

Savoyardage

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON SAVOYARDS, LTD.



2018 H.M.S. Pinafore, photo by Mod Media Productions

A Note from the President... AND Stage Director

Happy 2018 Everyone! If you like piña coladas, and gettin' caught in the rain, *then you're gonna enjoy **Die Fledermaus*** this summer! It is a new year of celebration for Madison Savoyards, Ltd.; not only are we trying out repertoire that's new to us, we are celebrating our **Emerald Anniversary – 55 years of theatre!** This is a milestone only a handful of theatre companies in Wisconsin can boast, and we are thankful to every single person that has performed, served, volunteered, and donated to our organization over the years. The board and I are working hard to make it 45 more!

We would not have survived without the support of you, our generous donors, who have helped us through

seasons of abundance and meager returns. As we mount **Fledermaus** this year, we look to you for your continued support. We are seeking suggestions for businesses and individuals to help underwrite specific costs for our season. Our November 2017 letter noted several expenses-- our **orchestra** (approx. \$17,000) and the **rental of Music Hall** (approx. \$8,500). Over the last year the board has sought corporate and new individual support, and we are turning to you for help identifying new connections and resources to help alleviate these costs. Please reach out to me, or any board member, with suggestions of whom to contact.

Likewise, the board is listening--

we have been for a while! Several iterations of our board debated expanding our repertoire in previous seasons. Audience members, donors, and performers have suggested it in addition to the granting organizations to which we apply. We heard this question most, "What are you doing that's different that sets MSL apart?" We looked at our mission statement:

...to preserve the works of Gilbert and Sullivan and other light opera by producing and promoting live performances; to develop the skills and talent of cast, crew, and musicians of all ages; and to inspire, entertain, and educate the community through performances and other initiatives.

In concert settings we have previously offered non-G&S works, and last year we debated and researched the possibility of offering other light opera as our main stage production. We asked throughout last season for feedback and received positive affirmations, cautions of the future, and negative critiques. I want to answer some of the most common concerns brought to us.

We are *not* abandoning Gilbert & Sullivan. The fact is some shows do not draw the same audience as the big 3, and subsequently the return for the company is low on several fronts. Occasionally we need to offer something different in the operetta/light opera repertory that is going to (1) excite & educate audiences, (2) excite & educate performers, and (3) keep the company fiscally responsible and strong.

We are dedicated to continue performing in English! I am sure everyone started to brush up their German and cook schnitzel in preparation for this summer, but we'll amend our title to *Die Fledermaus, or The Bat sung in English* as a way to help audiences feel more invited and know they'll understand the words. (Additionally, we're investigating supertitles as well.)

What's going to happen next year? The board and I are working on mounting a long-term passion project of former board president James Cain in his honor. I don't want to spoil too much, but this year's curtain speech I promise will contain the announcement of next year's show, which is a return to G&S!

Now, if you're still looking for your G&S fix this year, we've still got it this season! We have our **Topsy Turvy Cabaret** coming up in March



2018 Board of Directors (clockwise from upper left): Glen Barrett, Adam Shelton, Peter Gascoyne, Aimee Broman, Rebecca Stanley, Don Dexter, Catherine Killam. Not pictured: Anne Larson, Nicholas Damiano

written and compiled by Catherine Schweitzer Killam! It will include G&S favorites as you've probably never heard them before. We're looking at flipping age and gender concepts on their head! **AND** we'll have special guest appearances from previous performers with a couple glimpses at our upcoming *Fledermaus* cast! We encourage you to wear a mask or your favorite topsy turvy outfit to help us celebrate. The show starts at **7:30 at the Brink Lounge**, but we'd like to meet you before and socialize from 6:30 to showtime! Come start a delicious tab and see our cabaret!

