



# THE HAPPY DISPATCH

The Official Newsletter of  
the Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

DECEMBER 2016

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

## President's Message

STUART ALBERT

We have a big year ahead of us – one that will nicely bookend the Gilbert and Sullivan experience. Our spring show will be the rarely-performed *Grand Duke*, the last of Gilbert and Sullivan's collaborations. Soon afterward, we will be jumping back into another rehearsal cycle for both of the "first" G&S short plays, the well-known *Trial by Jury* and the "lost" show, *Thespis*. Of particular note in 2017 will be our performance of *Thespis*. This is a show for which the original music has been almost entirely lost, but we are incredibly fortunate to have Alan Jones as our music director, and he has re-written the missing score. The Durham Savoyards are excited to have this opportunity to present the world premiere of *Thespis* by (in proper order of credit) Gilbert, Jones and Sullivan.

The Durham Savoyards is an organization that, in part, relies upon the generous support of all of you reading this message. We

## Thespis and Me

ALAN RILEY JONES

When I started on *Thespis* back in the early 1990s, I didn't really intend for it to weave itself in and out of my life for a quarter century, and end up as the magnum opus of my composing career, but that has seemed to be the path mapped out for *Thespis* and me.

The first glimmer of this project came in 1987 when the Durham Savoyards first produced *Grand Duke*, proudly announcing completion of the "extant cycle." I knew that the word "extant" referred to the loss of *Thespis*, the first G&S collaboration whose score was lost during Sullivan's lifetime. Still, I thought, "What about *Thespis*? We still have Gilbert's libretto, and it has been set by other composers several times over the years. Why not license one of those scores, or maybe write our own?" But the thought subsided for a few years.

Then in 1992 (or so), I was reading all of the G&S libretti, and enjoying the tunes as they played back in my memory, at least where I knew them. At that time there were several shows unfamiliar to me, so the lyrics in those libretti lay silent on the page, and I read them as poetry, knowing that someday I would learn those tunes. But when I began reading *Thespis*, I knew there were no surviving tunes waiting to be learned. So I began to invent new ones as I read. Eventually, I realized these tunes were at least good enough to write down, and from there, the present musical score was first conceived.

There remained many phases of gestation through which to labor. I knew that I needed to raise my skill level in writing for chorus, writing for piano, and eventually writing for orchestra. By 2001 the vocal/piano score was complete. The Savoyards sponsored a piano-accompanied staged reading in November 2004, which proved that the score was on solid ground. But before a full production was possible, it needed to be orchestrated.

While creating the orchestral score, I also did some general revision and rethinking. For example, in my original concept, I provided an entirely new tune for the solo, "Little Maid of Arcadec," even though Sullivan's version of this number survives. In 2004, we used my new tune for this number. In 2017, we will use Sullivan's version (with my new orchestration). I had also imposed a long "Procession of the Gods" at a place where Gilbert indicated a brief fanfare. This time, we'll do it Gilbert's way.

are one of the few organizations in the world that is dedicated to bringing audiences the entire G&S canon of (with the updated *Thespis*) fourteen shows. Ticket sales are of vital importance, so please do your part to spread the word about us and introduce new viewers to our fantastic musical and comedic offerings. There are financial challenges ahead, including rising ticket handling fees and venue costs, but rest assured that we have many capable and dedicated members of our board of governors who are making it a point to ensure the group's financial solvency for many years to come. If you are as dedicated to this organization as its performers, production crew and long-time audience members are, I encourage you to donate what you can – both in volunteer time and financial support – so that the next generation of Savoyards will be able to become a part of our large family.

## Notes from the Producer

JANELL LOVELACE

It was once again my pleasure to oversee the main stage production for the Durham Savoyards, this time as we all took to the high seas aboard *H.M.S. Pinafore* under the excellent directorial collaboration of Derrick Ivey and Alan Riley Jones. We all sailed back to the late 1940's with our sisters, cousins, and aunts for a delightful set of performances at the historic Carolina Theatre that were only possible because of months of preparation by our cast, crew and orchestra. Almost fifteen hundred audience members were there to appreciate our efforts and laugh along with us at Gilbert's wit.

Now we're gearing up for a particularly spectacular 2017 season, again with Derrick Ivey and Alan Riley Jones at the helm. Not only will we be performing Gilbert & Sullivan's final collaboration, *Grand Duke*, on stage at the Carolina Theatre March 30-April 2, but we will also be performing the world premiere of a fully staged, fully orchestrated production of Gilbert & Jones' *Thespis* paired with *Trial by Jury* October 12-15, 2017, at East Chapel Hill High School. We are always happy to have new members join our merry band, so please spread the word to any who might be interested in helping out in any capacity. If you or they would like to be active behind the scenes – building, painting, sewing, editing, designing, accompanying – email [volunteer@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:volunteer@durhamsavoyards.org). If you'd like to sing with us, sign up for an audition by emailing [auditions@durhamsavoyards.org](mailto:auditions@durhamsavoyards.org). *Grand Duke* features a mythical European grand duchy, a theatrical troupe doing a Greek play, four brides and one groom, a conspiracy, sausage rolls, a statutory duel, a love triangle and much more. I can't wait!

In 2013, we celebrated the Savoyards' 50th anniversary with a production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. I suggested early on that the climactic "fight scene" (only a few brief chords in the *Pirates* score) could be developed into an extended fight and chase scene. For this purpose, we inserted my *Thespis* overture during the Act II finale. Afterwards, renewed interest in a full production of *Thespis* led to its scheduling, in tandem with *Trial by Jury*, for October 2017. I am deeply grateful and humbled for the gracious and enthusiastic support this production is receiving from the board and the entire Durham Savoyards community.

