



## Sudbury Savoyards Sandwich Board

Winter 2012 - Vol 17, Number 2

The Savoyards enter our 51<sup>st</sup> production season with very heavy hearts, mourning the loss of our honored friend and colleague, **Peter A. Stark**. Peter had begun rehearsing with our leads, was just a few days away from taking the reins as Stage Director in full rehearsal for the Savoyards' upcoming production of *Ruddigore* when he was killed in a car accident in Framingham on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Peter's life in local theater will be celebrated in a memorial service in March, with representatives of at least a half-dozen of the theater groups that were proud to count him as a member.

Watch the Savoyards' web site for details. Meanwhile, as Peter would have demanded, the show must go on, and *Ruddigore* will take the stage in his honor from February 24<sup>th</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup> under the stage direction of **Dennis O'Brien** and the baton of **Katherine Engel Meifert**, two long-time Savoyards who were working closely with Peter in preparing the show.

# Ruddigore

— or —

## The Witch's Curse

*Ruddigore* has everything one expects from a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. We have cases of mistaken (or misrepresented) identity, star-crossed would-be lovers, confusion of rank, the proud military men, the honorable British tar, the crowd of young women who would seem out of place anywhere else, and (of course) the twist at the end that makes All Right in the World.

As TV's "Dallas" was about the Ewings, *Ruddigore* is about the Murgatroyds. The Baronets of Ruddigore, the Murgatroyds, are cursed. The sitting Baronet must commit a crime a day or suffer death in fearful agony under the judgement of Murgatroyds past. The Ancestors are harsh in their judgements, and the life expectancy of a sitting Baronet is short.

Thus we reach our present state: The current rightful Baronet, Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, has fled his hometown to escape the title and the curse, and returned in disguise, as fair Robin Oakapple. Ruthven, being presumed dead, is replaced as Baronet by his younger brother Despard. Ruthven and Despard have a foster brother, Richard Dauntless, a British sailor, who is privy to Robin/Ruthven's secret. Richard reveals the truth as the two vie for the affection of sweet Rose Maybud, the most desirable young woman in town. Exposed, Ruthven must reclaim his title (to Despard's relief)... and we're not even to the Act I finale yet.

Dennis offers the following observations on the show and his work with Peter and Kate in preparation for our 2012 production...

*Ruddigore* is an opera with a somewhat checkered past. It was not highly regarded at the time of its premiere in January of 1887. Although it ran for a respectable 288 performances, it suffered from the misfortune of following the hugely successful *Mikado*. Any show would almost certainly pale by the inevitable comparison. It was not revived until 1920, long after Gilbert and Sullivan had both passed on. For that revival, the show was drastically edited; several numbers were cut, and a much shorter Act II finale was substituted for the original. One gets the feeling that the producers wanted to get the patrons in and out as quickly as possible, fearing another perceived negative response to this satirical treatment of Victorian melodrama. In fact, the revival proved to be a success.

Happily, as the years progressed, a fresh look was given to what the authors had originally written, with the result that various musical numbers and dialog that had been jettisoned have found their way, here and there, back into the production. One result of this process is that there is no one, standard, canonical version of *Ruddigore* - it even retains two different spellings of the title! With this in mind we have gone back to the original libretto and chosen to restore some elements that have not been presented to the public in many years. These allow for more rounded and complete characters, and of course the ability to make use of more of Gilbert's wonderful text.

I had the opportunity to partner with Peter Stark on the directorial team, a partnership which was tragically curtailed by his sudden loss. With the help of Music Director **Kate Meifert**, and the invaluable aid of Assistant Stage Director **Laura Guillard**, Choreographer **Barbara Finney**, and Assistant Music Director **Kathryn Denney**, we have all taken up his vision of the production. It is one where the unexpected is commonplace, the characters are real (if not always really nice) people, the dances tell a story, and things are seldom what they seem... but no, that's another show, isn't it?

