

REVIEW

Well-balanced Jane

Calamity Jane CAODS

CAODS has a new director for the next few productions – Jeremy Tustin – and I'm sure he would agree he has a hard act to follow.

Calamity Jane is a production that can't make up its mind if it's a drama or a musical, but Jeremy balanced it well. The production numbers were well handled, with a good, rich chorus, though some of the solos got a bit lost in the balance of chorus and orchestra.

Despite a few "eccentric" pieces of staging – Calamity slow-marching to her wedding as if to a funeral was one – the sheer vitality with

which CAODS infuses any production makes it a very worthwhile spectacle.

Kim Anderson as Calamity has the right amount of feisty presence and voice. Karl Wilson, as her lover Wild Bill Hickock, has a voice that rings out superbly with a stage presence to match.

The pairing of Christie Booth as the wannabe singer Katie Brown and Nick Court as the awkward Cavalry

Lieutenant who woos her, added buckets to the effect of the production.

Another pairing made in heaven was that of the hooper Ben Ward who produced a highly convincing

song & dance routine with the ever watchable Claire McGeoch as the saloon owner's daughter realising there is more to life than the backwoods.

A special mention for Peter Smith who can come up with a really convincing distraught appearance as the saloon owner Henry Miller faced with a series of disasters which threaten to have him tarred and feathered.

The tempo in some of the chorus numbers was a bit rushed and breathless, but the ensemble's rendition of Black Hills of Dakota and Calamity and Bill Hickock's Secret Love were moving and noteworthy exceptions.

JIM HUTCHON