

# Savoyardage

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON SAVOYARDS, LTD.

MADISON SAVOYARDS PRESENTS

## The McAdo

or, The Town of Ballydew

a new adaptation of  
Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*  
set in the Scottish Highlands

July 31 • Aug 6 • 7 at 7:30pm  
Aug 1 • 2 • 8 • 9 at 3:00pm

Tickets: 608-661-9696  
bartelltheatre.org

Bartell Theatre  
113 E Mifflin St  
Madison, WI

### COMING SOON: *The McAdo*

Poster Art by Ingrid Kallick

July 31 & August 6, 7 at 7:30pm  
August 1, 2, 8 & 9 at 3:00pm

Tickets: [bartelltheatre.org](http://bartelltheatre.org)  
Bartell Box Office: 608-661-9696

Ticket Prices include box office fees:  
\$36 General  
\$34 Senior  
\$21 Student / Youth

### FREE *McAdo* Programs

#### *The McAdo* in Concert

Selected songs from *The McAdo*

- **Saturday, July 11 at 7:00pm**
- Oakwood Village University Woods  
6205 Mineral Point Rd, Madison

#### Children's Pre-Show

for ages 4+

- **Saturday, August 1 at 1:00pm**
- Bartell Theatre  
113 E Mifflin St, Madison
- Meet some of the characters and learn a Scottish dance!

#### Post-show Talk Backs, Q&A

with director Sam White and *McAdo* cast

- **August 1, 2, and 8** following the matinee shows

*Happy Summer, Savoyards!* We are deep into all things Scottish and will be starting up rehearsals soon for *The McAdo*!

This new adaptation of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado* relocates the original Japanese setting to Scotland, in response to long-standing concerns about racial stereotyping found in traditional stagings. By changing costumes, names, and specific references—all while preserving most of the dialogue and score—Gilbert and Sullivan's humor and music are given new life in this twist on a beloved classic.

Set in the fictional town of Ballydew, the plot follows a disguised prince, Nanky Doug, his beloved Wynn Somme, and the comically reluctant executioner Coco as they navigate a ridiculous law requiring executions for flirting. Complications multiply when the *McAdo* arrives, leading to chaos involving romantic entanglements and comic reversals. Through mistaken identities and clever schemes, the absurd story resolves in classic comic fashion with love triumphant and order restored.

We hope you'll join us this summer as we celebrate this joyous work in a new setting.

### From our Stage Director Sam D. White

Thornton Wilder writes, "The theater is an art which reposes upon the work of many collaborators." Dang, he had a way with words, huh?

During all my years of theatrical meddling, collaboration is the ruling truth. It is an absolute. Without it, a theatrical endeavour is just a vanity project careening toward disaster. Or worse, a toxic morass of very unhappy people. Collaboration must exist between every participant at every level of production to have a successful show.



As a freshman Savoyard, I was very anxious at first—I had concerns about the working atmosphere here. Was MSL a company of "collaborators?" Not all theater companies are! It didn't take long to learn collaboration is the foundation of Madison Savoyards. It has been for decades. We could even say for generations—I was nine when I saw my first Madison Savoyards show. You?

I couldn't ask for more production support, communication, and the sharing of knowledge from everyone involved in the company. Their generosity of heart, enthusiasm, and spirit is contagious. To the patrons of this fine company, I testify, Savoyards is an organization with provenance, infrastructure, and a lot of heart. I'm so glad to finally work here!

I am beyond grateful to the folks who currently make this company go. I cannot thank them enough, nor now, as there are so many. You will read their names in the program.

I hope you have as much fun attending the show as we'll have bringing it to you. It's been a blast so far and rehearsals haven't even started yet! Cheers!

## Introducing *The McAdo* 2026 Principal Cast



**Henry Hammond** (The McAdo) is excited to return for his third production with Madison Savoyards. He previously pillaged through *Pirates of Penzance* (Pirate chorus), married into fairy royalty in *Iolanthe* (Private Willis), and has now ascended to the throne and is buzzin' to take on the titular role in *The McAdo*.



**Angela Joy Bleke** (Wynn Somme) is thrilled to sing with Savoyards again this summer! Some recent productions from this bonnie lass are: *Clue*; *Sweeney Todd*; *Iolanthe*; *The Zoo*; *Scooby-Doo And a Panto, Too!*; *9 to 5*; and *Patience*. Love to the village and community theatres making art available to everyone.



**Michael Hammer** (Nanky Doug) is giddy with joy to join *The McAdo*! When not whistling/singing lullabies in Ballydew, Michael enjoys wand'ring whilst teaching, kayaking, canoeing, camping, hiking, and game nights with family and friends. Previous G&S credits include Richard Dauntless (*Ruddigore*), Duke of Dunstable (*Patience*), and Plaintiff (*Trial by Jury*). Michael sings with several choral ensembles in the area.



**Cat Richmond** (Pretty Jean) is a versatile musician and an accomplished regional performer. She has performed a diverse set of operatic and musical theater roles including Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*), *Patience* (*Patience*), and Mary (*HAIR*). Most recently, Cat has been onstage in Rodgers and Hammerstein productions with Four Seasons Theatre and Music Theatre of Madison.



**Evan Jensen** (Coco) is currently pursuing his masters in Tuba Performance at the University of Wisconsin Madison. He received a Bachelor's in Music Education from Ripon College and currently teaches individualized music lessons at the Stoughton Center for the Arts. This is his first staged production with the Madison Savoyards.



**Mikayla Mindiola** (Wee Jo) is an American mezzo-soprano based in Madison, WI. In 2024 she graduated from George Mason University with a Master's of Music in Vocal Performance. Ms. Mindiola is a proud graduate of Illinois State University where she received a Bachelor's of Music and was a 4-year member of America's oldest collegiate circus, the Gamma Phi Circus.



