

GILBERT & SULLIVAN INVITE YOU TO THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE MIKADO



Fridays, March 1st, 8th and 15th at 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays, March 2nd, 9th and 16th at 8:00 p.m.

Sundays, March 3rd, 10th and 17th at 3:00 p.m.

Special 100th Birthday Gala:

Thursday, March 14th at 8:00 p.m.

Adults and Children: \$7.00

Howard Conn Fine Arts Center

1900 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis

Adults \$5.00 Children \$3.50

For information & reservations call 925-9159

THE GILBERT & SULLIVAN VERY LIGHT OPERA COMPANY

1 SAVOY HILL · LONDON · W.C.2

9th January 1985

Dear M/s Jensen,

I was very interested to read the various press cuttings about the Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company and all their hard work in presenting the Operas in Minneapolis. I now write to you as Secretary of the Company to ask you to convey to all the members my very best wishes for a very successful production of ' The Mikado ' to celebrate its Centenary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bridget D'Oyly Carte', written over a horizontal line.

Bridget D'Oyly Carte

Penelope Snipper
Catering

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Minneapolis, MN 55403

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A History of THE MIKADO

The Mikado opened at the Savoy Theatre in London on March 14, 1885. It enjoyed the longest initial run of any of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, packing the house for almost two years.

One reason for the immense popularity of The Mikado was the infatuation for anything Japanese that possessed many 19th century Englishmen. Japanese vases, jars, screens and fans filled British homes, and the craze reached new heights in 1884 when an exhibition of a Japanese village opened in Knightsbridge. Gilbert, whose passion for authentic detail was legendary, took advantage of its presence by enlisting the services of geisha girls from the village to teach the cast how to walk, run, sit and snap their fans in true Japanese fashion. So successful was the effort that one opening night critic wrote, "The damsels at the Savoy accomplished the Japanese shuffle as to the manner born." The costumes also had to measure up to Gilbert's exacting standards. Katisha's costume was a 200-year-old antique Japanese robe. Gilbert also ordered some antique Japanese armor for the male members of the cast; unfortunately, it turned out to be too small for any man taller than five foot four.

However, no matter how Japanese The Mikado may look, its characters and the institutions it satirizes are completely British. The corrupt, pompous aristocrat Pooh-Bah, the virago Katisha, and Ko-Ko, the foolish little man who rises from obscurity to high position through no merit of his own, are caricatures that are found in Gilbert's other works and in the works of many Victorian writers. G. K. Chesterton commented that, "I doubt if there is a single joke in the whole play that fits the Japanese. But all the jokes in the play fit the English." (Indeed, some modern producers, believing that at least two of the musical numbers, Ko-Ko's "little list" song and the Mikado's "My Object All Sublime," contain references comprehensible only to an Englishman of the 1880's, have rewritten

A History of THE MIKADO (continued)

the songs completely in an attempt to make them more meaningful to their own audiences. In one recent production, Ko-Ko's list of villains was updated to include "all governments who refuse to bail out D'Oyly Carte."

The Mikado is today one of the best known and most often performed of the Savoy operas, both in its traditional form, and in versions that must keep Gilbert and Sullivan turning in their graves. Over the years, the show has been performed in Italian, German, Dutch, Yiddish, Russian, and incredibly, in Japanese. There has been a Folies Bergere Mikado and a Swing Mikado - a syncopated version performed in 1938 by an all black cast. In 1939, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson played the title role in The Hot Mikado. The operetta has been brought to the screen, in faithful renditions by The D'Oyly Carte Company, and in versions less true to the original by others. But in whatever form it is presented, it has been, for one hundred years, "a source of innocent merriment" for all.

