Show Report

North Manchester AODS

Calamity Jane

13 October 2026

North Manchester AODS
Calamity Jane
SHOW REPORT
– 2026-27 Season –

Northern Stage Awards

REPORT COPYRIGHT & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY NOTICE

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved.

Northern Stage Awards is committed to openness and transparency. Our adjudication reports are therefore made publicly available so that societies, performers, production teams and the wider theatre community can access, read and share them freely.

Our decision to make our reports publicly accessible should not be interpreted as permission for other organisations to copy or reproduce our work.

The reports produced by Northern Stage Awards represent original work developed for and on behalf of the organisation. This includes, where applicable, the written content, commentary, observations, recommendations, wording, structure, presentation and other original elements contained within our reports.

Our reports may be freely viewed, downloaded and shared in their original form, and **societies may use their own reports for their own promotional**, **educational** and **archival purposes**, **provided that Northern Stage Awards is appropriately credited**.

However, **no permission is granted for another adjudication**, **awards**, **assessment** or **theatre organisation to copy**, **reproduce**, **adapt or repurpose our reports**, **or distinctive elements of our reporting approach**, **for use in its own services or publications.**

This includes using Northern Stage Awards reports as templates, source material or models for producing reports on behalf of another organisation, particularly where doing so reproduces our original wording, distinctive structure, presentation or other original content.

Northern Stage Awards recognises that general ideas, principles and methods may not be protected by copyright.

This notice is therefore specifically intended to protect the original written and creative expression developed by Northern Stage Awards and its contributors, rather than prevent others from developing their own independent approaches to adjudication.

We are proud to publish our work openly. We ask that others respect the distinction between being inspired by good practice and reproducing someone else's work.

Unauthorised reproduction or use of Northern Stage Awards material may constitute an infringement of intellectual property rights, and Northern Stage Awards reserves the right to take appropriate action where necessary.

All photography contained within this report has been supplied by the relevant society or production company and remains the property of its respective copyright holder. The images are reproduced with permission and no ownership rights are transferred to Northern Stage Awards.

For permission to reproduce material beyond the uses expressly permitted above, please contact Northern Stage Awards.

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION	Calamity Jane
SOCIETY	North Manchester AODS
VENUE	NWTAC Theatre
GENRE	Musical
CAST SIZE	27
DIRECTOR	Lindsay Lowe
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Jo Burton
CHOREOGRAPHER	Jayde Rylance
SECRETARY	Theresa Allcock
FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGER	Karen Hamnett
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Jon Gibson
RÉPÉTITEUR	Isobel Ingham
KEYS	John G Barry
VIOLIN	Julia Taylor
REEDS	Kat Dunphy/Andrew Bickerton
PERCUSSION	Dan Bennett
BASS	Simon Chaplin
STAGE MANAGER	Lucy Strong
SET	Mark Beaumont
LIGHTING/SOUND	Mark Beaumont
PROPERTIES	Patricia Smithies
COSTUMES	'The Boyz'
ARMOURER	Sheila Byrne
WARDROBE	Catherine King
PROGRAMME DESIGN	Nick Lowe
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS	Nick Lowe
FRONT OF HOUSE	Phil Hamnett, Helen Bacht & NWTAC

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

CAST LIST

Calamity Jane, Frontierswoman	Caoimhe Bradley
Wild Bill Hickock, Gambler	Oliver Hingston
Katie Brown, Theatre Maid	Caragh Rooney
Lt. Danny Gilmartin, Military Officer	Callum Burton
Henry Miller, Hotel Proprietor	Nick Lowe
Susan Miller, Hotel Assistant	Jayde Rylance
Francis Fryer, Entertainer	Callum Galgani
Adelaide Adams, Entertainer	Jo Burton
Joe, Bartender	Mike Waldron
Rattlesnake, Stagecoach Driver	John O'Brien
Doc Pierce, Undertaker/Doctor	David Fielding
Pete, Indian Scout	David Long
Hank, Indian Scout	Ewan Arthur
Colonel, Military Commander	David Lawton
Cora, Golden Garter Dancer	Vicky Parry
Pearl, Golden Garter Dancer	Amy Copas
Flo, Golden Garter Dancer	June Knox
Charlie, Prospector	Roy Dowson
Lottie, Storekeeper	Annie Dixon
Sadie, Postmistress	Theresa Allcock
Jed, Miner	Kath Storey
Constance, Schoolmistress	Maureen Leigh
Clara, Chemist	Rebecca Tonge
Cornelius, Whisky Tester	Andrew Evans
Delilah, Cook	Jenny Powrie
Evangeline, Upholsterer	Julia Smith
Susannah, Milliner	Mel Jones

