



Sudbury Savoyards Sandwich Board

Winter 2010 - Vol 15, Number 2

Change is in the air again for the Savoyards. Note that we will be starting our two-weekend run of our big Gilbert and Sullivan show on Saturday this year, not Friday as has been our schedule in the past. We will be performing six times over our two weekends, so there will still be plenty of times you can catch us on stage. And, as usual, there is other news to impart, because while Winter is here, can Summer be far behind? The Summer Show is in the planning stages, and we're already thinking about 2011, which will mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of our noble Company. We are anxious to keep you involved and enthralled in Savoyards activity, and we're grateful for your support through the years. We hope to see you in 2010 and beyond.

Princess Ida, or Castle Adamant, is the seventh of the thirteen surviving Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, smack in the middle of the canon, following *Iolanthe* and preceding *The Mikado*, and first produced in 1884. The team was widely viewed as being at the peak of their artistic accomplishments during this period. Gilbert often worked fragments of his earlier works into later ones, often between his stage plays and his poems and stories. For *Princess Ida*, his libretto is adapted from his 1870 play, *The Princess*, which was in turn drawn from a poem of the same name by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. *Princess Ida* is the only G&S operetta with three acts, though our production will merge these into two acts to smooth the dramatic presentation. As Stage Director **Kathy Lague** outlines in her notes, below, the satire of the play revolves around the title character's founding of a school for women. This isn't as barbed a satire as those found in many of Gilbert's other plots, where the admiralty, the peerage, or the courts were jibed in ways that could truly raise eyebrows among strait-laced Victorians. In fact, while the topic might have been eye-opening at the time of Gilbert's play, or more certainly Tennyson's poem, by the time *Princess Ida* was produced, such schooling would have been considered quite ordinary, if not entirely accepted. Which bring us to the real crux of the plot, the undercurrent of all G&S's stories: who should marry whom, and under what conditions. For that, we turn to Kathy, who outlines where the real drama of the piece lies:

Princess Ida is one of Gilbert and Sullivan's lesser-known operas, and most who do know it know it as the one that "makes fun of women's education." Yes, it does, but in looking at the material more closely, there are other lessons that can be learned. I approached this piece as a more of a story about false impressions, assumptions, and how they can be overcome through learning and respect.

Ida and Hilarion are products of their childhood environments. Hildebrand's court is a very traditional, patriarchal place. Hilarion has been born to privilege and has been exposed to the standard courtly, chivalric model, where women are to be cherished and idolized, but can't or shouldn't do anything. While knowing that he has been married all these years, he's certainly participated in innocent, ritualized flirting over the years, and the dainty triolet strategy has worked in the past.

Ida has not had the best male role models to deal with in her life (just wait until you see her father and her brothers!), so it's not much of a surprise that she's established a retreat for women. Education is important to her and clearly she was well educated before she founded the school.

So these two meet each other under bad assumptions and bad circumstances. Hilarion assumes she is like every other woman he's met, and she assumes he's like every other man she's ever known. It doesn't help matters that he comes to her in disguise. To his credit, he realizes very quickly that she is different from all the other women, and he likes that. His Act II plea is not a ploy, as he does love her. She actually does start to soften. He's speaking to her as no man ever has – she might even let him go in a day or two and it would all work out, but then Hildebrand comes in and ruins everything – resetting her general impression of men, and setting up a final conflict.

To see how (if!) it all works out, you'll need to come and see the show. Aside from Ida (**Grace Field**) and Hilarion and his father (**Tom Frates, Tom Weber**), you'll meet: Ida's brothers (**Mike Lague, Randy Divinski, David Fleischmann-Rose**) – good strong men with NO imagination whatsoever, but they can fight *very* well; Ida's father (**Dennis O'Brien**) – a man with an interesting viewpoint on philanthropy; Cyril and Florian (**Brad Amidon, Peter Boettcher**) – Hilarion's friends - Cyril gets himself (and others) into trouble, Florian is there to bail them out (everyone needs friends like these); Lady Psyche and Lady Blanche (**Wendy Parker, Katherine Meifert**) – professors at the school with differing viewpoints on the situation; and ladies of the school (**Danielle Melillo, Debbie Crane, Graham Daley, Laurel Martin**).

