

"THE MIKADO"

CHELMSFORD OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY BACK TO FORM

THE CAST.

The Mikado of Japan Jack Myall
Nanki-Poo E. T. Parfitt
Ko-Ko Harold J. Hinde
Pooh-Bah Cecil L. Bocking
Pish-Tush Maurice Phillips
Yum-Yum Rose Rowbotham
Pitti-Sing Lilian Hamilton
Peep-Bo Muriel Turner
Katisha Peggy Green
Go-To A. W. Ward

The Chorus: Ladies: E. Brazier, D. Bocking, V. J. Cannon, O. Catt, D. Davis, H. Fewell, J. H. Hutton, E. M. Hey, G. Irwin, K. Johnson, E. G. Lummis, N. Osborne, E. M. Phillips, N. K. Pullen, M. Robson, H. Towers.
—Gentlemen: A. T. Battagel, G. B. Boniface, W. R. Catt, A. Carrington, F. F. Christy, D. A. Craddock, L. Coe, J. F. Hatch, R. P. Jaquet, H. K. Mitchell, J. Ling, L. Osborne, R. Towers, G. N. Wilson, K. G. Woodhouse, C. Sticklen. Musical director, Mr. F. H. Spivey; producer, Mr. H. Ashley Cooper; hon. chorus master, Mr. Lawrence Hey.

In their production of Gilbert and Sullivan's opera "The Mikado," at the Empire Theatre, Chelmsford, this week, the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society achieve their greatest success of recent years.

The Society have established a tradition, and one looks to them for a more finished performances than from many.

The Society was founded in 1921, and this was their eleventh production. Their earlier shows were excellent. Then came a dull time. Last year "The Pirates of Penzance" began the upward grade, and now "The Mikado" sees them at the top of their form. Altogether the Society has contributed £580 to charity. Ald. J. O. Thompson is president.

"The Mikado" was the eighth opera of the famous partnership. It was produced in 1885, and ran for 672 performances. Between 1888 and 1908 it was revived four times. Only one of the operas—H.M.S. Pinafore—had a longer run, continuing for another 26 performances. But despite that "The Mikado" is the most popular of all the Gilbert and Sullivan series. It has been played in-

numerable times in England and in America, and is in the regular repertoire of the German theatres. It established an international reputation for Gilbert and Sullivan. In this piece Gilbert shows his genius for versatility—pathos, fun, and frolic follow fast on each other's heels. And Sullivan, entering into the spirit of it all, weaves a lovely pattern of melodies, sometimes gay, sometimes sad, but always wistful. From the first song to the finale the piece is full of sparkle. "The Mikado" will be remembered when many operas and musical plays for which greater artistic claims are made will be forgotten.

THE PLAYERS.

The Chelmsford company do very well indeed. They have found new vitality, are confident, and the show goes with a swing.

Many who have taken principal parts in the past again appear. Cecil L. Bocking, who has performed in all the Society's productions, takes the rôle of the pluralistic Pooh-Bah. The part suits his style, and he is most successful in his comic dignity. Rose Rowbotham (Mrs. J. C. Blooman) as Yum-Yum again takes the feminine lead. The part does not give her so many opportunities as some she has taken, but her voice is as good as ever. She is undoubtedly a great asset to the Society, and a member they could not do without. E. T. Parfitt (Nanki-Poo) is in very good voice, and has one of his best parts. Harold J. Hinde (Ko-Ko) works very hard, and "gets" the laughs. His clowning with Cecil Bocking is at times very good. Lilian Hamilton (Pitti-Sing) and Muriel Turner (Peep-Bo) are very dainty, and bring a natural charm to their parts. Peggy Green, in the difficult and unsympathetic part of Katisha, acquits herself well. Jack Myall, in the title part, has personality, and sings with great clarity.

Maurice Phillips (Pish-Tush) and A. W. Ward (Go-To) support well. All the principals should remember to aim at clear enunciation in singing as well as speaking.

THE NUMBERS.

The best numbers of the first act are undoubtedly Nanki-Poo's "A Wand'ring Minstrel I" and the trio (Yum-Yum, Peep-Bo, and Pitti-Sing), "Three little maids from school are we." The second act contains the best music, and nearly every number is a success. Yum-Yum's "The sun, whose rays are all ablaze," is excellent. The world-famous madrigal, "Brightly dawns our wedding day" (Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, Nanki-Poo, and Pish-Tush), could not have been better. And other pieces of outstanding excellence are "Here's a how de do," "A more humane Mikado," "The flowers that bloom in the spring," "Alone, and yet alive," and "Willow, tit-willow." The last named shows how Gilbert could make a comic song possess daintiness.

The chorus singing is excellent throughout, and the orchestra, under the direction of Mr. F. H. Spivey, is excellent. Mr. Spivey is wise not to allow his orchestra to dominate the company; so many shows are ruined in this way.

The producer, Mr. H. Ashley Cooper, and the hon. chorus master, Mr. Lawrence Hey, have, as usual, done their work well. Major F. W. M. Powley is hon. prompter, and Mr. A. J. Ogston hon. call boy.

The orchestra.—Violins: Mr. P. Green (leader), Miss Maryon Wilson, Mr. A. Jennings, Mr. G. Ryder, Mr. V. F. Waldau.—Viola: Miss J. A. Wallinger.—Violoncello: Mr. B. H. Keall.—Double bass: Mr. W. L. Barelay.—Flute: Mr. W. K. Jenkins.—Clarinet: Mr. V. D. Camillis.—Oboe: Mr. E. M. Gough.—Bassoon: Mr. J. Stanley.—Horn: Mr. V. F. Waller.—Cornet: Mr. E. A. Joyce.—Trombone: Mr. A. E. Dickerson.—Tympani: Mr. W. H. Wareham.—Piano: Mr. L. Hey.

R. E. E.

