

'Music Man' picked as summer play

6/12/86  
DIVA

## SVCT audition waits in wings

South Valley Civic Theater needs a few good traveling salesmen — as well as musicians, actors, dancers and backstage technicians.

Lots of people are needed to help put on this year's summer musical, *The Music Man*. Auditions will be held this weekend.

An open audition is slated for Saturday at the Gilroy High School theater at 2 and 7 p.m. Callbacks will be Sunday.

The musical will be directed by Jeff Richards, a recent graduate of San Jose State University. Vo-

cal and musical direction will be by Richard Nelson and Ray Bernd.

Show dates are August 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23. Long a favorite of audiences, the classic musical includes such numbers as *Till There Was You*, *76 Trombones* and *Lida Rose*.

Needed are musicians, singers, dancers, actors and performers, as well as a stage crew. There is a particular need for actors in the roles of "traveling salesmen."

Those interested in a singing role should prepare a musical number for the voice auditions.

## Music Man like a family reunion

6/20/86

By Jim Maya  
Miracle Miles Correspondent

Next to the Filices, the biggest "family reunion" in Gilroy happens each year in early June. The S.V.C.T. auditions for their summer musicals always bring together all the aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews and brothers and sisters for the weekend. So it was this last weekend when **Music Man** was cast.

Though not blood kin, the ties that bind the South Valley theater community together create bonds that are lasting and very "family" in nature. The 113 auditionees and their families and friends who attended the ten hours of auditions, re-acquainted themselves with other members of that artistic family. They laughed and cheered as they watched former fellow cast members strut their stuff for director Jeff Richards and his audition committee.

The act of producing a play with other human beings is very similar to being a member of a family. The family branches of this reunion were created by **Play It Again, Sam**, **The Crucible**, **1776**, **The Sound of Music**, **Hello Dolly**, **Annie**, **Godspell**, **Bye Bye Birdie**, **Guys and Dolls** and so many others.

The family aspect of the **Music Man** will only be enhanced by the several real families who will have more than one member working in or on the show.

And as always, new members enter into the growing family, such as this year's **Music Man**, Paul Myrvold, a newcomer to the S.V.C.T. stage. His beautiful voice will be matched by last year's Miss Hannigan, Ruth E. Mullins, who will be playing Marion, the librarian.

Other major roles were won by Greg DeLander as Tommy, Janet Espinosa as Marion's Mom, Sabrina Lloyd as Amaryllis, Joel Gregor as Winthrop and as the Mayor of River City, where all the trouble happens, and his family, moi and Brenda Warfield as the Mayor's wife, Eullalie. The mayor's daughter, who is a niece of mine anyway, will be Whitney Pintello. (She is a niece because Marion and Rod are like brother and sister, right? See what I mean?) My real daughter, Jessica, is in the ensemble.

And all the humorous little incidents, like little Andy Farrotte telling his mother, Rosalind, how she did it wrong, as she was stepping down off the stage after her audition. . . in his biggest voice.

**Music Man** opens and runs the three middle weekends in August at the Gavilan Theater.

Speaking of S.V.C.T., their Second Annual Awards Show, on June 7, was a great success. The entertainment was great, highlighted by "The Voice," Ted Sanchez, and the **Annie** reunion. The top winners included Erica Rizzi, for outstanding talent and Rod Pintello and Ruth E. Mullins, for their lead roles. Other winners included Susie Chastang, Dennis Chavez, Linda Duarte, Chris Souza, Nancy Harris and Tom Harris, Judy Langley, Will Mullins, Bill Corneth, Hollie Porter, Chris Lloyd, Carol Harris, Tom Hepner, Helen Wang, Simon Pintello, Andy Donlon, Craig Rubio, Dave Stocks and Richard Nelson.

Next week? . . . Mecca. . . That is the Ashland Shakespearean Festival for me. . . Nordstrom's Bargain Basement in Seattle for Carolee and Vancouver. . . Aloha!

# Finding a perfect harmony

Crammed into a standing-room only bus in downtown Honolulu, I cowered over a silent little man in a suit. I was hanging onto the handrail, and as we sped along sunny Ala Moana Boulevard I could read the small print on his lapel button: "S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A."

"Some people," I said to him, "especially baritones, should quit singing altogether."

The man beamed. He knew he had found a friend.

The lapel pin actually meant he was a member of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America; the other phony acronym is an old underground barbershop joke.

"Obviously you have sung barbershop!" he concluded with a smile.

"No, actually, I never have," I sighed as I explained that my father had been a member of the international champion barbershop chorus in 1957.

That night I did a lot of thinking. I had been very wrong in assuming that barbershop harmony would eventually die out with my father's generation.

I decided that if I wanted to do my part to help keep the tradition of my father and my uncle (for whom I am named) alive, I would very soon have the opportunity. South Vally Civic Theatre had already announced its intention to produce *The Music Man* this summer; the script features a barbershop quartet "disguised" as the town school board.

