

Spotlight on Learning

a Pioneer Theatre Company
Classroom Companion

The Music Man



Pioneer Theatre Company's *Student Matinee Program* is made possible through the support of Salt Lake County's Zoo, Arts and Parks Program, Salt Lake City Arts Council/Arts Learning Program, The Simmons Family Foundation, The

Meldrum Foundation Endowment Fund and R. Harold Burton Foundation.

Spotlight on Learning is provided to students through a grant provided by the George Q. Morris Foundation

Approx. running time:

2 hours and 25 minutes, including one fifteen-minute intermission.

Student Talk-Back:

There will be a Student Talk-Back directly after the performance.



THE MUSIC MAN • May 1 - May 16 , 2015

Meredith Willson's "The Music Man." Book, Music and Lyrics by Meredith Willson. Story by Meredith Willson and Franklin Lacey.

Directed by Karen Azenberg

Director's Notes

by Karen Azenberg

Some people call *The Music Man* the practically-perfect musical. And I must confess, I subscribe to that way of thinking.

Why? Well, there are so many barometers for why we like or dislike a show. Ways of measuring why a musical written in 1958 can stand the test of time and still resonate. You could write a thesis on this subject, but here are a few thoughts as you wait for the curtain to go up.

In terms of its practically-perfect-ness, *The Music Man* hits every checkbox on the What-Do-You-Look-For-In-A-Musical list. A memorable score—check; an accessible but not-too-over-told story—check; great characters—check; dancing—check; singing—check, check, check, check, check!

How many musicals can you name that have so many not only recognizable, but iconic songs? Is there anyone who doesn't know Seventy-Six Trombones? Trouble?

Plus, for a musical set in 1912, it's thematically as relevant in 2015 as any show I know. The change-resistant, stubborn Iowans depicted in *The Music Man* can still be found in every one of us. And the lighthearted reminder that, sometimes, something wonderful can happen if you open yourself up to a new thought, a new idea, or a new way of doing things, is a message as vital today as it ever was.

Practically. Perfect.

About Meredith Willson

Meredith Willson is someone you already know. He penned the classic Christmas song “It’s Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas.” As a composer, playwright and conductor Willson worked in film, television, and theatre. Willson was born as Robert Meredith Reiniger in Mason City, Iowa. He grew up taking piano, piccolo and flute lessons from an early age. In his autobiography *Once Upon a Piccolo*, he states “like any Iowa child, I loved to play circus and hated to play piano.” One of Willson’s brightest memories however was hanging around the bandstand in the summertime hearing the band play “Custer’s Last Stand.” He wished to play in John Philip Sousa’s band one day and years later he achieved his dream by touring with that very band. At the age of twenty-two he had also started playing the New York Philharmonic and New York Chamber Music Society.

The Music Man is one of his most well-known pieces. Based on the town he was born in, Mason City, Iowa, Willson called *The Music Man*, “an Iowlan’s attempt to pay tribute to his home state.” *The Music Man* depicts Willson’s lifetime love of music by fluidly melding music into each scene. For example the opening number “Rock Island” the rhythms of the train gradually frame the cadence of the salesmen’s song. Willson stated in his memoir, “In a musical comedy the song ought materialize out of the dialogue.”

The Importance of Rewrites

Willson’s friend Frank Loesser, the composer who created such hits as *Guys and Dolls* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* encouraged him to turn his anecdotes into a musical after working for eight years, creating 30 drafts and 40 songs. The first title for the show was *The Silver Triangle*. Willson crafted his memories into what is commonly regarded as one of the most accomplished works in Broadway history. *The Music Man* even beat *West Side Story* for the 1958 Tony for Best Musical.

1900s: A Child’s Life in Iowa

The majority of the families in Cerro Gordo County (where Mason City is located) were farmers. Each member of the family had farming responsibilities. Children had to wake up early to do their chores, such as gathering eggs, harnessing horses and milking cows. Days would start around 4:00 a.m. and end after dark. Work and play were dictated around the seasons. Springtime meant additional chores like feeding lambs, piglets and newborn calves.