Dear Cast Members,

**If you break a leg,
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BIOGRAPHIES

WALDYN BENBENEK (Nanki-Poo) -- Waldyn showed a fondness for Gilbert and Sullivan in his early adolescence. Ignoring the psychologists, his parents bought him D'Oyly Carte records in the hope that he would grow out of it. The ploy failed. After college theatre, where he usually played drunks, degenerates and nasties, he joined Dick Fishel in the starting days of the GSVLOC, wherein he has played various roles and held myriad positions.

BARBARA BLOOM (Stage Director/Choreographer) -- Barbara has directed/choreographed for GSVLOC's The Gondoliers, Minnetonka, Off-Broadway Musical, Capitol City and Nine Mile Creek Theatres as well as performing with many theatres, including "At The Foot Of The Mountain." A professional singer/dancer, she performs with MDT's "Super Taps Troupe" and sings solos at Berea Lutheran Church. Teaching Theatre for young people at the Bloomington Art Center rounds out her busy theatrical career and still allows time for son, Terry and husband, Don.

RAINA BRODY (Attendant to Ko-Ko & Mikado) -- Ms. Brody made her acting debut at age five as a dead child in the Olympia Theater's production of "Lenz." She performed several children's roles in the 1983 & 1984 productions of the Guthrie's "Christmas Carol." She sings with the Bel Canto Voices, and has a lead role in her school operetta. She has appeared with the GSVLOC in their revue "Ballads, Songs, and Snatches."

GRETCHEN COLLINS (Katisha) -- A charter member of the GSVLOC, she has played Lady Jane in Patience, the Fairy Queen in Iolanthe, the Duchess in The Gondoliers, and "now, at long last -- Katisha." She has a BFA in Vocal Music and most recently studied voice with E. V. Foreman, Director of Minnesota Singers' School. As administrator of the Title I Program in Hopkins Schools, Gretchen focuses her creativity on public speaking, workshop design, Special Services, public relations, and video production. She has her own business, Personalslides, Inc.

KRISTY LYNN CONRAD (Yum-Yum) -- Kristy is returning to the company for her second year. She sang the role of Casilda in The Gondoliers last year and has also portrayed Phyllis in Iolanthe at Glass Theatre Co. and Pitti-Sing in The Mikado at the same theater. Musical comedy is her first love turned hobby.

BIOGRAPHIES (continued)

CAROLYN DAVIES (Music Director) -- Carolyn is a graduate of the University of Minnesota in Music Education. She has been an accompanist and director for over ** years, taking part in productions of The Sorcerer, The Pirates of Penzance, The Gondoliers and numerous musicals by the Bloomington and original Edina Community Theatres, the Theatre of Involvement, Normandale College, and local school performances. Carolyn has taught music at all grad levels in Minnesota, and is presently an associate with Insight Seminars.

DICK FISHEL, JR. (Pooh-Bah) -- Dick made his G&S debut in a summer camp production of The Mikado -- as Peep-Bo, one of the three little maids from school. In the forty-odd years since his voice changed, Dick has remained an incurable Savoyard. His repertoire includes most of the comic roles in the G&S canon. With the GSVLOC, he has appeared as Bunthorne in Patience, the Lord Chancellor in Iolanthe, King Gama in Princess Ida, Sir Despard in Ruddigore, and the Duke of Plaza-Toro in The Gondoliers.

BRIGITTE HEANEY (Costume Designer) -- A native of Germany, she is a professional photographer and instructor of photography. As costume designer for Lakeshore Players in White Bear Lake, she did Taming of the Shrew, The Student Prince, Diary of Anne Frank, and A Doll's House, among others. Her previous two shows with the GSVLOC were Ruddigore and The Gondoliers. She also translates from French and German.

KATHY HERING (Peep-Bo) -- This marks the third production Ms. Hering has done with the GSVLOC. She has also appeared in musicals at Chimera, Center Stage, and Minnetonka Community Theater. This past summer she performed in a Richard Wilson show, "The Journey, A Musical of Life," which was done in Detroit and re-staged over New Year's at O'Shaughnessy Auditorium as a fund raiser for Augsburg College. She is also a member of the Mad Housewives Opera Company, which raises money for a variety of medical charities.