My only experience singing four-part harmony has come from singing in the choir in church. So I first thought of my ex-choirloft colleague, Charles Krahenbuhl. But before I even broached the subject, he cornered me at a Center Stage performance and asked me if I had considered trying out for the quartet!

With the half of the "chord" in place, it was time to look for some tenors. Like Charles, Frank Pattie had the right combination of musical theater background and choir harmony experience. And to round out the quartet as well as add the expertise of a pro-

Chuck  
Myer



fessional musician, South Valley Junior High music instructor David Drom, whose own vocal range is nothing short of awesome, was the perfect choice.

Rather than try to start with the complex arrangements from *The Music Man*, we started out slow with a couple of traditional barbershop tunes (two of which we performed for the Gilroy Cultural Faire last May.)

When we settled down to the business of preparing for auditions, we were fortunate to obtain the services of a 30-year barbershop veteran, John Fagundes of Morgan Hill, as our coach. John, whom my father remembers from his days in barbershop, sang in the San Jose Civic Light Opera production of *The Music Man* in 1963!

And so a barbershop quartet was born. Bowties and armbands were in place; all we still needed was one three-inch piece of metal and wood. And in my dad's senior-center apartment, where the barbershop trophies stand tarnished yet proud, the pitchpipe was handed down to the next generation.

*Want to play "Name that Quartet?" Help us think of an original name that we can use in the SCVT Music Man program. Submit your ideas to Backstages, P.O. Box 2296, Gilroy, 95021.*

---

Chuck Myer, a Gilroy city planner who also serves on the Santa Clara County Arts Council, is a free-lance writer and patron of the arts.

# Finally, quartet is christened

Finally, the results of the "Name that Quartet" contest ... First a warm thank-you to all who sent in name suggestions for South Valley Civic Theatre's *Music Man* barbershop quartet. Like the San Mateo County sheriff race, it was stiff competition.

Among the finalists were Mike and Claudia Sallows for "The Pitch Pipers," Johnny Fagundes for "The Goodtime Garlic Company," Tom Hepner for "The Close Shaves" and "The Four Cloves," Carl Myer for "Gilroyals," and Becky Goodwin for "Garlic Junction." (Becky's other suggestion, "Harmony Junction," was so good, it's already in use by another quartet!)

Though he doesn't know it, the runner-up name was inspired by Gilroy City Councilman and former barbershopper Paul Kloecker, who warned SVCT members staffing Garlic Festival ticket booths to be on the lookout for phony \$20 bills. Since the original "Music Man" quartet was "The Buffalo Bills," a logical name for our quartet might be "The Bogus Bills!"

Unfortunately, the pun depends upon knowing about the Buffalo Bills in the first place. Also, we needed a name that would endure after closing night of *The Music Man* this weekend.

The name we finally chose was recently made popular by a line of sportswear. With a slightly different spelling, it now adorns our dressing room door, and is printed in the *Music Man* program.

From this point on, the quartet is "Four Members Only."

\*\*\*\*

The production, meanwhile, has been filled with many treasured moments. On opening night, young Joel Gregor as Winthrop Paroo strode forward in full dress uniform for his curtain call. As he bowed, his tall white hat landed in the orchestra pit. That's okay, Joel, you're delightful on stage. Keep it up.

It's been four and a half years since I've been in a local production, and it's the little backstage events

Chuck Myer



that I've missed the most. Like walking into our "Four Members Only" dressing room on opening night and seeing the four gift packages from Ruth E. (Marion Paroo) Mullins: four cans of shaving cream, complete with disposable razors and even stiptic pencils!

But there is one moment which for me capsulizes the whole concept of community theater and illustrates the perspective of this column. It comes as I wait for my entrance in the middle of the song, *Pick-a-little, Talk-a-little*. The audience is watching the town gossips and Harold Hill in front of a series of set pieces representing the facade of the River City Library.

From my vantage point, I see them, too. But I also can see all of the hidden stage hands, actors, and technicians with headsets, crouching behind the "bookshelves" waiting to activate the complicated transformation to the library's interior scene.

And what are these "techies" doing as they wait? They're all singing, "Pick-a-little, talk-a-little, pick-a-little, talk-a-little, cheep, cheep, cheep, talk-a-lot, pick-a-little more ..."

Chuck Myer, a Gilroy city planner who also serves on the Santa Clara County Arts Council, is a free-lance writer and patron of the arts.

## BEST BETS 8/21/86



### Harmonious group on stage

David Drom, Frank Pattie, Chuck Myer and Charles Krahenbuhl will sing out in four-part harmony this weekend in South Valley Civic The-

ater's production of 'The Music Man.' The Friday and Saturday curtains open at 8 p.m. at Gavilan College. For tickets, call 842-SHOW.



# The play(ing's) the thing

## Orchestra members work hard to give musical its music

By Todd Silberman  
Staff Writer

Some might say that directing several dozen amateur actors and actresses through a large-scale musical is an undertaking fit only for a Broadway impresario.

The same could be said for the effort needed to orchestrate the 10 or so musicians who make the music that keeps the show rolling.

