



Todd Haak (center), Stacie Emery (left) and Ann Wixon study lines.

'I did learn a lot at Will-O-Way. When I was a kid, I was very squirmy. Show business was in my blood. Will-O-Way was my first outlet.'
—young comic Michael Binder



Celia Merrill Turner directs Saturday morning class in the Psychology of Performing at Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre in Bloomfield Township. (Staff photos by Stephen Cantrell)

Will-O-Way Theatre's work goes on with help from friends

By ETHEL SIMMONS

For Celia Merrill Turner, director of Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre, Saturday was an important day. In the afternoon, the closing matinee performance of "For Colored Girls" at Detroit's Fisher Theatre was a benefit, with proceeds going to the Save the Will-O-Way Fund. The benefit was organized 10 days before the event, a \$50-ticket covering the performance and a reception afterward at the St. Regis Hotel near the Fisher. "I would say we have made \$3,000-\$5,000 over the cost to put on the benefit," Mrs. Turner said after the event. Individual donations are still coming in to Will-O-Way, which totaled up \$1,000 in checks at the last accounting. THE PLAY "For Colored Girls" was co-produced by Woodie King Jr., who got his first theatrical training at Will-O-Way and helped stage the benefit.

The reception that followed the show featured entertainment by Detroit-area talent, staff and present and former students at Will-O-Way. Michael Binder, now of Los Angeles and formerly of Birmingham, did a stand-up comedy routine. The 19 year old will be seen this fall on the ABC-TV Saturday night comedy series "Apple Pie." Red-headed, friendly and confident young Binder told the reception guests, "I did learn a lot at Will-O-Way. When I was a kid, I was very squirmy. Show business was in my blood. Will-O-Way was my first outlet." Michael's mother, Judy Trumbull, said, "I'm proud to be Michael's mother. Will-O-Way was a tool that enabled Michael to head for Hollywood at 18. "Young people coming up need the training for show business that Celia and Will-O-Way can provide."

Connection, five second-generation members of Gladys Knight and the Pips' family. Contralto Patricia Luttermoser, who teaches at Will-O-Way, was among the other soloists. She sang "You'll Never Walk Alone." Mrs. Turner said, "I kind of thought I was walking alone. I have found friends both old and new these last three weeks." It was just 3½ ago that Mrs. Turner appealed for help to save Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre, which was going to have to close unless money could be raised for payment on a note due June 15. David Scharfman, treasurer of the Cultural Council of Pontiac, stepped in a guardian angel, to guide Will-O-Way to a sound financial footing. It was originally hoped that the benefit would raise \$20,000, but even though less than a quarter of the sum was realized, Mrs. Turner thinks it was a success. A lot of old friends have come forward to lend a hand. Mrs. Turner said

that Tuesday night a group of people were getting together to talk about other ways to assist Will-O-Way. Exact figures on the sum raised at the benefit and also total donations received thus far were also expected to be determined by meeting time. LITIGATION in court is under way to change the quit claim deed into an equitable mortgage for Will-O-Way. Mrs. Turner said a hold has been placed on the note, gaining the theater a little time. All these efforts to Save the Will-O-Way will allow this trade school of the theater to continue its work. Last Saturday was an important day, with an afternoon of events. But Saturday morning, spring classes went on, and Mrs. Turner was there to teach, as usual. Enabling young people and adults to learn the craft of theater is what Save the Will-O-Way is all about. The summer class term will begin July 9.

ALSO PERFORMING was the Pips



Students in young people's class practice mime.



During a break, children read clippings on past Will-O-Way shows.



Terry Brown (left) and Tine Turner, instructor, keep right on rehearsing through lunch.

Apprentice theater announces classes for summer

Registrations are being accepted for Will-O-Way's Summer Theatre Apprentice and Repertory Program beginning July 9, for five weeks through Aug. 13. Afternoon classes for teens, adults and under-teens are offered four days a week, Monday-Thursday, 12:30-3:30 p.m., in Play Production; Classic Scene Studies; Contemporary Scene Studies and Psychology of Performing, as well as Electives in Dialects and Diction, Mime and Movement, Creative Writing (for Kids or Teens or Adults), Stagecraft and Stage Management, Costume Design, Scene Design (Beginning and Advanced), Make-Up, Color in Lighting, and History of Theatre and Criticism. Age groups are separated. Evening Classes for Adults are offered Sundays, 7-11 p.m., The Psychology of Performing; Mondays, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Classic Scene Studies; 9:30-11:30 p.m., Directing and Playwriting; Tuesdays, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Electives in Speech and Movement; 8:30 p.m., Contemporary Scene Studies, in which seven Style Groups of Playwrights of the last 100 years are read, and produced in Laboratory Theatre Performances. Each Play Production Course is three hours, with a balance of 11 hours of theory, 11 hours of rehearsal, and 11 hours of final rehearsals and performance as a minimum. Individual coaching for the advanced and the beginner is always importantly present in instruction. All courses earn the student credit, toward Junior, Senior or Master Certificates. Prerequisites are good morals, dedication of interest, intelligence and good health. All previous experience is considered in class placement. Beginners are welcome. All students are given first consideration in casting for the repertory season. VOCAL TRAINING and coaching will be offered. Contralto Patricia Nicol Luttermoser will appear in "The Sound of Music" and will coach students in Voice and Repertoire during the summer season at Will-O-Way. Students are accepted by personal interview. All repertory productions are under the direction of Celia Turner, who teaches Play Production courses and Speech Electives. Eileen Weiss is production manager and instructs in Technical Electives. Christine Turner is assistant instructor for the children's classes. The Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre has been licensed by the Michigan State Board of Education as a trade school of the theater since 1949. For further information, phone Will-O-Way in Bloomfield Township at 644-4418.