

Task performed well

WORLE Operatic Society set themselves a hard task at Weston Playhouse this week but they succeeded.

It's not easy to whisk an audience back two centuries to a Highland village called Brigadoon, which exists for only one day in every century, and persuade us that love will conquer anything, even time.

But if you suspend disbelief for just one moment, you happily subscribe to the proposition.

Thanks to MD Carol Barrington, from the opening bars of the overture, Brigadoon never flags. Costumes are excellent, dances gracefully executed, and chorus numbers well set.

The society has three principals who are particularly talented. Jeff Prescott plays the bemused Tommy with assurance. His voice and presence are a considerable asset.

Bob Gibbons (Jeff) can point a line beautifully, and he doesn't miss a trick while Sue Chipperfield as Fiona has a strong, true voice which is a delight.

Tricia Roberts plays unconventional Meg, a difficult role to get right. She has a forthright delivery and a way of putting a song over which suits the part well. Dean Bettle makes his mark, not only as malcontent Harry, but in the sword dance, where he is ably supported by Linda Price and Lois Ruddock.

Christine Swindall and Ian Bennett are well cast as bride and groom. Among the smaller roles which are

REVIEW: Brigadoon, by Worle Operatic Society. At the Playhouse Theatre, Weston, until tomorrow (November 23).

played well, Chris Luker as Mr Murdoch, the village elder, and Jo Richmond-Coggan as Jane Ashton, the jilted fiancée, deserve special mention.

This is a tough musical to tackle: lots of movement, a difficult chase scene, Scots accents to maintain, and a plot that some may say is out of tune with our times.

Producer Les Walters has served the society admirably, but I would make two points. Firstly, putting Mr Murdoch in a nightgown for his final appearance was unnecessary, reducing the romantic impact of the last scene.

Secondly, because Brigadoon has a low key ending, we would really appreciate a reprise of more than one of those memorable tunes. Heather on the Hill, Bonnie Jean, the show is full of them, and it is nice to end on an upbeat note.

GEORGE MORRIS