

THE ARTS

A bored stranger in paradise

I MUST admit to being rather bored during the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society's production at the Civic Theatre this week. They are presenting "Kismet" — and it seems to go on for hours and hours.

I must also confess to being a purist and the liberties that are taken with Borodin's music seem to me offensive. It all sounds a bit like Eastern Promise out of Cecil B. DeMille and Paul Raymond. There is

plenty of movement and the large cast works hard and with a will but to little effect as far I was concerned.

The final scene collapsed completely on the first night but until then there had been isolated enjoyable moments and performances.

Brenda Wilkinson makes a lovely Marsinah — but I do wish she'd comb her hair occasionally. Stan Parsons is quite outstanding as the Wazir,

the chief of police, all cunning and guile.

I'm also afraid that Lalume's first appearance made me think irresistibly of Danny La Rue and even reading Betty Hughes in the programme did nothing to rid me of the impression.

Patrick Tucker makes a forthright and pleasant Caliph.

Peter Smith has played some splendid character roles in the past but seems not to have got the measure of the demanding leading role of Hajj, the poet. He has difficulty in filling the auditorium with his singing.

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