

## **TRIAL BY JURY AND HMS PINAFORE, BOURNEMOUTH GaSP, LIGHTHOUSE, POOLE**

Bournemouth G&S Society has been re-branded as Bournemouth GaSP (Gilbert and Sullivan Productions) and Trial by Jury and HMS Pinafore were chosen to launch the new title. The standard of professionalism for which the group is known remains and the first night audience gave the double-bill a rousing ovation.

Certainly the minimalist set and monochrome costumes for Trial presented a new look and the chorus made an impact with faces painted white. The Learned Judge (Mike Griffiths) seemed rather uneasy in the opening song but the arrival of the Other Woman (Martha Jenkins was a truly scarlet woman) brought the scene to life. David Robinson was suitably supercilious as the caddish defendant and The Usher – a forceful James Rosser – kept the public gallery and jury under control. Counsel for the Plaintiff (Fiona Aucott) pleaded her client's case eloquently and what a role for Eleanor Riley as the wronged Angelina. No shrinking violet but a fiery female clad in red and black (with hair to match), she was in strong voice and prepared to fight for her man.

A traditional set for HMS Pinafore and how well the multi-levelled scenery worked with the well-drilled sailors swabbing the decks in the opening chorus. Dick Deadeye (the versatile James Rosser) showed an evil streak as well as being light on his feet before the men greeted Little Buttercup. Another ideal part for Amanda King who revelled in the saucy description of plump and pleasing person, catching the eye of Captain Corcoran. Showing a great flair for comedy, Bruce Vyner made the role his own while daughter Josephine proved a lively and vivacious part for Amy McIntosh. Clad in 1920s flapper frock and boa she sang beautifully and made the perfect foil for humble sailor Ralph Rackstraw. In his debut with Bournemouth GaSP Richard Moore gained confidence as the action progressed and duetted splendidly with Josephine in Refrain, Audacious Tar. The customary polished performance by Robin Lavies as Sir Joseph Porter (comic moments with Captain Corcoran were magical) but it was Tanya Lerche-Lerchenborg as Hebe who threatened to steal the show. She sang and sparkled brilliantly, leading the attractively costumed ladies (plus the sailors) in a lively Charleston – and she tap-danced to perfection.

Good work by Musical Director Helen Brind who coaxed singers and orchestra to make the most of Sullivan's sublime music and plaudits to Director and Choreographer Claire Camble-Hutchins. She used her cast – and Gilbert's witty words – imaginatively to produce a stylish, fast-paced and entertaining double-bill. Look out for Bournemouth GaSP next year, surprises are promised.

Julie Adams