

BICESTER CHORAL & OPERATIC SOCIETY PRESENT

# THE MIKADO

3-5 June 2021

Bicester Heritage

*Three Little Maids  
hit the swinging 60s!*



Kindly supported by



**BICESTER  
VILLAGE**

# Welcome to an evening of firsts!

- Our first “e-programme”
- Our first show in a hangar
- Our first production in over 18 months!

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say we are absolutely amazed and delighted to be here! Even just a week ago we didn't know if this event would/could take place.

Originally planned for this time last year, and moved around 4 times, to be here today is a testament to lots of people's efforts.

We were fully focussed on bringing you a semi-staged production of the show, but not here! There's been a lot of 'adaptations' to be made but we've done it! We have to say a massive thank you to Bicester Heritage and The Bicester Aerodrome Company for allowing us to use this amazing space. We should also acknowledge Cherwell District Council who reviewed our plans and gave us the green light to proceed.

Can I ask you all to do your best to “stick to the rules” and keep us compliant.

- Remain in your seats/at your table at all times, including the interval
- Wear a mask when you do move around the space, e.g. to use facilities

We have gone hi-tech to keep compliant, meaning we're running a cashless site. We've asked you all to pre order drinks where possible either when booking, via our website, or using the BUTLR app.

At the time of writing we are thinking we may be able to take some manual orders, by exception, but these will need to be payment by card only.

We hope you understand.

Finally, all that remains for me to say is Sit back and enjoy the show!  
(didn't think I was going to get to say that !!)

*Ian*

Ian Muddle  
Chair, BCOS

Stage & Musical Director    **MARTIN QUINN**

Assistant Director    **NIKKI FINE**

## **Cast**

(in order of appearance)

Nanki-Poo    **MARTIN QUINN**

Pish-Tush    **ROGER MACKRELL**

Pooh-Bah    **TIM LANE**

Ko-Ko    **MATTHEW LAWRENCE**

Yum-Yum    **NICOLA ROBERTS**

Peep-Bo    **CAROLINE GRAHAM**

Pitti-Sing    **BEVERLEY SAVAGE**

Katisha    **EMILY BROWN**

The Mikado    **ROD FINE**

## **The Company**

TANIA DUBY, CHARLOTTE FRANKLIN, VIV FROST  
NIC HAMBLIN, HEATHER HOWELLS, JAMES HUDDIE,  
LAURA HUDSON, MARK HUDSON,  
IAN MUDDLE, ANDY ROBERTS, ELIZABETH STIFF,  
GABI TWIGG, ALAN TWIGG, LOUISE WOODWARDS

## **For BCOS**

### **Keyboard**

Mark Burden

### **Costumes**

Nic Hamblin

Sue Mackrell

### **Set**

Backcloth - Scenery Solutions

Construction - Alan Twigg

### **Sound & Lighting**

Adam Dix

### **Programme**

Ian Muddle

### **Front of House Manager**

Laura Hudson

## Directors Notes

The Mikado is possibly *the* most popular comic operetta by Gilbert & Sullivan.

It was their ninth production, coming hot on the heels of *The Princess Ida*, and went on to have the longest original run of any of their collaborations; to this day it is the most frequently performed. It opened in March 1885, and, like so many of their productions, deliberately poked fun at 'the establishment'.

At the time it opened, Britain had an all-consuming fascination with everything and anything Japanese. The language and setting of the show could be perceived as dated and/or inappropriate.

And here lay my 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenge....

How to be true to the spirit of the work, while at the same time breathing new life and humour into the show, without being seen to be overly politically correct?

Some changes were driven by the make-up of our cast. For example, "*three little maids from school*" we certainly don't have; they *nearly* became three 'old-maids', but I resisted that and... well, you'll just have to see where I went with that one! And the opening line of "*We are gentlemen of Japan*" – as with most amateur groups we have more ladies than gents so we now have '*citizens of Japan*'.

So far so good, but how to give the show some extra 'oomph!'?

