

New version 'absolute hit'

The Pirates Of Penzance — Chelmsford Operatic and Dramatic Society — Civic Theatre

THERE is no doubt about it, the purists must have been shocked by it, but the 'Broadway' version of this Gilbert and Sullivan classic does away with static routines and gives it new life.

CAODS under Ray Jeffery's direction, and Musical Director Bryan Cass, brought out the humour and self-mockery of the new version. It was so full of life that at times it appeared as if it was a crime to keep still.

Delightfully costumed, (the girl's dresses were some of the prettiest I've seen), well sung, acted and danced, there was never a dull moment all evening.

Lee Threadgold as the slightly camp Pirate King gnawed the scenery extremely well, whilst putting up with the advances of the

women. Gill Plumtree gave an excellent, strong, funny performance as Ruth.

Frederick, the bumptious young hero (Stephen Emery), suffered nobly as he was forced to ask the pretty Mabel (Dawn Sampson) to wait for his hand. Mabel herself appeared to be set on a career as a heroine of Grand Opera.

Patrick Tucker was a delightfully rotund Major General, but the real scene stealer was Sergeant of Police, Andrew Jeffers, who with his policemen chorus owed more to the Keystone Kops than to the Peelers. His arm movements provoked peals of laughter as he and his troops caused riots all over the auditorium.

This was an absolute hit with the audience and will be one of this year's great successes. I'd love to see them do the Thirties' Mikado.

MARY REDMAN