MIKE HOOVER (Scenery and Lighting Designer) -- Mike, or "Michael" to his friends, has been providing essential designs and artistic skill for the GSVLOC for several years. He designed sets and lighting for Princess Ida, Ruddigore, and The Gondoliers, in addition to his work for the University of Minnesota Opera Workshop.

BIOGRAPHIES (continued)

DOROTHEA JENSEN (Pitti-Sing) -- Deedy is a freelance writer with three published novels (under the pen name Catherine Moorhouse) and one produced play on her "little list." Her performance background includes summer stock, Carleton College musicals, and The Gilbert & Sullivan Players (Philadelphia). She has been in all the G&S Operas except Pirates, Sorcerer, and The Grand Duke, and plans to fill in two of these gaps next season!

SID KONIKOFF (The Mikado) -- This is Sid's third G&S production after moving to the Twin Cities from New York, where he frequently appeared in the title role in The Mikado. Actually, he has been in most of the shows in the G&S repertoire. With the GSVLOC, he has played Old Adam in Ruddigore, and Don Alhambra in The Gondoliers.

DAVID LOHMAN (Pish-Tush) -- David was born and raised in Minneapolis, graduated last spring from Moorhead State University in theatre and music. While at college, he played Major-General Stanley in The Pirates of Penzance, Captain Hook in Peter Pan, and Littlechap in Stop the World - I Want to Get Off, among others. Dave has his sights set upon a career in musical theatre conducting.

BOB LUNDEGAARD (Ko-Ko) -- Bob is a film critic for the Minneapolis Star and Tribune. He has been with the paper since 1958. This is his first performance the GSVLOC.

JOANN THRASH PHELAN (Rehearsal Accompanist) -- A 1978 graduate of USD, she received a BFA in Music with a Piano Performance major. She competed in the State Level of MTNA Competition in 1976, 1977, & 1978, placing each year. She has taken a special interest in accompanying, including Met Auditions, NATS competitions, and recitals. Since joining the GSVLOC, she has enjoyed working with seven productions thus far. She teaches Private Piano at Coffman Union Mini Courses and is a member of MMTA.

CHRIS RUSIN (Stage Manager) -- Having made her GSVLOC stage managing debut with our production of Ruddigore in 1983, Chris has perfected her dressing-room call of "Five Minutes!" In addition, she looks good in basic backstage black.

STEPHEN B. SULLIVAN (Go-To) -- (No known relation to Arthur S. Sullivan). Steve wishes to thank his father, who introduced him to performing G&S at the age of 13. He has the GSVLOC to thank for introducing him to his wife and most of his closest friends. This is his fourth season with the company, and his first performance in a named role. Steve is also responsible for hand props and built most of them.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Director.....Barbara Bloom
Music Director.....Carolyn Davies
Artistic Director.....Dick Fishel, Jr.
Scenery & Lighting Designer.....Michael Hoover
Costume Designer.....Brigitte Heaney
Choreographer.....Barbara Bloom
Production Manager.....Dean Laurance
Rehearsal Pianists.....Joann Thrash Phelan
Jean Orbison
Stage Manager.....Chris Rusin
Costume Mistress.....Wendy Evans
Scenic Artist.....Scott Latendresse
Light Board Operator.....Floyd Swanson
Follow Spots.....Ron Larson, Jill Johnson
Properties Master & Bridge Engineer..Stephen B. Sullivan
Wigs.....Susan Sittko, Stephanie Brody
House Managers.....Sandra Irwin, Mary Kuehborn
House Staff Recruitment.....Rhea Lee Sullivan
Tickets.....Charlotte Morrison, Fred Morrison, Mary Lou Loud
Publicity.....Stephanie Brody, Peter Erickson, Dick Fishel,
Dorothea Jensen, Sue Ann Loomis, Holly MacDonald,
Mary Mescher, Richard Rames, Steve Rawlins,
Rita Stough, Barb Webber, Holly Windle
Photography.....Brigitte Heaney
Costume Construction...Wendy Evans, Anne Heaney, Anita Rudman,
Stephanie Brody, Barb Webber
Video Camera Supervisor.....Tanya Brody

