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Gilbert and Sullivan for younger players

The Mikado



Adapted from Gilbert and Sullivan

Book by

Lynne Bartlett, Mark Leehy and Kevin O'Mara

Music and lyrics by

David Billings, Mark Leehy and Kevin O'Mara

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"Fantastic! Wow!! Our students loved the musical. The show was an outstanding success from the backdrop (painted by students) to the costumes, the singing and the acting. The children learnt so much about staging a musical. Songs were easy to sing and the humour was appreciated by all."

St Peter's School, Melbourne, Australia

The Mikado

Musical. Adapted from Gilbert and Sullivan for younger performers. Book by Lynne Bartlett, Mark Leehy and Kevin O'Mara. Music and lyrics by David Billings, Mark Leehy and Kevin O'Mara. Cast: 7m., 4w. or may be played by 11w., plus chorus of any size. Set in the little Japanese town of Titipu in the late 1800s. Disguised as a wand'ring minstrel, Nanki-poo (son of the Mikado, Emperor of Japan) comes to town to claim his secret love, Yum-Yum, only to find that Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner, is preparing to marry her. Then Ko-Ko finds he must carry out an execution or the town will be reclassified as a village. With the help of Pooh-Bah (Lord High Everything else) Ko-Ko plans a hoax—but the plan goes awry when the Mikado unexpectedly arrives. This is a faithful adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan's wonderful farce and comic send-up of everything from the class system and the monarchy to petty officials and scheming bureaucrats—plus all things heroic and operatic. Songs include *Gentlemen of Japan, A Wand'ring Minstrel, The Lord High Executioner, I've Got a Little List, Three Little Maids, The Punishment Fit the Crime, The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring* and *Titwillow*. All the music is appropriate in vocal range and lyric manageability for younger performers from middle elementary to middle high-school years. Instrumental backings have been adapted from Sir Arthur Sullivan's original orchestral score. Everything you need is here to give your students an exhilarating theatrical experience with the most enduring music theatre team of all time. Two basic sets. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Code: MF5.

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THE MIKADO
or
The Town of Titipu

by
William S Gilbert
Music by Sir Arthur Sullivan

adapted for younger performers
by
Lynne Bartlett, David Billings,
Mark Leehy And Kevin O'Mara



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LYNNE BARTLETT, DAVID BILLINGS,
MARK LEEHY and KEVIN O'MARA

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(THE MIKADO or The Town of Titipu)

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The Mikado or The Town of Titipu was first produced at the Savoy Theatre on March 14, 1885.

* * * *

For Zachery Dylan and Charlie – L.B.

*For Sandra (my wife elected) with much love and thanks
– M.L.*

For Erin – thanks for everything – K.O'M.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

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Produced by special arrangement with
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THE MIKADO

or

The Town of Titipu

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE MIKADO OF JAPAN

NANKI-POO, his son, disguised as a wandering minstrel,
and in love with Yum-Yum

KO-KO, Lord High Executioner of Titipu

POOH-BAH, Lord High Everything Else

PISH-TUSH, a noble Lord

NOBLE 1

NOBLE 2

THREE SISTERS, wards of Ko-Ko:

YUM-YUM

PITTI-SING

PEEP-BO

KATISHA, an elderly lady, in love with Nanki-Poo

Chorus Nobles

Chorus of Villagers (male and female)

Mikado's Entourage (Guards + any Court people re-
quired—these can be doubled from some of the Nobles
and Villagers choruses)

SETTING: Act I – Courtyard of Ko-Ko's official resi-
dence. Act II – Ko-Ko's garden.

TIME: Late 1800s.

See Production Notes page 63.

SONGS AND MUSICAL PIECES

Act I

1. Overture
2. Gentlemen of Japan Nobles & Villagers
3. A Wand'ring Minstrel Nanki-Poo with Nobles &
Villagers
4. Our Great Mikado (spoken verse) Pish-Tush,
Nanki-Poo and Nobles 1 & 2
5. The Lord High Executioner Nobles & Villagers
6. I've Got a Little List. Ko-Ko with Nobles & Villagers
7. Three Little Maids Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing &
Peep-Bo with Female Villagers
8. Act I Finale Company

Act II

9. Art and Nature Female Villagers
10. Entrance of the Mikado Nobles & Villagers
11. Duet Mikado & Katisha with Company
12. The Punishment Fit the Crime. Mikado with Company
13. The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring Nanki-Poo &
Ko-Ko with Nobles & Villagers
14. Recitative Katisha
15. Titwillow Ko-Ko with Male Nobles & Villagers
16. Entrance of the Mikado (#2). Nobles & Villagers
17. Act II Finale Company

ACT I

SONG #1: OVERTURE

SCENE: Courtyard of Ko-Ko's palace in Titipu. NOBLES UL and VILLAGERS UR, frozen in traditional Japanese poses.