After two years of 'big' musical support and backing tracks (Evita & Chess) I also wanted to present a 'stripped back' performance. So, in a first, we're performing with the support of just one man; the fabulously talented Mark Burden and his keyboard. This also gave me the rare opportunity to be onstage and perform a role I've loved since I was a teenager (Nanki-Poo) – and put the fear of god into the cast as I'm beside them and can spot if they've forgotten the words or the notes!

Moving the location from 1880s Japan to a 1960s British Summer fête opened a whole world of possibilities. The fashions and looks of the time couldn't be more different to 1880s Japan, but are at the same time so iconic. Thank you to the amazing Nic Hamblin and Sue Mackrell who took my concept and ran with it; they've certainly created an amazing look!

Our romantic lead, Nanki-Poo, is a posh-boy pretending to be working class, and masquerading as the town choir master (type casting?), as opposed to Second Trombonist. Ko-Ko on the other hand is trying as hard as he can to hide his inner Danny Dyer and present an upper-class façade. And finally our Mikado has become the town Mayor. There are other tweaks and changes, and nods to the times along the way, but I'll leave you to spot those!

I hope you enjoy our updates.

*Martin*  
Martin Quinn  
Director

# Cast ( in alphabetical order)

## Emily Brown - Katisha



Emily has always been a great lover of theatre and opera, performing as a child with Ellen Kent Opera Company in their touring productions of *Turandot* & *Tosca*. With two Grade 8s in Musical Theatre she has also performed in a variety of shows with her university theatre group in productions including *Fame*, *Grease*, and *Footloose*.

This is Emily's third outing as a principal with BCOS, having previously played the title role in the 2016 production of *Carmen The Musical*, and the role of Florence in *Chess* in 2018.

## Rod Fine - The Mikado



This is Rod's first show with BCOS in a named role, having been in the chorus for *Chess* and *Evita* and a few other concerts and shows. He has also been seen in many Launton Village Players' productions over the last nineteen years - mainly pantomimes - as a variety of dames, villains, handymen, villagers, aldermen, lechers, corrupt solicitors and assorted ne'er-do-wells. One of his proudest achievements while on stage was to take a selfie and post it on Facebook, in character, during a live performance. Rod is looking forward to playing *The Mikado* in his first foray into the world of Gilbert and Sullivan.

## Caroline Graham - Peep-Bo

Caroline's first performance with BCOS was in 2003 in *The Gondoliers* and she hasn't missed many stage productions since! She has been fortunate to play several roles with BCOS since including Mercedes in *Carmen*, Edith in *Pirates of Penzance*, Pitti-Sing in BCOS's last production of *Mikado*, and she was the Alto soloist in *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Caroline is excited to be playing Peep-Bo again; she played the part 20 years ago. and is looking forward to being a more mature maid this time round!



## Tim Lane - Pish-Tush

This is Tim's **37th** production with the Society(!) and his third 'Mikado'. Since joining in 1985 he has played many and varied roles, including Mephistopheles in *Faust*, Emile de Becque in *South Pacific*, Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* (his favourite role), Colonel Pickering in *My Fair Lady* and Horace Vandergelder in *Hello, Dolly!*. Most recently he was seen as Sir Joseph Porter KCB in *HMS Pinafore* and Alexander Molokov in *Chess*. Baritone solos include Handel *Messiah* and *Semele*, Haydn *The Creation*, Mendelssohn *Elijah*, and Mozart *Requiem*. In 2008 he was elected a Life Member of the Society. Tim lives in Stratton Audley and is European Director for a US Business Association. In addition he runs his own voice-over production company.



## Matthew Lawrance - Ko-Ko



Having recently moved to Bicester, performing in *The Mikado* marks Matthew's first production with BCOS. He developed a passion for performing from a young age through singing in school choirs and playing piano in concerts. During his school years, Matthew appeared in several amateur productions, most notably playing the lead role in *Aladdin*, and Fyedka in *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has also had the chance to perform with his sixth form choir in King's College Chapel, singing Mozart's *Requiem*. Matthew has had a hiatus from performing for several years while training and working as a veterinarian and is delighted to be able to return to the stage.

