

JSerra's The Music Man is Terrific With a Capital T
written by Abby Offenhauser, a senior at Laguna Hills High School

As lights come up on a train car filled with bustling, quick-talking salesmen, the energy and charm of this small-town romance is already apparent. From strikingly lucid performances to dazzling, high-energy dance numbers, JSerra's polished production of The Music Man is not one to be missed.

The Music Man follows Harold Hill, a smooth-talking con man who arrives in River City, Iowa hoping to make some money, and Marian Paroo, the local librarian who quickly sees through his tricks. But as Harold and Marian begin to fall in love, Harold grows hesitant to leave River City.

Gavin Conniff plays the charismatic "Music Man" Harold Hill with remarkable authenticity and a wide range of emotion. Whether he's marching confidently down Main Street during his rousing anthem "Ya Got Trouble" or assuring Marian of his love with soft, rich vocals during "Till There Was You (Reprise)," Conniff's Harold Hill is irresistibly charming.

As the dynamic Marian Paroo, Ysabella Padua displays a seamless transition from uptight to in love. Padua has the horrified expression of a wet cat during "Marian the Librarian," yet by the show's end, this melts into sweet fondness. Her clear, effortless soprano and longing tears in her eyes create a poignant rendition of "My White Night" as soft blue light casts her shadow hauntingly behind her.

Diego Uribe and Elizabeth Zeller as Tommy Djilas and Zaneeta Shinn energetically encapsulate the couple's youthful melodrama. Uribe's rambunctious manner whenever he bursts onstage is complemented by Zeller's lively stubbornness, with each "ye gods!" different from the last.

Another highlight of this production is the Teen Dance Ensemble, who bring the showstopping six-minute number "Marian the Librarian" to life with their clear characters and vivacious air. Impressive feats such as pirouettes, leaps, gymnastics, and lifts are pulled off flawlessly in this coordinated yet delightfully chaotic scene.

Meredith Starkenburg's costume design is unique from the show's typical costumes, with vibrant colors lighting up the stage such as hot reds and yellows in "Shipooopi" and cool shades of blue and lavender in "Marian the Librarian." Shifting colors such as Marian's change from white to pink also come to beautifully symbolize characters' mindsets.

With its masterful tech work and consistently touching performances, JSerra's The Music Man is impeccably immersive.