

## 8 *EsseXtra*

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# Exacting musical proving to be a box office success

### **Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, Chess the Musical, Civic Theatre**

WRITTEN in the 80s by two members of ABBA and Tim Rice, Chess is very much a product of its theatrical times.

CAODS, under the direction of Ray Jeffery, have bitten on the bullet, bringing off a dramatic production, spectacular and colourful to look at, despite awkward music and jerky rhythms.

When the music lets them sing out, in One Night in Bangkok or Soviet Machine, principals and chorus are very effective and full of energy.

Kim Webster's Florence is elegant, composed, with a strong stage presence and a voice very reminiscent of Elaine Paige.

Equally at ease is Philip Crapnell's Molokov, his deep singing voice mastering the tricky music well.

Patrick Tucker's Russian chess player shows the romantic soul beneath the champion's exterior with some beautifully lyrical singing.

Barry Hester as his spoilt American opponent tries too hard, forcing his singing voice.

A male quartet of Embassy officials guying the English way

of doing things is great fun.

Strong support comes from Deanna Tucker as the dignified Russian wife, John Escott as de Courcey and Kevin Richards as the Arbiter.

Musical director Jane Wernham has the formidable task of overseeing 498 pages of difficult, demanding music.

The expensive looking costumes and constant lighting changes make this a very visual show and the stage crew are kept constantly busy.

A good attempt at an exacting musical reflected in the fact that Friday and Saturday are sold out.

**Mary Redman**