

Troupers Light Opera Company  
2007 "Princess Ida" Cast Party Parody

# **Princess I-Did**

or

"Princess Ida": It's Not So Dreadful After All



March 24, 2007

*Presented at the home of Arnold Cohen  
Written with love in his heart and a twinkle in his eye by Frank Sisson*

# PRINCESS I-DID

Or

“Princess Ida”: It’s Not So Dreadful After All

Once upon a time, in Castle Andrea (just a couple of chases away from the Vernon and Irene Castle), a decision was made to put on an entertainment. Not just any old entertainment, but one hardly ever seen before! It was decided, after very little discussion, that the entertainment most hardly ever seen before was, of course, Princess Ida!

In fact, some 15 years before, at this very same castle, a palace revolt had prevented a plan to present the entertainment, “Princess Ida”, much to the chagrin of a prior benevolent despot, King David. Instead, a very common entertainment was selected, based on another Tennyson epic poem about a peppery potentate who started an all-male institution focusing on the teaching of the royal sport of bowling. The name of the operetta: “King Pin”. But it was no “Ida”. Never mind the why and wherefor. Suffice it to say that too many people had already seen “Pin” afore.

But now, at the Castle Andrea, it was Ida’s time! And just in time, too. For it had not been seen in so, so long that a letter had been prepared to the W.S. Gilbert Estate asking for permission to reprint the operetta under the title: “Princess Idle”.

So, “Ida” it was. The royal chorus was led by the royal conductor, Prince Hisey, through whose princely vision the true meaning of the piece was seen, just as clearly as the view of the castle grounds through the regal windows made by the Kingdom’s finest glassmaker. Yes, Prince Hisey was, indeed, a Royal Pane.

[“Search throughout the panorama”]

SEARCH THROUGHOUT THE PIT ORCHESTRAL  
FOR JIM HISEY’S SON ANCESTRAL  
WHO TODAY SHALL LEAD US BOLDLY  
WHILE WE TELL THIS TALE UNTOLDLY -- “IDA” IS IT’S NAME!  
SOME MISFORTUNE EVIDENTLY  
HAD IT WRITTEN, CONSEQUENTLY  
WE MUST SING THIS DAMN OPERETTA  
(THINK THAT “GRAND DUKE” MAY BE BETTA!)  
PRINCE HILARION’S FLAME SHOULD HAVE BURNED THIS “DAME”!

[Florian:] CAN PRINCE HILARION FIND A BETTER STORY?

WHO CAN TELL, WHO CAN TELL?

[Florian:] CAN HISEY BRING THIS GLIMMERING TO GLORY?

WHO CAN TELL, WHO CAN TELL?

[Florian:] WILL THEY WALK OUT, WHO COME TO SEE US SINGING?

WHO CAN TELL?

[Florian:] IF NOT, THEY MIGHT TOMATOES SOON BE FLINGING!

OH NO, LET'S NOT GO THERE. LET'S NOT GO THERE!!!  
FOR HISEY WOULD NOT DARE  
TO BE WITHIN THE THROW  
OF BEEFSTEAKS RIPE ... AND SO  
SEARCH THROUGHOUT THE PIT ORCHESTRAL  
FOR JIM HISEY'S SON ANCESTRAL  
WHO TODAY SHALL LEAD US BOLDLY  
WHILE WE TELL THIS TALE UNTOLDLY  
"IDA", "IDA" IS IT'S NAME!

But putting "Ida" on was not without challenges. Knowing that the not-so-loyal Royal Patrons would never sit through a Three Act Operetta, the Royal Cooper cleverly printed the program renumbering the Acts as 0 (Prologue), 1 and 2. "Act 0", thought the Cooper, "that'll put them over a barrel!" Prince Hisey had some other suggestions:

["Now hearken to my strict command"]

[Chris/Tom:] NOW HEARKEN TO MY STRICT BATON  
LOOK OVER HERE! HEY, EVERYONE!

[ALL:] WE'LL HEARKEN TO HIS STRICT BATON  
AS SURE AS NIGHT IS DAY!

