

The Mikado



'The Mikado' was a great success. The script was adapted well. Any songs changed from the original version were clever & funny & appropriate to the age performing.

St Joseph's Primary, Bracken Ridge, Australia

Extremely well written for children.

Swan Education Centre of Primary Arts, Australia

Thank you for your wonderful production of 'The Mikado'. The students had a fantastic experience and learned a lot about performance, working in a theatre setting, rehearsing, live performance and the amount of commitment a show requires.

John Wollaston Anglican Community School, Australia

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You can order *The Mikado* at www.bushfirepress.com/mikado



Bushfire Press

THE MIKADO

or

THE TOWN OF TITIPU

by William S Gilbert
Music by Sir Arthur Sullivan

adapted for younger performers

by

Lynne Bartlett, David Billings, Mark Leehy & Kevin O'Mara

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- *APPLICATION FOR PERFORMANCE of this adaptation of **The Mikado** should be made to the publisher and acknowledged before rehearsals commence.*

Production notes

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE MIKADO OF JAPAN.

NANKI-POO (his Son, disguised as a wandering minstrel, and in love with Yum-Yum).

KO-KO (Lord High Executioner of Titipu).

POOH-BAH (Lord High Everything Else).

PISH-TUSH (a Noble Lord).

NOBLE 1

NOBLE 2

Three Sisters—Wards of Ko-Ko:

YUM-YUM

PITTI-SING

PEEP-BO

KATISHA (an elderly Lady, in love with Nanki-Poo).

Chorus of Nobles

Chorus of Villagers (male & female)

Mikado's Entourage (Guards + any Court people required – these can be doubled from some of the Nobles and Villagers choruses)

SETTING

ACT I

Courtyard of Ko-Ko's Official Residence

ACT II

Ko-Ko's garden

TIME

Late 1800's

Synopsis

Before the story

NANKI-POO is the son of the MIKADO (Emperor of Japan). When faced with having to marry the Noblewoman KATISHA, he runs away to the little town of Titipu, disguised as a wandering minstrel. There he meets and falls in love with YUM-YUM, only to find that she is betrothed to KO-KO, a cheap tailor. He leaves in dejection.

KO-KO is thrown into jail for flirting (a capital offence) and is awaiting execution.

The townsfolk are worried that the new anti-flirting rule will eventually affect all – young and old alike! What to do?

The NOBLES let KO-KO out of jail and promote him to the rank of Lord High Executioner. Now ... as his name is the next on the list for execution (and as he is the executioner) he cannot execute anyone else in the town until he has executed himself first.

Titipu relaxes.

However, not many NOBLES like KO-KO and all the Officials resign rather than serve under an ex-tailor. This leaves the way clear for an unscrupulous Noble, POOH-BAH, to take on all the top positions (and the attached salaries). He becomes the Lord High Everything Else.

Act 1

It is a year later. NANKI-POO has learned that KO-KO is in jail awaiting execution (but hasn't learned that he has subsequently been released and promoted). He hurries back to Titipu, still disguised as a musician to claim YUM-YUM.

He learns that KO-KO is now Lord High Executioner and that YUM-YUM finishes school that very day and is returning to marry KO-KO.

As KO-KO is organising the wedding with POOH-BAH (and trying to wrangle money from the Treasury to fund it) YUM-YUM arrives with her schoolgirl friends PEEP-BO and PITTI-SING. NANKI-POO enters, sees YUM-YUM and declares his love for her to KO-KO ... who dismisses him with unconcern.

Alone, NANKI-POO tells YUM-YUM who he really is and why he ran away from the Imperial Court.

Meanwhile, POOH-BAH has received a letter from the MIKADO. The letter states that no executions have taken place for a year and that KO-KO has one month to change the situation – or else the post of Lord High Executioner will be abolished and the town reduced to the rank of Village. KO-KO needs to find a substitute or he shall have to execute himself.

Enter NANKI-POO, carrying a rope and intent, since he can't have YUM-YUM, to hang himself. A conniving KO-KO asks him to submit to public execution instead. NANKI-POO agrees – on condition that he gets to marry YUM-YUM and spend one month with her. KO-KO reluctantly agrees, as he will still be able to marry YUM-YUM after the execution.

All prepare for the wedding of NANKI-POO and KO-KO – but during the celebratory chorus, KATISHA arrives to give a warning to the audience that she wants revenge.

