

CESP NEWSLETTER

THE APRIL ISSUE

Dear Readers,

By the time this issue appears, we will be but a month away from performance week!

Emphasis has shifted to chorus work for the past few rehearsals, a welcome chance for us to get up speed on the energetic opening 20 minutes or so of Act One. Even so, members have still been able to slot in other commitments. Debbie Levy appeared in a run of Princess Ida at Greenwich, and Jackie Mitchell is, as I write, part of the Sidcup Operatic show 'Blitz' at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham.

Now, a reminder that tickets for 'The Gondoliers' are available online at:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cesp>



This month our Q & A is with Maggi Collings. See her above playing the role of Tessa, with Vincent Daniels as Don Alhambra del Bolero, when we performed The Gondoliers in 1992.

Richard Wheatley

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR, LEON BERGER.

Well, the hard work has been done, blocking out each scene, and we now have the luxury of running the opera an act at a time. This is the chance for everyone to get to know the whole show, judge 'time off' between scenes, figure out entrances and exits and generally pace themselves. In early May we have an advance rehearsal at the Deaton Theatre so we can at last fix the final stage positions we have been approximating in the smaller rehearsal space. It's one huge jigsaw which is assembling nicely. As I watch the picture come together and listen to the entire piece I am once again reminded what a terrific show it is. Light on plot and action, but the music just bubbles along with infectious melody; Gilbert's words and Sullivan's music at its best. It's impossible not to come away smiling and humming.

Q & A with Maggi Collings

When did you join CESP?

Not sure, but I think it was in 1991. I joined because I had recently performed *The Pirates of Penzance* with the Waltham Forest College Society. I enjoyed it so much that one of their members, Vincent Daniels, suggested that I might like to try his other society, CESP. I've been performing with CESP ever since.



Maggi as Katisha in *The Mikado*

Which part are you playing in *The Gondoliers*?

I am playing the part of The Duchess of Plaza-Toro. It's a new venture for me as I usually play soprano roles but I have a wide vocal range and enjoy new challenges and opportunities.

Do you have a favourite G & S opera / role?

My favourite G & S opera is actually *The Gondoliers* so I am delighted to be in it again. The two favourite roles that I have played so far are Tessa in *The Gondoliers* and Phoebe in *The Yeomen of the Guard* (not to mention Princess Ida and Katisha which I also enjoyed!) I like the part of Tessa as the music is so happy and uplifting and Phoebe, as you can really get into her character.

How do you spend your time when you are not performing G & S?

I enjoy going to the theatre, ballet, walking my dog, travelling and eating in good restaurants. I also sing in other groups and have recently returned from the Adelaide Music Festival where I sang in Terry Edward's group, performing extracts from Michael Caine's movies. As a solo artist, I have brought out an album under the name of Maggi Ronson and in my spare time I have also started to learn French!