

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2009



THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

● CAODS at the Civic Theatre

25.02.09

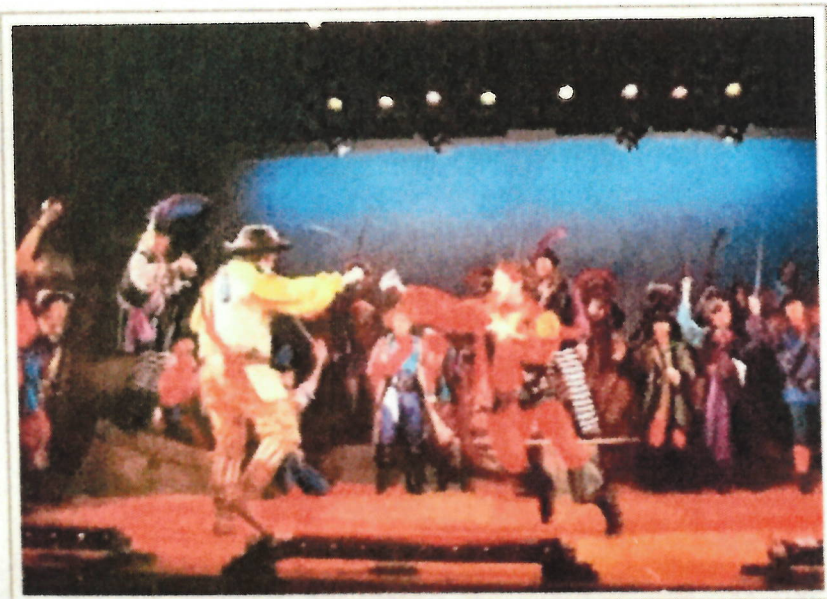
This “new” Broadway re-working is now nearly thirty years old. It belongs with the flamboyant musicals of the eighties, and as such still has the power to set the stage alight.

Purists would concede that little has changed – a couple of numbers inserted from other Savoy operas, and a few extra routines. Gilbert's jokes survive better than Sullivan's music, put through the Broadway blender and synthesised into submission.

Ray Jeffery's lively production made the most of the big numbers, the Act I finale, for instance, or the silliest policemen I ever saw. The reprise of Catlike Tread was also very effectively done. Only occasionally did I feel that swordplay and shouting were doing duty for style, or decibels for diction. Crystal clear always were Patrick Tucker's Major General, and Jonathan Davis in the swashbuckling Tim Curry role of Pirate King.

Thomas Harper was a likeable, hip-swivelling romantic lead, with Christie Hooper in the vocally demanding role of Mabel, his beloved. Splendid character work from Patrick Gallagher as the Police Sergeant, and Jenny Hockley as the spurned Ruth – though she did get to join the pirate ranks later on. Both pirates and police were equal opportunities employers, and the chorus boys and girls were kept busy with loads of imaginative and amusing business.

The Musical Director was John Trent Wallace.



*Photograph
y by
Christopher
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Edwards*