

'Private Lives' done with flair

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Noel Coward's 'Private Lives' starring Jimmy Laurence, the season's opener at Somerset Dinner Theatre, is a stylish romp, an evening of nostalgia and romance.

WJR radio personality Lance doesn't disappoint his fans looking for a showman as Elyot Chase, who honeymooned with his new bride in Paris only to discover he has an ex-wife on his honeymoon sharing an adjoining balcony at the hotel.

Sandra Sutherland as Elyot's new wife Sybil is a traditional doll of a wife, cut as can be but striking back with petulance. Elyot's ex, Amanda, may be the woman most other women envy, even today, for she is forthright and played with flair and strength by Marcia Benson.

Ferris Turgenon, co-producer of the Turgenon Guest Production, is Amanda's husband, Victor Pryor. He is the anonymous husband somewhat bewildered by his wife.

THE CAST doesn't really attempt English accents but does display a continental charm in this comedy of manners. Both the women wear exaggerated, matted hair styles in the '30s mode. Elyot's dress is glamorous and credit is due for the smartness of the costumes.

In the first act, some two all wear elegant evening dress. Sybil in a daphnion gown and Amanda in black crepe with rhinestones. In the second act, at Amanda's flat in Paris, Elyot and Amanda get together, after running off from their new spouses, and make loving overtures. He is in a red smoking jacket, she in wrapper and lounging pajamas.

Early in the show, Amanda describes a honeymoon as "a very overrated amusement." That sets the pace for the events that cause newweds Elyot and Amanda a fiery pair to try to dump their newer dates.

The Noel Coward dialogue is witty and subtle and this is the play with the famous line uttered by Elyot that "Women should be beaten regularly—like dogs."

There are amusing bits of stage business, such as Elyot and Amanda in a candlelighting sequence he lights hers, she gives it to him to smoke. He lights another

again for her, parodying those hot-blooded notions of romance, all but dead in the realistic '70s. No flick of the bic here, and she doesn't offer to light her own.

BUT JUST a little bit later, after a spat, she does light her own, showing what happens when two don't play the loving game. So, things haven't really changed that much, after all.

Mr. Benson's Amanda dominates the evening's performances. Laurence, with his deep, solid voice and capable acting abilities, is a good match.

Ms. Sutherland seems to start out with an almost unbearable cynicism, but her character quickly warms up to become a full-blown rival.

Turgenon has his comic moments, although he appears somewhat uncomfortable in the role.

The second-act curtain closer, actually, there is no curtain and the audience can watch while the sets are changed. Elyot and Amanda have a nice, knock-down, drag-out fight, which requires some good timing and apt footwork.

'Private Lives' moves briskly through-out, but the third act provides the best exchange between all the characters, generating a lot of electricity on stage.

A BUFFET dinner from Alfred's Restaurant precedes the performance, presented in the lower level auditorium of Somerset Mall in Troy. The menu features a salad bar, pepper steak, ravioli and roast chicken, with rice from the buffet table. Cake squares are available from the dessert table.

All the food is tasty. Tables are called by number, which is a convenience, except diners are required to serve themselves both salad and main course at the same time, juggling two platters.

At the tables, coffee is poured by attentive courteous waiters, a consideration not unappreciated by the diner.

This season's auditorium has been transformed into an attractive restaurant setting with orange contemporary fabric wall panels and brown and beige dried flower arrangements in wooden planters. Brown tablecloths and beige napkins have been ordered for the tables.

Jim DuBois, an artist-designer who is chiefly a potter, has done a good job on this, his first interior.

Somerset Dinner Theatre is presented

Program for youth

Magic Carpet, a community service, is now in its fourth year, providing transportation from the Pontiac Mall to performances at the Detroit Institute of Arts auditorium.

At the Pontiac Mall Friday, there will be free entertainment and a meeting explaining Magic Carpet to all north Oakland County residents interested in youth-oriented activities.

To help kick off the new Pontiac Mall Magic Carpet season, Harbinger Dance Company will perform "Dance, American Style" at 11 a.m. on stage in the North Mall Concourse. Admission will be free.

Following this presentation, a meeting will be held in the shopping center's Community Room at 11:30 a.m. to introduce youth, church and school group leaders as well as all other persons involved in young people's activities—to the seven live performances in this season's Magic Carpet lineup at the Art Institute's Detroit Theatre. Refreshments will be served.

Children's Farm lists hours

Kensington Children's Farm at Kensington Metropark near Milford now begins its fall schedule.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday from noon to 4 p.m. (closed Mondays and Saturdays). Sunday and holidays (including school vacations) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Children's Farm is available at other times, including Mondays and mornings for school groups or group parties. Details are available by contacting: Lincoln Friend, Kensington Children's Farm, 2340 W. Bruno Road, Milford, 48063.

