Performances Friday, July 29 and Monday, August 1 at 7:30 p.m.

The Mikado: Premiere Performance  Savoy Theatre, London, 1885
Recent Chautauqua Opera Performances 1993, 2001
This Production: Premiere Performance Opera Theatre of St. Louis, 2007

Chautauqua Opera engages 65 people each year to bring our season to life. This is in addition to the dozens of Institution employees in every department — foundation, programming, marketing, ticketing and administration — who support us throughout the year. It truly does take a village.

There are four Chautauqua Opera staff members, however, who work year-round to make our season possible, and I have leaned on each of them heavily over the past 11 months. Their patience and support as I have stepped in to lead this terrific company has been unwavering. These performances of The Mikado are dedicated with tremendous gratitude to my colleagues and friends — Carol Rausch, Michael Baumgarten, Sara Noble and Michael Berg.

— Steven Osgood

CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Nanki-Poo, A wandering minstrel (or so he claims), in love with Yum-Yum
  Quinn Bernegger*

A Noble
  Ryan Stoll*

Pish-Tush, Internet millionaire and minor noble, in love with Pitti-Sing
  Brian James Myer*

Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else, covert terpsichorean
  Daniel Belcher+

Ko-Ko, Former Tailor, current Lord High Executioner
  Kevin Burdette+

Yum-Yum, Ward of Ko-Ko, in love with Nanki-Poo
  Chelsea Miller*
  Catherine Miller*

Pitti-Sing, Ward of Ko-Ko, in love with Pish-Tush
  Rachael Braunstein*

Peep-Bo, Ward of Ko-Ko, in love with that guy at the mall, with the great hair
  Laura Soto-Bayomi*

Katisha, Sorceress and Courtier, also in love with Nanki-Poo
  Deanna Pauletto*

The Mikado of Japan
  Hans Tashjian*

Gentlemen of Japan, Young Persons of Japan
  Chautauqua Opera Young Artists

Supers
  Alex Burdette, Mariana Mathewson, Alyssa Sheaffer

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION

Conductor
  Steven Osgood

Stage Director
  Ned Canty

Chorus Master
  Carol Rausch

Set Designer
  Mikiko Suzuki

Lighting Designer
  Michael Baumgarten

Costume Designer
  Linda Cho

Wig/Makeup Designer
  Martha Ruskai

Properties Master/Scenic Artist
  Kate Brittingham

Original Choreography
  Sean Curran

Coach/ Accompanists
  Emily Jarrell Urbanek
  Dorothy Randall

Diction Coach/Supertitles
  Allison Voth

Technical Director
  John P. Woodey

Assistant Director
  Cara Consilvio

Stage Manager
  Catherine Costanzo

Assistant Stage Managers
  Cressa Amundsen
  Anna Reetz

Concertmaster
  Vahn Armstrong

CREDITS

Scenery and costumes provided by Opera Memphis
Wigs provided by Martha Ruskai
Lighting provided by Advanced Production Group
Orchestral materials furnished by Keiser-Southern Music
SYNOPSIS

Some months before the opera begins, Nanki-Poo, the son of The Mikado, flees his father’s palace to escape being compelled to marry Katisha, an ageless and powerful witch, who is also a member of the court. He lands in Titipu, a suburb of Tokyo, where he joins the town band. There he encounters Yum-Yum, and is instantly smitten. However, he cannot marry her because Ko-Ko, a cheap tailor who happens to be her guardian, has decided to marry her himself.

As the opera begins, Nanki-Poo has learned that Ko-Ko has been sentenced to death for violating The Mikado’s law against flirting. He arrives in Titipu, assuming that Yum-Yum is free to wed him, and is shocked to discover that his dreams of marrying Yum-Yum are further from fruition than he had previously postulated ...

—Ned Canty, Stage Director

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

The Mikado, through its use of strategic meiosis and hyperbolic deconstruction of the underlying pathology of the British class system, peels back the fragile shreds of Victorian ennui to expose the pataphoric angst of the Shavian working class.

Or … not.

Yeah, I’m gonna go with “not”.

The embarrassing truth of the matter is that The Mikado is ... fun. So much fun, in fact, that an army of academics and scholars would be hard pressed to spoil it, even if they could stop laughing long enough to try. The Mikado exists to make toes tap, heads nod, and most of all, sides split. (The ritual skewering of a few of society’s sacred cows is simply a bonus — one that fosters that feeling of community, of similarity, that is all too often absent in our current social discourse.)

The Mikado was born of a late 19th century British fascination with all things Japanese — a fascination that culminated in the Japanese Village in Knightsbridge, a recreation of an “authentic” Japanese village that employed over 100 Japanese artisans and laborers — think Epcot Center, 19th century-style. Less well known than the Nipponophilia that swept Britain was a similar craze for all things Western on the part of the Japanese. Japanese fashion prints of the era show full Victorian bustles and bowler hats in an atmosphere of cherry blossoms and ancient temples. It was the beginning of an aesthetic fascination that would only grow throughout the 20th century and into the present day.

This mutual love affair between Japan and the West expresses itself in manifold ways. Each generation of artists takes what they find and runs it through their particular filter, whether it is William Butler Yeats combining Japanese Noh drama with Irish myth, or Hayao Miyazaki setting his movies in worlds that look more like 1950s Ohio than anywhere on the island of his birth. Kurosawa remade King Lear as Ran, and John Sturges remade Kurosawa’s Seven Samurai into his classic Western The Magnificent Seven. Today our lives are full of Japanese imports, from the sushi we eat to the TV shows that populate our airwaves (not to mention the primacy of Godzilla in our collective consciousness). As I write this, a mobile-phone game based on a Japanese cartoon, “Pokémon Go,” continues its domination of both our download lists and our media. Japanese screens broadcast our movies and shows in the same fashion, and their game consoles feature American heroes and myths with the same frequency as the hundreds of millions of PlayStation and Nintendo games sold in America feature Japanese tropes.

This production was inspired by this centuries-long cultural swap-meet, and embraces it with glee. Most importantly, it approaches the whole affair with the respect and love an Ohio teenager would bring to making his costume for a Dragon-Ball Z cosplay contest, or a Kyoto post-grad might put into his dissertation on themes of rebellion and regret in the oeuvre of Clint Eastwood. And if this production makes you google Studio Ghibli, or pause for a moment at the bizarre wonder of a sushi station at a grocery store in upstate New York, well then … mission accomplished.

—Ned Canty, Stage Director
Don't miss Chautauqua Opera's final performance of the 2016 season …

**Song From the Uproar**

Music: Missy Mazzoli  
Libretto: Royce Vavrek

**Monday, August 8 @ 5 p.m.**  
Norton Hall

*World premiere: The Kitchen, NYC, 2012*

**Concert performance with film, in collaboration with the Logan Chamber Music Series**

19th-century Swiss adventuress Isabelle Eberhardt traveled alone to North Africa, where she dressed as a man, joined an all-male Sufi sect, married an Algerian soldier, and was drowned in a flash flood at the age of 27. Fragments of Isabelle’s writing and diaries are woven into this dreamlike opera by Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek, two of the most prolific and exciting writers of their generation. This uniquely theatrical performance features Abigail Fischer and the NOW Ensemble, for whom the opera was composed, and includes original film by Stephen Taylor projected above the performers.

*No additional ticket purchase necessary if holding a valid gate pass.*
Verdi - La Traviata 2016 (Photo Credit: Greg Funka)