



SLOC Spotlight

The Newsletter of the
Schenectady Light Opera Company
Volume 37-5
March 2004

The Mystery of Edwin Drood Set to Open

Make way for a rollicking evening, with a few surprise twists even we can't predict, as the cast of SLOC's third production of the season, Rupert Holmes' Tony-winning *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, kicks up its heels in performances on March 5-7 and 11-14.

Drood is a tribute to the Victorian-era phenomenon known as "music hall" - a rowdy, entertaining form of theater not unlike American turn-of-the-century vaudeville. We are transported to late nineteenth century England, where every city and town had its own opera house or music hall, visited regularly by touring companies presenting upbeat and loosely-structured musicales often based on classic works.

In this case, a fictional touring company [the Music Hall Royale] led by William Cartwright [Wayne Wickham], is ready to premiere its loose but earnest adaptation of the "Most Famous Unfinished Murder Mystery of Our Time", Charles Dickens' *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

The company's matinee idol and villain Mr. Clive Pagett [Dave Dixon], portrays the schizophrenic choirmaster John Jasper - who not-so-secretly is in love with his music pupil, Rosa Budd, played by Miss Deirdre Peregrine [Christina Nicotina]. Rosa is betrothed to the title character, Edwin Drood, played by Miss Alice Nutting [Heather D'Arcy], London's leading Mistress of Male Impersonation.

Also figuring prominently in the Music Hall Royale's undertaking are Miss Janet Conover [Christine Vermilyea], and Mr. Victor Grinstead [Matt Harvey]. Mr. Cedric Moncrieffe [Joe Malone] plays the kindly but befuddled rector, Rev. Mr. Crisparkle, accompanied by his underappreciated assistant, Bazzard, portrayed by Mr. Philip Bax [Brian Sheldon]. The Grand Dame of the Music Hall Royale, Angela Prysock [Paula Ginder], plays Princess Puffer. The Clown Prince of the Music Hall Royale, Mr. Nick Cricker [Adam Coons] plays the drunken stonemason Durdles, assisted by his son, Nick Cricker Jr. [Graig Shapiro].

(continued on page 3)

Drood and the unusual suspects!

Spotlight on...

***The Mystery
of Edwin Drood***

March 5-7 and 11-14

**For tickets call
Jean Clarke at 399-9359.**

826 State St.
Schenectady, NY 12307
393-5732

Web Site:
www.sloctheater.com



2003-2004 Season

Jane Eyre
October 17-19, 23-26
Babes in Arms
December 5-7, 11-14
Drood
March 5-7, 11-14
Victor/Victoria
April 30, May 1-2, 6-9



Tom Heckert
President

Board of Directors
Alan Angelo
Mary Kozlowski
Richard Lenehan
Brett Putnam
Michelle Sausa-Gatta
Ted Vickery
Deb Weiskopf
Bonnie Williams
Ken Zarnoch



Next Newsletter
Deadline:
April 1



President's Notes...by Tom Heckert



🎵 There You Are!

I hope everyone is getting ready to sleuth for clues during our next production, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The 1986 Tony Award winning Broadway hit arrives at SLOC under the able direction of Joe Phillips. Along with Joe, Producers Peter and Madeline Codella, Chorographer Lee Ryan, Musical Director Steven Sandborn and the cast and crew have been hard at work during the past few months to transform SLOC into a Victorian Music Hall. I'm sure that everyone will want to experience the opportunity to decide who the murderer is for each performance!

🎵 Victor/Victoria Rehearsals

Congratulations to first time SLOC director Laura Andruski, producers, Melinda Zarnoch and Michele Sausa-Gatta, musical director David Cash and choreographer Heather D'Arcy for assembling a terrific cast [see related article]. I'm sure that the production will be a terrific way to end the season!

🎵 Pot Luck is a Success!

We had over 70 people in attendance at the Annual January Pot Luck Dinner in January. Food, drinks and friendship were plentiful and everyone was treated to musical selections during the open mic entertainment. Our Treasurer reported that financially, the company is on track with budgetary spending, however, Company income is off for the year, partially due to the fact that our December show was plagued by two snowstorms. Also announced were the Etta Moore Award recipient, our next season and a SLOC sponsored bus trip to New York in April. [see related articles]

🎵 Etta Moore Award

This year, the Etta Moore Award, honoring a longtime commitment to SLOC, was given to Eunice Chouffi. Eunice has been making sure our auditions run smoothly since the 1970's. Prior to that, she was often seen onstage; she confessed to being in *Sweet Charity* and a few others. Congratulations again to Eunice for her commitment to SLOC!

