

## Smith-Dalton: Remembrance of things past ... and future

By Maggi Smith-Dalton/ Naumkeag Notations  
Friday, April 28, 2006

**C**ongregation requested to rise during performance.

The following Lines sung as a Tribute of Respect to Mr. Samuel McIntire, the Sunday after his Interment.

Few are our days - those few we dream away;

Sure is our fate to moulder in the clay.

Rise, immortal soul, above thine earthly fate;

Time yet is thine, but soon it is too late ...

Rise, immortal soul, that hence thy fame may shine,

Time flies and ends, eternity is thine.

(From a broadside in the collection of the Phillips Library.)

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Although the mainstay of my career is performing in concert settings, as a singer I am also called, from time to time, to play a pivotal role at celebrations in people's lives.

It's an honor to be asked to give voice to memories of joy or comfort at major milestones, such as baptisms, weddings, and memorial services, and I'm always utterly intrigued by the music people choose.

Interwoven with whatever chosen melody is soaring between us are memories of the journey that brought that particular song to that particular moment.

At the same time, we are creating new memories, to be cherished for days and years to come. As I sing and shape those memories, I maintain a kind of "double consciousness" - that this moment is equally of the past and of the future, merged in their choice, as well as my rendition, of that song.

Sometimes it's an exquisite "Ave Maria," a gospel tune, a popular song like "I'll Be Seeing You," or a down-home country song about "meeting again someday." Whatever the song, they all resonate choices from the past ... and choices for the forming future.

I also have that kind of double-consciousness as I walk the streets of Salem. Some of that comes naturally to me, since, also by profession, I am always immersed in considerations of history. The past is always present.

Yet, as a new resident of just a little more than two-and-a-half years, I am swimming the crosscurrents of Salem with the same feeling I have when I sing deeply personal songs for people I've never met before. It's exactly that same kind of process here, writ large.

More than any other town in which I've lived, it's this double-consciousness vibrating through Salem that resonates with me. And I have a feeling many residents I've met feel the same way, even if it's not articulated as such.

Salem is a town filled with voices of history; awareness of history builds Salem's future. I read through the earliest accounts of Salem from hither and yon, from resident and visitor and analyst, and I'm struck by how this has always been so.

How will the future view Salem, historically? It's evident everywhere in my studies, as well as in my everyday experience of our new home.

"Rise, immortal soul, that hence thy fame may shine, Time flies and ends, eternity is thine," could have been written about the city of Salem itself.

Samuel McIntire, the famous architect and carver of Salem's youth referred to in my opening lines, who died in 1811, was also an enthusiastic and apparently talented musician.

He is representative of our town in many ways, for as I study Salem's history I've seen how important a role the arts have played in the shaping of Salem's past for its future. Walk around and look at the architecture McIntire left behind. You'll see I mean that rather literally.

Perhaps we can most easily understand the double-consciousness that "is" Salem through considerations of art and culture. For it is through art and culture that the soul of a place or a people

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"sings."

So in this little corner of the Gazette I'll be inviting you to walk with me through Salem's past (and future). As we travel and chat, we're going to look at all things cultural, and particularly at the arts - historically speaking (most of the time).

We might take a few things apart, only to "re-member" them. The prefix "re-" is appropriate for this time and place, for Salem is, just now, a veritable cauldron of "re-birth."

As is customary for our town.

Just think about it a moment - "rebirth" is embedded in the very name of the city. Salem is not just "a city named for peace" as the popular bumper sticker proclaims - it is a city re-named "for peace" (from "Naumkeag" to "Salem.")

So, here in "Naumkeag Notations," time will be "the stream we go a-fishing in." To further borrow from Thoreau: "I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains ... "

Where the Woodcarver of Salem now sleeps his eternal sleep, his memorial proclaims him: " ... distinguished for Genius in Architecture, Sculpture and Musick: Modest and sweet Manners rendered him pleasing: Industry and Integrity respectable ... "

Old family or newcomer, we Salemites are all full participants in this particular eternal story, flowing to us and through us.

Be mindful of the double-consciousness I describe. Walk and listen equally to wind-whispered echoes of its original Algonkian name "Naumkeag," and to the comments of the latest newcomer bemusedly surveying the juxtaposition of sedate drawing room and colorful carnival that is - and has always been - Salem.

Whether it's appreciating a McIntire fireplace carving, living reminder of his "Industry and Integrity," or noting a brand-spanking-new tourist-magnet "witch shop" - living reminder of yet another form of "industry and integrity" - we'll throw our cultural fishing net wide.






It takes all kinds of songs to create a town's celebratory soul, and all of them resonate choices from the past which led us to this moment of the forming future.

