

ALGSS dazzle in the dales

In August Abbots Langley became recognised as a global Gilbert & Sullivan hotspot – and that's official. As part of the prestigious 15th International G&S Festival staged at the Buxton opera house in Derbyshire, Abbots Langley G&S Society gained a podium position and were crowned international second runners up with their production of *Ruddigore*. Directed by Linda Dyne with Peter Holt in charge of the orchestra, the show was initially staged at the Watford Palace Theatre in January where it achieved a NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) award nomination for the quality of the chorus work as well as rave reviews from the press.

Capacity audiences of G&S devotees enjoyed three weeks of performances by leading professional and amateur G&S companies from around the world a truly international festival which culminated in an Oscars style award ceremony at the sumptuous Palace Hotel.

ALGSS are well known to Buxton audiences having appeared at the festival on a number of occasions, always to great acclaim. Festival award success came in 2004 with their Mike Monk directed production of *Iolanthe* winning Best Concerted Item and again in 2005 where Emma Southorn won Best Supporting Actress in Julia Rufey's *Yeomen of the Guard*. The company have also gained a clutch of award nominations in recent years but nothing on the scale enjoyed with *Ruddigore*. The production gained unprecedented recognition for their efforts with a sensational 8 nominations and 1 award for the company.

In her post performance critique Festival adjudicator and respected G&S exponent, Gillian Humphries, spoke highly of the show, commenting particularly on the enthusiasm and team work displayed by the company as well as the costumes and the quality of the chorus singing.

At the awards lunch attended by ALGSS regulars Russell Stratton and Emma Southorn, the company picked up nominations for Musical Director (Peter Holt), Best Actor (Robert Milner), Best Supporting Actor (Gareth Edwards), Best Character Actress (Emma Southorn), Best Duet (Gareth Edwards & Emma Southorn), Best Voice (Russell Stratton), Most Traditional Opera and Most Animated Chorus. Staggered by their success, Emma Southorn was shocked and delighted to discover her portrayal of Mad Margaret won her the coveted gong of Best Character Actress.

Not ones to rest on their laurels, ALGSS are looking forward starting rehearsals for their forthcoming production of *The Mikado* which will see them reunited with Julia Rufey and Philip Joslin.

To take part in *The Mikado* or to find out more about the company visit them at www.algss.org.uk or email membership@algss.org.uk *The Mikado* runs at the Watford Palace Theatre Monday 19th - Saturday 24th January 2009 (7.45pm & 2.30pm Saturday matinee) www.watfordtheatre.co.uk 01923 225 671

Eve Wright

Emma Southorn in her Best Character Actress Award winning role of Mad Margaret



Emma Southorn with Gareth Edwards (Sir Despard - Best Supporting Actor) in rehearsal and below in performance



The Company outside the Buxton Opera House