

Focus

For singing mother and son, togetherness is a stage

BY MALKIA MCLEOD

Move over, Judds. Columbia has its own mother-and-child singing duo.

Unlike Wynonna and Naomi, however, Chris Rhodovi and his mother, Marilyn, specialize in opera, not country-western.

Both are performing in the Young Victorian Theatre Company's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera "The Mikado."

Chris, a baritone, and alto Marilyn are in the chorus of the production.

"On the first night of the show, I will be a little nervous because there are a lot of movements," Chris said prior to the July 14 opening, noting he has a lot more confidence in his voice than in his feet.

The performance is in celebration of the company's 30th anniversary. Based at the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore, the company has grown from a high school summer program to a professional theater company and is the only opera company in the city.

"I'm very impressed with the mother and son," says the show's director, Roger Brunyate, the artistic director of the Peabody Opera Theater. "The mother is rooted in music, and Chris is developing into an excellent soloist."

He adds that the show also features a real-life father and daughter.

Brunyate has instructed Chris Rhodovi at Peabody Preparatory Institute for five years, where the 22-year-old is majoring in opera. Unlike many young performers, he is not afraid to stick his neck out, Brunyate says.

Chris, who is now a senior, has performed over the past four summers with the company, which Brunyate describes as a competitive program.

Two years ago, Marilyn Rhodovi revived a long-forgotten music career when she joined her son in the Baltimore Symphony Chorus.

She had been a voice major at William Patterson College in New Jersey and performed in dozens of school shows, but dropped music to start a family.

took about two years to talk his mother into joining the company.

He, meanwhile, started his singing career at Wilde Lake High School, performing a small role in "Fiddler on the Roof" at 17.

"Going through the process of rehearsing and performing in front of family and friends helped me to realize what I wanted to do," he remembers.

Marilyn acknowledges the help and encouragement of Wilde Lake choral director Sandy Adkins and band director Lou Dutrow, but adds that it was Chris himself who got his career off the ground.

"One day, he called the Symphony Chorus for an audition," she recalls. "Then, he handed me the phone, saying 'The coordinator needs your permission for an audition.'"

"Chris is the youngest person that I have allowed in the chorus," said Symphony Chorus manager Cheryl Kauffman. "He did very well and we are all proud of Chris."

Marilyn initially wondered how

he would make it to the rehearsals. But she, Chris' father, Douglas, and older brother, Michael, took turns getting the teen-ager to Baltimore.

Chris graduated from Wilde Lake in 1996 and enrolled at Peabody. He now lives in an apartment across from the campus.

Every day after work, Marilyn braves rush-hour traffic from Arlington to Baltimore to get to rehearsals, equipped with a change of clothes and a cup of coffee.

"It's great from a parent's perspective because he's 22 and this keeps our relationship alive," she says. "We have something very special to share."

The Young Victorian Theatre Company production of "The Mikado" continues at 8 p.m. July 20 through 22 at the Bryn Mawr School's Centennial Hall in Baltimore. Ticket prices are \$25 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under. Call 410-323-3077.



Chris Rhodovi and mom Marilyn sing in Theatre Company's production of "The Mikado" at the Peabody Opera Theater in Baltimore. Marilyn gave up a singing career to raise a family, but Chris, 22, aims to be a professional musician.

REUNION Notices

► **Crew members of the seven ships of the DeSoto/Suffolk County class landing ship tanks.** Reunion in Newport News, Va., Oct. 19-22. Contact Charles C. Patton, Ohio War Memorial Inc., P.O. Box 307, Lorain, OH 44052. 419-872-9555.

► **Atholton High School class of 1970.** Planning reunion. Jane (Goins) Tyson, 410-799-4362 or tysondnj@aol.com.

► **Archbishop Keough High School class of 1970.** Sept. 16., at the school. Ann Garson McGuire, 410-788-2158 or Sweeps7@aol.com.

► **Baltimore Polytechnic Institute class of 1965.** Looking for "lost" alumni to attend bull-and-oyster roast. Oct. 14, Parkville Heritage Gardens. 410-833-0182.

► **Catonsville High School class of 1960.** Oct. 7, Rolling Road Golf Club. \$50.

► **1980.** Buffet, cash bar, music. Sept. 23, 7-11 p.m., Overhills Mansion, Rolling Road and Wilkens Avenue, Catonsville. \$40, person; \$75, couple. Picnic, Sept. 24, 2-6 p.m., \$5, person. T-shirts by Doug Glassband, \$12. 410-465-8521 or kbart001@erols.com.

► **Fallston High School class of 1985.** Classes of 1984 and 1986 also welcome. Buffet dinner. Sept. 30, 6-10 p.m., The Gin Mill Pub & Restaurant, Canton. \$40. Brian Briggs, 410-472-3164.

► **Glenelg High School class of 1990.** Seeking classmates for a reunion mailing list. Leave name, mailing address and telephone number at 301-587-6607.

► **High Point High School class of 1980.** Aug. 5, Sheraton College Park Hotel, Beltsville, Md. Contact Reunion Celebrations Inc. toll-free at 877-757-5223, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. for more information. Web site: reunioncelebrations.com.

► **Howard High School class of**

► **Howard High School class of 1990.** Looking for missing classmates for reunion. Nov. 25, 7-11 p.m., Columbia Hilton. 410-796-4475 or Howardclassof90reunion@hotmail.com.

► **Oakland Mills High School class of 1985.** July 22, 8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m., PSINet Stadium. Paula Miller at chantall4@yahoo.com or Anne Akiyama Lamberty, 410-579-2207.

► **Parkview High School class of 1980.** Seeking classmates for reunion. E-mail: PHS1980@juno.com. Phone: Nancy at 410-877-0595.

► **Patterson High School class of 1955.** Seeking classmates for reunion. Sally, 410-859-1971; Jim, 410-933-1776; or Mary Lou, 410-879-8989.

► **Perry Hall High School class of 1981.** Looking for information on graduates for November 2001 reunion. Priscilla, 410-569-1312 or

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