



## A More Humane Mikado

DERRICK IVEY

The first show I directed for the Durham Savoyards was our 2003 production of *The Mikado*—Gilbert & Sullivan’s beloved 1885 classic. At the time I joked that I was going to drag Gilbert & Sullivan into the 20th Century.

That proved a little harder than I’d thought.

I spent several months poring over *The Mikado*—studying the libretto, listening to recordings of the score, researching its history. And I was struck by two profound truths: The music is stunningly varied and beautiful (as I later found most G&S scores to be); and the libretto is shockingly rife with offensive caricature and blatant racism. Performed as it was originally presented, it’s essentially a Japanese Minstrel Show.

What to do?

Long story short: We choreographed the overture to establish an elaborate backstory in which modern American art patrons at an exhibition of Asian artifacts rebel against a controlling socialite and a bumbling security guard and improvise their version of “The Mikado.” We hardly had to change a word of dialogue, and the music, of course, remained the same.

Some people said it was brilliant. Some complained there weren’t any kimonos. (There was indeed one kimono.)

In 2010 I directed *The Mikado* again. This time we decided to go for a more traditional approach. But, rather than mimic Japanese characters, we evoked the style of Kabuki theater within a contemporary slapstick comedy framework. The set was modern, modular and the make-up and costumes were a homage to classic Kabuki designs.

Some people said it was brilliant. Some accused us of performing in yellow face. (The Kabuki-inspired make-up was technically white face.)

And here we are again.

For our 2019 production of *The Mikado* I’ve decided to go back to my original inspiration. We will again be contemporary Americans improvising a show. But this time the backstory involves a quarrelsome *avant garde* fashion designer named KoKo. Things go awry at the launch of his new Japanese inspired collection, the models rebel, and the attending fashionistas storm the runway to show KoKo what’s what.

In the true spirit of improvisation, anyone can play any character. Musical Director Jackson Cooper and I have agreed to explore non-traditional casting considerations whenever possible. Basically, if you can sing the notes you will be considered for the role. We’re excited to see who auditions—and to discover exactly how our community will tell this story in 2019.

Will it be brilliant? Who knows? (But there will be kimonos.) (And there will definitely not be yellow face.)



To peek at the Producer’s Perspective by Janell Lovelace & the Ruddigore 2018 Ensemble Picture, please go to our website at <https://bit.ly/HappyDispatch2018>

## Beauty from the Bellow of the Blast

ALAN RILEY JONES, MAESTRO  
EMERITUS, DURHAM SAVOYARDS LTD.

The years 1884-85 were pivotal for Gilbert and Sullivan. *Princess Ida* had fallen short of expectations, and producer Richard D’Oyly Carte required a new work sooner than anticipated. But frustrated at being sidetracked from more serious projects, Sullivan refused to set Gilbert’s “lozenge” plot, or any plot containing magical or absurd elements. England’s most successful theatrical partnership might easily have ended in a petulant quarrel.

Then Gilbert thought of Japan (though probably *not* because a sword fell from the wall). Setting the new story in Japan freed Gilbert’s wit to satirize the absurdities of English society in foreign trappings. Mindful of Sullivan’s objections, he kept the story grounded in humanity, and while much of it is whimsical, he avoided the usual absurd surprise ending. Sullivan heartily agreed to the idea. *The Mikado* went on to become their most phenomenally successful creation, and the partnership was revitalized both artistically and financially.



Presented by the  
Durham Savoyards Ltd.

March 28 to 31  
2019

The Carolina Theatre  
Downtown Durham, NC

*The Mikado* auditions are January 13-14, 2019.  
Contact [auditions@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:auditions@durhamsavoyards.org)

# Let's Do the Numbers

KIM KINGSLEY

What a busy year with two full productions! The numbers:

The October 2017 production of *Thespis & Trial by Jury* was performed at East Chapel Hill High School (ECHHS). Not having the Carolina Theatre box office, we experimented with selling tickets in advance through the online ticketing program "Seat Yourself" while also selling tickets at the door. Wonderful Savoyard volunteers not only took ticket money, donations, and sold archival Savoyard CDs & DVDs in the lobby, but also seated patrons. Despite the changed location and fall date, we sold 605 tickets and gave out over 75 comps to the World Premiere show.

Unable to take part in the Gilbert, Jones, & Sullivan World Premiere, Lee Galbreath generously offered to donate the income from her personal month-long Step Challenge, "500,000 Steps to Thespis." Thirty-four people pledged, and our first focused fundraiser raised \$1,890. Thank you, Lee, for being a true Savoyard Angel! We received no grant for this production, since we were not performing in the Carolina Theatre.

Table 1 summarizes the numbers. Theatre costs included rental, tech, and custodial fees, a bargain at ECHHS. Services expenses included those for the production team, rehearsal accompanists, and orchestra.