Act 2

YUM-YUM is being prepared for the wedding, but her bridesmaids are in tears because her husband has only a month to live. But NANKI-POO is happy.

KO-KO learns that, under Japanese law, when a man is executed, his wife must be buried alive with him. This dampens YUM-YUM's enthusiasm for the coming wedding.

Then – to make matters worse, KO-KO learns that the MIKADO is arriving in ten minutes. NANKI-POO realises that he cannot marry YUM-YUM, as it will mean she will be buried alive. Yet he cannot bear to live without her. So he instructs KO-KO to carry out the execution immediately. KO-KO is horrified and extremely squeamish.

But he has an idea: why not get KO-KO and YUM-YUM to marry and disappear immediately? Then fake an execution certificate and present it to the MIKADO!

The MIKADO arrives with his troops, a haughty, angry KATISHA with him.

KO-KO presents the certificate – only to find that the purpose of the visit is not to check up on KO-KO ... but to locate his missing son, NANKI-POO.

When KATISHA sees NANKI-POO's name on the execution certificate she is horrified. The MIKADO, however, is not as concerned. He feels that if his son is to run off, disguised as a musician, he deserves whatever he gets.

However ... there is a hideous punishment for causing the death of the Heir to the Throne ... and, unfortunately, the law being the law, KO-KO, POOH-BAH and PITTI-SING are condemned to death – to be carried out immediately after luncheon. The MIKADO & Co retire to dine.

NANKI-POO and YUM-YUM enter, about to leave for their honeymoon. KO-KO explains the situation and begs him to stay. But NANKI-POO points out that he is now married and that if KATISHA finds out she will insist on his execution – and that means that YUM-YUM will be buried alive!

NANKI-POO has a suggestion: if KO-KO persuades KATISHA to marry him, she will forget about NANKI-POO. So KO-KO woos and marries KATISHA.

After lunch, the MIKADO is ready for the executions. KATISHA explains that she has married KO-KO and pleads mercy for her new husband. But the MIKADO is troubled – the heir-apparent has been slain and the law is the law. Just in time, NANKI-POO arrives to show that the heir-apparent is indeed very much alive.

All seems well – except for the fact that KO-KO has ... lied to the MIKADO about the execution of NANKI-POO. However, as KO-KO explains:

When your Majesty says, "Let a thing be done," it's as good as done - because your Majesty's will is law. If Your Majesty says, "Kill a gentleman," that gentleman is as good as dead - practically, he *is* dead - and if he *is* dead ... why not say so?

The MIKADO is satisfied with the explanation and everyone is happy.

