

Village green revisioning puts fresh spin on opera

The Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough presents

The Mikado

By **W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan**
Adapted and directed by **Chris Monks**

Tues 7 – Sat 18 September, 2010

Musical maestro and Alan Ayckbourn successor, Chris Monks, returns to the theatre-in-the-round with the show that started a one-man revolution in opera.

Monks' uproariously popular version of the Gilbert and Sullivan masterpiece was a hit when it was first staged at the New Vic in 1995. Swapping Japan for the idyllic setting of Titipu Cricket Club, **The Mikado** was the first in a series of witty and exhilarating interpretations of classic opera that have taken audiences and critics by storm.

Now artistic director at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, following Alan Ayckbourn's retirement last year, Monks is bringing his village green revisioning home to the New Vic.

For some strange reason, local klutz Koko has risen to the highest rank a citizen can attain - Lord High Executioner, and lusts after the delicious Yum-Yum. Sadly, she's firmly set her cap at the free-wheeling Nanki-Poo. But that's only half of Koko's problems: the Mikado is about to arrive and find out why there have been no executions for over a year!

All Sullivan's superb melodies are there, complementing Gilbert's biting satire on capital punishment where, in the end, love conquers all.

Monks was first inspired to put Gilbert and Sullivan on a cricket pitch when asked to stage a musical with an English subject.

Says Chris: "I read *The Mikado* and realised it was so true to England today. Then I was driving past a cricket ground and realised that the batsmen looked like Japanese Samurai warriors."

Since then, Monks has gone on to win five-star reviews and national plaudits for his adaptations at the New Vic, including a Clinton/Lewinsky-inspired version of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, a magical take on *Don Giovanni* and a love affair played out against the backdrop of Kwik Save for Bizet's *Carmen*.

The production features Florence Andrews (*Annie Get Your Gun*, Young Vic), Jared Ashe, Pete Ashmore, Dominic Brewer, Kieran Buckeridge (*By Jeeves*), Claude Close (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Clare Corbett (Carleton Hobbs Radio Award winner), Julie Jupp (*Sweeney Todd*), Naomi Said, TV regular Lisa Stevenson and Kraig Thornber (*Oliver!*).

Tickets for *The Mikado*, which cost £8.50 – £17.50 (with concessions available), can be booked by calling the New Vic's Box Office on 01782 717962, or online at www.newvictheatre.org.uk

For further press information or to arrange an interview please contact Clare Hargreaves on 01782 717954 ext 317 or e-mail chargreaves@newvictheatre.org.uk