

# Updates Don't Sink 'Gilligan's' Inane Spirit

## Theater Review

By PHILIP BRANDES  
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

"Gilligan, do you think there's a reason we were both shipwrecked on the same island?" suggestively coos perky Melissa Fahn's Mary Ann. "Sure," comes the deadpan reply from Grant Rosen as the island idiot savant. "We were both on the same boat."

Vintage groaners like these ensure boatloads of nostalgic appeal for fans of America's famous sitcom castaways as "Gilligan's Island: The Musical" sets sail for a two-hour tour at Thousand Oaks' Scherr Forum Theatre.

Occasional concessions to the passage of time ("Can't we vote Gilligan off the island?") may admittedly trouble purists. The biggest flashpoint will be headliner Lee Meriwether's determinedly un-ditzy reading of Mrs. Lovey Ho-



ED KRIEGER

Front: Matthew Kimbrough, Melissa Fahn; back: Grant Rosen, Gordon Goodman, Lee Meriwether, Marshall Borden and Shea Alexander.

well—opting instead for greedy cunning equal to that of millionaire Thurston (played by Meriwether's real-life spouse Marshall Borden). Revisionist, but it works.

Where it counts, though, co-creators Sherwood Schwartz (ex-

ecutive producer of the original series) and son Lloyd J. Schwartz maintain scrupulous fidelity to the inane spirit of their proud Gilligan heritage. Skipper (Matthew Kimbrough) still gets entangled in slapstick stunts with his Little

Buddy, the Professor (Gordon Goodman) still fashions rockets out of coconuts, and Ginger (Shea Alexander) vamps up a perfect storm. Perry L. Brown appears as a visiting extraterrestrial in a plot arc that plays like a typical episode.

The breezy, workmanlike songs by Laurence and Hope Juber (who hail from the "Brady Bunch" wing of the Schwartz creative stable) prove serviceable but rarely inspired. If not for the courage of the cast and crew, this musical would be lost.

"Gilligan's Island: The Musical," Scherr Forum Theatre at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks. Wednesdays-Fridays, 8:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 2:30 and 8:30 p.m.; Sundays, 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Ends Aug. 26. \$27-\$31. (805) 449-ARTS; or TicketMaster (805) 522-8010 or (818) 986-2908. Running time: 2 hours, 10 minutes.

# THEATRE TIMES

★ ★ 4" SMASH MONTH!!! ★ ★  
★ HURRY! ENDS SEPT. 9"!!! ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ "Enchanting!" -Daily News  
★ ★ ★ ★ BEST BET! -LA Times  
★ ★ ★ ★ "Great Success!" -Daily Variety  
★ ★ ★ ★ "Knockout production!" -BSWest  
No Shows Labor Day Weekend!!

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★ CRITIC'S CHOICE! -LA Times ★  
**Central Avenue**  
by Stephen Sachs Directed by Shirley Jo Finney  
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★ OPENS FRIDAY, AUGUST 17" ★  
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LILLIAN THEATRE (310) 289-2999  
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From the original creator of "Gilligan's Island"  
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Gilligan, the Skipper, the Millionaire and his Wife,  
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"Gales of Laughter!!!" -LA Times  
**Late Nite Catechism**  
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"Porch lights up the stage!" -Daily News  
"A truly wonderful play!" -The Toluca  
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**MEETIN'S ON THE PORCH**  
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LITTLE VICTORY THEATRE 818-841-5421

★ ★ FINAL TWO WEEKS! ★ ★  
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"Mednick has wrought a devastatingly powerful journey through the inner workings of the psyche..." -Variety  
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★ ★ ★ ★ Pick of the Week! -LA Weekly  
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"Zimbalist sparkles!" -ShowMag.com  
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Mention 'Code R' and save \$3 per ticket  
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Pierpont Inn at (800) 285-4667

★ ★ Last 2 Shows! Aug. 18 & 19 ★ ★  
**The Scarecrow**  
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CRITIC'S CHOICE! -LA Times  
Pacific Resident Theatre 310-822-8392

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