



PINKERTON — The naval officer's uniform gets a last minute check by Trudy Whitlock, a



THE ACTORS — Director Ralph Kelley checks the costumes on cast members for the upcoming

Schoolcraft College production of "Madame Butterfly."

# Puppets 'On Stage' At Schoolcraft

By SUE SHAUGHNESSY.

The singing is world famous and the production of the classic opera will open right in your own backyard.

Stingers are drawn from the Rome Royal Opera House Company and Anna Moffo is featured in the lead.

The opera is Giacomo Puccini's masterpiece "Madame Butterfly."

Opening night is Oct. 1 in the Schoolcraft College Liberal Arts Theater on the Livonia

campus. Additional performances are scheduled Oct. 2, 3 and 4. Curtain time is 8 p.m.

THE ITALIANS aren't really coming to Livonia for performances at Schoolcraft, rather the presentation is being produced by the student dramatists, The Masque Players, and members of a drama workshop course.

There won't be an actor taller than 12 inches on stage. The entire cast that the audience will see will be puppets designed

and constructed by Director Ralph Kelley and the students.

Kelley who calls the production "one of the most painstaking projects I've been involved in" said that he has absolutely no idea on the cost of the cost hangers and plastic tubing that are the basic ingredients of the puppets.

It took Kelley all summer to come up with a workable design for the puppets. "The boys were very ingenious when it came to the actual construction," Kelley

said.

The stage built for the production fills the entire stage. Constructed on a scale of one foot equaling six feet the setting would be 70 feet wide if it were built in life size proportions.

The puppets are built in the middle-European style and are rod puppets which are operated from under the stage. Because of this the interior of the stage is a large walkway where the students slide back and forth on small carts -- to move the puppets to fit the action.

DURING THE first rehearsal, Tom Chenette, who built most of the puppets and operates the young American Naval officer

B. F. Pinkerton, had one comment.

He found himself with another student under the tea house constructed for the set. "Next time we do this we need more room," he exclaimed.

Linda Rasmussen, a Schoolcraft graduate, who returned to take part in this production says that she's both "scared and excited" about the production. Linda will operate the puppet depicting Cio-Cio-San or Madame Butterfly and, as such, will be under the stage but moving them smoothly.

All told six Schoolcraft students will operate the puppets in the close confines under the stage. Tickets to the production are priced at \$1.50 for adults and \$1 for Schoolcraft students. They may be purchased at the college.

is compounded by the fact that the opera is in Italian which means that the students -- none of whom speak Italian -- have difficulty in picking up their cues.

The young lady who is 5' 10" assured us that she had "plenty of room" under the stage and was "very comfortable."

Each puppet is operated by the manipulation of four different strings and three wires. As Linda said "the whole thing is not just moving the puppets but moving them smoothly."

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LOTS OF ROOM — Schoolcraft College Masque Players Gerry Gilbert (left) and Tom Chenette are backstage, or more precisely under the stage, for this production of "Madame Butterfly." (Observer photos by Craig Gaffield)

## Amusements

### 'Staircase' Good Example Of Movie As Art Form

By SUE SHAUGHNESSY

"Tell it like it is" has become today's cliché.

"Staircase," the film now showing at Livonia's Mai Kai Theater makes an honest attempt, however, to "tell it like it is."

Ray Harrison and Richard Burton turn their considerable acting talents into the work of portraying two aging homosexuals and their honest fears and frustrations in dealing with contemporary society.

This isn't a film for you if

you want to forget reality in the dark of the movie theater. It isn't for you if you honestly believe that homosexuals are evil rather than sick people. The film is more than a story of homosexuals. It's the story of two very lonely people who happen to be homosexuals.

HOLLYWOOD rates the film as Restricted, which means that anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. That's fine and probably prudent of the Hollywood moguls, but this reviewer has seen many films in worse taste, with more emphasis on sex and sadism that carry a Mature rating which is not nearly so strict.

Don't misunderstand -- the rating on this film is justified, but why doesn't the industry become more honest and rate films that treat more "normal" adults in the same manner?

The entire question of whether or not you enjoy movies has undergone the same transition and if your fondest wish is a return to extravaganzas on the screen you had better organize a pressure group.

Given a free rein more movies such as "Staircase" will be produced, while the "Black Beauties" will disappear.

I'm not certain that this is a good trend, but it is happening. "Staircase" is a film with a message, but isn't preachy. It's not for everybody. It should, however, be recognized as a mature, serious attempt to show one small segment of reality.

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By MARVIN KEMP

You'll get longer life from your paint brush if you follow these few simple procedures: If a telephone call interrupts your painting chores, leave the brush suspended in the paint. A wire that you can attach to the brush handle and hook over the edge of the paint can will serve to keep the brush at the correct height. The flag ends should not rest on the bottom of the can, nor should the heel be immersed in paint. For interruptions of longer than an hour, wrap the brush in a double thickness of aluminum foil to prevent air from hardening the paint.

Don't let lack of supplies interrupt your chores. Buy what you need at AMERICAN HARDWARE & SUPPLY CO., 31245 Eight Mile Road, 476-6240. 537-2645 before you start. We are a super department store with a folksy, neighborly spirit of helpfulness. Hours: Monday to Wednesday 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Thursday-Friday 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

HELPFUL HINT: Sandpaper and paint with nail polish the rough spots on your wooden coat hangers, it can avoid damage to your clothes.

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LIVONIA MALL  
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THE LEARNING TREE

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4:15  
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p.m.  
Alan Arkin  
in  
The Heart  
is a Lonely  
Hunter  
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The  
Gourmet  
Adventures  
of  
DICK BENSEN

There's no country like Mexico... the land of Mariachi music, spicy foods, and maize. Mexico has long been the food associated with Mexican Indian civilization. Walking through a small town you can still hear the slap -- slap -- slap of Maize being shaped into tortillas. Mexican markets are open-air displays of ripe mangoes, papayas, and melons with pinto beans, rice, chicken and turkey. You can smell the aroma of plumbeago and passamime and the spice of chili. Enjoy the taste of enchiladas and tacos. Mexican food is "terrifico"!

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