

Reviews By Judith

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL - Review

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Presumably many patrons to *9 to 5 The Musical* will be drawn to the Capitol Theatre by the movie. This exuberant live experience is based on the huge-hit 1980 film, the title song of which got an Oscar nomination for Dolly Parton. With Parton's brilliant song writing behind the show and a book by the movie's screenwriter, Patricia Resnick, this crowd pleaser opens and closes with the earworm song that will have you lightly humming your way for the next few days. Along with that though, you may want to have a conversation with this show about what has changed and what has still a way to go.

Overall, though, what awes and sets the toes to tapping is the fun with which Director Jeff Calhoun and Associate Director Karen Johnson Mortimer set the stage. Dolly even makes a video appearance as we meet the extraordinarily talented cast. Marina Prior is completely relatable as a newly driven Violet comes into her own, Casey Donovan will break your heart as Judy becomes the female strength of the piece and what Erin Clare does to come out of Dolly's shadow in playing Doralee is brilliant performance. Each of this formidable trio have solos that raise the roof with their superb rendering and and fill the heart, with an extraordinarily talented ensemble behind them, the big numbers get the pulse racing.

Then there's Eddie Perfect who does Franklin Hart Jnr complete justice - poor man, what a role to take on! There's an I-wish interlude though, that gives the audience a break from the blustering misogyny. That

scene involves a tour-de-force performance from Caroline O'Connor as Roz. Over the top and broad as broads get, it is hilariously big and brassy in it's don't look away silliness.

It's the mixture of silly and serious, of big stage perky and single-spot solo sincere that gives the show its variety and impact, however, some of the content has not stood the test of decades. And one can hear it in the audience. Laughs and cheers at what has been achieved and some grumbling at having to see and hear this again. There's one song that misses the mark by a considerable margin, but really that's a small drawback to a crowd who are entertained by unbeatable performance and slick, sassy and watchable staging.

With 80s computer screens as the frame, colour is used to considerable effect, especially as changes for the brighter are made by the female-power triumvirate. The upstage video used to good effect and the smoothest of scene changes transport the watcher easily to new places and moods with added guiderails of costume and wigs. Though I was somewhat surprised by the lack of country in the score, the excitement and the pathos come across the footlights with both brilliant dance numbers and a soup to cigars fidelity to the story which makes the audience smile.

9 to 5 The Musical is a laughing, heart-warming offering that, from my aftershow eavesdropping, appeals to old and young alike, and whether you have seen the film or not. And for those who didn't live through it, those were dreadful times for women, in the workplace and out of it, and maybe inspired by the sparkle, glamour and chutzpa, it's a show to spark an instructive conversation in the most entertaining of ways.

RbJ Rating: 4 ½ matadors

Dolly Parton's *9 to 5 The Musical* is now playing at the [Capitol Theatre](#) until May 1, 2022. You can also read an interview with some of the cast [here](#).