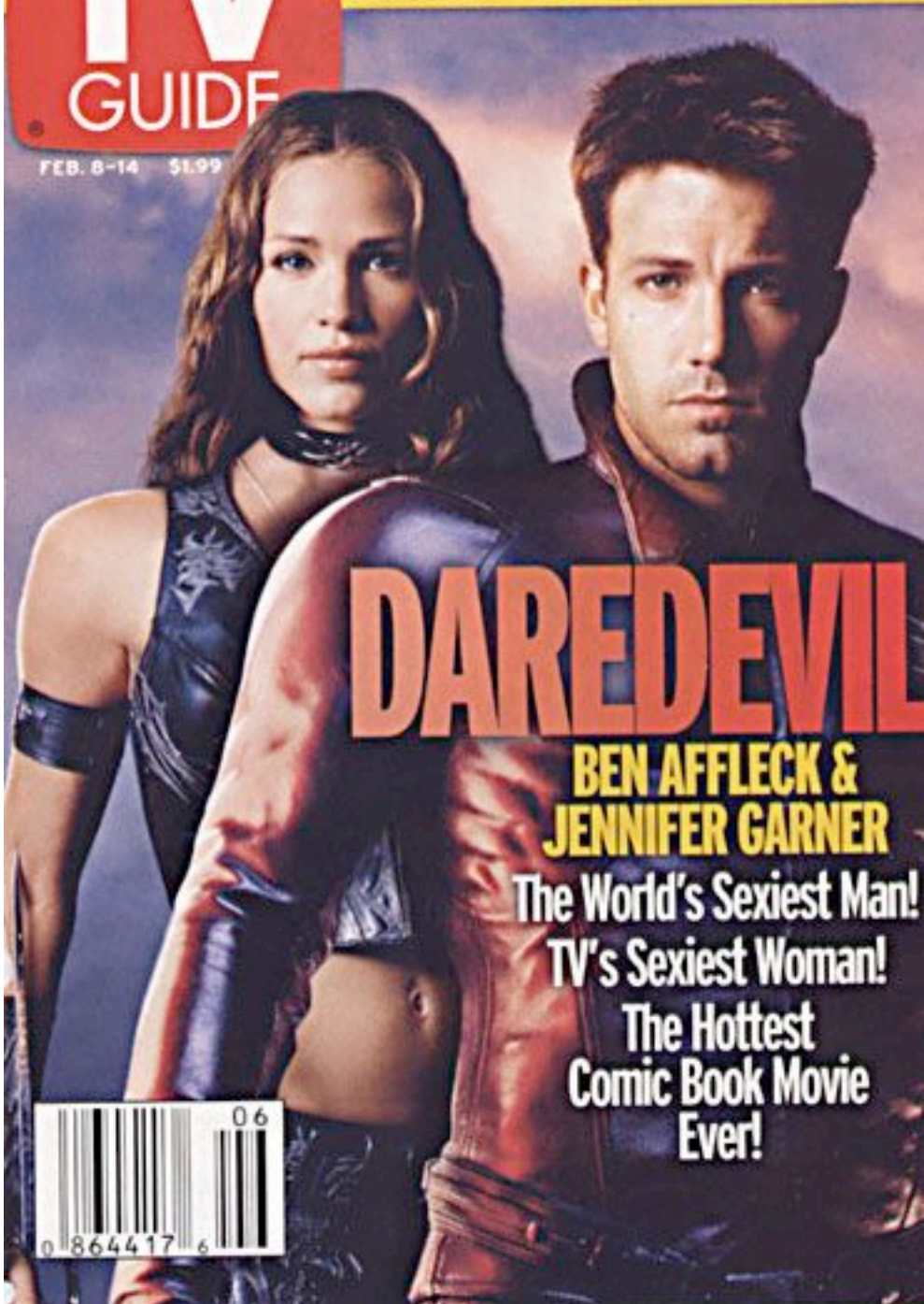


TV
GUIDE

FEB. 8-14 \$1.99

ALSO: A GUIDE TO **SWEEPS** SHOWS
MATTHEW BRODERICK'S **MUSIC MAN**



DAREDEVIL

**BEN AFFLECK &
JENNIFER GARNER**

**The World's Sexiest Man!
TV's Sexiest Woman!
The Hottest
Comic Book Movie
Ever!**



>>BEST OF THE SWEEPS

The Music Man is just one of several high-profile projects coming your way during February sweeps. It's this month's ratings that networks use to set their ad rates, so February's jam-packed with special programming. Here, TV Guide gives you the inside scoop on guest stars, reunions and other big events. For more, turn to page 26.

