

"GOOD NIGHT VIENNA"

EAST SURREY AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY'S PRODUCTION AT REDHILL

One of the most fascinating aspects of the East Surrey Amateur Operatic Society's "Good Night Vienna" at the Market Hall, Redhill, last week, was, with all due respect to the talented principals, the renewal of acquaintance with what one must now regard as producer Elsie Rendell's annual miracle in fitting a full-scale "musical" on the Market Hall stage. Mrs. Rendell cannot economise much in the matter of scenery, for musical comedy without settings suggestive of romantic luxury would be as unthinkable as "Hamlet", without the Prince, so economies have to be effected in the scope of movements and the miracle lies in the art with which she induces us to forget the limits.

It was a production that did the Society credit. Molly Larkin was a delightfully appealing Greta and sang sweetly, Douglas Chantler, also singing well, made her an ideal romantic Max. Robert Lilley and Charles Merriman were good as his fellow officers of the Imperial Guard and had excellent partners in the Frieda of Shelagh Daniels and the Vicki of Margaret Davison, and C. Stevenson Dennis as the most unlikely Private ever to have found his way into the Imperial Guard, and Diana Miller as Cilli, his inamorata, bounded through the humorous episodes with a zest that could not, however, always conceal the poverty of the material at their disposal.

The best acting *per se* came from two players with comparatively small speaking parts - William Malcomson (how good to see this fine actor again) who brought Prince Schmetoff to life, and Frederick Godden who, though occasionally not sure of his words (on Friday night), made us share his own obvious enjoyment of Baumer, the shoemaker, who became proprietor of a fashionable restaurant. While we are on the subject of acting, credit is due to Elleen Brownlow's Countess Helga, a well drawn portrait of a not particularly convincing character that made one forget its improbability; allied to her intelligent use of a satisfying singing voice in "When a woman wears a ring" this was a fine example of the small part played with artistry. After tribute to good work by Don Nicol, Godfrey Hili, Sheila Sanderson, Bettine Richardson, James Dorling, Joyce Alderson and Richard Nightingale in a variety of other small parts, it remains to give honour to the chorus and dancers who translated Mrs. Rendell's patient hours of drill into triumphant accomplishment, and to Joyce Hooper for achieving so admirable a balance between her orchestra and the people on the other side of the footlights.

The ladies of the chorus were: J. Alderson, E. Brownlow, M. Colvin, E. Edgar, J. Grimes, M. Ransley, D. Himsworth. B. Kellaway, A. Lilley, B. Martin, G. Meredith, J. Nightingale, I. Pinch, B. Richardson, S.

Sanderson, M. Stoneham and A. Waters; the dancers: D. Barkby, A. Churcher, H. Holder, A. Hurdle, P. Hurdle, Z. Martin, N. Richardson and P. Weaver; and the gentlemen: P. Apted, I. Chisholm, W. Davison, G. Dewar, J. Dorling, R. Jarvis, W. Johnston, M. Kellaway, E. Lott, R. Merchant, D. Nicol, R. Nightingale; W. Norden, J. Richardson, L. Sandeman, W. Thrift and W. Waters. In the orchestra were:- 1st violins, Mary Carter (leader). Phyllis Vigers, Audrey Mayes, Mrs. D. Barkby; 2nd. violins: Robert Chew, Belinda Gritton; violas: Ina Nichols. Joyce Comber; 'cellos: Mark Hamilton, Jean Welfare. Ann Broughton; flute: E. Woolgar, oboe: Hazel Minchin; clarinet: I. Couchman; trumpet: J. Roffey; harp: Joan Hanning; percussion: Elaine Gritton, Francis Gritton.