When South Valley Civic Theatre's production of Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* debuts Friday night at Gavilan College, the audience will focus their attentions on the stage. But beneath their line of sight, in the subterranean glow known as the pit, the band will be playing — oddly behind the scenes and in front of them at the same time.

"You're in a whole different world in the pit," said orchestra director Ray Bernd. "We're not there to be the musical. But, boy, if an orchestra plays badly, you sure hear about it."

For Bernd, music director for Gilroy High School and veteran of a few pits, *The Music Man* is the first musical for which he's directing a full-sized orchestra. He last led a five-person ensemble for the high school's spring production of *Godspell*.

And if community theater comes with compromise and occasional frustrations, the orchestra is not without its brushes with minor trials and larger calamities.

It was Monday night and the orchestra had begun just last week rehearsing with the cast. Four days until showtime. The musicians arrived slowly amidst the flurry of activity as actors and actresses of all ages readied themselves for the night's rehearsal.

Norma Fellows sat at the piano. She explained that she was playing only the week before the show. The pianist who would play for the performances was on vacation.

Stacey Peoples was warming up on the oboe. She was wearing a cap with a propeller on top. "It's something new," she said of playing for a musical.

Larry Manzo practiced a few measures from *76 Trombones* on the baritone saxophone. A soprano horn was in his lap. "I don't know what it's like," he conceded. "I haven't played in a performance yet."

Julie Pray sat down with her violin. The first musical she performed for was a Gilroy High School production in 1960 at the Strand Theater. It was *The Music Man*. "It's been a while," she said.

"This is a stress week. We must pull together," she added.

Bernd arrived, took his stool, tapped his baton and proceeded to warm up his orchestra. "Come on, trombone," he urged, "we open Friday night." The group missed a few notes along the way, but before long, he was singing with the tunes.

"These things always seem incredibly hectic — like they're never going to come together, but they always do," observed Jim Maya. Maya, Gilroy High School drama teacher, plays the role of George Shinn, mayor of River City, the show's mythical Midwestern setting.

Playing in a show orchestra is not like sitting down to perform a concert or play for a dance, even though "older musicians treat the pit as if it's a concert," said Bernd.

"It takes an awful lot of patience. A trumpet player will have 100 measures of rest and then have to come in on a high note with his tone perfectly set. And then there are some who have to play all the time. You can almost bet the pianist and percussionist are playing all the time."

That can mean a lot of playing. *The Music Man* features some 30 numbers of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty. The orchestra plays roughly 65 to 70 percent of the show, he said, including periods between scenes. "Sometimes you'll play a number, go right into another one and then sit for five minutes."

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the pit orchestra is to coordinate its timing with singing and dancing on stage, Bernd explained.

"We have to adjust to the surroundings. It's important not to over play the singers but to reinforce them. We have to adjust the tempos and make accommodations."

"And even if you work on the show for an entire year, no scene will have the same timing," he said. Which means that musicians and singers alike must keep a close eye on the director while concentrating on their music.

For Bernd, the orchestra has been a challenge from the start. "I tried to have auditions for the first time — I guess it takes time to catch on."

Instead of being able to select from a group of musicians wanting to play for the show, Bernd had to track down people to fill the orchestra seats. "I made a lot of phone calls," he recalled. Rehearsals began in early July. But instead of having an orchestra of 18 to 20 members, he ended up with less than 10.

"It's fun. But it can be really nerve-racking. Sometimes musicians don't show up and sometimes musicians don't watch."

Jeff Richards had his hands full during rehearsals this week. The 33-year-old director has been juggling a cast of nearly 60 while devising the logistics of 19 different set changes.

"It's been a very interesting design challenge," said Richards, who also developed the sets. Because of limited wing and fly space, he explained, the set changes are included in the show, with cast members shouldering props and sets with the curtains open. For some scene changes, as many as 30 people are on stage at one time.

Richards choreographed that activity. His wife, Vicki Hunter, has choreographed the song and dance numbers.

Both are new to the South Valley stage. But both are theater veterans.

### The Music Man'

**When:** Friday, Saturday, Aug. 15, 16, 22, and 23 at 8 p.m., and 2 p.m. Aug. 16.

**Cost:** Tickets are \$7.50 for adults and \$5 for children, students and seniors. Call 842-SHOW for reservations.

**Where:** Gavilan College theater in Gilroy.

**Who:** Presented by South Valley Civic Theater, directed by Jeff Richards, choreographed by Vicki Hunter, produced by Robin Stocks. Lead actors are Paul Marsh as Professor Harold Hill and Ruth E. Mullins as Marian Paroo.

Richards recently earned a master's of fine arts degree from San Jose State University in directing. He's been involved with some 50 productions from Indiana to Los Angeles, and has directed eight or nine musicals.

Hunter said she has about 50 musicals under her belt. She was a featured dancer and singer in the film *Grease II* and was involved with a production of *The Music Man* once before at Great America.

She met Richards while appearing in a show he was directing in Los Angeles several years ago.

Both Richards and Hunter noted that there's something special about working with community theater. "It can be frustrating at times," said Richards, "but there's a lot of enthusiasm."

