

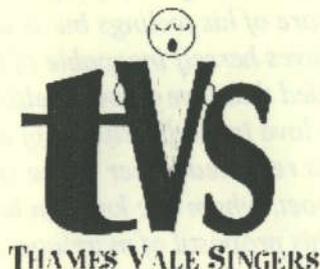
Aestheticism and Oscar Wilde

Aestheticism, a late 19th century arts movement, was a reaction to the ugliness of the Victorian era. It centered on the doctrine that art existed for the sake of its beauty alone and that it should not serve any political, educational, social or moral purpose. This challenged the traditional Victorian view that art had an essential ethical and social dimension.

Largely conceived by Walter Pater, a London critic, professor and aesthete, the movement is readily associated with Oscar Wilde who became one of its most important propagandists in this country. His lifestyle and humorous wit soon made him a spokesman for the movement. As a disciple of aestheticism, Wilde pursued beauty for beauty's sake, but probably personified more than any other person the excesses of aestheticism.

In Patience we find more contemporary satire than in any of Gilbert and Sullivan's other operettas. Aestheticism, as manifested in London at the time, contained many praiseworthy aspects and was not the specific target of Gilbert's satire. Rather it was the caricatures and excesses of the cult that he chose to parody and it may be that it was Oscar Wilde he had in mind as a model for the effeminate aesthete Reginald Bunthorne. Paradoxically, although originally intended as a piece of ridicule, the success of the operetta had the effect of publicising, and even enhancing, the reputation of the aesthetic movement. And it helped to prolong the popularity of aestheticism after its heyday.

Patience opened in April 1881 and ran for 578 performances, one of the longest first runs of all Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas. And Oscar Wilde found new fame as a result. When the operetta went to the United States, he was sent there by D'Oyly Carte on a lecture tour where, appearing in cities where Patience was just about to open, he was recognised to the benefit of both the operetta and the lecture tour.



present
the Songs from
"Patience"

or
Bunthorne's Bride

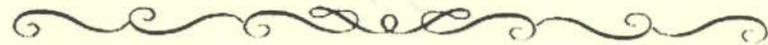
By W.S Gilbert & Arthur Sullivan

at the Purley Memorial Hall, Purley on Thames on:

**Friday 21st May and Saturday 22nd May
2004**

Patience - the story

Reginald Bunthorne, a poet, is idolised by the young maidens of the village for his aesthetic life-style. Much to their disappointment though, he only has eyes for Patience, a local milkmaid. She is aware of his feelings but is unable to return his affection as she believes herself incapable of loving anyone. When she is persuaded that love is an unselfish emotion, she sets about falling in love immediately out of a sense of duty. Although true love is revealed to her in the shape of Archibald Grosvenor, also a poet, whom she knew in her childhood, she is unable to accept his proposal of marriage. As he is adored by women wherever he goes, for his good looks and aesthetic tendencies, Patience realises that there would be nothing unselfish in loving so perfect a being. Instead she dutifully accepts Bunthorne's offer on the grounds that it would be an unselfish act to love him against her will.



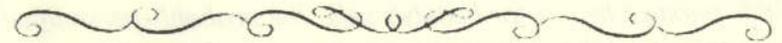
With Bunthorne unavailable, the village maidens quickly turn their attention to Grosvenor, much to Bunthorne's annoyance. He resents the presence of a rival depriving him of the adulation he is used to and, in an attempt to regain his past popularity, he forces Grosvenor to change his manner and appearance to one of a commonplace young man. Sick of the adoration he is attracting, Grosvenor agrees. This means that Patience is free to return to him as there is nothing unselfish in loving an ordinary man. The village maidens follow Grosvenor's example in abandoning aestheticism and pair up with members of a contingent of the 35th Dragoon Guards who have been vying for their attention all along. Therefore, in the end, Bunthorne is the only man in the piece who is left without a bride.

Patience: Carol Sillitoe
Joanne Hawkins
Katharine Braine

Colonel Calverley: John Dimmock

Duke of Dunstable }
Archibald Grosvenor } James Baldock

Major Murgatroyd }
Reginald Bunthorne } Reg Blagrove

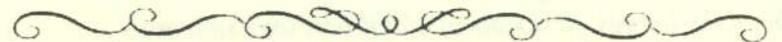


Act 1

Twenty love sick maidens we
I cannot tell what this love may be
The soldiers of our Queen
In a doleful train
When I first put this uniform on
If you're anxious for to shine
Long years ago
Prithee, pretty maiden
Finale

Act 2

On such eyes
Silvered is the raven hair
Turn, oh turn in this direction
A magnet hung in a hardware shop
Love is a plaintive song
So go to him, and say to him
It's clear that mediaeval art
If Saphir I choose to marry
When I go out of door
Finale



Narrator : Jenny Dimmock
Pianist : Peter Bernard
Musical Director : Alex Taylor