



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE

G&S Society

Arts Theatre

Until October 8

Review by Janice Bailey

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society's current production of "Thoroughly Modern Millie" is from the era of feel-good, happy ever after musicals where girl meets boy; there are strategic problems which create reasons for memorable musical numbers; there's a best friend – and ultimately everyone lives happily ever after. Millie was ahead of its time in that the heroine leaves home for the big city intent on making her own way in the world. This recipe was adopted in many other musicals which then followed. Considering the events in Adelaide over the past couple of weeks this production is a great choice to lift the spirits of an audience – and mostly it succeeds.

Director David Sinclair has assembled a talented and enthusiastic, predominantly very young cast. The set is basic but is brought to life with the use of video, a trademark of Sinclair. This gives depth and authenticity of the era to the stage and the technical expertise of Craig Williams is evident. Shenayde-Wilkinson-Sarti's choreography gives the big ensemble numbers pizzazz, especially in the tap routines.

The costumes, co-ordinated by Helen Snoswell, are superb and a highlight of the show. Musical director Heather Elliott's orchestra is excellent and does justice to the toe-tapping musical numbers. The principal roles were mostly well-cast but what was highlighted was the lack of young males which apparently is currently an issue in Adelaide. Mitchell Smith as Jimmy did a good job, his energy and vocal range could not be faulted, but he was physically mismatched with the more mature Alana Sheperdson who was suitably likeable and vivacious as Millie.

Buddy Dawson as Trevor Graydon III, with the addition of a moustache, was more believable in his role. Buddy's performance was very good and he better matched Miss Dorothy, played sweetly by Emily Wood. Pam O'Grady shines as Mrs Meers; Nadine Wood has created a memorable Miss Flannery; and Harry Nguyen as Ching Ho and Paulo Nacienceno as Bun Foo provide the comic relief and do it with gusto. Samantha Francis as Muzzy was clearly having vocal difficulty but made up for it with an energetic and strong performance.

"Thoroughly Modern Millie" is a well-loved musical and if you enjoy the happy ever after story and are prepared to 'suspend disbelief' and enjoy the music and dancing, you will not be disappointed with this production.