

Utopia (Limited)
or, The Flowers of Progress
An Original Comic Opera, in Two Acts

Synopsis by Fredric Woodbridge Wilson

First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, under the management of R. D'Oyly Carte, on Saturday, October 7, 1893, for 245 performances through June 9, 1894. Sullivan conducted the first performance.

PARAMOUNT THE FIRST, King of Utopia	<i>Baritone</i>	Rutland Barrington
SCAPHIO, Judge of the Utopian Supreme Court	<i>Bass-Baritone</i>	W. H. Denny
PHANTIS, Judge of the Utopian Supreme Court	<i>Baritone</i>	John Le Hay
TARARA, the Public Exploder	<i>Light Baritone</i>	Walter Passmore
CALYNX, the Utopian Vice-Chamberlain	<i>Baritone</i>	J. Bowden Haswell
Imported Flowers of Progress		
LORD DRAMALEIGH, a British Lord Chamberlain	<i>Tenor</i>	H. Scott Russell
CAPTAIN FITZBATTLEAXE (ARTHUR), of the First Life Guards	<i>Tenor</i>	Charles Kenningham
CAPTAIN SIR EDWARD CORCORAN, K.C.B., of the Royal Navy	<i>Baritone</i>	Lawrence Gridley
MR. GOLDBURY, a Company Promoter, afterwards Comptroller of the Royal Household	<i>Baritone</i>	R. Scott Fishe
SIR BAILEY BARRE, Q.C., M.P.	<i>Baritone</i>	H. Enes Blackmore
MR. BLUSHINGTON, of the County Council	<i>Baritone</i>	Herbert Ralland
King Paramount's Daughters		
THE PRINCESS ZARA, his Eldest Daughter	<i>Soprano</i>	Nancy McIntosh
THE PRINCESS NEKAYA	<i>Soprano</i>	Emmie Owen
THE PRINCESS KALYBA	<i>Soprano</i>	Florence Perry
THE LADY SOPHY, their English Governess	<i>Contralto</i>	Rosina Brandram
Utopian Maidens		
SALATA	<i>Chorus</i>	Edith Johnston
MELENE	<i>Chorus</i>	May Bell
PHYLLA	<i>Soprano</i>	Florence Easton

UTOPIAN MAIDENS, NOBLES, and TROOPERS OF THE FIRST LIFE GUARDS

First American production at the Broadway Theatre, New York, under the management of R.

D'Oyly Carte, on March 26, 1894, for 55 performances through May 12, 1894. The opera was not revived in London during D'Oyly Carte's original management. First London revival at the Savoy Theatre, under the management of Bridget D'Oyly Carte, on April 4, 1975, during the company's centenary season.

ACT I — A UTOPIAN PALM GROVE IN THE GARDENS OF KING PARAMOUNT'S PALACE

The Utopian maidens lie lazily about the stage, basking in lotus-eating fashion (Chorus, *In lazy languor — motionless*). Calynx enters, announcing the good news that King Paramount's eldest daughter, Princess Zara, is about to return to Utopia after taking a high degree at Girton, in England, "the greatest, the most powerful, the wisest country in the world." It seems likely that Utopia may then be completely Anglicized — a prospect which delights some, but not all, of the inhabitants. Tarara, the Public Exploder, enters in a great rage, uttering Utopian oaths, which cause the ladies to cover their ears. He is next in succession to the throne occupied by the kindly despot, King Paramount. His every deed is watched by the two Wise Men, Scaphio and Phantis, who, upon any deviation from political or social propriety (as they see it) will denounce the King to the Public Exploder, who accordingly performs his lethal duty. But in actuality the King is subject to their every whim: forced to denounce himself in the *Palace Peeper*, he buys up the entire edition, whereupon the Wise Men "wink at his immoralities."

Scaphio and Phantis are escorted by a guard (Chorus, *Oh, make way for the Wise Men!*). They introduce themselves (Duet, *In every mental lore*) and are left alone together. Scaphio notices that his comrade is not as cheerful as usual, and Phantis confesses that although in his sixty-six years he has never loved, he finds himself agonizingly in love with Princess Zara. Scaphio promises to help Phantis to obtain the consent of King Paramount in the matter: "Is he not our very slave?" In a song and dance they rehearse their plan (Duet, *Let all your doubts take wing*).

