

PIRATES OF PENZANCE

BWT Review

The Production of the Pirates of Penzance will always be popular and Witham Amateur Operatic Society's production last week was no exception, playing to full houses.

Cynthia Stead the producer and John James the musical director combined to make this both a memorable and enjoyable experience. The overture gave the first hint the music to come: restrained, with strings and woodwind predominating. The oboe solo could be enjoyed to the full. The music throughout the show supported the performers on stage and never drowned them.

This production was not an ego trip to one or two soloists but Cynthai Stead made it a production where everyone was important. Her handling of the large chorus was excellent and the various tableaux created were a joy to the eye. The final one was exceptional.

Nicholas Clough as the Pirate King was a lively colourful personality. Our here, Frederick, was played by Nicholas Ladd, a handsome young man with a pleasant voice. Lydia Clough was a character not a caricature as Ruth, the piratical maid of all work. Michael Dunion without roller skates was effective as Samuel.

Mabel, sung by Valerie Ditchman, made her usual impact with her opening song. There was something very Victorian about the way she moved. Helen Fox made a real impression playing the minor part of Kate. Patrick O'Brien was an eccentric Major General. Steve Draper played the Sergeant of Police leading his happy band of idiots.

It is a pity that those are those who go to the theatre and either through conceit or ignorance fail to turn off their mobile phones.

This was a most enjoyable performance, truly musical, colourful and taken along at a lively pace.

By James Bright