[Chris/Tom:] IF YOU WILL SING THIS OPERA QUEER  
I'LL GIVE A CHEER! BUY YOU A BEER!

[ALL:} IF WE PRESENT THIS OPERA QUEER  
WE'LL GET A BEER TODAY!!!  
HIP HIP HURRAH! HIP HIP HURRAH!  
HIP HIP HURRAH, HURRAH, HURRAH!  
WE'LL TRY TO MEET PRINCE HISEY'S BEAT  
BUT HE IS A TRICKY ... *[stop music until Chris signals]* PRINCE!  
WE'LL SHOUT HA HA, HIP HIP HURRAH  
HIP HIP HIP HIP HURRAH  
FOR ANDREA FAIR AND HER MUSIC MAY'R  
WE SMILE... THEY WINCE!

So the entertainment proceeds. It turns out that Princess Andrea has been betrothed, at the age of 1, to Dance Captain Bill Abbott, when he was the age of 2. But do we believe their time-line? "Twenty years ago"? We think not! (Initially outraged, we all do the hokey-pokey and become Molly-fied.) But it is clear that by now Bill and Andrea are dancing to the beat of a different rum-tum-tummy-tummy drum. So, although Abbott is asked to kneel to be dubbed 'Sir Bill' (causing much confusion in the orchestra,

who already has a “Ser Bell”), at the last second (the last second act, that is), the betrothal is be-roken! Too bad, because otherwise Sir Bill could have danced all knight.

Then the underappreciated, but stalwart and true star of the operetta, Lady Dorothee, emerges with her nightly lecture on what the chorus **MUST** sing right, what we more realistically **MAY** sing right, and what we most probably **SHALL NOT** sing right. Tragically, Lady Dorothee’s one and only aria of the operetta is suddenly re-assigned after Ada has an allergic room-bolt due to someone’s unauthorized cologne. Her big understudy chance **FINALLY** there to be grabbed, Wendy sings:

[“Come mighty Must!”]

[Wendy:]        GO MIGHTY MUSK! ... WHO WORE THAT STRONG PERFUME?  
GREET THEE THE DUSK ... GET THEE NOW FROM THIS ROOM!  
POOR ADA’S PISSED, ‘CAUSE YOU BROKE THEATER LAWS  
THAT SHE IS THIS-ED ... YE ARE THE CURSED CAUSE!  
YE ARE THE CURSED CAUSE!  
OUR HUMBLE NO-OSES ... SEEK YOU TO NOW RECOMPENSE!  
WE WO-OULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU  
WOULD HAVE HAD LESS SCENTS!

Meanwhile, the jolly cripple King Santa appears to announce that his daughter, Princess Andrea, is quite independent and has bolted from her father’s Castle Guilford to run a women’s univerty in Manhattanville. He explains the situation to King HildebrandX:

[“Praps if you address the lady”]

[Gama:]        P’RAPS IF PLOT WEREN’T QUITE SO DATED  
(COMMON KNOWLEDGE: GIRLS IN COLLEGE)  
LAUGHS WOULD BE MUCH MORE INFLATED  
(COMMON KNOWLEDGE: GIRLS IN COLLEGE)  
EVEN POOR OLD SANTA CLAUS  
HUMBLY BEGGING FOR APPLAUSE  
CAN’T PRETEND THIS GIVES HIM PAUSE:  
GIRLS IN COLLEGE!

[All:]        EVEN POOR OLD SANTA CLAUS  
HUMBLY BEGGING FOR APPLAUSE  
CAN’T PRETEND THIS GIVES HIM PAUSE:  
GIRLS IN COLLEGE!

“Women living together in Manhattanville, shunning men and seeking knowledge and wisdom on their own forever?” “How absurd!,” King HildebrandX exclaims, “Everyone knows that this could only happen at Wellesley!” HildebrandX’s son, Hilarious, a very morose and dark young man who finds happiness only by wearing red shoes ... and purple gowns ... is deeply moved by this news. “Women’s academic robes at Wellesley? Let’s try them on!!!” He convinces his younger, overly-amorous friend, Cyphillis, and his somewhat older “Sunbird” friend, Floridian, to accompany him

to Massachusetts for the fun. Confused, as usual, the three actually head off up Route 7 and are not seen again until they return several hours later – in the middle of Act II. Or rather in the “Post-Prologue Act”. (Shhh!!! ... Don’t let on to the audience that they’re getting rooked out of an intermission! They may want refunds, and the stalwart but overworked Rachel doesn’t need any more ticket problems!)