**Jeremy Dyer** (Pubagh) is thrilled to be a part of the delightful farce of *The McAdo*. Brought up by musician parents, Jeremy found his way into Gilbert & Sullivan in high school and has performed the shows nearly every year since. He wholly embraces the term "amateur" in that he performs purely for the love of sharing these wonderful shows with the world.



**Brendin Larson** (Katishagh) is happy to be returning for his third production with Madison Savoyards. He received his masters degree in voice from UW-Madison in 2025. He specializes in gender-bending roles in operas and musicals. Brendin also performs in drag shows as the drag queen Aria Dunyet. Recent roles include: Fruma Sarah (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Usherette (*The Rocky Horror Show*), Queen of the Fairies (*Iolanthe*), and Lady Jane (*Patience*).



**Evan Bruns** (Pischtush) is excited to be taking part in his first MSL production! The works of Gilbert and Sullivan have always been among his favorites, so to be a part of this production is a dream come true. Evan also currently performs in the Madison Symphony Chorus and recently performed with the Verona Area Community Theater in their production of *Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van*.

### *Mikado* to *McAdo* Name Changes

Mikado .....	McAdo	Yum-Yum .....	Wynn Somme
Nanki-Poo .....	Nanky Doug	Pitti-Sing .....	Pretty Jean
Ko-Ko .....	Coco	Peep-Bo .....	Wee Jo
Pooh-Bah .....	Pubagh	Katisha .....	Katishagh
Pish-Tush .....	Pischtush	Titipu .....	Ballydew

**ARTIST SPOTLIGHT**

**Brendin Larson** is returning for his third year as our Gilbert & Sullivan Contralto, often a middle-aged spinster with fading appeal, lusty desire, and thrilling female power. We are so glad to welcome Brendin back to our stage!



**You've described yourself as a countertenor—what is this voice type?**

A countertenor in the most traditional sense is a male (assigned at birth) singer whose main register of singing is their falsetto; they are most often associated with baroque music. Today's countertenors train to strengthen their falsetto voice and have found success in mainstream pop/rock music and in new opera compositions, but overwhelmingly remain associated with baroque music and operas.

**What does "gender expression" in the performing arts mean to you?**

I guess that is my fancy way of stating that I often play drag roles or gender bend roles. You may be thinking, "aren't those the same thing?" Gender bending in theater can come in various forms: switching the character's gender, switching the gender of the performer (gender blind casting), or having a drag queen/king play the role (similar to pantodames).

I would say that over 90% of the roles I play are female characters, and it is a niche that I have found I excel in. I saw a recent interview where they talked about the legendary drag queen Divine. Divine didn't consider themselves to be playing drag queen characters, instead they considered themselves a man who played women's parts. That quote really resonated with me and helped me better understand my own style of performing. I have and still play male parts from time to time, but I just find comfort and freedom in female characters that I seldom feel in my male roles.

**What do you enjoy about G&S?**

I love Gilbert and Sullivan because I love the parody. The plots are just so exaggerated and make fun of the flawed logic found in so many operas. They also often poke fun at the flaws of government bureaucracy and odd social trends of their time which are still relevant today.

**What are you excited about in this year's show?**

What I look forward to the most is getting to make people laugh. Something that I really do love about these Contralto parts is the range of humor you can find in them. You can play them as the aloof straight man or as a manic slapstick wisecracker. Making people laugh is one of the best feelings in this world and I am excited to be back in a comedic role in a genre of theater I absolutely adore.

It's been a real treat to have started my G&S journey with Madison Savoyards in 2024. If you would like to follow my journey and events check me out on instagram [@brendinandaria](https://www.instagram.com/brendinandaria) or if you would like to work with me, feel free to email me at [brendinlarson@gmail.com](mailto:brendinlarson@gmail.com).

**Madison Savoyards Annual Meeting**

**Monday, October 5  
6:30-7:30pm on Zoom**

- review 2026 activities
- discuss plans for 2027
- elect board members

Please join us! Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/MSLAnnMtg26>



**2026 McAdo Tees are available to order online!**



allow 1-2 weeks shipping time

[www.bonfire.com/msl-mcado-2026/](http://www.bonfire.com/msl-mcado-2026/)

**Donate**

Consider a legacy gift to our Endowment Fund through Madison Community Foundation. Distributions from this fund support 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.

**Thank You to our Supporters**

Madison Savoyards is deeply grateful for your continued support of our company. Your donations support our artist and musician stipends, set and costume materials, and operational needs such as storage and communication services.

**Board of Directors**

- |                   |                 |
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| Elena DeMajistre  | Member at large |

**Thank you to our Granting Organizations**

Madison Savoyards is a proud and grateful recipient of grant awards from the Wisconsin Arts Board, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, and Madison Arts Commission! These boards are publically funded entities supporting and promoting arts and culture here in the State of Wisconsin, Dane County, and the City of Madison. Their support allows us to continue our legacy of presenting full lyric productions of Gilbert and Sullivan, engaging local artists, and educating our participants and patrons on English-language musical theatre.



**Contact Us**

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**Madison Savoyards, Ltd. Donation Form**

**Yes, I wish to ensure more Madison Savoyards productions** at the following level:

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Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to **Madison Savoyards, Ltd.**  
 Mail your check and this form to: **P.O. Box 1612, Madison, WI 53701-1612**  
 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 2024 *Patience*:**

I would like to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ DVDs (\$26, tax and shipping included) of *Patience*. Shipping fee may be waived if pick-up can be arranged in Madison. Email **madison.savoyards@gmail.com** for more information.