



THE HAPPY DISPATCH



DECEMBER 2014

The Official Newsletter of the Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

durhamsavoyards.org

President's Message

BY BOBBY CAMERON

It's fall—anyone thinking what I'm thinking? That's right, it's SHOW TIME!

Hello all, and welcome to *The Happy Dispatch*! It's unbelievable that our globe has spun enough to get us into the next show cycle, but here we are and work is well under way on *Utopia Limited*. A HUGE shout-out to Janell Lovelace, our esteemed producer, who already has much of the show's production staff on board — building on the groundwork laid in the late spring by the always-prepared and newly-elected past-president, Kim Kingsley. Many of you will already have joined us in the sing-through on November 9th, and also at the auditions on December 7th and 8th.

In August I had an interesting and enriching experience I wanted to share with you, to validate the sense many of us have of being a part of the Gilbert & Sullivan community. I attended a gathering of representatives from twelve G&S organizations from



A scene from *The Sorcerer* (2014)

cities like San Francisco, Seattle, Houston, San Antonio, Minneapolis, and Norman, Oklahoma. It's really something to understand that there are so many people as crazy about the music and humor of G&S as we are!

We shared ways to reach new audiences, enhance their experience, and help them appreciate this zany art form. And we left with teams volunteering to do things like build a curriculum for teachers to feature G&S in their classrooms.

I have heard our own David Smith and Michael Gray talk about other G&S companies that they've communicated and sung with, so that part wasn't new. It was the experience of the excitement and commitment shared by these twelve groups that helped me understand that we in the Durham Savoyards have lots of kin across the country.

*And so,
on with the show!*



The Durham Savoyards, Ltd. Presents

Utopia Limited

March 26-29, 2015
Carolina Theatre, Durham, NC

Directed by Derrick Ivey
With Music Direction by Alan Riley Jones

Notes from the Producer

BY JANELL LOVELACE

Last year I had the pleasure of being producer for the Durham Savoyards for the first time. While I already knew how talented the folks onstage are, I was blown away by the quality of talent that goes on behind the scenes to make shows like *The Sorcerer* happen. I'd never realized the professional photography equipment and experience that goes into our promo pictures; the difficulty in designing a set that has to be taken apart at the warehouse, put together on stage, and be both sturdy and fabulous looking; the detail that goes into the pages of lighting information that our lighting designer brings to the folks at the Carolina Theatre, and much more. So many people work so hard, whether they're creating choreography, learning music,

sewing costumes, making props, designing posters, or doing one of too many other things to name; I couldn't possibly thank them all or applaud them all enough for what they did to make *The Sorcerer* come alive. The audience is also a necessary part of a successful show, so thanks to everyone who came to see the show for helping heighten the excitement.

— Now another year has rolled around, and I enjoyed coordinating this talent enough that I find myself in the Producer's seat again, getting ready for *Utopia Limited*. The production team is starting to take shape, and I'm excited to see both veteran Savoyards and new folks in the group, all bringing amazing talents and skills to the mix. It will be interesting to see what we



do with this show about a tropical island nation where the people decide to improve themselves by becoming more British (of course), and end up transforming their island nation into a limited liability corporation. Then again, if corporations can be people, why can't a nation be a corporation? Maybe the more things change, the more they stay the same! Then there's the island princess and the dashing young captain... romance may be in the air, unless the island's two judges manage to spoil the mood. I can't wait to find out what happens this year when all of our talented folks combine their efforts. There will be many opportunities to be involved during the next few months, so please plan to audition, volunteer, or to come see *Utopia Limited* on March 26-29 at the Carolina Theatre!



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Durham Savoyards main stage shows are supported in part by the Durham Arts Council's Annual Arts Fund and the N.C. 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!

New Board Members

Stuart Albert

Even though Stuart Albert has little to no idea what he's doing as the newly-elected Vice President of the Durham Savoyards, Ltd. (or in anything else, as is readily evident when watching him onstage), he will probably not let that stop him from eventually going mad from the unchecked power the position of nominal second-in-command of a regional musical theater company affords. Originally from Moore County, Stuart was very active in community theater for the first eighteen years of his life, and then in the next eighteen years he was not. In his daily life, he is a Japanese-to-English biomedical translator and editor, and is dangerously close to obtaining his Masters of Science in Biomedical Writing from the University of the



Sciences in Philadelphia. He is otherwise akin to an ice cream cone full of baby fennec foxes to his friends, and an underwear drawer full of tarantula death adders to his enemies, and is terrible at metaphors.

Mary Elisabeth Hirsh

Hey everyone! This is Mary Elisabeth Hirsh, your co-member at large on the board. My first Durham Savoyards experience was as an audience member at *HMS Pinafore* in 2002. The next year I helped my mother, Lisa Hirsh, paint part of the set for *The Mikado*. In the following years, I watched many a show with which my mother



helped, and in which my friend Sarah Bynum (nee Miller) and my sister and co-member at large Kimberly Hirsh performed. My first show as performer was the 2010 *Mikado*. I took a one-year hiatus (only because I lived out of town) during 2011, but promptly returned in 2012 and have performed in every show since. You may remember me from such parts as Celia in *Iolanthe* in 2012 and Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* in 2013. I am happy to be on the board so I can help this organization. The Durham Savoyards are very important to me, as is continuing the tradition of performing Gilbert and Sullivan shows. I hope I will be a valuable member to this board and look forward to serving you all.