King Santa’s singing warrior sons, Hardrock, Grrr-oan, and Synthyoubegone, sing a song, are voted out of the American Ida vocal competiton, and in punishment are chained up for most of the rest of the night. That’s about it for the guys. The tenor lead and his two friends are M.I.A., the three Sons of Santa are in their offstage dungeon, we’ve heard enough of the Kings in the Prologue to last a lifetime -- and we haven’t even started Act I yet! With hardly any story line left for the men, what to do? Well, it must be time for several women’s numbers in a row!!!

[“Towards the empyrean heights”]  
THE WOMEN NOW HAVE GOT THE LIGHTS  
AS IT SHOULD ALWAYS BE  
(THE MEN JUST DON’T LOOK GOOD IN TIGHTS  
OR SING IN PROPER KEY)  
IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS, NO ENVY RACKS OUR HEART  
IT’S JUST THAT, GUYS, YOU MAKE A MESS  
WHENE’ER ON STAGE YOU START.

Princess Andrea appears and says she has been working with the men in Room 104, blocking their spear-and-sword armed charge of Ida’s castle walls, and staging their sword fight for Act III (uh ...sorry, Act “2.5”). The women are appalled:

[“Mighty maiden with a mission”]  
MIGHTY MAIDEN WITH A MISSION  
WHERE HAS GONE YOUR COMMON SENSE?  
CAN’T AFFORD MALE VOICE ATTRITION:  
SAVE THEM WITH SWORD ABSTINENCE!  
MEN WHO CAN’T REMEMBER STEPS  
SHOULDN’T CARRY SHARPENED WEAPS!  
THEY ARE DUMB AND SHOULD NOT TALK  
THEY’LL BE LAME AND WILL NOT WALK  
MIGHTY MAIDEN WITH A MISSION  
WHERE HAS GONE YOUR COMMON SENSE?  
HEED ONE TROUPERS’ TRUE TRADITION:  
TROUPER MEN JUST CANNOT FENCE  
JUST CANNOT FENCE!

Princess Andrea assures the women that all will be well: for their own protection, most of the men have been given plastic weapons, and the few who have been given real metal are not strong enough to lift them off the ground. Lady Palma reminds them that, after all, a tenor is, at best, only a baritone shaved. Lady Dorothee’s daughter, Melissing, the ladies union rep, arrives, sings “hoity toity” (that word is French!), and after her solo decides it is time for the lunch break, thus making the audience even more miserable about their long-delayed intermission by having an elaborate picnic right in front of them.

The men, having exhausted and bored themselves to death backstage for the past several hours playing “hide the cigar” (and the other props) with Stage Manager Annie and eating every culinary delight brought in by Arnold Cohen (including the remaining Girl Scout cookies from “Iolanthe” he found in his trunk tire well on Friday morning), now demand stage time. They decide to storm the castle and break down it’s walls. Which shouldn’t be that hard considering they’re made from ¼ inch plywood. But good sports that they are, they decide to make for a fair fight by using a battering ram made from a gift wrap tube.

[“Walls and fences scaling”]  
FROM BACKSTAGE ARRIVING ... HEAR OUR ANGRY TONE  
NOW IT’S TIME FOR TROUPERS’ ... BEST TESTOSTERONE  
WE HAVE MADE NO NOISES ... FOR THE LAST HALF ACT  
NOW YOU HEAR OUR VOICES: DO YOU FEEL ATTACKED?  
NOW THAT YOU HEAR OUR VOICES  
WITH OUR RHYTHM INEXACT!