"You get a lot of people who maybe wanted to be actors or actresses, but decided to raise a family instead," said Hunter.



Russ Curtis/Viva

Although the orchestra is right out front, musicians are still hidden while the play goes on.

# Dave Stocks is number 1 support person

By Jim Maya  
Miracle Miles Correspondent

Dave Stocks is the kind of man everyone likes, trusts and respects. He is also the kind of person who seldom will get any press, unlike those egotistical actor-type persons. He's one of those unsung heroes of the theater. . . a techie.

In the case of the South Valley Civic Theater's upcoming production of *The Music Man* (which opens August 8 for three weekends at Gavilan College), Dave is in charge of set construction and is Number 1 support person for producer Robin Stocks.

He is also the father of young Ethan and talented cutie, Megan, who plays Gracie Shinn, the daughter of River-city's Mayor. (Yours truly and Brenda Warfield play the Mayor and Mrs. Shinn. Whitney Pintello plays the other daughter.)

I got to know Dave last summer while helping with the sets for *Annie*. Many of us were struck by his skill, and how dependable he is.

Marion Pintello, who was S.V.C.T.'s President during *Annie* told me how Dave is someone she could always count on. . . Someone who she could always trust to get it done and with no fuss. "No fuss" people seem to be rare in theater. Marion strongly advises, however, that you should never play poker with him.

Because of his work on *Annie* and *Same Time Next Year*, *They're Playing Our Song* and *Bye Bye Birdie*, Dave was the winner of this year's S.V.C.T. Newcomer of the Year.

Far more important than Dave's invaluable service to the theater is his service to his family and the community.

He is acknowledged by all who know him, especially his wife Robin, to be a marvelous father. His theater activities fundamentally are in support of his daughter, Megan.

Younger son Ethan and Dave were leaving for a fishing trip to the Sierras recently as I came by for coffee one morning. Anyone who has taken a child fishing knows that they probably won't get much fishing done themselves.

Both Mega and Ethan will have those important memories and bonding experiences that are too often lacking in our modern family experience.

Besides his service to the community through theater activities, Dave's occupation is also sort of community related. . . He has been a Morgan Hill Firefighter for the past eight years.

Dave is not perfect, however. He drives a funny yellow teenage 4X4 truck and he has a popcorn fetish. Outside of that, "You got it!" Dave "No Fuss" Stocks is "What a guy, what a guy!"

Looking for a movie to take the little ones to? *The Great Mouse Detective* would be perfect. The full length Disney cartoon, though not quite up to the classic animation of a *Fantasia* or *Snow White*, is still light years ahead of the Saturday A.M. garbage that our poor youngsters get on the telly.

The film, based on the classic children's tale, *Basil of Baker Street*, is the rodent version of a Sherlock Holmes mystery. The voices are classics also. . . Vincent Price's is the villain.

I tested the film on my 10-year old daughter and it passed. It plays during the day at The Valley Cinema.

See you at the Garlic Festival.

# Great songs hi-light S.V.C.T. performance

By Jim Maya  
Miracle Miles Correspondent

***The Music Man* opens tonight!** The classic American musical, with book, music and lyrics by Meredith Wilson, comes alive for the umteen thousandth time tonight at 8:00 p.m. on the Gavilan stage.

The musical comedy is filled with great songs like *Goodnight, My Someone*; *Lida Rose*; *Seventy-Six Trombones*; *Till There Was You*; *My White Night*; *The Wells Fargo Wagon*; and, *Gary, Indiana*, and with great characters like the lovable con-man, Prof. Harold Hill, immortalized on stage and screen by Robert Preston. . .and Marion, the librarian, Paroo, played in this South Valley Civic Theatre production by the talented winner of last years Most Talented Actress Award, Ruth E., "The Voice," Mullins. Newcomer Paul Marsh brings an impressive resume and beautiful voice to the role of Harold. Both performances are great.

**Being so close to the production** makes it impossible to be totally objective (I play Mayor Shinn), but a few insights and some inside humor are in order. Insights like. . .It is amazing that these community major theatre musicals ever come together at all. The crew has been working and the cast rehearsing from 10:00 a.m. to midnight, finishing on the sets and costumes and tightening up the many scenes and cues. It hasn't helped to have Gavilan's computerized light board somehow erase all the lighting cues three days before opening night, or to have one crucial rehearsal cut short by some unexplained smoke in the theatre. . .Everything was o.k.

**The reason that such amateur productions** do make it to the railhead is because of trail bosses like director Jeff Richards and wife Vicky, the show's choreographer, and producers like Robin Stocks, and the musical directors like Richard Nelson on vocals and Ray Bernd in the pit, and set construction in-charge-persons like Dave Stocks and costume designer and coordinator, Carol Harris. (Railhead? Trailboss? This is Gilroy, right?)

Not only will you get to see one of the best costumed shows in recent memory, but you will get to see the talented designer on stage as the player piano player. . .piano. . .Ethel Toffelmier.

