

CHELTENHAM OPERATIC & DRAMATIC SOCIETY

‘Kiss Me Kate’ – Cole Porter 24th January 2007

Director: JASON BLACKBURN Musical Director: BEVERLEY WHITAKER

Choreographer: KAREN TOWNSEND

This is not one of my favourite musicals and is one that I usually end up fidgeting in. However, that cannot be said of this production. From curtain up until the finale, I was thoroughly entertained. The opening number was sharp and performed with gusto. KAREN TOWNSEND'S choreography was fresh, imaginative and complimented JASON BLACKBURN'S accomplished direction well. The seven-piece orchestra were proficiently led and sympathetic to the needs of the singers. The set, designed by Mike Barwick, was simple and well thought out, allowing the maximum use of the limited space. The costumes, supplied by The Haslemere Wardrobe and Gill Jerden Costumes, were colourful and in keeping with both periods. MIKE PANDAZIS superbly played Fred Graham/Petruchio. He was a true leading man – handsome, strong character and a beautiful rich voice. SARAH ROBERTS as Lilli Vanessi/Katherine, gave a credible performance, which was consistent throughout. Although young for the roles, they worked well together and their relationship was very believable. They were excellently supported by NICKY BISSET (Lois Lane/Bianca), NEIL BURGE (Bill Calhoun/Lucentio) and a superb pair of gangsters in COLIN COOPER and DAN BACON. Cheltenham O.D.S. has another success under their belt. Well done to all concerned.

FRED GRAHAM / PETRUCIO

A strong performance and good characterisation. A lovely warm voice that was very easy to listen to.

LILLI VANESSI / KATHERINE

A commendable performance, with some lovely moments. I would like to have seen a little more light and shade in Lilli's temperament.

LOIS LANE / BIANCA

A good 'all round' performance. This actress knows how to put a number over.

BILL CALHOUN / LUCENTIO

An easy actor to watch. He has a very relaxed style and played both parts convincingly.

THE GANGSTERS

Excellent comic timing. They 'bounced' well off each other and really looked as if they were having a good time. The bridesmaids' costumes were a treat!

The show was supported by well cast principals and an enthusiastic company. The warm welcome by the friendly front of house staff also deserves a mention. After all, the experience of the theatre starts in the foyer. Thank you C.O.D.S for a lovely evening.

Report given by: Malcolm White – NODA South West Regional Representative.