## Roger Mackrell - Pooh-Bah



Having returned to tread the boards for the first time in 15 years for last year's production of *Chess* as Agustin Magaldi, it would seem Roger can't keep away! His previous BCOS performances include Luiz in *The Gondoliers*, Cable in *South Pacific*, and Leonard Merrill in *Yeoman of the Guard*. Other stage work includes shows with Stowe Opera (*Eugene Onegin*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il Travatore*, *Rusalka*, *Carmen*), and Arcadian Opera (*La Boheme*, *Elisir d'amour*).

## Nicola Roberts – Yum-Yum

Nicola has performed with BCOS since 1999 in a variety of roles, most notably Jacquie in *Me and my Girl*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*, Micaela in *Carmen*, and Josephine in *HMS Pinafore*. She has also performed the role of Yum-Yum before, both on stage with BCOS and also for many concert versions of the *Mikado*. She has featured as soprano soloist in a wide and varied repertoire of concerts including *Messiah & Israel in Egypt*, (Handel), *Creation & the Seasons* (Haydn), *Stabat Mater* (Pergolesi), *Ceremony of Carols* (Britten) and both Rutter and Faure's *Requiems*. She also performs in pantomime with the Launton Village Players. Nicola is a music and vocal teacher in local primary schools and has recently taken her love of singing to senior citizens in the community, hosting sing-a-longs at care homes in Bicester. This she has found to be very rewarding.



## Beverley Savage - Pitti-Sing



Beverley has been singing for as long as she can remember, starting out in school and county choirs before moving to 'grown up' groups including BCOS, Akeman Voices and Stowe Opera. On stage, principle roles have included, Phoebe (*Yeoman of the Guard*), Hodel (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Tessa (*The Gondoliers*), and Ruth (*Pirates of Penzance*). Beverley has also sung many choral works and concerts with solos including Handel's *Messiah*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. This is Beverley's sixth *Mikado*(!) – the first was at school (aged 12), one with BCOS, two concert versions (Pitti-Sing, Katisha) and one as stage crew! After an absence of some 14 years from stage work Beverley is really excited (and a little nervous!) to be back on stage and playing the role of Pitti-Sing. She's not sure of the 'little maid' description though!



# RAFFLE

In this difficult time for everyone including businesses large and small, we are incredibly grateful to the businesses below who have donated prizes for our raffle.

The draw will take place after the final performance, and winners will be contacted by email/post

If you've not bought yours yet, order via the BUTLR app , £5 for 5 tickets



Day Spa for 2



Gas Boiler Service



WADDESDON

Family day pass



Cream Tea for 2



Camembert Feast

# Act I

1. If you want to know who we are
2. A Wand'ring Minstrel I
3. Our Great Mikado, virtuous man
4. Young man, despair
- 4a. And have I journey'd for a month
5. Behold the Lord High Executioner
- 5a. As some day it may happen
6. Comes a train of little ladies
7. Three single babes
8. So please you, Sir, we much regret
9. Were you not to Ko-Ko plighted
10. I am so proud
11. Finale Act I

A year ago, Nanki-Poo (son of the Mikado - the Mayor of Titipu - in disguise as a choir master) met Yum-Yum and fell in love with her. But Yum-Yum is betrothed to her guardian Ko-Ko. When Nanki-Poo hears that Ko-Ko has been condemned to death for flirting, he thinks that he will now be able to marry her. He arrives at the town summer fete

On arriving there however Nanki-Poo discovers that Ko-Ko has instead been raised to the rank of Lord High Executioner. Although Yum-Yum is delighted to see Nanki-Poo again, they cannot marry. So, when a message from the Mikado is received commanding an immediate execution, Ko-Ko persuades Nanki-Poo to be the victim, on condition that Nanki-Poo can enjoy one month of married bliss with Yum-Yum beforehand.

