

Putteridge Bury Gilbert & Sullivan Society “SALAD DAYS”
Director: Robin Hinton MD: Tim Sell (Performance MD Sue Trost)
Assistant Director & Choreographer: Graham Breeze

Salad Days has one of the most vacuous storylines for a musical – however, that said it is a cheerful, amusing vehicle for some nice tunes.

PBGS put loads of energy and fun into the show and speaking for myself, I came out feeling happy and upbeat, there were some obvious times when pace could have been picked up, for example blackouts, but on the whole the cast delivered their lines well, and the music was taken at a cracking pace, which uplifted everyone.

I liked the backcloth for the park – and Minnie, the piano, was lovely, so nice to have a ‘real’ one. The train windows across the back of the station scene were good. Lighting on the whole was good, and the effects round the Flying Saucer were great fun.

Generally the props were good, and there was a nice selection of colourful costumes. The flouncy petticoats under full skirts worked really well, and added a bit of glamour. There were some really nice wigs and hairdos, which all helped to create a good overall picture.

Paula Fraser played the part of Jane – who decides along with her friend Timothy, played by Tim Sell, that it might be a good idea to get married! Both sang their parts well, but I thought Paula gave us a more down to earth and believable character.

Jane has some nice songs, which Paula put over well, and I particularly enjoyed Oh Look At Me, which incorporated a lively dance number from Jane and Timothy, which they accomplished extremely well.

I thought there were some opportunities for highlighting a funny line that were missed, but we did in the main get plenty of humour from all the cast. The beauty salon scene could have had a little more emphasis.

I liked Sue Kennedy’s portrayal of Rowena and her rather flirty relationship with PC Boot (Barny Shergold) – they reacted well off each other. Barny also showed loads of energy in his meeting with the Inspector, played by Andrew Hodges, which was funny scene.

I understand Peter Sayers as Ambrose was drafted in only two weeks ago – so well done to him – once again Sue Kennedy showed her comic flair in this scene.

Louise Thonger as Fiona acted and sang the part with great vivacity – she looked good too – I was impressed with the way she handled the part and got a lot of meaning into the very innocent and rather vague character.

Sue Wookey as Tim’s mother and Margaret Snape as Lady Raeburn, Jane’s mother, both acted their parts really well, and I love their song “We Don’t Understand Our Children” it is a very telling song, which they did justice to.

Shayn Dickens played a very bouncy Nigel – I liked what he did with the part. Shayn showed good all round performance skills.

There were a number of other characters, I particularly liked Nicole Santelmann as the Nightclub Singer – her Cleopatra song was full of vigour and nuances, making me laugh, as did Alison Gibbs as Asphynxia – again her song was very funny.

Clive Wheeler gave us a full-on club owner, and also played Uncle Zed, who flew his space craft in the hunt for Minnie – both good characterisations.

I thought Dianna Moylan as Troppo did a very good job – she has an extremely expressive face which lent itself well to the non-speaking part, and Aidan Dwyer created a good Tramp.

Musically the piece was sound. The quartet created some nice sounds that made the chorus numbers pleasing on the ear, and enhanced the solo numbers and duets.

So, in the main a nice fun show, that the cast obviously enjoyed, which always communicates itself to an audience, and enhances their enjoyment – good to see a full house too.