

THE MUSIC MAN

Meredith Willson's "The Music Man" is probably THE great All-American Musical. It takes place in the fictional River City, Iowa and it is a quaint and fun slice of Iowa life in July of 1912. The show is filled with the uniquely stubborn and humorous characters that populate a small town.

The story opens on a train with traveling salesmen discussing the sad state of affairs in the sales business. We soon meet our "Music Man", Professor Harold Hill, who is out to sell River city on the idea of a Boys' Band. Of course, he has no intent to actually teach the boys how to play the instruments, but run off with the money he's collected. He is certainly a spellbinder who whips the citizens into a moral frenzy against the pool table and then later into having a Boys' Band as a remedy.

He must also get on the good side of the town's leading music person, Miss Marian Paroo, the local librarian. Marian is skeptical of this fast-talking salesman and tries to get rid of him. The Mayor and the School Board also try to get his credentials (the Mayor owns the pool table), but Harold is "slipperier than a Mississippi sturgeon."

Eventually Harold's charm and cunning win over the entire town and everyone rejoices when the instruments arrive. Marian sees a more positive side to Harold and becomes much more receptive to his romantic advances. While waiting for the uniforms, one of the angry traveling salesmen catches up with Harold in River City and starts to spill the beans about him. The town is in an uproar and demands to have Harold arrested.

In the end Harold is captured, the Boy's Band plays, the townsfolk are overjoyed with the music, Harold is forgiven and he and Marian live happily ever after – just like a good musical should end.