



# THD THE HAPPY DISPATCH



DECEMBER 2011

The Official Newsletter of the Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

[durhamsavoyards.org](http://durhamsavoyards.org)

## Banished No More, *Iolanthe* Returns

By PAULA SCOTLAND

From the depths of the waters... rising up to the stage of the Carolina Theatre, *Iolanthe* is coming! Forgiven by the fairy queen, Iolanthe returns to the world she left 25 years earlier... full of love triangles, political mayhem, and considerable folly. Her half-mortal/half-fairy son Strephon has fallen in love with a mortal, Phyllis. Will love prevail? Or will Phyllis fall into the arms of another as a result of a simple misunderstanding? Can Iolanthe help without compromising her identity? Don't forget the older women posing as young girls – it must be Gilbert and Sullivan!

Tanner and Janell Lovelace and I are thrilled to be working with the Durham Savoyards this year to produce *Iolanthe*. We are assembling a very strong production team, most of whom have worked with the Savoyards for many years now. Both Derrick Ivey and Alan Riley Jones will be returning as our stage and music directors, respectively, for their tenth consecutive production in these positions. Richard Dideriksen has created a beautiful set design that he shared with us at the sing-through in November. Our other designers are also actively making plans. At the time of this writing, we are eagerly anticipating auditions; we can see already that Derrick and Alan will have an excellent cast to choose from for the show. Creative ideas and excitement are overflowing about this production. This will be a great adventure!

*Iolanthe* is a wonderful show. While certainly love stories involving fairies and G&S style-political humor

are unquestionably very fun, my favorite part of "Iolanthe" is the music. Who can't love Private Willis's "When all night long a chap remains," or Phyllis and Strephon's duet, "If we're weak enough to tarry"? However, my favorite song is without doubt "Loudly let the trumpet bray," a well-known favorite of the Savoyards' previous directors, Ranny Umberger and Ben Keaton. The joy and energy of this foot-tapping song is like no other. As many of you know, Ranny Umberger passed this last October. In my heart as I hear this beautiful song, I will think of Ranny, tapping his foot and humming along. Peace to you, Ranny!

So, be you "a little liberal, or else a little conservative," I hope you will participate in this production... either on stage, backstage, in the pit, at the warehouse or costuming room, or simply enjoying this beautiful creation from the newly renovated seats in the Carolina Theatre. We want you there. Come share the adventure with us!

## The New and Improved Carolina Theatre

By MICHAEL HALE GRAY

If you have gone to past Savoyards shows (and, if you get this newsletter, you probably have!), then you should be very pleased with the recent improvements to the Carolina Theatre. It has been over 20 years since the theatre's last make-over; the changes are very apparent. The new carpet

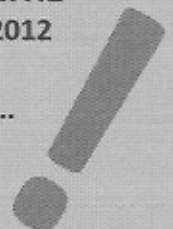
harkens back to the original style when the Carolina opened as the "Durham Auditorium" in 1926. The plaster has been patched and painted; the entire auditorium has been thoroughly stripped of the grime that has added up over the years where the cleaning crews cannot reach, but scaffolding can.

One of the ongoing projects is a multi-museum, part of it on each floor. The ground floor exhibit is now open, showing the basic history of the building. It displays pictures of the theatre when it was new and when it was renovated in the late 1980s, as well as facsimiles of programs. The second floor display (opening fall 2012) will highlight the many volunteers who have helped the Carolina function over the years. In 2013, the third floor will focus on the original African-American patrons of that level and their struggle for equality.

Presently, all audience members enter through the same front doors. Now you will be able to peruse the history of the theatre, marvel at the carpet and well-polished accessories, and eagerly anticipate the opening of the doors to the newly-painted auditorium for that night's show. Enjoy the ambiance!

Gilbert and Sullivan's  
**IOLANTHE**  
Performing at Durham's historic  
**CAROLINA THEATRE**  
March 29 - April 1, 2012

Blow the trumpets....  
Bang the brasses!  
Tantantara, tzing,  
**BOOM!**



## From the Desk of the President

BY STEVE DOBBINS  
PRESIDENT, DURHAM SAVOYARDS, LTD.

### My fellow Durham Savoyards:

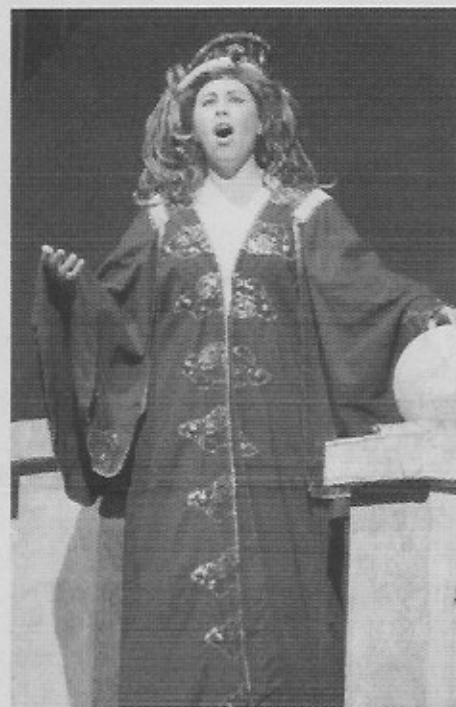
With another New Year destined to arrive in just a few more weeks, it seems like a good time to reminisce upon the journeys and adventures of the Durham Savoyards over the last twelve months.

