

Martin, Charisse make beautiful music together

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Review

Tony Martin and Cyd Charisse make the stage come alive with his singing and her dancing in a polished performance on the second half of "Les Girls, Les Girls" at the Birmingham Theatre.

The show is having one of the longest runs yet attempted at the theater, continuing through Sept. 23 with matinees Wednesday and Saturday.

"Les Girls, Les Girls" is a Las Vegas revue put together by impresario Barry Ashton. On the first half of the bill, a stagelife of beautiful girls dance in costumes that are brilliantly colored and designed.

The costumes are the kinds with towering headresses, a la Flo Ziegfeld, and long or skimpy skirts that expose plenty of leg. Frequently midriffs are covered but breasts aren't.

THE ELABORATE routines featuring Les Girls and male chorus dancers include a "Moulin Rouge" number with can-can girls and all the French-style characters familiar from Toulouse-Lautrec prints.

"Les Girls, Les Girls" bare-bosomed production numbers are the kinds that you wouldn't bat an eye over in Vegas but are real eye-openers here at home.

The singing and dancing on the first half of the show is all entertaining but light and frothy and nothing memorable.

Vaudeville has definitely returned to the Birmingham Theatre, with a couple of acts tossed in the middle of the first half: a juggler and a comedy act with a nonperforming dog.

Tony Martin and Cyd Charisse open their part of the show with one of those cute numbers ("do numbers") about doing your own thing, that features them describing their talents and limitations.

The two then perform separately. Martin singing a long and enjoyable set (for Tuesday's opening night benefit audience) and Ms. Charisse starting in numbers with two male dancers.

MARTIN LOOKS the same as ever; he doesn't seem to get younger or older but remains handsome and slick. His voice is deep, mellow, hitting high notes, phrasing lyrics skillfully.

Ms. Charisse is tall and shapely with slender limbs that move effortlessly in her balletic style. She wears stunning costumes, but in one number, surprisingly, ties a scarf under her chin to keep her full-blown brunette coiffure under control.

Both Martin and his wife Cyd recalled their stage and screen careers as they performed songs or

dance routines that have made them famous.

Martin's songs include "Solitaire," "I Write the Songs" (which Barry Manilow wrote with him in mind), and some of the hits for which he earned 14 gold records:

"For Every Man There's a Woman," "To Each His Own," "There's No Tomorrow," "I Love Paris" and his phenomenal top-seller "Begin the Beguine."

Ms. Charisse describes her career that led from the Ballet de Russe de

Monte Carlo to MGM movie musicals with Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly. She dances everything from a Highland Fling from "Brigadoon" to the "Girl Hunt Ballet" from "The Bandwagon."

Martin says he and Cyd seen the Broadway show "Chorus Line" 50

times, especially to hear the meaningful song "What I Did for Love," which he then sings.

The couple closed the show with a charming number that has them both competing to use their rehearsal room at home.

Shelley Quayle stars with Strider at Pontch

Strider featuring Shelley Quayle is appearing at Top of the Pontch through September. The four-piece group, formerly called Masterman, consists of Detroit vocalist Shelley Quayle, her husband Steve Wray on guitar, Tom Morin on bass and Eric Nyhuis on drums.

Strider will display strong vocal and instrumental talents in special arrangements of contemporary and disco tunes 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Tuesday-Thursday and 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

Top of the Pontch is located on the 25th floor of the Hotel Pontchartrain, across from Gobo Hall, in downtown Detroit.

Fine dining in the Chuck Muer tradition is available at Top of the Pontch from 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays and from 6 p.m. Saturdays.

For reservations or more information, telephone 965-0200.

Theater group opens season

The Family Players will kick off its new season with entertainment from 5-9 p.m. Sunday at the Franklin Community Church, 32423 Normandy Road, Franklin.

Both adults and children may participate in the Family Players, which calls itself "Michigan's original family theater group." For more information, phone 851-1597 or 626-1893.

Gemini plays at coffeehouse

The folk group Gemini will entertain at the University of Michigan-Dearborn's Hinge Coffeehouse on Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the campus Recreation Organization Center.

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For more information, call 593-5390.

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