

## Review of Graham Breeze's production of "The Sorcerer"

Whilst not the most popular of Gilbert and Sullivan's works *The Sorcerer* is still regularly performed, 142 years after its premiere. Hardly surprising since, though an early work, many of the signs are there of what is to come in the more popular pieces - clever satire, a patter song, a love duet and so on.

In brief, Alexis Pointdextre, an idealistic young man holds the belief that when it comes to matters of the heart, rank should not count and following his marriage to Aline he commits himself to proving this theory by employing a sorcerer who creates a love potion, causing those to imbibe to fall asleep, only to fall in love with the first person they see. Chaos ensues when some rather inappropriate matches are formed - and the spell cast by the sorcerer will only be broken by the sacrifice of Alexis or The Sorcerer himself.

This was a very entertaining evening.

All the principals worked hard at their roles and overall the singing was of a good standard. I was especially impressed by Claire Moore (Constance), whose mooning over the vicar, Dr Daly, was eventually rewarded after a brief and uncomfortable 'spell' with The Notary ('Have Pity on my Lot'), and Catherine Lee (Aline), whose brief but very passionate - and very funny - fling with the aforesaid man of the cloth ('Oh, joyous boon! oh, mad delight') finally convinces Alexis (very ably played by Robert Kendrick) that his noble experiment has not worked.

Graham Mitchell has a fine and subtle sense of comedy, as well as a notable singing voice, enabling him to make the most of his part of Dr Daley, the vicar, and another regular Wolverton G&S cast member, Paula Fraser, drew out the comedy from her role as Lady Sangazure - I especially enjoyed her and Sir Marmaduke (Alan Bennett)'s duet 'Welcome Joy'.

And at the centre of this mayhem - The Sorcerer, John Wellington Wells, played with great comic and dramatic skill by Richard Fraser. The decision to set the play in the Second World War seemed rather random but, if nothing else it gave the opportunity for the sorcerer to be portrayed as a spiv, which, in the hands of Richard Fraser, worked incredibly well.

The chorus performed very well together though I think diction in the chorus numbers especially could be improved.

A fine orchestra was ably led by MD Mike Crofts.

Special thanks are due to John Bailes, my host for the evening and the members of the cast who were kind enough to meet me during the interval.

**ALEX WOOD for N.O.D.A.**