All agree to this satisfactory solution when Katisha, who the Mikado has promised can marry Nanki-Poo, arrives to expose Nanki-Poo.

## Act 2

12. Braid the raven hair
13. The sun whose rays are all ablaze
14. Brightly dawns our wedding day
15. Here's a how-de-do
16. Entrance of The Mikado
17. A more humane Mikado
18. The criminal cried as he dropped him down
19. The flowers that bloom in the spring
20. Alone, and yet alive
21. On a tree by a river
22. There is beauty in the bellow of the blast
23. Finale Act II

Ko-Ko discovers that the bride of a beheaded man must be buried alive, so Yum-Yum decides that she will not marry Nanki-Poo after all. It is announced that the Mikado will visit to formally open the fete, so Ko-Ko bribes the town dignitary Pooh-Bah to swear that Nanki-Poo has already been beheaded. He then tells Yum-Yum to go off and marry Nanki-Poo to keep him quiet. The Mikado arrives and is interested to hear that an execution has taken place but Katisha notices Nanki-Poo's name on the warrant of execution and tells the Mikado. He immediately sentences the culprits to death and the only way that Nanki-Poo can safely come to life again is for Katisha to be married to someone else – so Ko-Ko obliges.

## MARTIN QUINN Director & Nanki Poo!



Martin studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. After ten years as vocal tutor at Sibford School, and more than 20 years as a professional singer, Martin now focusses on his many Musical Director responsibilities, as well as teaching privately from home.

He has held the position of Musical Director of Bicester Choral & Operatic Society for over 12 years now; for 3 years from 1999-2002 before returning in May 2012. Since returning he will have taken the directorial lead for 5 out of the past six productions (*Iolanthe*, *Carmen the Musical*, *Chess*, *Evita*, and now *The Mikado*).

Martin conducts a number of other local choirs. Until the end of last year Martin was MD of Bloxham-based Cherwell Choral Society (formerly Warriner Choral Society), acting as their longest serving MD for a total of 16 years. Under his guidance the choir doubled in size, pulling in singers from across five counties.

Since January of 2019 Martin has been Musical Director Of Kidlington Amateur Operatic Society (KAOS) - only their 2nd MD in 40 years!

## NIKKI FINE Assistant Director

Nikki initially worked in admin but later trained as a teacher. As Head of English at Swanbourne House School, near Buckingham, she directed school plays for five years before leaving to pursue a career out of formal education. A long time member of BCOS, she assisted Martin Quinn in the direction of *Iolanthe* and *Carmen the Musical*, before flying solo for *HMS Pinafore* in 2017, taking the directorial lead, assisting again with *Chess* and *Evita*. She has also written and directed shows for the Launton Village Players.

## MARK BURDEN Keyboard

Mark Burden performs regularly as a piano soloist, accompanist and pit musician across southern England. As a teenager he studied the piano with Christopher Elton (RCM) and Philip Fowke (TCL) and was music society secretary at Trinity College, Oxford.

He has previously taught music A-level, directed community choirs in Portsmouth, and worked with Hampshire-based theatre companies including Portsmouth Players. He currently teaches piano and music theory in Oxfordshire, is a regular accompanist for Bicester Choral and Operatic Society, and directs Wendlebury Community Choir. As a piano soloist he has performed concertos by Mozart and Schumann, and has particular interests in Romantic and early twentieth-century music.



# Mikado Trivia

## Etymology

Borrowed from Japanese 御門 (mikado), from 御 (mi, “honourable”) + 門 (kado, “gate, portal”).

## Noun **mikado** (plural **mikados**)

1- (historical) A former title of the emperors of Japan during a certain period.

2- a game of skill, in which identically shaped (but differently coloured and valued) wooden sticks must be removed from a pile without disturbing the remaining stack

3- a fabric having a stiff twill weave

we'd of course like to add

4- delicious chocolate biscuit snack!



