

Savoyardage

The newsletter of the Madison Savoyards, Ltd.

March 2005 – Number 81

PIRATES DIRECTOR HEADS FOR NEW YORK

On the brink of going to press, Savoyardage discovered that last year's Savoyards' Director, Brian Bizzell, is leaving Madison for New York City. He has been recruited to work on a PBS special, *Passion*, a musical by Stephen Sondheim. *Passion* is scheduled to air as "Live from Lincoln Center" on March 31st, and will star Michael Cervaris, Patti LuPone and Audra McDonald. Brian had this to say about his trip to the Big Apple: "I'm thrilled and honored that they've asked me to come out there, and I think it'll be an intensely rewarding experience to work with people who have helped to shape theatre in America."

We're thrilled to learn that his talent is about to find a wider audience, and relieved that Savoyards has Mr. Bizzell under a contract that will bring him back to Madison to direct *The Pirates of Penzance* for us in July! So PBS's gain will not be our loss. On that point Mr. Bizzell added, "I'm **extremely** happy to be returning to Savoyards. I found last year's production to be one of the highlights of my young career, and I'm eagerly anticipating working on this summer's show."

After last year's surprise, when we discovered that sixties London had become the setting for *Ruddigore*, we assumed that Mr. Bizzell will have a novel twist to add to another nineteenth century Cornish tale. Brian deflected inquiry about his plans, saying, "For all of those who have seen *Pirates* so many times, I'll give them something they won't expect but will thoroughly enjoy, when all is said and done." Backstage gossip suggests that a play-within-a-play may be in the works. Regardless, audiences can be confident that the latest staging of this perennial favorite will be both fresh and authentic. It's a summer treat in store.
-- Paul Haskew

WYOUIES

Tarantara, Tarantara, Tarantara! Madison Savoyards' 2003 production of *The Gondoliers* has received a nomination for the 1st Annual WYOU Community Television Awards (a.k.a. the WYOUies) to be held at the Overture Center, Saturday, April 16th at 7pm. WYOU created these awards to celebrate the hard work and creativity demonstrated by volunteer producers in making quality local programming. Look for WYOU's (Cable Channel 4) upcoming 48-hour marathon comprised of 15-minute segments from each of the nominated programs (the marathon will run sometime between March 15

and April 16). And, keep your cheers and crossed-fingers coming in the hope that we Win, Place, or Show!

MEMBERANDUM

"April is the cruelest month," T.S. Eliot once wrote in his poem *The Wasteland*. Perhaps Eliot's phonograph broke down and needed to be fixed. This year, April will be a wonderful month, as many Savoyard veterans will be performing: **Anna Farkas** is playing Desdemona in the Young Shakespeare Production of *Othello* on the weekends of April 22nd and 29th. **Ilona Pinzke** will be performing with the Rural Musicians Forum Choir at St. John's Catholic Church, and Christ Luthern Church, Spring Green April 8th through the 10th. **Amy Kleist** is currently an intern for the Playhouse Merced in Merced, CA. She has already done numerous shows, and will be the technical director for Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. **Ann Baltes, Bill Rosholt, Julie Hutchinson, Kara Noah, and Bill Hoyt** are busy practicing *Mass in B Minor* by J. S. Bach. The concert will be on April 24th at 2:30 PM. **Mara Hoyt** performed a fiddle tune in a strings recital on Feb. 20th. She is planning to bring her Girl Scout troop to the upcoming *Pirates* show this summer. **Kendra Sundal** is finishing up her senior year at the Interlochen Arts Academy, and will be touring Europe this summer for two weeks . . . **Mary Nastri** will be performing in Sun Prairie Civic Theatre's Spring production of *Seussical*. **Sean Sweeney** is still studying theatre in La Crosse and has been in numerous productions, including *The Rise and Fall of Daniel Rocket*. He hopes to become one of the scene designers for another production of *Pirates of Penzance*. **Edward Marion** has been busy this winter in numerous productions, including *Christmas Carol* and *Little Women*. His next play will be *Bat Boy: The Musical*. **Steve Powell** will be performing in *Tosca* this fall. **Vincent Rideout** covered for actors in the Lyric's production of *Tosca*, and will audition for its chorus. **Jim Fleming** performs with the Festival Choir of Madison on April 30th at the Ashbury United Methodist Church and May 1st at the Verona Performing Arts Center, in selections of *Grieg, Sibelius and Part*. **Brian Bizzell** will be assistant to Conductor/Composer Stephen Sondheim for *Passion* from March 14 through April 1 as noted in the first article on this page. **David Woldseth** recently directed Ovine Productions' *Two Rooms* from October 14th through the 16th. A portion of the proceeds benefited the Carter Center Peace Programs. --Sean Bode

