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SERVING AMATEUR THEATRE SINCE 1899

HMS Pinafore. Clevedon Gilbert & Sullivan Society. Princes Hall, Clevedon 20th Feb '09

Producer: Gill Rummings

Musical Arrangement: Carol Kenway

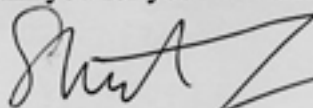
What a thrill to hear the audience expose a gasp as the tabs revealed the set for this HMS Pinafore they almost broke into an applause and a little bit of a shame that they didn't. Harry Ellis & team did a really sterling effort appreciated by all concerned. The idea of having a cat and rats running around onboard ship worked well since it started the production with that sense of fun utilising time whilst the Overture was being played. Direction sought for opportunities to promote the humour and looked for additional aspects to breath fresh sea air into the usual format. Appreciation of the text came over with the style intended, well received by the audience. Generous movement around the stage had the crew looking busy in trying to replicate a real life aspect.

The sound system nicely enhanced the voices when required with one or two specials which added to the atmosphere. Lighting design held some surprises and captured the different moods on-board during various scenes. The cyc was used to good effect giving depth to the entire stage. All the naval personnel were very suitably dressed which prompted the ladies to carry a zest of differing colours to complete a costumed picture. Make-up certainly was at the helm in this production with the animals in full facial wonder and then 'Dick Deadeye' very effectively marked out in his role. It was pleasing to see that attention to detail was full rounded since I didn't notice any unwarranted rings or bracelets. Props department complimented the scenery with various barrels and associated nautical material expected to be seen on a ship, an important factor in creating visual belief.

There was a pleasant chemistry between cast members and a glint in the eye from everyone especially when the subject matter of love sprung to the lips. As mentioned early the cat and rats added to the overall picture as did Dave Kelly's (Captain Corcoran), playing of the guitar during 'Fair Moon to Thee I Sing'. The dangling and dancing of what I can only assume to be Ralph Rackstraw legs, whilst Josephine was lamenting over him, brought a well deserved titter from the audience and a nice mechanism to enhance a song. Comedic fun was observed in several places for example the deck-hands and use of rope, visual bit of nonsense worked well. Musical Direction ensured that all the songs carried a punch and the intention and meaning was delivered. The balance in the orchestration produced a very pleasant sound and the flute punctuated a delightful song bird from time to time.

Your front-of-house personnel are always so welcoming in Clevedon and it's always a delight to see the enthusiasm generated by all members no-matter what task is undertaken. Your audience was very enthralled with this presentation which contained an element of fun throughout. Love certainly reached all levels on this voyage 'Oh joy, oh rapture!'

Thank you for your invitation



S J Lyddon

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

Patron: The Lord Lloyd-Webber

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