Attractions include a historical barn, a corral, pony rides, swan rides, farm animals, farm crops, information office and food service.

Beverages and snacks are available at the Feed Bag, a limited food service restaurant, opened Sept. 28.

Friday and Saturday evenings.

Sitting at individual tables looks intimate, although the room actually holds 150 theatergoers.

"PETER PAN," a multi-media show featuring both people and puppets, will be first on the Magic Carpet schedule Nov. 12.

Other shows will include "Treasure Island," "Alice in Wonderland," "Here Comes Rusty," "Life on the Mississippi" and "The Wizard of Oz."

On the seven selected Saturdays, non-stop Magic Carpet coaches will leave the Pontiac Mall at 12:30 p.m. for Detroit Theatre. America's largest center of entertainment for young people, returning to the shopping center at 4:15 p.m.

The Magic Carpet program has been particularly successful among youth-oriented groups, such as Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls, with transportation problems.

Magic Carpet tickets at \$2 each, including show and roundtrip coach, may be bought only at the Pontiac Mall's Grinnell's. For further information, call the museum ticket office at 822-2730.

Curtain Time

Max and Superman G. B. Shaw's comedy opens eight-play season on Thursday at Meadow Brook Theatre on Oakland University campus in Rochester. Show runs through October. For ticket information call Meadow Brook box office at 377-3300.

An Evening of One-Act Plays presented by the Avon Players of Dramatic Art in season's premiere at 8:15 p.m. Friday-dun-day and Oct. 14-17 in Studio Theatre, Vassar Hall, Oakland University. Plays are "Enchanted Night" by Sawonitz, Mrozek, "The Bald Soprano" by Eugene Ionesco and "Home Fires" by John Guare. Tickets at 377-3013.

Finishing Teaches Jean Kerr comedy about English professor who becomes disturbed about his feelings for one of his students, presented by Avon Players Friday-Sunday and Oct. 15-17, 22:23 at Avon Playhouse, 1185 Washington, Rochester. Tickets by calling 651-9229.

A Touch of Spring rocking comedy by Samuel Tadjer is sheer delight in production Friday and Saturday and Oct. 15-18 at Wild-O-Way Repertory Theatre, 773 W. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills. Call 644-4411 for reservations.

Private Lives Noel Coward comedy is stylish romp, an evening of nostalgia and romance, starring WJR personality Jimmy Laurence. Twelve-week run Friday and Saturday at Somerset Dinner Theatre at Somerset Mall in Troy. Curtain at 8:45 p.m. Buffet dinner every Friday and Saturday. Reservations and tickets at Alfred's Restaurant or by calling 643-6863.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum musical comedy at cocktail theater (in the round) in Pontiac/Bloomfield Sheraton at 100 Woodward, Pontiac. Chuck Keeps of Bloomfield Hills is a merry Pseudolus, the slave, in this lively show about doings in ancient Rome. Performances each Friday and Saturday at 8:15 p.m. Drinks served in the theater. Diners available in the Chateau Louis Restaurant. Reservations by calling 528-4121.

Violinist at dinner

Gino D'Alessio, internationally known violinist and composer is appearing nightly in the Benchmark Restaurant at Southfield's Michigan Inn. D'Alessio, who has played the violin in both the United States and Europe for nearly half a century, is appearing from 7:30-11 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Among the European cities D'Alessio has appeared in are Rome, Milan, Bologna, Vienna, Geneva, Paris, London, Monte Carlo and Madrid. In the United States, he has performed at the Waldorf Astoria, the Iranian Room and Hotel Plaza and was for several years featured at the Greenbrier Hotel in North Carolina.

In the Detroit metropolitan area, he has played with the Detroit Chamber Music Group and was assistant concertmaster for the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and conducted

reftinner for the Allen Park Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to the violin, he plays the piano and guitar and composes. His style ranges from classical to pop and show tunes.

Daybreak appearing at Fanny's disco

Daybreak, a new musical group, is appearing at Fanny's disco bar at the Troy Hilton Inn through Oct. 18.

Playing a selection of Top 40 hits for dancing and listening, Daybreak appears nightly 8:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday.

Dining And Entertainment Guide

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Meadow Brook Theatre

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BY


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Friendly craftsmen are still at work down at the Crafts Center. Should the weather turn, Henry Ford Museum is just next door, where you'll enjoy endless galleries of memorabilia—plus the special Bicentennial exhibition, "The Struggle and The Glory."

There's something for the whole family to see and do.

Greenfield Village
Dearborn, Michigan



Long ago, but not far away.