about this work and held conversations with David Furamoto in the

UW Theatre Department about possible stagings that could mitigate the students' concerns. Savoyards moved forward with a production directed by Melanie Cain, designed with an Anime or Manga aesthetic, which removed the yellow-face visuals, and celebrated an art-form that originated in Japan. No words or music were changed.

Elsewhere, in July 2014, Seattle Gilbert & Sullivan Society's production of *Mikado* faced protests and public commentary (1). In December 2015 New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players cancelled their winter production of *Mikado* amid backlash from the Asian-American theater community (2). In 2016, Lamplighters Theater in San Francisco planned a *Mikado* production with "less orientalism" but reworked its design after community feedback and reset their stage design in Italy (3). In 2019, the Overture Center brought *Miss Saigon* to Madison (which has similar and different issues to *Mikado*), to protests and a cancelled public discussion (4).

Board members continue to follow these public discussions and are connecting with other G&S societies who have proposed solutions. A number of companies have made informed and researched edits to the libretto to avoid perpetuating degrading stereotypes of fellow community members.

In 2019, the Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company (VLOC) in Minneapolis, MN performed a version of *Mikado* by playwright and artistic director Rick Shiomi, set in Edwardian England. Character names were changed to English derived nicknames, and orchestration remained the same. This year, VLOC will present *The McAdo*, a production developed by the Gilbert & Sullivan Austin (GSA) society. GSA had the following goals when creating this version:

1. keep a monarchical or feudal context,
2. in an unequivocally British setting,
3. a libretto and staging without Asian references and names,
4. a score that modifies or eliminates the Japanese melody "Miya Sama" and
5. a production as true to the original as possible, given the requirements 1-4. They have set their production in a fictitious medieval Scottish highland.

Madison Savoyards is committed to continuing to perform the works of Gilbert & Sullivan and other light opera—we are the only company in Wisconsin with a focus on Gilbert & Sullivan, and we are one of a few companies who are able to offer staged opera opportunities to community and pre-professional vocalists and theater artists in our area. We hope to perform an altered version of *The Mikado* in 2026, preserving the music of Arthur Sullivan and keeping intact the satire of W.S. Gilbert and his jabs at English society without the trappings of a Japanese setting. Our wish is to keep the spirit of *The Mikado* intact and enjoyable for all, into the future.

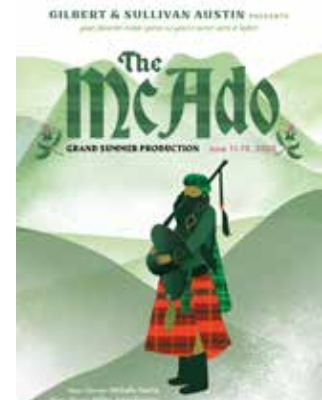
As always, we welcome your thoughts. Please email or reach out for a chat, we're eager to hear from you as we think about what's next.

Aimee Teo Broman
MSL Board of Directors 2013-present

References

- (1) <http://blog.angryasianman.com/2014/07/real-life-yellowface-now-playing-in.html>
- (2) <https://archive.nytimes.com/takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/09/18/the-mikado-is-beheaded-in-new-york/>
- (3) <https://www.sfgate.com/performance/article/Mikado-gets-a-makeover-to-remove-7926978.php>
- (4) https://captimes.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/theatre/overture-cancels-asian-american-panel-on-miss-saigon/article_4b49e766-2c30-517b-9f95-4eae69740d2c.html

G&S Very Light Opera Company will present *The McAdo*, in November 2024 (gsvloc.org)



Poster art for Gilbert & Sullivan Austin, 2022 production of *The McAdo*

A look back at 2023



Clockwise from top left: (1) July 22, *Pirates* Concert at Capitol Lakes, (2) August 6, Free Children's *Pirates* Pre-show, (3) August 3-12 Madison Savoyards presented *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Bartell Theatre, and (4) December 3, caroling on Monroe Street

Board of Directors

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- Bradley J. Carter Vice President
- Roland Beach Secretary
- Aimee Teo Broman Treasurer
- Erin Bryan Member at large
- Jeremy Dyer Member at large
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Thank You to our Supporters

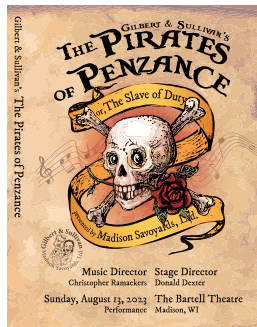
Madison Savoyards is deeply grateful for your continued support of our company through your donations and well wishes. Do you have interest in board service or in helping shepherd our organization into the future? Please reach out to any current board member for a quick coffee or chat. We'd love to hear from you.

Thank You to the Wisconsin Arts Board

Madison Savoyards is a proud and grateful recipient of a Wisconsin Arts Board 2024 Creation and Presentation grant, through funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



2023 *Pirates of Penzance* DVDs are available for purchase!



Cost: \$20 plus \$6 shipping
or pick up in-person at the next show or at our April Grace Presents program!

Donate

Consider a legacy gift to our Endowment Fund through Madison Community Foundation. Interest from this fund supports Madison Savoyards productions *in perpetuity*.

Gifts to our General Fund are used in their entirety to support administrative and production needs, and are vital in bringing the joy and musicality of G&S to our community every year.

Contact Us

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Madison Savoyards is a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Contributors will be acknowledged in the program and online, unless otherwise requested.

Thank you for your contribution!

Order a copy of our 2023 *Pirates of Penzance* recording:

I would like to purchase _____ DVDs (\$26, tax and shipping included) of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Go online to **www.madisonsavoyards.org > Support > Purchase DVDs** for a complete list of available recordings.