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Who says you can’t go home again? When Glenda Man-Waring contacted me last year to see if I’d be interested in playing Lawrence in Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, I knew I couldn’t refuse. After all, this was the Broadway show my late wife loved; and Centre Stage was where we first met so many years ago when I lived in Greenville. After I said yes, I could only hope I made the right decision. After all, leaving my home in Dallas and NYC to live in the Upstate for eight weeks would be a real challenge. But what a wonderful journey it turned out to be. Everything about the process - the creative team at Centre Stage, the other actors, the wonderful theatre, the audiences’ response - was beyond my wildest expectations. Simply put, I had the time of my life. This was an experience that I will always hold close to my heart. And I think my Denise would have been proud of me.
A good country song goes straight to the heart. It doesn’t beat around the bush, so neither will your reviewer: Centre Stage’s “The Kings of Country and Their Queens” is a terrifically entertaining show.

Director Ben Robinson has cooked up this tasty end-of-the-summer treat, fired with passion and spiced with great local talent. Robinson’s fine cast does a fantastic job of crooning and soaring through no fewer than 40 whisky-soaked and sorrow-filled songs. But don’t expect spot-on impersonations. The singers don’t try to imitate the originals but seek to make the songs their own. The kings in this musical are strong, but no one can deny that the queens come away with the crown. The women more successfully capture the twang and heart-on-the-sleeve emotions of the music. Meredith Reed, as always, brings the wow factor to the show.

Equally dazzling is Tiffany Morton in her ebullient “Why’d You come in Here Lookin’ Like that” and her heartfelt “She’s Got You.” Kristi Parker Martin sings songs such as Barbara Mandrell’s “Crackers” with a bright, attractive soprano. She soars especially in the duet “After the Fire.” Diane Mitchell has the perfect voice for this kind of music and shines especially in “I keep On Lovin’ You” and the duet “Every Time Two Folks Collide.”

John Bringham sings a robust “Folsom Prison Blues” but also provides sensitive and suavely phrased renditions of a couple of romantic duets and Ray Price’s “For the Good Times.” Lavin Cuddihee offers some stylish country singing, particularly in the familiar “Sixteen Tons,” made famous by Tennessee Ernie Ford. Tim St. Clair leads the boisterous showstopper “Mississippi Squirrel Revival.” Both e and Brady Smith have bright, appealing voices, offering their country selections with a Broadway accent. The choreography by Robinson and Paige ManWaring nicely complements the singing. Scenic designer Lesley Preston has transformed the stage into a colorful honky-tonk.

**Special Valentine’s Day Event**

Want a unique EXPERIENCE for you and your special someone? Centre Stage has just the evening. Come experience one of the most breath-taking evenings of music ever arranged – in active “Concert” style, with the leading vocalists in the Upstate. You will wine and dine and make a lasting memory when experiencing this magical event in this new presentation style with your special someone.

The proceeds from the special performance will benefit Centre Stage to help cover the 50% of operating expenses that are not covered by ticket sales.

Updates will be coming about this event, so check our website for more information.

**SPONSORS FOR THE EVENING WILL RECEIVE SPECIAL NOTATIONS IN ALL SHOW PLAYBILLS AND ON CSSC WEBSITE ALONG WITH MANY OTHER BENEFITS.**

**G.L.O.W. The Mikado**

Greenville Light Opera Works (GLOW) is thrilled to begin their second full season at Centre Stage with Gilbert & Sullivan’s comic masterpiece: The Mikado. After its premiere in 1885, The Mikado quickly became a smash hit, and has often been regarded as their finest work.

The story takes place in Japan - The great Mikado (the emperor of all) has decreed that flirting is against the law in the town of Titipu. But what can you do when love is in the air? Wackiness ensues when Nanki-Poo, the not-too-bright son of the Mikado, and a narcissistic schoolgirl, Yum-Yum, fall in love with each other despite their respective engagements to the “elderly and ugly” Ko, an ex-tailor-turned-Lord High Executioner.

The Mikado brings to life some of Gilbert and Sullivan’s most popular comic characters and contains hum-worthy hits like “Three Little Maids; A Wand’ring Minstrel; t: A More Humane Mikado and Here’s a How-de-Do.”

Stage directed by GLOW’s Artistic Director, Jenna Tamisiea, and music directed byAssociate Music Director, Marion Sprott, this production will feature singers from around the country, lavish costumes, and of course the GLOW chamber orchestra.

If you enjoyed “Trial by Jury” last year, you will not be disappointed with GLOW’s first FULL LENGTH Gilbert & Sullivan offering.
2011-2012 SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

Sweeney Todd The rare instance of a musical thriller, Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler’s chilling, suspenseful, heart-pounding masterpiece of murderous barber-ism and culinary crime tells the infamous tale of the unjustly exiled barber who returns to 19th century London seeking revenge against the lecherous judge who framed him and ravaged his young wife. Will Ragland stars as “Sweeney”.