THE CAST

The Mikado of Japan.....Sid Konikoff
Nanki-Poo, His Son.....Waldyn Benbenek
Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu....Bob Lundegaard
Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else.....Dick Fishel, Jr.
Pish-Tush, A Noble Lord.....David Lohman
Go-To.....Stephen B. Sullivan
Attendant to Ko-Ko/Mikado.....Raina S. Brody
Yum-Yum.....Kristy Lynn Conrad
Pitti-Sing.....Dorothea Jensen
Peep-Bo.....Kathy Hering
Katisha, an Elderly Lady,
in love with Nanki-Poo.....Gretchen Collins

CHORUS of School-girls, Chaperones, Nobles, and Guards:

Andy Bowen	Michael Matson
Ernest Brody	Mary Mescher
Stephanie Brody	Charlotte Morrison
Peter Erickson	Cyndi Nelson
Roger Evans	Charlotte Overend
Vern Harman	Richard Rames
David Jensen	Steve Rawlins
Dean Laurance	Rita Stough
Sue Ann Loomis	Rhea Lee Sullivan
Warren S. Loud	Barbara Webber
Holly MacDonald	Holly Windle

The Setting: Courtyard of Ko-Ko's official residence

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

* * * * *

No smoking, drinking or eating is allowed in the theatre.

The use of flash cameras is strictly forbidden, as it is a hazard to the performers.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

To conceptualize our interpretation of The Mikado, imagine first that you are without the gift of hearing. What you see clearly tells you that this is 19th Century Japan with its brave, confident men and its dainty, demure women moving about the stage as though lifted from screen and vase in relief. Now, pretend to be without the gift of sight. What you hear clearly indicates that you are experiencing a lightly British, if not formal American, rendition of classic British wit, humor, and melody with merely a suggestion of the mystic orient. Combine this with a primarily traditional approach modified for our midwestern audience only when it makes the action clearer and you have the basis for the concept with which this production is staged. If this concept is realized for you as you experience our production, we are happy and grateful that our task is complete and we give you The Mikado which we present with great affection and love.

Barbara Bloom

ORCHESTRA

Violin I.....	Elizabeth Weis (Concert Mistress)
	Michelle Hunn
Violin II.....	Dan Folland
	Sue Schultz
Viola.....	Linda Warner
Cello.....	Coral Bastien
Bass.....	Bob Salter
Flute.....	Julie Smythe
Oboe.....	Lorelei Giddings
	Doug Munro
Clarinet.....	Barb Hovey
Bassoon.....	Nancy Warren
	John Banks
	Laura McNaught
French Horn.....	Lisa Worcester
	Martha Bentley
	Julia Douglas
Trumpet.....	Bob Hirte
Trombone.....	Mike Kaye
Percussion.....	Richard Pehrson, Jr.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A "Wandering Minstrel," Nanki-Poo (actually the son of the Mikado) arrives in Titipu and asks the assembled gentlemen where he might find Yum-Yum, ward and fiancée of the tailor, Ko-Ko. Having heard that Ko-Ko has been sentenced to die for flirting, "a capital crime," Nanki-Poo has come to claim Yum-Yum for his own. His hopes are dashed when he learns that Ko-Ko has been reprieved, made Lord High Executioner, and will soon marry the girl after all. Ko-Ko appears, tells of his remarkable promotion, lists his possible victims, and plans his wedding.