DATE OF PERFORMANCE	Tuesday 13th October 2026
DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	Thursday 15th October 2026
ADJUDICATOR ID	NSA1001

NSA LOGO ON POSTER	Yes
NSA IN PROGRAMME	Yes
PROGRAMME CLASS	Best Original Design

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

THE REVIEW

REVIEW WORD COUNT	2640
STRONGEST ELEMENTS	**Powerful performance**

- **Caoimhe Bradley** and **Oliver Hingston** played the unlikely couple that is Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickock with great comedy, banter and strong vocals.

Choreography created with everyone in mind

- **Jayde Rylance** created choreography that was not over complicated and it meant that everyone in the cast could do it to the best of their ability and there were repeating phrases that created a lasting impression.

Great use of space

- The set and direction team thought not only how to make sure to use every part of the space that they have been given on the stage but also made sure to fill it out when necessary.

My guest and I arrived at NWTAC Theatre to see North Manchester AODS's version of Calamity Jane, the musical based on the historical frontierswoman of the same name. We were warmly welcomed by some of the patrons of North Manchester A.O.D.S who made sure we were well looked after and had everything we needed.

We were introduced to the Chair of the society, **Lindsay Lowe**, who also took on the role of Director for this production. Lindsay spoke about her love for the society, having been involved since 1988 and having taken on many different roles during that time. She also discussed the challenges of making the most of the available space while doing justice to the musical, as well as the need to find a replacement for Francis Fryer just six weeks before the production opened. It was interesting to hear more about the society and to understand what a labour of love this production had been for everyone involved.

Taking our seats, we were able to see the 'Saloon Orchestra' to the right-hand side of the stage which comprised the Musical Director **Jon Gibson** and the musicians that included **Isobel Ingham**, **John G Barry**, **Julia Taylor**, **Kat Dunphy**, **Andrew Bickerton**, **Dan Bennett** and **Simon Chaplin**. The production opened with the overture, giving us an immediate opportunity to appreciate the skill and togetherness of the orchestra. Although there was some initial feedback through the speakers, this was quickly addressed, allowing the music to take centre stage. As the performance progressed, the balance between the orchestra and the vocalists was particularly important, especially during moments when quieter singers needed to be heard clearly above the accompaniment. The sound balance allowed the music to maintain its energy and drive the story forward while ensuring the vocals remained audible.

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

The stage at NWTAC offers considerable depth, which was put to good use in this production, with the action extending right to the back of the stage. The stage was initially set as the Golden Garter Saloon where tables were set in front of the curtains which helped to bring the action of some of the scenes right onto the audience's laps. There was a bar set off to the side of the stage and the saloon's stage set at the very back of the stage. During other scenes like in 'the star dressing room' they used a partition to bring our attention towards the front of the stage, so we were taken away from the saloon where we began the story. There were additional pieces of set that cleverly showed part of Calamity's cabin, so they were able to give the illusion of being inside the cabin without having to change the full set. Additional set pieces cleverly suggested the interior of Calamity's cabin without requiring a complete scene change. Windows, a door and sections of brickwork, thoughtfully created by **Mark Beaumont**, helped establish the setting while allowing stage manager **Lucy Strong** to keep transitions moving efficiently. One scene transition did reveal a rogue Diet Coke on the bar, which may have left someone backstage wondering where it had come from! However, most transitions were covered by blackouts and the continued playing of the saloon orchestra, helping to avoid prolonged periods of inactivity on stage. The sound and lighting were operated by **Mark Beaumont**. The lighting set up consisted of multiple lines of lighting rigs, spaced out throughout the depth of the stage so they were able to light different areas of the stage as the action changed position. They also used a red wash over the lights during *'Secret Love'* which helped to suggest that the two duet partners might have been falling in love.

During the overture at the beginning of the musical, we were introduced to the running of the Golden Garter Saloon. Firstly, we saw bartender Joe, played by **Mike Waldron**, seem to water down the liquor in the saloon with water and then saloon owner Henry Miller and his niece Susan Miller played by **Nick Lowe** and **Jayde Rylance** respectively who were busying themselves with the daily goings-on of the saloon. We also saw Mike take on the role of one of Adelaide Adam's adoring fans where he created a completely different character, from a change of mannerisms, stature and even vocal tone, this was noticeable and showed he had thought through his characterisation of each role.

