

By TOM WRONA

SURFLIGHT REVIEW

Trouble in River City Means There's Joy in Beach Haven



Photographs by Jack Reynolds

DON'T GET CONNED: Professor Harold Hill (at far left, played by Alan M-L Wager) is out to pull a fast one with his sales pitch for a town band. The townfolk are not entirely sure about the matter, but Amaryllis (Alex Schettini, at the piano) knows music can't be a bad thing. Also pictured in the scene at left are Carrie Tillis as Marian the librarian, and Suzette Whiting as Marian's Irish mother.

the role he invented on stage and screen. Perhaps Wager will find his *oomph* as his performances continue.

Another Surflight favorite of mine who suffered a similar comparison was Andrew Foote, who played Hill's confederate, Marcellus Washburn. Foote's portrayal was good but compared to the comic genius of Buddy Hackett – well, there's just no comparison. Similarly, the portrayals of Zaneeta Shinn (the "Ye gods!" girl) and her beau Tommy Djilas, by Heather Carino and Eric Giancola, were competent but unexceptional.

Those who successfully excoriated the spirits of their filmic predecessors include David DuPont and (2003's brilliant "Fanny") Melanie Kann as Mayor George Shinn and his (ahem) lovely wife Eulalie Mackechnie Shinn (portrayed so unforgettably by Paul Ford and Hermione Gingold in the movie). I also



enjoyed Suzette Whiting's portrayal of Marian's widowed mother – with an Irish brogue so thick it could slice an uncooked potato. And the barbershop quartet Hill forms, comprising Matty Price, Christopher Deaton, Keith Schneider and Richard Earl, did fine work, too.

But in a film with unfor-

gettable characters portrayed by legendary talents, who could forget young Ronny Howard's performance as Marian's lisping kid brother, Winthrop? We loved Howard as Andy Griffith's Opie, and Happy Days' Richie Cunningham. We grew to respect him as a director of hits like "Apollo 13" and "A Beautiful

Mind." If ever there was a tough act to follow, it's Howard. Fortunately for us, 10-year-old Timothy Goerg of Fairlawn, N.J., is a perfect Winthrop. He's not only a surprisingly accomplished actor and singer, the kid's adorable. I can imagine females of all ages just wanting to pinch his cheeks and give him a hot chocolate or something.

"The Music Man" is a fitting end to this Surflight Summer season. But don't forget, there's another six shows coming our way in the fall season. I'll preview them in our final edition of 2005 next week.

Evening performances run through Sept. 3 at 8 p.m., except Aug. 28, 29; with matinees at 2 p.m. on August 25, 28, 30 and Sept. 4.

Bonus Broadway Buff Trivia Question:

For the season finale, I'll give you two questions: First, what was unique about the Grammy Award the original cast album won in 1959? And second, Paul McCartney sang one of the songs from "The Music Man" on the 1964 hit album Meet the Beatles. Can you name it?

I'll give you the answers when I preview the Surflight's fall season in our big Labor Day Weekend issue next week.

Last time I asked you how many of the five songs that were added for the Broadway version of "Beauty and the Beast" you could name. They were "No Matter What," "Home," "Me," "If I Can't Love Her," and "Human Again."

Tom Wrona is a writer and filmmaker based in Barnegat. You can let him know what you think of his reviews at tom@dangerousmovies.com. And for more Island-area entertainment tidbits, visit his web site at wrona.com.

REGAL MANAHAWKIN 10, Kmart Plaza, 733 Rte. 72 east (978-5900) Call for show information.

Serious Stuff

AI-Anon Meetings, (494-0543 or 296-3240) This is a 12-Step support group for friends and relatives of alcoholics. Mon., Barnegat United Methodist Church,

682 East Bay Ave.; beginners, 10 am; step/discussion, 10:30 am. Tues., Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, 333 North Main St., Manahawkin; beginners, 7 pm; step/discussion, 7:30 pm. Wed., Mill Creek Community Center, 1199 Mill Creek Rd., Beach Haven West; beginners, 1 pm; discussion, 1:30 pm. Thurs., St. Francis Center, 47th St. & Long Beach Blvd., Brant Beach; beginners, 7:30 pm; step/discussion, 8 pm.

THROUGH AUGUST 31 Free Spinal Assessment with

Donation for Needy Children, Healing Hands of Manahawkin, 588 East Bay Ave. (978-4304) School supplies are being collected. The assessment, for new patients only, includes a spinal checkup, consultation, any necessary X-rays and report of findings. Call to drop off donation and make appointment.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31 American Red Cross Bloodmobile, Southern Ocean County Hospital, Ullmann Conference Center, 1140 Rte. 72 west, Mana-

hawk (800-GIVELIFE or www.pleasegiveblood.org) Most healthy people who weigh at least 110 pounds and are 17 or older are eligible to donate. Photo ID is required. A Red Cross parental consent form signed by parent or legal guardian is required for 17-year-olds. Noon-5 pm.

DARE Night for Parents, LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (494-1241) Lt. Paul Vereb of the Long Beach Twp.

Police Dept. presents the program. 7 pm.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 Free Blood Pressure Screening, Island Branch Ocean County Library, 217 South Central Ave., Surf City (494-2480) The LBI Health Dept. offers the service. 11 am-noon.

"Meet Your Local Press" Roundtable, Barnegat Branch Ocean County Library, 112 Burr St. (698-3331) Reporters on the local beat present the principles