

The Mikado

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Review: *The Mikado* – Melbourne Operatic Society

Celebrating an incredible 100 years, the Melbourne Operatic Society marked its centenary with a delightful performance of *The Mikado*. This beloved Gilbert and Sullivan classic was delivered with charm, humour, and musical excellence.

The production featured a strong male ensemble, rich in vocal talent, providing a solid foundation for the show's signature harmonies. One of the standout features of the performance was that no head microphones were used, and yet the diction and projection of the cast were excellent throughout a true testament to their vocal training and stagecraft.

Costumes were fabulous colourful, traditional, and visually engaging, perfectly capturing the spirit of the operetta. The set design was simple yet effective, and scene changes were executed smoothly and efficiently, allowing the action to flow seamlessly.

Paul Blackmore gave a solid and commanding performance as *The Mikado* and Melvyn Edwards, as *Nanki-Poo* (the Mikado's son in disguise as a wandering minstrel), showcased a strong and expressive singing voice.

Alan Lowe was brilliantly cast as *Ko-Ko*, the Lord High Executioner. His comic timing and facial expressions kept the audience entertained throughout. Equally amusing was Mick McGhee as *Pooh-Bah*, the Lord High Everything Else, his delivery was sharp and his presence consistently engaging.

Pete Bostock brought poise and polish to the role of *Pish-Tush*, the Noble Lord.

The trio of sisters was wonderfully cast. Allie Sturla gave a standout performance as *Yum-Yum*, with a stunning rendition of "The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze" beautifully sung. Helen Blatch (*Pitti-Sing*) and Paula Bettison (*Peep-Bo*) provided strong vocal support and delightful character work, making the three sisters' scenes a highlight of the show.

Katharine Dryden played *Katisha*, the older noblewoman also vying for Nanki-Poo's affections. She gave a memorable performance with strong stage presence and fabulous hair to match!

The ensemble of schoolgirls and nobles completed the production with well-blended vocals.

This wonderful production was directed by Gary Askam, with Jane Askam as assistant director. Their direction brought out the humour and heart of the operetta while maintaining its classic charm. Andy Hubbard served as Stage Manager, keeping the production running smoothly behind the scenes. Dave Martin handled sound and lighting, which were both clear, balanced, and effectively supported the production.

David Henshaw brought out the best from the orchestra and vocally from the cast as musical director and conductor. His ability to balance them both was exceedingly professional and vital to the success of the performance.

A heartfelt congratulations to the Melbourne Operatic Society on their 100th year! This production of *The Mikado* was a fitting tribute to their legacy, filled with music, humour, and a clear passion for Gilbert and Sullivan. Bravo to the entire cast and crew on a thoroughly enjoyable and beautifully delivered performance.

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