The maidens dance on, followed by the marching Guards and Nobles who attend King Paramount (Chorus, *Quaff the nectar — cull the roses*). The King introduces himself (Song, *A King of autocratic power we*). Acceding to the popular wish for Anglicization, he has arranged for his twin younger daughters, who have been "finished" by their governess, Lady Sophy ("A grave, and good, and gracious English lady," His Majesty adds tenderly), to "daily be exhibited in public." The modest twin Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba appear, to the appreciative exclamations of the people (Chorus, *How fair! how modest! how discreet*). They demonstrate their modesty (Duet, *Although of native maids the cream*), and Lady Sophy presents a lecture (Valse Song, *Bold-faced ranger*) on proper behavior for young ladies, duly illustrated by the young Princesses.

The King has an interview with Scaphio and Phantis. He accepts his situation with good nature ("I cannot help looking at the humorous side of things"), even though it places him

in an awkward, not to say dangerous, predicament. King Paramount has been compelled to write scathing exposés on his own character for the *Palace Peeper*, and he has even written a comic opera called “King Tuppence; or, A Good Deal Less than Half a Sovereign.” King Paramount contemplates “what a farce life is” (Song, *First you’re born — and I’ll be bound you Find a dozen strangers round you*). Scaphio and Phantis leave, and the King decides to buy the entire edition of the *Palace Peeper* so that Zara and Lady Sophy will not read about his own misdoings.

Lady Sophy enters, carrying a copy of the *Palace Peeper* that she has been given by Tarara. She takes a dim view of the King’s behavior, and leaves little hope that she may look kindly on his protestations of love. He denies the reports, whereupon Lady Sophy urges “Well, you are a Despot — have you taken steps to slay this scribbler?” Embarrassed to admit that he has written these reports on compulsion, King Paramount asks her to be merciful to the nuisances (Duet, *Subjected to your heavenly gaze*). She leaves, followed by the King.

A march brings the Court to herald the entrance of Princess Zara (Chorus, *Oh, maiden, rich In Girton lore*). She is escorted by Captain Fitzbattleaxe and four uniformed troopers of the First Life Guards (Solo and Chorus, *Five years have flown since I took wing*). The King enters, with the Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba, and Lady Sophy. He greets Zara affectionately. Zara presents Captain Fitzbattleaxe to her father in terms that leave no doubt as to their attraction for one another (Duet and Chorus, *Ah! gallant soldier, brave and true*). Scaphio and Phantis watch lasciviously as Zara and the troopers leave. Phantis is desperate with love for Zara, and now Scaphio finds himself in the same condition. Zara and Fitzbattleaxe return to find them arguing violently, but Fitzbattleaxe slyly takes custody of the young lady until their dispute can be settled (Quartet, *It’s understood, I think, all round*). Scaphio and Phantis exit together, and Zara and Fitzbattleaxe delight in their deception (Duet, *Oh, admirable art!*).

The King enters, and Zara loses no time in showing him the copy of the *Palace Peeper* that Lady Sophy has given her. She too urges him to take strong action against the writer of the scurrilous attacks. King Paramount breaks down and confesses that he is under the control of the two Wise Men. Zara informs him that she has brought with her “six representatives of the principal causes that have tended to make England the powerful, happy, and blameless country which the consensus of European civilization has declared it to be.” She urges him to place himself in their hands, and promises that they will deliver him from the tyranny of Scaphio and Phantis.

The King summons his Court, and the people reply (Chorus, *Although your Royal summons to appear*). King Paramount informs them of his plan (Recitative, *My worthy people, my beloved daughter*). Zara addresses the “South Pacific Island viviparians” (Recitative, *Attend to me, Utopian populace*), introducing, one by one, the six English “Flowers of Progress”: first, Captain Fitzbattleaxe, who “represents a military scheme In all

its proud perfection!"; second, Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., an eminent barrister; third, Lord Dramaleigh, who, as Lord High Chamberlain, will "cleanse our Court from moral stain And purify our Stage"; fourth, Mr. Blushington, the County Councillor, who promises all manner of municipal improvements; fifth, Mr. Goldbury, a Company Promoter for whom "No scheme's too great and none too small For Companification!"; and sixth, Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B., of the Royal Navy (late of the H.M.S. *Pinafore*), who offers to "teach you how we rule the sea."

The Utopians are awed by the impressive visitors (Chorus, *All hail, ye types of England's power*). Mr. Goldbury presents a plan to float the entire Utopian nation as a limited liability company (Song, *Some seven men form an Association*). The King at first has reservations at such a novel concept (Recitative, *Well, at first sight it strikes us as dishonest*), and the Wise Men and Public Exploder warn him about taking action without consulting with them. But he is carried away with the prospect of being more progressive than England herself (Solo, *Henceforth, of a verity, With Fame ourselves we link*). The act closes as the entire Court salutes the "Joint Stock Companies Act" (Chorus, *Let's seal this mercantile pact*).

