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Jewel Theater dazzles with flashy, fun world premiere of ‘Who’s Got Me?’



Jewel Theatre Company's "Who's Got Me?" runs through Dec. 23.
(Courtesy Steve DiBartolomeo)

If you're looking for an entertaining respite from the chaotic and tragic news cycle, then a night at the theater might be just the thing. Jeffrey Scharf's play "Who's Got Me?" directed by Julie James is an engaging and romantic romp full of wonderful songs and enchanting dance numbers. The intoxicating fashion and art deco set design is a delicious recipe for anyone hungering for nostalgic feelings of a simpler time. Perfect for entertaining family and friends visiting from out of town, the Jewel Theatre has done it again providing the people of Santa Cruz with top-shelf romantic musical comedy.

As we wind our way to the official start of winter, it's the perfect time to enjoy some warmth and comfort, and this new play at the Jewel Theatre offers just that. Stepping out of the cold to sip some hot cocoa in the lobby as you wait for the start of the show, it's a grand time for you fans of light-hearted love stories. If your appetite is growling for a story where you can root for romance, then you're sure to enjoy the dramatic journey this play-within-a-play proposes. Resplendent with glamour and glimmering with charm, "Who's Got Me?" is sure to warm your heart.

Flashing between the placid starlight of small town Peoria and the frantic bright lights of Manhattan's Broadway district, we follow a family of entertainers on a journey to the heights of show business in the late '30s. The thread that connects these contrasting worlds is a love of theater, music and dance. It is a communion that is made more complicated by ego and power, but not impossibly so. The situational comedy posed by a series of misunderstandings is never so serious as to disrupt our enjoyment of the dresses and the dance steps. Like pasta is a vehicle for sauce, this plot is all about creating elevated moments for the talented ensemble and the stunning leads to strut their stuff.

The three-piece band that performs the musical score makes masterful use of a standup bass (Matt Bohn), a piano (Luke Shepherd), and a drum kit (Zack Olsen). This live musical element gives the play an elegant and old-timey soul of authenticity. This is one of the keys to great theater: Every movement depends upon the skill and timing of the players performing in front of an audience without slipping, musicians and actors alike. Each step is taken with attention to the style and grace of the music and choreography. The flawlessness of their act gives the audience permission to indulge in enjoying the motion of the unfolding story and to see it all as a dance.

At the center of the action, Bianca Chesnut dazzles as Darci Fadham, daughter of the powerful producer Preston Fadham who is debuting her dancing and singing skills on stage for the first time with this play. Her counterpart, the talented but unknown Joe Alexander is played by Cody Cooley with considerable style and grace. When Alexander commands the stage with their dance moves, it is fun to watch. John Alexander (Ryan Sammonds) and Jimmy Alexander (Zach Padlo), the other two brothers of the trio, complement their brother neatly. The chemistry between Jimmy and his fiancée Susan (Adria Swan) is a charming counterpoint to the professional ambitions of the older brothers. The happiness of their love is a guiding light that gives the play an idyllic quality, praising the pastoral ideal of a small-town life.

This is a great production to take your kids to see. If they are interested in fashion, dance and music, there is a lot for them to enjoy! You can buy tickets on the [Jewel Theatre website](#), or by calling the box office directly at: 831-425-7506.