**Table 1. 2017 *Thespis & Trial by Jury***

Ticket Sales	\$13,788.90
Lobby Sales & Donations	\$234.20
Fundraiser	\$1,890.00
Grants	\$0.00
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$15,913.10</b>
Theater Costs	\$6,755.00
Services	\$19,318.00
Materials	\$973.00
Outreach & Advertisement	\$5,892.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$32,938.00</b>
<b>(Net Loss)</b>	<b>(\$17,024.90)</b>

That amount was less than it might have been because production and orchestra members didn't accept over \$4,000 in service payments. Materials (set, props, costumes, hair, makeup, and truck rental) could have been higher, but we had \$690 of in-kind donations. Outreach included postage, postcards, posters, and programs, as well as advertising in print, radio, and online. Our net loss was \$17,025.

We implemented some changes for our spring 2018 production of *Ruddigore* by again using Savoyard volunteers in the lobby this time to collect donations for 108 tickets & accept 102 comps at the Thursday night "closed" preview performance, thus sparing box office costs. At all four shows, these folks also sold archival CDs & DVDs, accepted *Ruddigore* DVD presale orders, and secured donations from our patrons. We sold a grand total of 1,047 tickets over the run of the show.

**Table 2. 2018 *Ruddigore***

Ticket Sales	\$21,932.00
Lobby Sales & Donations	\$1,295.00
Fundraiser	\$3,200.00
Grants	\$3,006.00
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$29,433.00</b>
Theater Costs	\$17,717.60
Services	\$21,720.00
Materials	\$3,238.54
Outreach & Advertisement	\$6,192.69
<b>Total Expense:</b>	<b>\$48,868.83</b>
<b>(Net Loss)</b>	<b>(\$19,435.83)</b>

Table 2 shows these numbers. The Durham Arts Council awarded us \$3,006 from the Fletcher Fund. A Facebook Fundraiser proposed by new Board member Courtney Thornton brought in \$3,200 to offset the cost of an additional spotlight. Thank you to the 54 donors and 4 matching donors who made this first time Durham Savoyards Facebook campaign such a success!

For this show, theatre costs included rental, tech, custodial, box office, and credit card fees. Services expenses included those for the production team, rehearsal

accompanists, and orchestra. Materials as before included set, props, costumes, hair, makeup, and truck rental, but were higher in part because we rebuilt set pieces that were no longer safe and updated the royal chorus costumes to be more flexible and hopefully last longer. Outreach again included postage, postcards, posters, and programs, plus print, radio, and online advertising. Our net loss was \$19,436.

Continued losses of this magnitude are not sustainable. Making matters worse, we have been forced to move out of our warehouse space on Ellis Road and into a much more expensive space at Northgate Mall. Ellis cost a reasonable \$520 per month (\$6,240/year), whereas our new monthly rent is almost four times more expensive (\$2,038/month, \$24,456/year). The move to Northgate was meant to be temporary while we found less expensive space. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find any suitable space within our budget in the Triangle and are looking further afield. We need immediate assistance in finding a warehouse! Please contact [warehouse@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:warehouse@durhamsavoyards.org), if you have an idea or a connection.

I am happy to report the good news that Friends donations have increased, with \$21,998 collected from 87 donors, along with an additional \$1,232 in matching gifts. These contributions are greatly appreciated and are helping us to keep going. We have two donors who are making monthly payments via PayPal, one long-time sustainer making an automatic bank draft, and a supporter who has a quarterly payroll deduction that is matched by their employer!

Want to help? Have you paid your dues? Are you able to make a difference by becoming a Savoyard Sustainer? Does your employer match donations? If you order from Amazon, you can also support us with your pennies through AmazonSmile, from which we have already received \$23.59. We have just started a formal process to accept advertisements either on a Sponsors page on the website, in the show program, or both. Please contact [business@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:business@durhamsavoyards.org) with questions or if you know a company who may be interested.

Every cent is valued! We need your support to prevent the Lord High Executioner from taking our heads!

## Welcome, New & Newish Board Members

### Courtney H. Thornton

Greetings, Savoyards! I've enjoyed participating in *Thespis* (2017) & *Ruddigore* (2018) with you. By day, I'm an academic administrator at NC State University. I'm also a wife, mother, active member of Yates Baptist, and accordion student. Fewer things make me happier than helping organizations with excellent missions to do their very best work...oh, and spreadsheets. The Durham Savoyards are a warm, welcoming, and talented community, and I am pleased to serve as Secretary this year.



### Pam Guidry-Vollers

Pam Guidry-Vollers has been a member of the Durham Savoyards for 20 years. In that time, she has completed the Gilbert/Sullivan/Jones Super Canon (the 13 extant Gilbert & Sullivan operas, plus *Thespis*) as a performer, choreographer, and hair & makeup designer. She has even held almost all of the positions on the

Board of Governors. As Vice-President, she is looking forward to being a part of the continued growth of this organization she loves so very much.

