



The Sudbury Savoyards' Sandwich Board

Fall 2007 - Vol 13, Number 1

It's Fall, kick-off time for the Savoyards' Big Show of the year, this year the distinctive *The Yeomen of the Guard*. With *Yeomen*, we welcome a new member to our directorial team, paired with a returning director. We hope to repeat the success of the past four years with another well-attended Craft Fair. And we can report on a very successful Summer Show, one that was a new experience in so many ways for the Savoyards. We all hope you had a good summer and are ready for a new year of Savoyard activities. Welcome back, we hope you can join us in our endeavors.

The Yeomen of the Guard

The Yeomen of the Guard was the eleventh of the fourteen operatic collaborations of Gilbert and Sullivan, first produced in 1888. *Yeomen* is distinctive among the collaborations in that it is often considered to be a "darker" or "more somber" work than the rest of the repertoire. While *Yeomen* may not bring to mind the more effervescent *HMS Pinafore* or flamboyant *Mikado*, our directors will point out that *Yeomen* is still classic G&S, quite worthy of the aficionado's and the newcomer's attention.

The new member of our directorial team is **Music Director Thomas Dawkins**. While new to Sudbury, Thomas is a well-known and well-traveled vocalist, accompanist, multi-instrumental orchestra member, and conductor with area philharmonics, university groups, and professional ensembles. The returning members of our directorial team are **Stage Director Paula Moravek** and **Assistant Stage Director Jim Parmentier**. Paula is a long-time Savoyard whose Sudbury participation goes back twenty years or so. Most recently, Paula was stage director for our 2006 production of *The Grand Duke* (the Company's first performance of that work), and two of our Summer Shows, 2001's *Blithe Spirit* and 2004's *Hay Fever*. Paula also played Dame Caruthers in our 1997 presentation of *Yeomen*, and has executed innumerable technical and administrative roles with the Savoyards. Jim assisted Paula in directing *The Grand Duke*, and has had numerous lead and chorus roles with the Savoyards over the years.

What will this *Yeomen* be like? We ask the directors to tip their hands with their observations about the work and their vision for it to enable prospective auditioners and choristers to get a little more insight than just the plot synopsis. Forthwith, then...

Thomas: *The Yeomen of the Guard* is without a doubt the closest that Gilbert and Sullivan ever got to writing a grand opera together. Gilbert's deeper development of character combined with some of Sullivan's best music makes for a very dramatic night at the opera. Sullivan's orchestration gains additional depth from a slight expansion in the orchestra; for *Yeomen* and all later operas, a second bassoon and third trombone are added. This allows for chord voicing that is fuller, richer, and more anchored.

Grove's dictionary notes "Though [Sullivan's] orchestration is distinguished by the delicacy and restraint with which he used these forces, he could nevertheless produce a remarkably full sound

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when required, as in the sonorous tower music in *The Yeomen of the Guard*.” Vocally, the music and text are also more operatic. The usual upbeat introductory songs with choral responses are replaced by arias that have narrative and descriptive depth. Even the patter song acquires a new spin. In addition, *Yeomen* uses a double chorus (four-part male chorus of Yeomen in addition to the usual mixed chorus of townspeople) for another level of perspective.

Lest this make it sound too dramatic, the usual ridiculous situations, mistaken identities, deadpan jokes, song, and dance are certainly all there too. The show is more serious in many ways, but the underlying theme of light opera humor is clear in *Yeomen*, sometimes even more so since the moments of gravity seem far more genuine. This opera represents both members of the team at their considerable best; other operas may be better known, but *Yeomen* will always hold a special place among Savoyards.

Paula: My vision is simply to create a dynamic snapshot of life at the Tower of London, with its folk, fun, foibles, and disappointments all rolled into two eventful days near the end of the reign of Henry VIII. Although there is a grisly aspect to the topic matter (imprisonment, torture, and executions at Tower Green, ugh!), the story line is quite active and lively: boy meets girl (albeit an odd meeting — she unknowing and blindfolded vs. his motivation of revenge), boy loses girl, boy gets girl in the end. Also, the music is quite cheerful in much of the show, and is coupled with some extremely moving numbers that thrill (“All frenzied with despair” in the Act I finale) or plunge into anguish. Jack Point’s ending “I have a song to sing, O!” is particularly poignant.

I tend to not focus on the deeper, darker aspects of the piece that many observers seem to point to as departures from other Gilbert and Sullivan fare. In *Yeomen*, I see the biggest departure from the norm in the demise of the character Jack Point. He starts out overbearing cocky, and just one pierce from Cupid’s arrow — and subsequent regret over the loss of Elsie — crushes him completely.

For many years, my yardstick for the quality of a show has been, ‘does it have at least ten minutes of real life, a real emotional connection with real characters I’ve come to care about?’ Meeting this hallmark of authenticity, where the actors on stage portray honest characters, and are motivated to take that leap to genuine and deep connections with each other and the audience, is my primary hope for the upcoming production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Auditions for *The Yeomen of the Guard* will be held in Hawes Hall at the Sudbury United Methodist Church, 251 Old Sudbury Rd, Sudbury starting at 7:30pm on **Sunday, November 11th** and **Monday, November 12th**. Performance dates are February 22nd through March 1st, 2008. As was the case last year, while our chorus is still open to all who commit to the show, all prospective choristers are also expected to attend one of the two nights of auditions so that the directors can better plan their blocking and other artistic choices in advance of the start of rehearsals. Interested choristers who can’t attend audition nights should contact the directors through the Savoyards’ message line at 978-443-8811 before the first rehearsal, in early December.

