

# Delightfully inept cast funny in 'Play On!'

Performances of the Farmington Players production of "Play On!" continue through Feb. 20 at the Farmington Players Barn in Farmington Hills. For ticket information, call 553-2855.



**MARK S. CARLEY**  
pense.  
"Play On!" a farce by Rick Ab-

bot, should amuse audiences from all walks of life, but will be especially funny to those of us who tread the boards for fun (and no profit).

Mr. Abbot must have extensive theater experience. His script abounds with those little details which all groups seem to share, whether it's the goofy set builder, those messy little impromptu romances, or the almost universal addition to coffee.

As our story opens, an unnamed amateur theater troupe is struggling through rehearsals of an absolutely dreadful murder mystery by a local playwright. In typically stingy community theater fashion, the group has chosen this dog in order to avoid paying royalties.

Director Geraldine Dunbar (Cynthia Turner) is expected by a host of familiar headaches including forgotten lines, intracast squabbles and technical glitches. Compounding her misery is nitwitted playwright Phyllis Montague, played by Paula Myers. This would-be Agatha Christie continues to re-write her abominable script right up until opening night.

By Act 2 Ms. Dunbar and her cast have managed to stumble their way through dress rehearsal, which only serves to convince them that they cannot possibly be ready to open the following evening.

Act 3, opening night, proves their right in excruciatingly funny fashion. Lines go astray, props

disappear, zippers fly open, and the murderer arrives for the performance stinking drunk. Hearty congratulations go to real-life director Phil Hadley, who choreographs this disaster with great skill, thus achieving maximum hilarity.

Kudos also to a fine cast. In fact it is hard to single anyone in particular out for praise. I'll start, though, with Margaret Gilkes because she reminds me of so many stage managers I have known. Myers is also quite good as the irritating Ms. Montague.

The "cast within the cast," so to speak, is delightfully inept. It takes a lot of talent to act this badly. Especially noteworthy are the awful British accents.



Hilarious show: Bert Green of Southfield and Debbie Gosciniah of Farmington Hills in a scene from the Farmington Players' production of "Play On!"

Yes, friends, go and enjoy "Play On!" But be forewarned. It may seem just a little too familiar.

Mark S. Carley is active in local community theater, both onstage and behind the scenes. He is a member of the Birmingham Village Players and Ridgedale Players in Troy.

# Southfield Symphony tackles major works in three concerts

The Southfield Symphony continues to expand its repertoire as part of the celebration of its 40th anniversary season this year. The orchestra, along with guest artists and Conductor and Music Director Douglas Bianchi, will be tackling

some major instrumental and choral works on the remaining three series concerts of the 1993 season. Concert tickets are \$10 adults; \$6 students and seniors. Call 354-4717 or 851-7408. At Congregation Shaarey Zedek

in Southfield, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7, guest soprano Linda Thorne will perform "The Four Last Songs" of Richard Strauss. A doctoral student in voice at Indiana University, she has performed with orchestras and opera companies in the U.S. and Europe. On this concert, she will be the featured soloist in Mozart's "Solemn Vespers" when the orchestra combines with the Ford Motor Chorus.

On Sunday, March 28, at 7 p.m.

at St. Hugo of the Hills Church in Bloomfield Hills, the Ann Arbor Cantata Singers will perform Leonard Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" with the orchestra. Now in their 33rd year, the Ann Arbor Cantata Singers have earned high praise from critics, and they perform a wide range of choral repertoire throughout the state. The group performs frequently with the Ann Arbor Symphony, and has appeared with the Detroit and Grand Rapids symphonies and

the Michigan Sinfonietta. This concert marks their first appearance with the Southfield Symphony. The concert will conclude with a performance of the Fifth Symphony by Dmitri Shostakovich.

The final concert of the season will be 7 p.m. Sunday, May 9 at the Southfield Civic Center Pavilion. The concert will feature Russian guest conductor Valery Leонов, the chief conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Belorussian Radio and Television, and the leading conductor of the Belorussian Opera and Ballet Theater. This will be the second appearance of Leонов with the Southfield Symphony.

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