

## **COLCHESTER OPERATIC SOCIETY**

**My Fair Lady, book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Frederick Loewe**

**Director Claire Carr**

**Assistant Director Holly Bird**

**Choreographer Claire Carr**

**Musical Director Geoff Osborne**

**Stage Manager Terry Lyon**

**Performed at The Mercury Theatre, Colchester on Thursday 1st February 2024, at 7.30pm**

**I was met on arrival by Chairman Katie Cutmore and Assistant Director Holly Bird. This was a stunning and brilliant performance by this talented society with a high degree of energy and enthusiasm running throughout. All the cast and production team contributed to a highly enjoyable evening which the near capacity audience appreciated as evidenced by the standing ovation at the end.**

**Hannah Ambrose as Eliza Doolittle was perfect in this role. The audience followed her linguistics journey from her excellent Cockney accent, meticulously maintained, to the perfection of her cultured voice and there was plenty of comedy in her facial expressions and contortions along the way ! She had a beautiful and well toned singing voice very apparent in her delivery of Wouldn't It Be Lovely and I could Have Danced All Night.**

**Wayne Setford was a very convincing Henry Higgins, professor of linguistics. Upright and arrogant, he was constantly on the move planning Eliza's transformation to a lady. He had a lovely voice and I particularly enjoyed him singing I'm An Ordinary Man and I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face.**

**Graham Bowden was the somewhat staid and risk adverse Colonel Pickering with a great refined voice and was well cast in this role. He was first to congratulate Higgins in You Did It.**

**I really enjoyed the character of Alfred P Doolittle, as played by Stuart Williams with a magnificent Cockney accent.. Aided by Jamie and Harry ( Ed Mehan and Eddie Thorpe) he danced with huge energy and gave a tremendous performance of Get Me To The Church On Time.**

**Tom Pleasant played the nonchalant and romantic character, Freddy Eynsford-Hill who sang a wistful On The Street Where You Live. A beautiful rendition by Tom.**

**Barbara Ryan as the long suffering housekeeper to Henry Higgins reprised this role and was suitably deferential to Henry but very supportive and concerned with Eliza. Mrs Higgins, Henry's mother, played by Jackie Grant was also supportive of Eliza, suspecting that she was in love with Henry and that he reciprocated**

**Many members of the company ensemble had small roles as well and tackled these enthusiastically. The company members were well rehearsed in both their vocals and the many dance routines. The group of featured dancers displayed some very intricate moves and showed great professionalism in their performance.**

**Congratulations to choreographer Claire Carr for some innovative and imaginative routines here.**

**There were many very attractive sets used with a high level of speed and precision needed in the changes and all changes were completed very slickly whilst other**

activity on stage diverted attention away from the changes underway. There was close attention to detail in the use of props. Well done to Production Manager Katie Cutmore and Stage Manager Terry Lyon and all the production team.

The orchestra, under the skilful direction of Musical Director Geoff Osborne, gave tremendous support to the actors whilst performing so many well loved numbers with just the appropriate sound levels.

I must congratulate the costumes team for some fabulous costumes and the black and white outfits for the Ascot Gavotte were spectacular.

Many congratulations to Director Claire Carr for her innovation in bringing this familiar and much loved story to the stage and for her enthusiasm and creative talent.

**Hazel Hole MBE  
Regional Representative  
NODA East  
District 11**

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