



Sudbury Savoyards Sandwich Board

Winter 2009 - Vol 14, Number 2

Sir Thomas More coined the term "Utopia" way back in the 16th century. The term is from the Greek, meaning "no place," but by the 19th century, it had developed a more colloquial meaning as a "perfect place." W. S. Gilbert was, as were many educated Victorian gentlemen, well-schooled in the classics, and he certainly would have been aware of the origin and use of the name. Of course, many writers have used the name in their own contexts, but it is Gilbert and Sullivan's *Utopia, Limited*, that is the focus of this issue of the Sandwich Board. But the Savoyards are a forward-looking group, and, as usual, we'll be catching up on the other plans and projects the Savoyards have coming up

in 2009 and beyond.

You will perhaps recognize that this is the second edition of the newsletter in this new, streamlined format. Do you find it more convenient? Do you find everything you might look for compared to our older format? Do you have other comments or questions? Subscription issues? If so, email the newsletter editor at newsletter_ed@sudburysavoyards.org. And thanks for reading!

Utopia, Limited

to be educated in England, and has imported an English governess, Lady Sophy, to tutor his younger daughters, Nekaya and Kalyba. Paramount has also developed a romantic attraction to Lady Sophy, but this is complicated by an odd implementation of governmental "checks and balances" in Utopia. If the King offends his Wise Men, Phantis and Scaphio, they will direct the Public Exploder, Tarara (you can sense where that name is going if you say it out loud), to 'explode' the King and take his place as ruler. As the Wise Men have an agenda that is turning Sophy against Paramount, the king's options are somewhat limited.

More complications arise when Zara returns to Utopia, bringing with her the epitome of English culture in the persons of Captain Fitzbattleaxe and his First Life Guards, and The Flowers of Progress: a cadre of Englishmen of impeccable credentials who will Anglicize Utopia and raise it to Perfection. They succeed, but too well! Improvements in public health put all the doctors out of work; recodification of the law eliminates crime and litigation, idling the lawyers; the Army and Navy improve to the point that no neighboring country can challenge Utopia in any way; and worst, every person in Utopia becomes a Limited Liability Corporation, totally insulating himself from financial exposure and personal responsibility. Unlimited Prosperity has turned on itself, impoverishing all. And of course through all of this are the romantic triangles, pentagons, and dodecahedrons that are the hallmark of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. What solves it all? Why, the addition of the one element of English civilization that Zara overlooked in helping integrate the fruits of the Flowers into Utopian society.... which you will have to attend one of our seven performances to ascertain.

Utopia, Limited or *The Flowers of Progress* was the next-to-last of the fourteen Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. At this point, Gilbert's horizons for plot devices had broadened, as had his choice of targets of satire. For plot, he was probably influenced in the invention of Zara and Lady Sophy by the well-publicized attendance of a Hawaiian princess at an English boarding school and the memoir of Anna, governess to the children of the King of Siam (yes *that* Anna). For satire, every aspect of the Flowers of Progress was subject to ridicule, topped by the then-still-contentious passage of the Limited Liability Acts, which codified the existence of what today we call Corporations, and their privileged place in business and culture. Sullivan, for his turn, had broadened his musical scope over time by moving beyond operettas and "theater music" to grand opera and "serious" orchestral efforts. Some consider this maturation to have lifted his theater music to a higher plane.

Another aspect of the later G&S collaborations was larger casts of characters compared to the earlier works. The regulars of the D'Oyly- Carte company (the producer of the G&S operas at the Savoy Theater) had developed some celebrity, and each demanded a more prominent place in each succeeding production. There are 18 named leads in this opus!

Never fear, the depth of talent available to the Sudbury Savoyards has the leads well covered, along with a chorus of another twenty skilled voices. Our leads are **Dennis O'Brien** (Calynx), **David Fleischman-Rose** (Capt. Corcoran), **Brad Amidon** (Capt. Fitzbattleaxe), **Jamieson Cobleigh** (First Life Guard), **John Gorgone** (First Life Guard), **Tom Frates** (Goldbury), **Mike Lague** (King Paramount), **Katherine Engel Meifert** (Lady Sophy), **Katy Weeks** (Melene), **Tony Parkes** (Phantis), **Graham Daley** (Phylla), **Alison Smith-Vaniz** (Princess Kalyba), **Danielle Melillo** (Princess Nekaya), **Catherine Lee Christie** (Princess Zara), **Halla Kalmansson** (Salata), **Ed Fell** (Scaphio), **Jon Saul** (Sir Bailey Barre), and **Randy Divinski** (Tarara). The rest of our Utopians are **David Baldwin**, **Debbie Crane**, **Janice Dallas**, **Meryl Eisenstein**, **Ann Ferentz**, **Beth Goldstein**, **Ruth Griesel**, **Fred Hughes**, **Jennifer Jermantowicz**, **Bill Johnson**, **David Kay**, **Laurel Martin**, **Neil McCormick**, **Rich Olsen**, **Karen Powers**, **Nancy Powers**, **Ellen Simmons**, **Paul Sliney**, **Michael Zimmer**, and **Marla Zucker**.