Rock ‘n Roll Yule Centre Stage does it again with an original musical concert-Rock ’n’ Roll “Christmas” style. Bring your family, friends and office staff to enjoy this fun and rockin’ out show! Contact allen.evans@centrestage.org to reserve a night for your office party.

Rumors by Neil Simon is an elaborate farce involving four couples who gather to celebrate a tenth wedding anniversary of their best friends only to discover an attempted suicide - or is it? A missing wife, missing cook, a damaged car, whiplash, a reoccurring back spasm, and rumors galore add to the comedic mayhem and the situation gets progressively more difficult to sustain when nobody can remember who has been told what about whom.

Hairspray, delighted audiences by sweeping them away to 1960’s Baltimore, where the 50’s are out-and-change is in the air. Loveable plus-size heroine, Tracy Turnblad, has a passion for dancing and a young lad’s heart.

Whose Wives Are They Anyway? The Ashley Maureen Cosmetics company has been sold and two of its vice presidents have planned a weekend off before the new CEO arrives on Monday. With their wives off on a shopping spree in NYC, they check into the Country Club intending to “golf their brains out.” They unexpectedly encounter their new boss and she insists on meeting the wives stating “no one who went golfing for a weekend without his wife would ever work for me.” Hilarious chaos ensues as the VPs try to cover for their missing wives.

New Board Members Join CSSC

Centre Stage welcomes new Board members to its 2010-2013 Seasons.

Robyn Zimmerman, Director of public and community relations at Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center (GHS), was this year’s recipient of the SC Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America’s (SCPRSA) highest individual honor, the W. Thomas Duke Distinguished Public Relations Practitioner of the Year Award. She returns to our board having served several terms in past CSSC years.

Jack Ashton, Director, Internal Communication at Michelin North America, Inc. Experiences include: Personnel Director, organizational development consultant and Human Resources Manager. 30+ years of theatre experience.

Michael K. Chengrian, 35+ years’ management and consulting experience, successfully leading fund raising campaigns in health care, school/ higher education, performing arts, national and international denominational, health and civic organizations.

Catherine Hayes of Catherine Hayes Art & Sculpture, Educated in engineering, Catherine had the opportunity to work in Germany and to travel extensively throughout Europe, gaining exposure to European art, from the Old Masters to contemporary installations.

Lorraine Goldstein, in a former life was a Hospital Social Worker in Brooklyn, N. Y. While living in Fl., was a “Hadassah Trouper” performing for Fl. communities, nursing homes/whomever else requested, singing parodies/acting & all proceeds went to charity.

Hal Weiss, has 30+ yrs. financial experience with lge. N.E. Corp. Hal and Lorraine are vigorous supporters of varied art organizations. M.A.C. honorees for outstanding support of the arts in 2007-08-09. “It was a great experience sponsoring ‘The Legacy’ play chosen from CSSC’s New Play Festival in 2008.

We are hoping to add seven more directors to our existing board during the next season. If you would like to be considered, email glenda.manwaring@centrestage.org

Financial Update

What a Difference a Year Makes!

A year ago, Centre Stage was struggling financially primarily because of the slumping economy but also because of prior financial decisions that had a cumulative negative impact on the future viability of the theater.

After an appeal went out to help Centre Stage keep its doors open, the community responded wholeheartedly, a new lease was negotiated, and Centre Stage is about to complete it’s most successful season in years (ever?)

While we are not totally out of the woods yet, the theater is on much firmer financial footing. Attendance is up significantly over prior seasons, cash flow is much improved, and the theater is firmly focused on the future.

Lisa Nason
Nason Way Accounting, LLC
CSSC Treasurer
From the Executive Director

I remember sitting in my office listening to a sold-out Thursday night performance of Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. The audience was laughing and applauding, three of the leads are members of our staff and there are fifteen other cast members who have never acted on our CSSC stage. It was a pretty great night. I need to count my blessings since our shows thus far have been wonderful successes - and I don’t just mean financially. I am very proud of our production teams, cast members, ushers and all the volunteers that it took to produce these high quality, successful productions...and we just finished another successful hit with Kings of Country and Their Queens.

I look back at the organizations that we collaborate with including: G.L.O.W, Greenville Tech, GSO, Artisphere, M.A.C. and others. We share in their successes as they share with us in ours.

Our weeks are never slow and yes, it is sometimes stressful for our staff but we all pitch in and work together to get the jobs done—many times that is pulling together to do our 3:00 cleaning of the facility before an 8:00 show.

There are many positive outcomes happening for Centre Stage and I’m thrilled looking toward the future knowing that many more are coming our way. These of course could not happen without the wonderful support of our patrons, volunteers, staff, board members and friends of Centre Stage. Thank you for your continued support and helping us have a very successful 2010-2011 season.

G. L. O. W.
Greenville Tech
GSO
Artisphere
M.A.C.
and others.

Side by Side by Sondheim
SEPTEMBER

The Last Night of Ballyhoo
DECEMBER

Rock ‘n Roll Heaven 2
FEBRUARY

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels
APRIL

Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure
JUNE