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APRIL GILBERT & SULLIVAN REVUE TO BE HELD AT OAKWOOD VILLAGE WEST

The Madison Savoyards will perform at Oakwood Village West in Madison on Saturday evening, April 16, at 7:00 p.m. This special April revue will be held in the Auditorium at Oakwood Village West, 6165 Mineral Point Road. The program will be open to the public. There is no admission fee. Interim Activities Director & Savoyards soprano Jessica Couto-Lashbrook extended the invitation to the Savoyards. At press time John Kruse reported that he was busy lining up the singers for this concert. He aims to have the program include songs from each of the thirteen G & S operettas, with an emphasis on the July production of *Pirates of Penzance*. The singers who have volunteered to be in this program include: Emerald Wahoske, Jessica Couto-Lashbrook, Deborah Holbrook, Ilona Pinzke, Terry Kiss Frank, Brian Bizzell, Ethan Bremner, Paul Bushland, Jeremy Wetherald, Keith Meyer, and John Kruse. Ted Reinke will be the accompanist

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES BY SAVOYARDS VETERANS

The First Unitarian Society of Madison sponsors a series of Friday Noon Musicales which are open to the public. The Musicale on Friday, May 20, will feature John Kruse and some friends presenting *Sholom Aleichem's Tevye*, interspersing songs from *Fiddler on the Roof* with readings from Aleichem's stories on which the musical was based. The public is welcome to attend. *Fiddler on the Roof* was written by Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Bock. They also wrote *She Loves Me*, the featured musical in the First Unitarian Society's upcoming summer series. *She Loves Me* will be presented Friday and Saturday, June 3 and 4, at 7:30 p.m. in FUS Meeting House Auditorium, 900 University Bay Drive. The Savoyards veterans in that production include Tamara Norden Brognano, Andy Abrams, Dennis Reese and John Kruse. For details about tickets, etc., watch local media or check the FUS website <http://www.fusmadison.org/> as these dates draw near.

--John Kruse

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: S'WONDERFUL

It truly was wonderful to be with the enthusiastic fans of Gilbert and Sullivan on February 4 at the First Unitarian Society. This was a gathering of 200 enthusiasts and cognoscenti. The Prelude, Emeritus Professor John W. Barker's commentary, was a treat to our generous donors. He sparked memories, reflections and applause. His remarks also revealed the broad knowledge and interest of the group. The

musical program, the *piece de resistance*, was superb. Young trained singers acted their roles convincingly as well as sang, telling us that 125 years haven't destroyed G&S appeal. Experienced friends like Deborah Holbrook and John Kruse reappeared to warm response. The fine chorus filled out a great musical program. A reverse quiz replaced the usual intermission to display more audience erudition. Prof. Barker threw out questions about arcane G&S facts and folks and fielded informed answers from the audience. People near me vied to outdo each other. The only complaints came when we ran out of sing-along scores. Everyone wanted to take part! The size of the audience had surprised us all and we regretted the last-minute scramble for parking and seats. Every member of Madison Savoyards owed John Kruse a huge thank you. He not only created a great evening, he also sang for First Unitarian Society services so Madison Savoyards could use the auditorium for a token fee.

Here's who else created magic.

Accompanist: Martha Saywell. **Chorus Director:** Kathleen Otterson

Soloists: Brian R. Bizzell, Ethan Bremner, Jessica Couto-Lashbrook, Susan Craft, Terry Kiss Frank, Chad Graham, Deborah Holbrook, John Kruse, Keith Meyer, William Rosholt, Emerald Wahoske, Dan Weinstein and Jeremy Wetherald.

Chorus: Charles Bellinger, Rachel Bishop, Fiona Cahill, Anna Farkas, Caryl Farkas, Michael Gorman, Dianne Graham, Bill Hoyt, Scott Hurlbert, Jenni Macheel, Catherine Neumann, Ilona Pinzke and Mike Ward.

Behind the Scenes: Ginny Moore Kruse, Paul Haskew, Gerry Thain, Kato Perlman, Joann Elder and many more bakers and shakers.

Having fun is what G&S should be about. And *Winter Joy*, a successful return to midwinter events, was fun. We'll be doing it next year. You don't want to miss it!

