



## Star-spangled show

It will be a star-spangled opening for the second annual dinner-theater production to benefit Detroit Country Day School. The Neil Simon romantic comedy "Star-Spangled Girl" is the choice, with a cast headed by (from left) Ronnie Clemmer, Joan Clemmer and Jim Kottler. Performances continue Saturday and Feb. 10-11 in the school learning center at the Main Campus on Thirteen Mile and Lahser in Birmingham. A gourmet dinner served at candle-lit tables begins at 7:30 p.m., followed by the show. Don Craig is directing "Star-Spangled Girl," about a patriotic young girl who confronts two counter-culture magazine publishers. (Photos by Denny Berels)

## Vittorio's hosts 'Brel'

Tonight at Vittorio's dinner theatre in Lorton, four voices reunite to once again work their magic on stage.

Phil Marcus Esser, Barbara Bredius, Charlie Latimer and Mary Ann Paquette will perform—for the 25th time—the 24 songs that caused both laughter and tears for 15 months in "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris."

The show, directed by Phil Marcus Esser and originally produced by John Schmittroth, started late in 1973 in America's first professional dinner on a college campus.

Before the show, Vittorio's serves a buffet dinner with round of roast beef, fried chicken, baked lasagna or mostaccioli, as well as relish trays, jello molds, cole slaw, potatoes au gratin, green beans almondine and fresh fruit.

Following the performance, creme de menthe parfait dessert is served and the audience can dance to disco music.

Total price is \$14.95 plus tax. Vittorio's is at 33201 Plymouth Road at Farmington Road.

Performances are Thursday through Sunday nights with dinner at 7 p.m. and curtain time at 8:30. Sunday dinner is at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7:30 p.m.

To attend only the show, the price is \$8.50 plus tax.

For reservations, call 425-8344



"Jacques Brel" stars (from left) Charlie Latimer, Mary Ann Paquette, Phil Marcus Esser and Barbara Bredius (center).

# 'The Boyfriend' plus food makes pleasant evening

By GAY ZIEGER

The natives grew restless as they awaited the dinner bell at Alvaro's dimly lighted Downstairs, in Troy. It seems that the inclement weather had caused the delay and resultant confusion.

But the promise of good food and entertainment—Saturday night, the Theatre of the Arts Cocktail Playhouse's presentation of "The Boyfriend"—kept the conversation light. As Mrs. Herbert Martiny observed, "We planned a leisurely evening, so it didn't matter."

Besides, she added, "we came in as strangers and met some nice people." That was the general feeling—nice people, good fun.

The pre-show dinner was adequately prepared and served. The fare was not particularly exciting—steak or fish, potatoes, corn, salad, sherbet. But generous portions and cheerful service compensated somewhat for the less-than-gourmet quality.

Most of the serving was done by the players themselves. This, according to

## Review

Director Michael Klier, helps to "warm up the audience."

THIS MINGLING of actors and viewers tends to break down the barriers created by footlights in more traditional theaters. As Klier noted, it is "an attempt to bring theater back to its roots, basically the market places of ancient Greece and Rome." It is a case of bringing theater to where people naturally congregate. "We want to make the entire evening an experience," he concluded.

The show itself was a bit of froth, a musical revue spoofing the 1920s. It had its moments of fun. Four musical numbers were especially enjoyable.

The title song allowed for much finger-snapping and toe-tapping. In "Won't You Charleston With Me," Del Howison showed us that it was indeed

possible to sing well and dance at the same time.

His partner, the fiery Linda Johnson, was nicely naughty. The lead characters, Carol Wedge as Polly and Tom Emmott as her suitor Tony, blended melodrama and fine voices in "I Could Be Happy with You."

The cute "It's Never Too Late to Fall in Love" gave Michael MacRae an opportunity to show his mettle. MacRae played the benign roue, Lord Breckhurst, with panache.

AT TIMES the acting was frantic. As Polly said of her friends, "They do chatter so." Still, the spirit was good and there was evidence of serious preparation and talent.

The food did not excite the palate, nor did the performance challenge the mind. Still the dinner, the pervasive atmosphere of good cheer, the determined singing and dancing, and the elaborate costuming made for that "experience" that Klier said was sought after.

"The Boyfriend" is presented each Friday and Saturday. The show follows a 7 p.m. dinner.



## Keeping their promises

The show didn't go on opening night last Thursday when a blizzard interfered with the benefit night for American Field Service. But the Birmingham Village Players production of the musical "Promises, Promises" was switched to Sunday night and the show took place. Regularly scheduled performances were held Friday and Saturday night, however. Publicity chairman Jean Hall said of Friday's opening night, "It was great. I think everyone was stir crazy. We had a few cancellations, but others knew tickets would probably be available. Would you believe it; we had a full house." Performances open to the public continue tonight through Saturday and Feb. 10-11. "Promises, Promises" stars (above) are John Urrah and Elissa Jacobson. The Broadway hit, based on the Neil Simon comedy, has music by Bert Bacharach and lyrics by Hal David. (Photos by Denny Berels)

## St. Dunstan's slates drama

"I Never Sang for My Father," two-act drama by Robert Anderson, will be staged by St. Dunstan's Theatre at 9 p.m. Feb. 10-11 and 17-18.

The hard-hitting drama was first presented at the Longacre Theatre in New York City in 1968. The cast included Hal Holbrook and Lillian Gish.

The St. Dunstan's presentation will feature Jerry McMechan, Steve Pew,

Maggie Bennett, Jean Dodge, Lew Singer, Fred Wuellner, Alec Flesselman, West Meyer and Jane Kempf.

The show is directed by Paulette Slayden, assisted by Liz Smith. Producers are Clare Keller and Jack Waters.

The playhouse is located on Lone Pine Road at Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills. Call 644-0527 for ticket information.

## Extra shows for 'Charlie'

The Farmington Family Players production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" at Franklin Community Church was blitzed by last week's blizzard.

All three performances of the opening weekend—Friday-Sunday—were snowed out. Tickets for the canceled shows will be honored at any performance this weekend. Shows are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Friday (which had been kept open as a "snow date"), 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday (the matinee is an extra performance) and 7 p.m. Sunday.

Group rates are available. Ticket information is available by calling 632-3822 or 642-8367.

## Paradigm sets nighttime jazz

After Theater Jazz at the Paradigm natural foods restaurant in Birmingham will begin Feb. 17.

Classic standards and contemporary and original compositions will be performed by Bess Bonner on piano, Joe Lo Duca on guitar and bass and Rod Rose on vibraphone and percussion.

Performances will be presented Fridays and Saturdays in concert at 11:30 p.m. and 1 a.m. There will be a cover charge. A light after-dinner menu will be available. No liquor is served.

Pamela Pupp, proprietor, said dates announced in a flyer circulated by one of the trio's members were incorrect.

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