BY JENNIFER GRAHAM

ON THE TORONTO SET of Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*, 66 actors fill the bleachers of a fictitious high school gymnasium, decorated circa 1912. The men are buttoned into wool blazers, the women trussed up in corsets. Naturally, on this 70th June day, the air-conditioning is broken. But only one actor is sweating. It's the Music Man's number. Between takes—he's nimbly high-stepping his way through "Seventy-Six Trombones"—Matthew Broderick sheds his heavy bandleader's jacket and wipes his brow. What, he is asked, attracted him to this three-hour *Wonderful World of Disney* remake of the legendary stage show and movie? "It's one of the most challenging male parts in a musical," Broderick says. "And I always think you should do the thing you're most scared of." He tugs at his neck-pinching collar and laughs, adding, "Now, of course, I regret it." He's joking, but only a little. It's been 40 years since the late Robert

Preston brought that fast-talking charmer Professor Harold Hill to the big screen after creating him for the Broadway stage. Though the show has been endlessly called up in high school auditoriums, and Craig Bierko received a Tony nomination for his Hill in a Broadway revival as recently as 2000, Preston is still widely considered *the* Music Man by musical theater buffs. Fair enough, but the right actor might politely nudge him aside—in a revitalized version, that is. So say producers Neil Meron and Craig Zadan. They already have some musical TV coups behind them, virtually owning ABC's sweeps periods with 1997's *Cinderella*, 1999's *Annie* and 2001's *Life With Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows*. (These wins handily outshine some of their misses, among them 1999's *Double Platinum*.) The pair also scored big at the Golden Globes last month with their hit movie musical, "Chicago." Broderick, the team contends, is just the man for the *Music Man*



Strike up the band

>> Matthew Broderick has plenty to sing about with the TV remake of "The Music Man," life with Sarah Jessica and sweet baby James

□ Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* airs Sunday, February 16, 7 PM/ET, on ABC.

>>BEST OF THE SWEEPS

job. Since his career-sparking roles in "Brighton Beach Memoirs," for which he won a Tony in 1983, and the 1986 movie "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," he's come to be best known for his work in Broadway musicals—most recently in "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," for which he snagged his second Tony in 1995, and in the 2001 smash hit "The Producers."

From the start, Meron and Zadan felt the 40-year-old actor could hoodwink the small town of River City, Iowa, into buying band instruments, and do it realistically. "All the performances in the movie [were] so fever-pitched," Zadan says. "We wanted to remove the cartoon element and let the humor and the love story shine through."

But Broderick, ever modest, is careful to give Preston his due. "I get nervous when people start saying, 'Oh, we're going to freshen it up,'" he says. "Robert Preston in

this part was one of the best performances I've ever seen." He might also be a bit humbled by the task before him; it's only Day 6 of the two-month shoot. "I'm always a little nervous till things are done," he says.

His jitters don't surprise his wife, *Sex and the City* siren Sarah Jessica Parker. "Matthew worships at the altar of Robert Preston," she says. "He has ever since I've known him." But she also knows he can hold his own in the smooth salesman department. "I think Matthew is extremely—and on most occasions, *unknowingly*—charming," she says. "He's bright and funny. And he's lovely to look at."

Initially, industry tabloids trumpeted that Parker would snag Shirley Jones's role of Marian the librarian—an idea Parker shrugs off. "Frankly, I don't think I have the musical skills required," she says, laughing.

Zadan and Meron went with Tony-winning Kristin Chenoweth, who also appeared in their production of *Annie*. On the set today, no stomach-squeezing corset is going to stifle this 32-year-old ray of sunshine. "It's not just about doing *The Music Man*," says Chenoweth of the show that includes such famed numbers as "Ya Got Trouble" and also stars Victor Garber (*Alias*) and Molly Shannon (*Saturday Night Live*). "It's about introducing it to new people, so they'll know what great American classic theater is." Adds Meron, "We have been on a mission to prove that musicals can once again be the most popular entertainment form."

When Broderick is interviewed the following January in his Greenwich Village apartment, he's no longer talking regrets: The TV-movie and, heck, life in general, are pretty good right now.

Broderick became a new dad in October, when Parker gave birth to their first child, James; he was

Man on the move: Broderick marching with some River City kids (right); and meeting with the charming Chenoweth



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: RAY/TASC; PETER STRAIN/ABC; TV GUIDE; ANDREA BENASUT/OLIVE PHOTOS

named after Broderick's late father, best known for the mid-'70s TV series *Family*. Of the baby, who's 3 months old, Broderick says, "He sleeps pretty well now, till about six in the morning." Both of James's parents have been around the house since his birth, "but there will be a nanny pretty soon because Sarah goes back to [filming *Sex*] at the end of March," he says. This month, he'll fly to Los Angeles for his next movie project, a mob-related comedy called "Providence." "So we'll need somebody to be able to take him to [Parker's] set and home and stuff like that."

Like his father, James will be raised in New York City. "I don't know where else to live," Broderick says. "My family has a house in Ireland, too, so we'll go there a lot. But then when he goes to school I guess we can't travel as much." He's already nixed the idea of a kids-of-stars academy. "In some parts of New York, you get a really narrow slice of life, and they turn out like Little Lord Fauntleroy," he says, laughing. "We



Family man: With Parker and James

wouldn't send him to a school like that."

Wherever he goes, James shouldn't have trouble making friends. His father provided the voice of the grown Simba in Disney's 1994 hit "The Lion King" and just lent his vocals to another upcoming children's film, "Good Boy!" as a space-traveling dog named Hubble. And there are always those other bragging rights: His dad was Ferris Bueller. Does it get any cooler than that? ■