



Patience

W.S. Gilbert, Arthur Sullivan

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Patience Details

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From Reader Review Patience for online ebook

Greg Kerestan says

Among the Savoy operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, none is more aggressively camp as "Patience," probably the first satire on metrosexuality ever written. Aesthetic poet Bunthorne writes purple prose like Swinburne, but his dramatic, grandiose and effeminate presentation is primarily based on Oscar Wilde. His rival, the most handsome man on earth, is an astoundingly bad poet who happens to have a face no woman can resist. Will style over substance win out over... more style over substance? Who knows? It's Gilbert and Sullivan, anything can happen.

Sandi says

I had never seen a Gilbert and Sullivan play all the way through before and read along/watched this to investigate commentary on Oscar Wilde and other authors of the aesthetic movement.

Commentary-wise, I definitely got plenty to work with, but in terms of enjoyment not so much. This probably because I just don't like the style of Gilbert and Sullivan--much too repetitive, and seemingly reliant of a skilled acting troupe to put jokes in themselves to hold the audience's attention.

In the performance I watched, for some reason all of the actresses spoke in falsetto, which added to the grating (I get it—they like artsy boys!) of the repetitive lines. Additionally, Bunthorne, (and the dragoons when dressed up) played the role of the aesthete as flamingly effeminate, and, though most audiences today would probably interpret aesthetic nineteenth-century preoccupations and style as "gay," it had a very much more nuanced relationship with homosexuality.

The one thing I liked was the "cancelling-out" resolution to the critical dilemma of the plot. Basically, girl is told that love is selfless so she becomes engaged to the puffed-up aesthete (Bunthorne) rather than her true love (Grosvenor). Bunthorne then gets socially replaced and Grosvenor is admired by the girls. But, Bunthorne misses attention from other girls so bullies G. to dress/act plainly, which had the backlash that the girl could then leave Bun. and love G. selflessly. What was satisfying about this resolution was that the stuck up aesthete so clearly brought about his own downfall by wanting it all and thinking he could manipulate everyone's emotions. The two men, then, in both being aesthetic, was like a sort of anti-macho, macho rivalry.

But what was unsatisfying was that the female protag's final decision. She was a "simple" milkmaid, initially immune to the aesthete's "charms" in the first place and didn't seem to admire those elements of a man but instead the fact that she and Grosvenor grew up together. So, when he turns "plain" why would she "selflessly" love him? Was she attracted to what repulsed her in Bunthorne? Or, because Bunthorne was disingenuous, did she see through that? Or did she see through both their acts and was repulsed that her true love would put on an act as well? Eh, it seems unresolved—heading for some serious marriage counseling.

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Leslie says

4½ stars. Once again, I read this on my Kindle as part of The Complete Plays of Gilbert and Sullivan while watching the video (found on YouTube).

I laughed out loud many times during this! Although not as well known as The Pirates of Penzance or H.M.S. Pinafore - Or, the Lass That Loved a Sailor, it was just as funny and had several good tunes as well.

Harry Boyd says

The music in this typically poncy British operetta is really nice, there are some lovely harmonies particularly in 'prithee pretty maiden'. It's very funny in that it is ridiculous and purposely written so. It has a large array of characters and a lot more female characters with actual speaking parts than usual which is always good to see. As a play on its own it is very farcical and silly but it is the addition of the wonderful music and vocals that make it so watchable.
