

# Jubilant 'The Music Man' belies offstage drama

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By Peggie Miller / performing arts columnist

That there's no business like show business has never been disputed. The truth in that adage played out during opening weekend for STAGE RIGHT'S "The Music Man."

"There are no people like show people," Ethel Merman used to bellow. "They smile when they are low ... so let's go on with the show!"

The musical opened July 15. Despite the light-hearted shenanigans, love story and entrancing music in fictional River City, Iowa, there was drama behind the scenes at the Crighton Theatre in downtown Conroe.

Last weekend JENNY HOOFNAGLE was scheduled to perform the female lead as Marian, the librarian, alternating with GINY MENDEZ.

Wishing to support the daughter of whom he is so proud, TOM HOOFNAGLE, volunteered to be stage manager. But fate had other plans.

## Arts and Entertainment calendar

"The Music Man" by Stage Right Crighton Theatre Final shows this weekend

A week before opening, Tom suffered health problems and was forced to undergo emergency heart bypass surgery.

Obliging SR board member MIKE GOODE stepped in for Tom during technical week. But alas, the Wednesday before opening, Mike Goode's mom, RONNIE GOODE, suffered a massive stroke, and now the family is seeking prayers for her recovery.

As always, another capable SR hand, JILLIAN NOLAN, shifted from her role as MANNY CAFELO'S assistant director to that of stage manager. "Let's go on with the show!"

Audience members cheered even more heartily when Tom himself led the standing ovation for his daughter and the other entertainers after the opening performance.

"The Music Man" is collecting raves, with an audience numbering close to 400 on Saturday eve.

It is an uplifting "piece of Americana" with a set to match, not to mention almost 200 costume pieces. Mayor Shin's wife, Eulalia, alone has eight changes, and most of the ladies wear wide feathered hats, products of costumer DEBORAH BLAKE'S flexible fingers.

THE RIVER CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION QUARTET turned out to be a crowd pleaser, as anticipated. Seems the four may become SR mainstays. Besides singing, they were on hand to build sets, paint and chip in wherever needed.

They come to Conroe's Crighton Theatre stage again Aug. 20 with a sizeable group of barbershop singers, THE STATESMEN. Look and listen for DARREL BASON, MATT MEALEY, BUDDY SCHNELL and JIM HOGE this weekend, continuing through a matinee July 31.

Another disquieting bit of information is that MIKE ANDERSON, as Professor Harold Hill, the music man of the title, will be exiting this area shortly.

He relocates to North Carolina, where his beloved father is undergoing cancer treatments.

Especially poignant is that Mike's dad first introduced him to "The Music Man," and they dueted together on the songs.

"The Music Man" plays weekends at 8 p.m., with 2 p.m. matinees July 24 and 31.

Tickets cost \$20, less for certain age groups, and this certainly is one for the youngsters. Call 936-441-7469 to reserve.