🎵 Our 78th Season

Well once again it is that time of the year when SLOC finishes its selection process for next season. Unlike other years when we have been able to announce the season at our March production, we are still in the process of securing production rights for one of the four shows we plan to offer. When that last piece is in place, I know that you will be razzle-dazzled by the selections we have made! At this time, I am unable to divulge the first three shows until the fourth is in place, but I am willing to provide you with some hints to whet your appetite. First off are some London murders directed by Thomas Bambury, followed by traveling ecdysiasts directed by Orlando Pigliavento, then leading us on to love conquering all in a 17th century French farce directed by Tom Heckert. Got them all? If not, watch for the announcement in our next newsletter and on our website, www.sloctheater.com, in the next few months.

🎵 Changes in Photo Board, Comp Ticket and Critique Committee Policies

The Board has revised some policies as a result of feedback from directors and producers of productions over the last season as well as the current season. First, the critique committee guidelines were updated to allow members of the Board of Directors, as the company's leadership, to participate in the after show discussion. This policy took effect with *Babes in Arms*. Secondly, the lobby Photo Board guidelines have been updated and clarified. The policy has been made more inclusive allowing for pictures of production designers, staff and the entire cast. This policy will take effect with *Drood*. Lastly, we have revised the longstanding comp ticket policy. Previously two comp tickets were allowed for the director, producer, choreographer and musical director. The new policy allows for ten comp tickets for each production to be distributed by the producer. The comp tickets can be requested by everyone in the production staff with a limit of one ticket per person. This policy will be effective with *Victor/Victoria*. The Board hopes that with these revisions, we can recognize and thank more people for their contribution and dedication to the organization.

SLOC Spotlight

SLOC Spotlight is a newsletter of the Schenectady Light Opera Company, P. O. Box 1006, Schenectady, NY 12301. SLOC is a community volunteer musical and theatre arts incorporated, nonprofit organization. Governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership, SLOC's purpose is to foster light opera and related arts for the people in and around Schenectady County, NY.

Newsletter Staff: Jill Coloney, Tom Heckert, Jackie Mosher, and Greg Rucinski.

Subscription Rates: \$5 per year, check payable to SLOC. Send subscription inquiries and address changes to the address listed above.

DEADLINE for submissions to **Vol. 37 Issue No. 6** of the SLOC SPOTLIGHT is **Thursday, April 1, 2004**. Issue No. 6 will be mailed by April 23.

Please submit articles to Jill Coloney at jac12661@aol.com or 92 Cooks Court, Waterford, NY 12188.

Victor/Victoria Cast Announced

Producers Michelle Sausa-Gatta and Melinda Zarnoch, along with Director Laura Andruski are pleased to announce the following cast for SLOC's final show of the season, *Victor/Victoria*: Allan Stern (Toddy/Carol Todd); Melissa Lacijan (Victor/Victoria Grant); Shawn Hahn (King Marchan); Heather Hewitt (Norma Cassidy); Marc Destefano (Squash Bernstein); Michael McDermott (Henri Labisse); Richard Lenehan (Andre Cassell); Adam Coons (Sal Andretti/ensemble); Matt Lopez (Richard/Juke/ensemble); Eugene Kosarovich (Clam/ensemble); Jonathan Janssen (jazz singer/ensemble); Jillian M. Dion (flower lady(street singer)/ensemble).

Additional female ensemble members include Charlene Busman, Jennifer S. Depew, Theresa Duffy, Candace Farone, Kathleen McCabe, and Corey White. Additional male ensemble members include Brian Avery and Christopher Byrne.

An equally talented production staff will support this talented cast. In addition to the already mentioned Director and Producers, the staff includes: Kara DiCaterino, Assistant Director/Stage Manager; Dave Cash, Musical Director; Heather D'Arcy, Choreographer; Ken Zarnoch, Set Designer and Lighting Designer; Richard Lenehan, Set Construction; Chris Persans, Costumer; Joel Lord, Sound Designer; Stacy LaCombe, Properties; Katherine Zalewski, Hair Designer; Marcia Lenehan, Make-up Designer; and Marlene Countermine, Rehearsal Secretary.

Rehearsals are already underway and the production opens on April 30 – mark your calendars!!

SLOC Semi-Annual Meeting a Fabulous Evening For All

On Saturday night, January 24, SLOC hosted its Semi-Annual Meeting. Far from being a routine business meeting, this gathering turned out to be a real party. Of course there were plenty of delicious foods brought in for the potluck dinner. There were also decorations galore, provided and set up by Debbie and Eric Weiskopf, Bonnie Williams, and Michelle Sausa-Gatta. Each table was adorned with colorful decorations, centerpieces, and place settings. Banners hung about the Opera House. And the theater was dressed up for a fabulous open microphone night.

Tom Heckert, our President, announced our 78th season of shows (see related article) and he presented the Etta Moore Award to Eunice Chouffi.

