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Gilbert & Sullivan THE MIKADO

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THE CAST

The Mikado of Japan	Darrell Fancourt
Nanki-Poo, his son (disguised)	Derek Oldham
Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner	Sir Henry A. Lytton
Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else	Leo Sheffield
Pish-Tush, a Noble Lord	George Baker
Go-To, a Noble Lord	T. Penry Hughes
Yum-Yum, ward of Ko-Ko	Elsie Griffin
Pitti-Sing, schoolfriend (shared role)	Aileen Davies*, Doris Hemingway**, Beatrice Elburn***
Peep-Bo, another schoolfriend	Beatrice Elburn
Katisha, a Lady of the Mikado's court	Bertha Lewis

Light Opera Orchestra and Chorus
Harry Norris, conductor

*(Pitti-Sing: *CD 1, Tracks 12, 16 & 17; CD 2, Tracks 7, 8, 9 & 13 - **CD 1, Track 11; CD 2, Track 3 - ***CD 2, Track 1)*

Producer's Note

The 1926 D'Oyly Carte production of *The Mikado* boasted several "firsts". It was the first to use new costumes and scenery since the original production of 1885, and the first to broadcast a portion of the opening night performance on the radio, live from the theater. It would also become not merely the first Gilbert and Sullivan work, but the first opera of any kind to be recorded complete using the new electrical process.

As might be expected with such an early effort, the recording quality is variable. Some portions have much clarity and presence, while other sides sound dim and muffled. There are balance problems between singers and orchestra, and sometimes between one singer and another. The sides dating from the December 6th session are particularly problematic – bass-deficient, shrill and distorted.

Nevertheless, the set is significant in that it preserves the performances of several unforgettable Savoyards. As the Gilbert and Sullivan Discography website puts it, this was "the height of the so-called 'golden age' of G&S singing, and it is doubtful that any better cast than this was assembled in the twentieth century. Lytton, Lewis, Fancourt, Oldham and Griffin are all justifiably rated as G&S legends." Chief among the attractions here is the Ko-Ko of Sir Henry A. Lytton, heir to the "patter" roles originated by George Grossmith and continued by Walter Passmore, who would himself turn them over to Maryn Green in the 1930s. (The recording also, unfortunately, preserves a racial slur in Ko-Ko's "little list" and the Mikado's litany of punishments, one which was not removed from the performing editions until 1948.)

The transfer has been made from the best portions of three late-Orthophonic U.S. Victor pressings, the quietest form of issue I have heard for this basically rather noisy set. Save for excerpts, it has never received an 'official' LP or CD reissue by EMI or its licensees.
Mark Obert-Thorn

**Darrell Fancourt
Derek Oldham
Henry Lytton
Leo Sheffield
George Baker
Elsie Griffin
Bertha Lewis**

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The 1926 D'Oyly Carte Production: Studio recording

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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The Mikado

ACT ONE

- 1 Overture (7:25)
(Cc 9408-2 & 9409-2 / D 1172 / 8 Nov 1926)
- 2 If you want to know who we are (2:14)
(Cc 9495-1A / D 1173 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 3 Gentlemen, I pray you tell me (0:38)
(Cc 9410-5A / D 1173 / 19 Nov 1926)
- 4 Our great Mikado (2:37)
(Cc 9462-2A / D 1174 / 19 Nov 1926)
- 5 Young man, despair (2:37)
(Cc 9467-3 / D 1174 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 6 And, have I journeyed (0:53)
(Cc 9467-3 / D 1174 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 7 Behold the Lord High Executioner (2:15)
(Cc 9494-1 / D 1175 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 8 As some day it may happen (2:17)
(Cc 9494-1 / D 1175 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 9 Comes a train of little ladies (2:09)
- 10 Three little maids (1:31)
(Cc 9471-4 / D 1175 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 11 So please you, sir (1:54)
- 12 Were you not to Koko plighted (2:16)
(Cc 9468-2 / D 1176 / 19 Nov 1926)
- 13 I am so proud (2:47)
(Cc 9466-4 / D 1176 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 14 With aspect stern (2:07)
- 15 The threatened cloud (2:22)
(Cc 9489-2A / D 1177 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 16 Your revels cease (4:42)
(Cc 9490-2 / D 1177 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 17 Oh, faithless one (3:34)
(Cc 9491-2 / D 1178 / 26 Nov 1926)



ACT TWO

- 1 Braid the raven hair (3:10)
(Cc 9472-4 / D 1178 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 2 The sun whose rays (2:45)
(Cc 9470-1 / D 1179 / 22 Nov 1926)
- 3 Brightly dawns our wedding day (3:40)
(Cc 9469-3 / D 1179 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 4 Here's a how-de-do (1:12)
- 5 Mi-ya-sa-ma . . . From every kind of man (3:08)
(Cc 9488-1 / D 1180 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 6 A more humane Mikado (3:48)
(Cc 9463-2A / D 1180 / 19 Nov 1926)
- 7 The criminal cried (3:31)
(Cc 9493-2 / D 1181 / 26 Nov 1926)
- 8 See how the fates (2:17)
- 9 The flowers that bloom in the spring (1:28)
(Cc 9494-2 / D 1181 / 19 Nov 1926)
- 10 Alone, and yet alive (2:16)
- 11 On a tree by a river (2:18)
(Cc 9465-3 / D 1182 / 6 Dec 1926)
- 12 There is beauty in the bellow of the blast (1:56)
- 13 For he's gone and married Yum-Yum (2:00)
(Cc 9492-2 / D 1182 / 26 Nov 1926)

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Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer:
Mark Obert-Thorn

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for providing source material
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Sir
Henry Lytton as Ko-Ko in The Mikado

Total duration: 82:00

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