## COMING in 2017!

*Grand Duke*, on stage at the Carolina Theatre March 30-April 2, and *Thespis* paired with *Trial by Jury* October 12-15, 2017, at East Chapel Hill High School.



This project was 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!

## New Board Member: Meaghan Morgan

Hi. I am Meaghan Morgan, the newest member of the board of governors. You may know me from set building, running crew, making props or Savoyards parties. The first Savoyards show I ever saw was *Ruddigore* in 2005. By 2008, I was attending weekly set-building for *Yeoman of the Guard*.

Eventually this was where I met my husband, Ben Morgan – so, the Durham Savoyards won my heart and changed my name!

At the moment, I am looking forward to organizing parties and props during the next show season as social chair and props manager. This gives me a great opportunity

to finish craft projects and throw parties in other people's houses.

It is an honor to be involved with the planning and execution of the shows from early board meetings through strike and disassembly. I continue to learn how much effort and time goes into a performance.

## New Board Member: Scott Sino

I have been a performing member with the Durham Savoyards since 2010, having joined just in time to participate in *The Mikado* (my personal favorite of the G&S canon). I would have never imagined myself on stage singing, acting and delivering dialog, but my participation with the Savoyards over five

seasons has taught me what rewards come when one pushes beyond one's comfort zone. In addition to stage work, I am also an enthusiastic member of the set building team. Since I am a wood worker and have built some of my own household furniture, the Savoyards annual set building provides

an outlet for handling wood and tools and turning out a satisfying finished project. I am pleased to have been invited to join the board of governors for the 2017 season and look forward to participating in a new capacity with people who have become like extended family to me over the last 6 years.

## Finances

MICHAEL ROWE, KIM KINGSLEY (CONTRIB.)

While we have been blessed with incredibly supportive friends in the past, the last few years and the upcoming shows remain challenging for us. In 2016, we performed *H.M.S. Pinafore*, one of the big three Gilbert and Sullivan shows, which is traditionally a financial success. Not so this year, as you will read below. Overall, controllable costs have been managed by the board, but the Carolina Theatre's own financial challenges are resulting in increasing expenditures for us. And, our aging audience coupled with fewer new supporters of any age is complicating the situation.

When comparing performances, there is a key item to consider. We performed *H.M.S. Pinafore* over two weekends in 2007, while in 2016 we only performed one weekend. In 2007, we had to pay an additional fee of \$1,600 in order to hold the theater "dark" between weekend shows. However, even with that extra outlay, the expense for doing two weekends was still less expensive than the cost for one weekend in 2016. In the meantime, the Carolina Theatre has experienced major financial challenges, and has changed the agreement that the Savoyards had to be more in line with professional organizations. We see this impacting us not only in the cost of the theatre space itself, but also in increases for other fees such as ticket handling and labor.

As you can see from the following table, we have passed little of this cost on to our audience in ticket prices, but this is not sustainable long term. The results of 2016 in comparison to 2007 are as follows:

Budget Area	2016 HMS Pinafore (one weekend)	Difference	2007 HMS Pinafore (over two weekends)
Total Income:	\$33,504	(\$7,785)	\$41,289
Expenses:			
Theater Expenses	\$10,337	\$2,481	\$7,856
Labor Expenses	\$35,558	\$8,637	\$26,921
Materials	\$3,110	(\$3,838)	\$6,948
Administration & Publicity	\$14,185	\$1,015	\$13,169
Total Expenses	\$63,190	\$8,297	\$54,894
Net Gain/(Loss)	(\$29,686)	(\$16,081)	(\$13,605)
Total Tickets Sold	1478	(509)	1987
Gross Receipts	\$27,998	(\$5,433)	\$33,431
Average Ticket Price	\$18.94	\$2.12	\$16.82

We will be performing two full Gilbert & Sullivan shows this year, *Grand Duke* and *Thespis* as well as a one act show, *Trial by Jury*. Our motivated plan is risky as we will almost double our annual expenses by bringing you a rarely-seen show in addition to a never-seen show. Many Gilbert and Sullivan groups simply repeat the big three over and over with a smattering of the less-well-knowns mixed in for viewing pleasure. However, we believe in performing the

entire canon. We are very excited to bring these shows to you in 2017.

The board has and will continue taking steps to manage costs. However, you can also help in at least two ways. First, please

plan to attend both performances and bring a friend or two each time. Second, please start or increase your giving to the Friends Foundation. Remember to check if you work for a company who will match your charitable donation – and don't hesitate to ask us for assistance in this endeavor. Every little bit does help. Strengthening the financial base of the Durham Savoyards will make it possible to continue bringing you the experience of all Gilbert and Sullivan shows.

Your contribution is tax deductible. Durham Savoyards, Ltd. is a non-profit, 501c3 tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code. If you work for a company that matches your donation, please send in an employer matching grant form. Financial

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(as you would like it to appear in our main stage production programs)

I prefer to remain anonymous. \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Matching gift? \_\_\_\_\_ Business name \_\_\_\_\_

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 to \$999
- Lord High Admiral* \$250 to \$499
- Pirate of Penzance* \$100 to \$249
- Gondolier* \$50 to \$99
- Peer* Up to \$49