

The Mikado 2000 BWT Review

It was a real delight for local music lovers when Witham Amateur Operatic Society decided to perform The Mikado as their spring production.

There is a problem with Gilbert and Sullivan operas: they are so well known that it is difficult to surprise the audience so there is a temptation to be wildly innovative.

Apart from a few topical references and some entertaining entries on KoKo's little list, this production was a traditional polished and colourful show.

Right from the start the traditions were maintained and the overture was played with the curtains closed. They opened to reveal an excellent set created by Paul Lazell. That for the second act earned a round of applause.

Patrick O'Connell, the director, kept the show going along at a fine pace. The movement of the soloists and chorus was interesting and the costumes, always colourful, added to the air of Vivacity of the show.

Nicholas Clough repeated his fine performance of 22 years ago as Pooh Bar, a pompous figure with an extended ancestry.

Patrick O'Brian was a sympathies KoKo. His esterial accent fitted well with his position of tailor raised to the elevated rank of Lord High Executioner. Colin a Ellett was a confident Pish Tish, creating many laughs as well as having a pleasing voice.

Richard Cowen's Mikado was majestic rather than threatening and he did not overwhelm the stage as many do.

Jonathan Baron was a lively Nanki Pop and he fired well with Natalie Cudlip with her delightful soprano voice. Helen Fox and Carolyn Wash were two delightful maids from school

Katisha played by Jan Wash was really imperious when dealing with the villagers. She aroused the sympathy of the audience with one of Sullivan's alto arias Alone and Yet Alive and hilarious when singing with KoKo.

David Cawdell, the musical director ensured that the music went at a fine pace and that the large orchestra never dominated the singing.

A delightful evening's entertainment.

By James Bright