



The Sudbury Savoyards' Sandwich Board

Fall 2005 - Vol 11, Number 1

We enter Year 11 of the Sandwich Board with an apology for the end of Year 10. Unfortunately, a postal handling error we don't yet fully understand caused a great many of our Spring newsletters to be significantly delayed in delivery. Some, even to nearby communities, reached their intended recipients as much as a month late. We can only cross our t's and dot our i's and hope that that keeps a delay from happening again. But meanwhile, we've sent a special post card mailing to inform our local mailing list about the preparation for this year's Sudbury Savoyards' premiere of *The Grand Duke*, much of which you'll find described below. So with a wistful look back at our (otherwise quite successful!) summer, we look forward to a busy fall and winter, with hopes that you'll be sharing it with us on one side of the stage or the other.

Sudbury Savoyards Summer Shows

***The Matchmaker* breaks records**

Each of our eight previous summer shows has presented its own set of challenges and provided its own set of rewards. We've been pleased and proud to present a few old community theater chestnuts, a couple of W.S. Gilbert's lesser known stage plays, and some more modern American works. This year's production of Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker* was no exception. We'll leave it to first-time Savoyard Producer Laurel Martin to deliver the last word:

As I don my Producer hat for what may be the final time, I'd like to say "Congratulations" to the cast, crew, and patrons for making this year's summer show such a rousing success! Our production entertained over 600 patrons. I could easily go on about the inspired visions of our directors and designers, the multiple talents of the actors and singers, the intricacies of our 4 different sets, and the hard work and dedication our stage crew and production staff. But, instead I'm going to acknowledge the new members. The Savoyards welcomed 15 new members as actors, production staff and stage crew. A warm Yonkers thank you to all the volunteers, new and returning, who helped make *The Matchmaker* such a wonderful show!

This year's production was perhaps the most profitable in recent years, netting more than \$5000 in proceeds, all of which is earmarked for the Savoyards' designated charity, UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. (At this writing, UMCOR is already on-site in Louisiana and elsewhere in the south assisting in recovery and relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.)

The Parade

The theme of Sudbury's Fourth of July Parade this year was "American Heroes." It's not always easy to link the parade's theme to a Savoyard event, but this year "Hats of American Heroes" on a float featuring vignettes from Mrs. Molloy's *Matchmaker* hat shop met the goal, and the Savoyards captured Second Place in the Neighborhood Division of the Parade. Thanks go out as usual to **Sudbury Lumber** for the loan of their truck as the basis for the float, and to the Savoyards who rode, walked, supported, and talked up the Savoyards to the cheering fans lining Concord Rd.

The Grand Duke

Yes, there is one published collaboration of Gilbert and Sullivan that the Savoyards have not produced in their 45 years of existence, and that omission will be remedied in short order. **Stage Director Paula Moravek** and **Music Director Steve Malione** will oversee our upcoming production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Grand Duke*, to be presented at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School in seven performances between February 25 and March 5, 2006. Our fall newsletter is one way we entice our readers to consider auditioning with us, and by way of that enticement we encourage our directors to tip their hands about their vision for the show and what our auditioners might expect. Steve offers the following enticement:

The approach of fall brings us closer to the start of our 2006 production of *The Grand Duke*. This season will be a milestone for the Sudbury Savoyards in that it will mark the very first production of this operetta in the 45 year history of the organization.

The Grand Duke has rarely been performed, although in recent times it is coming back into the spotlight as groups such as ours include it in its sequence of productions. When it opened in 1896, it ran for a mere 123 performances. Only *Thespis*, Gilbert and Sullivan's first collaboration had a shorter run. One can only speculate the reasons for this. A possibility is that it is a rather lengthy libretto and a somewhat complicated plot. Musical tastes were changing and audiences were looking towards new and different entertainment opportunities. *The Grand Duke* didn't match the popularity of some of the more well-liked operettas such as *The Mikado* or *The Pirates of Penzance*, and thus signaling the probable end of the collaboration.

