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Special to The Journal

Posted Jun 24, 2017 at 6:24 PM
Updated Jun 24, 2017 at 6:24 PM

There may be trouble in River City, but Theatre By The Sea's current run of "The Music Man" is about as trouble-free as you could ask, with impressive voices including a crack barbershop quartet, ambitious choreography, and Richard Sabellico's tight direction that keeps this Meredith Willson classic on track for close to three hours.

Sabellico and a talented cast turned the signature "Seventy-Six Trombones" into something of a showstopper, with ballet dancers and marchers that somehow manage to squeeze a theatrical three-ring circus into the historic barn theater's cramped stage. But it was clear as soon as Tiffan Borelli, the musical's uptight Marian, tiptoed her way into "Goodnight, My Someone," that this show was going to be a winner. At least Borelli got my attention with the sweetness and sincerity of singing that's so unlike the brassy, in-your-face sound so many Broadway crooners strive for. She just let the music speak for itself, with a simple, pure delivery.

Borelli found her match, though, in Jason Ostrowski's warm baritone that ends up melting the heart of snooty Marian, even though in some place at the back of her brain she knows Harold Hill is the Donald J. Trump of con men. Besides, Broadway veteran Ostrowski is a true presence in this production, a solid anchor.

Even better is Marian and Harold's tryst at the footbridge, when they team up for a tender "Till There Was You," the show's best tune, by far. The whole point of Willson's familiar tale is, of course, the dance between Marian and Harold. The attractive but mousy librarian, in the hands of Borelli, eventually learns to come out of her shell, celebrate her womanhood, and in the end, I suppose you'd have to say, emasculates Harold. At least, her newfound charms manage to coax the king of con men into her corral.

True, this scenario forms the basis of many a love story, when free, if somewhat roughish spirits like Harold give up the addictive thrill of the life for a woman. But because Ostrowski is such a master when it comes to conning naïve townsfolk into believing he'll teach their kids to form a band when he can't read a note, it's hard to think of him settling down and working at the local bank.

Special attention was paid, too, to Jeff Hendry's period costumes, with flamboyant women's hats brimming with feathers and flowers.

Scenic designer Kyle Dixon has come up with some clever touches, such as the lurching train car filled with traveling salesmen that opens the show, when many of the passengers recount the legendary exploits of Hill — even though "he doesn't even know the territory." There is also something refreshingly quirky about Willson's songs, oddball tunes such as the opening "Rock Island" train song and the second act's "Shipooopi."

And let's not forget Rhode Island's own Tom Gleadow, who seems to have become a fixture at Theatre By The Sea. This time around, Gleadow, a born comic, crawls into the skin of blustery Mayor Shinn, making him colorful as can be without forgetting he's part of the ensemble.

As a footnote, the theater is asking patrons to donate unwanted instruments to be passed along to needy children. As for the show, it's an old-fashioned musical, which on the plus side means it's well written, funny while remaining civil, just an enjoyable night of theater.