



Society : Maidenhead Operatic Society
Production : The Gondoliers
Date : 19th November 2010
Venue : Desborough Suite, Maidenhead
Report by : Steve Bold, NODA Representative, Area 14

Report

This was a very outlandish production of Gondoliers, full of lavish costumes, hairstyles and displays of amore! Full of tuneful melodies and the usual foolish plot this should be, and was, a riot of colour, assisted by the imaginative set, cleverly designed and constructed. The orchestra was nicely balanced and suited the power of the singing very well. The costumes from were bright and fresh and were complementary to the whole affect. The chorus were lively and full of animation. All in all a nicely rounded production, with some good principals, Maidenhead Operatic Society do this sort of show well and the audience were very appreciative.

Duke of Plaza Toro, James Couper Johnston

Competent and astute performance, used the right mannerisms to display his character and certainly seemed put upon by his classic Italian style master of his domain. But with the added characteristics that he was hiding, namely the lack of a fortune that his demeanour displayed.

Duchess of Plaza Toro, Rosie Lake

A well played performance, really bringing forth a classic period grande dame. The costumes were especially outstanding, dresses and the heels as she moved about the stage, whispering plans to her husband.

Casilda, Cat Thompson

A superb singing voice and confident performer. She was not afraid to give the part her all and her performance duly reflected this. The stand out performance from a very accomplished and enjoyable actress.

Luiz, William Branston

Although not as large as some parts, very integral to the story. Came across as the quiet put upon servant at the beginning but his character grew and his destiny revealed at the end, somewhat predictably, but well done all the same.

Don Alhambra, Paul Seddon

Although Paul looked every inch the part and put over the role well, I felt he should have projected just a bit more to make the Grand Inquisitor just a little more "grand" with his gestures.

Marco, Bruce Walcroft

An interesting part as he finds himself withdrawn from his comfort zone and thrust into a new and unknown environment, I feel there could have been more character depth, but he held his own as a presence on the stage.

Giuseppe, Gareth Watkins

Played in a similar way to his companion Marco, jovial, hopeless romantic type. A little more deliberate in his delivery than his companion, gave the role a nervous demeanour which made him stand out, but I felt although on the whole well played, he could have smiled a little more.

Gianetta, Jessica Smith & Tessa, Eve MacDonald

Lively and both with excellent singing voices, moved about the stage well and costumes were well suited. Also good interaction from both ladies with their partners with the right amount of disdain and disbelief when Casilda arrived to possibly take one of them away.

Inez, Jenny Harris

Clear performances from all, confident and lively. Playing the parts of those who have missed out with dutiful sadness.

Chorus of The Gondoliers and The Contadine

Claire Ashton Tait, Liam Begley, Robin Bratchley, Cathy Brookes, Simon Classey, Sally Ellis, Liz Gibson, Mandy Hall, Jenny Harris, Kit Hobson, Laura Hobson, Debbie Hore, Zachary Mitchell, Phillipa Morris, Karen Newton, Delia Nicholson, Frank Quick, Mike Robinson, Claire Sargent, Maureen Smith, Sarah Seddon, Francisca Vennard

All of the background ladies and gentlemen playing a mixture of townsfolk, villagers and nobles contributed well to the performance, exuberant singing and movement throughout. Entrances and exits were well handled and no one could be seen prior to their entrance to the stage as can be the case with large choruses. All the chorus contributed well to the performance, lively singing in the background and filling the stage with an abundance of melody.

Musical Director, David Hazeldine

Musical Director David Hazeldine and his well balanced and responsive band did a tremendous job in ensuring that one of Sullivan's finest scores remained firmly within the vocal range of the cast.

Costumes Jan Chislett

The costumes were very bright and lively, the frock coats and dresses suitable period and renaissance, everyone carried their costumes well and no one looked awkward or out of place in the ensemble scenes.

Director Lou Millward

Lou kept this production entirely traditional and I thought her groupings and general direction were well conceived. I would like to have seen a little more of the humour expanded upon, but all in all this was a jolly good production.

I thought the sound balance was excellent, and from the principals down to the person who always stays in the back row of the chorus, I didn't miss a syllable they spoke or sang. One of the highlights of the production was the set and I congratulate everyone who had anything to do with its design and construction. Not only did it ensure very efficient entrances and exits for everyone, but it also used the available space to great advantage. As such, many congratulations are in order to the team and Lou for all their hard work – I know how much work is involved in putting together such a large and colourful production and many thanks for the hospitality shown on the evening by your front of house staff.