Complementing our cast and chorus are the 28 members of our orchestra, and the fantastic sets, lights, and costumes that continue to validate the Savoyards' motto of "Gilbert and Sullivan on a Grand Scale."

Open Ticketing Continues, by friend, phone, mail, email, or on the Web

Our seven-performance schedule allows us to continue an important element of our ticketing policy. Again, any ticket will be good for any one of our seven performances, with the exception of our discount Thursday night tickets, which will be honored only for that performance. All tickets are for general admission seating.

The Sudbury Savoyards are pleased to present Gilbert and Sullivan's *Utopia, Limited* at 8:00PM Friday, **February 20**, Saturday, **February 21**; Thursday, **February 26**; Friday, **February 27**; and Saturday, **February 28** with matinee performances at 2:00PM on Sunday, **February 22** and Saturday, **February 28**. All performances will be presented in the Rogers-Kirschner Auditorium at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, 390 Lincoln Road, Sudbury, Massachusetts.

Tickets good for any performance are \$20 for adult general admission, \$16 for seniors and students, and \$12 for children under 12; Thursday night discount tickets are \$15 for all age groups (except children, where the \$12 rate remains applicable).

Order your tickets by phone at **978-443-8811**, by email to **Tickets@SudburySavoyards.org**, or postal mail (make checks payable to the Sudbury Savoyards) to **Utopia Tickets, 9 Marlboro Rd., Sudbury, MA 01776**. With all orders, include your name and address, a phone number for callback, the number of tickets for each category (adult, senior/student, child), and whether you are ordering specifically for the Thursday discount night performance. The Savoyards again offer web-based ticket purchasing. Go to www.sudburysavoyards.org and click on the "Tickets" link. You will be offered menus to order tickets by category and number. Payment for tickets is through the PayPal web purchasing system, as used for eBay and other web commerce. Tickets are priced as above, but a \$3 per order (regardless of number of tickets purchased) surcharge will be added to cover web processing costs. Prepaid orders (web orders and postal mail orders with checks) received before February 14th will be mailed back to you; later orders, orders without payment, or orders you request not be sent will be held at the door. You can also purchase tickets from any participating Savoyard.

Family Matinee Returns (with a twist!)

Once again, the Savoyards offer our matinee performance on Sunday, February 22nd as our Family Matinee. This year, we invite all audience members to break the winter doldrums by wearing tropical attire! The show remains the same, but we'll offer a post-performance opportunity to tour the stage, meet costumed actors, and see the "other side" of the set pieces. Our stage tours are open to patrons of all ages. So don a grass skirt or a tropical print and join us February 22!

Annual Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Sudbury Savoyards will be held at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on February 28th, between the matinee and evening performances of *Utopia, Limited*.

The principal activities of the Annual Meeting are recognition of the participants of the current production and election of new or returning Trustees for the coming year. While the Annual Membership Meeting is the once-a-year convening of all available Savoyards, the Board of Trustees operates year-round, coordinating the various activities and maintaining governance of the Company. The Board meets monthly, and meetings are generally open to any Savoyard. Minutes of Board meetings are available by subscription, and will soon be archived on the Savoyard web site. If you would like to follow the Board's activities, go to www.sudburysavoyards.org and click on "email the Secretary" on the "Contacts" page and indicate your interest in receiving the minutes.

2009 Sudbury Savoyards Summer Show

The success of the Sudbury Savoyards' summer productions is well-established. The Board is currently considering proposals for productions for Summer 2009. As always, there is need for participants in every aspect of the production effort. If you would like to produce, direct, act, paint sets, collect props, manage a box office, or help in any way imaginable, contact the Board by telephone at 978-443-8811, or through our general email address, info@sudburysavoyards.org. People who can commit early to the production serve an invaluable role in streamlining the summer effort! We anticipate announcing our summer show in our *Utopia* playbill, with audition dates to be set for April or May and planned production for two or three weekends in July/August. Look for the announcement at the show, or keep an eye on our web site for the latest information.

2010: *Princess Ida*

The Board of Trustees of the Sudbury Savoyards has selected Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida* as the company's 49th main stage production, to be presented in winter/spring of 2010. Directors' interviews will be held in June of this year. Other senior staff recruiting will begin soon, and interested candidates are encouraged to contact the Board through any of our contact addresses.



Sudbury Savoyards

Utopia, Limited – February 20-28, 2009
details and info: 978-443-8811 & www.sudburysavoyards.org

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