Although Gilbert didn't know it at the time, Ko-Ko is an actual Japanese name (a girl's name, amusingly enough, meaning “stork”).



When Ko-Ko protests that he doesn't see how a man can cut off his own head, Pish-Tush replies that if he could succeed in cutting it half off, that would at least be something. During seppuku, ritual suicide, a samurai would have a second ready to deliver the killing blow while he disembowelled himself, striking his neck with a sword but crucially not fully cutting his head off.



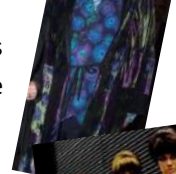
The 1907 revival was cancelled for six weeks due to a state visit by Prince Fushimi Sadanaru, in case he found it offensive. It backfired spectacularly when the prince expressed a desire to see the show. A command performance was put together and both the prince and his entourage found it hilarious.

A lot of people who were young in the late 2000s first learned "As Some Day It May Happen" from Family Guy.



# Costumes NIC HAMBLIN, SUE MACKRELL

The Mikado is a well-loved light opera written by Gilbert and Sullivan in the 1880s and set in Japan. Our production is set in the 1960s at a quintessential English summer fete. This might appear a challenge in costume terms. However, from my experience in costume design, I began the process by researching classic 60s iconic styles and then making subtle, and sometimes less subtle, references to the Japanese essence of the show. Joined by Sue, our vision gradually took shape, and bespoke outfits were created for the cast. The Victorian interest in Japanese Culture became the Swinging Sixties interest in Indian Culture and Spiritualism.



You will recognise some of the iconic influences, particular the Mondrian-inspired dresses worn by our three little maids. The characterisation of Nanki-Poo, who is a choir master in our production, has been influenced by the Beatles, and Ko-Ko sports a suit that is reminiscent of the style of the Chelsea Boutique Dandy, a key figure in Swinging London.

We have taken Martin's original concept for the show and peopled Titipu's fete with reference to everyday life. To that end, we have included, a vicar, a shaman, a footballer, ladies of the WI, working husbands, hippies, and others who wear outfits as true as possible to the era.

The Swinging 60s was a time when fashion exploded and social boundaries were challenged. However, as a nod to the original, there is still the odd kimono out there! Can you spot them?

*Nic*

Nic Hamblin



# THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank all our members, friends, and helpers for their continued support to make this production possible. We would also like to extend special thanks to the following individuals & organisations.



**Bicester Heritage**  
**The Bicester Aerodrome Company**  
Staging Facilities



**Cherwell District Council**  
Sign off of Covid Compliance

The Headteacher and staff of  
**St Mary's RC Primary School**  
Regular rehearsal facilities



**Sanctuary Housing**  
Storage Facility

**Savoir Fare**  
Supply Ice Creams



**Savoir Fare**

**Christine Townsend**  
First Aid



**Planet Kitchens**  
Use of van for logistics!

## Remembering Friends

Sadly, since we've last performed, we've lost a few members of the society, and we'd like to take this opportunity to remember them.

### MICHAEL COWDY



To say Mike was a stalwart of the society would be an understatement. A member for longer than anyone can /could remember, he will be sadly missed. He had every intention of being in this production at its original date, when illness sadly took him from us. He will always be remembered for the smile on his face and his positive, can-do approach to everything he did. In memory of him and that positive attitude the society introduced



### ADRIAN LAW



Adrian's death at a young age was a shock to us all. He had taken part in many BCOS events, most recently on stage in HMS Pinafore and behind the scenes taking the stunning programme photographs for that show, Chess and Evita. He and his amazing sense of humour will be sorely missed.



### HEATHER SOUTHGATE

Heather was another long term member of the society. Although she hadn't performed with the society for some years (her last stage performances was as a chorus member in The Gondoliers), she never failed to attend a concert or show. She was always to be found in the interval seeking out members/performers and congratulating them on a job well done.



Coming in 2022

LITTLE SHOP OF  
**HORRORS**



"FEED ME, SEYMOUR!"