

Pygmalion  
2003

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#### TEDDINGTON THEATRE CLUB

### Fine words and language

**G**EORGE Bernard Shaw, that much maligned playwright of yester-year has been chosen by the Teddington Theatre Club for its next major production at The Hampton Hill Playhouse.

The fabulous production of *My Fair Lady*, the colourful and lavish presentation, based on Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, is now in its third year at Drury Lane.

But no, TTC is providing an opportunity to see the real, original play with all its fine words and language, there to be appreciated.

Set in Covent Garden with all the well loved costumes of pre-First World War London and all its uncertainties of the immediate future - a wonderful opportunity is being provided to see, and more importantly, listen to, all these outrageous characters, in the flesh, strutting the stage.

There is the dustman Doolittle and his coarse, loud flower-girl, daughter Linda, contrasting with the quiet, elegant and eloquent Professor Higgins and his friend, Pickering and the language they speak and

again contrasting with the false, posh language of the 'gentry', young Freddie - sit back and enjoy this great play.

The playing dates are from Saturday April 26th until the following Saturday May 3rd, each evening at 7.45pm (doors open at 7.15pm) with the exception of Sunday April 27th at 6 pm (doors open at 5.30pm).

This is an opportunity not to be missed and reservations are expected to be heavy so an early booking is advised, to Box Office, 5 Howard Close, Hampton TW12 2UB or may be contacted from Monday April 14th from 2pm - 9pm only, on Tel: 020 8979 9499.

Lynn Lewsey is in charge of the production and has chosen a very talented cast, to bring this famous story to life. Tall, elegant Stephen Bentley plays the professor with, always at his side, the more rotund, Allen Dickens as Pickering.

At the other end of the scale, the 'Doolittles', John Roth as the loud, dustman father with Jo Viney in the challenging role of Lisa the 'gor-blimey' flower-girl who is to receive the special training necessary to be received at court as a 'lady'.

#### RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

### Splendid production of much loved play

**L**OVERS of George Bernard Shaw's plays have been given a treat this week by Teddington Theatre Club's stylish production of *Pygmalion* at the Hampton Hill Playhouse.

Director Lynn Lewsey has assembled a talented and experienced cast and the production is strong in all departments.

The performance I saw had a slightly shaky start but settled into a steady pace, sufficiently slow for all the dialogue to be heard and understood but fast enough to sustain interest.

Stephen Bentley made an excellent Higgins. He dominated the play and obviously relished his witty lines. Strong support was given by Allen Dickens as Colonel Pickering and Carol Fuller as the housekeeper, Mrs Pearce.

Audience members took Joanna Viney's spirited Eliza Doolittle to their hearts and there was spontaneous applause for her on two occasions during the performance. She coped admirably with the difficult transition from cockney flowergirl to grand lady.

John Roth made the most of the scene-stealing role of Albert Doolittle, the victim of middle-class morality. His philosophical monologues were well received.

Jan Ryan was impressive as the cool-headed, aristocratic Mrs Higgins.

Andy Everett brought the role of Freddy Eynsford-Hill pleasantly to life. His ardent wooing of Eliza was more late 20th century than 1914.

Sets were rather sparse, considering the moneyed circumstances of the Higgins family. Furniture was kept to a few items. For the rain storm in the opening scene at Covent Garden imaginative use was made of projected image. Costumes were very attractive and in period.

There was effective use of lighting, particularly in the scenes in Mrs Higgins' drawing room.

Congratulations to Lynn Lewsey and her team on a splendid realisation of a much-loved play.

JM