

'Martha' Received By Enthusiastic Audience

A large and enthusiastic audience in the new high school auditorium Monday night gave repeated curtain calls to the principals and chorus of "Martha" as produced by the Mount Airy Opera Club under the direction of Dr. Clifford Bair.

Here was a sparkling, fresh production which offered an evening of good, light entertainment and fine music. The sets, as created by Virginia and Louis Bianco, were unusually beautiful, yet did not detract from the colorful costumes for which Mrs. Alma Banner and Mrs. Alma Lou Haynes were responsible. Set pieces chosen by Mrs. Gertie Cheek added to the scenes as did the skillful lighting by Bill Elder and the make-up under the supervision of Betty Lovill.

The Mount Airy group deserves special congratulations for their "Martha". Everyone declared it to be a finished and totally delightful performance all the way through.

An excellent instrumental group from the Winston-Salem Symphony, recruited by Kenneth Smith, gave sensitive accompaniment to the singers. An unusual feature of the top-rate chorus was the presence of ten members of the Charlotte Opera association who enjoyed singing in the "Martha" given in Charlotte last February so much that they offered their services to the Mount Airy group for Monday's opera. And much credit for the solid performance goes to four Winston-Salem residents who traveled weekly to Mount Airy to participate in the workshop and production program of the Opera club: Connie Reynolds, Riley Matthews, Ronald Milroy and John Mickey.

Miss Reynolds, who sang the role of winsome and fun-loving Lady Harriett or "Martha" was in excellent voice and called forth much applause for her excellent portrayal. Convincing in fine vocalism and dramatic interpretation was Grant Davis of Mount Airy who sang the role of Lionel. The role of Plunket was sung by Riley Matthews, possessor of a voice of rich and appealing quality and considerable acting ability. Mount Airy's own talented Dolores Mills, who sang the role of the mischievous Nancy or "Betsy Ann", turned in a brilliant performance with her pleasing voice and easy manner on the stage. John Mickey in the role of the foppish Sir Tristan, kept the audience chuckling with his droll and comic antics. Joe Gamble, as the fussy and cantankerous sheriff, added further comedy interest to the performance.

Local residents were pleased to note the appearance of Bill Avery

of Winston-Salem, who handled the bass viol in the orchestra. He is a grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Haynes and well-known in this section.

Further credit for a smooth and sound musical and dramatic interpretation goes to Dr. Bair both as producer and conductor of the orchestra, and other associate directors, Ronald Milroy, Sally Phillips, and Mrs. James Bray, president of the Mount Airy Opera Club.