Nick Lowe played the owner of the Golden Garter Saloon with a nervous energy, and he portrayed this not only through his physicality but also with the speed in which he delivered his dialogue. His dialogue was delivered with such urgency at times that made it seem like Henry Miller would often speak before he thought. He still maintained good diction, and we were always able to follow what he was saying. He kept his characterisation throughout the production and would keep dabbing his forehead with a napkin even when not in the forefront of the scene. He even managed to bring a comedic element to the role when he was physically shaking with anger after Francis Fryer announced that he wants to marry his niece.

Henry Miller's niece Susan was played by **Jayde Rylance**. Jayde played Susan with a soft tone of voice which fitted the role of a doting niece. Although the character of Susan started out meek, she seemed to find her voice more and we even saw her stand up to her uncle at times. It was

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

noticeable that Jayde's confidence lay with the dancing during this performance which was no surprise because as Jayde was also choreographer for this production. She created choreography for the full cast that was memorable but also achievable by all the cast. Jayde also incorporated more complex choreography for the saloon dancers, Flo, played by **June Knox**, Pearl, played by **Amy Copas**, and Cora, played by **Vicky Parry**. The trio delivered Jayde's choreography with real attention to detail, and I particularly enjoyed the precision of June's movements, ensuring each finished with fully extended arms and beautifully defined lines. It was these finer details that added polish to the performance and demonstrated the care that had gone into the choreography.

During the musical, we saw Susan take very kindly to a performer that came to town by the name of Francis Fryer. Francis, played by **Callum Galgani**, had initially been booked to play at the Golden Garter Saloon by mistake by Susan's uncle as he mistakenly thought it would be a female artist. When Francis arrived in Deadwood and was not what Henry Miller was expecting he tried to get Francis to leave but we saw Susan stand up to her uncle and convince him to let Francis perform. Before the performance, I was made aware that the original actor cast as Francis had to withdraw from the production just six weeks before opening night. North Manchester AODS should be commended for finding Callum to step into the role at such short notice, taking on two solo numbers, one featuring a dance break and umbrella prop, and the other requiring him to perform in drag. While a little more vocal projection would have helped Callum's performance carry across the stage, it is important to recognise the challenges of taking on such a demanding role at short notice. Joining a cast that had already been rehearsing for some time is no easy task, and Callum deserves credit for stepping in just six weeks before the production.

Our leading lady, Calamity Jane, was played by **Caoimhe Bradley**. The role involved a significant amount of stage time, and Caoimhe made the most of every moment. I was made aware that this was the first principal role that she had taken on with NMAODS and having seen the confidence with which she commanded the stage, I suspected that there would be more principal roles in her future.

She maintained her accent throughout, even during the plentiful musical numbers that she was a part of. Caoimhe made sure to keep her stance strong during the first act of the musical which fed into the storyline that Calamity was someone that was constantly mistaken for a man and was overlooked by the men as a feminine figure. When she appeared in the second act, wearing a dress and even though she was trying to embrace her feminine side, she still slipped into her masculine energy using her physicality, like when she would put her feet up on the table or even dropped the 'freshly baked' cakes and then shrugged it off like it was nothing. Although her stance had been strong from the beginning of the performance, I wished that her vocals in dialogue and during songs were even stronger or had further projection although this seemed to improve throughout the show. Throughout the musical, Caoimhe was able to display different singing styles like her excellent pitching in the scalic verses of *'Careless With The Truth'* where Calamity was trying to make a cogent argument as to how adventurous she is but the patrons

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

at the Golden Garter Saloon were having none of it. We saw her anger come through whilst she spits out the lyrics during *'Men'* and she also showed a softer vocal during her duet with Katie, *'A Woman's Touch'*. Though I thought the song that showed off Caoimhe's voice the most was *'A Secret Love'*, in which she was able to portray her feelings, using her vibrato well and grew her vocals to a climax in the song.

Often when our leading lady was on stage, Wild Bill Hickock never seemed to be far behind. Bringing this playful friendship to the stage was **Oliver Hingston** who always seemed to have a cheeky smile on his face when mocking Calamity especially during songs like *'Careless With The Truth'* and *'I Can Do Without You'*. Throughout the production, Oliver displayed his vocal power and range in songs like *'Adelaide'*. It seemed as though this role really tested every part of Oliver's vocal ability and during *'Higher Than A Hawk'*, he seemed to get slightly ahead of the music and would have benefitted from some further breath control but his deep dulcet tones were always a welcome addition to any song he was a part of. He was able to maintain his accent throughout whilst displaying good diction and projection throughout his dialogue.