Molly and her roommate, Rebecca, the castle artists-in-residence, are quite annoyed at this threat to their beautiful paint job on the castle. (Word has it that their option has been picked up by Buckingham Palace!) A fired-up Molly uses some tongue-twisting language we never heard during her pre-show warm-ups, and rallies the woman. They decide the best way to scare off the men is to put themselves in skimpy leather uniforms and threaten bodily punishment. Scare off the men with these outfits? Little did they know how miserably this plan would fail – after all, they were dealing with the likes of Tom Zimmerman and Jim Cooper! Still, they did SOUND scary:

[“Death to the Invader”]  
DEATH TO ANY TENOR ... WHO STEPS ON MY TOE!  
BARITONE BE FRIEND OR ... WE WILL MAKE YOU GO!  
WE’LL SWING PLASTIC AXES ... AT YOUR MEN’S BLACK SLACKS-ES  
‘LESS YOU TURN YOUR BACKS-ES ... HOPE YOU’RE ARMED BELOW!  
DEATH TO ANY TENOR ... WHO STEPS ON MY TOE!  
BARITONE BE FRIEND OR ... EUNUCH YOU WILL GO!!!

At this point, Hilarious and his two friends return, having been frightened back on stage by a crazed pack of odd, barking people. Princess Andrea immediately stops the battle and announces that she has changed her mind – from henceforth, it will be chase-skip, and not skip-chase!!! She declares that the Company has actually, for once, almost “got it”, and compliments us on keeping G&S alive and well for posterity! King HildbrandX wisely exclaims: “But without our continued hard work and ticket sales, how is this Posterity to be provided?” Princess Andrea, who “never thought of that”, decrees that the Company must regroup in a few short months to do this all again!

[“With joy abiding” – Act III FINALE]  
[Leslie:]  
WITH JOY ALMIGHTY ... WE KISS GOOD BYE TO THEE  
OUR PRINCESS I-AH-DEE ... AND HER SOCIETY

OF LADIES SURE TO SCARE ... AND SOLDIERS LOSING HAIR  
AND KINGS FILLED WITH HOT AIR  
DON'T ASK ME WHY!

[All:] YET IT IS TRUE TO SAY ... WE'LL MISS IT ANYWAY  
IT WAS A PRETTY PLAY ... WE LOVED TO CROON  
WE'D DO IT ALL AGAIN ... AND FIGHT THOSE BRAWLS AGAIN  
IF "IDA" CALLS AGAIN  
(JUST DON'T CALL SOON!)

[Alex:]  
SOON WILL BE FADING ... OUR SERENADING  
BUT THOUGH THE STAGE IS BARE ... WE'VE LEFT OUR HEARTS UP THERE  
WE'LL MISS THOSE HOURS ... AND CHRIS'S LOWERS  
BUT TO THE SHOWERS  
WE GAILY FLY  
NOW TO THE SHOWERS WE GAILY FLY!!!

[All:] YET IT IS TRUE TO SAY ... WE'LL MISS IT ANYWAY  
IT WAS A PRETTY PLAY ... WE LOVED TO CROON  
WE'D DO IT ALL AGAIN ... AND FIGHT THOSE BRAWLS AGAIN  
IF "IDA" CALLS AGAIN  
(JUST DON'T CALL SOON!)

[Sopranos:]  
WE'D DO IT ALL AGAIN  
AND FIGHT THOSE BRAWLS AGAIN  
IF "IDA" CALLS AGAIN  
(JUST DON'T CALL SOON!)

[Altos and Men / Simutaneously:]  
JUST DON'T CALL SOON!  
  
JUST DON'T CALL SOON!

[Leslie and Alex:]  
WE'LL MISS THOSE HOURS  
AND CHRIS'S LOWERS  
BUT TO THE SHOWERS  
WE GAILY FLY

[Full Chorus:]  
JUST DON'T CALL SOON!  
  
JUST DON'T CALL SOON!

[All:] WE'D DO IT ALL AGAIN  
AND FIGHT THOSE BRAWLS AGAIN  
IF "IDA" CALLS AGAIN ...  
WE'LL HAVE A BALL ... A ... GAIN!!!

[FINIS]