The verdict: Fabulous entertainment a credit to all

OPERA

Classical voice students from the WA Academy of Performing Arts performed Gilbert and Sullivan’s farcical Trial by Jury.

The one-act opera was the first collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan and its ingenious parody of the justice system and rollicking music made it an instant hit.

WAAPA’s creative production, with its large-as-life set, had the audience in the public gallery rolling with laughter from the outset as an inebriated Judge staggered past to find his chair.

Director Stuart Maunder kept the pace snappy with bouncy choreography using the entire space, including the tops of desks.

Maunder is Opera Australia’s G&S specialist and aspects of the production were reminiscent of Opera Australia’s 2005 production, with the female chorus dressed as paparazzi and the plaintiff and defendant depicted as an estranged celebrity couple.

Chris Lewis was outstanding as the panting, sozzled Judge.

Matthew Ward was one slimy half of the celebrity couple and his fuming fiancee was played glamorously by Morgan Cowling. The three gave high-energy performances with spot-on comic timing and impressive vocal control.

Anne-Marie McDonald directed from a keyboard, replete with wig and gown.

Earlier in the evening a smorgasbord of Gilbert and Sullivan favourites were performed in the foyer of the Supreme Court.

The entry hall with its sweeping double staircase and ornate domed ceiling was put to good use with the landing used as a stage for the classical singers to strut their stuff.

McDonald had the ensemble sizzling with energy. Solos showcased the unique and beautiful tones of individual singers and the combined ensemble produced a luscious, balanced choral sound.

Tongue-twister patter songs like My Eyes Are Fully Open were crisp and clean, while female ensemble numbers like Three Little Maids sparkled with coquettish charm.

It’s easy to see why these sell-out shows are marked in the diary of Perth music lovers; full credit to WAAPA’s production team and performers for a fabulous night.

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