

# Show marked by enthusiasm

By BARBARA MICHALS

An old-fashioned, heart-warming kind of story, "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," is good family entertainment. The production by the First Theatre Guild of the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham is attractively packaged, and the performers' enthusiasm helps compensate for their lack of polish.

Turn-of-the-century Brooklyn and its teeming tenements are the setting for the musical comedy based on the popular Betty Smith book of the same title.

"A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" is the story of Johnny Nolan, a likable neighborhood boy who would rather dream than face the harsh realities of his life.

Accepting her husband's shortcomings, wife Katie must work hard to make a home for Johnny and their daughter Francie. As Francie grows older, she is torn between the attractive fantasy world of her father and the practical world of her mother.

A LARGE PORTION of the play also centers around Katie's sister Cissy. Having lived with a long succession of men, warm-hearted Cissy is having difficulties with her current common-law husband.

When Harry refuses to adopt a child, Cissy fakes a pregnancy and then delivers an infant via the back door. Her fake labor pains provide one of the show's two funniest moments.

The play's funniest scene is when Cissy has a clandestine reunion with her first lover, a man whom she so idolized for his refinement that all succeeding men in her life have been named "Harry" in his honor. In the intervening years, Cissy has gained weight, while Harry has lost his hair and his bearing. Their attempts at conversation are classic farce.

As Cissy, Judy Truplett demonstrates a fine comic flair. Bill Robertson, the current Harry, and

Charles Sommers, the first Harry, both give delightfully amusing performances as well.

James Robertson is convincing as Johnny Nolan, an impressive accomplishment when one considers that Robertson stepped into the role on two weeks notice. His singing voice is not up to the demands placed on it, though.

AS KATIE Delmyra Moore is the most polished member of the cast and the most accomplished singer as well. Unfortunately, the play does not require her to sing as much as other cast members.

In smaller roles, Carolyn Bristow is quite competent as Francie. Peggy Glenn is pleasing as Katie's friend Hildy, and Gaye Ernst is amusing as the neighborhood madam, Larry DuBois. John Lorne and Edward Krebs lend able support as Johnny's friends.

The music for "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" was written by Arthur Schwartz, with lyrics by Dorothy Fields. A few of the musical numbers are memorable ("Look Who's Dancin'," "Love Is the Reason," "If You Haven't Got a Sweetheart"), but most are not.

The guild's production is under the direction of Richard Truplett, with Martha Welton as music director and choreographer. Costumes and scenery are attractive, and the crew competently handles the show's 21 scene changes.

"A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" is a bit over-long. The pace slackens most during a few dance sequences ("Irish jig," "Halloween Ballet" that might best be eliminated. The extremely large chorus of singers and dancers add spirit to the production but also weigh it down with a lot of time-consuming entrances and exits.

Evening performances are at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, with a special senior citizens matinee at 2 p.m. Saturday. The musical is presented in the church's Knox Auditorium.



## Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS

### Truth of the matter is honesty in menus

The Michigan Restaurant Association wants its members and non-member restaurants, too, to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

George Washington's Birthday—and you know how honest he was—marked the day the MRA introduced its new truth in menu policy. This is the first restaurant association throughout the United States to adopt such a policy, which protects you against being served something different than what the menu promises.

For example, if you read a description of some luscious item, or see a color photo on a picture menu, or supposedly even if your waitress says something verbally, you shouldn't have an unwelcome surprise.

If you ask for a Coke you won't get a cola substitute. If you order a hamburger with onion rings, you'll get just as many succulent rings as pictured. If you ask for coffee, you'll be asked in turn if you want "whitener" (when it's not actually cream).

MRA PRESIDENT Monte Montague said most of the member restaurants are not guilty of these indiscretions. But they want to set the standard for all restaurants.

There are 25,000 licensed restaurants in Michigan, he said. The MRA includes the higher-level, quality restaurants, and its 1,500 members may individually represent more than one restaurant.

Many American restaurants are not intentionally dishonest, according to Montague, but have made such sub-

stitutions as turkey salad for chicken salad (one MRA member restaurant confessed to this and is changing its menu listing), blue cheese for Roquefort cheese, hamburger for ground round, and margarine for butter.

Other more startling substitutions have been shark for swordfish, milk-soaked pork for veal and canned soup for homemade soup.

The MRA has been organized since 1971. Montague said restaurants violating the truth in menu policy will be asked to cooperate but, "We are not policemen. We are an educational, informational organization."

Montague added, "We feel there is a movement in the country toward consumer protection."

Bill Morgan, representing Elms Brothers, and Jim Constand, representing Jim's Garage, also were spokesmen at the MRA's recent press conference.

A SERIES OF SuperGarden Concerts will combine chamber music by members of the Michigan Chamber Orchestra with a menu of fine French food from Yvonne's Cuisine a la Carte.

The Super Garden Concert will be held each Sunday in March, and there will be two seatings, promptly at 5 and 7:30 p.m. You can relax in the French cafe setting of Tweeny's, Yvonne Gill Davis' restaurant in the Great American Insurance Building at 280 N. Woodward, Birmingham.

Guests will leave their wraps at the top of the stairs and descend the winding staircase to the inner courtyard restaurant under a skylight.

At round tables that accommodate four to six persons, they will begin supper dining in hors d'oeuvres and salad. Then the entree will be served, and after the entree the concert begins.

Dishes will be cleared away, and following fruit and cheese or dessert (depending on the menu) and coffee, the concert will continue.

Reservations must be made by Wednesday for the next Sunday's concert. The second concert, March 13, will feature a traditional French white veal steak, along with musical selections by Beethoven, Haeflert and Poulenc. Reservations are being taken at 644-0850.

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

# ON THE TOWN

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