Staging

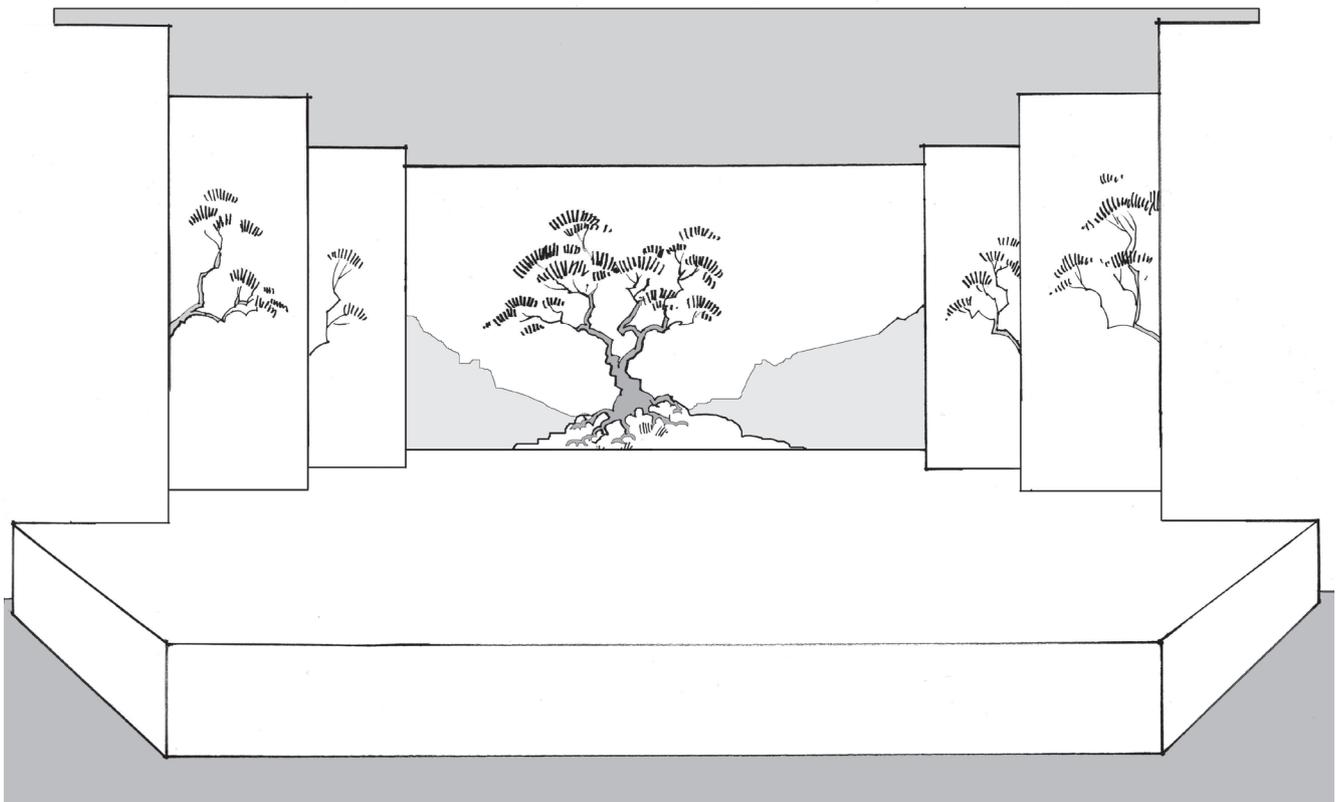
The show can be staged in two acts, with an intermission, or (as the running time is approximately 65 minutes) can be performed straight through, without an intermission.

This adaptation is intended to faithfully represent the original intent of Gilbert & Sullivan. Changes have been made to original dialogue, melodies, keys and arrangements only to enable the work to be done by young performers.

The Mikado is a timeless social satire of everything from Royalty and politicians to the public service, the ruling classes and institutions, pomposity ... and the heroic nature of serious opera. It is over-the-top and we encourage you to perform it that way. Be melodramatic, be outrageous ... and have as much fun as possible!

Sets & Scenes

Below is a suggested set showing a bare stage. Throughout the libretto are drawings of suggested settings for various songs & scenes.



Props

Act 1: guitar or ukulele & bundle of ballads and a coin purse & coin for Nanki-Poo, fans for the Three Little Maids, letter for Pooh-Bah, rope for Nanki-Poo

Act 2: hand mirror for Yum-Yum, revolving stool for Yum-Yum, coin purse & coin for Ko-Ko, certificate for Pooh-Bah, suitcases for Nanki-Poo & Yum-Yum

Songs and Musical Pieces

Act 1

Overture

Gentlemen of Japan – Nobles & Villagers

A Wand'ring Minstrel – Nanki-Poo with Nobles & Villagers

Our Great Mikado (spoken verse) – Pish-Tush, Nanki-Poo and Nobles 1 & 2

The Lord High Executioner – Nobles & Villagers

I've Got a Little List – Ko-Ko with Nobles & Villagers

Three Little Maids – Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing & Peep-Bo with female Villagers

Finale – Company

Act 2

Art and Nature – Female villagers

Entrance of the Mikado – Nobles & Villagers

Duet – Mikado & Katisha with Company

The Punishment Fit the Crime – Mikado with Company

The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring – Nanki-Poo & Ko-Ko with Nobles & Villagers

Recitative (Alone and Yet Alive) – Katisha

Titwillow – Ko-Ko with male Nobles & Villagers

Entrance of the Mikado – Nobles & Villagers

Finale – Company

Music

The accompanying CDs contain vocal demonstrations and instrumental backing tracks for rehearsal/performance.

A Vocal Score can be found in the back of this book. A separate 3-stave piano/vocal score is available for hire from the publisher.

Videotape

If you intend videotaping your own production please complete an application form, available from the publisher.

