



PRESS RELEASE

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The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin Presents Its Summer 2011 Grand Production
The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu
Gilbert & Sullivan's Classic Musical Opening in Austin June 9th

WHO: The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
WHAT: THE MIKADO
WHEN: June 9-19 / Thursdays-Sundays / 9 Performances.
Evening performances Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays at 8pm.
Matinees at 3pm June 12, 18 & 19.
Special Children's Activities Sunday, June 12 at 2pm.
WHERE: Travis High School Performing Arts Center / 1211 E. Oltorf
INFO: Visit www.gilbertsullivan.org or call (512) 472-4772
TICKETS: \$5 - \$25 / Purchase tickets online at www.gilbertsullivan.org, or call 1-800-494-TIXS
For group sales of 10 or more, contact Michael Meigs at (512) 420-0888 or michael@gilbertsullivan.org

AUSTIN, TX – The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin is proud to present its Summer 2011 Grand Production of *The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu*. *The Mikado* has delighted audiences for more than a century and is perhaps the most popular comic opera ever written. This quintessential satire of human nature represents Gilbert and Sullivan at the height of their creative geniuses. *The Mikado* is filled with masterful Gilbertian lyrics and magnificent Sullivanian musical “hits,” conveyed with orchestral brilliance. Populated with memorable characters and colorfully exotic costumes and sets, *The Mikado* is wildly funny. Audiences of all ages will be captivated by its hauntingly beautiful tunes and its colorful pageantry.

The Mikado opened in London on March 14, 1885, and ran for a record-breaking 672 performances at the Savoy Theatre. This comedy about an executioner, while set in Japan, displays wit that is very much British, albeit kimono-clad. Victorian England is the target of Gilbert's satire, thinly disguised as a strange and distant land. *The Mikado* has had an extensive influence on popular culture, from “Pooh-Bah,” “Tit-Willow,” “A Wand’ring Minstrel I” and “Three Little Maids” to the 1999 Mike Leigh film “Topsy-Turvy,” which tells the story of the creation of *The Mikado*.

Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr. returns for his 11th summer with the Society, along with Jeffrey Jones-Ragona, enjoying his 15th season as Music Director.

The cast includes: Holton Johnson (Nanki-Poo), Tamsen Cohagan (Yum-Yum), Russell Gregory (The Mikado), Janette Jones (Katisha), Arthur DiBianca (Ko-Ko), Patricia Combs (Pitti-Sing), Robert L. Schneider (Pooh-Bah), Angela Irving (Peep-Bo), Jay Young (Pish-Tush), and a Chorus of 24 Noblemen and School-Girls.



A free Opening Night Gala with refreshments follows the Friday, June 10 performance. Special Children's Activities precede the performance on June 12 at 2pm. All performances will have supertitles.

Usually regarded as Gilbert & Sullivan's masterpiece, *The Mikado* has been translated into other languages and adapted more than any other of their works. The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin will continue its tradition of offering *The Mikado* that Gilbert and Sullivan wrote, demonstrating why the work has proved so enduring and endearing for 125 years.

Synopsis:

Nanki-Poo, a wandering minstrel, has come to the town of Titipu in search of Yum-Yum, a girl with whom he has fallen in love. Ko-Ko, her guardian, had been condemned to death under the Mikado's law against flirting, but has since been appointed Lord High Executioner, on the assumption that he will be unwilling to enforce a law of which he himself must be the first victim. While Ko-Ko plans to marry Yum-Yum himself, Nanki-Poo woos the beautiful girl. Yum-Yum returns his affection, but she is unwilling to defy her guardian.

Meanwhile, Ko-Ko learns that his post is to be abolished by the Mikado for non-performance of duty. His search for a victim is interrupted by the appearance of the despondent Nanki-Poo, bent on suicide. The two men strike a deal that Nanki-Poo may marry Yum-Yum, if he will agree to become Ko-Ko's first victim at the end of a month.

The general rejoicing that follows this announcement is halted by the arrival of Katisha, an elderly lady of the Mikado's court. Thwarted in her efforts to claim Nanki-Poo as her lover, she attempts to reveal his true identity, but the entire town shouts her down as the act ends.

Act II finds Yum-Yum and Nanki-Poo preparing for their wedding. But Ko-Ko produces a surprise: he's discovered that "by the Mikado's law, when a married man is beheaded, his wife is buried alive"! Yum-Yum is having second thoughts when the approach of the Mikado himself is announced. Ko-Ko panics and decides that a dead body will not be needed if the proper papers are produced. He sends Nanki-Poo away to marry Yum-Yum and prepares an "affidavit" of Nanki-Poo's execution.

The Mikado is delighted to receive the news until he sees the name of the victim. Ko-Ko now learns for the first time that Nanki-Poo is the son of the Mikado. Along with Pooh-Bah and Pitti-Sing, who have acted as witnesses to the fake execution, Ko-Ko is sentenced to be boiled in oil for "compassing the death of the Heir Apparent."

When Ko-Ko goes to Nanki-Poo for help, the minstrel explains that he originally disguised himself in order to escape Katisha's attentions, and he has no intention of being anything but "dead" until she is married to someone else. To save his own neck, Ko-Ko woos and wins the lady in record time. When the Mikado returns from lunch to find his son still alive, and Ko-Ko married to Katisha, he declares that "nothing could possibly be more satisfactory."





The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin was founded in 1976 with the purpose of education by preserving and presenting the works of Gilbert & Sullivan. Known for its highly acclaimed annual grand productions from the G&S repertoire, the Society is also dedicated to spreading and teaching the joys of G&S through school and community presentations.

GSSA is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts, and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts which believes that a great nation deserves great art. Media sponsors for *The Mikado* are Time Warner Cable's, YNN and Classical 89.5 KMFA.

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