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The Mikado (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

A lighthearted burlesque of Victorian English culture and the vagaries of love, *The Mikado* offers an ideal matching of William Schwenck Gilbert's elegant comedic gifts with Arthur Sullivan's agile and refined musicianship. The tale unfolds amid a fanciful version of Japanese society, in which a wandering minstrel has the misfortune to fall in love with the beautiful ward of the Lord High Executioner of Titipu. The sparkling lyrics and witty dialogue of this comic masterpiece are as much a delight to read as they are to hear with musical accompaniment. The complete libretto is reprinted in this edition from the standard performance text of *The Mikado*, complete with nine charming illustrations drawn by W. S. Gilbert himself.

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Customer Reviews

A lighthearted burlesque of Japanese culture and the vagaries of love, and one of the most widely admired of all the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The sparkling lyrics and witty dialogue of this comic masterpiece are as much a delight to read as they are to hear with musical accompaniment. The complete libretto is reprinted in this edition from the standard performance text of "*The Mikado*," complete with 9 charming illustrations drawn by W. S. Gilbert himself.

English playwright, librettist, and poet William Schwenck Gilbert (1836–1911) is chiefly remembered for the comic operas he created in collaboration with Sir Arthur Sullivan. Their best

known works include *The Pirates of Penzance* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

Though the instances of topical Canadian humor are becoming incredibly dated, this rendition of the *Mikado* nevertheless benefits from excellent performances, both in its presentation of character, and in its music. A recorded stage production, the set is highly stylized if minimalist- while it certainly clicked with me, artistically, its starkness might also be underwhelming for others with more grandiose expectations. While there are other renditions of the *Mikado* available, of all those I've seen, this version has the most personality. I recommend it to anyone looking for a unique experience, or those who nostalgically remember this production when it was a CBC release on VHS, and would like a copy on more modern media.

I had agonized for years wanting to purchase a copy of "The Mikado" on video/DVD, but there were so many that I had difficulty choosing. Watching the movie "Topsy Turvy" about the creation of the operetta made the decision even more difficult, because I liked the players in the movie so much that I despaired of finding a stage production on DVD that could make me love "The Mikado" as much as did the actors in that movie. I'm so glad I selected this one. This is a marvelous, energetic, fast moving production of "The Mikado." The stage setting is very spare; but the actors are so animated, and the sound, camera work, and everything else about the production is so good that I kept forgetting that I was watching a recording of a stage play. What is more, there are many pretty touches -- acrobats, dancers, and great costumes that dress up the stage and the production perfectly. What can I say except "Bravo!"?

This is my favorite version of the *Mikado* and I have seen quite a few, live and on tape. Most are a little boring (the one with the Monty Python "clan") and some are exactly the same (Renshaw directed I believe, which was still entertaining); this one is entertaining and has very talented actors esp. *Gidon Saks*.

The video/DVD is of a staged Canadian production, filmed from the proscenium-audience point of view with some close-ups, in full costume and makeup appropriate to the G&S script and score. The score is very well sung although the songs are dubbed, you have to pay special attention to notice this. The lip-sync is very, very good and since they don't have to worry about singing perfectly "live" with the camera, they can do more acting while mouthing their parts, and it all works very well. Some wonderfully stylized performances make it fun, especially from Pooh Bah who is the tallest

actor I've ever seen in a G&S opera! Folks who are addicted to perfect-score singing will notice some deviations (not bad ones, just different) but overall it's well-done and includes encores that are usually performed of the most popular numbers at high speed for an appreciative audience. I recommend this version to Mikado-lovers.

This is a superb performance of *The Mikado*. The acting and the music are first-rate. Don't hesitate for one second to get it. Shortly after purchasing and viewing this video, I saw *The Mikado* performed live by the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players, a top-notch troupe whom I have seen in action many times and always loved. I must say that the Stratford performance held its own against even these masters, and I think I actually preferred the Stratford in many ways. Objections raised in the other reviews include: 1) The scenery is too simple. I, however, found that the simplicity of the scenery actually enhanced the performance. It allowed me to concentrate more fully on that which is really important, and really good: the actors and the music. 2) There are allusions to people and events in Canadian culture that not everybody will understand. But that is true of any performance. In songs such as "I've got a little list" and "My object all sublime", nobody will sing the original Gilbert lyrics today, which would have very little comic effect; everybody has to substitute something contemporary. In five years from now, the substitutions I heard here in New York, very funny for me, will no longer be comprehensible to most people. So don't worry about that tiny detail. The overall effect of this performance is powerful. Enjoy it!!

I'm not a great fan of operettas, but I saw this performance many years ago on TV, and was charmed and captivated by it. Since I remembered nothing about the production, it's been a long time until I found it, but now that I did - it met all my expectations and surpassed my memories. A colourful, quick paced production, saucy and humorous, with wonderful singers-actors. While looking for it I had watched some other productions - this one is by far the best. Even if - like me - you don't really like the genre - it's highly recommended.

This "*Mikado*" makes all the rest seem lifeless! The singer-actors are all excellent, particularly Erik Donkin (KoKo) and Gidon Saks (the Mikado), but what is most striking is the choreographing of movement, but during the scenes and between them: there isn't a dull moment! The sound is good, the cinematography fine, and all in all, I have no hesitation in recommending this as the best "*Mikado*" available.

Having seen the CBC broadcasting of this its still a great DVD of Gilbert & Sullivan production and should be part of everyone's collection!

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