

# Actress sparkles in lead role

By JEFF SCHORR

"Forty Carats" is a diamond-in-the-rough that nonetheless pleases, thanks in large part to Elaine Boike's sparkling performance in the two-act comedy's lead role.

The most recent offering of the Troy Players, "Forty Carats" continues Friday and Saturday at Smith Middle School.

The play leaves you unsure whether it is taking place in the '60s or '70s (due to music, headline and contemporary references). But this chronological confusion does not hamper the action, as its characters grapple with love across cultural and generational spans.

"Forty Carats" explores a theme common to the late '60s (when it was written): How much influence should upbringing and what society thinks have in our life and love choices?

Snappy, contemporary dialogue, hinting of Neil Simon in Jay Allen's adaptation, puts a premium on crisp acting, timing, rejoinders and end-of-scene blackouts. The Troy Players do well.

MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS is sometimes lost, however. A quicker

## Review

blackout following one of the 13 scenes would better punctuate a scene-ending exclamation or startling discovery. In several cases, the players mood doesn't change quick enough to fit changing circumstances.

Elaine Boike, a veteran of the Troy troupe, plays a twice-divorced, late 30s woman, Ann Stanley. This woman has turned to the real estate business world to absorb her energies and alienations. During a getaway vacation to the islands of Greece, she dallies in a brief affair with a man 17 years her junior.

To avoid complications, she gives a phony name to her lover, Peter Latham, who is played by John Butte. (And if you are wondering why the WW-TV North Bureau chief hasn't been in on the late night shift as much lately, now you know.)

However, complications—as can often happen in a play—develop. John coincidentally (New York coincidentally, yet) stops by on a date to pick up

the teenage daughter, Trina Stanley, of his erstwhile Mrs. Robinson.

Upon discovering his lost "mother love," he becomes possessed and possessive. He only wants mama. Mother sensibly tries to avoid the match, but her heart tells her otherwise.

Her mother, Trina's grandmother, is a cheerfully meddling and plotting household resident. Ann's second husband, Billy Boylan, is a dashing, suave, man-of-the-world, fading Hollywood rake. He comes around seeking a hand-out but turns noble.

A prospective real estate buyer, about 50, has a date with Ann and falls in love. But with Trina, however.

AS AN ADDED ingredient, Peter is from very rich bloodlines. In his Troy Players debut, Butte does realistically well as a calm, purposeful, poised man who only desires (the soon-to-be-middle-aged) Ann. Her frantic reactions to his urgings and the forces tugging at her from all sides bring out excellent acting from Ms. Boike.

Don Hubbard, brother of Troy Players regular Dave Hubbard, does well as the cynical, live-off-his-looks but weak "one," who is there when it counts. He delivers his lines well and is perfectly cast.

Jessica Cooper, who plays the gold-digging and meddlesome grandma, is natural and best in low-key dialogue.

but loses the tempo when the pace quickens.

Earle Chalfant, the rich westerner, is properly proper and considerate if not a heart-quickener to Ann. One accepts that teenage Trina (Melissa Flot)—who makes no mistakes despite being brought into the cast late—is only interested in his money.

Creditable performances are turned in by Merna Lyn and George Holz as Peter Latham's mismatched (age) parents, Delores Lamb and Alice Thornton join John Barnard in rounding out the play's cast.

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# Good voices fill 'Guys and Dolls'

By BARBARA MICHALS

for a band of gold, a person can develop a cold.

Brimming over with joyous tunes, Frank Loesser's "Guys and Dolls" is one of two current offerings at the Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre, and the appealing production boasts many excellent vocalists.

The popular musical comedy based on Damon Runyon characters is playing in repertory, alternating weekends with "The Lion in Winter" until June 17 and then continuing to run alone through July 15.

Capitalizing on the eternal battle of the sexes, the simple plot contends that a "dolt" can really mess up a guy's life. Nathan Detroit and Sky Masterson, leaders among a group of small-time hoods, find themselves hopelessly entangled with dolls.

The local hoods are all complaining because Nathan has temporarily closed "the oldest reliable floating crap game in New York" to satisfy the demands of his long-time fiancée, Miss Adelaide.

Among the many other memorable tunes are "Luck Be a Lady Tonight," "Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat," "I Love You a Bushel and a Peck," "A Fluke for 'Tinhorns," and the title song.

At final dress rehearsal Friday night (opening night was rescheduled at the last minute), Moddi McCalester was a bit awkward at times as Sarah, though she did a good job with the drunk scene. Ms. McCalester's beautiful operatic voice is a real treat, and when it's coupled with Jack Cortes' strong baritone in the love duets between Sarah and Sky, the small theater is filled with rich sound.

Mary Lyle is a sprightly, credible Adelaide, and she belts out her songs in a most pleasing manner. The petite Ms. Lyle looks even more diminutive paired with towering George Dweilley as Nathan, and the physical contrast adds to the humor of their battles.

DWEILLEY HAS difficulty handling the Runyonesque accent, with the result that some lines are amusing in ways they were never intended to be. Cortes, who has a slight foreign accent, wisely shuns the New York at that moment a Salvation Army sister happens by, and the challenge is on.

While Sky works at melting the icy reserve of Sister Sarah, Miss Adelaide continues her 14-year struggle to get and Nicely-Nicely Johnson. The adept performances of Tim Tuharsh as Nicely-Nicely and Mark DeFram as Benny lend strong support. Hubarth shines in his solo number.

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