THE MIKADO

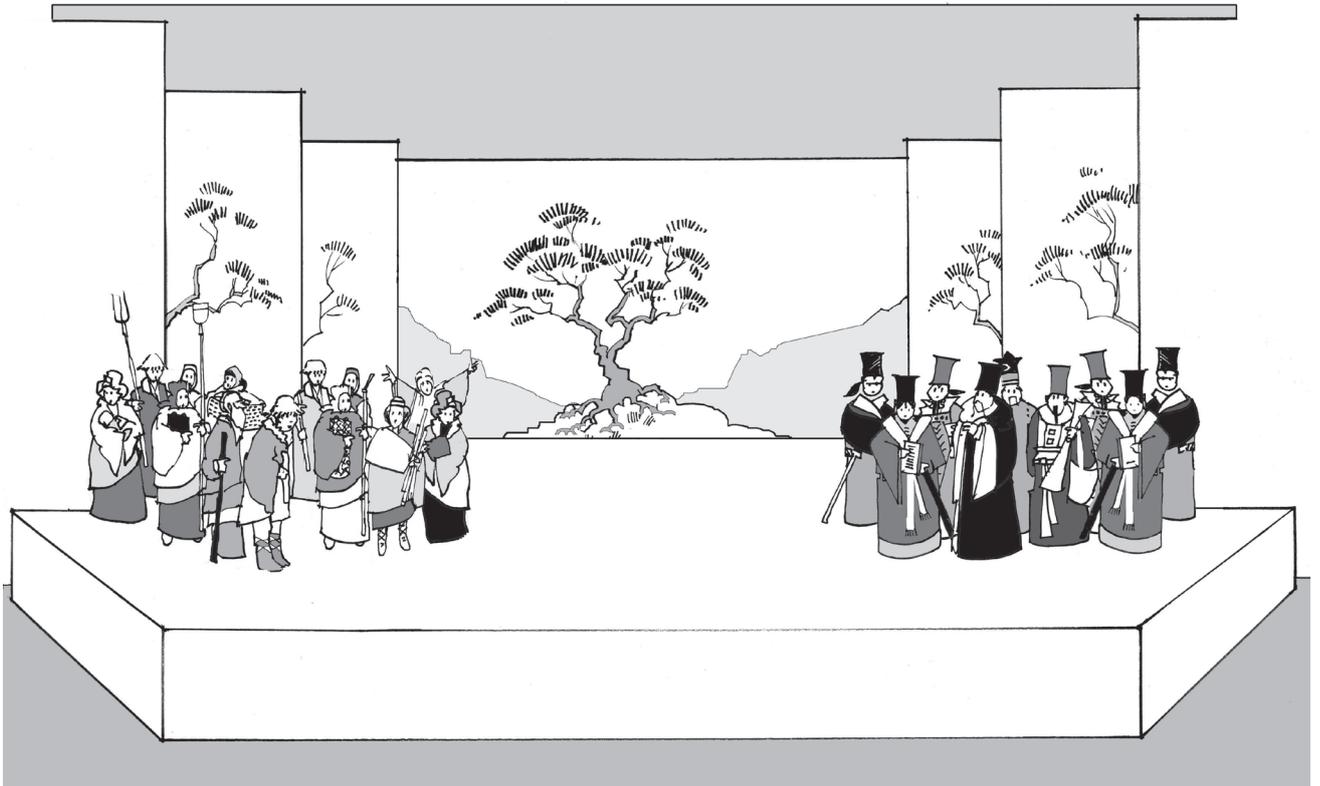
OR

THE TOWN OF TITIPU

ACT I — Courtyard of Ko-Ko's Official Residence.

ACT II — Ko-Ko's Garden

ACT I



SCENE.- Courtyard of Ko-Ko's Palace in Titipu.

NOBLES (UPSTAGE PS) & VILLAGERS (UPSTAGE OP) frozen in traditional Japanese poses.

NOBLES *come to life, step forward to CENTRE STAGE and sing:*

SONG: GENTLEMEN OF JAPAN

NOBLES: If you want to know who we are,
 We are gentlemen of Japan:
 On many a vase and jar -
 On many a screen and fan,

VILLAGERS *come to life, step forward to CENTRE STAGE and sing:*

VILLAGERS: We figure in lively paint:
 Our attitude here is quaint -
 You're wrong if you think it ain't, oh-oh!