When *The Grand Duke* was first produced, Gilbert and Sullivan didn't make their usual number of cuts to the score and libretto as they had previously done throughout their partnership. Hence, the show, as published, does remain rather lengthy and with quite a bit of "fat." The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company did not include *The Grand Duke* in their repertoire throughout the 20th century, thus leaving us without any "performance practice" to use as a guide for a modern-day production. Therefore, it is up to the performing groups to trim some of the "fat" and make it a reasonable and enjoyable operetta for today's audiences. Musically speaking, I consider *The Grand Duke* one of Sir Arthur Sullivan's finest achievements. My goal in analyzing the score is to retain as much of Sullivan's wonderful music as I can, yet trim the parts that are either repetitious or not critical to the plot. I've only cut two complete musical numbers, eliminated the occasional multiple verse, and combined verses into one without compromising the story line.

Presenting *The Grand Duke* will certainly pose a challenge. Much of the music is unfamiliar and this particular score offers the largest amount of chorus participation of all the operettas. I am quite pleased with the result of this summer's work and am very excited about the Sudbury Savoyards' premier of *The Grand Duke*.

A plot synopsis of *The Grand Duke* is available on our web site. Full character sketches and a rehearsal schedule will be available at auditions and the voice ranges for all the leads are listed on the enclosed audition flyer. **Lead Auditions for *The Grand Duke*** will be held in Hawes Hall at Sudbury United Methodist Church at 7:30pm on **Wednesday and Thursday, the 2nd and 3rd of November, 2005**. As is our custom, there are no auditions for the chorus for our shows. However, potential choristers are encouraged to attend auditions and sing accompaniment to support the auditioners, learn a thing or two about the show, and get an initial feel for how Sudbury Savoyard productions come together. Come one, come all, and bring your theatrically-minded friends.

Producer Neil McCormick and **Technical Director Mariah Howland** are currently concentrating on recruiting for the variety of business, staff, and technical positions required to support our production. The senior staff is particularly interested this year in engaging folks in "apprenticeship" positions to help build our leadership ranks. Recall that it takes between 100 and 150 people to mount our mainstage shows! Step forward and lend your skills to an area you might not have considered before. Talk to any staff or Board member about what needs to be done.

A Different Kind of Party?

As is the Sudbury Savoyards' habit, the kick-off for the year's big production is a party. This year's socialization departs from tradition. While our "**2-Ring Circus**" is normally held in the home of a welcoming Savoyard, this year we will be making it a "working" celebration, in two separate sessions. *The Grand Duke*, being an unfamiliar show even to many dedicated Savoyards, needs a more structured introduction. If you received our special post card mailing in early September, you will have seen the announcements for two choral sing-alongs of the operetta. The first session has already been held, and nearly 40 curious Savoyards (including a few new faces) came out to take it in. The second session, to be held on **October 17, at 7:30pm**, is in lieu of our regular 2-Ring. The sessions will be held in Hawes Hall at the Sudbury United Methodist Church (see our web site if you need directions). While the main portion of the gathering will be an introduction to the show and a guided sing-through of excerpts from the score, people who show up a bit early will have some time to meet, mingle, and catch up with one another, and to meet the directors and production staff of the upcoming show. Please bring a light snack to share, but no nuts and no alcohol, please.

Hey, Weren't Computers Supposed to Simplify Things?

In the past several newsletters we've been describing all those "folks behind the curtain," the Savoyards' Staff, who execute the day-to-day workings of the Company. Just as businesses and personal lives have become more information-dependent, so have the Savoyards.

This newsletter is mailed to about 2800 households. Our email contact lists include several hundred addresses. Every show we produce attracts at least a few dozen new members and patrons. We can tell you who played what role, staff or on-stage, for any of our last twenty or more shows. The job descriptions for our show staff positions are all collected into Task Lists. Who manages all this information? In simpler times, we had a single staffer called the Data Base Manager. That person's job was to maintain a few lists and documents on a computer, maybe at home, or before home computers, at work. The growth of the organization, the diversity of the information we keep, and the dependence on the Web have led to several stages of division of labor.

