Light-hearted, happy entertainment from H. M. S. Pinafore

H. M. S. PINAFORE
Directed by Larry Carpenter.
Starring Rebecca Baxter, Michael Brian, and James Javore.
At the Huntington Theatre.
Continuing through Oct. 21.

By MICHELLE P. PERRY

THE HUNTINGTON THEATRE opens its 1990-91 season with a charming production of the Gilbert & Sullivan musical H. M. S. Pinafore, directed by Larry Carpenter.

Pinafore is the story of people of different social standings who fall in love. The central couple consists of Josephine (Rebecca Baxter), the daughter of the Pinafore's captain (James Javore), and Ralph Rackstraw (Michael Brian), a member of the crew. Josephine must conceal her love for Ralph because she is promised in marriage to Sir Joseph Porter (Denis Holmes), first lord of the admiralty. Their difference in social class is a major obstacle which must be overcome in order for Josephine and Ralph to live happily ever after. Other obstacles are provided by the ill-wishes of Dick Deadeye (Paul Schaeffer), a crew member whose nasty temperament is partly the result of his unfortunate moniker. Pinafore's cast puts forth a true ensemble effort, in that no one performer stands out from the rest. The leads all have strong voices and considerable acting skill, and the supporting ensemble fulfills the responsibility of being a well-balanced singing group, agile enough to execute several dance routines.

The set is the bow end of the upper deck of the Pinafore. It is wrought in elaborate detail in several wood tones and a generous application of gold paint. When combined with frothing-colored lights, it looks almost edible.

Overall, H. M. S. Pinafore is fun to see, but it's only a Gilbert & Sullivan musical. Like many letters from MIT's Gilbert & Sullivan Players; Audience members will not leave the theater with any new insights on life, the universe, or anything, but they will leave happily entertained.

By the way, if you see the show and wonder why a couple of the songs are surprisingly familiar, it could be because snippets of them are sung by characters in "Raiders of the Lost Ark.

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Symphony Hall, October 17 at 8 pm.
MIT price: $6.

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Symphony Hall, October 19 at 8 pm.
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The Tech Performing Arts Series announces

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