NOBLES: If you think we work by strings, (VILLAGERS *mime puppet actions*)
Like a Japanese marionette, (*mime*)
You don't understand these things (*mime*)
It is simply etiquette. (*strike 'etiquette' poses – drinking cups of tea, hands in prayer, etc*)

VILLAGERS: Perhaps you think this throng
Can't keep it up all day long?
If that's your idea, you're wrong, oh-oh!

ALL: If that's your idea, you're wrong

ALL: If you want to know who we/they are,
We/they are gentlemen of Japan:
On vase and jar -
On screen and fan

On many, many, many, many
Many, many, many, many a jar
Oh, oh, oh, oh
On vase and jar
On screen and fan

ENTER NANKI-POO UPSTAGE OP *in great excitement. He carries a guitar or ukulele on his back and a bundle of ballads in his hand and comes DOWN through CENTRE between NOBLES and VILLAGERS.*

NANK: Gentlemen, I pray you tell me
Where a gentle maiden dwelleth,
Named Yum-Yum, the ward of Ko-Ko?

NOBLE 1 (*stepping forward*): Why, who are you to ask this question?

NANK (*turning & gesturing to chorus*): Come gather round me, and I'll tell you.

CHORUS *gather round.*

SONG: A WAND'RING MINSTREL

NANK: A wand'ring minstrel I –
A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby!
My catalogue is long,
Through every passion ranging,
And to your humours changing
I tune my supple song!
I tune my supple song!

NANK (*Spoken*): Are you in sentimental mood?
I'll sigh with you,

ALL: Oh, sorrow, sorrow!

NANK (*Spoken*): On maiden's coldness do you brood?
I'll do so, too –

ALL: Oh, sorrow, sorrow!

NANK: (*Marching back and forth across the stage*)
But if patriotic sentiment is wanted,
I've patriotic ballads cut and dried;
For where'er our country's banner may be planted,
All other local banners are defied!
Our warriors are ready and assembled,
Never quail—or they conceal it if they do –
And I shouldn't be surprised if nations trembled
Before the mighty troops of Titipu!

ALL (*marching on spot*): No we shouldn't be surprised if nations trembled
Before the mighty troops of Titipu!

NANK: (*Doing sailor dance as he sings*)
And if you call for a song of the sea,
We'll heave the capstan round,
Yo heave ho, for the wind is free,
Her anchor's a-trip and her helm's a-lee,
Hurrah for the homeward bound!

ALL perform 'sailor' actions as they sing – each member can invent own actions

ALL: Yo-ho – heave ho –
Hurrah for the homeward bound!
With a yo heave ho,
And a rum below,
Hurrah for the homeward bound!
With a yo heave ho,
And a rum below,
Yo ho, heave ho
Yo ho, heave ho, Yo ho, heave ho
Yo ho!

ALL: (*Wandering back to original places as they sing*)
A wand'ring minstrel I/he –
A thing of shreds and patches,
Of ballads, songs and snatches,
And dreamy lullaby!
And dreamy lullaby!

VILLAGERS EXIT OP; NOBLES (*except PISH-TUSH, NOBLES 1 & 2*) EXIT PS.
PISH-TUSH *steps forward, with NOBLES 1 & 2 at his side, and addresses NANKI-POO.*

PISH: And what may be your business with Yum-Yum?

NANK: I'll tell you. A year ago I was a member of the Titipu town band. While playing one day, I saw Yum-Yum. (*Walks DOWNSTAGE*) (*To audience*) Ahh ... We loved each other at once. (*Walks back to NOBLES*) But she was betrothed to her guardian Ko-Ko, a cheap tailor. (*To audience*) In despair, I left the town. (*To NOBLES*) Imagine my delight when I heard, a month ago, that Ko-Ko had been condemned to death for flirting! I hurried back at once.

PISH: It is true that Ko-Ko was condemned to death for flirting, but he was reprieved at the last moment, and raised to the exalted rank of Lord High Executioner ... under the following remarkable circumstances:

NANKI-POO *moves across to* DOWNSTAGE OP. PISH-TUSH, NOBLES 1 & 2 *move* DOWN CENTRE.

SPOKEN VERSE: OUR GREAT MIKADO

PISH: Our great Mikado, virtuous man,
When he began to rule our land,
Resolved to try
A plan whereby
Young men might best be steadied.