I am also excited to announce **Fledermaus** as my directorial debut! I wear many hats now other than being a performer and voice teacher; board president, professor, business owner, and now director. My minor while in school was opera production and stage direction, and I relished my time on stage with Bill Farlow. Comedy has always been my favorite to perform, and I enjoy nothing more than a good laugh. The story of **Fledermaus** is a great tale of misdirection, misconception, and masquerades with many comedic moments I cannot wait to stage! PLUS,

we have a chance to collaborate with **Central Midwest Ballet Academy** from Middleton. And let me not fail to mention the connection to G&S! Our translation this summer is adapted from Gilbert's *On Bail*, which is a translation of the original play, *Le Réveillon*. Gilbert often provided translations and burlesques on the works of Donizetti and Offenbach in addition to his collaborations with Sullivan. You'll hear alliterations, patters, and even a few original lines too! **Kyle Knox** returns to us to conduct a resplendent orchestration full of waltzes and tuneful melodies to keep you humming as you leave the theatre. **Rebecca Stanley** will costume our modernized concept and dazzle with her gift. These are only a handful highlights you won't want to miss!

Read through the following pages and mark your calendars. Don't forget we have our **free Children's Pre-Show Event** this summer too. There will be more about that in our next newsletter this year, but it is quickly growing into a Savoyards tradition! Here's to a wonderful 2018!

- Dr. J. Adam Shelton

Quick Thoughts: *Die Fledermaus*

by Music Director, Kyle Knox

Johann Strauss Jr.'s *Die Fledermaus* is one of the true gems of the operetta repertory. When a friend of the



wealthy Gabriel von Eisenstein exacts some playful revenge for a past practical joke, a wild night of song, dance, and confused identities ensues. Audiences relate to these characters as they play their games; there is after all something of a secret trickster in us all. We love *Die Fledermaus* because it makes us smile and it makes us think. And most importantly it makes us laugh at ourselves, something we can all use a little more of.

Though a breezy comedy at heart, the score also contains moments of profound beauty and thoughtfulness. It is a gem comic theater and is Johann Strauss Jr.'s greatest masterpiece. We at Savoyards can't wait to share it with you. So please join us in July, we'll bring the champagne!

Join the Board

We are on the lookout for board members with a passion for the Madison music community, and a strong work ethic. We meet once a month in the evenings. Special skills we are looking for: fundraising or board development experience, business acumen, graphic design/layout, marketing, events planning and a dry sense of humor.

**Prom Dresses & Ball Gowns Needed!**

What is *Die Fledermaus* without outrageous Ball Gowns?

Donate your used prom / formal dresses to our Costume Shop! We're looking for satin, billowy skirts, and sparkly trimmings that may be used whole, embellished, or completely reconstructed (items will not be returned)! Email madison.savoyards@gmail.com for a drop-off time/date. Thank you!

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facebook.com/Madison-Savoyards-Ltd

Mark your Calendars!***Topsy Turvy Cabaret***

Featuring a revue of tunes from Gilbert & Sullivan like you've never heard them, along with some highlights from our upcoming *Fledermaus*!

Friday, March 23rd

6:30 - 7:30: Purchase food/drink

7:30pm: Cabaret program

The Brink Lounge, 701 East Washington Ave., Madison

To RSVP and purchase tickets, go to madisonsavoyards.org.

For more information email catherineskillam@gmail.com.

The Bat (Die Fledermaus)

Performed in English - translation based on Gilbert's *On Bail*. Professional singers, orchestra, and a ballet divertissement, with three *free* previews!

7:30pm July 20, 27 and 28 and

3:00pm July 21, 22, and 29 (First Saturday performance is a Matinee!)

Location: **UW Music Hall**, 925 Bascom Hill

Thank You to the Wisconsin Arts Board

Madison Savoyards is a proud and grateful recipient of a Wisconsin Arts Board 2018 Creation and Presentation grant, through funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment of the Arts.



Renew Your Membership

I wish to join or renew my membership for 2018 at the following level:

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 Please list my contribution as "Anonymous" in your program.
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Please mail this membership form along with your check payable to Madison Savoyards, Ltd. to PO Box 1612; Madison, WI 53701-1612.

Your support of Madison Savoyards, Ltd. is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Contributors will be acknowledged in the program and online, unless otherwise requested.

Order your copy of the 2017 H.M.S. Pinafore

In addition to my charitable contribution, I would like to purchase _____ DVDs (\$20) and _____ Blu-Rays (\$25) of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. All prices include sales tax, please add \$5 to your order for shipping. www.madisonsavoyards.org

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