

H.M.S. PINAFORE



NASHVILLE
OPERA 24
25

THE ANN & FRANK BUMSTEAD SEASON

H.M.S. PINAFORE

“A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men.” —Anon.

Attributed to sources ranging from Horace (13 BC) to Willy Wonka (via Roald Dahl, 1971 AD), this proverb may help to explain why a show like *H.M.S. Pinafore*, written to cater to the sensibilities of audiences in Victorian England, is still so widely cherished today. While one would hardly consider the pointed social satire of Gilbert and eminently hummable melodies of Sullivan to be mere “nonsense”, the fact that this collaboration elevated silliness to such great heights among the tightly wound (literally, when one takes corsets into consideration) members of 19th century British society gives one hope that good-natured farce will always resonate, even - or perhaps especially - during serious times.

H.M.S. Pinafore opened at the Opéra Comique in London on May 25, 1878, and was the fourth collaboration of Arthur Sullivan, a cultured composer who preferred high art over hilarity, and William Schwenck Gilbert, an erstwhile lackluster lawyer who preferred ballads over briefs. Their first pairing, an 1871 Christmas extravaganza called *Thespis*, met with little success, but the theatrical entrepreneur Richard D'Oyly Carte reunited them in 1875. He was sufficiently encouraged by the promising reception of their one act comedy *Trial by Jury* that he commissioned further works and established his own permanent opera company to perform them. Their next project, *The Sorcerer*, earned a similarly positive response, but neither piece prepared them for the overwhelming popularity that awaited them when *Pinafore* set sail.

It made the transatlantic crossing to the United States that fall, and, as international copyright agreements were not yet in effect, 150 unauthorized companies were performing the work across the country within a matter of months. At one point, New York had eight different theaters producing the show within five blocks of each other. The notion that “love levels all ranks” and the fact that completely unqualified individuals can rise to positions of great authority, along with the absurdity of sailors being forbidden to use profanity, had clearly struck a nerve and tickled the funny bone on both sides of the pond, and the show’s lyrics and melodies became thoroughly embedded in British and American culture. *Pinafore*’s influence continued to spread, and almost a century-and-a-half later, hundreds of productions are still being performed around the world each year.

So I hope you will relish a little “operettic” nonsense and leave the theater humming a tune or two. Who knows—it might make you a bit wiser, and, as Bart Simpson can readily attest (The Simpsons, "Cape Feare," 1993 AD), it could even save your life!

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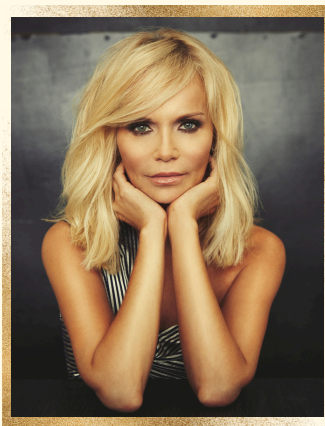
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JANUARY 24 - 26, 2025
TPAC POLK THEATER

Music by **Sir Arthur Sullivan**

Libretto by **Sir William S. Gilbert**

Premiered at Opéra Comique, London - May 25, 1878

Director - **Emily Pulley**

Conductor - **Dean Williamson**

CAST

THE RT. HON. SIR JOSEPH PORTER..... Eric McKeever

CAPTAIN CORCORAN..... Andrew Payne[^]

LITTLE BUTTERCUP..... Emily Pulley
Artist Patron - John T. Lewis

RALPH RACKSTRAW..... Zachary Taylor*

DICK DEADEYE..... Luke Harnish
Artist Patron - Allis Dale & John Gillmor

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Set and Props Courtesy of TRI-CITIES OPERA COMPANY, INC.
Lighting & Video Design..... Barry Steele
Costume Designer Glenn Avery Breed
Costumes provided by Wardrobe Witchery
Wig & Makeup Designer..... Sondra Nottingham
Wig & Makeup Assistant..... Dakota Williams

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Lillie Burnett
Capri Bianguardi
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Rehearsal Pianist..... Benjamin Pessognelli*
Supertitles Coordinator..... Hannah Marcoe
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SYNOPSIS



Some time before Act I opens, foremost hand Ralph Rackstraw has fallen in love with Josephine, the daughter of his commanding officer, Captain Corcoran. Likewise, Little Buttercup, a dockside peddler-woman, has fallen in love with the Captain himself. Class pride, however, stands in the way of the natural inclinations of both the Corcorans to reciprocate Ralph's and Buttercup's affections. The Captain has, in fact, been arranging a marriage between his daughter and Sir Joseph Porter, First Lord of the Admiralty, who is of the social class above even the Corcorans.