ACT II — THE THRONE ROOM IN KING PARAMOUNT'S PALACE,
SIX MONTHS LATER, AT NIGHT

Captain Fitzbattleaxe demonstrates to Zara how his emotion has affected his voice (Recitative, *Oh, Zara, my beloved one, bear with me!*; Song, *A tenor, all singers above*). Zara is pleased at the progress that has been made under the new regime, and she describes the improvements that have transformed Utopia. She takes her leave of Fitzbattleaxe, and when he protests passionately, she gently reproves him (Duet, *Words of love too loudly spoken*).

King Paramount enters, dressed as a Field Marshal. He is joined by the Flowers of Progress for a meeting at which the half-yearly report is to be made. The Lord Chamberlain arranges their chairs in the style of the Christy Minstrels, and as the King summarizes the progress that has been made in Utopia (Song, *Society has quite forsaken all her wicked courses*), the Flowers of Progress respond in minstrel fashion. As the meeting concludes, the first official Drawing-Room is to be held. The men are joined by the Royal Household, and finally by the three Princesses and Lady Sophy, and in a stately procession each lady is presented to the Royal party. The King welcomes the assembled guests (Recitative, *This ceremonial our wish displays*), and the company joins in a stirring anthem (Unaccompanied Chorus, *Eagle high in cloudland soaring*).

After the ceremony Scaphio and Phantis enter alone, grumbling about their loss of power (Duet, *With fury deep we burn*). The King enters, and the Wise Men apprise him of their complaints. When the King takes this opportunity to defy them, they threaten to have him exploded (Trio, *If you think that when banded in unity*). The King, however, is safe behind the protection of the limited company, and he leaves them. Tarara enters, and the three

conspire to overthrow the government (Trio, *With wily brain upon the spot*). Hitting on “a capital plan,” they exit.

Lord Dramaleigh and Mr. Goldbury enter and reflect upon the success of the Drawing-Room. They are joined by the timid Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba. The girls were sent away from the garden where Captain Fitzbattleaxe and Zara were carrying on “in a manner which no well conducted young ladies ought to witness.” The men flirt with the naïve girls, and lead them to believe that the best English girl is “frank, open-hearted, and fearless, and never shows in so favourable light as when she gives her own blameless impulses full play.” Mr. Goldbury sings the praises of the “bright and beautiful English girl” (Song, *A wonderful joy our eyes to bless*), and the Princesses, won over, delight in the realization “That Art is wrong and Nature right!” (Quartet, *Then I may sing and play?*). They dance offstage.

Lady Sophy is troubled by her own fastidiousness (Recitative, *Oh, would some demon power the gift impart*). She recites her girlhood vow that she would only marry “some spotless King Who proof of blameless life could bring” (Song, *When but a maid of fifteen year*). King Paramount overhears her confession and reveals the circumstances of his seeming impropriety (Recitative, *Ah, Lady Sophy — then you love me!*). At length, Lady Sophy accepts the King (Duet, *Oh, the rapture unrestrained*). As they dance, they are observed by all three Princesses and their escorts. The King kisses Lady Sophy, causing the Princesses to make an exclamation. After initial embarrassment, all four couples join in a wild Tarantella, and at the end they exit severally.

Abruptly the chorus enter, led by the three conspirators (Chorus, *Upon our sea-girt land*). They angrily decry the Flowers of Progress and the ruin their reform has caused. The Royal party enter and the King asks the meaning of the outburst. Scaphio describes the ruin that has overtaken them: the reforms have cured disease, abolished war, put an end to crime and litigation; as a consequence, the doctors and lawyers are starving. In short, Utopia is “swamped by dull Prosperity.”

King Paramount appeals to Zara for a solution. It occurs to her that she “had forgotten the most essential element of all” — the English institution of Government by Party. “No political measures will endure, because one Party will assuredly undo all that the other party has done.” The resulting confusion will result in “general and unexampled prosperity!” The triumphant King Paramount orders the arrest of the conspirators, and proclaims the transformation of Utopia from a Monarchy (Limited) to a Limited Monarchy. The opera ends as the Utopians pay tribute (Finale, *There’s a little group of isles beyond the wave*) to Great Britain, “that monarchy sublime, To which some add (but others do not) Ireland.”

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