### Mary Elizabeth Guy

After serving on the Board from 2012 to 2015, followed by a three-year medical hiatus, Mary is excited (and slightly overwhelmed) to be back as a member-at-large for 2018-2019. She has performed on stage with the Durham Savoyards since *The Mikado* in 2010, having enjoyed previous shows from the audience's perspective since moving to the area with her parents in 1998. Often found among the set construction, props, and costume crews, Mary also helps to keep the warehouse crew fed during construction season!



## New President's Message

MICHAEL ROWE

2017-2018 has been a very exciting time for the Durham Savoyards, Ltd. In October 2017, we were honored to perform the world premiere of the fully orchestrated *Thespis* by our Maestro Emeritus Alan Riley Jones. After a brief introduction with *Trial by Jury*, we fully welcomed our new Music Director, Jackson Cooper, during the April 2018 performance of *Ruddigore*. And we ended up having to accomplish an emergency (unplanned) move to new temporary warehouse space at Northgate Mall, when we were given 60 days' notice that our prior warehouse was closing down. Luckily, the Savoyards are a strong community who came together and helped re-organize, pack, and move to our temporary home, while dealing with the incredible heat of a North Carolina summer. Thank you to all who donated tubs & racks, brought meals, made calls, worked at the warehouse on Saturdays, came on Moving Day, and otherwise freely gave your time to pull this off.

We still need your help to find a new permanent warehouse location. The incredible growth of the area has made warehouse space a premium, and our current temporary location is four times more expensive. Please share any thoughts, about a location or person to contact, with me.

On July 21st, I had the honor of being elected as President of your Board of Governors, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to help us strengthen and enrich the group over the next few years. I have been part of the Savoyards since moving to the area nearly 20 years ago when a co-worker told me about a performance of *Pirates of Penzance* at the Carolina Theater. After seeing the cast & hearing the orchestra, I knew I had to join in the 2000 *Grand Duke*. I want to give you some insights into what we are thinking and doing as a Board, to help continue the tradition of excellent performances for which the Savoyards are known.

The Bylaws were updated at the July Annual Meeting to include language on how we welcome all people for our membership. We are: updating policies to ensure a safer environment for all our members, family, volunteers, & guests; hoping to begin a capital campaign to replenish our endowment, which has been adversely impacted by a decline in audience, rising production costs, and unforeseen expenses such as our current warehouse situation; and actively looking for year-round support in areas such as publicity to increase our visibility to the Triangle.

While I enjoyed serving with Ada Brown & Scott Sino, board members whose terms have ended, I am pleased to note that both will continue assisting the Board in their areas of interest. I welcome our new board members.

I am looking forward to the Spring 2019 performance of *The Mikado*, which will feature some exciting changes and help the Savoyards grow our audience and community.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly via e-mail at [michaelrowe01@gmail.com](mailto:michaelrowe01@gmail.com). I hope to see you at *The Mikado* on March 28-31st, 2019!!



# With Aspect Stern

JACKSON COOPER

Already almost a year into my tenure as Music Director, I have felt so much warmth, support, and good graces from this organization. I came to G&S later in

my career, albeit I'm only in my 20s, but I came to it nevertheless. One of the greatest overtures in the repertoire is that for *Pirates of Penzance*, so naturally, when I saw the greatest orchestras in the world include it on their *50 Greatest Overtures* CDs, I had to conclude that G&S was not "filler music," as one of my snobby conducting friends once said. In fact, the *Pirates* overture is

probably greater than the greatest opera overtures, more symphonically rich than the best symphonies, and deeper, more difficult than the most serious of choral music...



To finish reading and find out what Jackson wrote about *The Mikado*, please go to our website at <https://bit.ly/HappyDispatch2018>

Please help us connect with schools, social clubs, retirement communities, & any other interested public or private group(s) by contacting Informal Performances Director, Noelle Paull, at (919) 246-4362 or [gs-singers@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:gs-singers@durhamsavoyards.org).



More details at <https://bit.ly/HDconcerts>

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# Perform, Entertain, Educate, Perpetuate

BETH L. ROWE

A savvy long-time Savoyard once wrote that the reason for concerts is "to perform, to entertain, to educate, and to perpetuate the works of Gilbert & Sullivan". Providing multi-generational amusement for a donation allows the Savoyards to give back to the community throughout the year rather than with just a single annual production...



To see the rest of the concert note, please go to our website at <https://bit.ly/HappyDispatch2018>

This project is supported by the Durham Arts Council's Annual Arts Fund and the NC Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources. Our shows are also made possible by the generous donations of time, money, and expertise of our members and supporters.

Thank you!



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Please fill in the information below and RETURN THIS FORM along with your tax-deductible contribution.

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Please make check payable to Durham Savoyards Ltd.  
120 Morris Street, Durham, NC 27701

There are many ways in which you can be a Friend of the Savoyards. Please consider the following options:

- Mikado* \$1000 and over
- Sorcerer* \$500-\$999
- Lord High Admiral* \$250-\$499
- Pirate of Penzance* \$100-\$249
- Gondolier* \$50-\$99
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