

Stewartby Operatic and Dramatic Society

## The Pirates of Penzance

Director Prue Gardiner Musical Director Allan Thomas

Stewartby Village Hall - November 19<sup>th</sup> 2010

This production was an outstanding success. From the first notes of the overture it was obvious that Allan Thomas had once again created a musical feast for the audience to enjoy. Clear diction, harmonies blended together, good tempo and strong singing voices: the excellence of the music continued throughout the production. Prue Gardiner directed skilfully and showed much ingenuity and humour - a pirate reading The Dummies guide to Pirating, the maids being revealed eating the picnic greedily while General Stanley's daughters are singing. Prue has the wonderful skill of adding small detailed touches of humour which have a big impact.

The chorus were superb. The pirates and the girls sang extraordinarily well. 'Climbing over rocky mountains' was a delight. Suzanne Horlock was quite wonderful as Kate. Here is a fine comic actress with a pure melodic voice, who added so much humour to the action. 'Hail Poetry' was quite magical. In this number, Allan achieved a variety of tone and expression from the company that held the audience spellbound.

The principals too were so talented. Charles Mills as Frederic was outstanding. Charles has everything you could wish for a musical lead - good stage presence, thoroughly believable acting skills, an unforced melodic voice with excellent diction. This was a musical performance of the highest standard. He was perfectly complemented by Carol Urwin as Mabel. In voice and acting, Carol's performance totally matched Charles. Together on stage they were a formidable pair. Their duet in Act 2 demonstrated vividly their range and variety of vocal tone. 'Stay Frederick Stay' contrasted in mood with 'Oh leave me not to pine'. This was especially fine, the beauty and sorrow of the delivery had an immediate effect on the audience - you could have heard a pin drop! Then the change in tempo of 'So here is love' added a further dimension. This was musical theatre at its best.

Variety and humour came via the pirates. Stephen Hoath's Pirate King was bold, athletic and appropriately dashing. Stephen sang well and commanded the stage. Lind Bowen's Ruth too was well sung. Linda was well able to portray not only her love for Frederic in Act 1 but her ferocity in Act 2. The trios in Act 2 between these two and Frederic were excellent - well sung and full of energy. Stephen's pirates gave excellent support notably from John Epton as Samuel. Chris Garraway's Major General was suitably eccentric. This was a good performance and, although his patter song was not always clear, went from strength to strength. In comparison to other local groups, Sergeant Colin Jones had females in his force. This was not unsuccessful and the troupe performed well.

Prue and Allan are to be congratulated for this production and for achieving such excellent performances from the cast and orchestra.

Enid Cooper  
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