

Theatre Aurora presents ?The Music Man?



A Review by Scott Johnston

Theatre Aurora starts its 2024-25 season with Meredith Willson's popular musical ?The Music Man?.

Set in the early 1900s, it tells the story of con man Harold Hill. Arriving in a small midwestern town, he convinces the townsfolk that a recently-purchased pool table will not provide a good influence on their kids, who would much better benefit from a group activity, such as a band.

Despite knowing nothing about music, he claims he just happens to be a children's band organizer. Better yet, he will happily sell them all the instruments, music and uniforms they need, then teach the children everything they need to know.

Of course, his claims do not match his intentions, which are to collect the money and run. But despite more people becoming convinced he's not what he appears, his growing affection for the local librarian is impeding his efforts to hop on the next train out of town while he still can.

This show provides quite a spectacle, with the huge cast of over 25 performers singing and dancing throughout. The vocals consist of individual songs, ensemble performances and even a barbershop quartet. The choreography of all the action on stage is impressive.

To provide room for all this activity, the sets are simple, but effective in both setting the mood, and being easily switched between scenes.

But, of course, it's the performances that sell the show.

Keith O'Connell as Harold Hill shines in a role he has played more than once on the stage. He is totally convincing as a con man with a soft side. When he's in the spotlight he commands the stage, even in a crowded scene.

Rebecca Rodley as librarian Marian has a wonderful singing voice, and excellent acting skills. Her facial expressions effortlessly convey a variety of emotions appropriate to each scene.

While too many to list them all, the supporting cast members all have their moments as well, including Jennifer Briggs-Fitzgerald and Jory Goldbeg as Marion's mother and brother, Mitchell Rozen as Harold's fellow con man Marcellus, Chris Cluff as Charlie the whistle-blower, Leanne Goldstein as assertive Eulalie Shinn, and Chris Cole as her husband, the bumbling Mayor Shinn.

This play has lots of fun, positive energy, and you are sure to leave humming one of its many popular tunes as you head out the doors of Theatre Aurora.

Evening performances of ?The Music Man? continue at Theatre Aurora, 150 Henderson Drive, November 22, 23, 28, 29 & 30, with matinees November 23, 24, 30 and December 1. Tickets are available through the box office at 905-727-3669.