

Curtain calls by clamorous acclamation

It is almost always easier to write a review of something you didn't like or enjoy, something you can point out the shortcomings of and then balance things up by paying tribute to whatever you did like: the colour of the programmes, perhaps, or the leading laddie's wig. Reviewing something that you enjoyed from beginning to end, enjoyed so much that your face was sore from smiling and laughing, is a rather horrible and difficult task. What on earth do you say? "Eeh, it were great, that, it really were".

Is this the kind of reaction that a

team of at least fifty stars of stage and backstage want to read, however? Do they not rather want detailed comment in print on "how we did" - in all 22 of the numbers in Pirate Productions latest showbiz extravaganza? And how do you avoid offending those who inevitably do not get mentioned individually, given that I do not have 6000 words and a special edition of the LuxNews to devote to acclaiming one of the most joyous and inspiring Friday evenings I have had in a long time?

Those who are already observing

that I have wasted several lines of this review can write one themselves next time, while I shall quite self-indulgently congratulate all those involved, who so entertainingly realised the designs of the deviser and director, Carole Williams, and made us marvel at a masterly piece of music-theatrical mosaic-making of morning melodiousness, marine mischievousness, magical murmuring, sentimental snapshots, poetry as perfervid performance, music hall memories, meaningful matches made with money, enchantingly erroneous identities, and mushrooming mass movement in moments of maritime madness.

And that was only the first half. As you notice, it was just mmmmmmmmm. All this was taking place in Gasperich kirk hall, with the agile audience seated (or standing) around tables, sipping savoury soups at affordable prices. An excellent scheme for a winter's night.

Then there was bardic brilliance, songs from the South, an unsuccessful attempt to put a stop to the proceedings, practical polyandry and seaport polygamy, po-faced pyramidal pirouetting, momentary and moving melancholy, dynamic double declarations of the desirability of Durex, a who's where, where's who, when's why and

why's what of transatlantic rounders, tripping the light fantastic with terpsichore, more of the magical murmuring, and then, alas, in a final flurry of fabulous fast and furious fun, the whole extremely exquisitely executed enterprise exploded in the Big Time.

For it was exquisite: each half was constructed as a proper sequence of contrasting or complementary events building to a very satisfying high point. A kind of "abstract musical", if you like, complete with very clever staging, costumes, lighting... The idea of presenting it all as a series of auditions was pure genius; the rehearsal pianists (as it were) were stars, and as for the improvisatory skills of the guest-director taking the auditions, the essential link man putting it all together both within the theatrical fiction and for the audience in Gasperich kirk hall, your reviewer - unlike the gentleman in question - is lost for words.

The whole team, cast and backstage, obviously had a whale of a time. So did everyone there the night we were lucky enough to lighten the load of the labouring week with such lovely ladle-fuls of living laughter. Oh, it were great, it were.