

**The Farndale Avenue Housing
Estate Townswomen's Guild
Operatic Society's Production of 'The Mikado'**

It takes great skill for a company of amateur performers to pull off a production in which distraction and incompetence are the prime themes. The make-believe cast included an amnesiac Mikado, a bumbling clergyman playing a female rôle, a chorus member who was heavily pregnant and another who needed a Zimmer frame to remain upright. I have never seen one of these productions before, but forewarned, I tried to determine which of the cock-ups were scripted and which were genuine mistakes made by the cast. I must say that I failed and have to admit that the whole thing was scripted from end to end and as far as I can tell performed faultlessly. The underlying quality, chaos apart was high with the soloists, thanks to some help from the very subtle radio microphones coming over with good diction and musicality. The ladies chorus deserve an accolade. The audience laughed their socks off at the nonchalant interruptions of the performance by routine announcements about obstructive cars, etc and yet the show lurched on! There must have been temptation at times for the players to ad lib for more laughs and prolong the performance, but this clearly did not happen. The whole thing progressed at a whirlwind's pace and finished with a crescendo whilst we were still sitting on the edge of our seats. I cannot single out any principal or group for particular praise; the whole cast, band and crew deserve a bunch of *Flowers that bloom in the spring*.

Tony Woodliffe

This evening did not disappoint. From the moment it opened with Jackie Jenkins sounding remarkably like Joyce Grenfell to the finale.

It was obvious that all those involved in the production thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The audience had permanent grins on their faces; always a good sign.

The chorus worked well with good voices and looked good: the "pregnant lady (Alice Burrell) in the chorus played her part well as did Ros Williams, playing the part of Hermoine the elderly lady with her Zimmer frame. Nanki -Poo (Sarah Thorn) and Yum Yum (Grainne Cotter) worked well together with their good voices as did Adam Hardy as somewhat bumbling clergyman. The scene with the hats was a little slow and I found my mind wandering but perhaps this was because it was the first night.

Lynn Lunn playing The Mikado was a joy to watch; I had tears running down my face. Her Scottish accent improved as she went on; I thought it sounded more Irish to begin with.

It really takes an art (director Alison Organ) to produce order out of the chaotic shambles of the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Operatic Society Production of the Mikado.

An excellent evening's entertainment. Jo Woodliffe