

**PUTTERIDGE BURY G&S SOCIETY "IOLANTHE" 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019**  
**Director: Alison Gibbs MD: Jane Stott**  
**Queen Mother Theatre, Hitchin**

I think of all the G&S shows, this is the most charming, and this production lived up to expectations.

The backdrop was very suitable, with the rostra creating an additional dimension to the staging.

Lighting enhanced the action and feel of the piece, with sound excellent. Always good to see a cast without personal mics, and a band playing without enhancement. They blended well, and sound balance was good.

The costumes were beautiful, very colourful, I don't think I've seen such bright fairies before, really lovely, and the Peers robes were also colourful, pristine and very regal. I loved the Lord Chancellor's wig, his black and gold robe was stunning. The Fairy Queen looked regal, but again so colourful, the best costume I have seen for this part.

Musically very good, the MD had achieved some lovely sounds from the cast, good harmonies, although I would have liked a little more volume from the tenor section in Loudly Let the Trumpet Bray. Otherwise I enjoyed the music tremendously, I think Iolanthe has some very lovely numbers.

Stephen Hoath was a very lively Strephon, he sang, danced and acted the part well, and I liked his relationship with Phyllis. Very well done.

Phyllis was played by Claire Moore who sang charmingly and interacted well with the cast, I loved her facial expressions, even when she wasn't the centre of attention.

I loved the incarnation of Katharine Crew's Fleta as a Northern pointe dancing fairy! – lots of fun, good characterisation and interaction.

Emma Crew as Leila looked lovely and sang well, with again good interaction with the cast.

Celia was played with plenty of zest by Bryony Reynolds, perhaps a little too full-on at times, but a good contrast to the other fairies, and great facial expressions.

The Fairy Queen was played with great aplomb by Melanie Roberts, so regal, but unbending when confronted by Private Willis, who brought a twinkle to her eye. More expressive than some Fairy Queen's I've seen, which I enjoyed. Lovely voice too.

Jessica Hallett's Iolanthe was the calm in the midst of the exuberant Fairies, a good dimension to the production, and beautifully sung. I liked her scene with the Lord Chancellor, very moving.

Amanda Clarke was a bright Hortensia, who added much to the ensemble.

Richard Fraser gave a sterling performance as the Lord Chancellor, both stern, but also giving a lightness to the role, which I really enjoyed.

Joe Emler as Lord Tolloller always gives a high-spirited performance, showing a fine singing voice, and this was no exception. Joe makes me smile and he engages the audience. Well done.

Lord Mountararat was beautifully played by David Crew, who always gives a serious but well-crafted and exceptionally well sung performance. David always looked very elegant and stately.

Peter Davis played Private Willis well, he perhaps needed to be a little sharper in his marching etc, but I liked his number it was well-performed.

All in all a very good production, good performances, lots of different takes on the characters, I thoroughly enjoyed the evening.