Alongside Wild Bill Hickock, there were also a group of men in the musical that would mock Calamity's character whilst hanging around the saloon also. These comprised Rattlesnake, played by **John O'Brien**, Hank, played by **Ewan Arthur**, Pete, played by **David Long**, Charlie played by **Roy Dowson**, Jed, played by **Kath Storey**, Cornelius played by **Andrew Evans** and Doc Pierce played by **David Fielding**. They all worked well together as a group and constantly found moments to bring the light-hearted comedic energy to the performance. John O'Brien played off the gag where Calamity Jane had shot through his hat with convincing nervous shaky hands and Roy Dowson was particularly emotive throughout the entire production. The audience particularly enjoyed a moment when David Fielding appeared to battle with his accent. Although his American twang wavered, he continued to deliver his lines confidently and commanded the stage, with the moment ultimately adding an unexpected comic effect. This group of men never failed to show their adoration for Adelaide Adams and would stop whatever they were doing whenever her name was mentioned to daydream.

The adored woman in question, Adelaide Adams, was played by **Jo Burton**. Jo played the role with the pizzazz of a showman but the delicacy of a lady. Whilst the men sang 'Adelaide', she danced on the saloon stage, as though it was happening in their dreams and during her solo song *'It's Harry I'm Plannin' To Marry'* she enunciated so well that it seemed effortless. She was able to create peaks and troughs in the song which helped to create a story throughout her solo. Although Adelaide as a part was not on the stage for long, Jo certainly made sure she left a lasting impression, particularly through her mockery of her male admirers when repeating the phrase 'au revoir'. We also saw Jo appear throughout other scenes as a member of the ensemble.

Caragh Rooney played Katie Brown, the maid to Adelaide Adams, and created a clear contrast between the two characters through her physical characterisation. She portrayed Katie with a

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

more reserved posture, holding her hands in front of herself and bowing her head slightly, which helped to emphasise the differences between the two women.

We then saw Katie try to find herself as a performer when she was mistaken for the famous performer Adelaide Adams by Calamity Jane. Katie then began performing *'Keep It Under Your Hat'* where she sang quietly and became so nervous that she confessed that she wasn't actually the famous star they thought she was. When she continued with the song after receiving encouragement from Calamity Jane and a second chance to prove herself, Caragh showed Katie's growth in confidence by singing slightly louder and dancing around the saloon. I would have liked to see even more projection in Caragh's singing at this point to show an even bigger difference between the way she started and the way she finished the song.

Throughout the musical, we saw Katie fall for Lt. Danny Gilmartin played by **Callum Burton**. Although we could clearly see the relationship developing between Katie and Danny, Katie tried to deny her feelings to avoid causing any upset in the small town of Deadwood. Caragh and Callum created a convincing fondness between the characters, often gazing lovingly into each other's eyes. I would have liked Callum to have performed more towards the audience, allowing us to see more of his expressions. Nevertheless, their rendition of *'Love You Dearly'* was sweet and delicately sung.

The Lieutenant's commanding officer was played by **David Lawton**, a sweet but respected Colonel, who's solo section in the *'Adelaide'* reprise was tunefully and softly sung. He worked well with the push and pull of the live band, and it was a moment where all eyes were on him.

Our cast was rounded out by the women of Deadwood, who consisted of Delilah, played by **Jenny Powrie**, Clara, played by **Rebecca Tonge**, Sadie, played by **Theresa Allcock**, Constance played by **Maureen Leigh**, Evangeline played by **Julia Smith**, Lottie played by **Annie Dixon** and Susannah played by **Mel Jones**. The women in the story helped to drive the story along by reacting to everything going on, on stage and they always did so with smiles on their faces. Jenny Powrie always drew my eye, as she moved around the stage interacting with the different characters and her reaction to the action on stage was always so noticeable but believable and she seemed to be enjoying herself.

The direction by **Lindsay Lowe**, assisted by **Jo Burton**, was thoughtfully executed. All areas of the stage were used effectively throughout the production, and the ensemble and supporting cast were well utilised. Moments with fewer characters on stage also allowed the audience to appreciate the more tender relationships developing between characters. The use of the band and also getting the cast to walk through the audience to cover different scene changes helped to maintain the audience's interest even at times when it could otherwise have been lost. This paired with the props, managed by **Patricia Smithies**, the costumes provided by **'The Boyz'**, armoury organised by **Sheila Byrne** and the wardrobe coordinated by **Catherine King** helped to impress the audience so thoroughly that the production even received a standing ovation on the night I attended.