When Act I opens, the sailors are merrily preparing the ship for Sir Joseph's inspection. The generally happy atmosphere on deck is marred only by Little Buttercup's hints of a dark secret she is hiding, by the misanthropic grumbling of Dick Deadeye, and by the love-lorn complaints of Ralph and Josephine. Sir Joseph appears, attended by a train of ladies (his relatives, who always follow him wherever he goes). He explains how he became Lord of the Admiralty and examines the crew, patronizingly encouraging them to feel that they are everyone's equal, except his. Like the Captain, he is very punctilious, demanding polite speech among the sailors at all times. Josephine finds him insufferable, and, when Ralph again pleads his suit and finally threatens suicide, she agrees to elope. The act ends with the general rejoicing of the sailors at Ralph's success; only Dick Deadeye croaks his warning that their hopes will be frustrated.

Act II opens with the Captain in despair at the demoralization of his crew and the coldness of his daughter towards Sir Joseph. Little Buttercup tries to comfort him and predicts a change in store. But Sir Joseph soon appears and tells the Captain that Josephine has thoroughly discouraged him in his suit; he wishes to call the match off. The Captain suggests that perhaps his daughter feels herself vastly inferior to Sir Joseph and urges him to assure her that inequality of social rank should not be considered a barrier to marriage. This Sir Joseph does, not realizing that his words are as applicable to Josephine in relation to Ralph as they are to himself in relation to Josephine. He thinks that she accepts him, whereas actually she is reaffirming her acceptance of Ralph, and they all join in a happy song.

Dick Deadeye finds his way to the Captain and informs him of the planned elopement of his daughter with Ralph. The Captain thereupon intercepts the elopers and is so incensed by the situation that he cries, "Dammel!" Unfortunately, Sir Joseph and his relatives hear him and are horrified at his swearing; Sir Joseph sends him to his cabin in disgrace. But when Sir Joseph also learns from Ralph that Josephine was eloping, he angrily orders Ralph put in irons.

Little Buttercup now comes out with her secret, which solves the whole difficulty: she confesses that long ago she was the paid foster mother of Ralph and the Captain when they were babies. She somehow got them mixed up; so the one who now is Ralph really should be the Captain, and the one now the Captain should be Ralph. This error is immediately rectified. The sudden reversal in the social status of Ralph and the Corcorans removes Sir Joseph as a suitor for Josephine's hand, thus permitting her to marry Ralph and her father to marry Buttercup. Sir Joseph resigns himself to marrying his cousin, Hebe, and celebration ensues.



Stage Director / Little Buttercup
EMILY PULLEY

Nashville Opera

Julia Child / Beryl Bennett in *Bon Appétit! / The Cook-Off*, 2024

Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance*, 2023

Madeline Mitchell in *Three Decembers*, 2018

Despina in *Così fan tutte*, 2016

Recent

Witch/Mother in *Hansel and Gretel* - Eugene Opera

Director/Old Lady in *Candide* - Wichita Grand Opera

Ježibaba in *Rusalka* - Opera Orlando

Upcoming

Dame Quickly in *Falstaff* - Virginia Opera



Conductor
DEAN WILLIAMSON

Nashville Opera Music Director

2015-Present

Nashville Opera

Romeo and Juliet, Samson and Delilah, The Girl of the Golden West, The Difficulty of Crossing a Field, Cinderella, The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, The Barber of Seville, Romulus Hunt, Florencia en el Amazonas, Hydrogen Jukebox, Three Way, María de Buenos Aires, Madame Butterfly, Beach Party Cinderella, Rigoletto Noir, Das Rheingold, La Bohème, The Medium, Stuck Elevator, The Pirates of Penzance, Pagliacci, The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat, Florencia en el Amazonas, The Magic Flute, Carmen, Bon Appétit! / The Cook-Off

