



Mary Elisabeth | Photo Editor

Top Left: 'The Music Man' actors including seniors Jackson Murrieta and Kayla Bryant cheer. Top Right: Senior Hannah Sedlacek looks down at Murrieta. Bottom: 'The Music Man' actors including Murrieta, Sedlacek and Bryant and junior Spencer Williams dance across the stage at the Nov. 8 dress rehearsal in Smothers Theater.

# 'Music Man' magic aims to connect Pepp

**Beth Gonzales**  
News Editor

With sets decorated down to the tiniest detail and old-fashioned movie credits rolling on the big screen — Pepperdine Theatre credits of course — before the show's start, Pepperdine's Theatre Program brings the classic golden age musical, "The Music Man."

The musical opens this weekend at Smothers Theatre, and is playing Nov. 10-12, and Nov. 16-18, with shows at 2 and 7:30 p.m. This show has a massive cast with star senior leads as well as a message of hope and love for the audience to take home, senior lead actress Hannah Sedlacek said.

"In this show, it has been fun to tell a sweet story with these heartwarming, charming characters — and it's funny, there is dancing and it's a big spectacle," Sedlacek said.

Pepperdine's fall musical brings the audience the classic story of boy meets girl: a boy likes the quiet girl in town; she rejects his advances; she sees how he brightens and cheers up the town — and her life. They fall happily in love and celebrate the joy and community music brings. This is what the "The Music Man" is all about.

The theater program got right to work, holding auditions during the first

week of the fall semester. The cast list was revealed that weekend, and they headed straight to practice the following Monday, Sedlacek said.

As senior theater majors, Sedlacek and co-star Jackson Murrieta said they are emotional, yet proud, to be bringing "The Music Man" to life as their last Pepperdine musical.

"It is the dream every theater girl has: to be the lead your senior year," Sedlacek said. "It has been so fulfilling, and I have grown so much during my time at Pepperdine."

Kelly Todd, director, choreographer and visiting professor of theater, said when choosing the fall musicals, the faculty desires to give their students a well-rounded education in their four years.

This senior class has participated in the pop/contemporary music of "Mama Mia," the complexity of Sondheim's "Into the Woods," and now, the classic show-tune style of "The Music Man."

"When people leave this show, I want them to think of how amazing the leads are," Todd said. "I knew they worked really hard for all these years, and they deserve it. I'm excited for them to be seen."

The story focuses on traveling salesman/conman, Harold Hill — played by Murrieta — who plans to sell instruments to the small-town Iowa residents

with the intention of running away before his end of the deal is made.

However, he ends up falling for the snobby librarian Marian Paroo — played by Sedlacek — and creates a marching band for the boys in town, spreading the love of music and song to all, Sedlacek said.

This show features a large cast, even highlighting some of the faculty's own children, Todd said.

"They [the children] bring so much life to the show," Murrieta said.

This cast paints the stage in their pastel costumes, striped suits and feathered hats with large musical numbers such as "Marian The Librarian," "Shipoopee" and "Wells Fargo Wagon."

This show also has soft and slow ballads that speak volumes through lyrics such as, "There were bells on the hill, but I never heard them ring, no I never heard them at all, til there was you," in the lovers duet, "Til There Was You."

With all these large numbers, Sedlacek said she had prior dance experience but was very excited about all the complex and upbeat numbers throughout this musical. With the intensity of voice, dance and acting in this musical, she tended to focus on the singing and really dove head first into this musical when she found out it would be the headline this fall.

"This is a role I would not have been

able to play when I first got to Pepperdine," Sedlacek said. "So, I feel this is a culmination of all the work I've done here. I am very connected to it, and I am excited to show my family, who has never really heard me sing like this before."

Both Todd and Murrieta said their favorite number is "Shipoopee" — the larger than life dance number following the intermission where Hill shows Paroo and the whole town how to let their hair down and dance their way through life.

"It's all a lot of work, but it really pays off in the end, it is such a blast, and we have such great leadership and faculty," Murrieta said.

Murrieta said he feels like this musical and its feel-good nature is needed during this time in the community.

From white-horse princes, under the oak-tree kisses, to holding hands on moonlit bridges, the cast said the smiles and laughs they see in the audience during "The Music Man" makes all the work rewarding.

"I hope that people have fun," Sedlacek said. "I hope they leave with a pep in their step and a song in their heart."



Bryant, Sedlacek, Murrieta, Williams and other actors take the stage at Smothers Theatre on Nov. 8 during their dress rehearsal for 'The Music Man.' The actors dance, sing, crawl and stomp in a joyful display of friendship and community.

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