

# Utopia, Limited

or, The Flowers of Progress

## THE CAST

King Nigel Paramount (*King of Utopia*).....Waldyn Benbenek  
Colin Scaphio (*Judge of the Utopian Supreme Court*) ..... Tom Berg  
Henry Phantis (*Judge of the Utopian Supreme Court*) ..... Joe Andrews  
Thomas Tarara (*The Public Exploder*).....Scott Benson  
Princess Zara (*eldest daughter of the King*).....Mary Kettlewell  
Princess Natasha (*younger sister of Princess Zara*)..... Mallory Rabehl  
Princess Katherine (*younger sister of Princess Zara*)..... Ella Rose Katzenberger  
Lady Sophy (*their English Governess*).....Lara Trujillo  
Phyllis (*Utopian maiden*)..... Rosemary Vega  
Sarah (*Utopian maiden*).....Mikaela Moe  
Margaret (*Utopian maiden*) ..... Alyssa Ehlen

## Imported Flowers of Progress:

Captain Arthur Fitzbattleaxe (*of the First Life Guards*) .....Josh Zapata-Palmer  
Mr. Goldbury (*a company promoter*) .....Joe Allen  
Captain Corcoran, K.C.B. (*of the Royal Navy*) ..... Jacob Koshiol  
Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P. .... Jeff Erickson  
Mrs. Blushington (*of the County Council*)..... Kelly Danger  
First Life Guardsmen .....Stephen Hage, Noah Han, Gary Pye  
Seth Tychon Steidl, Riley Webster

## Chorus of Utopians:

Joe Allen	Jeff Erickson	Zakary Morton
Mary Mescher Benbenek	Mary Gregory	Jaezmyne Pheanious-
Maggie Benham	Stephen Hage	Browne
Sarah Brickeen	Noah Han	Gary Pye
Jim Brooks	Trenton Johnson	Richard Rames
Justin Cervantes	Jacob Koshiol	Seth Tychon Steidl
Tessa Dahlgren	Therese Kulas	Angela Walberg
Kelly Danger	Dean Laurance	Riley Webster
Alyssa Ehlen	Blanka Melbostad	Holly Windle

**Covers:** Riley Webster (*Captain Corcoran, February 29, March 17*)  
Trenton Johnson (*Captain Fitzbattleaxe, March 8*)  
Blanka Melbostad (*Princess Zara, March 9*)  
Noah Han (*Sir Bailey Barre, March 9*)  
Angela Walberg (*Lady Sophy, March 15*)  
Zakary Morton (*Henry Phantis, March 15*)  
Alyssa Ehlen (*Thomas Tarara, March 16 matinee*)  
Mary Mescher Benbenek (*Margaret, March 16 matinee*)  
Rosemary Vega (*Princess Katharine, March 16 evening*)  
Jaezmyne Pheanious-Brown (*Phyllis, March 16 evening*)  
Sarah Brickeen (*Princess Natasha, March 22*)  
Justin Cervantes (*Mr. Goldbury, March 23*)  
Therese Kulas (*Mrs. Blushington, March 23*)  
Stephen Hage (*King Nigel Paramount*)  
Tessa Dahlgren (*Sarah*)

**Act I:** The Seaside Terrace of the Utopian Royal Palace, Daytime

*15-Minute Intermission*

**Act II:** The Same, Evening

~ Please turn off all cell phones ~

~ No eating or drinking (except water) is allowed in the theatre ~

~ No smoking is permitted in the building ~

~ The use of cameras or recording of any kind is strictly forbidden ~

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We aim in this production to communicate the freshness and vitality of one of Gilbert and Sullivan's lesser-known operas. *Utopia Ltd.*, their next-to-last collaboration, received positive reviews at its premier in 1893: George Bernard Shaw reported that he "enjoyed the score of *Utopia* more than that of any of the previous Savoy operas." But it soon fell into obscurity; the D'Oyly Carte Company did not revive it until 1975.

