



Four Years Before the Cast

Our directorial team of Derrick Ivey (Director) and Alan Riley Jones (Music Director) will reach a landmark this coming March with the production of *HMS Pinafore* — their fifth collaborative effort for Durham Savoyards!

Just as Sir William Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan were very different but worked together to create magic, the same is true of Derrick and Alan. When asked about their experience with Gilbert & Sullivan shows prior to working together, we got two very different answers.

Derrick describes himself as coming in to the Savoyards as a “complete neophyte,” having seen the movie version of *The Pirates of Penzance* many years ago and with a “passing familiarity with the major titles.” Alan, on the other hand, had listened to Gilbert & Sullivan music since his pre-teen years and first appeared in a production in college. He has been involved, off and on, with Durham Savoyards productions since 1984. Sometimes two completely different perspectives can cause conflicts but in this case, it seems to have helped form a good working relationship with each director pulling from the other’s experiences to produce a unique product.

When asked if there was a favorite production experience among the four done to date, both directors mentioned *Patience*. Alan had looked forward to working on *Patience* because of the high-quality musical score and because he had never worked on the show before. Derrick said that while he loved *Pirates* and *Mikado*, he particularly enjoyed working on two of what are considered “lesser-known” shows — *Ruddigore* and *Patience*. Working on these shows al-

lowed everyone in the cast and on the production team to approach them with the same sense of naïveté and discovery with which he approaches all the G&S shows that are new to him.

In reminiscing about the last four productions, Derrick and Alan experienced low points, both personal and professional, but found many more high points than low. Hard work, lack of time and money to do everything directors would like to see done, having to turn away talented performers because of a wealth of available talent, family crises, and just plain old running out of energy were all factors at one time or another. But through it all, the cast and production crews continued to rehearse, build, paint, sew, and do all the behind-the-scenes tasks that are necessary for a production to take shape. Each time, the result was “a stunningly beautiful production,” “icing on the cake,” and “good polished results ... in each and every show.” Audiences and reviewers alike have agreed with these sentiments from the directors about the first four productions and look forward, with the rest of us, to another successful turn in March as they bring to the stage the fifth collaboration, the Ivey & Jones version of Gilbert & Sullivan’s *HMS Pinafore*. Don’t miss it!

Become a Friend of the Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

A gift at any level entitles you to receive mailings, information about special events, and invitations to our parties. Again this year, Friends are eligible for discount pricing on orchestra seats for *HMS Pinafore* next March. We hope you will treasure belonging to our troupe of merrymakers and help us continue keeping the brilliant works of Gilbert & Sullivan vital in North Carolina.

We are a 501(c)3 corporation, so your Friends contribution is tax-deductible. You will receive an acknowledgement for your contribution for your tax records. In addition, donors at the Peer level and above will be acknowledged (unless otherwise requested) in the playbill and on a poster in the lobby during the annual show.

Friends are recognized in performance programs in six levels of giving:

- Mikado** ~ \$1000 and above
- Sorcerer** ~ \$500 to 999
- Lord High Admiral** ~ \$250 to 499
- Pirate of Penzance** ~ \$100 to 249
- Gondolier** ~ \$50 to 99
- Peer of the Realm** ~ \$25 to 49

Our deepest thanks to you for your past and continuing support. We hope you find the most important benefit of all lies in being such an important part of a vital arts organization. As we enter this new season, we enjoy the same level of excitement that our predecessors felt forty-four years ago. We look forward to presenting the next forty-four and, with your help, we will.

The Official Newsletter of
The Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

WWW.DURHAMSAVOYARDS.ORG

933 Lystra Lane
Chapel Hill, NC 27517



Editor's Letter: "Four for the Benefit of Our Audience"

As we sally forth into Durham Savoyards' forty-fourth season and I prepare for my fourth production as DSL Business Manager, the annual Friends appeal comes to the fore. Yes, another year has passed, my friends in G&S, and we are asking for your financial support to keep the complete works of Gilbert & Sullivan on stage in North Carolina.