### Our cast...

The Murgatroyds and their friends, relatives, neighbors, and dead Ancestors inhabit the stage as our fine Savoyard cast and chorus. **Tom Frates** is Robin Oakapple, **Ed Fell** is his brother, Sir Despard Murgatroyd, and **Peter Boettcher** is their foster brother, Richard Dauntless. **Randy Divinski** is the late Sir Roderick Murgatroyd. Family retainers Old Adam Goodheart, Even Older Adam Goodheart, and Old Horatio Goodheart are played by **Mike Lague**, **Tom Ostrowski**, and **Tony Parkes**, respectively. **Kate Harper** is Rose Maybud, and **Kathleen Larson Day** is Mad Margaret Mackintosh. Rounding out the cast are **Pamela Ryba** as Dame

### Exclusive offer for our newsletter subscribers!

Present this coupon at the Ruddigore box office and receive \$2 off each of up to four tickets for your party in any ticket category.

(Original newsletters only, no photocopies, please not used for Preview performances)

Hannah, **Connell Benn** as Zorah, and **Kerry Teman** as Ruth. Our chorus of townspeople, bucks and blades, ancestors, and the endowed corps of professional bridesmaids are **Sara Ballard, Stephen Brand, Herschel Clopper, Phyllis Clopper, Janie Cron, Janice Dallas, Thomas Durgin, Meryl Eisenstein, Susan Elberger, David Allan Fitch, Lissa Gilbert, Marcia Goldensher, Beth Goldstein, John Gorgone, Jane Graham, Andrew Herrick, Fred Hughes, Bill Johnson, Susannah Kay, Scott Lutz, Marylee Marsh, Laurel Martin, Neil McCormick, Larry Millner, Rich Olsen, Tom Porcher, Nancy Powers, Karen Powers, Jon Saul, Susan Schultz, Ellen Simmons, Stacey Teman, Sal Triolo, Erin Van Speybroeck, Peter Welsh, and Marla Zucker.**

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

The Sudbury Savoyards are pleased to present Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore* at **8:00pm** on **Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup>, Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup>**, with matinee performances at **2:00pm** on **Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>**. In addition, there will be a preview performance at a reduced price at 8:00pm on Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. All performances will be presented in the Rogers-Kirschner Auditorium at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, 390 Lincoln Road, Sudbury, Massachusetts.

'Open Ticketing' means that tickets good for any performance are \$22 for adult general admission, \$17 for seniors and students, and \$12 for children under 12; the Thursday night (February 23<sup>rd</sup>) Preview Performance tickets are \$15 for all adult age groups, and \$12 for children under 12. All tickets are for general admission seating. Lincoln-Sudbury high school is handicapped accessible and all parking is free.

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 **Ruddigore Tickets, 279 Captain Eames Circle, Ashland, MA 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 Preview Performance. The Savoyards again offer web-based ticket purchasing. Go to [www.sudburysavoyards.org](http://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 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

**This year we are offering a special deal for subscribers to this newsletter! Present the coupon on the previous page at the box office at the show and receive a discount of \$2 per ticket for each ticket in your party of up to four people!** You must present and surrender the coupon from your mailed copy of the newsletter, and the discount applies only to our regular performances for tickets purchased at the door, and does not apply to our preview discount night.

### Annual Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Sudbury Savoyards will be held at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on March 3<sup>rd</sup> between the matinee and evening performances of *Ruddigore*. 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](http://www.sudburysavoyards.org) and click on "Board Meeting Minutes" on the home page and indicate your interest in receiving the minutes.

### 2013: *The Gondoliers*

The Board of Trustees of the Sudbury Savoyards has selected *The Gondoliers* (or *The King of Barataria*) as the Company's winter 2013 production. *The Gondoliers* was last produced by the Savoyards in 2001. Directors and senior staff will be recruited in coming months, and interested candidates are encouraged to contact the Board by telephone or email at their earliest convenience.

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

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