That was a pity, because *Utopia* has much to offer—including a lot of beautiful music. Beyond that, its outlook is notably modern. Princess Zara returns to Utopia with a Cambridge degree and a determination to apply English reforms to Utopia's institutions, which have been corrupted by crony capitalists. (Sound relevant?) Among Gilbert's many resourceful heroines, Zara is distinctively modern because her main struggle is for public, not private, goals: to improve her nation, not simply to marry her beloved (she and Capt. Fitzbattleaxe are happy from start to finish). The English reformers, the "Flowers of Progress," provide multiple targets for Gilbert's satire. Of course, their reforms go awry—partly because the Utopians actually do reform better than the English do!

Moreover, *Utopia, Ltd.* is wacky in ways arguably beyond even the topsy-turvy plots of previous shows. It demonstrates why Gilbert and Sullivan are antecedents not only of American musical theater but of Monty Python's craziness. We've tried to reinforce this with a collection of visual shenanigans from corrupt judges wearing gangster attire to beach balls flying over the head of Utopia's supposedly "despotic" king.

One reason why *Utopia, Ltd.* fell into disuse, it seems, is that its original conception was too extravagant. An elaborate throne-room procession scene swelled the production costs. The original libretto was long-winded, mainly because Gilbert and Sullivan were no longer working so closely to edit and sharpen each other's contributions. Their partnership had ended in 1890 over the so-called "Carpet Quarrel" (a fight about the costs of renovating the Savoy Theater); they patched things up to write *Utopia, Ltd.* but never fully resumed their previous close (if often tense) collaboration.

The GSVLOC has revised *Utopia, Ltd.* to pare away unnecessary scenes and dialogue and allow the satire to cut through fully. We've also made Utopia's people descendants of English settlers who now wish to reconnect with their ancestral homeland. Moreover, we have set this production in the early 1960s—partly for visual features like "Mad Men" fashions and Kodak cameras, partly because that period saw swift social change in England. So when Lady Sophy trains Utopia's two younger princesses to be demure "English ladies," she is woefully behind the times. Goldbury's lyric "Whatever you are, be that" is a revelation to the Princesses, and still-relevant advice to us all.

— Maureen Kane Berg

## SYNOPSIS

**Act I** — Generations ago, ancestors of the current Utopians fled England. Now, however, relations have been re-established, and Princess Zara is returning from her studies at Cambridge, escorted by a small troop of British "First Life Guards," headed by Capt. Fitzbattleaxe. Zara's two younger sisters are under the tutelage of Lady Sophy, an English governess with whom King Nigel has fallen in love. The King's life is being made miserable by the two "wise men" (Scaphio and Phantis) who, in Utopia's quirkily Gilbertian form of government ("despotism tempered by dynamite"), have the power to denounce the King to Tarara, the Public Exploder, who would then blow him up. Scaphio and Phantis seek further control by having Princess Zara marry one of them.

Zara has brought with her the "Flowers of Progress"—representatives of the supposed elements that have made Britain great. Each one makes recommendations, but it is Mr. Goldbury, the "company promoter," who inspires King Nigel to do what even glorious England has not yet managed to do: turn his country into a "company limited" (based on the "Joint Stock Companies Act of Parliament '62"). General rejoicing.

**Act II** — The first Utopia, Ltd. Board of Directors meeting celebrates the changes. Scaphio and Phantis, however, are dismayed to learn that their customers now claim limited liability and avoid payment. Even worse, as the King explains to them, a corporation can be "wound up" but not "blown up," so he need no longer fear them. Scaphio and Phantis plot with Tarara to stir up a revolt against the Flowers of Progress. Fortunately, Zara remembers the vital missing element which will ensure perfection. All ends in bliss, further praise for Britain, and a stirring Utopian "Hurrah!"

