



Society : Maidenhead Operatic Society  
Production : Ruddygore  
Date : 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009  
Venue : Desborough Suite, Maidenhead  
Report by : Steve Bold, NODA Representative, Area 14

## Report

A well staged, choreographed and cast performance from Maidenhead Operatic Society. This was an accomplished performance of Ruddygore, with many outstanding performances both from the cast and the band, who played their instruments as a great accompaniment to the singers themselves.

### **Robin Oakapple/Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd – Gareth Watkins**

Gareth moved the show along with his performance, giving the audience the opportunity to see how the plot was expanding and evolving. He was a strong singer throughout, his relationship with Rose was well played as they tried to formulate their future.

### **Rose Maybud – Cat Ellis**

Cat Ellis showed a great deal of experience in her character. There was a real energy in her singing and movement as we have come to expect.

### **Richard Dauntless – Gary Owens**

Gary Owens was one of many confident performers amongst the cast. He carried off the role effortlessly with a clear dulcet tone and fine comic touches.

### **Sir Despard Murgatroyd – Mike Smith**

Mike Smith played Sir Despard with all the moustache twirling nastiness the part required and his voice was a pleasure to listen to.

### **Mad Margaret – Olivia Hunt**

An excellent performance from Olivia as Mad Margaret, here was the stand out moment of the show. From her first appearance (absolutely bonkers) through to the end of the show (still bonkers but just about under control) she was hilarious.

### **Sir Roderic Murgatroyd – Mike Robinson**

As a ghostly Sir Roderic, Mike Robinson led the eerie ancestors in "When the Night Wind Howls" one of Ruddygore's best known numbers. It's a tricky song and Mike sang and led it very well.

### **Dame Hannah – Lou Millward**

Good clear singing with beautiful diction from Lou Millward, giving those of us unfamiliar with the story at least a chance of following the plot. A confident and suitable opening to the show.

### **Old Adam/Gideon Crawle – John Sheppard**

It was a delightful cameo and one of the highlights of the production. I thought he brought a wonderful disdainfulness to his role. His comic timing was absolutely impeccable.

**Zorah – Sarah Seddon**

A smaller role for Sarah Seddon but she still played the part with professionalism and gave a great performance. She sang and performed beautifully.

**Ruth – Jenny Harris**

A competent and professional performance, Jenny used her opportunities well remaining in full character throughout.

**Chorus**

**Claire Ashton Tait, Marina Banfield, Nina Bannerman, Cathy Brookes, James Couper-Johnston, Paul Cuttance, Sally Ellis, David Gibson, Liz Gibson, Jacky Hart, Kit Hobson, Laura Hobson, Debbie Hore, Rosie Lake, Karen Newton, Delia Nicholson, Maureen Smith, Stuart Seber, Bob Spooner**

After a bit of a wobble at the start of their big chorus the men settled down quickly and made the most of the creepy words and music. The ladies were all excellent in their delivery and singing, their voices were a wonderful compliment to one another.

Well performed and sung to a high standard by cast and company this was a thoroughly entertaining and enjoyable evening.

**Musical Director – David Hazeldine**

From the overture to the finale musical director David Hazeldine had the band well under control. Pleasing tempos and with sympathetic dynamics supported the singers without overwhelming them.

**Director – Paul Seddon**

Simply and effectively staged and with a colourful and imaginative wardrobe from within the society. Ruddigore contains a scene which is difficult to pull off convincingly on the amateur stage. Ancestral paintings come alive and step out on to the stage to scare the wits out of Sir Ruthven. In this production it was managed magnificently with the aid of large individual portraits of each chorus member painted specially for the occasion. I particularly enjoyed the transfer of the cloak and wig from one brother to the other, this was handled extremely well in the stage setting, incorporating the change as a subtle joke to the plot.