



**Barbara Michals**

## Company excels in 'Music Man'

Performances of the St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook production of the musical "The Music Man" continue tonight through Saturday at the outdoor Greek Theatre at Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills. For ticket reservations phone 644-0527.

By Barbara Michals  
special writer

There may be trouble in River City, but there's magic on the stage of St. Dunstan's outdoor Greek Theatre where Meredith Willson's "The Music Man" is being performed with enormous style and gusto.

The large cast features many talented performers, and the colorful costumes, adept staging and overall music and professionalism make this an especially memorable production among St. Dunstan's many fine musicals of the past.

In the lead role of Prof. Harold Hill, master con man, Patrick Lynch is dazzling. Sounding remarkably like a young Robert Preston, the role's originator, Lynch has a splendid, strong voice.

He has perfect enunciation on the difficult patter song "Trouble," and he seems equally adept at lively numbers like "Seventy-Six Trombones" and "Marion the Librarian" and ballads like "Till There Was You" and "Goodnight My Someone."

Lynch radiates an easy charm that makes him an eminently believable con artist. Hill is something of a legend among his fellow traveling salesmen, who fear he gives their profession a bad name.

HIS LATEST SCAM is selling band instruments and uniforms to youngsters and then shipping town before they can learn to play a note. He finds the stubborn townies of River City particularly challenging, and winning over Marian, the town's hard-nosed librarian, proves the most difficult job of all.

Barbara Solverson is engaging as Marian, the very sensible spinster who learns to throw caution to the wind and open her heart, even though she knows that Hill is a phony. Solverson's delightful soprano is heard to advance in "Goodnight My Someone." "Till There Was You" and "My White Knight."

Nine-year-old Merritt Shwedel, playing Marian's shy, troubled young brother, Winthrop, has a commanding stage presence as she belts out her solo "Gary, Indiana" and does a nice acting job overall.

As Mrs. Paroo, Marian and Winthrop's widowed mother, Margery Brooks conveys a good deal of warmth, understanding and humor with a thick Irish brogue.

Sheila Hanahan is effective as young Maryville, hopelessly smitten on Winthrop though he won't give her a second glance.

Mark Watli is amusing as Hill's old pal, Marcellus, and the two mug shamelessly as they sing their preference for "The Sadder-But-Wiser Girl."

RALPH TODD is perfect as stodgy, blustering Mayor Shinn, forever trying to get the goods on Hill but never quite succeeding.

Jack Lower, Don Schore, James Brooks, and Norris Andersen, the squabbling members of the River City School Board, are amusingly transformed by Hill into a bachelorette quartet, inseparable and harmonizing at the drop of a note.

The traveling salesmen, Mark Jones, Harry Loucks, Al Roelie, Jim Masters and Vance Hayes, have excellent enunciation on their patter song as they explain how a salesman had "got to know the territory."

Bubbly Debbie Cragin plays the mayor's teenage daughter Zanetta, and her squeaky "Eggs" could probably shatter glass. As the mayor's wife, Fran Hayes humorously struggles to maintain her dignity while falling prey to Hill's charm.

The large supporting cast of River City townspeople and kids all perform well, with even the smallest roles enlivened with polish and enthusiasm.

UNDER DIRECTOR Isabel Himelboch, stage movements are smooth and vitality abounds. Musical director/conductor Barbara Anne Gowans has the orchestra sounding fine, and choreographer Alice Fils does a pleasing job with the dancers.



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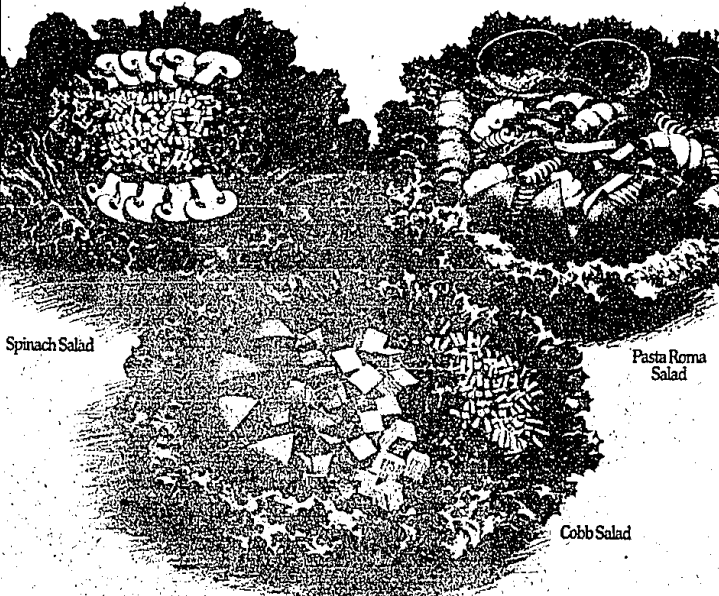
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