



Photo by Robert Dubner, courtesy Techniques

theatre:
'Pirates' storms Kresge

By P.E. Schindler, Jr.
For a fourth performance it would have been good. For an opening night, it was superb. For the first time under new management, the MIT Musical Theatre Guild produced Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance." The combined group, succeeding the Gilbert and Sullivan Society as well as the Tech Show organization, has proven itself well able to carry off a performance in the public domain; hopefully it can do as well with the original Tech Show scheduled for later this year. Technically, the performance was superb; but nothing less is expected from artistic performances at MIT. The sets, for example, while not exactly standard for this particular play, were visually fascinating. They provided the director myriad opportunities for the stylized posturings typical of Gilbert and Sullivan, and Nancy-Ellen Rainier (the director) took full advantage of them. In fact, if any technical criticism can be made, it might be that the set spread the action out a bit too much, occasionally diffusing the audience's attention over too wide an area, striving to catch what should be mere background stage business. The sound re-enforcement, making use of Kresge's all new mixing system was not overdone. It was subtle, and with rare exceptions, kept so skillfully in the background that only a trained ear would have noted its presence; this is as it should be. (Also of note is the Dolby master tape, recorded by WTBS for future broadcast, making use of the Kresge Dolby unit.) Last, but not at all least (on the technical side), there were the lights, without which the play would have been very difficult to see. The lighting was competent, but not inspired. The artistic side is a little

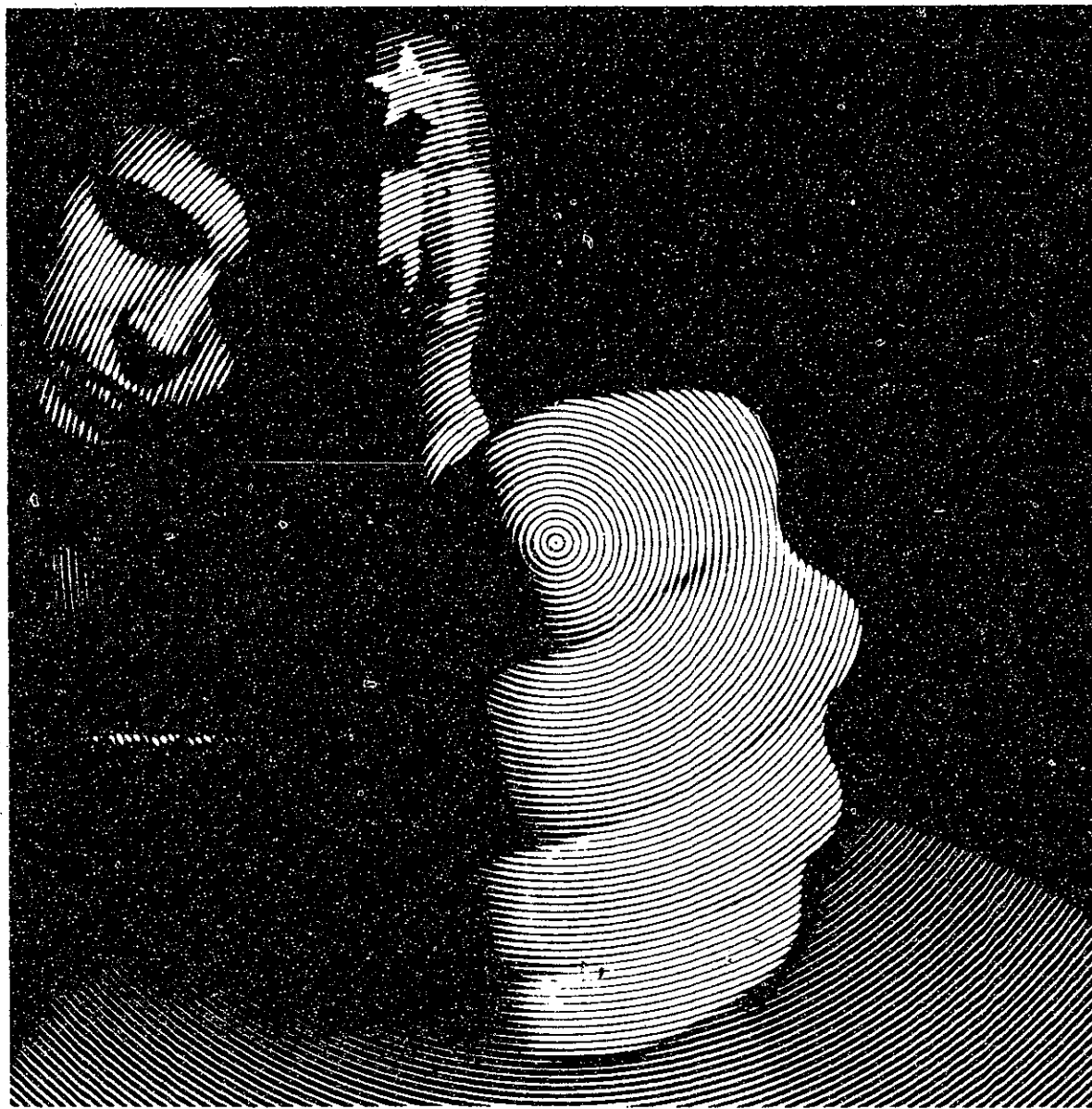
more open to criticism, (again a malaise of most MIT performances) but not much so. Perennial favorite Dan T. McGillicuddy headed the bill, as Major-General Stanley. Rarely overplaying a part which might be spoiled by lesser men, he maintains a proper balance of comic gestures, well-timed grimaces, and a good stage "presence." The overall effect is outstanding. Stephen Nuding, as the pirate king, exhibited an occasional lack of proper pitch at the start, but straightened out to reveal a respectable range, and quite adequate performing skills. The stand-out performance of the evening was that of a petite lass with a long name:

