

BWW Review: Gimme, gimme! THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE Opens at Theatre Jacksonville

by Heather Vollman (</author/Heather-Vollman>) Jun. 12, 2017



Thoroughly
MODERN MILLIE

JUNE 9 - 25, 2017

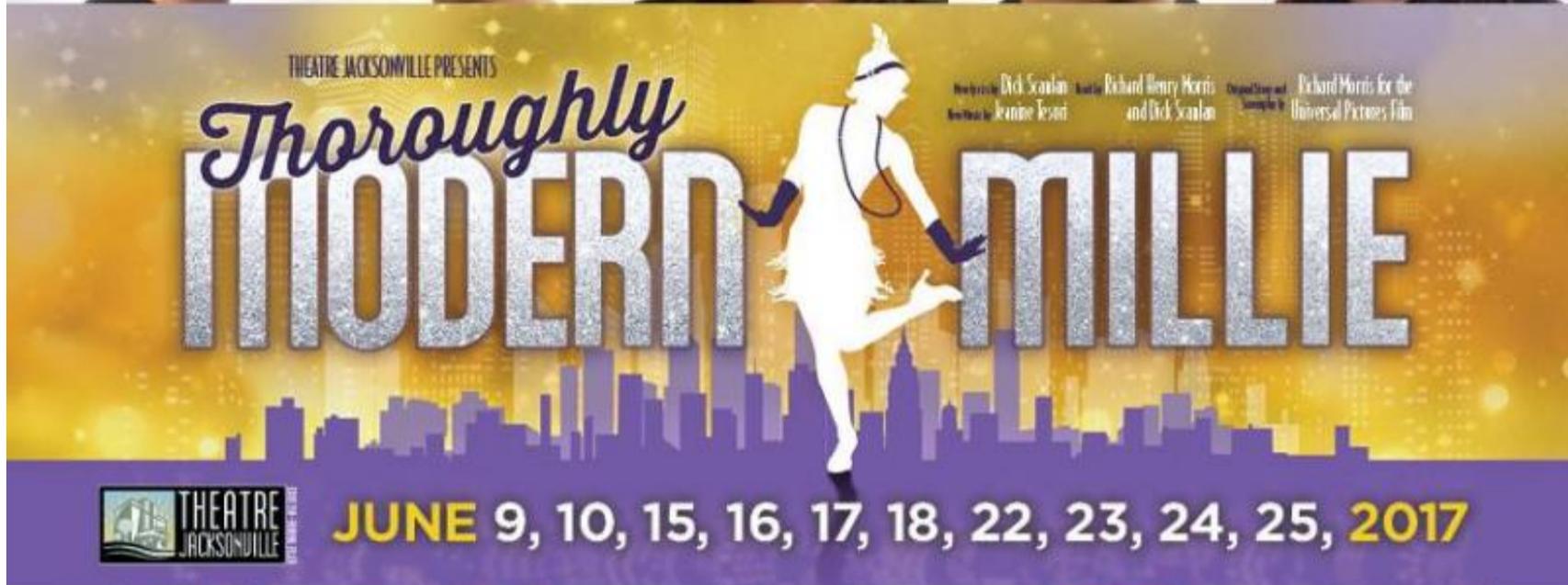


www.theatrejax.com

With wide eyes and big dreams, Millie Dillmount leaves behind her small town of Salina, Kansas to pursue a life of riches and fame in New York City. Like most of us, it takes Millie mere moments in the Big Apple to learn her goals may be a little harder to come by than she had originally thought. THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE, a comedic musical in two acts is full of fun choreography, toe-tapping songs, and larger-than-life characters. Theatre Jacksonville will be running this production through June 25th, and you can scoop up tickets here (<https://theatre-jax.ticketleap.com/>).

Celebrating their 97th season, Theatre Jacksonville is a delightful space. If you've never been, know that the seats are comfortable, the stage is sufficient, and the people are kind. This show is a head-spinner, full of misunderstandings and several mini plot lines. The characters are endearing and developed, and the costumes are well-researched period pieces. Directed and Choreographed by Curtis J. Williams with Musical Direction by the brilliant Erin Barnes, MILLIE is fun for all ages.

MILLIE offers something for everyone. If you like a quirky, extroverted adventure seeker, you'll love Taylor Kearschner's interpretation of Millie Dillmount. If you take to divas and drama with surprisingly tender morale to bestow, Felicia Ewing's Muzzy Van Hossmere will win your heart. Logan Smith, a recent Douglas Anderson (</people/Douglas-Anderson/>) graduate, plays the likable Jimmy Smith (</people/Jimmy-Smith/>), whose story takes an interesting turn. Smith's voice is stunning; he can probably sing upside down, under water. Perhaps you're more of a comedic antagonist fan...if so, Tracy Olin's Mrs. Meers will deliver wit and energy. Matt King (</people/Matt-King/>) maintains strong comedic delivery as Trevor Graydon, Millie's fast-talking boss. Ching Ho, played by Brandon Leporati, is an absolute show stealer. Each ounce of this young man is devoted to the story in every moment: he brings much laughter and even a few tears. Rounded out by an energetic supporting cast and a seemingly always dancing ensemble, these characters successfully recreate an almost century old culture of prohibition, bobbed hair, and plenty of sequins.



The pit, full of talented instrumentalists, is life-giving to the performance; their full sound and energy keeps a flowing pace for the production. Unfortunately, the pit often overpowers the vocalists, to an extent that most of the solo numbers are barely audible. I missed the opportunity to hear some of Jacksonville's finest in their more delicate moments, as there was no room for them to withdraw into a tender vocal interpretation, at the risk of going unheard. As it is, I missed several lines that are signature THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE moments because of the poor sound quality. The pit is not too loud; they are directed well and play emotively. The cast desperately needs to be amplified more effectively, however, for the sake of the audiences' experience *and* the vocal health of the performers.

Costume Designer Kimberly Burns fantastically conceptualized bright, glittery, glitzy costumes for this cast, from fun headwear all the way down to intentional shoe embellishments. Her design itself tells a story: pay attention to color choices throughout the production. It is clear through her art that Burns understands the nuances of the script, and a delight to be on the receiving end of these actualizations.

While MILLIE is at first glance, a loud, energetic comedy that at times is borderline (intentionally) offensive, there is much to garner from Millie Dillmount's experiences in New York City. The story is rich with conversation material...but don't take my word for it: come see for yourself! Click here (<https://www.facebook.com/TheatreJacksonville/videos/10154603946045205/>) for a sneak peek at the fun!

What Do You Think? Tell Us In The Comments!