Yum-Yum, her sisters Pitti-Sing and Peep-Bo, and numerous schoolfellows return from school. She tolerates Ko-Ko's welcoming kiss, but waxes much more enthusiastic over Nanki-Poo's arrival. When alone, Nanki-Poo tells her his true identity, explaining that he fled his father's court to avoid marrying the unspeakable Katisha. The two young lovers effectively show one another what they would do if it were not for the double obstacles of the law against flirting and her betrothal to Ko-Ko.

Word arrives from the Mikado that because no executions have taken place for a year, someone must be executed within a month, or Titipu will be downgraded to a mere village. Ko-Ko unsuccessfully tries to recruit a volunteer, only to discover the distraught Nanki-Poo about to hang himself over the loss of Yum-Yum. They strike a bargain whereby Nanki-Poo shall be allowed to marry Yum-Yum then be beheaded at the end of one month. All rejoice at this ingenious solution, but their merrymaking is interrupted by the arrival of Katisha. They thwart her attempts to reveal Nanki-Poo's identity and she vengefully vows to go "Mikado-wards."

ACT II

Yum-Yum prepares for her wedding to Nanki-Poo, only to be overcome by the realization that her married happiness is to be "cut short." The three little maids, Nanki-Poo and Pish-Tush try without success to lift their spirits with a wedding madrigal. Ko-Ko turns up with the unwelcome news that by law when a married man is beheaded, his wife must be buried alive. In order to avert this "stuffy death" for Yum-Yum, Ko-Ko sends her off to marry Nanki-Poo in secret, while he conspires to convince the Mikado that an execution has taken place.

The Mikado and Katisha arrive, and the three conspirators (Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah and Pitti-Sing) are obliged to describe the pretended execution. When it is revealed that the victim was the Mikado's disguised son, he orders that the three perpetrators be put to death -- after lunch. Happily, before the sentence is carried out, Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum pass by en route to their honeymoon. Unhappily for Ko-Ko, Nanki-Poo will not prove to the Mikado that he is alive unless Ko-Ko woos and wins Katisha. This the reluctant suitor undertakes, enabling the opera to come to its typically G & S happy ending.

GLOSSARY (in order of appearance)

Titipu - Actually, such a town exists (now the cement capital of Japan). It is a few hours northwest of Tokyo by train.

"Her anchor's a-trip and her helm's a-lee" - A-trip means clear of mud and ready to be hauled aboard. A-lee means away from the wind, ready for making sail.

to lay aloft - to climb up into the rigging in order to raise or lower sails

Ko-Ko - Apparently, this is the only real Japanese name in the play. Depending how it is stressed, it can mean such diverse things as pickles, grammar school, here, navigation, etc.

"you very imperfect ablutioner" - The implication is that the person addressed has not done a good job of washing himself. (Well, it does rhyme with "Lord High Executioner.")

piano-organist - A piano organ is similar to a barrel organ, a sort of street piano. (Sullivan's mother was a woman of Italian background who met her husband while accompanying an organ grinder and his monkey through the streets of London. Now aren't you glad you read these program notes?)

"Nisi Prius nuisance" - Nisi Prius is a legal term used to refer to cases that were tried in the Assize court though technically they should have been civil cases. Nisi Prius literally means "unless before," the implication is "unless heard before."

"its genius tutelary" - guardian spirit, guiding influence

the Marine Parade - sea-side promenade

Tremendous Swell - a very impressively distinguished person

Lucius Junius Brutus - First consul of Rome, he condemned his own sons to death for their part in a treasonous conspiracy. (In other words, justice weighs quite heavily with him.)

Second Trombone - That is, the second trombone in an orchestra. (Sullivan complained frequently of the need for one in the production of these operettas. He didn't get one added until Yeomen of the Guard in 1888, unless you count Nanki-Poo.)

con fuoco - Italian term meaning "with fire" (i.e., with passion)

gioco - actually "giuoco," the Italian word for joke

GLOSSARY (continued)

"I should get toco" - Toco (or toko) was a Victorian schoolboys' expression (derived from Hindi) meaning punishment, either a beating or a diet of bread and water.