Summer Concert Series

By NOELLE PAULL

In the past few months, the Savoyard Concert Singers performed two well-received concerts. The first was at Carol Woods and was conducted by Jacqueline Marxx, a talented conductor and singer. We sang a Gilbert & Sullivan sampler which included music from *Pirates of Penzance*, *Utopia Limited*, *HMS Pinafore*, *The Mikado*, and *The Gondoliers*. Sam Hammond served as accompanist, tickling the ivories with his usual flair!

The second concert was for the residents of Galloway Ridge at Ferrington Village, a new venue for us. Our conductor was the wonderful Jim Waddelow from Meredith College and we were lucky that Sam Hammond was available again to be our accompanist. We did basically the same concert, the Gilbert & Sullivan sampler which began and ended with music from *Utopia Limited*. Noelle acted as emcee for both concerts, wishing the whole time that Steve Dobbins could have been there, and made a point of announcing the March show dates for *Utopia Limited*.

We also put together a short concert for the Durham Arts Council anniversary celebration on November 23rd. Margaret De Mott had contacted Bobby Cameron requesting that we sing, so sing we did!

Thanks to all who helped us celebrate!

Friends and Finances

BY MARY GUY

Another year, another wonderful show—and some lovely concerts as well! Plus, a shiny new Business Manager. For those who may not know me, a quick introduction: I have been attending Durham Savoyard shows since my family moved to Raleigh in 1998. I began performing with the Durham Savoyards five years ago after returning to the area after college and have spent the past two years on the Board of Governors as a Member-at-Large. I've got some big shoes to fill and I would like to thank Michael Gray for his amazing service to the Savoyards. And now, onto the numbers!

This year, we sold a total of 1,685 tickets to *The Sorcerer's* four performances, an average of 421 tickets per night, down from *The Pirates of Penzance's* average of 471 per night over its 2 week run. *The Sorcerer* brought in a total of \$30,714, including nearly \$26,000 in box office sales and over \$2,500 from the always appreciated Fletcher Grant. Concerts added an additional \$800 for a grand total income of \$31,514.

Of course, the show can't go on without some money going out. Rental of the Carolina costs just over \$7,500 for a one week run, plus an additional \$7,000 for their labor expenses (stagehands, etc.). Add to this our orchestra (\$12,600) and production crew (\$14,500), plus sets, costumes,

props, advertising, mailings, assorted fees, and our year-round warehouse rental, and the expenses total \$63,014.

And now for the really important stuff, our Friends. Although our expenses for *The Sorcerer* were similar to other one week shows, lower ticket sales meant that our shortfall was larger than it has been in recent years, making the contributions of our Friends even more important. Our deficit this year came to \$31,500. Unfortunately, our Friends donations were also down this past year, both in quantity and in amount, at 72 donations for a total of just under \$15,300. The remaining \$16,200 shortage had to be absorbed by those rare past surplus years and our investment funds.

If you'll indulge me, I'd like to do a little Friends Math. As stated above, last year we received 72 donations for a total of \$15,300, an average of \$213 per donation. With a median gift of \$75 and the most frequent amount being \$50, most are lower than the average. Over the previous four years, our average number of donations was 79, with the average donation being \$287. That is a 9% reduction in number of gifts and a 26% reduction in the average amount of each gift.

Obviously, we cannot put on a show without the help of our Friends and we greatly appreciate every donation that comes in. But looking at an annual shortage of \$16,200 is a tad overwhelming, so let's focus on smaller bites. Over 1,000 copies of *The Happy Dispatch* have been sent out this year. If each person who receives

a copy would increase their donation by or send in a new donation of \$15, that shortage virtually disappears. \$15. That's \$1.25 a month. Or, even smaller bites. If the each of the 900 people who receive this newsletter but did not send a Friends contribution for 2013-14 send a donation of \$9, we would have the rental of the Carolina covered for the 2015 production of *Utopia Limited*. Just \$9 dollars, 75 cents a month.

Our Friends are vital to the existence of the Durham Savoyards. Your contributions allow us to keep ticket costs affordable while being able to perform in a professional theatre, with live and very talented musicians, supported by a production crew whose skills help to bring each show to life. If you are a regular supporter, thank you, as always; we appreciate you more and more each year. If you haven't joined the ranks of our Friends, please consider doing so. Every little bit truly does help and becoming a Friend is easy. You can use the form at the bottom of this page and enclosed envelope to send a check or bank draft, or donate online through Paypal: click "Send Money" and use the address business@durhamsavoyards.org. You could even be a monthly sustainer.

Finally, if you would like more details regarding our financial ebb and flow, please feel free to contact me. I am still finding my Business Manager sea legs but Kim Kingsley has done a marvelous job as Interim Business Manager (THANK YOU KIM!!!) and with her help, I would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Become a Friend of the Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

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

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