



THE MIKADO Co-Opera and G&S Society of South Australia
Thomas Edmond Opera Studio Wayville Showgrounds 6-8 13-15 May
Emily Sutherland 5MBS

Forget any ideas you may have had that Gilbert and Sullivan Operas are fusty, outdated remnants of the Victorian era. This Mikado, directed by Richard Trevaskis does not have a dull or a dud moment. I laughed throughout the entire show, both at the witty dialogue and the reactions and interaction among the singers. From the entrance of the impressive PoohBah (Eddie Muliau) who knows how to command a stage with the lift of an eyebrow, to the final triumphant chorus the story unfolds with pace and sparkle. The singers, most of whom are conservatorium graduates with experience in opera and musical theatre, give universally satisfying performances. They were all terrific, but I would like to give special praise to two. Rod Schulz as Ko-Ko, with his cockney accent, is wonderfully funny and his wooing of Katisha (Sidonie Henbest) stole the show. Sidonie has a strong operatic voice, and it was strange to think that last time I saw her she was singing torch songs, but she played the femme fatale, just a little past her best, with aplomb. It's a new take on Katisha, and it works. Grace Bawden was a suitably pert and silly Yum-Yum, with a voice that could soar into the heights. Her two little maids, Pee Bo (Karina Jay) and Pitti-Sing (Bethany Hill) sang beautifully, pouted, primed and sulked as needed and contributed to the fun. Nor should I neglect to mention the Gentlemen of Japan, Pish-Tush (Macintyre Howie Reeves) and Pish-Tish (James Moffatt), with their iPads and Selfies, as well as Daniel Smerdon who appeared in the second act as the Mikado, portraying a vacuous despot in fine style. No one has pronounced a death sentence with more good humour.

The singers were fortunate to be supported by members of the RCS Ensemble, which is now the permanent orchestra for Co-Opera. Having this permanent ensemble, with Brian Chatterton conducting, is a great asset to Co-Opera.

There are only three more chances to see this fantastic production in Adelaide before they go on tour again. Don't miss it.