Throw in a strong chorus (**David Baldwin, Alyssa Berkson, Zoe Castro, Jamie Cobleigh, Janice Dallas, Jennifer Dohm, Meryl Eisenstein, Ed Fell, Ann Ferentz, Janine Gauntt, Lissa Gilbert, Marcia Goldensher, Beth Goldstein, John Gorgone, Ruth Griesel, Fred Hughes, Bill Johnson, Dave Kay, Neil McCormick, Jim Miller, Larry Millner, Rich Olsen, Tony Parkes, Mei-Lin Po, Tom Porcher, Karen Powers, Nancy Powers, Sarah Roth, Jon Saul, Ellen Simmons, Erin Van Speybroeck, Michael Zimmer, and Marla Zucker**) and you've got everything for a great evening of music and drama. We hope to see you at the show!

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 six-performance schedule allows us to continue an important element of our ticketing policy. Again, any ticket will be good for any one of our six 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.

princess ida or Castle Adamant



The Sudbury Savoyards are pleased to present Gilbert and Sullivan's *Princess Ida* at 8:00PM Saturday, **February 20; Thursday, February 25; Friday, February 26; and Saturday, February 27** with matinee performances at 2:00PM on **Sunday, February 21 and Saturday, February 27**. All performances will be presented in the Rogers-Kirschner Auditorium at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, 390 Lincoln Road, Sudbury, Massachusetts. Please note that we will not have a Friday night performance on opening weekend. We have moved opening night to Saturday.

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 **Princess Ida Tickets, 279 Captain Eames Circle, Ashland, Mass. 01721-3916**. 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 12th 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.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Sudbury Savoyards will be held at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on February 27th, between the matinee and evening performances of *Princess Ida*.

The principal activities of the Annual Meeting are recognition of the participants of the current production and election of 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 are archived on the Savoyard web site. If you would like to follow the Board's activities, go to www.sudburysavoyards.org and click on "Board Meeting Minutes" on the home page and indicate your interest in receiving the minutes.

2010 Sudbury Savoyards Summer Show: "On Golden Pond"

The Sudbury Savoyards' summer productions have run the gamut from Gilbert's stage plays to modern American comedy and musicals to English drawing room pieces. The Board of Trustees has selected Ernest Thompson's "On Golden Pond" as our Summer 2010 offering, to be directed by Mary Spinosa-Wilson. Plans are only just afoot, and, as always, there is need for participants in every aspect of the production effort. If you would like to produce, 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 audition dates will be sometime in April or May and the production will run for two weekends in July/August. For details as they arise, keep an eye on our web site for the latest information.

2011: Fiftieth anniversary extravaganza

The Board of Trustees of the Sudbury Savoyards has selected a double bill of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury and HMS Pinafore* as the company's 50th main stage production, to be presented in winter/spring of 2011. While the "extravaganza" part of the program remains to be finalized, we can be sure to celebrate such a noble anniversary in fine Savoyard style! Stay tuned to future newsletter and web announcements for details as they arise.

a loss - Larry Littlefield

We recently learned of the death of Larry Littlefield in October of last year, at age 77, in Tucson, Arizona. Larry was a mainstay of the Sudbury Savoyards and other musical theater groups in our area from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. He was a founding member of the New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society (NEGASS). Nominally a baritone, he sang lead roles from tenor to bass and whatever was required in innumerable choruses. He is remembered by other Savoyard old-timers as patient and encouraging to the less experienced, and he helped by example to establish the Sudbury Savoyards' culture of inclusion and high performance standards. Larry is survived by his wife, Donna, and daughters in Arizona and Rhode Island and a son in New Hampshire.

**Sudbury Savoyards
Sudbury United Methodist Church
251 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776**

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