



*Hollywood Icon to Star in Thoroughly Modern Millie  
at the  
Huron Country Playhouse in Grand Bend*

Friday, March 15, 2019

GRAND BEND – The bustling beach town of Grand Bend will be even busier this June as a beloved Hollywood star arrives in town. Iconic television actor **Cindy Williams**, best known for her role as Shirley Feeney on the classic sitcom *Laverne & Shirley* will play the role of Mrs. Meers in Drayton Entertainment’s production of the hit Broadway musical comedy, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. The production launches the 2019 Season at the **Huron Country Playhouse** running from **June 5 to June 22** on the Mainstage.

“Cindy Williams is a cherished star and a celebrated comedienne. I am thrilled that she’s coming to the Huron Country Playhouse to take on this hilarious role in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* – Grand Bend audiences are in for a real treat,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “*Laverne & Shirley* is treasured by many generations, and Cindy’s enduring appeal and legendary talent are a terrific fit for this fun-filled production.”

A popular 70s television series, *Laverne & Shirley* explored the antics of best friends, roommates and polar opposites Laverne DeFazio and Shirley Feeney as they coped with dating, neighbours, and each other. Running for 8 seasons from 1976 to 1983, the series made stars out of Williams and her co-star Penny Marshall, who passed away in December. With high ratings, *Laverne & Shirley* became the most-watched television program in America by its third season, and was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards and a Primetime Emmy Award in 1979.

With appearances in numerous big budget movies, Williams’ distinguished career also includes George Cukor’s *Travels with My Aunt* alongside Maggie Smith (1972), George Lucas’ iconic film *American Graffiti* (1973), and Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Conversation* (1974) starring Gene Hackman, among other major films. Her television appearances include *Room 222*, *Nanny and the Professor*, *Happy Days*, *Love American Style*, and many, many others.

Williams’ considerable talents also translate behind the camera, as co-producer of the smash hits *Father of the Bride* and *Father of the Bride II*, both starring Steve Martin.

An accomplished stage performer, Williams made her Broadway debut as the daffy Mrs. Tottendale in *The Drowsy Chaperone* in 2007, and also appeared in the national tours of *Grease*, *Deathtrap*, and *Moon Over Buffalo*.

In *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Williams will make a marked departure from her sweet and charming image to play the hilarious villain Mrs. Meers, a quirky and wicked hotel owner, who is secretly involved in a sinister business scheme.

*Thoroughly Modern Millie* will be directed and choreographed by **Michael Lichtefeld**, who has helmed many productions for Drayton Entertainment including *Holiday Inn*, *Anything Goes*, *Damn Yankees*, and more. Lichtefeld will be joined by Music Director **Steve Thomas**, Set Designer **Ivan Brozic**, Costume Coordinator **Jessica Pembleton**, and Lighting Designer **Kevin Fraser**.

In addition to Williams, the company for *Thoroughly Modern Millie* will also feature **Jayne Armstrong** as Millie Dillmount, **Billy Lake** as Jimmy Smith, **Brent Thiessen** as Trevor Graydon, and **Kayla James** as Miss Dorothy Brown. **Matthew Armet**, **Carla Bennett**, **J. Sean Elliott**, **Christina Gordon**, **Josh Graetz**, **Gabrielle Jones**, **Ryota Kaneko**, **Shelley Kenney**, **David Light**, **Melanie McInenly**, **Luke Opdahl**, **Reece Rowat**, **Neil Salinas**, **Jennifer Thiessen** and **Margaret Thompson** round out the stellar cast.

“This is a rare opportunity to see a talented Hollywood artist live on stage,” says Mustakas. “To see this calibre of performer in a charming theatre housed in a century-old barn, minutes away from the sparkling shores of Lake Huron, makes this a truly unique theatre experience not to be missed.”

Based on the 1967 film of the same name, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* opened on Broadway to great acclaim in 2000 winning six Tony Awards®, including Best Musical. Featuring a score of brassy jazz-inspired hits like “Not for the Life of Me,” “Forget about the Boy,” and the title tune, this twenties-inspired song-and-dance musical is popular with audiences around the world.

*Thoroughly Modern Millie* takes place in New York City in 1922 – the hemlines are short, the men are dashing, and the rules on love, work, and just about everything else, are ready to be broken. It's the Roaring Twenties, and young Millie Dillmount has just arrived in the Big Apple in search of a new life. She's determined to better her station by becoming a secretary for a wealthy man and then convincing him to marry her. But, it doesn't take long before Millie's “thoroughly modern” plan goes awry. The hotel she calls home is run by conniving villainess Mrs. Meers, her wealthy boss seems immune to her flirtations, and the man she truly loves appears to be broke.

*Thoroughly Modern Millie* is proudly sponsored by **Best Cooling Systems**. Media Sponsors are **107.7 2Day FM** and **The London Free Press**. The Design Sponsor is **Garden Gate Gifts & Florals**. The 2019 Media Season Sponsor is **CTV**.

Regular performance tickets are \$48 for adults, \$29 for youth under 20 years of age and \$39 for Discount Dates or for groups of 20 or more. HST is applicable to all prices.

*Thoroughly Modern Millie* is on stage at the **Huron Country Playhouse** in Grand Bend from **June 5 to June 22**. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.huroncountryplayhouse.com](http://www.huroncountryplayhouse.com), in person at any Drayton Entertainment Box Office or by calling **519-238-6000** or toll free **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**.

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