The team of **Kirsten** and **Brendon Chetwynd** maintain our membership data base and retain the ancient and honored title "Data Base Manager." Webmaster **Stoney Ballard** oversees our web and email presence. Web content is collected through several staff and non-staff contacts and is posted and updated by **Steve Malione**. Job descriptions and task lists are edited and made web-accessible by **Kathy** and **Mike Lague**. Still other info-tasks are managed on an ad hoc basis.

Like those businesses and personal lives that have become so information-dependent, the Savoyards are finding new ways to do more with the technology at hand. It still needs a dedicated staff to make it all work towards the Savoyards' ends. If you're interested in the background of these or any of our staff responsibilities, contact information can be found on our web site.

October Craft Fair

Another Savoyard activity that is nearing the status of "tradition" is the Fall Craft Fair. This year's Craft Fair, featuring crafts from members of the Savoyards and others, will be held in Hawes Hall at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on **Saturday, October 22 from 9:30am to 3:30pm**. There will be over 25 crafters/artisans featured. **Admission is free.**

Last year's fair was so popular the space had to be increased to include the chapel, and this year an additional classroom has been added to accommodate the wide variety of high quality crafters that are participating from all over Massachusetts, and as far away as New Hampshire and Ohio. Craft items for sale include hand-crafted jewelry of many different kinds, whimsical pins, fabric purses, tote bags, designer tea cozies, stained glass, hand-made quilts, sweaters and other hand-knitted and hand-woven items, pottery, ironing board covers, custom-embroidered fleece baby items, holiday items including ornaments and decorations, hand-painted wooden items, wool vests, jackets and bags, polar fleece mittens and wraps, aprons for adults and children, herbs & spices, framed food art, placemats, jewelry totes, cob-web catchers, dammit dolls, cat and dog items including Christmas stockings and scarves, original photography, hand-made note cards, the Bearington Bears, and a Home-Baked Goodies Table. There will also be demonstrations of weaving and machine embroidery

by those individual crafters. **Contributions of home-baked items are welcome**, with all proceeds from the Bake Table and crafter's registration fees being donated to the Relief of World Hunger.

Volunteers are also encouraged to help with set-up on Friday October 21, as well as the many tasks on the day of the Craft Fair. For more information, to volunteer, or to contribute a home-baked item, please contact **Co-Chairs Donna or Andrea Roessler** at 508-628-9772 or email donnarslr@rcn.com.

Opportunities to Support the Savoyards' Work Financially

As many of our readers are aware, the Sudbury Savoyards are a 100% volunteer organization. No Savoyard is paid for his or her efforts in support of the group. Every penny of our income over expenses from our shows is earmarked for distribution in the Relief of World Hunger through the United Methodist Committee on Relief. In support of our charitable goals, we depend on the efforts of our members and donations from the entire community. On the insert that accompanies this newsletter you will find two forms. One is for advertisers in our *Grand Duke* program, and one is for acknowledged donations. Program ads are priced to cover the cost of preparing and printing the programs; donations directly support the charitable work of the Savoyards. Donations received by mid-January are guaranteed to be acknowledged in the program; later donations will be acknowledged in a program supplement. Your donation will make a direct contribution to the relief of world hunger. Thank you for your generosity.

Resubscribe your email!

The Savoyards maintain a collection of email interest lists covering news of the Savoyards, other community theatrical news, and items of general interest. We recently changed our email list service, which has required us to re-invite our former subscribers to opt back in to our lists. As a spam preventative, the new service requires that subscribers initiate the opt-in. *We can't resubscribe you, even if your address is unchanged and you are a long-standing Savoyard list member!* If you have visited our web site and re-subscribed, thank you. If you haven't, or if you weren't previously a list member, please visit us at www.sudburysavoyards.org and click on the 'subscribe' button. Our lists are moderated, and traffic is light, but we like to keep you informed.