

Production Proposal:

9 to 5 the Musical by Dolly Parton and Patricia Resnick

Directorial Concept:

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan

- The phrase "feminine mystique" was coined by Friedan to describe the assumptions that women would be fulfilled from their housework, marriage, sexual lives, and children. The prevailing belief was that women who were truly feminine should not want to work, get an education, or have political opinions. Friedan wanted to prove that women were unsatisfied and could not voice their feelings.
- Second Wave Feminism
- Fourth Wave Feminism
 - Focus on body shaming, sexual harassment, and r*pe culture, #MeToo
- Feminist ode to working women

Plot Summary:

9 to 5 The Musical, with music and lyrics by Dolly Parton and book by Patricia Resnick, is based on the seminal 1980 hit movie. Set in the late 1970s, this hilarious story of friendship and revenge in the Rolodex era is outrageous, thought-provoking and even a little romantic.

Pushed to the boiling point, three female coworkers concoct a plan to get even with the sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot they call their boss. In a hilarious turn of events, Violet, Judy and Doralee live out their wildest fantasy – giving their boss the boot! While Hart remains "otherwise engaged," the women give their workplace a dream makeover, taking control of the company that had always kept them down.

Setting:

1979, multiple locations

Casting Considerations:

15 named characters, 4 leads, 8 female, 7 male, 11 of the named characters can also play ensemble roles (some with costume changes), there are other small roles like Detective, Doctor, Candy Striper that will be taken by ensemble. If possible 3-4 extra actors that are only ensemble to fill out these roles and space would be preferred. Actors will need to sing and be able to do standard dance.

Diversity in casting is a necessity. Being aware of how ethnicity could affect the storyline, particularly with the role of Violet.

Technical Requirements:

- The music can be played through tracks.
- A projector will be needed for the set.
- Mics should be utilized for sound.
- Scene with the garage door opener - need to fly an actor.

Description of Ideal Venue:

Large, seats 800, proscenium style stage with automatic fly system. I understand this ideal venue may not be what I will be working with.

Directing

The overall show concept is taking inspiration from the women in the show and their fight against the patriarchal ideology. This reflects real life movements for at the same time this show is set, was the middle of the second wave feminist movement.

Second wave feminism was pushed by the book *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan. The phrase "feminine mystique" was coined by Friedan to describe the assumptions that women would be fulfilled from their housework, marriage, sexual lives, and children. The prevailing belief was that women who were truly feminine should not want to work, get an education, or have political opinions. Friedan wanted to prove that women were unsatisfied and could not voice their feelings.

In *9 to 5*, we see three women who are eager to have careers of their own as their career is what fulfills them; not beauty, not sex, not a man, not housework. These are smart and capable women. Violet works hard and devotes her life to this company. Her loyalty deserves the promotion she is waiting for. Judy is new to the workforce but learns quickly how much she prefers the single, working life to her old married one.

We are currently in the Fourth Wave of the Feminist movement. This movement is focusing more on body shaming, sexual harrassment, and rape culture. This is how #MeToo came about. We see this theme in Doralee's story. Unfortunately many women can still see themselves in Doralee.

This production should tie these two feminist movements together. It should make the vintage modern. It will remind us that these themes are still something worth fighting for. *9 to 5* is a feminist ode to working women.

Acting

Actors will need to be able to practice standard dance. We will have separate choreography and music rehearsals. Dance will be standard musical theatre and jazz. Choreography/movement will be utilized in scene transitions and moving furniture on and off stage.

The show is a comedy. Actors should have a good sense of comedic timing and pacing. There are a few serious moments in the show, so there should be acting range as well. The actor playing Mr. Hart will need to be funny, but sleazy. If possible, the actor playing Doralee should look and sound like Dolly Parton or at least be able to do a Texas accent.

As director, I will be implementing the tool “button,” created by intimacy coordinator Chelsea Pace, as a safety tool. We will discuss this tool and how to use it on the first day of rehearsal. Before we start choreography and blocking, we will have separate intimacy calls between Hart and Doralee. These calls will also be scheduled whenever necessary to upkeep the intimacy choreography and whenever else needed between actors.

Scenic Design

The show is set in 1979 Los Angeles. There are many, many locations throughout the musical. To accommodate, I would like a simple set with possibly a platform on the side for levels. A screen and projections should be used to showcase the location. Minimal furniture used and will be moved on and off the set for changes.

The set design should take inspiration from 1970s TV game show sets. I love the flashy arches and framing. Maybe make use of a false proscenium?

Locations mentioned: Violet's garage, Office bullpen, Hart's office, Filing room, Xerox room, Doralee's bedroom, an Elevator, Violet's living room, a posh 1940's nightclub, a rodeo, a woodland, Consolidated coffee area, Ladies bathroom, Hospital, Parking garage (revealing Hart inside the trunk of Judy's car), Hart's bedroom, Roz's desk, Atrium, Hart's house. That's 19 different locations! A couple of these can be reused and consolidated down.

I do not want to include a projection of Dolly Parton as the script suggests. It feels cheesy and corny as if the show was being produced at a theme park.





Costume/Hair & Makeup Design

The setting is 1979 Los Angeles. Costumes should fit everyone according to their status. For example, Mr. Hart might wear more up-to-date (for 1979) suits as he is the CEO of the company. Violet is a single mother and has not gotten her promotion, so her clothes might be more well-worn. Judy is noted to be wearing a designer outfit, hat, and silk scarf on her first day of work. Doralee is the character that is based to look like Dolly Parton. She should be blonde, sexy, and have big bosoms. Everyone is wearing business office attire. There will be many quick changes.

There are several small characters like a cop, doctor, candy striper, etc. They will need specific costumes and have quick changes from ensemble members to these characters.

Makeup will be standard basic beauty. Hair will be a bit more specific to look like the time period.





Lighting Design

This design should not shy away from color. The lighting should feel free to move with the music and have fun. I want to see pops of purple, pinks, and oranges. These colors should be stereotypical pop 70s. There are two spotlights that can be used.

During stagnant scenes, the lighting can look more realistic to the setting. We are not doing total realism, so no bright fluorescent lighting to replicate an office space.

If possible, I would like to tie in the game show aesthetic by using other lighting fixtures. Maybe a fan next to a curtain as pictured below? I am open to ideas.





Sound Design

I do not want to do the initial suggestion of the script of having Dolly Parton recordings interrupt the music. Follow along the suggestions of the Appendix.

There will be several sound cues played throughout the show. There is underscoring played generally throughout when singing is not being done. Underscoring is done for each scene transition.

Actors should be mic'd. This will greatly enhance sound. There is a truncated rehearsal schedule and the theatre space does not have room for a pit orchestra. So, we will not be utilizing an orchestra or band. Music will be played through tracks instead. The sound system will need to accommodate. The sound board operator will need to be skilled in sound mixing for the tracks and for the microphones for each actor.