NOBLES 1 & 2: So he decreed, in words succinct,
That all who flirted, leered or winked
Unless in marriage they are linked,
Should forthwith be beheaded.

NANK: Beheaded, beheaded?

PISH: This stern decree, you'll understand,
Caused great dismay throughout the land!
For young and old
And shy and bold
Were equally affected.

NOBLES 1 & 2: The youth who winked a roving eye,
Or breathed a slightly wayward sigh,
Was thereupon condemned to die -
He usually objected.

NANK: *I can understand that!*

PISH: We straight away let out on bail
A convict from the county jail,
Whose head was next
On some pretext
Condemned to be mown off,

NOBLES 1 & 2: And made him Headsman, for we said,
“Who’s next to be decapitated
Cannot cut off another’s head
Until he’s cut his own off.”

NANK: Now, *there’s* a challenge.

NOBLES 1 & 2 EXIT PS. NANKI-POO *and* TISH-TUSH *remain*.

POOH-BAH ENTERS UPSTAGE PS. *He comes DOWN to PISH-TUSH as NANKI-POO is speaking.*

NANK (*to audience*): So ... Ko-Ko, the cheap tailor, Lord High Executioner of Titipu!
Why ... that’s the highest rank a citizen can attain!

POOH (*to NANKI-POO, surprising him*): It is. (*Turns to see POOH-BAH and comes over to him*)
And ... I believe you are looking for Yum-Yum.

NANK (*bowing*): Yes, indeed. And how good of you, a nobleman of the highest rank, to speak to me, a mere strolling minstrel!

POOH: Don’t mention it. I am, in point of fact, a particularly haughty person. I can’t help it. I was born sneering. But I struggle hard to overcome this defect. When all the great officers of State resigned because they were too proud to serve under Ko-Ko, an ex-tailor (*to PISH*) did I not accept all their posts at once?

PISH: You did. *And* the salaries attached to them.

POOH: So now it is my degrading duty to serve as the following: I am First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, all rolled into one. (*Sadly*) And at a salary! The Great Pooh-Bah ... a salaried servant! But I do it! It revolts me, but I do it!

NANK: And it does you credit.

POOH: But I don’t stop at that. I go and dine with middle-class people at reasonable rates. I dance at suburban parties for a moderate fee. I also sell State secrets at a very low figure. (*Winking at audience*) For instance, any further information about Yum-Yum would come under the heading of a State secret. (*He puts his hand out to NANKI-POO, whilst looking the other way. NANKI-POO takes his hint and puts money into his hand. POO-BAH looks disapprovingly at the small coin*)

POOH (*to AUDIENCE*): I see you really *are* a poor musician.

NANK: The State Secret, Pooh-Bah?

POOH: Oh, yes ... ahem:

“This very day
From school Yum-Yum
Will wend her way,
And homeward come,

With beat of drum
And a rum-tum-tum,
To wed the Lord High executioner!”

POOH-BAH EXITS PS, *accompanied by PISH-TUSH, NANKI-POO running after him.*

NANK (EXITING): Oh, no! Is that all? Can you tell me no more?

VILLAGERS ENTER OP *and* NOBLES ENTER PS, *to the instrumental opening of the song:*

SONG: THE LORD HIGH EXECUTIONER

ALL sing

Behold the Lord High Executioner
A personage of noble rank and title
A dignified and potent officer,
Whose functions are particularly vital!

KO-KO *marches on* UPSTAGE PS *and moves* DOWN CENTRE
between NOBLES *and* VILLAGERS *as they sing to him*

Defer, defer,
To the Lord High Executioner!
Defer, defer,
To the noble Lord, to the noble Lord
High Executioner!

Behold the Lord High Executioner
A personage of noble rank and title
A dignified and potent officer,
Whose functions are particularly vital!

Defer, defer,
To the Lord High Executioner!
Defer, defer,
To the noble Lord, to the noble Lord
High Executioner!

Defer, defer,
To the Lord High Executioner!
Defer, defer,
To the noble Lord, to the noble Lord
High Executioner!

Bow down, bow down
To the Lord High Executioner
Defer, defer
To the noble, noble Lord High Executioner!

KO (*to ALL*): Ladies and gentlemen, I'm much touched by this reception. And I promise that, if I should ever be called upon to act professionally, as Executioner, that is ... I will have *no* difficulty in finding PLENTY of people whose loss will be a distinct gain to society.

