

Choreographing for Musical Theater

By Mackenzie Beck-Esmay

What did I do?

I served as an assistant to professional choreographer Linda Talcott Lee at Bloomington Civic Theatre's production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. I worked alongside Mrs. Talcott Lee during preproduction meetings, movement generation sessions, rehearsals and performances.



Sample of Typed Choreography

It was helpful to type the choreography and print off multiple copies for us to reference during rehearsal.

Lyrics	Version A Movement	Version B Movement
THERE ARE THOSE	Male A&B step US around Millie	Male A turn into Millie, getting in semi-circle position
(THERE ARE THOSE)	Male A&B step DS around Millie	Male B turn into Millie, getting into semi-circle position
I SUPPOSE	Male A look front	Male C turn into Millie, getting into semi-circle position
(I SUPPOSE)	Male B look front	Male D turn into Millie, getting into semi-circle position
THINK WE'RE MAD	Male A&B walk around Millie	Male E turn into Millie, getting into semi-circle position



Tips for Choreographers

- Always over-prepare! It is a good idea to have more than one plan.
- Highlight staging within the script.
- Information regarding props and scene changes are important pieces of information to gather at production meetings.
- Musical scores do not always match the vocal libretto. Cross-reference as much as possible!
- Use bar numbers when communicating with the musical director.
- Modify the movement to fit the performers' bodies.
- Read the lyrics out-loud to make sure you are staying true to the story within the number. There always needs to be motivation behind the movement.
- Take many notes but then judge which ones to give to the cast.
- Research the show and it's history!