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Jeanne Claire van Ryzin is the arts critic for the Austin American-Statesman where she has worked since 1999. She covers visual art, theater, dance, music, performance, public art, architecture and just about any combination thereof.

This blog also hosts arts reviews and posts from other American-Statesman writers and freelancers.

Among other commendations, Jeanne Claire has won first place awards for arts criticism from the American Association of Sunday & Features Editors and the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors.

"Seeing Things" is also the name of Jeanne Claire's [Sunday arts column](#) that appears most weeks in the Austin American-Statesman.

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Review: Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Patience'

By [Cate Blouke](#) | Wednesday, June 13, 2012, 10:36 AM

In Gilbert and Sullivan's sixth operatic collaboration, "Patience," playing through Sunday at the Brentwood Christian School Performing Arts Center, the title character asks a poignant question: how to distinguish between love and insanity?

The show opens on a delightfully picturesque tableau, with "Twenty Lovesick Maidens" (or, 15, in spite of the song's title) mooning over the same object of adoration. Infatuated with the earthly (and morose) poet Reginald Bunthorne (Arthur DiBianca), the horde of women lament their plight: Bunthorne has fallen in love with the local milkmaid, Patience (Meredith Ruduski), and to add insult to injury, Patience doesn't even return his favor. Patience is the show's guileless straight man. Having never really been in love, Patience doesn't see what all the fuss is about.

A satire directed at the "aesthetic craze" of the late 19th century, "Patience" is a strange story that features some great music and some interesting questions about the nature of love.

The show is filled with familiar faces for the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin, and the sound quality of the performance is exceptional — clearly taking advantage of both the state of the art space and the voices of the performers. The Gilman Light Opera Orchestra sounds wonderful emanating from the pit, and the show's vocals are top-notch, with a stand out performance by Wayne J. Davis (the Duke of Dunstable).

"Patience" is definitely more a comic opera than a traditional sort of musical, and the number of opera singers in the cast reflects as much. Though a few of the "dance" numbers feature nice stage pictures, stage director Ralph MacPhail Jr.'s choreography ultimately falls rather flat for those seeking a more spectacular musical experience.

A nice feature of the performance is the closed captioning, which can be particularly helpful for those hard of hearing or less accustomed to operatic singing.

Decking out the characters in medieval/Renaissance garb for a piece supposedly set in Victorian London, the show calls for an odd mix of costumes. And it's a shame we get to see so little of the Victorian garb, but the costumes (imported all the way from Canada) are delightful overall.

The show does lose energy by the end of the first half, but the second act picks back up, and GSSA's production offers some great music and enthusiastic performances from a large number of lovely voices.

Performances through Sunday. Thurs-Sat 8:00 pm, matinees Sat & Sun 3:00 pm. Tickets \$7-25. Brentwood Christian School Performing Arts Center 11908 N. Lamar

Cate Blouke is an American-Statesman freelance arts critic.

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