L-R: Don Rey, Kilty Reidy, George Dvorsky, Billy Sharpe and Ricky Parkinson.
Photo by Alexander Weisman.

Glossary of Terms

NOGGINS:

A small mug or cup. Also a unit of liquid measure equal to one quarter of a pint.

PIGGINS:

A small wooden pail or tub with an upright stick for a handle.

FIRKINS:

A small wooden bucket or covered barrel used for butter, lard or sugar. Also any of several British units of capacity, usually equal to about 1/4 of a barrel or nine gallons (34 liters).

HOGSHEAD:

A large cask or barrel of liquid or occasionally food. Also any of various units of volume or capacity ranging from 63 to 140 gallons (238 to 530 liters), especially a unit of capacity used in liquid measure in the United States, equal to 63 gallons (238 liters).

CASK:

A barrel-shaped vessel, usually fitted together to hold liquids. Also a unit of measurement, referring to the quantity contained in a cask.

DEMIJOHN:

A large, narrow-necked bottle made of glass or ceramic material known as earthenware. A demijohn is usually encased in wickerwork and commonly holds wine or ale.

FLYPAPER:

Paper coated with a sticky (sometimes poisonous) substance, used to catch flies.

MODEL T FORD:

Henry Ford (1863-1947) began selling the Model T in 1909. At the time, horses and wagons were common place. There were no highways and most roads were still not paved. But when Henry's "Tin Lizzie" hit the market, it was the beginning of the end of the "horse and buggy era." The "T" was the first car that the average person could afford to buy. It wasn't very fancy, but it was reliable (by the standards of the day) and cheap and easy to fix when it did break down.



Traveling Salesmen & Small Towns

The first traveling salesmen in the 1860s represented manufacturers. They frequently found themselves harassed by anti-peddling laws enacted with the support of local business owners who feared losing their clients. However most merchants, particularly those located far from big cities, soon welcomed the salesmen.

The expansion of the railroads throughout the country meant that previously inaccessible towns could now be reached by the salesmen and their new products and plentiful selection. By 1877 there was an estimated 100,000 traveling salesmen on the roads, selling things like shoes, groceries and dry goods. Traveling salesmen were important not only because they were a link between manufacturer and retailer but they were also a source of news and life outside of the small town. Because their livelihood depended on personal interaction, traveling salesmen had to be charmers. They were commonly seen as big city types who dressed in nice clothes and ate fancy food. The story of the traveling salesman is embedded in American culture.

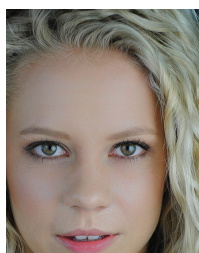


In stagecoach: George Dvorksy (Harold Hill) and Lizzie Klemperer (Marian Paroo). L-R: Wally Inkley, Maclayne Inkley, Maggie Scott, Alyssa Buckner, Abigail Scott, Mason Shanks, Matthew Rees. Photo by Alexander Weisman.

OUR EQUITY CAST



Jessica Blair



Maria Briggs



Mary Fanning Driggs



George Dvorsky



Garrett Hawe



Robert Anthony Jones

KAREN AZENBERG (Director) This marks the end of Karen’s third season as Artistic Director at PTC, having also directed *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *The Rocky Horror Show Concert Version* and *Alabama Story*.

JESSICA BLAIR (Zaneeta Shinn) returns to Pioneer Theatre Company where she was last seen in *Sweet Charity* and *A Christmas Carol: The Musical*.

MARIA BRIGGS (Zaneeta’s Friend) makes her Pioneer Theatre debut! NYC: *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, Second Stage Gala, Transport Group Concert (*The Music Man*).

MARY FANNING DRIGGS (Mrs. Paroo) returns to PTC, having been seen earlier this season as Rona Lisa Peretti in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. She has also appeared in many PTC productions, including *Les Misérables*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *White Christmas*, *42nd Street*, and *The Producers*.

