

OPERA

Sasha Regan's All-Male The Mikado

King's Theatre, Edinburgh



"No ball games" warns the handwritten sign, coyly draped from one of the on-stage tents. And in an all-male recasting of Gilbert and Sullivan's already arch oriental comedy, you might see that as the trigger for some high-camp, Julian Clary-style smut coming your way.

Not a bit of it. Director Sasha Regan's glorious G&S rethink is all sweetness and innocence – well, mostly. Instead of nods and winks, she delivers a warm-hearted, thoroughly sincere production set amongst some seemingly well-meaning, good-as-gold Scouts out in the woods. Indeed, the only thing camp about it are the tents and the flickering fire.

Regan pulls a neat trick in relocating G&S's satire on the English establishment, clothed as a preposterous oriental fantasy, back in the very establishment it's satirising. She has some fine, wonderfully energetic performances too – Holly Hughes's Cecil B DeMille-style choreography might feel a little hyperactive, but it's always entertaining, and more importantly, it always has a narrative point. Richard Munday has a strong if slightly nasal tenor as wandering minstrel Nanki-Poo, and Ross Finnie is suitably stentorian as the multi-professioned Pooh-Bah. But it's the

when, the hip young gunslinger, now the reluctant Nobel Laureate – it is entirely fitting that the old gig conventions be observed: Dylan will take the stage at eight o'clock on the dot, at which point the terms of the gentleman's contract come into effect – there will be no cameras, no phones, no rushing the stage to touch the hem of Mr Dylan's garment. Instead, the audience shall just sit and listen to the music. A crazy idea but it might just work.

Which is not to imply that there is anything austere about a Dylan concert at this juncture of the Never Ending Tour. His current set-up, with Bob and band looking super sharp in their Mariachi-inspired threads, bathed in the golden glow of super troupers and amber lanterns, conveys a living room intimacy, while the warm and welcoming sound

"ladies" who really steal the show, with Alex Weatherhill growling away as a wronged Katisha, and Alan Richardson soaring aloft in an impeccable falsetto as love interest Yum-Yum. It's all frothy nonsense, of course – but carried off with such conviction that you can't help be captivated. A delight.

DAVID KETTLE

DANCE

Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes

Festival Theatre, Edinburgh



One of Matthew Bourne's strongest attributes is his abili-