Student-written Foundling years for editing

THE FOUNDLING (OR A BASKET OF HAM)
By Mary A. Finn '81 and Robert Weingart
MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players
Conducted by Robert Weingart.
Directed by Mary A. Finn '81.

By Jonathan Richmond

IT'S a good idea to allow writers to direct their own work, as they don't know how to cut — or don't want to do so. The MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players' production of The Foundling with text by Mary Finn '81, music from conductor Robert Weingart is far too dense. It yeats for drastic shortening and overall tightening up. Taking around 30 minutes and coupled with a similar-length original G & S work — Trial by Jury for example — this parody might have worked. But, stretched into a two-and-a-half-hour evening, it becomes tedious.

Quite a few sections of text are clever and likely to appeal especially to G & S cognoscenti. The stylization of the characters is nicely-done and well-laced with inside jokes. But for every minute of mirth, there are two of yawning.

The music doesn't make things better. Robert Weingart is no Arthur Sullivan, and you won't be0ing any of his tunes when you leave — they are not memorable. His direction of the orchestra is also limp. True, he is hampered by an appallingly bad string section whose endless scratching and scraping hardly ever becomes musical. But Weingart could have made the sound much more acceptable by pointing the rhythms more sharply; his music making lacked any connection to the buoyancy of Gilbert & Sullivan.

This said, there were notes of distinction from the woodwinds at several points in the evening. They certainly stood apart from the crowd.

The best performance of the lot comes from Sarah Rose Edelman as Prudence, the domineering nurse to doting fusileers. Her voice is sharp and timing is great. Her Prudence is a classic G & S creation with just the right amount of extra exaggeration to make it into a very funny parody.

Deborah Kreuze '91 also adds to the credit of this production with pretty singing and stylish acting. She contributes the evening's only poignant in "Speak No More of Fierce Desire," a nicely-schmaltzy number where the music does manage to rise above the ordinary.

Thomas Andrews as Abigail — who be husband of Kreuze's Chloe — rarely ranges beyond the adagio. While Jeffrey D. Manning did extract the occasional giggle from the role of Sir Humphrey Oliphant, his inability to render the words he was singing made it impossible to determine whether the pain he sang was humorous.

The chorus of noblewomen and fusileers is unbalanced in quality, but luckily perked up after the intermission to help put in place an entertaining finale. Things did speed up for a nicely written and executed ensemble scene, and the production did happily end with more animation than it began. Fifty the whole show doesn't dance with this sort of zest, though. Time to get out the editorial knives.

THE ARTS

MTG's voices and staging shine in Baby

BABY
Musical Theater Guild
Directed by David Wright.
La Salle de Puerto Rico.
Feb. 3, 4, and 5.

By Robert Marcato

While watching this show, the MIT Musical Theater Guild's 1AP pro-duction of Baby, I tried to remind myself of certain realities. I knew that I shouldn't expect anything approaching a professional produc- tion, given that the show was put together in only four weeks and that MTG's pool of per-forming arts talent, though strong, is not con-sidered on par with that of Northwestern. Even so, it is easy to call "Baby" a success.

This upbeat and endearing show depicts the lives of three couples. Danny and Lizzie are an unmarried pair of college students who unexpectedly find that they are future parents. Nick and Pam, a track coach and an ex-territory, are trying to have a child but not hav-ing much luck. Alan and Aynsle are a middle-aged couple who, with all three of their children in college, are forced to face some tough questions about their marriage when they are surprised by the prospect of an incoming baby.

Don't let me make you think its a seedy and serious show. Some weighty issues lie at the heart of the story, but "Baby" is first and foremost a cleverly handled comedy. And the music is some of the best you'll hear, in a lively, comic score that is hard not to like.

"DANIEL DAY-LEWIS IS BRILLIANT. A performance of such depth and range would make any actor the envy of even the best in this year's most skillfully directed film," writes Roger Ebert in his review of My Left Foot.

"A TRUE STORY FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MY LEFT FOOT!
DAVY LEWIS

"A BRILLIANT FILM. RIVETING.

"A GRIPPING TALE... AN IMPASSIONED MOVIE.
Daniel Day-Lewis and gansta film Continum is a rich creation," declares Variety.

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