**Morgan Hillian Carol Harris** sings, dances, acts, and when the accompanist is absent, accompanies the singing and dancing. She has done all the above, and more, with grace, charm and good humor despite a jarring automobile accident last Saturday that left her neck in a brace for a few days. Carol embodies the spirit and talent that so many of the cast and crew bring to *The Music Man*. What a woman!

**Speaking of humor**, other than the constant bad jokes and running gags like, "They didn't do it like that in the movies!" the topper comes from little adorable Elizabeth Farotte, who may someday top her brother, Andrew, for quotable lines. While listening to the radio, she heard one of the popular beer commercials and told her mom, Roslind, who is also in the show, that *Music Man* has one of those commercials too. . ."You know Mom, When Harold sings about a sadder but wiser girl for me". . .But wiser?. . .Budweiser? . . .

If you miss *The Music Man*, may the cruse of the great theatre god be upon you. . .There will be seven performances, including a matinee on the 16th at 2:00 p.m. Call 842-SHOW for ticket reservations.

**Ask me about the curse in private. . .**

**And if you miss *Here Comes The Bride*** at Center Stage, you will miss one of the finest comedic performances ever to charm South Valley audiences. I speak, of course, of Rod Pintello's professional-like portrayal of the father of the bride, Timothy Westerby. You have this weekend and next to catch Rod's smashingly good show. . .

**Lastly, Sarah Taylor is in another show!** She is doing *Female Transport* at the City Lights Theatre, 70 N. Almaden Ave., in San Jose. It runs through the 16th. Call 295-8313 for more information.



# The Music Man opens tonight at Gavilan Theater

By Sam Baker  
Miracle Miles Staff

The mood is electric...everybody is on edge. The weeks of work, frustration, sweat and lack of sleep are being pulled together into something coherent and exciting. Everyone's focus is on their task and the soon-to-begin rehearsal.

"We're going to take these down tonight," *Music Man* Director Jeff Richards tells the assembled cast and crew, pointing to the rails that barricade the edge of the stage from the orchestra pit below. "If you're not sure where the stage ends, don't just figure you'll fake it. If you're blinded for a moment and you're within six feet of the edge of this stage, don't take a chance."

The South Valley Civic Theater's presentation of *The Music Man* opens tonight at the Gavilan College Theater, with other performances on August 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23. Showtimes are 8 p.m. and there will be a special matinee August 16 at 2 p.m.

This is a strong cast...a large cast, too. *The Music Man* is a tremendous undertaking for a civic theater. In fact, musical comedies fell from grace in Hollywood because the casts were so large and the costs so prohibitive. You really have to admire any group which undertakes a musical comedy these days.

The chorus could do with a stronger male presence...they are a little weak in the bass, but this is a problem common to most civic theaters. For some reason, many guys just aren't in to singing.

The story takes place in River City, Iowa, a turn of the century town where even "Cigarettes are illegal."

Professor Harold Hill, played by newcomer Paul Marsh, comes to town to sell them on the idea of a boy's band. Professor Hill is really a traveling salesman and the whole band idea is a scam, designed to part these naive folks out of their hard-earned money.

Most people are familiar with the plot and the music, through the film, starring Robert Preston as Professor Hill and Shirley Jones as Marion the librarian. This was one of the last great musicals put on film, before Hollywood lost its taste for such things.

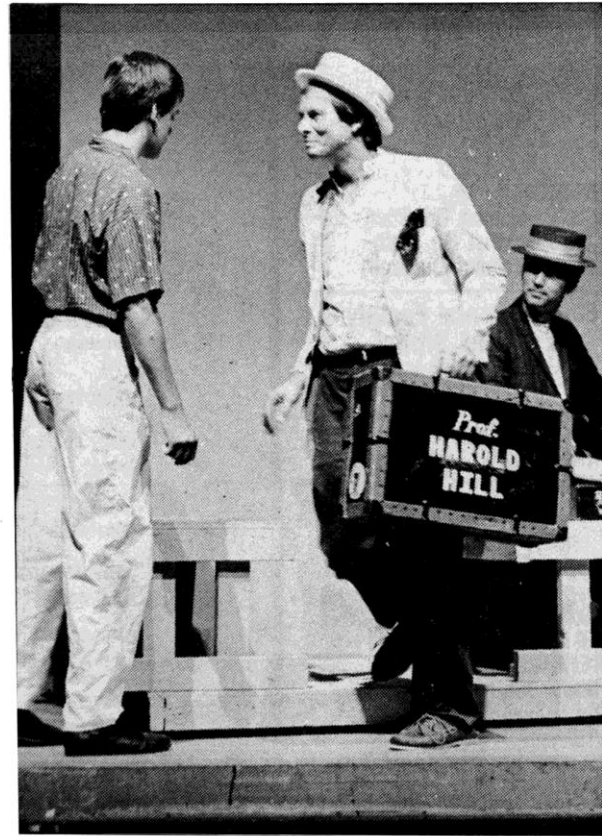
"The couch...it's borrowed and very expensive and if it weren't for the good graces of a certain furniture store, we wouldn't have it," Richards admonished the cast and crew before Monday night's dress rehearsal. "So don't jump on it, don't chew on it, don't kick it and be careful when they move it. It's not ours to play with."

