**NODA Review for ‘Calamity Jane’ 10th July 2017**

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An old favourite of mine “Calamity Jane” is one of those feel good musicals that still seems to attract a reasonable box office. I have always regarded it as a good show. It is light-hearted, has a proper story line and most of the songs are well loved and memorable.

The set for ‘The Golden Garter’ was well designed with a small stage at the back, bar and tables and chairs, it gave the atmosphere of a bustling establishment. Sets for other scenes had been designed with varying degrees of complexity from using blacks and furniture for Miss Adelaide’s dressing room, and for Calamity’s cabin, with the use of backcloths for the reception at Fort Scully, and for the Black Hills.  It was such a good idea to have the band at the back of the Golden Garter stage looking really part of the proceedings.

As always Sarah Smith produced a well fitting and appropriate set of costumes, with wigs and make up adding to the overall picture. Calamity’s transformation was gradual, ending with a lovely wedding dress. Conversely, I was getting myself a bit exercised about the lack of belts for the soldiers’ uniform trousers.

Lighting was well-designed giving appropriate lighting effects for indoors and out, with moonlight for ‘The Black Hills of Dakota’. The sound effects were well cued and with a couple of exceptions there was good use of radio microphones.

The choreography was suited to the show, although I personally felt the ‘Can-Can’ rather lacked the required sauciness.

The chorus always gave solid support to the action and despite a few lack lustre moments when chorus energy levels faded, singing was good with ‘Black Hills’ being particularly so.

Calamity is a physically and vocally challenging role but the minute she erupted on stage it was clear Georgie Smit had it all; excellent singing and good character development from the strutting ‘cowboy’, to the frustrating attempts at femininity, then to the ‘suddenly smitten by love’. In an extremely lively performance indeed she put over her songs in great fashion giving a performance that was heartfelt and believable. Georgie is a newcomer to the society and an obvious asset.

Katy Cocks gave us a lovely Katie Brown and, teamed with Georgie, produced a force to be reckoned with, their ‘Woman’s Touch’ a joy to hear.  Katie Brown showed a good contrast of character to Calamity, and there was lovely development in the two renditions of ‘Keep It Under Your Hat’.

Joseph Hall gets better every time I see him and was in fine form as Lieut. Danny Gilmartin.  The chemistry between Danny Gilmartin and Katie Brown worked well, they were believable in their scenes together.

As Wild Bill Hickock, Andy Cosner ticked all the boxes despite taking a minute or two to get into his stride. He was able to draw out a convincing depth of feeling; the ‘Secret Love’ scene with Calamity was one of the best in the production.

Minor principals more than proved their capabilities with Tim McCormick as Henry Miller never losing his enthusiasm and drive and Susan Miller well played by Charlie Maguire. There was good interaction between Susan and Francis Fryer (Lewis Moore).

Congratulations to Director Fiona Maguire, MD Vicky Calver and Choreographers Jess Clifford and Andy Thorpe and all involved. Everyone in all departments had obviously worked together to provide us with a lively and entertaining evening.