

**Ohio Light Opera premiere:
the Gershwins' *Girl Crazy* (June 30)**

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Has your smile gone on vacation? It might very well regenerate itself at Ohio Light Opera's zany, colorful, and happy production of *Girl Crazy* by the Gershwins — George for the music, Ira for the lyrics. If you like dance, in particular tap dancing, then this is the show for you.

Don't spend too much time worrying about the plot — as usual for that era (1930) it doesn't always make a lot of sense. It's totally unnecessary, anyway, with all those hit songs and splendiferous dancing.

Briefly: the little town of Custerville, Arizona has been without any resident women for some time, when Danny Churchill is sent there by his rich New York daddy in an attempt to make something of himself. But what? With no women around? Impossible. His driver Gieber has a hard time believing the town and its male inhabitants are for real. The only woman in the area is Holly the postmistress, but she's from another town. This is the fragile underpinning of a preposterous plot.



But never fear, the Gershwins provided several splendid songs which quickly became standards of the Great American Songbook. “Bidin’ My Time,” “Embraceable You,” “Sam and Delilah,” “I Got Rhythm,” and “But Not for Me” have become legendary and all are from this one show. You’ll hear bits and pieces of them in the overture, which is of the old-fashioned type, demonstrating all the wonderful tunes to come.



With stage direction by Steven Daigle, and orchestra conducted by Steven Byess, you know you’re in good hands. Choreographer Spencer Reese (who also plays Danny)



always creates the most imaginative dance routines you're likely to see for a good while, and this production is no exception. Kiah Kayser designed the versatile sets that represent the town of Custerville, a dude ranch, and various locations in Mexico. The dazzling and colorful costumes by Myron Elliott were made even more noticeable by Daniel Huston's lighting. Christopher Plummer designed the sound.

Kyle Yampiro was excellent as Gieber Goldfarb, who must have changed his persona every five minutes or so during the two acts, and succeeded at all of them. As Molly, Hannah Holmes had no trouble keeping up with the dancing required for her role as the out-of-town postmistress who visits Custerville on a daily basis.

The fun starts when Danny decides to turn his father's ranch into a dude ranch, complete with casino, dance hall (and girls) plus other entertainments, and hires Kate Fothergill (Yvonne Trobe) and her gambler husband Slick (Brad Baron) to manage the new venture. In the meantime, Molly's beau Sam (Alan Smith) from her hometown has won \$6,000 from a gambling venture, and he visits Custerville to reclaim her.



Even with all the great songs, it's the dancing that puts a smile on your face. The entire cast comes together in a huge finale for each of the two acts. Do not leave before the house lights come up, or you might miss these spectacular displays. You'll find your own smile very easily, believe me!

Girl Crazy runs in repertoire through August 10 in Freedlander Theatre on the campus of The College of Wooster. Tickets are available [online](#).

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