

NOT BEST CHOICE BUT WELL ACTED

IF I can't rate Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Flower Drum Song" as one of the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society's best choices, this does not lessen my great admiration for the splendid way in which this rather dull musical was put over.

The opening performance on Monday night at the Regent Theatre moved with a bite and polish that was both commendable and rare, save for one sticky patch at the end of the first act.

Producer Phil Payne has extracted just about all there is to be got from this musical, and it was her work, aided by an evenly matched cast, that makes the show as enjoyable as it is.

This may seem a rash statement in view of the deservedly high reputation that the author and composer of "Flower Drum Song" enjoy in the world of musical comedy but the fact remains that there are no memorable numbers in the show nor many really funny lines either.

In the first act I would go so far as to say that some of the music is pretty threadbare and the two best songs "The Other Generation" and "Sunday" occur after the interval.

EAST AND WEST

The plot revolves round the different traditions of the East and the West where they meet rather uneasily in the Chinatown quarter of San Francisco. It was a joy however to watch so many performances that made their impact just as much in the circle as in the stalls.

Derek Fisher (Sammy Fong) is as exuberant as the part demands while, if Freddie Costello (Wang Chi Yang) has less opportunities to sing than in other productions, he turns in a good piece of character acting.

Peter Smith (Wang Tu) acts and sings with an authority I have not seen from him before, while Stan Parsons (Frankie Wing) and John Arnold (Dr. Li) provide solid support.

In the leading female roles

Julie Appleton (Mei Li) and Pat Curran (Linda Low) make an effective contrast although the former is just a little inaudible at times.

Pam White (Madame Liang) puts over the "Chop Suey" number with a zip and attack while Mary Bullard (Helen Chang) not only sings eloquently but also strikes exactly the right emotional chord for the part.

EFFECTIVE

Ta's dream ballet sequence is most effectively performed and the musical director Mr. J. Armitage Fuggle, maintained an admirable balance between the



Pictured at the Sunday rehearsal of the Chelmsford Operatic and Dramatic Society's current production of "Flower Drum Song" are: Sandra Mills, Mary Ballard, Julie Appleton and Derek Fisher.

musical comedy.

There are further performances (tonight) at 7.15 p.m. and to-morrow (Saturday) at 4.30 p.m. and 7.45 p.m.

ALSO APPEARED

Also in the cast are: Pam Medcroft, Fred Jones, Neville

Burt, Robin Sampson, Ron Pilbeam, Pauline Conolly, Pauline Griffin, Audrey Hinton, Deanna Greenleaf, Sharon Filby and Sandra Hill.

Dancers: Deanna Greenleaf, Audrey Hinton, Sandra Mills, Isabel Shroud, Sylvia Sullivan, Dianne Thompson, George

Bruce, Peter Farmer, Barry Holden, Robin Tyrrell.

Singers: Jean Clements, Marion Dann, Pam Medcroft, Muriel Sampson, Janet Smith, Iris Sweetman, Jack Carter, Jim Cottee, Mike Nash, Ron Pilbeam, Vic Silvester and Colin Thorne.

the arts
edited by
Peter Andrews

singers and orchestra for almost all Monday evening.

A final word of praise for the chorus trained by Nova Rampling, who make a far more positive contribution to the show than is usually the case in amateur performances of