

of their captain. It has become traditional for the audience to await with growing expectancy the entrance of the female chorus. One doubted whether the sisters, cousins and aunts would successfully survive the transformation from male to female appearance. The girls "gaily tripped" and "lightly skipped" and our doubts were answered.

Since this was the first opera for two years the leads were of necessity inexperienced, but this was not really apparent in their performances. It will be no injustice to the rest of the cast if mention is first made of J. E. Burnell's splendid portrayal of the fussiness of Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. He had won the sympathy of his audience long before the climax to his performance came—as we had expected—in the trio "Never mind the Why and Wherefore." After five encores he seemed still willing to entertain, but the audience had clapped itself out. The romantic lead, Ralph, was very well played by J. E. Camp, who combined the great virtue of audibility with a pleasing and powerful tenor voice. We look forward to his future performances. His leading lady, J. F. I. Pryce, "sold" his feminine charms as Josephine quite convincingly and sang his rather difficult solos well.

G. H. Duffie, as the noble and "hardly ever" blasphemous Captain Corcoran, maintained his dignity throughout both in his singing and acting. Indeed, he seemed merely contemptuous if not unaware, of Sir Joseph's antics. Bill Bobstay (C. J. Gee) and Bob Becket (J. H. Dawes and T. P. Thirlway) were worthy representatives both in voice and appearance of his gallant crew. R. W. Paine, as the pessimistic Dick Deadeye, successfully excited in the audience—and cast—a mixture of revulsion and pity. Garner, as the "midshipmite" was admirable in his unobtrusive omnipresence. Of the other female leads, B. Carritt (first cousin Hebe) led his ladies with due femininity and said his postscripts well. Little Buttercup is a very difficult part for a young boy to play, but R. W. Gravestock sang well and audibly and was surely the rosiest and reddest, if not the roundest, beauty in all Spithead.

It is unintentional that once again the last persons to be mentioned are the members of the orchestra and the production team. The orchestra, conducted by Mr. Dawes, must receive the highest praise—as it always does on these occasions—by playing not for itself, but in sympathy with the singers. Let us, then, join with the crew of H.M.S. *Pinafore* in giving three cheers for all those responsible for a fine performance, especially Mr. Dawes and Mr. Gaster. May it be many years before there is another interruption in the succession of Gilbert and Sullivan operas at Christmas.

J.W.P.

"THE CREATION"

Josef Haydn was no doubt inspired to write an oratorio when he heard some of Handel's works in London in the 1790's. At any rate, the outcome of his activity was the work that we know as "The Creation." That it is not generally regarded as a masterpiece to stand next to "The Messiah" is due only to the fact that it is much less well known. When rehearsals began, many of the members of the School Choir were hearing it for the first time.

The production of "The Messiah" only two years ago set an example against which all succeeding School productions of oratorios must be compared. The general opinion of the audience as they left the Hall after "The Creation" was that it far surpassed its predecessor. A performance of the complete work would have meant that many of the audience would not have reached home until the early hours of the morning. It was decided to perform the first two of the three parts. This made an effective programme in itself, finishing as it did with the two choruses—"Achieved is the glorious work."

Of the three soloists, two had sang in the "Messiah" performance. A last-minute crisis arose when Mr. Harry Barnes was unfortunately indisposed, but everyone was grateful to the confident way in which Mr. Bernard Baboulene stepped into the part at extremely short notice. His pleasing, lyrical rendering of the solo tenor part betrayed no lack of confidence. Mr. Kenneth Tudor is now an old friend of the School, having appeared at two previous productions. He sang the bass solos with firmness and assurance. Miss Rosamond Strode delighted the audience with her flexible singing of the solo soprano role of Gabriel, and she contributed greatly to the success of the whole performance.

The School made its main contribution in the choruses, with a choir of nearly 150 voices. Some of Haydn's choruses make heavy demands on the choir, but there was very little sign of tiredness in their singing, even at the end of the evening. The climax of Part I, the chorus "The Heavens are telling," was sung with the utmost vitality, and proved to be the most impressive moment of the evening.

The Choir received admirable support from the orchestra, whose accompaniment was always energetic. The orchestral writing of "The Creation" is very descriptive, and their playing always displayed precision and assurance. It was perhaps unavoidable that the continuo had to be supplied on a piano rather than on a harpsichord.