The night continued with a wonderful dessert assortment, followed by the Open Mic Night, which took place in the theater. Brett Putnam acted as the MC, Joanne Mensching was our pianist, and 8 songs were sung. Performances ranged from humorous to melancholy and nostalgic to modern.

The audience was boisterous and occasionally unruly, which just added to the fun. It was a great night, with friends performing for friends in our SLOC family. And folks have already asked us to hold more of these events.

Thanks go out to all of our talented performers, with a special thanks to Joanne Mensching for her piano accompaniment, Thanks to David Wilkinson and Ken Zarnoch and crew for providing sound and lights.

Drood Factoids

*On Broadway, Betty Buckley originated the role of Edwin Drood. She was replaced by Donna Murphy who is currently winning raves on Broadway for her role in *Wonderful Town*.

*Howard McGillan was nominated for a Tony Award for *Drood*. His most recent claim to fame is as the longest running Phantom in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*.

**Drood* was nominated for ten Tony Awards in 1986 and won five, including Best Musical, Actor in a Musical, Director, and Book and Score.

*Rupert Holmes (music, lyrics, and book) turned a lifelong fascination of this Dickens' novel into his first stage work.

Etta Moore Award Goes to Eunice Chouffi



Imaging trying to please anxious directors, calm nervous actors, and keep piles of papers under control. That thankless job has belonged to Eunice Chouffi for the past 30 years. As Audition Arranger it has been her job to ensure these stressful evenings run smoothly. In addition, over the years Eunice has been responsible for securing ushers, has served as rehearsal secretary, and has even appeared on stage!

For her years of dedicated service in a variety of behind-the-scenes areas, the Board of Directors is pleased to present this year's Etta Moore Award to Eunice Chouffi. Congratulations Eunice and thank you for your many contributions to our company!

Drood continued

Portraying the motley ensemble of the Music Hall Royale are Al Aumick, Brian Avery, Meighan Carivan-Esmond, Sue Culver, Casey Dinkin, Jillian M. Dion, Deb May, Mariah Piasta, Andy Shelton and Eric Weiskopf. Not to be overlooked is the Royale's dutiful Stage Manager, Miss Jane Throttle (our actual stage manager, Donna Baxter) — and, of course, our audience, who will determine several key plot points as we contrive "An Ending In Accordance With Their Specifications".

The whole rowdy affair is under the direction Joe Phillips, produced by Madeline and Peter Codella, with Stephen Sanborn (Musical Director), Lee Ryan (Choreographer), Bob Farquharson (Set Construction), from a concept by Joe Phillips, Ken Zarnoch (Lighting Design), Lois LaBounty (Costumer), David Wilkinson (Sound), and Carolyn Mills (Props and Prompting).

It's a rousing evening of audience participation in the spirit of a bygone era of musical theater and not to be missed. Before you go "Off to the Races", call Jean Clarke (399-9359) for your tickets!



P.O. Box 1006
Schenectady, NY 12301-1006

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Mystery of Edwin Drood

March 5-7, 11-14
Thursday, Friday, and
Saturday at 8:00 PM
Sunday at 2:00 PM

TICKETS: 399-9359

Adults: \$18; Children under 13: \$9
Group rates available! Call for information.

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Schenectady, NY
Permit #120



Bus Trip to New York



As some of you may know, the Board has been trying to provide new reasons to become active with SLOC and maintain interest in membership. The Board of Directors has approved offering a bus trip to New York City on Saturday, April 17, 2004. The cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for nonmembers. The bus will depart Albany at 7:30 AM and will leave from New York City at 11:30 PM that night.

Activities in NYC are on your own with plenty of time to see two shows if you like. The trip was announced at the Pot Luck Dinner, giving people

who attended the opportunity to sign up that night.

So far, 40 people have reserved seats – there are still 15 available at the time of this writing. If you are interested in going, please contact Tom Heckert at 877-6777 or by email at tomh823@aol.com for details and reservations. If this trip is a success, I'm sure the Board will approve another trip in the fall... possibly announcing the date at the annual meeting and allowing people who attend the first chance to signup!

SLOC Archives

SLOC is looking to add to our archives collection. Now is your chance to weed out any clippings, pictures, memorabilia, etc. that you no longer want to keep. We are planning to renovate a room in the Opera House to store and display our treasured memories. Please contact Sally Farrell at 393-2206 or Deb Weiskopf at 373-0975 for further information.



Nominations for the Board of Directors

The Nominating Committee is looking for candidates for terms on the Board of Directors starting in June 2004. There are four open positions. If you are interested in serving, contact Brett Putnam at 785-6930 or Michelle Sausa Gatta at 377-1905 .