

A thoroughly jolly Millie

Nomads go back to the age of the flapper for their latest production *Nomads: Thoroughly Modern Millie*, at the Corn Exchange, from Wednesday, October 4, to Saturday, October 7

A production by Nomads is something to look forward to and I anticipated a good evening, for the society have high standards and the members to help them achieve it, although TMM isn't one of my favourite musicals.

Millie Dillmount has come to New York from Kansas to find a rich husband. On arrival she is robbed and meets the unsympathetic Jimmy, who directs her to Hotel Priscilla, owned by faux Oriental Mrs Meers, a white slave trader helped by two Chinese sidekicks. Another arrival is the naive Miss Dorothy Brown. She and Millie pal up and what follows is a mix of love, crime and misunderstanding.

Nic Cope's orchestra, always a delight to listen to, started the evening off well, with a crisp, jazzy overture. The opening chorus number, with everyone on stage, nevertheless sounded strangely muted, in spite of the fact that they were all obviously singing their hearts out. Some familiar faces were missing and obviously the society are building up new talent.

Beth Marsh, in the massive role of Millie, did well, as did Hannah Maskell (Miss Dorothy), showing her beautiful voice best in the duet *Falling In Love With Someone*. Kate Leek as the evil Mrs Meers brought her character to life and worked well with Stuart Honey (Bun Foo) and Malt Collins (Ching Ho), her two hilariously disagreeing assistants.

Seasoned performer Alison Hault was magnificent as glitzy hostess Muzzy, as was Chloe Anderson as the nifty-footed Miss Flannery. George Stacey (Jimmy) and Tom Hazelden as rich Mr Graydon gave first-rate all-round performances. Well done.

The 'Priscilla' dancers were bright and slick, but, disappointingly, the movement in the chorus numbers, with the exception of the excellent *Forget About the Boy* and the closing number, were just not up to Nomads standards. Neither were the costumes, which were a hotchpotch. I understand why these were not hired, but there seemed to have been no overseeing eye as to accuracy, colour and suitability, so necessary to present a good picture on stage.

All that said, it was jolly and there were shouts of appreciation at the end, but, for me, this production, directed by Jeanette Maskell, was not one of Nomads' finest.

CAROLINE FRANKLIN