

## "DEAR MISS PHOEBE"

# Another winner for the Operatic Society

THE curtain came down to enthusiastic applause after the first night on Monday of "Dear Miss Phœbe" at the Regent Theatre. The Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society can be satisfied that they have given another first-class production.

It was an enjoyable show that ran easily. It was a less ambitious production than usual, and well within the talents of the cast. An encouraging first-night audience, well up on last year's, helped to dispel the few first-night nerves apparent during the earlier stages of the musical.

The chorus was well turned out, and not worked too hard. The first sopranos were a band of strong voices which rather dominated the other weaker sections in the several songs after the ballroom scene. The end of the scene produced an original touch with lamps, held by the chorus, as the only lighting.

HELEN ELDRIDGE was outstanding. Her acting as Miss Susan Throssel had a natural charm that endeared her to her audience. She acted naturally and sincerely, and her voice had great variety and tone.

VERA EVANS, better known perhaps as Vera Stock, was once again in the lead as Miss Phoebe. She gave an expressive performance, but it was not always easy to hear her, especially when singing.

She has a pleasant voice, and her rendering of "I Leave My Heart in an English Garden," with Valentine, was delightful.

WILFRED COSHAM looked very well as Valentine Brown, and his make-up in the second act was excellent. His strong voice carried him through the part, and his singing was of a high standard.

DIANE LAWSON was well suited to her part of Patty the maid, and some of her scenes with JIM WELHAM, as the recruiting sergeant, were excellent. Jim Welham acted with confidence, and his singing of "Cowslip Wine" with Phoebe was a great success.

There was some good character work also from STAN PARSONS, as the blustering dandy Ensign Blades, and he was good in the short, but amusing, "drunk"

scene with Lieutenant Spicer, ably played by ROBIN SAMPSON.

Among the smaller parts, Pat Harnett gave a good interpretation of Miss Charlotte Parratt and Grace Hawes. Winifred Follett and Lillian George were admirable as the three maiden ladies, Miss Fanny Willoughby, Miss Henrietta Turnbull, and Miss Mary Willoughby. The beadle was played by Tony Richardson.

In his speech after the show, the Society's President, Mr. David Smith, commented on the high standard of the performance, and said: "It is only through experience with these societies that talent can be developed."

The sets and costumes were, as always, extremely attractive, and make-up was good. The whole production had more polish, and PHYL PAYNE, the producer, is to be congratulated on a fine show.

The orchestra, leader G. V. Giddy, did a fine job, under the experienced direction of DR. A. E. STEPHENS.

Others taking part were:—

DANCERS and CHILDREN OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD: Trixie Brewer, June Gilbey, Iris Harvey, Ann Jackman, Betty Louise Jackman, Pat Matthews, Irene Scott, Betty Wager.

CHORUS appearing as OFFICERS, LADIES, PEOPLE OF QUALITY STREET, TRADESMEN, etc: Margaret Anelli, Cherry Beckwith, Shirley Clark, June Davies, Elizabeth Dutton, Christine Eves, Jane Horrey, Doreen Hurrell, Sheila de Laspée, Jean Linn, Muriel Passmore, Ruth Robinson, Peggy Welham, Fred. Anelli, Derek Ann, Sid. Collicott, Ken. Collins, John Daldry, Fred. Gisby, John Howitt, John Marden, John Morella, Peter Smith.

P.H.G.

A successful appeal for the removal of the disqualification of his driving licence was made by Herbert Miller, of Barnet Park Road, Runwell, at Billericay Court on Tuesday.