

## The Gondoliers 2001 BWT Review

Over 111 years ago, The Gondoliers was first performed at the Savoy Theatre. It is not just nostalgia that has kept this as a regularly performed opera. Sullivan's music is loved by many people.

This could account for the sell out houses for Witham Amateur Operatic Society's production of The Gondoliers last week. Gilbert would have been pleased with their polished performance. Paul Lazell scenery gained a round of applause as the curtains opened, and the setting for the second act was suitably elegant.

David Cawdell, the musical director, had a fine Orchestra which worked well with soloists he kept the show moving at a sparkling pace. Nicholas Clough, in his first effort at production, handled the large chorus with imagination.

Tom Whelan gave the opera vibrant opening with his solo Jonathan Baron and Tim Clarke, playing Marco and Giuseppe, were good leading men. They're clear voices and happy movements when enjoyable feature of the evening.

Their partners were played by Carolyn wash and Helen Fox who presented contrasting styles Carolyn Walsh had a gentle voice and a performance was poised and polished Helen Fox was more aggressive in both singing and acting

The Duke of Plaza Toro was played by Patrick O'Brian in a lively manner with a humorous delivery in keeping with his character. Having acquired new wealth between acts, his costume and make up in the second act were delightfully foppish

The Duchess was played by Jan wash who has the ability to dominate the stage. She made the most of this interesting part.

Helene Jones is Casilda and Paul Chittleborough, were affective as a young lovers who became King and Queen.

The Grand Inquisitor, Steve Draper was younger than usual, but was suitably pompous. No credit was given in the excellent program to the writer of the additional material which added greatly to the humour, giving it a topical twist.

This production with good music played by an excellent orchestra and sung by effective cast gave the audience a really enjoyable evening.

By James Bright.