NOBLES come to life, step forward to CENTRE STAGE and sing:

SONG #1: GENTLEMEN OF JAPAN

NOBLES.

If you want to know who we are,
We are gentlemen of Japan:
On many a vase and jar—
On many a screen and fan,

(VILLAGERS come to life, step forward to CENTRE STAGE and sing:)

VILLAGERS.

We figure in lively paint:
Our attitude here is quaint—
You're wrong if you think it ain't, oh-oh!

NOBLES.

If you think we work by strings, (*VILLAGERS mime puppet actions*)

Like a Japanese marionette, (*mime*)

You don't understand these things (*mime*)

It is simply etiquette. (*Strike "etiquette" poses—drinking cups of tea, hands in prayer, etc.*)

VILLAGERS.

Perhaps you think this throng

Can't keep it up all day long?

If that's your idea, you're wrong, oh-oh!

ALL.

If that's your idea, you're wrong

ALL.

If you want to know who we/they are,

We/They are gentlemen of Japan:

On vase and jar—

On screen and fan

On many, many, many, many

Many, many, many, many a jar

Oh, oh, oh, oh

On vase and jar

On screen and fan

(*ENTER NANKI-POO UR in great excitement. He carries a guitar or ukulele on his back and a bundle of ballads in his hand and comes DOWN through CENTRE between NOBLES and VILLAGERS.*)

NANK. Gentlemen, I pray you tell me
Where a gentle maiden dwelleth,
Named Yum-Yum, the ward of Ko-Ko?

NOBLE 1 (*stepping forward*) Why, who are you to ask this question?

NANK (*turning and gesturing to chorus*). Come gather round me, and I'll tell you.

(*CHORUS gather round.*)

SONG: A WAND'RING MINSTREL

NANK.

A wand'ring minstrel I—
A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby!

My catalogue is long,
Through every passion ranging,
And to your humours changing
I tune my supple song!
I tune my supple song!

NANK (*spoken*). Are you in sentimental mood?
I'll sigh with you,

ALL.

Oh, sorrow, sorrow!

NANK (*spoken*). On maiden's coldness do you brood?
I'll do so, too—

ALL.

Oh, sorrow, sorrow!

NANK (*marching back and forth across the stage*).

But if patriotic sentiment is wanted,
I've patriotic ballads cut and dried;
For where'er our country's banner may be planted,
All other local banners are defied!
Our warriors are ready and assembled,
Never quail—or they conceal it if they do—
And I shouldn't be surprised if nations trembled
Before the mighty troops of Titipu!

ALL (*marching on spot*). No we shouldn't be surprised if
nations trembled

Before the mighty troops of Titipu!

NANK (*doing sailor dance as he sings*).

And if you call for a song of the sea,
We'll heave the capstan round,
Yo heave ho, for the wind is free,
Her anchor's a-trip and her helm's a-lee,
Hurrah for the homeward bound!

(*ALL perform "sailor" actions as they sing—each member can invent own actions.*)

ALL.

Yo-ho—heave ho—
Hurrah for the homeward bound!
With a yo heave ho,
And a rum below,

Hurrah for the homeward bound!
With a yo heave ho,
And a rum below,
Yo-ho, heave ho
Yo-ho, heave ho, Yo-ho, heave ho
Yo-ho!

ALL (*wandering back to original places as they sing*).

A wand'ring minstrel I/he—
A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby!
And dreamy lullaby!

(*VILLAGERS EXIT R; NOBLES [except PISH-TUSH, NOBLES 1 and 2] EXIT L. PISH-TUSH steps forward, with NOBLES 1 and 2 at his side, and addresses NANKI-POO.*)

PISH. And what may be your business with Yum-Yum?

NANK. I'll tell you. A year ago I was a member of the Titipu town band. While playing one day, I saw Yum-Yum. (*Walks DOWNSTAGE. To audience:*) Ahh... We loved each other at once. (*Walks back to NOBLES.*) But she was betrothed to her guardian Ko-Ko, a cheap tailor. (*To audience.*) In despair, I left the town. (*To NOBLES.*) Imagine my delight when I heard, a month ago, that Ko-Ko had been condemned to death for flirting! I hurried back at once.

PISH. It is true that Ko-Ko was condemned to death for flirting, but he was reprieved at the last moment, and

raised to the exalted rank of Lord High Executioner...
under the following remarkable circumstances:

(NANKI-POO moves across to DR. PISH-TUSH, NOBLES 1 and 2 move DC.)

#4: SPOKEN VERSE: OUR GREAT MIKADO

PISH.

Our great Mikado, virtuous man,
When he began to rule our land,
Resolved to try
A plan whereby
Young men might best be steadied.

NOBLES 1 & 2.

So he decreed, in words succinct,
That all who flirted, leered or winked
Unless in marriage they are linked,
Should forthwith be beheaded.

NANK.

Beheaded, beheaded?

PISH.