Even those who haven't seen the movie, know the music...unless they've been hiding under a rock in the Cascades for the past 30 years. "76 Trombones" and "Til there was you" are universal favorites. I've always been fond of "There's Trouble in River City," because of the quick pace. It's hard to do.

"We have no one in charge of trash pickup, so if you have anything to eat or drink back stage, don't leave it," Richards continued with his briefing. There's so much to be done. "I don't know who smokes. There should be no smoking in costume. Preferably don't eat in costume. If you're that hungry, you should have gotten something to eat before the show?"

The excitement builds as the time to begin the rehearsal draws nearer.

"Has anyone seen script number two?" Mayor Shinn (Jim Maya) asks.



**Paul Marsh, center, stars as Professor Harold Hill in the South Valley Civic Theater's production of Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man*, which opens tonight at the Gavilan College Theater. Here, Professor Hill confronts loudmouth salesman Charlie Cowell, played by Kevin Fallis, as Jim Warfield, also portraying a salesman looks on.**

Paul Marsh is not Robert Preston and Ruth Mullins, who plays Professor Hill's love interest Marion, is not Shirley Jones, but they both do justice to their roles and are supported by a fine cast, which includes local thespians Jim Maya, Chuck Myer, Kevin Fallis, Gerri Schmutz and many, many more.

The musical is directed by Richards and produced by Robin Stocks, whose husband, Morgan Hill Firefighter Dave, took charge of set construction.

Richard Nelson is the Musical Director and Ray Bernd will be in the Pit conducting. Vicki Richards does the choreography.

This is a fun show. While fun shows are to be enjoyed by everyone, including the cast, the comedy takes perfect timing and that means a lot of hard work from the cast. These fine local performers have been rehearsing all summer and they can rise to the occasion.

While Jeff Richards and Robin Stocks deserve accolades for their effort, the real credit goes to the cast and crew, who have been able to take direction and turn it into a performance which the public will no doubt love.

*The Music Man* begins tonight and will run for three weekends, August 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23 at 8 p.m. with the matinee performance at 2 p.m. on August 16. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults and \$5 for children, students and seniors. Call the South Valley Civic Theater at 842-SHOW for ticket reservations.



# S.V.C.T. production of *The Music Man* reflects the cast's energy and enthusiasm for their work

By Luellen Reese  
Miracle Miles Correspondent

From the minute the curtain went up, the energy and enthusiasm of the cast of *The Music Man* permeated the theater and involved the audience. The opening scene with Charlie (played well by Kevin Fallis) and the salesmen on the train had the audience jumping in time to the infectious rhythm of their scat-like rendition of the opening tune, "Rock Island."

South Valley Civic Theater's production of Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man*, which was produced by Robin Stocks and directed by Jeff Richards, is a fun show. You are well advised to take the kids, and enjoy.

A musical the scope of *The Music Man* is an ambitious undertaking for a company of community players. They have acquitted themselves very well, and seemed to be enjoying themselves in the process.

The costumes, coordinated by Carol Harris, are great, very realistic and professional.

The show was choreographed by Vicki Hunter who has performed in and choreographed more than fifty productions and is currently teaching dance at the Action Day Academy of Dance. Hunter has done a superb job, as the dance and the dancers are one of the main highlights of the show. A cast of nearly sixty men, women and children bounced, twirled, jumped and marched through the theater and across the stage with cohesiveness, charm and panache.

Paul Marsh, in the role of the music man, Professor Harold Hill, was very engaging and convincing as he plotted to bilk the citizens of River City out of their money with fantastic promises of starting a band for the boys of the town.

Ruth E. Mullins is perfect in the part of Marion the librarian, who falls in love with the con-artist, Hill.

James Mead Maya (known to Miracle Miles' readers as columnist, Jim Maya) was excellent as the excitable and suspicious Mayor Shinn. He and Brenda Warfield, as the Mayor's wife, provided a delightful comic touch to the show.

This is a terrific show for families. Even the youngest child would enjoy this show. Community theater is a worthwhile cultural endowment. It should be preserved and supported by the members of the community it seeks to enrich. Here is an opportunity to support and to be enriched by the South Valley Civic Theater.

The final performances, all at Gavilan College, will be at 8 p. m. on the 22, and 23 of August.



The energy and enthusiasm of the cast and crew of the South Valley Civic Theater's production of Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* makes the show a lot of fun for the troupe and the audience. Final performances are this weekend. Call 842-SHOW for ticket information.

# *The Music Man* is very well received

By Jim Maya

Miracle Miles Correspondent

*The Music Man* opened last Friday night to very enthusiastic audiences, an early-morning end to the reception at the Theatre Angels House and a strange sense of "time-on-our hands" for the cast.

Opening nights are almost as traumatic in Gilroy as they are in New York. Will the audiences like the show? Will I remember all my lines? Will all the technical stuff get done? Will it all work? Will the voice go? And what will the critics say? Did I brush my teeth?

