

# 1983 The Pirates of Penzance

BWT Review

## Quite simply a very good show

WITHAM Operatic Society has decided to give Gilbert and Sullivan a rest in 1984. So it is a good thing that they put on such a bubbling presentation of The Pirates of Penzance last week and leave us with such happy memories of the heavenly twins. Derek Collins' production was full of enjoyable and stimulating entertainment. The movement throughout was full of bounce and vitality, the comedy was uproarious at times, the costumes were fine and if the hired scenery was rather uninspired perhaps the enthusiastic Savoyards can do something about it when they return.

The singing, as befits a pseudo grand opera, must be exceptionally good and, under the direction of Gareth Dallender-Jones, it was. Experienced Elisabeth Miller made a tuneful, dominating Mabel and Lara Barber, Janet Collins and Angela Lait were attractive and vivacious lesser lights. Rita Page made the downtrodden Ruth a character to watch with interest and General Stanley's daughters, all of whom were beauties, sang well and wove pretty patterns over the stage.

But the production of this large family had 'taken its toll' and precise, accurate and amusing Tim Sheppard cleverly indicated this with his slightly crumbling Major-General. Malcolm Lowe provided a manly, well-sung Frederic and Nicholas Clough's Pirate King was splendidly articulate. We have met Tony Wood's richly comic Police Sergeant before and always with delight.

A little research revealed that the funniest of all the funny coppers was none other than Stewart Adkins, a leading man temporarily 'resting' in the chorus.

The villainous pirate crew, with Ewart Cornfield as their efficient lieutenant, stamped about to our entire satisfaction and in all their long history Witham have seldom done better.

**Gilbert Sutcliffe.**