

A TOUCH OF MAGIC AND MYSTERY

The magic and mystery of the East flooded the stage at Lower Wulfric School, Burton, and Burton Operatic Society scored a resounding success this week with its presentation of Kismet.

A resounding success? Yes, absolutely, for the Society, this time produced by Frank Doran, handled a far from simple musical with a considerable amount of panache.

On the opening night there were mistakes, but all minor . . . the odd squeak from the orchestra, a bit of bother with scenery and the odd nervous quaver, in a voice.

But overall the show was a marvellously colourful, tuneful and exciting spectacle, fully deserving the near ovation at the final curtain that first night.

As well as the usual capable performance of the company as a whole there were some outstanding individual performances.

Not the least of these came from an obviously talented Steve Dunning as Hajj, the poet. His handling of the humorous dialogue was fine, and he turned on an equally smooth musical performance, notably in Gesticulate and the early song Fate.

Almost as fine a performance came from Christine George as the man chasing Lalume.

But the singing performance that went down the biggest with the audience, at least on the first night, was a truly beautiful rendering of And this is my Beloved, from Anne Oakley as Marsinah, daughter of Hajj.

Adrian Bader (the Caliph) was in fine voice singing some fine songs, and Roy Smith as the Chief Policeman gave a good performance.

On the acting front another well filled part was that of the Wazir, though perhaps Gordon Fry could have injected a little more menace into the part.

The Operatic Society seem to go from strength to strength, certainly in recent years. The quality of their choice of presentation may have helped, after all Kismet is bright, humorous and colourful.

But judged by this performance their next production HMS Pinafore in February, must be well worth a visit.

Mark Wheelton



Lalume (Christine George) and Hajj (Steve Dunning) certainly seem to be happy with one another in this scene from Kismet.

Baghdad comes

COME to Baghdad, Come to Baghdad, says the song — and it's well worth the trip.

Baghdad is this week at Wulfric Lower School, Burton, where tuneful music, fine voices, Mesopotamian muezzins, sensuous slavegirls and other lovely ladies in diaphanous dress spell success for Burton Operatic Society's presentation of Kismet.

The society chose Kismet because it presented a difficult challenge and they rose to it.

Certainly Steve Dunning as Hajj beggar poet, conman and thief of Baghdad was equal to the challenge of some difficult songs.

Not for Hajj those popular stand alone hit numbers like Stranger in Paradise and This Is My Beloved He has to grapple with such lesser known rhymes as Have I and the Olive Tree — songs full of wit and wisdom and essential to the tale. But surely hard to master

to Burton

Anne Oakley as his daughter, who falls in love with a handsome young caliph she thought was a gardener, and Adrian Bader as the caliph himself, sang the romantic numbers beautifully.

There was maybe a hint of screen bitch Angela Lansbury in Christine George's characterisation of the amorous scheming, faithless Lalume the Wazir's wife.

Christine's voice carries over the footlights with a power to match its charm and her acting is faultless.

But it was the dancing that really brought Baghdad to Burton Prudence Wollaston's expressive choreography was superbly executed by among others, Debbie Roseway as the deliciously wiggling hip-humping Princess of Damascus, Julie Cork,

The ARTS

mystically oriental as the Princess of Bangalore Nicola Atkinson Alison Chesters and Pam Clark as the excitingly rhythmic, scimitar wielding Princesses of Ababa.

Produced by Frank Doran, the show has Myra Mesaritis and Bertram Herbert as musical directors and a marvellous 17-piece orchestra doing justice to the tunes of Robert Wright and George Forrest based on themes of Alexander Borodin.

D.S.

More reviews
in pages 10, 11



A warlike trio — not at all the sort of image most princesses foster. But these three eastern jewels, played by (left to right): Pam Clark, Nicola Atkinson and Alison Chesters, are just three of the characters in Burton Operatic Society's production of *Kismet*. The show, a virtual sell-out, opened last night at Lower Wulfric School, Horninglow. A review of the performance will appear in Saturday's Mail.