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Maggi Smith-Dalton has been a professional singer and guitarist since the age of 10, and is also a writer, teacher, lecturer, and artist. She and her composer husband, Jim, have performed nationwide and abroad. They live a mindfully happy life in Salem's McIntire district, sharing a serious addiction to books, a staggering collection of musical instruments, alarming numbers of stuffed animals, and a passion for organic gardening, wildlife and birding.

Visit her at [singingstring.org](http://singingstring.org) online, or drop her a line with your own suggested songs at [ssm@singingstring.org](mailto:ssm@singingstring.org).

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# Jim and Maggi Dalton

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## ABOUT JIM & MAGGI

Jim and Maggi Dalton perform music of popular/vernacular, folk and cultivated traditions, covering time periods from the Middle Ages to the present, focusing largely on American, Celtic and British Isles repertoire. They specialize in music of the 19th and 20th centuries. Instrumentation: mostly plucked strings and voices.

Concerts and programs contain commentary designed to place the music performed in historical context for the audience. Programs reflect the continual and ongoing research in which the two delight. They also perform original songs and compositions.

Jim and Maggi have released two recordings to date, and have designed a full spectrum of programs which they present nationwide. They have been featured often on radio and television. (PBS, ABC, NBC, CBS affiliates, Cable Networks; NPR stations, NewsRadio, interview programs across the USA; feature stories in newspapers and magazines, i.e., *The Philadelphia Inquirer & Courier-Post*) They have performed at nationally-known venues (i.e., Colonial Williamsburg, Seneca Falls, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House) and countless local and regional venues nationwide.

They have served as artists-in-residence at various colleges, public history sites, community and educational centers, presenting series addressing American history and other topics in the humanities, using music as the core of each session.

*Previous audiences and sponsors have said:*

"engaging, scholarly, delightful, warm, intelligent, flexible, humorous, talented, versatile, enthusiastic, personable, joyful ..."



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in our "sunny yellow folder" for  
descriptions of our programs, classes,  
and concerts ~

Multi-instrumentalist *Jim Dalton* is an educator, conductor and award-winning composer and arranger.

As a performer, he specializes in historical and ethnic playing styles on a variety of plucked string instruments including guitar, mandolin, banjo, mandocello, Renaissance lute, bouzouki etc.

He also plays piano, organ, recorder and tin whistle.

In addition to duo performances with his wife, soprano and guitarist Maggi Smith-Dalton he maintains an active career as a freelance musician -- playing in chamber music ensembles, jazz and world music groups and in opera/theater and symphony orchestras.

He is a member of the New England Mandolin Ensemble.

His compositions have been performed across the U.S. and Canada and in Europe.

His choral composition, "The Rocky Road to Dublin," won first prize in the 1997 Toronto Camerata Competition. Two of his pieces for carillon have been published in anthologies by Fenwick Parva and the Friends of the Albany Carillon.

His composition for solo mandolin, "Gifts of the Bard," is published by Wolfhead Music.

His works are available through these publishers and Singing String Music Publications.

Jim is on the faculty of The Boston Conservatory, teaching music theory, ear training and world music courses for both the Music Theory and Music Education Departments. He has written articles for Blues Revue Magazine and is the author of *Mandolin for Beginners*, published by Workshop Arts, Inc./Alfred Publishing.

He is a frequent guest lecturer on topics such as composition, choral arranging and Irish traditional music. In the 2004-2005 year Jim received a MACRO research grant (Univ. of Wisconsin) to study and analyze palindromic compositions in concert music repertoire and presented this work at the 2005 Macro Musician's Workshop in Madison, WI.

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Singer and musician, independent scholar, author and educator, *Maggi Smith-Dalton* has sung as a soloist with choirs and choruses both here and abroad, acted and sung in professional theater productions and produced/participated/performed in radio and television projects and programs.

She is a frequent guest lecturer -- on the integration of humanities and the arts, on folklore, and on American music and history, to name a few topics.

She has given lecture/demonstration programs at the college level (i.e., The New England Conservatory, The Boston Conservatory) and in numerous professional-development courses for educators and teachers at all grade levels.

Maggi enjoys an active performing career, which, after eleven years of work in cabaret, musical theater, and nightclub singing, has included more than two decades of concert performance nationwide and abroad, in partnership with her husband and as a soloist with choirs and in concert.

In addition, she authored a prize-winning short story and writes often for newspapers and magazines (including history and cultural/arts/educational feature articles, and a regular history column for the *Salem Gazette*).

Maggi's work in mainstream media included producing a cable TV series and programming and hosting musical theater, arts interview, and classical music shows for NPR public radio, commercial, and community stations.

A former Chairperson of the Haverhill Cultural Council, Maggi served as Musical Theater Director at Hill House (a community Arts Center) in Boston's Beacon Hill; as Director of "Adventures in Art," a summer arts program; and as a director of children's choirs.

With a background in teaching multiply-handicapped children, Maggi continues interest in and study of music therapy. She is working on a children's book; and is always working on a variety of writing projects.