

## *No shadows in 'My Fair Lady'*

For their production last week at the Market Han, Redhill, East Surrey Operatic Society chose one of the smash hits of recent times, in "My Fair Lady." One of the problems of producing a famous show of the recent past is that the stars who created the parts tend to cast a long shadow; this is particularly the case in the two central roles of Eliza Doolittle and Professor Higgins. The latter role also involves a mastery of that art of projection which is neither speaking nor singing and yet combines the function both, which was perfected by Rex Harrison.

Indeed, not only did Geoffrey Collins give a masterly performance in the role; he even contrived to look like a younger version of Rex-Harrison. On the other hand Gillian Jarvis' portrayal of the role of Eliza Doolittle is more personal and was not only vocally satisfying but showed considerable sensitivity in conveying the gradual change in the heroine's character as she is transformed into a lady.

Of the other principals Andrew Glass made a rumbustious and totally convincing Alfred Doolittle and Frederick Harrison gave an excellent portrait of an upper class military gentleman in the role of Colonel Pickering. Brenda Page and Patricia Felstead gave satisfying performances as Mrs Pearce and Mrs Higgins respectively, but Trevor Muller, although visually right, was not sufficiently strong vocally.

All the other parts were well realised, not least Malcolm Howe and Philip Felstead in the roles of Harry and Jamie Doolittle's disreputable cockney mates. The chorus sang and danced well, particularly in the scene featuring "Get me to the Church on Time."

The orchestra under their conductor Colin Copestead played with unobtrusive professionalism and the production by Sheila Searing was economical, smooth running.