Our March 2011 production of *Princess Ida* was out-of-this-world! Director Derrick Ivey chose a non-traditional setting for this production: Princess Ida and Company were found on another planet in the far reaches of outer space. It was – I'm guessing – the first time that Act One of a Durham Savoyards production was set onboard a spaceship. Twenty years had passed since the Savoyards' last performance of *Ida* in 1991, and although it is less well-known than many G&S operas, we were delighted that more than 1,900 people attended the production.

again, Charles Guidry! When the remaining tenants of Liberty were evicted after the collapse, the Savoyards helped several groups find other warehouse space. In particular, Savoyard volunteers helped the Young People's Performing Company move its materials to the Regional Commerce Center complex where we now build and store our set pieces.

In October 2011, we enjoyed the first Durham Savoyards concert ever to be produced in collaboration with Raleigh Little Theatre. You can read about *Sing Me A Story* elsewhere in this newsletter. It was a marvelously entertaining revue, and I was especially gratified that many of the members of the audience were RLT fans who had never before seen a Durham Savoyards production. My thanks to a wonderful and tireless cast, to our very hospitable colleagues at RLT, to co-producer Noelle Paull, stage director and choreographer Maggie Bunce, and music director Alan Riley Jones, who also wrote the delightful script.

I am sad to note that we have lost a number of members of the Durham Savo



Lee Galbreath as Princess Ida

us how many volunteers and supporters have worked together over the last five decades to bring the Savoyards to where we are today. The Savoyards of today stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, after all.

I will be contacting you via the [g-s] listserv in the near future with information about our plans to interview Savoyards from the organization's early years. We look forward to *Iolanthe* in March 2012 and to our upcoming 50th anniversary season in 2013 with appreciation for the Durham Savoyards Ltd.'s rich history and with renewed excitement for the adventures that lie ahead. Here's to the next 50 years!




Kings Gama (John Adams) and Hildebrand (Jim Burnette) discuss their childrens' future in *Princess Ida*

When part of the Liberty Warehouse roof collapsed in May 2011, all the hard work required for the Savoyards to move out of that facility in September 2010 suddenly seemed all-the-more rewarding. Thanks

yards family this year: Janice Sue Maher, Barbara Bounds Milone, Pauline Ligon Nease, Herb Posner, Clark Wang, Monte Moses, and our former stage director of more than 20 years, Ranny Umberger. The passing of former Savoyards reminds

**2013 is the  
Durham  
Savoyards'  
50th Anniversary  
Season**





## Quicken Quickie Financial Update

By MICHAEL HALE GRAY  
BUSINESS MANAGER

Numbers may not be the most exciting thing about getting a newsletter, but some readers might like to know that the Savoyards are solvent and will be around for the 50th anniversary. *Princess Ida* (2011), while it is one of the lesser-known G&S operettas, did very well. All values in this article are rounded to the nearest dollar.

The cost to rent the Carolina Theatre was \$4,283. Personnel at the Carolina cost \$6,612, so please be nice to the stagehands and the house manager in the lobby. Chairs, tables, mikes, gels, and daily restroom cleaning were \$3,223. Ads placed by the Carolina came to \$4,294. Box office costs were \$1,882. Total retail cost (just like on *The Price is Right!*): \$20,295 for everything associated with the Carolina.

A total of 1,717 tickets were sold, compared to just over 2000 for *Gondoliers* (2009) and about 2,800 for *Mikado* (2010). With the comp tickets given to cast, crew, and orchestra, 1,902 people saw *Princess Ida* from an audience seat. That brought in \$29,859. When you add this year's \$2,875 from the Fletcher Fund, a grant to continuing performing groups using the Carolina's Fletcher Auditorium, it's \$32,734 income for the group. Minus the Carolina fees – the Savoyards got a check for \$11,759. Looks good, doesn't it?

The cost of renting our warehouse space is rising. The *Princess Ida* directors, tech heads, costume makers, and props people get small stipends relative to their work and dedication, and the orchestra runs a tab for stipends and scores. Add them all up and those categories total more than \$28,000.

I won't bore you with set materials, costume fabric, props, printing costs, and postage, but you can see that the Friends

contributions are vital to offset the yearly cost of the show and administrative business: \$46,530, give or take a farthing. The cast pays for their scores and videos. That \$2,100 does help, but you can see that the generous contributions of the Savoyard supporters help keep the cost of tickets affordable.