--Helen Baldwin

PRETHEATER DINNERS AT THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

Pretheater Dinner for *The Pirates of Penzance* at the University Club Friday July 8 and Friday July 15. Social hour begins at 5:15, dinner at 6PM, and the performance of *The Pirates of Penzance* at 7:30 PM at Music Hall is a short (half block) walk. Cost and menu are being planned but it will be close to \$25.00 for three courses with two entree choices. Call the University Club to reserve for yourself and friends, 262-5023

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ORDER YOUR PIRATES TICKETS NOW!

Order your tickets direct from us, before general public release. With a donation of \$25 or more made since July 1, 2004 you can reserve your seats early. You will get the best available reserved seating for the performance of your choice. Please mail this ticket order form by Friday, May 20 to ensure receipt, processing and timely delivery of your tickets.

Please Note: Tickets will be mailed after June 16. *Seating in Music Hall is limited!*

- Friday, July 8 at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, July 9 at 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, July 10 at 3:00 p.m.
- Friday, July 15 at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, July 16 at 3:00 p.m.
- Sunday, July 17 at 3:00 p.m.

_____ Adults @ \$25 = _____

_____ Seniors @ \$23 = _____

_____ Students @ \$10 = _____

_____ Children (under 13) @ \$5= _____

Additional Donation = _____

Total Amount Enclosed= _____

Circle Your Choice: Main Floor or Balcony _____

Special Preferences? _____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____

Hold my tickets at Music Hall Box Office

Please mail this ticket form and check to: The Madison Savoyards, Ltd., Ticket Reservations, P.O. Box 1612, Madison, WI 53701-1612.

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE OR THE SLAVE OF DUTY

Libretto by William Schwenk Gilbert
Music by Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan
Produced by Madison Savoyards Ltd. at Music Hall,
Madison, Wisconsin.
Brian Bizzell, Stage Director

Performances: July 8-10, 15-17, 2005:

Friday, July 8, 2005 - 7:30 PM	Friday, July 15, 2005 - 7:30 PM
Saturday, July 9, 2005 - 7:30 PM	Saturday, July 16, 2005 - 3:00 PM
Sunday, July 10, 2005 - 3:00 PM	Sunday, July 17, 2005 - 3:00 PM

Ticket Prices (All seats reserved):
\$25 Adults, \$23 Seniors, \$10 Students, \$5 Children
Group rates for groups of 10 or more- call (608) 231-9005

After the sensational success of H.M.S. Pinafore, many American performing companies presented unauthorized versions of that opera. Gilbert, Sullivan and Carte decided to prevent that from happening again by presenting official versions of their next opera, *The Pirates of Penzance, or The Slave of Duty* simultaneously in the U.S. and the U.K. The opera premiered on December 31, 1879 at the Fifth Avenue Theater in New York with Sullivan conducting, and one performance was given on the previous day at the Royal Bijou Theatre, Paignton, England, to secure the British copyright. Finally, *Pirates* opened on April 3, 1880, at the Opera Comique in London, where it ran for 363 performances, having already been playing successfully for over three months in NY. On December 10, 1879, Sullivan wrote a letter to his mother about the new opera, upon which he was hard at work in New York. "I think it will be a great success, for it is exquisitely funny, and the music is strikingly tuneful and catching." True enough! *The Pirates of Penzance* was an immediate hit and takes its place today as one of the most popular and enduring works of musical theater. In *The Pirates of Penzance*, Frederic was as a child

apprenticed to a band of tenderhearted, orphaned pirates by his nurse who, being hard of hearing, had mistaken her master's instructions to apprentice the boy to a pilot. Frederic, upon completing his 21st year, rejoices that he has fulfilled his indentures and is now free to return to respectable society. But it turns out that he was born on February 29 in leap year, and he remains apprenticed to the pirates until his 21st "birthday". By the end of the opera, the pirates, a Major General who knows nothing of military strategy, his large family of beautiful but unwed daughters, and the timid constabulary all contribute to a cacophony that can be silenced only by Queen Victoria's name.

- Gilbert & Sullivan Archive

AUDITIONS

Auditions for the *The Pirates of Penzance* are by appointment only on Friday evening, April 29, 2005 and Saturday April 30, 2005. Parts are available for all voices. Reserve your audition time and get location information by calling 608-231-9005. Come prepared to sing a G&S song or something from classical theater in English.

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