Recent

Il barbiere di Siviglia - Opera Saratoga

Don Giovanni - Inland Opera Northwest

Stuck Elevator - Hawaii Opera Theatre

Upcoming

H.M.S. Pinafore - Nashville Opera

Lucia: The Bride of Lammermoor - Nashville Opera

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The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter
ERIC MCKEEVER

Baritone

Nashville Opera

Frank in *Die Fledermaus*, 2016

Schaunard in *La Bohème*, 2014

Recent

Michele in *Il Tabarro* - On Site Opera

Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* - Columbus Opera Projects

Schaunard in *La Bohème* - Opera Memphis

Upcoming

Dante in *Lucidity* - Seattle Opera/On Site Opera

Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* - Fort Worth Opera



Captain Corcoran
ANDREW PAYNE

Baritone

Nashville Opera

Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2024

Speaker / Second Armored Man in *The Magic Flute*, 2024

Recent

Bello in *La Fanciulla del West* - Central City Opera

Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* - Central City Opera

Angelotti in *Tosca* - Charlottesville Opera

Upcoming

Dancaire in *Carmen* - Florida Grand Opera

Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* - Opera Neo



Ralph Rackstraw
ZACHARY TAYLOR

Tenor

Nashville Opera

Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2025

Recent

Second Nazarene in *Salome* - Des Moines Metro Opera

Pang in *Turandot* - Opera Carolina

Dr. Blind in *Die Fledermaus* - Pensacola Opera

Upcoming

Soloist in Mozart's Requiem - Greensboro Symphony

ARTISTS



Dick Deadeye

LUKE HARNISH

Bass-Baritone

Nashville Opera

Imperial Commissioner in *Madame Butterfly*, 2019

Professor Trixie / Gus Polock in *The Cradle Will Rock*, 2019

Recent

Gandalf in *The Hobbit* - Sarasota Opera

Messenger in *La Traviata* - The Santa Fe Opera

Schaunard in *La Bohème* - Wichita Grand Opera

Upcoming

Doctor in *Macbeth* - Atlanta Opera

Soloist in *Ich habe genug* - Allegro Orchestra

Sciarrone in *Tosca* - The Glimmerglass Festival



Bill Bobstay, the Boatswain's Mate

KEATON BROWN

Baritone

Nashville Opera

Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2025

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Don Giovanni in *Don Giovanni* - Seagle Festival

Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* - Moore's Opera Center

Frederik Egerman in *A Little Night Music* - Seagle Festival



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YEONJAE CHO

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Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2025

Recent

Adele in *Die Fledermaus* - New England Conservatory

Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* - New England Conservatory

Eurydice in *Orpheus in the Underworld* - Opera in the Ozarks

ARTISTS



Cousin Hebe

KATHERINE KINCAID

Mezzo-Soprano

Nashville Opera

Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2025

Recent

Mercédès in *Carmen* - Jacksonville Symphony

Third Lady in *The Magic Flute* - Indianapolis Opera

Flora in *La Traviata* - Toledo Opera



Bob Becket, the Carpenter's Mate

BLAKE RYAN

Bass-Baritone

Nashville Opera

Chorus: *Carmen*, 2024; *The Magic Flute*, 2024; *Florencia en el Amazonas*, 2024; *Pagliacci*, 2023; *Rigoletto*, 2022

Upcoming

Papa Bear/Baritone (Cover) - Nashville Opera On Tour

Chorus in *Lucia: The Bride of Lammermoor* - Nashville Opera

NASHVILLE OPERA CHORUS

Stephen Carey, Chorusmaster

Artist Patron - The Hughes Family

SOPRANO

Emily Apuzzo Hopkins

Alysha Nesbitt

Claire Paschal

Krista Adams Santilli

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Sarah Antell

Jada Duff

Robin Hutton

Jessica Taylor

TENOR

Larry Cotton Jr.

