

Pickering MS : Somewhere in England

Director Maureen Symonds

MD Richard Benson

What a delight to visit Pickering's " Wartime Show", now in its tenth year. Cleverly devised by the Director, the show again creates the atmosphere of the 1940s with a wealth of standard songs and some more obscure ones that I missed the first time round. There is a fair share of comedy items and this is the ideal place to resuscitate those corny gags from the last Century. The company is convincingly arrayed in authentic uniforms and period costume and the Youth Theatre is integrated into the format. The opening of the second act was particularly striking with songs from the movies set in black and white. As usual, it was cheered to the rafters by the audience, many in period clothes. Long may we say 'Sing As We Go'!

Whitby ADS : Russian Peasants and Red Peppers

Director Angela Cook

MD David Carrack

Choreographer Katrina Stead

This was an interesting and entertaining evening with Coward's substantial 'Red Peppers' preceded by two curtain warmers. Chekov's 'The Proposal' received quite a stylish treatment though there was a tendency to hide behind the furniture. The coarse acting 'Cherry Sisters' tended to strain at the leash so that neither the intentional ineptitude of the characters nor the farcical situation really got into its stride. The strength of the players in 'Red Peppers' carried this gem smoothly along, with Lily and George sparking off themselves and the other theatricals with great relish. Just a pity that the denouement was not big enough to give us the laugh we were expecting.

Thornton-Le-Dale Players : The Reunion

Director Sandra Bell

This comedy, new I believe to the amateur stage, was excellent material for this company and its audience. There were strong characterisations from nerdy Nigel, arranging an ill-fated reunion in a Yorkshire pub, accompanied by his less than enthusiastic wife, Kay. Convincing well-defined portrayals in the other parts included Jenny, the disinterested waitress, Mugsy, the stick-in-the mud DJ, and Lorraine, the feisty secretary and mistress. This company has a real knack of capturing the pace of a comedy so the laughs roll on so naturally. I came away, as I usually do, in the best of spirits thinking what nonsense – and what great entertainment!

Whitby AMTC : The Wizard of Oz

Director Rosalie Newlyn

MD Sue Rowland

Choreographer Barbara Benson-Smith

I am so pleased this show has regained popularity in the past few years and here it received a warm, well-prepared and joyous treatment from a new director from the ranks of the society. Well done, a great success! With excellent support from orchestra and MD (though the film style score does jar a little) and choreographer, the confidence and enthusiasm palpably showed this society at its best. A sweet Dorothy led her personable companions along the Yellow Brick Road, encountering a really scary Wicked Witch, a reassuring Good Witch and an avuncular Wizard. Congratulations to the whole company – it was heart-warming stuff for this winter!

YMCA Productions : Aladdin

Director Kerry Nicholson

One fast developing young man, with a voice to match, made a magnificent Abanazer to deliver the prologue to this colourful and spirited production. With only two token adults (to give the comedy gravitas!) this show depended on the vitality and enthusiasm of the young players. A personable young man played Aladdin, matched with a beautiful Princess Lotus Blossom and a young actor gave a delightfully eccentric portrayal of the Emperor. With strong vocal work from the principals and a virtuosity of dancing from the large chorus in exquisite costumes, the audience was enchanted and showed their appreciation. My previous gripe at these productions was laid to rest – the sound balance was perfect.