

Molesey Musical Theatre  
Director: E Gloria Smith  
Musical Director: Barry Pritchard

Calamity Jane  
Walton Playhouse  
11<sup>th</sup> November 2009

I congratulate MMT and Gloria for presenting this wonderful musical in such a difficult venue as Walton Playhouse. From the start it was a thoroughly enjoyable and fun evening.

The set was simple but perfectly established the saloon, the main location for the action. The change to the Bijou Theatre was again simple but effective. In the second act, Calamity's cabin showed just the right female influence and the transitions through the trail, Fort Scully, trail and Golden Garter were reasonably fluid.

The costumes were good and in period, and the lighting was effective. I was a little concerned about the sound as there were occasions of under projection, but I was pleased to hear that the orchestra accompanied the voices rather than drowning them. Barry is to be congratulated.

Choreography was well designed and executed but there did seem to be a 'dead' area in the centre front of the stage which might have been used to more effect. I particularly liked the entrance to the Ball through the audience.

It was delightful to see sisters, Polly Horne (Calamity Jane) and Emily Horne (Katie Brown) playing against one another. It pointed the attractions of both heroines to both heroes, Wild Bill Hickcock and Lt Danny Gilmartin. Both Polly (Calamity) and Emily (Katie) had lovely true voices throughout, but particularly brought out the comedy in "A Woman's Touch", possibly my favourite number in a thoroughly enjoyable show. Both Mark Mowbray (Wild Bill) and Richard Streetley (Lt Gilmartin) were true to their characters, and showed their rivalry well, with excellent voices. Iain Cannell (Henry Miller) was suitably bossy as the saloon owner who mistakenly books Francis Fryer as a show girl, beautifully played by Steve Nottage who brought out all the comedy written into this part. His attraction to Miller's daughter, Susan, was nicely developed through the play.

Other members of the cast and chorus were well played and enhanced the atmosphere of a Wild West saloon.

All in all, everyone is to be congratulated. Thank you for my warm welcome to my first visit to MMT. I look forward to your next production.

Danny Sparkes