This stern decree, you'll understand,
Caused great dismay throughout the land!
For young and old
And shy and bold
Were equally affected.

NOBLES 1 & 2.

The youth who winked a roving eye,
Or breathed a slightly wayward sigh,
Was thereupon condemned to die—
He usually objected.

NANK.

I can understand that!

PISH.

We straightaway let out on bail
A convict from the county jail,
Whose head was next
On some pretext
Condemned to soon be mown off,

NOBLES 1 & 2.

And made him Headsman, for we said,
“Who’s next to be decapited
Cannot cut off another’s head
Until he’s cut his own off.”

NANK.

Now, *there’s* a challenge.

(NOBLES 1 and 2 EXIT L. NANKI-POO and TISH-TUSH remain. POOH-BAH ENTERS UL. He comes DOWN to PISH-TUSH as NANKI-POO is speaking.)

NANK (*to audience*). So...Ko-Ko, the cheap tailor, Lord High Executioner of Titipu! *Why...that's the highest rank a citizen can attain!*

POOH (*to NANKI-POO, surprising him*). It is. (*Turns to see POOH-BAH and comes over to him.*) And...I believe you are looking for Yum-Yum.

NANK (*bowing*). Yes, indeed. And how good of you, a nobleman of the highest rank, to speak to me, a mere strolling minstrel!

POOH. Don't mention it. I am, in point of fact, a particularly haughty person. I can't help it. I was born sneering. But I struggle hard to overcome this defect. When all the great Officers of State resigned because they were too proud to serve under Ko-Ko, an ex-tailor, (*to PISH*) did I not accept all their posts at once?

PISH. You did. *And* the salaries attached to them.

POOH. So now it is my degrading duty to serve as the following: I am First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, all rolled into one. (*Sadly.*) And at a salary! The Great Pooh-Bah...a salaried servant! But I do it! It revolts me, but I do it!

NANK. And it does you credit.

POOH. But I don't stop at that. I go and dine with middle-class people at reasonable rates. I dance at suburban parties for a moderate fee. I also sell State secrets at a very low figure. (*Winking at audience.*) For instance, any further information about Yum-Yum would come under the heading of a State secret.

(He puts his hand out to NANKI-POO, whilst looking the other way. NANKI-POO takes his hint and puts money into his hand. POO-BAH looks disapprovingly at the small coin.)

POOH *(to audience)*. I see you really *are* a poor musician.

NANK. The State secret, Pooh-Bah?

POOH. Oh, yes...ahem:

“This very day
From school Yum-Yum
Will wend her way,
And homeward come,
With beat of drum
And a rum-tum-tum,
To wed the Lord High Executioner!”

(POOH-BAH EXITS L, accompanied by PISH-TUSH, NANKI-POO running after him.)

NANK *(EXITING)*. Oh, no! Is that all? Can you tell me no more?

(VILLAGERS ENTER R and NOBLES ENTER L, to the instrumental opening of the song:)

SONG #5: THE LORD HIGH EXECUTIONER

VILLAGERS & NOBLES *(sing)*.

Behold the Lord High Executioner
A personage of noble rank and title
A dignified and potent officer,
Whose functions are particularly vital!

(KO-KO marches on UL and moves DC between NO-BLES and VILLAGERS as they sing to him.)

Defer, defer,
To the Lord High Executioner!
Defer, defer,
To the noble Lord, to the noble Lord
High Executioner!

Behold the Lord High Executioner
A personage of noble rank and title
A dignified and potent officer,
Whose functions are particularly vital!

Defer, defer,
To the Lord High Executioner!
Defer, defer,
To the noble Lord, to the noble Lord
High Executioner!

Defer, defer,
To the Lord High Executioner!
Defer, defer,
To the noble Lord, to the noble Lord
High Executioner!

Bow down, bow down
To the Lord High Executioner
Defer, defer
To the noble, noble Lord High Executioner!

End of excerpt. Production notes

PRODUCTION NOTES

STAGING: The show can be staged in two acts, with an intermission, or (as the running time is approximately sixty-five minutes) can be performed straight through, without an intermission.

This adaptation is intended to faithfully represent the original intent of Gilbert and Sullivan. Changes have been made to original dialogue, melodies, keys and arrangements only to enable the work to be done by young performers.

The Mikado is a timeless social satire of everything from royalty and politicians to the public service, the ruling classes and institutions, pomposity...and the heroic nature of serious opera. It is over the top and we encourage you to perform it that way. Be melodramatic, be outrageous...and have as much fun as possible!

PROPS:

Act I: guitar or ukulele and bundle of ballads and a coin purse and coin for Nanki-Poo, fans for the Three Little Maids, letter for Pooh-Bah, rope for Nanki-Poo

Act II: hand mirror for Yum-Yum, revolving stool for Yum-Yum, coin purse and coin for Ko-Ko, certificate for Pooh-Bah, suitcases for Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum