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**COUNTESS MARITZA**  
**SA Light Opera Society**  
Mayfair Theatre, Goodwood

Review by Fran Edwards

This delightful little operetta is from another time - a more leisurely, more romantic era. Written in the 1920's this piece reflects the European class system and relies on a very thin plot.

Countess Maritza has devised a way to stop being harassed by suitors after her money by declaring her engagement to a fictional character. The complications are that the character is not so fictional and she falls in love with her bailiff (who is an impoverished Count). The usual twists and turns lead eventually to a happy ending - what else?

The music is well played and well sung. Although the chorus work suffers from a lack of male voices, for the most part Peter Potts handles this well, however more variation in tempo would help the audience and create more interest. The music was the star of this production.

Although Pam Tucker creates some very pretty pictures with the colourful costumes, the direction leaves a lot to be desired. There was a lack of rapport between most of the characters and a tendency to play to the audience not to each other.

The notable exceptions were Peter Potts and Deborah Wotherspoon who sparked off one another quite well and Irene Barfoot and Richard Dryer who provided some much needed levity in the third act.

Kathy Wardle and Hamish Aneer sang beautifully but missed the mark in the romantic stakes. Wardle was not as at ease with this role as one would expect and seemed to gain little reaction from Aneer. Wardle looked wonderful in her many costumes (there seemed to be a costume for every entrance in every scene).

David Roberts and Geoff Tucker gave good support, but others lost much of the plot and audience interest with poor diction. The choreography by Pam Tucker and Anna Winter was well executed but could have been improved if the obviously experienced, featured dancers had been given steps with more variety.

The well designed set allowed the action to flow well, but was sadly under-utilised. The lighting complimented the scenes nicely.

Opening night performances may have been affected by nerves and may well be much improved by next week. If you are a fan of light opera with music delivered by some fine singers and a strong chorus, this production is worth a visit.