Vincent Davis

Andrew Hutton

Kevin Salter

Mark Williams

BASS

Aaron Arseneault

Steven Joseph Auster

Walker Barnett

Billy Dodson

Mark Filosa

Blake Ryan

NASHVILLE OPERA ORCHESTRA

Dean Williamson, Conductor

Anne Dickson Rogers, Contractor

Artists' Patron - The Dettwiller Foundation

FIRST VIOLIN

Christina McGann, CM

George Meyer

Maria Romero Ramos

Esther McMahon

Deidre Fominaya Bacco

Sara Younglove

Ali Hoffman Gooding

Mark Reneau

SECOND VIOLIN

Carolyn Wann Bailey

Zoya Leybin

Jessica Blackwell

Mia Hagarty

Emily Hanna Crane

VIOLA

Elizabeth Lamb

Razvan Berindean

Carl Larson

Cristina Micci-Barreca

CELLO

Sari Reist

Meghan Berindean

Kaitlyn Vest

Christopher Stenstrom

BASS

Craig E. Nelson

Quentin Flowers

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Deanna Little

Julie Ditzel

OBOE

Jared Hauser

CLARINET

Todd Waldecker

Emily Bowland

BASSOON

Benjamin Atherholt

FRENCH HORN

Jennifer Kummer

Harry Ditzel

TRUMPET

Joel Treybig

Jeff Bailey

TROMBONE

David Loucky

Evan Clifton

TIMPANI

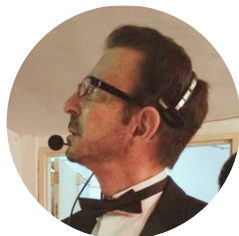
Ron Sorbo

PERCUSSION

Scot Corey

Lee Vinson

PRODUCTION



Production Stage Manager

JOE GLADSTONE

Nashville Opera

Das Rheingold, 2022; *The Medium*, 2022; *The Pirates of Penzance*, 2023; *Pagliacci*, 2023; *Florencia en el Amazonas*, 2024; *The Magic Flute*, 2024; *Carmen*, 2024

Recent

La Traviata - North Carolina Opera

La Cenerentola - Opera Maine

Aida - Opera Maine



Lighting Design

BARRY STEELE

Nashville Opera

Der Rosenkavalier, *Salome*, *The Lighthouse*, *La Voix Humaine*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Surrender Road*, *Turandot* (2006, 2015), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Fall of the House of Usber*, *Andrea Chénier*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (2013, 2023), *Otello*, *La Bohème* (2014, 2022), *Romulus Hunt*, *Florencia en el Amazonas* (2015, 2024), *Hydrogen Jukebox*, *Don Giovanni*, *Glory Denied*, *Three Way*, *Carmen* (2017, 2024), *Maria de Buenos Aires*, *Susannah*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Rigoletto Noir*, *Das Rheingold*, *The Medium*, *Stuck Elevator*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Pagliacci*, *Bon Appétit!* / *The Cook-Off*

Recent Designs

The Barber of Seville - Arizona Opera

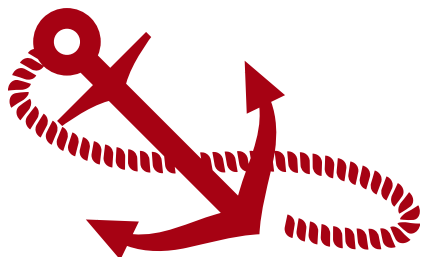
La Bohème - Florida Grand Opera

Romeo et Juliette - Arizona Opera

Upcoming Designs

Florencia en el Amazonas - North Carolina Opera

Don Giovanni - Madison Opera



PRODUCTION



Wig & Makeup Designer

SONDRA NOTTINGHAM

Nashville Opera

La Bohème, Florencia en el Amazonas, Salome, Elmer Gantry, Il Trovatore, The Student Prince, The Fall of the House of Usher, Rigoletto, The Girl of the Golden West, Madama Butterfly, The Difficulty of Crossing a Field, The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, Romulus Hunt, Glory Denied, Tales of Hoffmann, The Cradle Will Rock, Madama Butterfly, Pepito, Amahl and the Night Visitors, Turn of the Screw, Beach Party Cinderella, One Vote Won, Favorite Son, Rigoletto Noir, Das Rheingold, La Bohème, The Medium, Stuck Elevator, The Pirates of Penzance, Pagliacci, The Pearl Fishers, Salome, Amahl and the Night Visitors, Hansel and Gretel, The Difficulty of Crossing a Field, The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat (2013), Romulus Hunt, Hydrogren Jukebox, Maria de Buenos Aires.

Recent

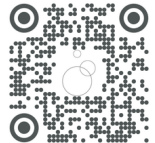
Abduction from the Seraglio, Ariadne auf Naxos - St. Petersburg Opera
Das Rheingold, La Traviata - North Carolina Opera
Turandot, Dead Man Walking - Shreveport Opera



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