

Braintree & Witham Times

ME AND MY GIRL

In 2003 Witham Amateur Operatic Society's 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum' was rated as the Best Production in the region in the National Operatic and Dramatic Association Awards

Last week they produced another hit with Me and My Girl, funny slick and packed with good songs. The setting is class conscious 1930's England. Revised by Stephen Fry, the comic element has been strengthened with modern allusions and wordplay. It was a pity that on the opening night many of the jokes were missed by the audience.

Michael Mundell-Poole played the central character, Bill, a Lambeth lad who inherited a title, money, servants and a posse of snobbish relations. Witham is lucky to have found such a talent. His timings are excellent and he always held the stage. Singing, dancing and tumbling, he performed comic routines to good effect.

His was a star performance

He was not alone in showing talent. As his Lambeth girlfriend Sally, Carolyn Harley charmed the audience with her acting, singing and dancing. Her poised sympathetic performance of 'Once you Lose Your Heart' was one of the highlights of the show.

The music, under the direction of David Cawdell was crisp and jaunty. The chorus and dancers were polished and we were treated to some effective tap dancing.

The choreography by Nikki Mundell-Poole was possibly the best seen for many years. She was also the Director showing expert touches to make many scenes a visual delight.

The scene changes were imaginatively blended so the flow of the action was not disrupted. In contrast to Bill and Sally were the polished members of society. Foremost among these was gold-digging Sue Rogers who made a fine vamp. She attempted to seduce Bill, putting her all into 'You Would if you Could'

As her dumped fiancé, Tim Clarke made the most of his role as an upper class twit. Determined to reform Bill's London accent and manners, Liz Watson played his critical aunt, the duchess, with imperious poise. As her gentleman friend, Stewart Adkins allowed his pomposity to dissolve when he engaged Bill in a drinking spree. They succeeded in keeping the audience thoroughly entertained.

Tom Whelan was well cast as the crusty family solicitor and Richard Herring as the Butler was a fine link between upstairs and down.

None of the cast put a foot wrong. The final scene included a selection of rousing choruses, ending with the irrepressible vitality of the Lambeth Walk.

James Bright