Gilbert & Sullivan for the masses

by William Schaffner

The Boston Light Opera, Ltd., is a company designed to offer high quality live theatre for the price of a fast-foo movie. Thus, for $3.50 ($2.50 for a Sunday matinee) you can spend an evening watching R.M.S. Pinafore. On Friday and Saturday evenings, Trial By Jury is offered at a current rate. This is a double bill not to be missed by those who feel that good theatre disappeared when the MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Society was absorbed into the Musical Theatre Guild. Each of the two productions is staged with a flair I have never seen before in a semi-professional theatre. Every actor on stage knows precisely what to do, down to the smallest gesture, and opening night jitters were all but absent. It is a shame that a production with such excellent standards for the players lacks technical finesse. It is obvious that the orchestral problems are due to the lack of working capital that unfortunately affects new theatrical companies. The sets for both productions were poorly designed and sloppily painted. The lighting, although acceptable, shows little imagination. This unfortunate combination detracts strongly from the rest of the show.

The conductor, Beatrice Erdely, the wife of MIT music professor, Richard Horn, maintained a very reasonable tempi for the actors. Given that belied the anxiety which any instrumentalist must feel when faced with the percussionists ("The Devil's Pal-Teufels Lustschloss") of Schubert. The electronic reverberation system, which must be carefully adjusted to aid the otherwise dry sound of the hall without itself becoming obtrusive, added a wavy and metallic sound, especially to the strings in their upper register. The overture itself is rather lightweight, relying heavily on back-cured gimmicks to convey an atmosphere of suspense. It didn't seem to inspire the orchestra as written, but it was serviceable enough. (It was, in fact, as successful an opening piece as one could hope for.) Upon rehearsing this piece on the WGBH broadcast, my attention was drawn to various splayed downbeats. The orchestra had some splayed downbeats. The orchestra was not quite as well adjusted to aid the otherwise dry sound of the hall without itself becoming obtrusive, added a wavy and metallic sound, especially to the strings in their upper register.

The Concerto for Piano and Orchestra was presented after intermission. Known as a tough feat for even the most virtuosic soloist, this piece was written especially for the entire orchestra (and conductor) and soloist was light and exuberant, yet at the same time beautiful and theatrical. However, it is the Judge, executed by Brent Jones, who makes this production superb. He mugs his way through some of the most difficult patter ever written. His light interpretation adds charm to the stage and he is a perfect foil for the rest of the cast. The orchestra is quiet enough to allow the voices to carry. An added treat to the use of the original Sullivan score in Trial By Jury. The Boston Light Opera, Ltd. is a new company--Friday evening was its premiere performance and it promises many fine shows in the future. Technical areas need improvement, but the production is already a high caliber of acting. So everyone, Gilbert & Sullivan fans or not, should see this premiere performance and help celebrate the birth of a talented troupe.

MIT Symphony Orchestra — spring tour preview

by Stephen Owades

The program presented by conductor David Epstein and the MIT Symphony Orchestra on March 15 in Kresge contains the works that the orchestra has prepared for its spring tour (which will be continued this year to a series of day-trips to nearby colleges). Thus it was with particular interest that I attended the Kresge concert, since the opinions of many outsiders (and particularly prospective MIT students) about music at MIT are affected by what they hear of the MIT Symphony on tour. As always, the orchestra has nothing to be ashamed of.

Krege Auditorium and its ballyhoo acoustics presented a serious problem in the opening piece, the Overture to Die Fledermaus ("The Devil's Palace") of Schubert. The electronic reverberation system, which must be carefully adjusted to aid the otherwise dry sound of the hall without itself becoming obtrusive, added a wavy and metallic sound, especially to the strings in their upper register. The overture itself is rather lightweight, relying heavily on back-cured gimmicks to convey an atmosphere of suspense. It didn't seem to inspire the orchestra as written, but it was serviceable enough. (It was, in fact, as successful an opening piece as one could hope for.) Upon rehearsing this piece on the WGBH broadcast, my attention was drawn to various splayed downbeats. The orchestra had some splayed downbeats. The orchestra was not quite as well adjusted to aid the otherwise dry sound of the hall without itself becoming obtrusive, added a wavy and metallic sound, especially to the strings in their upper register.

The program included the Suite from Mozart's "Don Giovanni," the Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 488. Though she played all the notes efficiently enough, the sparkle which the outer movements demand was largely missing—though perhaps the over-refined tone of the Bosendorfer piano was partly to blame. The rapport between

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