**Having made the rash promise** that I would never review a show that I was acting in or directing, I shall refrain from making any attempts to comment as an unbiased member of the audience. From the view of a cast member, however, certain biased comments will be made.

**Comment.** . The show is very well directed. Director Jeff Richards and choreographer Vicki Richards, a husband/wife team in the great theater tradition of Lunt/Fontaine, Cronyn/Tandy, Marge and Gower (and Rod and Marion, Russ and Nancy, Chuck and Becky, Tom and Anne, Robin and Dave, and Jim and Carolee), have done a great job. They have taken a group of non-dancers, citizen actors and singers, and molded them into several wonderful production numbers. I have the good fortune to be on the stage as the first version of "76 Trombones" ends, with practically the whole cast out in the audience. Seldom does a critic have the chance to look the whole audience in the eye while they are watching a number. . The audience was loving it!

**Comment.** . It was great to see so many families involved in the production, either on stage or behind the scenes. Several families, including the Zuhrs, Stocks,

Mayas, Pintellos, had four family members involved. The Farottes, Hetzels, Harris', Warfields, have three each. The Hepners have five involved, but that doesn't really count, since they have so many to start with.

**Comment.** . There are many fine individual and group efforts. Those performances that I feel are especially outstanding include the dancing of Sharon White, whose grace on the stage is matched only by her attitude and charm off the stage. . The wonderful barber shop quartet of Chuck Myer, David Drom, Charles Krahenbuhl and Frank Patte. They have gotten better with each rehearsal and at moments come close to stopping the show. . The Stage Crew, who are not seen except for their results in the technically complicated show. The Crew, with stage manager Bill Corneth and assistant Lisa Bauer in charge, move the large sets on and off and about with amazing quickness and silence. . The "Pic-a-little ladies", Brenda Warfield, Anne Zuhr, Carol Harris, Gerri Schmultz, Janet Ackerman and Patti Marks, whenever they are on stage. . Tom Hepner and Whitney Pintello. . Sidney "Wha-da-ya-talk" Espinoza. . and at one time or another most of the whole cast for their energy and effort in getting such a gigantic show to opening night.

**I am under the assumption** that the stars of the show, Paul Marsh and Ruth E. Mullins, will get their just praise from the other critics, and that other bright performances will be mentioned.

Oh yes, I thought the "maple sugar" line was done real well. . So, I'm no different than any other parent in the audience.

*The Music Man* continues tonight at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday at 2:00 and 8:00 plus next weekend, Friday and Saturday at 8:00. Call 842-SHOW for reservations.

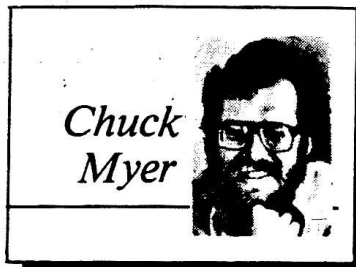
# 'The Music Man's' coincidences

There's something special, even mystical, about Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*.

People who won't go to see any other musical will buy a block of tickets to see this one. Barbershop quartets come out of the woodwork. Dormant actors come out of years of retirement for the chance to sing its songs. It may very well epitomize the American musical of this century.

South Valley Civic Theatre opens its production of this old chestnut Friday night. And the magic is still there.

The production marks the beginning of what this viewer hopes will be a long association between SVCT and the husband/wife directorial team of Jeff Richards and Vicki Hunter. Between the two, they directed, choreographed, blocked, and designed the set for this production in record time (as they have for dozens of other pro-



ductions from San Jose to Los Angeles to New York). With a little luck, South County will be able to lure them from San Jose into our resident fold like we did another talented team, Richard and Debbie Nelson, a few years back.

*The Music Man* is the first movie I recall ever seeing as a child (not counting Disney). Ron Howard and I were each 6 years old at the time: he layed the part of Winthrop Paroo and went on to be-

come Andy Griffith's Opie. Now, a quarter of a century later, he's an award-winning movie director, and I'm ... well, never mind.

The last local production of *The Music Man* was staged by the Gilroy young performers' theater group in 1979. Like Ron Howard, many of the stars of that production have grown a few feet and gone on to bigger and better things. One player, however, will be able to put both local credits on his resume.

Danny Walters played the part of Mayor Shinn in 1979, shortly before the tragic auto accident that almost took his life. Dan's courageous story of rehabilitation and return to the stage was the topic of my very first column five and a half years ago.

As the curtain rises Friday night on the famous "train scene," it will be Dan's "All aboarrrd" that starts the show. A poignant mo-

ment of nostalgia occurred when the present Mayor Shinn, Jim Maya, missed a rehearsal, and Dan recited the role for him ... from memory.

The opening night reception location also has a nostalgic connection. The Theatre Angels House, formerly the residence of Judge Willey, was to Gilroy what the Paroo household was to River City in 1912. The judge's daughters (who, incidentally, were born in Iowa) gave piano lessons just the way Marian Paroo does in this delightful musical.

So if you think you see the spirits of the Willey girls in the lobby Friday night, it's just a little more of the magic of *The Music Man*.