Epp-Karika Jurima-Sönnin. Her uncanny clear voice so overcame the audience that persistent cries of "encore" (especially loud from one clod sitting behind me) caused a reprise of her most spectacular number: the first encore this reviewer has seen in a long time. At least a nod must be given to the other leads, Michael Kaiser, Jeffrey Weisenfreund, David I. Katz and Valerie Norwood. Credit too goes to the orchestra, and to musical director John M. Rainier. The strings were a little weak, but all in all, the orchestra backed up the players in a Gilbert and Sullivan production that all participants can be proud of.

theatre:
Othello at the Loeb

By David Searls
The Harvard Dramatic Club's presentation of *Othello* (playing tomorrow through Saturday at the Loeb) is, typically, competent but not stellar. The lines are delivered with a minimum of fluffs and, in general, with approximately the right intonation; the only exceptions would be a much-too-literal and lyrical Brabantio and similar imperfections among some of the lesser characters. These are balanced, if not compensated for, by a great deal of talent among the more significant personae. Curt Anderson plays the Moor with some elan, though it would probably profit him to pursue further the fluid gesturing and flaccid gait, reminiscent of Olivier's portrayal, in which he only occasionally indulges. He is better at the raging emotions than the tender ones, and a more exotic posturing would undoubtedly help him by rendering him more foreign and thus (ironically) more believable. Ralph Pochoda would appear to be a natural for Iago, with his stocky, solidly build and marvelous acting voice (at times, embarrassingly voluble compared to the others). His performance is creditable, with the exception of one misinterpretation: he seems to play up to Roderigo in much too "straight" a manner. Not only does he ennoble Roderigo too much by

deceiving him earnestly, rather than laughingly, but he negates the essential comic relief of the "gulled gentleman" and subverts an entire subplot of the play. In fact, Iago approaches Roderigo in much the same manner as Othello himself, which serves to put the latter in a more simple-minded and too-trusting aspect. This would not be noticeable but for the fact of Iago's overbearing presence on stage in the first place, which makes it both a strength and a weakness. His only general flaw of portrayal, and it is a slight one, is his handling of the more pathological aspect of Iago's monomania; too often he seems to be straightforward but irrational where he should be cunning and irrational. The only other standout is Darcy Pulliam as Emilia, Iago's wife. Her performance, unlike the others, showed a great deal of range; whether she is taunting Iago, dotting on Desdemona, or being outraged at Othello, her acting can hardly be faulted. The set and lighting is standard fare for modern productions of Shakespeare — all the action takes place in or in front of a huge, archetypal stone structure, dramatically amorphous but distracting when it sways beneath the actors' weight. Also, it is a bit ludicrous when the bed for the final scene trundles out of a hidden door in the rock.



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