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director .....Maureen Kane Berg  
Music Director .....Randal A. Buikema  
Assistant Music Director..... Jean Orbison Van Heel  
Stage Manager ..... P. J. Seeberger  
Set Designer & Scenic Painter ..... Lydia Francis, Sophie Pfluger  
Stage Carpenter.....Elise McIlhaney  
Costume Designers ..... Barb Portinga, Andrea Gross  
Lighting Designer ..... Carl Schoenborn  
Choreographer ..... Penelope Freeh  
Props ..... Stephen Hage, Lara Trujillo  
Cell Phone Lyrics..... Holly Windle  
Assistant Stage Managers ..... Malka Key, Brianna Sullivan  
Audio-Visual Technician / Assistant Stage Manager ..... Kate Bender  
Live Streaming Audio & Visual .....Waldyn Benbenek, Alexander Gerchak  
Princess Natasha's Wig..... Luis Ventura  
Wardrobe Supervisor..... Claire Bias  
Set Construction Crew ..... Michael Milkovich and cast members  
Rehearsal Pianists ..... Jean Orbison Van Heel, Brian Chan  
Poster Design ..... Tom McGregor, Mary Olson  
Lobby Display & Photography ..... Stephen Hage  
Ticketing..... Steve Schellenberg  
House Managers ..... Steve Schellenberg, Rhea Sullivan  
Phone Box Office..... Rhea Sullivan, and cast members  
Flyer, Program, and Ticket preparation .....Richard Rames  
House Staff Recruitment..... Wendy Matsutani

### The Board:

Producer ..... Stephen Hage  
Labour Pool Coordinator..... Malka Key  
Publicity .....Waldyn Benbenek  
Treasurer .....John Orbison  
Secretary..... Wendy Matsutani  
Chorus Representatives ..... Lowell Rice, Mallory Rabehl  
Orchestra Representative.....Barb Hovey  
Member at Large ..... Tom Berg

## ORCHESTRA

Conductor .....Randal A. Buikema  
Orchestra Manager / Librarian .....Lorine Menzhuber  
Violin I ..... Victoria Athmann (*Concertmaster*), Derick Rehurek  
Jill Lestina-Warnest, Beth Henningsen,  
Karen Kozak, Maya Gitch, Amy Letson  
Violin II .....Lorine Menzhuber\*, Roxanne Cornell  
Betsy Lofgren, Karen Neinstadt  
Viola ..... Ann Bur\*, Laura Bidgood, Aija Ronis  
Teresa Mager, Daniel Sadoff  
Cello ..... Nathan Hertz\*, Aaron Barrett  
David Downing, Karin Holmberg Kimble  
String Bass..... Benjamin Kitt\*, Jason Anderson  
Flute.....Suzanne Benson\*, Nancy Hagfors  
Nancy Wucherpfennig, Joe Wypych  
Clarinet .....John Orbison\*, Ken Gellerman  
Barb Hovey, Barbara Sabal  
Oboe ..... Donna Votino\*, Meg Schlukebier  
Bassoon ..... Elizabeth Brandt\*, Alice Anderson  
Cassandra Roaché, Gene Scholtens  
Horn..... Cristina Werling\*, Michael Engh, Bob Olsen  
Trumpet .....Bob Zobal\*, Andy Padula  
Trombone .....John Herman\*, Charles Watt, Matt Schlukebier  
Percussion..... Charley Rich\*, Kat Felicis Ioco  
Keyboard ..... Jean Orbison Van Heel

\* *principal*

## GLOSSARY (*in order of occurrence*)

### ACT I:

- Tarara**—The Public Exploder's name is a reference to the recent music-hall hit song imported from America: "Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay!"
- Girton**—a women's college at Cambridge University, founded in 1869
- Double-first in the world's university**—in British higher education, top honors in two final examinations
- dynamite explodes in his auriculars**—ears
- Quaff the nectar, cull the roses** – the joys of Utopian life: to drink a scrumptious beverage and pick flowers
- song of far niente**—idleness (in Italian)
- The Kodaks do their best**—Kodak cameras (which came out in 1888) were advertised with the slogan "You press the button, we do the rest."
- Knightsbridge nursemaids, serving fairies, Stars of proud Belgravian airies**—servant girls the Guardsmen presumably have left behind in London
- marvelous philologist**—one who studies words
- swell the county rate**—increase the local taxes
- what contango means and also backwardation**—fees paid to postpone settlement of a stock purchase or sale, respectively
- K.C.B.**—Knight Commander of the (Order of the) Bath (high honor)
- Q.C.**—Queen's Counsel (senior lawyer)
- M.P.**—Member of Parliament (elected Politician)
- terrify the simple Gaul**—the French
- Maxim gun and Nordenfelt**—kinds of machine gun
- Unbend your sails and lower your yards, unstep your masts**—Capt. Corcoran's terms for undoing the rigging of sails on a ship (to use coal power instead)
- thanks to coke**—a fuel made from coal
- a Rothschild you may be**—wealthy family of bankers, famous since the 1700s
- Company Limited**—an incorporated company ("Inc.")
- of sovereigns all the pink**—the best
- Joint Stock Companies Act of Parliament '62**—This act made it easier for small investors to pool their resources and incorporate with reduced personal risk (limited liability). Note: Seven was the required number of founders to establish a company, and the word "limited" (Ltd.) had to be added to the company's name.
- If you've the mad temerity our wishes thus to blink**—If you are crazily bold enough to disregard our wishes