Chuck Myer, a Gilroy city planner who also serves on the Santa Clara County Arts Council, is a free-lance writer and patron of the arts.

## Musical memories

Friday, August 22, 1986 The Dispatch

### Iowa native knew creator of 'The Music Man'

By Todd Silberman  
Dispatch Staff Writer

GILROY — Sandy Metler might know River City, Iowa, better than Professor Harold Hill.

She was just about born and raised there.

When the Gilroy resident sees *The Music Man* performed Saturday by South Valley Civic Theater, she might even recognize the spirit of her great aunt on stage.

It wouldn't be the first time.

She has found herself in the spotlight again. All she did was call for tickets to the current production. She wanted good seats, and so happened to mention to the person taking reservations that she came from the original River City and that she had known the man who wrote the ever-popular musical, Meredith Willson. Word was out.

"I was watching Robert Preston on TV (as Harold Hill) last night and I get a call from a member of the show here in town," says Metler. Jim Maya, who plays the mayor of River City, asked to meet her after Saturday's performance.



Sandy Metler  
...remembers Willson

River City was the name Willson gave to the mythical town he made the setting of *The Music Man*. Mason City was the real town where Willson grew up with Metler's father, Douglas Swale, who became a prominent banker.

Mason City also became Willson's model for the musical.

Metler left her native Mason City years ago. She's lived in California since 1961 and moved to Gilroy four years ago. She and her husband Harold manage Pacific Mobile Estates trailer park on Tenth Street.

But one way she keeps in touch with her native Iowa is to see *The Music Man*. She just saw the film version on television, and Saturday's stage performance will be one of a few dozen she's seen in the last 25 years.

Though the musical is set in a different era than the one she grew up in, she is reminded of home nonetheless. One of the "three old biddies" in the show, says Metler, is modeled after her great aunt Effie Asbury.

This is the closing weekend for the musical at Gavilan College theater. Performances are Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.

Despite her first-hand knowledge, she's never been in a performance herself. "If I'd known they were doing it, it might have been fun to try out."



## 7/31/86 'Music Man' set

GILROY — The Gavilan College theater will be transformed into that ever-popular Midwest town, River City, Iowa, for three weekends starting Aug. 8, when *The Music Man* marches onto stage. South Valley Civic Theater's summer musical will run Aug. 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23 with an 8 p.m. curtain time. A 2 p.m. matinee will be performed Aug. 17. Paul Marsh will play the leading role of fast-talking, suave Harold Hill. Veteran Gilroy actress Ruth E. Mullins will act the part of Marion the librarian, who falls for con artist Hill. The show, written by Meredith Wilson, is being directed by Jeff Richards and produced by Robin Stocks. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults and \$5 for children and seniors. Call 842-SHOW for reservations.

## SVCT shines in 'The Music Man'

By Craig Quintana  
Staff Writer

It was 74 trombones short, but that didn't matter. South Valley Community Theater's rendition of *The Music Man* marched along just fine anyway.

The acute shortage of brass instruments (and orchestra members in general) zapped some of the punch from some songs, but the cast more than made up for the shortfalls with inspired performances and loud voices. What the band lacked, the cast more than made up in enthusiasm.

Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* represents an ambitious undertaking by any professional troop, let alone a community theater group. But director Jeff Richards and choreographer Vicki Hunter, both theater veterans, melded all the bodies, music and dancing into a cohesive and enjoyable whole.

While there were some opening-night glitches that need to be worked out, the show worked well overall Friday at Gavilan College Theater. With five performances scattered over the next two weekends, it can only improve.

Paul Marsh is perfectly cast as Harold Hill, the ultimate flim-flam man. His comic delivery brought the part alive. On songs like *Marian the Librarian*, Marsh was particularly good. He has just the right amount of tongue-in-cheek appeal.

Marsh has a pleasing, if not powerful, voice and was also quite good on the dance scenes.

Ruth E. Mullins turned in a wonderful performance as

Marian Paroo, the old maid librarian beguiled by the con man. Singing is her strong suit, and the part provides a good showcase for her ample lungs.

Choreographer Hunter got maximum use of the limited space of the Gavilan theater, constantly directing traffic into the audience and expanding the stage past the confines of the small stage. On various chase scenes and band marches, Hunter had cast members scurrying through the aisles. A play of this scope needs the space.

### Play review

But there was trouble, musically speaking, in River City. The 13-member orchestra, under the direction of Ray Bernd, exacerbated the problem of limited numbers with an often disjointed and spotty performance.

An old show business maxim admonishes adult actors not to perform with animals or kids. Its wisdom proved true when Sabrina Lloyd and Joel Gregor took the spotlight, momentarily upstaging the stars.

The River City mayor and school board — played to the hilt by James Maya, David Drom, Frank Pattie, Chuck Myer and Charles Krahenbuhl — proved to be crowd pleasers.

*The Music Man* proves to be another successful outing for SVCT. The group has a history of staging quality summer musicals and this is no exception.

*The Music Man* plays Aug. 15, 16, 22 and 23 with an extra afternoon matinee on Aug. 16.