Princess Ida

LET’S STUDY A PLAY TOGETHER

Summer 2012
CONTENT PLANNED FOR TODAY’S CLASS:

- William Schenk Gilbert
- Arthur Sullivan
- G&S Collaboration
- D’Oyly Carte’s role
- Savoy Theater
- G&S – output
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TODAY’S CLASS CONTENT (cont.)

• Topsy Turvy trailer
• Class discussion
• Update on where our characters are now (Act II, start of Scene 4)
• Read Act II, III to end
William Schwenk Gilbert (1836 -1911):

- Gifted writer and librettist
- Came from a nautical family
- Educated as a lawyer, but unsuccessful in that field
- Wrote satires, short stories, humorous poetry before meeting Sullivan
- Wrote an earlier “Princess Ida”
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• Gilbert (1879)
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Sir W. Schwenk Gilbert
Arthur Sullivan (1842 -1900):
• Gifted musician
• Classically trained
• Studied in Germany and Austria and held a Doctorate in Music
• Was a well-regarded conductor
• Wrote oratorios, operas, ballads, hymns, ballets, songs
• Wrote the music for “Onward, Christian Soldiers” and “The Lost Chord”
• A well-known Sullivan grand opera is “Ivanhoe”
• Considered possibly “the best English composer of the 19th century”
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- Sullivan (1870)
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Sir Arthur Sullivan
Richard D’Oyle Carte (1844 – 1901):

- Musician, ran a theatrical management company
- Desired to start a light opera company in London
- Had produced Sullivan’s “Cox and Box”
- Introduced Gilbert to Sullivan – result “Trial by Jury” and twelve more
Richard D’Oyly Carte (Cont.)

- Opened the Savoy Theater
- Hence, the Savoyards
- Theater Innovations at Savoy
  - First theater in London lit by electricity
  - Free theater programs
  - Tickets with row and seat assignments
  - Tea at intermissions
  - No tipping in cloakrooms
Richard D’Oyly Carte (Cont.)
• Ran the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company for many years, producing the G&S light operas all over England
• Licensed G&S operas for performance by amateur theatrical companies
• Built the Palace Theater (for Sullivan’s “Ivanhoe”, not a commercial success), originally named the Royal English Opera House
• Built and ran the Savoy Hotel, owned Claridge’s Hotel and other luxury hotels
• D’Oyly Carte Opera Company finally dissolved in 1982
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Richard D’Oyly Carte
Richard D’Oyly Carte As Business Manager:

• Put G&S under a 5 year contract:
  – Upon request, produce a new work within 6 months
  – When Princess Ida closed after “only” a 9 month run, D’Oyly Carte asked for a new work
  – SIR Sullivan was loath to produce, but...
    • Sullivan could not break the contract
    • Sullivan needed the money, as his investments had gone bust (with his broker)
  – Impasse
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Creative Collaboration Post-Ida:

– All Gilbert’s ideas rejected by Sullivan – too silly, too repetitive of the magic potion
– Sullivan wanted to write serious music, or at least have the music be as important as the lyrics
– Gilbert was inspired by the Japanese exhibit in London
– Sullivan was amenable
– Consequence: *The Mikado*

• D’Oyly Carte was the mediator in the G&S quarrels
• All three eventually became financial partners
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G&S Output and Collaboration:
• G&S wrote a total of 13 light operas
• The majority were financially successful
• The partners and rivals quarreled over:
  – Whose work was more important
  – Who was knighted first by Queen Victoria
  – How to split the cost of replacing the carpet in the theater
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Creative Partnership:

• Gilbert wrote the synopsis, plot and lyrics first
• Sullivan wrote the melody and the orchestration
• Gilbert blocked all the scenes’ movements, the scenery, the costumes, etc. (rehearsal micro-manager)
• Sullivan usually worked on composing the music until the last moment
• Sullivan always conducted the orchestra on opening night
• Gilbert was almost always elsewhere on opening night
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- Gilbert & Sullivan movie
  - Topsy-Turvy Trailer
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Online Resources:

URL for Gilbert and Sullivan Archive
http://math.boisestate.edu/gas

URL for DC Savoyards
http://savoyards.org

Wikipedia
Princess Ida - Characters

NOW TO UPDATE OUR CHARACTERS TO ACT II, Scene 4
• Still in King Hildebrand’s kingdom:

King Hildebrand
Princess Ida

- Visitor to Hildebrand’s kingdom, now in Hildebrand’s prison as a hostage:
  
  King Gama
Princess Ida

- Visitors to Hildebrand’s kingdom, now in Hildebrand’s prison:
  
  King Gama’s 3 sons Arac, Guron, Scynthius
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ACT II, Scene 4

In Castle Adamant:
In Castle Adamant:

Princess Ida, headmistress of the school Adamant
Princess Ida

In Castle Adamant:

Princess Ida is about to show her leadership skills
Princess Ida

• Now in Adamant, disguised as a female student (for the moment), looking to meet Ida

  Prince Hilarion,
  King
  Hildebrand's son
Now in Adamant, disguised as girl students (at the moment) to aid Hilarion

Prince Hilarion’s friends, Florian and Cyril
Princess Ida

In Castle Adamant:

Lady Psyche, sister of Florian, has recognized the disguised men.
In Castle Adamant:

Lady Blanche, who has also penetrated the disguises, and schemes to replace the headmistress Ida
In Castle Adamant:

Melissa, daughter of Lady Blanche, aiding her mother but much enamored of the men (in general)
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In Castle Adamant:

Sacharissa, Chloe, Ada - students
CLASS LOGISTICS

• Does everyone have the text?
• We will probably study another G&S opera next summer, so if interested hold onto your book for that class
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Let’s Begin Our Reading
Act II, Scene 4 Clips:

- Would You Know the Kind of Maid
- Some Years ago
- Though I am but a girl
Act III Video Clips:

- **Death to the Invader** (chorus)
- **I Built Upon a Rock** (Ida)
- **Whene'er I Poke** (Gama)
- **This Helmet, I Suppose** (Arac)
- **With Joy Abiding**