For our 44th season, The Durham Savoyards, Ltd. will present *HMS Pinafore* at the historic Carolina Theatre from March 16th through 25th, 2007. Tickets are on sale now.

It's very special to me that we are staging *HMS Pinafore* this season. *Pinafore* is my personal favorite among the operettas. It is the first Savoyard production with which I was involved. In 2002, I was strutting the stage instead of the checkbook. It is the first show that I'll see from both the creative and business sides. To close this circle of experience on *HMS Pinafore* is, as I said in another show, "Nothing could possibly be more satisfactory!"

Yet, even with all the experience that the seasons have brought, I feel that I am personally just beginning to appreciate the possibilities before us. I have

witnessed people who had barely heard of Gilbert & Sullivan become devoted fans. I've watched families arrive for our performances with children in costume. Associates often stop me in the hall of my workplace to ask when our show will be presented this year. Plainly this is not a conservation project for some dusty old work that's less accessible with each passing year. On the contrary, the shows are colorful family entertainment with some of the most memorable music of all time. We have only just begun to realize the possibilities.

The Durham Savoyards are blessed with a growing stable of performing talent, a committed, multi-talented board of directors, and, most important of all, a circle of Friends to help us continue this labor of love. Your support allows us to continue high production standards while maintaining ticket prices that allow an expanding audience for these glorious works of theatre. Please read on to learn about how 2006 shaped up for the Savoyards and some of the things we have planned for 2007.

— Dwight Sullivan

The Durham Savoyards, Ltd. Board of Governors, 2006-2007

Elected Officers

- **President** – Karen Gray <KEGRAY@NC.RR.COM>
- **Past President** – Karen Guidry <KAREN.GUIDRY@MINDSPRING.COM>
- **Vice President** – Jim Burnette <BRUTBOY@AOL.COM>
- **Secretary** – Ann Marie Thomas <AM@VIRTUEOFTHEMALL.COM>
- **Business Manager** – Dwight Sullivan <DDSULLIVAN@NC.RR.COM>
- **Members At-Large** – Steve Dobbins <SDOBBS@EMAIL.UNC.EDU>
Pat Roos <PROOS@NC.RR.COM>

Appointed Officers:

- **Producers** – Karen & Charles Guidry <C-K.GUIDRY@MINDSPRING.COM>
- **Publicity Director** and **Informal Performances Director** – not yet appointed

A Command Performance for the Dutchess of Carrboro

On October 27th through 29th the Savoyards returned to The ArtsCenter in Carrboro for the second year to present a condensed version of *Ruddigore* which has become known as "Mini-Gore." While much of last year's cast returned, this time they were under the direction of Savoyard veterans Evelyn McCauley (Mad Margaret) and Steve Dobbins (Sir Despard Murgatroyd). This is the directing debut and first collaboration between this pair. As is often the case when collaboration is in the air, the creative juices flowed from everywhere: "Time after time, someone would step forward unexpectedly to solve this or that problem or challenge. Gold stars all around," says Co-director Steve Dobbins.

According to Lynden Harris, Artistic Director of ArtsCenter Stage, The ArtsCenter would like to make this an annual event. "It might be fun to see *Ruddigore* develop something of a cult following... with audience members wearing very tall wigs like 'Mad Margaret' and maybe even calling out lines with the actors or singing along to songs," Harris said.

For this production, Chris Newlon, Ann Marie Thomas, Evelyn McCauley, Steve Dobbins, and Richard Dideriksen reprised their roles from the original 2004 spring production. Karen Gray and Kenny Cruz returned from last year's "Mini-Gore." Charlie Bartee stepped in this year as Old Adam, Teme Levgar as Ruth, and Kim Kingsley sang the part of Zorah. The

ghoulish cabaret chorus included Pam Guidry-Vollers, Saki Kinney, Cathy Lambé, Donna Smith, Bobby Cameron, Michael Hale Gray, Pat Roos, David Smith, Nick Staffa, and Bruce Stewart.

