

## [The Musical of Musicals \(The Musical!\)](#)

Venue: [The Tron](#)

Where: Glasgow

Date Reviewed: 24 June 2009

WOS Rating: ★★

Average Reader Rating: ★★★★★

Reader Reviews: [View and add to our user reviews](#)

‘Sometimes one musical is not enough!’ This is the tag line that accompanies [Upstage Theatre Company](#)’s production of the Off-Broadway spoof *The Musical of Musicals: The Musical*. With book, music and lyrics by [Eric Rockwell](#) and [Joanne Bogart](#), the show’s simple plot of paying rent is acted out by four characters: tenant, landlord, hero and neighbour, each section in a different musical song-styling, comprising of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s "Corn", Stephen Sondheim’s "A Little Complex", Jerry Herman’s "Dear Abby", Andrew Lloyd Webber’s "Aspects of Junita" and Kander and Ebb’s "Speakeasy".

Comedy is a tricky business, but spoof can be even more problematic. To recognise spoof, the audience has to appreciate and have an understanding of the core material. Generally, this wasn’t too much of a problem, but this production certainly appeared to have ‘The Grand Old Duke of York’ effect: when they were up, they were up, and when they were down, they were down. In the opening scene Mother Abby sings ‘the hills are alive, but you’re half dead’. Sadly, so are half the cast. On one hand, [Matt Fullerton](#) (Willy), [Chris Johnston](#) (Jidder) and [Lucy Mills](#) (June) are confident and reasonably assured in their roles, particularly Mills who establishes herself as the star attraction very early on. However, they are let down by inconsistent performances by [Lynn Mulvenna](#) and [Suzanne Sellers](#) who share the role of Abby, losing much of the character’s wit and charm with shoddy delivery, moments of lackluster and underplayed characterisation. It’s never a good sign when an actor is upstaged by a smoke machine.

Director [Peter Screen](#) keeps the production ticking along, but this show shouldn’t just tick, it should revolve at double speed with razor-sharp execution. Screen does produce some lovely touches, but for me these don’t come often enough. There is some witty choreography by [Andrea Finbow](#), particularly the Jerry Herman ‘dance-break’ and effective projection design by [Mark Hughes](#).

This production does amuse and at times has the audience in fits of laughter. However, a bit more polish is required if it is to truly sparkle. It’s ironic that at the end of the 90 minute comedic piece, one was grateful to hear the show’s finale number "Done". Generally, it needs a bit longer in the oven, as this one is slightly ‘underdone’.

- David Somerville

## Reader Reviews

Score	Comment	Date
★★★ ★	I attended this performance on thursday evening and thoroughly enjoyed it, i think all the actors did a fine job and i myself am professionally trained and a regural working actor. I think the comments of Lynne Mulvenna and Suzanne Sellers were slightly harsh, Mills Johnstone and Fullerton were fully confident in their roles, however when sharing a role the other two performers do not travel on the same journey as the rest of the cast, maybe this was the problem. Their characterisation was not as strong but vocally i feel Miss Sellers in particular had the voice to be heard, with a massive range and a very colourful tone. I do agree with a lot of David's comments, however one thing I find lacking in this review is the mention of the singing itself and the musical direction. The job of Miss Amy Barnes has sadly went unnoticed, great job done with a very complex musical score. - <i>Annie</i>	29 Jun 09
★★★ ★	I also managed to catch this performance and enjoyed it at most parts, be it am new to the theatre so cannot be that critical. David Somerville is bang on buck about Mills performance of June and she totally lifted up the production for me. I thought the play was entertaining overall and had me and my partner laughing happily throughout. - <i>Alan</i>	29 Jun 09
★★★	I also attended this production. The show is not as easy to perorm as you might think. I have seen this show performed before to a much better standard. I certainly did not laugh all the way through as I felt in places the humour was skimmed over and in some cases the punch lines were not delivered properly. I can understand that people may have found it very entertaining but they may have nothing else to compare it to. The review is very fair and as an outsider who doesn't know anyone involved in the production, feel it's gives a true picture of how the show was presented. - <i>Iain</i>	27 Jun 09
★★★	I also saw the performance on Wednesday and because the script is so good rather than the actor's skills there were some titters in the audience but there were very few moments of rip roaring laughter which were heard ringing around the Crawford theatre a couple of years ago when it was performed last. Shame it didn't live up to that standard. A little disappointing in comparison. - <i>Katie</i>	27 Jun 09
★★	Anyone who cannot raise a laugh at the humour of this show must be very sullen. I saw the performance on Wednesday night and thought it was superb. The acting and choreography were perfectly performed; overall it was very entertaining. I laughed all the way through. I think that Mr Somerville was perhaps a little too critical in his review. At the end of the day it is the audience who decide. The individual opinion of one individual is of no consequence. - <i>Brian G Sellers, I.S.M.</i>	27 Jun 09