

Mary Poppins Returns

Friday between Christmas and New Year and things feel a bit flat, so . . .

“What’s on at the pictures?”

Which is how daughter and I came to be in one of the larger theatres of our local multi-screen yesterday settling down to watch Mary Poppins Returns. I grew up on the original Mary Poppins film. I still have the LP; I knew every word of every song.

I’m a Londoner (have I ever mentioned that to you?) and I’m particular about the Cockney accent and London locations. It is a measure of the popularity of Dick van Dyke in England that his appalling English accents (cockney as Bert the chimneysweep and RP as bank chairman Mr Dawes) were overlooked and forgiven on the strength of his other virtues (singing, dancing, acting and generally being a decent bloke).

I was a little worried when I heard that his grown up apprentice Jack, now a lamplighter, was going to be played by American musical actor Lin-Manuel Miranda.

“Look Mum, they are keeping up the tradition of the first film already; just as the pantomime dame is played by a man, in this case the cockney is again played by an American. And look at this chap’s body of work already – he wrote Hamilton – he’s not just a pretty face”

In 54 years Dick van Dyke’s English accent (RP as Mr Dawes the younger, son of the original chairman) has not improved. But he can still dance at the age of 93. And it was lovely to see him, Karen Dotrice (young Jane in 1964) and Angela Lansbury in cameo roles.

The film opens with Jack riding a bicycle as he extinguishes

the gas burning street lights while singing "Under the Lovely London Sky". His singing accent is right, his voice as expected is excellent, and his ability to cycle while singing from the Tower of London to St Paul's cathedral in less than two lines, without any breathlessness, could not have been achieved [this is one of his best](#) (subjective opinion again).

Accent aside, Jack's movements, mannerisms, presence were all convincing. And the sub-plot, a potential romance with Jane Banks, who works in adulthood for a trade union, was touching.

So far these were my original thoughts but when I tried an on-line search for the lyrics of the patter song element of A Book is not its Cover I found