

ASF season closes with 'Mikado'

MILFORD—For the final show of the 1998 summer season, the American Stage Festival will present Gilbert & Sullivan's comedy "The Mikado," a musical about "rice, love and politics."

It will run for 13 performances, Aug. 20-30 on the Summer Stage at the American Stage Festival.

The most famous of the musical comedies by Gilbert and Sullivan (who wrote "The Pirates of Penzance" and "HMS Pinafore") "The Mikado" as staged by the ASF will be "huge, hysterical and outlandish with lavish sets and dazzling costumes," according to artistic director Matthew Parent.

New York director/choreographer Jim Weaver, who received rave reviews this summer for "The All Night Strut," will direct the 30-member cast.

Manchester's Scott Severance will update several of the songs to reflect the politics of today with a wink and a nod to President Clinton, Monica Lewinsky and Gov. Shaheen, among others. Severance will also perform as the high-spirited Pish-Tush.

"The Mikado" mixes some of theater's most hummable tunes like "Three Little Maids from School," "I've Got A Little List" and "The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring (Tra-la)" and the delightful tale of two young lovers, to create the comic blockbuster of the millennium, according to Parent.

As the two young lovers, the cast boasts Broadway's Michael Moore and Monika Kendall, whose credits include a recent production of "The Mikado" with Steve Allen.

Several local actors will also take to the stage in "The

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Mikado," including Natalie Brown (as Pitti-Sing, one of the infamous little maids) of Amherst, who played Mrs. Danvers in the season opener, "Rebecca;" Michelle Henderson of Nashua's Carey Henderson Vocal Studios as Katisha, "the other woman;" and Michael Poisson of Boston (ASF's "Rumors" and "Tea and Sympathy") as the Mikado, the emperor of Japan.

"The Mikado" is sponsored in part by Borofsky, Lewis & Amodeo-Vickery, WZLD, WFEA and New Hampshire Public Radio.

Performances will be at 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday evenings. Matinees will be at 2 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Tickets range from \$14 to \$26 depending on the day of performance. Senior and student discounts will be available for all shows. Limited \$10 rush tickets will be available to all performances.

The Festival will offer 2-for-1 tickets to "The Mikado" on Thursday, Aug. 20, and Tuesday, Aug. 25.

For tickets or information, call the American Stage Festival at 673-7515.