"Mini-Gore" #2 marks a milestone for the Savoyards in a few ways: an established audience in a Chapel Hill/Carrboro venue; a successful record of "smaller scale" productions; and a successful first collaboration by this actor-turned-director pair. Of this Dobbins says, "What a great experience *Ruddigore* was...I think our audiences were really very happy. They even laughed at the new sight gags and jokes that Evelyn and I added! Insert a big sigh of relief here."



Patience Financials

Each year the business news desk here at Happy Dispatch brings you a financial review of the previous year's stage production. This year we bring you a review of 2006's *Patience, or Bunthorne's Bride*.

As you may recall from last year's Happy Dispatch, *Patience* is in the "Next Six" category of operettas. To review: *The Pirates of Penzance*, *HMS Pinafore*, and *The Mikado* make up the "Big Three." The "Next Six" are *Patience*, *Yeoman of the Guard*, *Ruddigore*, *The Gondoliers*, *Iolanthe*, and *The Sorcerer*. The definition of the "Next Six" are shows with enough following to draw a substantial audience, but significantly smaller (25-40% less) than the "Big Three." In financial terms: "Big Three" shows come close to breaking even, "Next Six" shows always lose money, it's a question of how much.

Financially, *Patience* 2006 did quite a bit better than expected. Three things contributed to this financial good news in order of effect:

- Careful expense management by Producers Karen and Charles Guidry and their technical team;
- Reducing the show to a single weekend;
- We sold more tickets than predicted.

Here are the numbers:

Patience — Income and Expenses, 2006			
BUDGET AREA	BUDGETED	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
Total Income	\$29,218	30,134	\$916
Expenses:			
<i>Theatre Expenses</i>	\$10,700	\$7,533	-\$3,167
<i>Labor Expenses</i>	\$24,330	\$21,811	-\$2,519
<i>Materials</i>	\$2,200	\$2,166	-\$34
<i>Administration & Publicity</i>	<u>\$11,940</u>	<u>\$11,632</u>	<u>-\$398</u>
Total Expenses	\$49,170	\$43,142	-\$6,028
Net Gain or Loss	-\$19,952	-\$13,008	
Total Tickets Sold	1,300	1,386	+86
Gross Receipts	\$26,468	\$28,115	+\$1,647
Average Ticket Price	\$20.36	\$20.28	

These expense reductions came to over \$6,000. The bulk of the savings came in theatre and labor costs. This was the first time we had done a single weekend show and we estimated most of the expenses too high. A single weekend run is one of the most effective things we can do to save expense on "Next Six" productions.

Ticket sales of 1,386 vs. a projection of 1,300 brought an improvement of gross receipts of \$1,657. This doesn't all turn up in the total income because the Fletcher Grant came in at about \$1,000 less than we budgeted. We have no way of predicting this value. It rises and falls with the endowment's portfolio.

With better income and lower expenses the net is a loss of \$13,000 instead of the expected amount of almost \$20,000. \$13,000 is right in the area where "Next Six" productions are expected to perform.





This issue of

The Happy Dispatch
NEWSLETTER

was written by Dwight Sullivan and Karen Guidry
and produced by Charles Register

The Never Ending Search for the Ideal Ticketing Plan

The ticketing plan for *HMS Pinafore* has been completely revised this year based on feedback received for the last two years. The ideal ticketing plan would have some reserved seats for those who want to buy tickets early and know where they will be seated. There should be open seating available for people who want to sit together without prior notice. There should be a ticket that can be redeemed for any performance. With the help of the Carolina Theatre's box office and at the expense of a few brain cells, we have developed a plan with all of those features.

The following ticket pricing applies to all performances *except* the Family Matinee on Saturday March 24th.

Reserved seating will be center orchestra only: rows A-K and seats 101 through 116. Pricing for center orchestra will be similar to last year: \$25 regular price. Donors, seniors and groups can buy these seats for \$22.

All other seats will be general admission (first-come/first-served) and will be priced at \$15.

For the Family Matinee, Saturday March 24th, ALL SEATS will be general admission and be priced at \$10.