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

My guest and I greatly enjoyed watching NMADOS's production of *Calamity Jane* and appreciated the warm hospitality throughout our visit. We look forward to seeing what the society brings to the stage next.

©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

PHOTOGRAPHS



©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

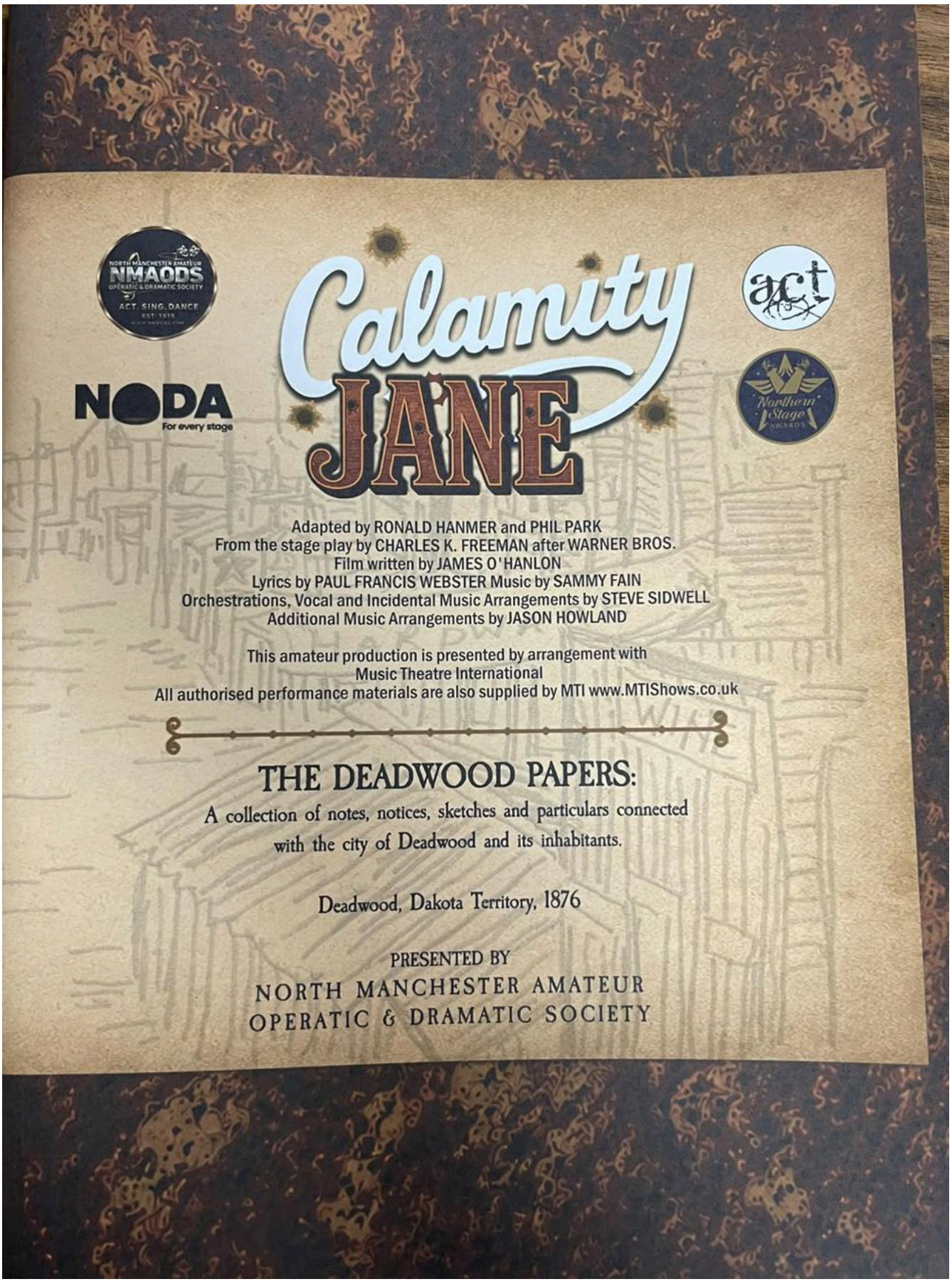


©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.



©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.

PROGRAMME



©2026 Northern Stage Awards. All rights reserved. This report is publicly available for viewing and sharing in its original form. Reproduction, adaptation or use of its original content or distinctive reporting material by another organisation is not permitted without prior written permission.