SONG: I'VE GOT A LITTLE LIST

KOKO *with* CHORUS *of* NOBLES & VILLAGERS

KO-KO: As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,
I've got a little list - I've got a little list
Of society offenders who might well be underground,
Who never would be missed - who never would be missed!

Moves DOWNSTAGE PS addressing audience

Like people in the cinema who don't turn off their phone
And pesky little brothers who will not leave you alone -
Or people with their noses pierced and coloured hair and plaits -
And people who, in shaking hands, shake hands with you like that
(*flabby handshake or hip-hop handshake action*)
And teachers who on giving too much homework do insist -
They'd none of 'em be missed - they'd none of 'em be missed!

Crosses to DOWNSTAGE PS as chorus sing:

CHORUS: He's got 'em on the list - he's got 'em on the list;
And they'll none of 'em be missed - they'll none of 'em be missed.

KO-KO: There's the smiling, cheery dentist and his friend you sometimes meet,
The orthodontalist - I've got him on the list!
And the people who chew bubblegum and stick it on your seat,
They never would be missed - they never would be missed!

And people who don't realise their jokes are really bad,
And DJs on the radio who play too many ads;
And the uncle and the auntie who upon your birthday bring,
A set of socks and undies – instead of useful things
And parents who think bedrooms should be kept the tidiest
I don't think they'd be missed - I'm sure they'd not be missed

CHORUS: He's got 'em on the list - he's got 'em on the list;
And I don't think they'll be missed - I'm sure they'll not be missed!

KO-KO: But it really doesn't matter whom you put upon the list,
For they'd none of 'em be missed - they'd none of 'em be missed!

CHORUS: You may put 'em on the list - you may put 'em on the list;
And they'll none of 'em be missed - they'll none of 'em be missed!

ENTER POOH-BAH UPSTAGE PS *as* NOBLES EXIT MID-STAGE PS *and* VILLAGERS EXIT OP.
POOH-BAH *joins* KO-KO.

KO: Pooh-Bah, it seems that my approaching marriage festivities must last a week. I should like to do it handsomely, and I want to consult you as to the amount I ought to spend.

POOH: Certainly. In which of my capacities? As Private Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Attorney General, Lord Chief Justice, or Paymaster General?

KO. Suppose we say as Private Secretary.

POOH: Speaking as your Private Secretary, I should say that, as the city will have to pay for it, don't stint yourself, do it well.

KO: Exactly - as the city will have to pay for it. That is your advice.

POOH: As Private Secretary, yes. BUT ... as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I am bound to see that due economy is observed.

KO: Oh! But you just said 'Don't stint yourself, do it well'.

POOH. As Private Secretary.

KO: And now you say that due economy must be observed.

POOH: As Chancellor of the Exchequer.

KO: I see. Come over here, where the Chancellor can't hear us. (*They cross the stage to DOWNSTAGE OP*) Now, as my Attorney General, how do you advise me to deal with this difficulty?

POOH: Oh, as your Attorney General, I should have no hesitation in saying 'Chance it - '

KO: Thank you. (*Shaking his hand.*) I will.

POOH: However, as Lord Chief Justice, I am bound to see that the law isn't violated.

KO: I see. Come over here where the Chief Justice can't hear us. (*They cross the stage to DOWNSTAGE PS*) Now, then, as Paymaster general?

POOH: Of course, as Paymaster General, I could cook the accounts so that, as Lord High Auditor, I should never discover the fraud.

KO: Excellent!

POOH: But then, as Archbishop of Titipu, it would be my duty to denounce my dishonesty and give myself into my own custody as first Commissioner of Police.

KO: That's extremely awkward.

POOH: I don't say that all these distinguished people couldn't be ... ahem ... 'bought'; but it would take a very considerable bribe.

KO: I shall have to give the matter some thought. (YUM-YUM, PITTI-SING *and* PEEP-BO *begin*
ENTERING UPSTAGE OP) But- now my bride and her sisters approach. (*Grabbing* POOH-
BAH) I say – make me look important..

POOH: How?

KO: Grovelling is good.

POOH: No money, no grovel!

POOH-BAH EXITS *in a huff* PS.

KO (*following him*): I say, Pooh-Bah – don't be like that.