

BWT review
Witham Operatic Society
Calamity Jane
25 – 30 October 1999

Wild West foot-tapper delighted audience

THE programme of Witham Operatic Society's performance of Calamity Jane was a real pleasure to read while waiting for the curtain to rise. The show which followed gave delight to the packed audience at the Public Hall last week.

Set in the Wild West in the 1870s, there is a slight plot. It is used as an opportunity to sing well known foot-tapping songs and for the chorus to present colourful set pieces.

Jill Parkin, the musical director, set a vibrant rhythm from the start. In the opening number Jacqui Foster, the director and choreographer, with her assistant Lyndsay Ward, showed the audience what pleasure lay in store.

The costumes were colourful and the movement of the cast always presented attractive and interesting shapes.

Kathryn Adkins played the title role as a vital, boastful gun-toting young woman. Her confident, pleasant voice added a great deal to the songs.

As Wild Bill Hickock, Stewart Adkins used his powerful, tuneful voice to emphasise his strong personality, showing more gentleness when singing 'My Secret Love'.

The flustered, blustering owner of the Golden Garter saloon in Deadwood City was well played by Richard Cowen.



Reg. Charity No. 265029 

**Witham Amateur
Operatic Society**
presents

CALAMITY JANE



Adapted by RONALD HAMMER and PHIL PARK
From the stage play by CHARLES K. FREEMAN
after WARNER BROS. film written by JAMES O'HANLON

Lyrics by PAUL FRANCIS WEBSTER
Music by SAMMY FAIN

Performances given by arrangement with JOSEF WEINBERGER LTD.

at the
WITHAM PUBLIC HALL
MONDAY 25th to SATURDAY 30th OCTOBER
Nightly 7.30pm - Doors open 7.00 pm
Saturday Matinee 2.30pm - Doors open 2.00pm

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are very pleased to support this production of "Calamity Jane"

Jonathan Baron played the part of 'a good-looking young officer'. He and Elizabeth Ladd were the second couple, providing a peaceful contrast to the leading pair.

Bonny Osborne made a brief appearance as the backwoodsmen's heart-throb and Tim Clarke was introduced to perform a song and dance act. He also closed the performance by arranging to wed the proprietor's niece, played by Helen Fox.

This show will long be remembered for the outstanding use of the chorus and the principals, especially at the final curtain call.

James Bright.

NODA REPORT FOR THE MARCH 2000
EASTERN NEWS

WITHAM A.O.S. - CALAMITY JANE
PERFORMANCE OF 29TH OCTOBER 1999

This first time production for the company was directed and choreographed by Jacqui Foster. Given that there were really too few men in the chorus for the plot, ensemble scenes were well handled and presented with energy, and the dancers made an excellent contribution.

The opening sequences captured the atmosphere of the town and anticipation of the stage's arrival well enough, but the build up was long through being started during the overture and as a consequence Calam's arrival seemed to lose impact. We also lost some initial dialogue explanations early on due to orchestra volume. There were some other similar occasions later, but on the whole M.D. Jill Parkin had things well under control. Costumes and sets were mostly fine, though why a stone cabin for Calam?



The show was reasonably well lit, though, for me, the high lighting level in Black Hills did not really assist the number. Kathryn Adkins gave a spirited performance as Calam. but to my mind didn't achieve the raw dominance needing to be exhibited in Act I; she seemed much more comfortable in her Act II characterisation. Stewart Adkins' Bill Hickock was excellently strong in aJi departments. The main supporting principals, Jonathan Baron as Gilmore, Tim Clarke as Fryer and Elisabeth Ladd as Katie, all came across convincingly, with well defined characters. Support amongst the remaining principals was somewhat variable, with inexperience showing in places. The show kept up a good pace throughout, particularly in the ensemble 'argument'

scenes, and the final curtain 'coach' tableau (in Halifax advert style) was extremely effective.

Overall this was a good evening's entertainment, and thoroughly enjoyed by a full house, though there was more comedy to be extracted from the secondary characters and their situations than emerged.

John Warburton

CAST OF CHARACTERS

<i>Calamity Jane</i>	hard-bitten gun-totin' heroine	Kathryn Adkins
<i>Wild Bill Hickock</i>	handsome professional gambler	Stewart Adkins
<i>Lieut. Danny Gilmartin</i>	good-looking young officer	Jonathan Baron
<i>Katie Brown</i>	stage-struck young lady	Elisabeth Ladd
<i>Henry Miller</i>	Proprietor of "The Golden Garter"	Richard Cowen
<i>Susan</i>	Miller's pretty young niece	Helen Fox
<i>Francis Fryer</i>	A song-and-dance man	Tim Clarke
<i>Adelaide Adams</i>	A show-business star	Bonny Osborne
<i>Rattlesnake</i>	A stage coach driver	Jim Crimmins
<i>"Doc" Pierce</i>	Deadwood's doctor-undertaker	Danny Mullane
<i>Joe</i>	Bartender at "The Golden Garter"	Darren White
<i>Hank</i>	Scout	Richard Herring
<i>Pete</i>	Scout	Alf Farmer
<i>Colonel Stark</i>	Colonel of Fort Scully	Alf Farmer

Cowpunchers, bullwhackers, prospectors, trappers, Indians, women of the town, spies, Chorus girls, Officers, Soldiers and their wives, stagecoach passengers etc.

Caron Bradbury, Pat Briggs, Helen Clark, Nicholas Clough, Alf Farmer, Helen Fox, Natalie Hawkes, Judy Henderson, Richard Herring, Marea Irving, Anne Marsden, Sandra Moorhouse, Danny Mullane, Roger Munt, Muriel Loveridge, Bonny Osborne, Julia Reed, Steve Rogers, Sue Rogers, Callie Shaw, Sue Siddalls, Bobbie Tyler, Liz Watson, Tom Whelan, Darren White, Sarah Wilson.

Dancers Sue Rogers, Marea Irving, Helen Clark, Natalie Hawkes, Callie Shaw, Muriel Loveridge.