GEORGE DVORSKY (Harold Hill) Broadway credits include the title role in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blonds*, the Tony Award-Winning *Passion*, *Marilyn: An American Fable* and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*.

GARETT HAWE (Tommy Djilas) Broadway: *Newsies* (Original Cast–Albert, u/s Davey, Crutchie), *Mary Poppins* (Neleus), *Matilda*. TV: “Peter Pan Live!” on NBC (Lost Boy), “Nurse Jackie” (Showtime), “Dancing with the Stars” (ABC).

ROBERT ANTHONY JONES (Marcellus Washburn) returns to PTC where he most recently appeared as Mr. Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol: The Musical*. NYC credits include: *The 101 Dalmatians Musical* (National Tour), *Dorian Gray* (Sir Henry Wotton, York Theatre) and *The Prince and the Pauper*.

HOWARD KAYE (Salesman, Constable Locke) returns to Pioneer Theatre Company where he recently appeared in *Peter and the Starcatcher*. On Broadway in *Miss Saigon*. Toured with *Mamma Mia!*

LIZZIE KLEMPERER (Marian Paroo) makes her PTC debut. New York: *A Christmas Story* (Broadway), *The Most Happy Fella*, *Fiorello* (City Center Encores), *Somewhere in Time* (NY Workshop), *Mother Jones and the Children’s Crusade* (NYMF) and *Bunked!* (Fringe).

ANNE STEWART MARK (Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn) returns to PTC, where she was most recently seen in *Les Misérables* and *Annie*. Other PTC favorites include *My Fair Lady*, *Noises Off*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Disney’s Beauty and the Beast*, and many more.

MICHAEL MCARTHUR (Salesman, Tommy’s Friend) performs at PTC for the first time. Most recently in the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, for his 7th year. Some favorite credits include *Can-Can* and *Newsies* at Papermill Playhouse and *Hello Dolly!* and *Legally Blonde the Musical* at The Cape Playhouse.

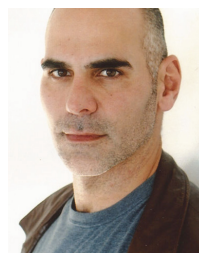
KILTY REIDY (Salesman, Ewart Dunlop) Broadway: *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *In My Life*. Other credits include: Mr. Braithwaite in *Billy Elliot* (National Tour) and Mike Nulty in *Irving Berlin’s White Christmas* (Original Cast and Tour).

DON REY (Salesman, Jacey Squires) appears in his Pioneer Theatre Company debut. Tours include the National Tours of *White Christmas* (Mike Nulty), *The Sound Of Music* (Herr Zeller), *Camelot*, *The Music Man* and the International Tour of *Evita*.

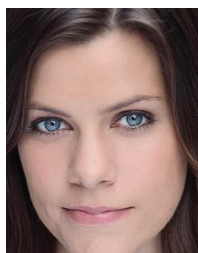
MAX ROBINSON (Mayor Shinn) was last seen at Pioneer Theatre Company in *One Man, Two Guvnors*. He has also appeared in last season’s *A Few Good Men* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, as well as many other PTC productions.

BILLY SHARPE (Salesman, Oliver Hix) Touring credits include *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *42nd Street*, *Annie* and *On The Town*. When not performing, Billy is the director for Royal Caribbean Cruise Line’s production of *Mamma Mia!*

JAKE WEINSTEN (Salesman, Tommy’s Friend) makes his Pioneer Theatre debut. Off-Broadway: *The Music Man in Concert* (Transport Group), Peter in *Peter and the Wolf* (BAM), *One Thrilling Combination* (The Public Theater), *Angelina Ballerina* (Union Square Theatre). National Tour: *A Chorus Line* (Mark).



Howard Kaye



Lizzie Klemperer



Billy Sharpe



Anne Stewart Mark



Michael McArthur



Kilty Reidy



Don Rey



Max Robinson



Jake Weinsten