"interrupted an apostrophe" - an exclamatory address to a person or thing

"dull, dark dock" - the enclosure where a criminal stands or sits during a trial

Happy Despatch - rather humorous term for suicide necessary for the sake of honor (by the way, hara-kiri in such cases was no longer required of the Japanese military after 1868)

O ni! bikkuri shakkuri to! - There are various theories about the exact meaning of this Japanese expression. When we sing it we mean "surprise, with a hiccup."

gambado - Spanish word meaning a caper, a gambol, a sudden action

tocsin - a warning bell

"here's a how-de-do" - an embarrassing or awkward situation

Miya sama, miya sama
On n'm-ma no maye ni
Pira-Pira suru no wa
Nan gia na
Toko tonyare tonyare na?

This is a legitimate Japanese song and was of fairly recent composition when Gilbert appropriated it for The Mikado. A war song of the Japanese Imperial Army, it was sung by the loyalist troops of Prince Arisugawa who put down a rebellion against the Mikado in 1877. Translations vary.

"mystical Germans who preach from ten till four" - a reference to the evangelical German Lutherans who had recently been touring England

"to ride on a buffer in Parliamentary trains" - The buffer is the section between the cars of a train (where travel is quite jerky and unpleasantly noisy). When an Act of Parliament in 1844 required that at least one train a day run to various small stations, these slow trains were known as Parliamentary trains.

Monday Pops - This refers to the weekly London concerts of classical music organized by Chappells, the music publishers.

fitless finger stalls - covering sheaths for the fingers

snickersnee - a large knife or sword

NEXT ON MAIN STAGE

Broadway Hit!

THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM



By Robert Waldman and Alfred Uhry
March 1- April 7

Adapted from a story by Eudora Welty, this theatrical fairy tale recounts the romantic exploits and dual life of a sly Mississippi scalawag also known as the menacing Bandit of the Woods.

March 1-April 7

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THE COMPANY

The Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera Company was founded in 1979 by Jim Hart, who became our first music director, and Dick Fishel, Jr., who is now the GSVLOC artistic director. Dick plays the role of Lord High Everything Else in this year's production of The Mikado, and the title is an apt description of his present function in the company.

The company's first effort was a production of the one-act cantata Trial by Jury. In the spring of 1980, we performed our first full length G&S operetta Patience. Although the show sparkled with the charm and wit for which the company has come to be known (or so we would like to think), the visual aspects of the production betrayed the humble state of the GSVLOC treasury at the time. The ladies of the chorus were artfully draped in costumes made of the best bedsheets K-Mart had to offer, and the set design consisted mainly of two large potted plants strategically placed to hide the light sockets in the back wall of the stage.

One of the aims of the GSVLOC has been to present to Twin Cities audiences some of the less frequently performed Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. To that end, we staged Iolanthe in 1981, Princess Ida in 1982, and Ruddigore in 1983. Each of these productions was just a bit grander than the last, as we gradually began to acquire an orchestra and more elaborate sets and costumes.

In spring of 1984, we presented one of the more popular Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, The Gondoliers. One of the highlights of the show is the marriage of the two gondoliers to their contadine, and this occasion is heralded by the joyous chorus "Bridegroom and Bride." In June of 1984, the company sang this, and many other Gilbert and Sullivan songs, at the real-life wedding of two of our members, Steve and Rhea Sullivan, who met during GSVLOC rehearsals.

This year the company will present two full length Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Our current production commemorates the 100th anniversary of The Mikado. In November, we hope to present The Sorcerer.

Our company has been able to grow because of the dedication and enthusiasm of our cast and crew, and the generosity of our supporters. Although we've come a long way from the bare stage and bedsheets of Patience, we still operate on a meagre budget. Your financial contribution to the company is tax deductible and very welcome.
