

Once again Stewartby presented an entertaining performance of a very high musical standard. The chorus sang beautifully, with power, harmony and variety. List and Learn gave us a taste of the musical pleasures to come. Charles Mills and Stephen Hoath were excellent as Marco and Guiseppe and were well matched against Carol Urwin as Gianetta and Lesley Thomas as Tessa. Both couples were confident performers, voices were well balanced, with delightful harmonies: they were a pleasure to watch and to listen to. Peter Davies's Don Alhambra was well sung, but as the Grand Inquisitor, I would have hoped for more ferocity and menace. Charlotte Garraway's Casilda was another delight, with an exceptional voice and good stage presence, Charlotte was perfect casting in this role. Jamie Fairweather as Luiz was also well cast, a very believable performance with a very attractive voice. Colin Jones as the Duke of Plaza-Toro, was perhaps less believable. Plaza-Toro is an over the top character, a swaggering, pompous exhibitionist who is also cowardly and somewhat dishonourable. He should add much humour to the scene especially when it becomes apparent that his formidable wife rules the roost. Colin was not entirely successful in achieving this. Alison Gibbs was excellent in the role of the Duchess. Alison has a rich voice and is a skilled comic actor, her facial expressions added much amusement but she lacked the foil of a boasting pusillanimous husband. Staging was simple but the colourful costumes added a vibrancy to the scene. Musical Director Allan Thomas is a shining example of excellence, the orchestra and talented cast performed with confidence and skill. The result was some exemplary singing, the four part harmonies in particular were thrilling. There were really too many outstanding musical numbers to mention. Director Pru Gardiner ensured a fast moving, well paced production and introduced topical references which added humour to the plot. This was a very pleasurable evening. Having performed in *The Gondoliers*, I was reminded what an extraordinary and tuneful musical it is. Stewartby Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society once again demonstrated their skill and considerable musical talents and gave so much pleasure to their audience.