Cast and orchestra will each receive two coupons, which can be redeemed in the lobby at the time of the performance for general admission tickets. They will no longer have to pre-specify which performance they want to attend. There will be a table staffed with volunteers in the lobby to redeem the coupons for tickets to that day's performance. Cast and orchestra are also eligible for the \$3 discount on center orchestra seats.

We think we are getting close to meeting the broadest range of needs while significantly simplifying box office operations.



This program was made possible with the support of the Durham Arts Council, Inc. Go to www.durhamarts.org for current class, exhibit, and event listings.

The Durham Savoyards needs YOU

Volunteers are always needed and welcomed. From slapping paint to slinging computer bits to snipping snippets of sailor suits, there is a job for you. Check out the "Help Wanted" list at right for information on several special opportunities.

Send email to VOLUNTEER@DURHAMSAVOYARDS.ORG or call producer Karen Guidry at 919-632-4224 and sign up now!

The Family Matinee

From our "Children Should Be Seen" Department

On March 24th, 2007, the second Saturday of the *HMS Pinafore* run, we will offer a special Family Matinee performance for which an entirely new ticketing plan has been developed:

- There are no reserved seats. All seats are general admission.
- All tickets will be priced at only \$10.
- A family of five can attend *HMS Pinafore* for \$50, not much more than a movie but with live orchestra, singers, and dancers!

As we have worked to develop our audience of families with children over the last few years, this new group of enthusiasts has been attending the Sunday matinees with our longest-term fans and supporters. The Sunday matinee has now become very popular. Last year, with only a single weekend run presented, orchestra seats sold out early for this afternoon performance.

This Saturday Family Matinee is an experiment. The board has discussed such a performance in previous years. We chose to try it this year when, if it

didn't sell well, there are six other performances to carry the show. If successful, it has an excellent place in both single and two weekend runs in the future.

For the lesser-known operettas, we considered running the show over a single weekend as we did with *Patience* last year. For this, the Saturday matinee provides an ideal substitute for a Thursday opening night, which is difficult to sell. The show would open Friday. Saturday would have two performances and Sunday a matinee.

For a two-weekend run, such as this year for *HMS Pinafore*, we have two excellent choices to consider in future. One option is a Family Matinee on the second Saturday, as we are doing this year. The alternative is to make the first Sunday a Family Matinee and offer the second Sunday at regular prices. These choices can be made depending on the success of this year's March 24th showing.

Consider the Family Matinee for a family on your Christmas list. Tickets are on sale now!



Help Wanted

Ticket Master (1 needed)

Acts as liaison between Savoyards and Carolina Theater Box Office to handle ticket-related tasks. Will work closely with a cast member who will act as Cast Ticket Sales Coordinator, with the Corporate Sales person, and also with the Business Manager. Must have excellent communications skills, the ability to work well with the Box Office staff, and have the flexibility to go to the box office during the day to conduct business. Great organizational skills and ability to maintain a spreadsheet are a must. The time commitment is 1-2 hours a week through January and then will increase to 4-5 hours a week.

Corporate Sales Rep (1 needed)

Contacts Human Resources or Employee Relations offices of local companies and Activities Directors of local retirement centers to offer information on our group ticket sales and coordinates those ticket sales with the Ticket Master and/or the Box Office. Will work closely with the Business Manager and the Ticket Master. Must have excellent communications skills and be well-organized. Ability to maintain a spreadsheet and documentation are very important.

Ticket Sales Table Volunteers (14 needed)

Two people are needed for each performance of *HMS Pinafore* to man a table in the lobby of the theatre prior to show time to give audience members general admission tickets in exchange for ticket vouchers that have been pre-sold. Pleasant personality and organizational skills required.

The Durham Savoyards, Ltd. presents
Gilbert & Sullivan's delightful musical comedy

H.M.S. Pinafore

or The Lass that Loved a Sailor

March 16-17, 2007 at 8pm, March 18 at 2pm
March 23-24 at 8pm, March 25 at 2pm

Reserved seating \$25 (\$22 for Friends, seniors, groups of 10)
General Admission seating \$15

Special Family Matinee, March 24 at 2pm
 All Seats \$10

All performances at Durham's historic Carolina Theatre

