

Thoroughly Modern millie  
CAODS, September 24, 2007

Director and choreographer - Jeremy Tustin, MD – Andrew Denyer

This show has a thin plot and few memorable songs and yet CAODS extracted the maximum from it. The key was a great set (albeit quite complex and slow to move at times), glorious costumes, a talented cast and plenty of action. What impressed me most was the choreography; everyone danced, even the men! Not just easy movements either but apparently complex tap and modern dance steps that created interesting shapes on stage. This was not only true of the opening chorus number but all the way through. The principal line up was both strong and balanced, with no weak links. The contrast between Millie, desperately trying to be “modern”, with faux naïf Dorothy was well played and the cheesy moments, such as the instant Trevor Graydon met Dorothy, was timed beautifully and very funny. Millie was totally convincing throughout as an actress, singer and dancer but deserved a more sympathetic approach from her orchestra. During the *Gimme gimme* number it appeared as though Millie was struggling to sing over the orchestra; I hope she lasted the week. The patter song from Ruddigore was superb and both Millie and Graydon are to be commended for their diction. Mrs Mears was triumphant and handled the transition from pantomime Chinese to crooked American with a chip on her shoulder with aplomb. Jimmy was a strong foil to Millie and coped with the extremely high “I turned the corner” well. Muzzy had a superb night club voice and provided some genuine goosebumps during *Long as I'm here with you*. While the two Chinese laundrymen, Bun Foo and Ching Ho were funny and sang well I felt they didn't quite ring true. I suspect it was the costume; perhaps black pigtail wigs and white socks would have completed the stereotype. Overall this was a thoroughly enjoyable production but on the first night at least the orchestra was simply too loud; this was true not only during the underscoring but even during some of the songs. Either a lighter orchestral touch or a push on the volume slide of the sound desk is needed.

Reviewer – Stewart Adkins