

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD

BWT Review

SPARKLING VISIT TO THE UNDERWORLD

A SPARKLING Champagne production of Orpheus In The Underworld was presented by Witham Amateur Operatic Society at the Public Hall last week.

With 15 solo parts, it says a lot for the strength and depth of the society that there were no weaknesses and the chorus only drew lightly on the workshop.

Valerie Ditchman was a delightful sounding Eurydice. Paul Chittleborough's Orpheus gave her good reason to fall for the devilish charms of Pluto, Howard Brooks, despite the dreadful puns that he was given to deliver. Jan Wash as Orpheus's mum brought an operatic quality and clarity of delivery. As usual, she was a real presence on stage.

Marea Irving as Cupid was a delight, a bubbly young Barbara Windsor. Sandra Moorehouse was a majestic Juno and Sue Siddalls a confident punk Diana. The music in operetta is often incidental but here John James, the musical director, ensured that it was an integral part of the production.

Eddie McKay, the producer, kept the show flowing in a light and polished manner, while Lavinia Farmer, the choreographer, maintained her usual high standard.

The scenery, especially in Act III, was visually luxurious. Nicholas Clough was a stage dominant Jupiter and his singing was matched by Graham Jones as Styx. Michael Dun- ion, fresh from his triumphs at Wickham Bishops, was Mercury, racing through the auditorium and on to stage on his roller blades. It was a sophisticated pantomime with a high standard of singing and acting, responding to the quality of Offenbach's music and Phil Park's witty translation enjoyed by a large audience.

James Bright