

Braintree and Witham Times Review IOLANTHE

Hall ablaze with colour for an outstanding Iolanthe

LAST week the Public Hall in Witham was ablaze with colour and resounded with beautiful music as Witham Operatic Society produced an outstanding performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's Iolanthe.

The hero, Strephon, played by Tim Clarke, sang well with his leading lady especially in None Shall Part Us, which set the scene and tone of the show. Playing Phyllis, Carolyn Harley, a real asset to any society, had a bell like quality in her voice. Janet Wash as Queen of the Fairies had the ability to command the stage and her singing voice added to the drama of the scenes. Her band of fairies tripped elegantly and sang sweetly.

Director Tony Brett's control of the movement of chorus and soloists was matched by the high standard of singing under the guidance of the musical director Susannah Edom.

The second act introduced Private Willis played by Stephen Draper. A fine figure of a man with a powerful bass voice, he proved to be irresistible to the Queen of the Fairies. It was not until the end of the second act that Rachel Clapp as Iolanthe had the opportunity to reveal her pleasant singing voice. Earl Tolloller, Simon Mitchell, and Earl of Mount Ararat, Nicholas Clough, acted and sang their solos and duets most effectively. They danced a trio with the agile Lord Chancellor, portrayed by Tony Court. It was a pity that the words of the nightmare song were not clearer.

Review by James Bright