

# STAGE RIGHT

ASKS:

## What Is It About The Sound Of A Band?

By: Steven Wong

As a Texas A&M student (Class of 1983) one of the highlights of attending football games was to see the Fighting Texas Aggie Marching Band. It made me proud to see 300 men and women executing complex marching maneuvers to traditional march music. Known for military precision and style, some of the Aggie Band's maneuvers are so complex that a computer says they can't be

done because they require two people to be in the same place at the same time. What is it about a band that makes you feel proud of your son, your daughter, or your country?

Perhaps it has something to do with the strong rhythm in march music. Around the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most towns, organizations, theaters and even companies would have their own band. These community bands would perform their music at special events much like the military band, but would often play at simple scheduled concerts such as the traditional gazebo concerts. By this time, published marches were plentiful due to prolific composers such as John Philip Sousa. Marches became a staple in these concert bands and explain how the popularity of the march spread so rapidly across the world.

Maybe the sound of a band lets us recall the simpler times our country once enjoyed when march music was popular.

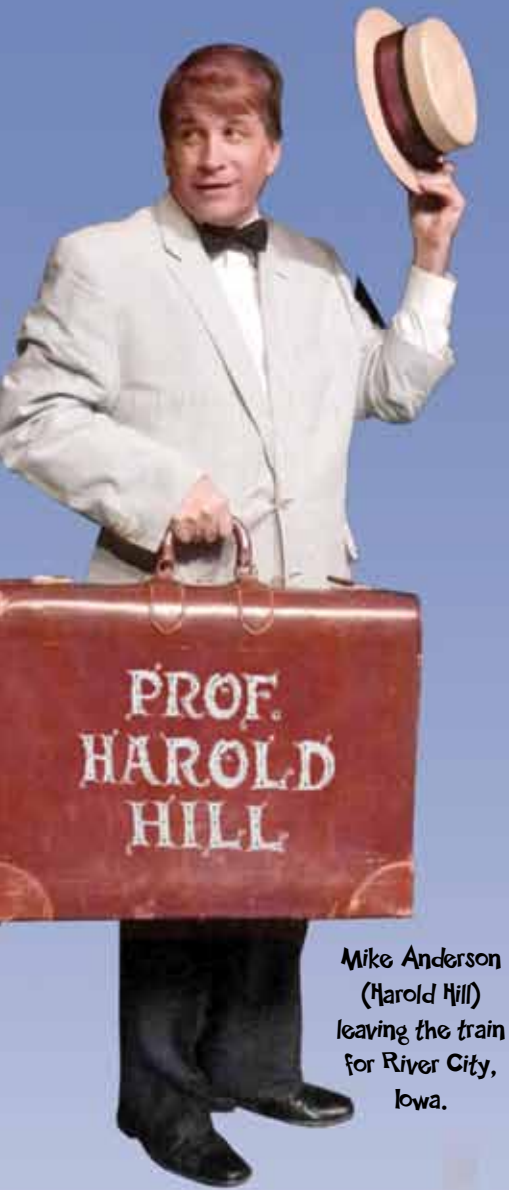
STAGE RIGHT is going to bring back that simpler time of bands, barbershop harmony and march music in their production of *The Music Man* running July 15-31, 2011 at the historic Crighton Theatre in downtown Conroe. No other musical dishes out a big old fashioned slice of American apple pie better than *The Music Man*! Of course, *The Music Man* is more than just a musical about a marching band. Con man Harold Hill (Mike Anderson) poses as a boys' band organizer and leader and sells band instruments and uniforms to naive townsfolk before skipping town with the cash. In River City, Iowa, prim Marian the librarian (Giny Mendez and Jenny Hoofnagle) sees through him. Marian begins to fall in love with Harold when Hill helps her younger brother Winthrop (Ian Montez and Noah Smith) overcome his fear of social interactions due to his lisp. Will Harold succeed in his scheming plan, or will he risk getting caught to win Marian's heart? Here's a hint; one of the closing numbers of the show is titled "Till There Was You."

The memories about the sound of a band in *The Music Man* run deep for music director Caleb Ackerman. "This used to be a movie theater," his mother told him as he walked through the doors of the Crighton beneath the marquee. "Must've been a long time ago," replied her less than enthusiastic son, barely fifteen, and unsure which is worse: Friday night with the family, or seeing some silly musical. Although forced to watch Julie Andrews movies growing up, seeing a live musical was something he had never experienced at this point. Caleb didn't understand why he had to dress up to see some show called *The Music Man*. His piano teacher, Nadine Wilkinson, was music director and had given them spare tickets to the show. As the lights went down, Caleb could see her hands conducting the orchestra, guiding the music like a captain at the helm, every ebb and flow at her discretion. After the curtain call, the cast motioned to their conductor and the whole theater took to their feet in applause. All he could think was how if he continued with music, he may be able to do something as spectacular as what he had just witnessed. Many years later *The Music Man* marks Caleb's maiden voyage as music direc-



Harold Hill giving Winthrop his trumpet. And Winthrop thought he was getting a new trombone.

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Mike Anderson  
(Harold Hill)  
leaving the train  
for River City,  
Iowa.

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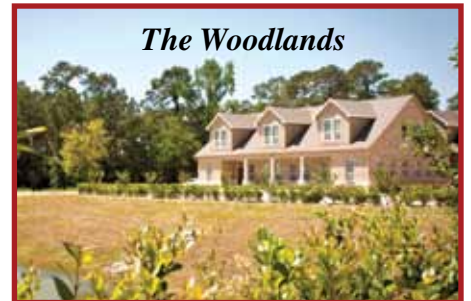
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Peyton Crenshaw as Amaryllis having a  
laugh at Winthrop's expense.

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Mike Anderson (Harold Hill) telling a story to Ian Montez and Noah Smith (Winthrop Paroo).

tor at the Crighton Theater. He wonders if some other fifteen year old out in the audience will one day fill his shoes.

So what is it about the sound of a band that stirs such emotion in our soul? We hope you'll come to the Crighton Theatre on July 15-31, 2011 and let the music take you back to a simpler time and maybe make some happy memories for your own family.

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Harold Hill admitting to Winthrop that he is a liar, a cheat, and a con man.



Mike Anderson (Harold Hill) and Marian (Jenny Hoofnagle) enjoying a private moment at the footbridge in the park.

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