

The Finborough Theatre is now fully heated and air conditioned

Part of the Finborough Theatre's
Celebrating British Music Theatre
series

The first fully staged professional UK production since 1896
The New Actors Company in association with Neil McPherson for the Finborough Theatre presents

Gilbert and Sullivan's **THE GRAND DUKE** or, **The Statutory Duel**

Music by Arthur Sullivan Libretto by W.S. Gilbert
Directed by Martin Milnes

The Finborough Theatre's acclaimed 'Celebrating British Music Theatre' series continues with the first fully staged professional UK production of Gilbert and Sullivan's final operetta, *The Grand Duke*, since the original 1896 production. It opens at the Finborough Theatre for a strictly limited run of six Sundays and Mondays from Sunday, 1 April 2012 (**Press Night: Monday, 2 April 2012 at 7.30pm**).

In the Grand Duchy of Pfennig Halbpennig, the theatrical troupe of Ernest Dummkopf is plotting a conspiracy to overthrow the tyrannical Grand Duke Rudolph. Ludwig, the troupe's leading comedian, fights a number of "statutory duels" and finds himself taking the place and the title of the Grand Duke...but when legions of women arrive to claim Ludwig in marriage to become his Grand Duchess, including an indignant leading lady, an enormously wealthy old battleaxe, and even the Princess of Monte Carlo, how will matters resolve themselves?

With the aid of an eclectic array of travelling players and aristocrats, four weddings and enough sausage rolls to last several lifetimes, Gilbert and Sullivan's final 'Savoy Opera' is full of Topsy Turvy paradoxes, legal conundrums and absurdities of etiquette. Far more than just a historical curiosity, *The Grand Duke* displays a much sharper satirical edge than any of Gilbert and Sullivan's other works.

Apart from a concert version produced by D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in the mid-seventies and a handful of amateur productions, Gilbert and Sullivan's final operetta, *The Grand Duke*, has not been seen in a fully staged professional production in the UK since the original production in 1896.

Composer **Sir Arthur Sullivan** (1842-1900) and Librettist **Sir William Schwenk Gilbert** (1836-1910) collaborated on a total of fifteen quintessentially British comic operettas, most of which are continually performed all over the world with *The Mikado* and *H.M.S. Pinafore* being amongst the best known. Gilbert and Sullivan's complete repertoire includes *Thespis* (1871), *Trial by Jury* (1875), *The Sorcerer* (1877), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879), *Patience* (1881), *Iolanthe* (1882), *Princess Ida* (1884), *The Mikado* (1885), *Ruddigore* (1887), *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888), *The Gondoliers* (1889), *Utopia, Limited* (1893) and *The Grand Duke* (1896).

Director **Martin Milnes'** most recent production *The Falsetto* received five star reviews at the Edinburgh Festival and has been seen at The Pheasantry, Buxton Festival and King's Head Theatre. As a performer, he has been seen in *Utopia Limited* (Buxton Opera House), *The Pirates of Penzance* (Kilworth House Theatre, Leicestershire), *Little Shop of Horrors* (White Bear Theatre), *Much Sound and Little Sense* (Opera Della Luna), *Thursford Christmas Spectacular* (Thursford), *Crazy For You* (Kilworth House Theatre, Leicestershire), *The Pirates of Penzance* (National Tour for Carl Rosa Opera Company), *Promises and Lies* (Birmingham Rep), *All Male Mikado* (Union Theatre), *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of*

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Press Information

FINBOROUGH | THEATRE

Penzance (The Carl Rosa Opera Company at the Gielgud Theatre), *Tosca* and *Il Trovatore* (Opus 1 Opera National Tour), *La Boheme* (Soho Theatre) and *The Yeomen of the Guard* (The Tower of London). Television includes *Gilbert and Sullivan: A Motley Pair*, *The Andrew Marr Show*, *Popstar to Operastar*, *Songs of Praise* and *The Welsh in the West End*.

The New Actors Company was founded in 2008. Their first production was *A Dinner Party*, devised and written by the company, and performed at the Camden Peoples Theatre. Since then they have presented three more productions in London: *The Night Before Christmas* (Barons Court Theatre), *Out Of The Sun* (Hen and Chickens Theatre) and *They Came To A City* (Southwark Playhouse).

The Celebrating British Music Theatre series at the Finborough Theatre

In 2006, the Finborough Theatre began the Celebrating British Music Theatre series with a sell-out production of Leslie Stuart's *Florodora*. Productions since then have included sell-out rediscoveries of Lionel Monckton's *Our Miss Gibbs*, Harold Fraser-Simson's operetta *The Maid of the Mountains*, A "Gilbert and Sullivan" Double Bill featuring Gilbert's play *Sweethearts* and Sullivan's opera *The Zoo*, Dame Ethel Smyth's opera *The Boatswain's Mate*, Sandy Wilson's *The Buccaneer*, Oscar Asche's *Chu Chin Chow*, Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley's *The Roar of the Greasepaint – The Smell of the Crowd* and two shows by Ivor Novello – *Perchance to Dream* and *Gay's The Word*.

PRESS NIGHT: MONDAY, 2 APRIL 2012 AT 7.30PM

PHOTOCALL: BY ARRANGEMENT. PLEASE EMAIL admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Finborough Theatre, 118 Finborough Road, London SW10 9ED

Box Office 0844 847 1652. www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk

Sundays and Mondays, 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16 April 2012

Evenings at 7.30pm

Tickets £18, £15 concessions

For more information, interviews and images, please contact

Neil McPherson on e-mail admin@finboroughtheatre.co.uk or **07977 173135**

Download press releases and images at <http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/press-resources.php>

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