The Board is all volunteer, as is the Producer, and they meet monthly to ensure that the next year's show is as ready as can be when you audition, rehearse, and finally put on the show. Add in the *Sing Me A Story* just finished, the various space grants from Durham Arts Council, and forms and regulations to keep the Savoyards able to be non-profit and allowed to solicit those Friends funds, and you can see it's a labor of love that keeps our organization running.

## *Sing Me a Story* Hits the Right Notes

By SONJA FOUST

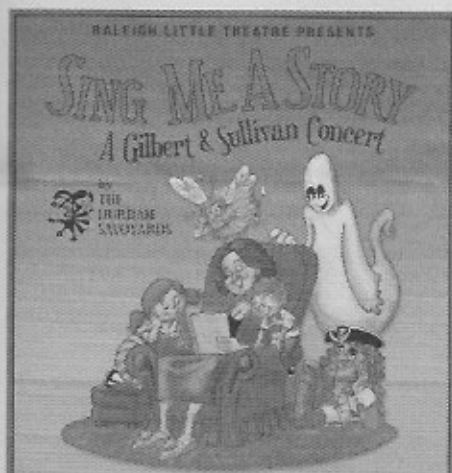
In a first-time collaboration between the Durham Savoyards and Raleigh Little Theatre, the Savoyards performed a staged and costumed Gilbert & Sullivan concert, *Sing Me a Story* at Raleigh Little Theatre on October 29 and 30, 2011.

A write-up in the Independent Weekly set the stage for success; the production played to good-sized, enthusiastic crowds for both performances. Comments from the audience included that they loved the structure of the performance, with its narration between songs to fill in the plot points, and that they appreciated the performers' obvious joy.

### A first-time collaboration between the Durham Savoyards and Raleigh Little Theatre

*Sing Me a Story* was produced by Noelle Paull and Steve Dobbins, directed by Alan Riley Jones (music) and Maggie Bunce (staging and choreography), and accompanied by Sam Hammond on the piano.

Despite a few injuries and illnesses, and one big injury (Adrienne Richter took a bad step into the pit and ended up with a broken wrist!), the cast delivered two energetic, fun-filled performances.



RALEIGH LITTLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
**SING ME A STORY**  
A Gilbert & Sullivan Concert  
with THE DURHAM SAVOYARDS

Raleigh Little Theatre  
385 Poplar St. Raleigh, NC 27607  
404-815-0000  
919-821-3111  
raleighlittletheatre.org

## Be a Friend to the Savoyards in 2011

By MICHAEL HALE GRAY

For almost 49 years, the Savoyards have provided superb productions in a family environment at affordable prices. Many of you know students who, after watching our shows, go on to perform themselves and entertain the next generation of theatre-goers. Recently, several teens have written letters, e-mailed, and posted on Facebook about their positive experiences at Savoyards shows. Some of them might even be on stage with us this year!

In today's economy, we know that some of you are struggling to make ends meet. You can attend the show, but cannot be as generous with your

money as you would like. Know that every one of your contributions is fervently and deeply appreciated. Please drop by the courtesy desk during the show so the business manager can personally thank you and get to know your faces, not just your check numbers.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Savoyards in Spring 2013, those of you on this special mailing list will be the first to hear about any perks associated with the celebration. Notice that it does not say "those who donate;" everyone on this list has contributed in some way over the years. We want to thank you.

If you are able to make a donation this year, we thank you. If it seems like only a small donation to you, remember that many small donations add up to a wonderful show and we thank you just as much. You make it possible to raise the curtain. We sing for you, we bow to you, and we laugh with you. You provide a clean, friendly link to the past, providing entertainment for generations to come, so that your grandkids can see the Savoyards in our 100th anniversary year! (And did we mention? Thank you for your donation!)



*Iolanthe* is made possible in part through gifts to the Durham Arts Council's Annual Arts Fund, an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

The performances in Fletcher Hall of the Carolina Theatre are made possible in part by a grant from the Durham Arts Council's Fletcher Performing Arts Fund of the Triangle Community Foundation.



## Subscribe to Email Notifications for Savoyard Events

By MICHAEL HALE GRAY

Are you getting your Savoyard information by snail-mail only? Would you like to get it via e-mail? Most announcements are that way now, but we know many of you still like having this hard-copy piece of paper in your hand. It's hard to put the pledge form and return envelope in an e-mail!

Still, in today's eco-friendly and mobile environment, do you want to get audition and show information via the internet? Would you like to be informed of the annual meeting by electronic means, without the postcard and stamp?

Please let the Savoyards know your desires by sending your email address to [info@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:info@durhamsavoyards.org). We will let you know when you are added. Thank you for your participation.

## Savoyard Board of Governors

PRODUCTION YEAR 2011-2012

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