For more details on the audition process and a brief description of the characters and their vocal ranges, see the insert page in this newsletter or visit our web site, www.sudburysavoyards.org.

Technical and production opportunities abound!

Producer Andrea Roessler and **Technical Director Tom Powers** are currently concentrating on recruiting for the variety of business, staff, and technical positions required to support our production. There are openings at every level of effort, from senior designers to “apprentice” and other “assistant” positions. We will also need those oh-so-valuable crew members who work tech and staff during the run of the show, so your volunteering now needn’t take your time until February. You may have heard that it takes between 100 and 150 people to mount our mainstage shows. It’s true! We have had years where nearly 200 people were credited with participation. Step forward and lend your skills to an area you might not have considered before. Interested? Call Andrea at 508-628-9772 or email ajr-asid@juno.com.

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Back to the 2-Ring!

The official kick-off of the Savoyard year is usually a party, where old and new Savoyards meet and mingle and get excited about the upcoming show. Our **"2-Ring Circus"** is to be held on **Sunday, October 28th, at 7:00pm**, at the home of **Tom and Nancy Powers, 201 Union Avenue, Sudbury**. This is about halfway between Sudbury Center and Route 20, where Union Ave meets Concord Rd. The **2-Ring** is your chance to meet old friends and new, hear what the directors and designers have to say about the production, and sing through the show. Scores, T-shirts, sweats, and chorus tapes/CD will be available for sale, so bring your checkbooks. Everyone, newcomer or old timer, who is considering participating in *Yeomen* is welcome to attend. Experienced Savoyards: BSTS.

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 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 *Yeomen* 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 will 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.

October Craft Fair

The Sudbury Savoyards' Fifth Annual Fall Craft Fair, part of the group's fund raising efforts for the Relief of World Hunger, will take place from 9:00am to 3:00pm in Hawes Hall at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on **Saturday, October 20th**. **Admission is free!**

Nearly three dozen talented crafters and artisans will be presenting a wide variety of unique, high quality items. Many of our crafters are returning from previous years, and this year we have a number of new crafters with more novel, distinctive merchandise. Items featured this year include hand-crafted jewelry of many different kinds, including beads and sterling; specialty purses and bags; designer tea cozies, aprons, and placemats; stained glass; hand-made quilts; hand-knitted sweaters; custom-embroidered fleece and baby items; holiday items including ornaments, decorations, stockings for dogs and cats, wreaths, and tree skirts; wood-burning on driftwood items; herbs and spices; original photography; hand-made note cards; silk and dried floral arrangements; primitives; quilted wall hangings and table runners; hand-painting on slate, wood, and metal items; original designs on children's t-shirts; unique wearable art from kimono silks and other fibers; glass-block lights; glycerin soaps and lotions; herbal gifts; and even homemade fudge.

For more information including the complete list of vendors, photographs of the crafters' wares, and their websites, or for directions, please visit www.sudburysavoyards.org.

The Craft Fair includes our very popular Home-Baked Goodies Table. **We need your help to provide home-baked items such as cakes, pies, cookies, bars, and breads.** Please deliver them to the Hawes Hall on Friday, October 19th from 2:00-8:00pm or on Saturday, October 20th starting at 7:00am, and we will take care of packaging your baked item for sale.

Volunteers are also needed to help with set-up, greeting, staffing, serving lunch, and especially clean-up on both days. Please contact Co-Chairs Andrea and Donna Roessler at 508-628-9772 or email donnarslr@rcn.com to volunteer.

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All the proceeds from the Bake Table and the Crafter's Space Fees are donated to the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Over the past four years, our Craft Fairs have generated more than \$5000 in donations. Thank you for your continuing support!

You're a *Really* Good Man, Charlie Brown!

The Savoyards' Summer Show this year was novel in many ways: it was a musical, it ran over two weekends instead of three, with more matinee performances, and had a larger cast than many of our other Summer Shows. The biggest change was performing away from Hawes Hall for the first time, in the Air Conditioned Luxury of Sudbury's Curtis Middle School. The challenges were met and surmounted, and in the end we entertained more than 900 patrons over our eight performances, raising over \$6000 for our principal charity, the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Producers **John Gorgone** and **Sharon Kivnik**, Director **Ed Knights**, one-man-orchestra/accompanist **Steve Malioneck**, and the rest of the cast, crew, and staff deserve enormous credit and thanks for making *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* a hit to be remembered.

The Sudbury Savoyards Summer Shows have become an important element of the group's presence over the last ten years. The Board of Trustees is always open to proposals from directors or suggestions from the community regarding what we might perform. If you are a director or producer with an idea to present, or have a suggestion about a play, or wish to serve on our play reading committee, please contact the Board at the address on the 'contacts' page of our web site, www.sudburysavoyards.org, or leave a message at 978-443-8811.