

THE MAGIC OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

Brilliant start to "Iolanthe" run at Horninglow

THE MAGIC OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN WOVE ITS SPELL AROUND THE AUDIENCE AT HORNINGLOW SECONDARY SCHOOL LAST NIGHT WHEN BURTON AND DISTRICT OPERATIC SOCIETY PRESENTED "IOLANTHE" ON THE OPENING NIGHT OF A RUN WHICH WILL END ON SATURDAY.

This delightful story has everything, comedy, drama and a fairy tale love story. As in most amateur productions it's all a matter of team work and both principals and chorus managed to achieve this with a panache making them worthy of being called professional.

Celia, Lelia and Fleta were the three sisters of Iolanthe and Elizabeth Booth as Celia, with her short blonde hair and trim figure was exactly how I imagine a fairy to look.

Pamela Clarke gave an excellent performance as Lelia and her acting was very convincing, while Louise Evanson with a more passive role as Fleta backed up the other two enabling all three to shine.

Villain of the piece was the Lord Chancellor played by Alan

Thompson who has the gift of comedy acting as well as being able to sing into the bargain. The Chancellor was therefore hard to despise and in the end quite lovable.

EXCELLENT VOICE

The outstanding gem in the chest of diamonds however, must surely be the principal girl Phyllis the shepherdess who falls in love with the son of the fairy Iolanthe. Christine George was Phyllis and her marvellous voice and comedy acting, faintly reminiscent of Pauline Collins, the comedy actress, gave a new life to the role.

The scene in which Iolanthe tells the Chancellor that she is his "dead" wife thus breaking her vow to the Fairy Queen is the most dramatic and best of the show.

Credit must go to Margaret Gordon whose beautiful voice added that extra magic to a fine performance as Iolanthe.

The scenery was excellent and I was assured that there were 600 rectangles in the back-cloth of the House of Lords.

Local teacher Dick Walters, who dreamt about those rectangles, Graham Lockwood, James Grant and Kitty Buckley were all responsible for the scenery.

This is the first musical show that Allen Scott Mitchell and Sadie Mitchell have produced, one hopes that it will not be their last.

J.S.