### ACT II:

- the notes of lover's lay**—a poem to be sung
- whispered virelay**—ancient French verse form
- all that isn't Belgrave Square is Strand and Piccadilly**—fashionable areas of London
- an English girl of eleven stone two**—A stone equals 14 pounds, so Goldbury's ideal girl weighs 156 lbs.—of course, she's 5 foot 10.
- Eleven maids out, eleven maids in, And perhaps an occasional "maiden over!"**—Cricket playing references (a "maiden over" is analogous to a scoreless inning in baseball)
- She'll waltz away like a teetotum**—a kind of top
- If my speech is unduly refractory**—disobedient
- short-petticoated**—an indication of being a young girl (before wearing long skirts)
- that asinorum pons I have crossed**—actually, "pons asinorum," or Bridge of Asses; schoolboy slang for one of Euclid's propositions, due to the difficulty of "getting over" it
- Government by party**—The US and the UK use opposite color distinctions to define their parties. In Britain, it is the conservative Tories that are blue, while in the US it's the more liberal Democrats. What might it mean in Utopia?
- Limited monarchy**—where the powers of the monarch are limited by law (vs. an absolute monarchy)

## CONTRIBUTORS

(Donations received during our 2023 – 2024 season)

### Heav'n-Enlightened Band (\$1000 and over)

Patricia Fishel ❖ Stephen Hage and Lara Trujillo ❖ Historic Stage Services LLC (in-kind)  
❖ Bill and Nancy Jones ❖ Holly MacDonald and John Orbison ❖ George Sparks

### Triumphs of Infallibility (\$500 to \$999)

Christi and Rolf Bolstad ❖ Jonathan Flory ❖ Securian Financial ❖ Thomson Reuters

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Lisa Sinclair ❖ Charles Sislo ❖ Norma Solstad ❖ Cherie Stofer ❖ Marianna Stotesbury ❖  
Cassandra Utt ❖ Wesley and Cheryl Volkenant ❖ Cristina Werling in honor of the orchestra  
❖ Jean Wilhelm ❖ John M. Williams ❖ Alice Williams

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, David Rounds, and  
our "very ingenious lot" of ushers, ticket sellers, and concessionaires.

Since its founding in 1979 by Dick Fishel and Jim Hart, the company has produced all  
the Gilbert and Sullivan shows: *Trial By Jury* (1979, Fall 1996, Summer 2015),  
*Patience* (1980, 1990, 2002, 2012), *Iolanthe* (1981, 1992, 2004, 2016),  
*Princess Ida* (1982, 1993, 2006, 2018), *Ruddigore* (1983, 1995, 2009, 2020, 2022),  
*The Gondoliers* (1984, 1994, 2005, 2017), *The Mikado* (1985, 1996, 2007, 2019),  
*The Sorcerer* (Fall 1985, 1997, 2010, 2023),  
*The Pirates of Penzance* (1986, 1998, 2011, Fall 2022),  
*The Yeomen of the Guard* (1987, 1999, 2013), *Utopia, Ltd.* (1988, 2008),  
*H.M.S. Pinafore* (1989, 2001, 2015, Fall 2023),  
and *The Grand Duke* (1991, 2003, 2014).  
We've also presented Sullivan's *The Zoo* (Fall 1996),  
Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* (2000, Fall 2017),  
and a concert version of Sullivan's *Rose of Persia* (Fall, 2001)

In November 2024, the GSVLOC will present *The McAdo*, a revised version of *The  
Mikado* set in Scotland.

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*or The Flowers of Progress*



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MUSIC DIRECTOR: RANDAL BUIKEMA  
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