This Dracula won't scare you

By ETHEL SIMMONS

With all those scary goings-on onstage, you wouldn't think your mind would wander. Yet I found my thoughts drifting off, from time to time, during the opening night of "The Passion of Dracula" at the Birming-boary Theatr

Passion of Dracua" at the Diffining-ham Theatre.

The show has to be scary but not of rightening that adults will leave the theater feeling depressed, or that chil-dren will have nightmars later. The terrors depicted in "Dracual" have to be on a comic plane, not hitting at gut level.

level.

Putting together a "Gothic enter-tainment," as the show is billed, means laughs supersede reactions of fear.

means raugus supersonante fear.
You don't for a minute believe any of that stuff about vampires, the undead who sleep through the day and get through the night by draining the blood from living victims.

IT WAS DIFFICULT for the cast to hold my attention, despite the gener-ally high quality of the acting. Comic lines are not especially witty, and the

Review

melodrama often is heavy handed.
Jose Greco, the great Spanish
dancer, is an evil-looking Count Dracula, the Transylvanian nobleman who
as come to England to study (he
says) English folklore.
Dracula has a heavy accent and a
roughi voice. He has a mop of oily
black hair with not-lo-be believed sideburns: Naturally, he's dressed entirely
in black. with a case.

burns. Naturally, he's dressed entirely in black, with a cape.
Our first sight of Dracula is the shadow of his bat wings outside the terrace doors adjoining a doctor's study. When Dracula enters to greet the assembled doctors and their patient, Wilhelmina, he is in human form.
During the play, Greco flourishes his cape a few times but gets to dance

During the play, Greco Hoursness ms cape, a few times but gets to dance nary a step. It's too bad. The script is so far-out a scene where Dracula dances solo or with his prospective bride-to-be could have been fun. Why limit the talents of the star?

GRECO IS deservedly frightful as Count Dracula, Dark-haired Lynn Wat-son, with a Gilson-girl hairdo and Vic-torian draped garments, looks the part of the now-anemic heroine Wilhelmina whom Dracula has selected as his

bride.

This Mina asks her new friend, a London newspaper reporter Jonathan Harker, to call her Willie. She is a spirited young lady, not the remembered ingenue of Bram Socker's novel "Dracula."

She has a liberated quality that probably was given her by the playwrights, Bob Hall and David Richmond, who wrote "The Passion of Dracula."

Ms. Watson meets the challenges of her role, which call for her repeatedly to range from wan to wanton. A clas-sic heroine, the actress plumps up the characterization.

By far the most terrifying individual in the play is not Dracula but Renfield, the madman from the nearby sanitarium who eats flies and other live, small creatures. Kevin McClarnon, with his black-rimmed eyes, controls

the stage in his scenes. Renfield calls Dracula "master."

PETER MURPHY, trim of mus-tache, is the English Lord Godalming who is in love with the Austrian shrink, Dr. Helga Van Zandt. He has an especially well-done scene mourn-ing his temporarily lost lady love (a victim of the count).

The rest of the good cast includes K.
Lype O'Dell as Dr. Cedric Seward, I.
M. Hobson as Professor Van Helsing,
Jim Stubbs as journalist Jonathan
Harker, Victoria Boothby as Dr. Helga
Van Zandt and William Buell as

One of the funniest bits didn't get a laugh but comes when the professor, urgency in his wice, tells the butler to get all the sprouted garlic and surveyor's stakes—the vampine-fighting equipment—"And hurry." Everyone's standing around, while the servant does the important stuff.

"The Passion of Dracula" continues at the Birmingham Theatre through Saturday; Nov. 18.

Dracula stalks fun in students' show

By CRAIG REYNOLDS

It surfaces annually in the harvest season, rising from an urnamed bog of old laments and stale ideas.

It is Ted Tiller's play of "Dracula" and it is most recently resurrected by the Student Enterprise Theatre of Oakland University. And it is sort of fun, even if it is poorly structured and written were.

Went it is pointy substances and mirror work.

What Tiller's characters lack in you should excuse the phrase — flesh and blood, the author attempts to make up in a string of limp double-entendres and hatcheyed speeches from the dawn of recorded drama — some string of limp double-entendres and hatcheyed speeches to the string of the stri

on the compact two-story-high set.

IN THE TITLE ROLE, David Kleim
appeared properly skeletal in pearlgray tux with de rigueur black cape,
the pearled was a state of the state of the state of the state
its voice.

Jane Schulte enjoyed a few good
durns — and near collapses and a
shriek or two — in the comic character of Sybil Seward.

David Neison's stiffnesses as Jonathan Harker was more of his own
than Harker was more of his own
sproper uphringing, and John Gorsan
was sufficiently squirrely but not
nearly lunatic enough as Renfield, the
man who cat sites and talks to the
empty (?) air.

On opening night, Gary DeVar appeared as a properly reserved and appeared as a properly reserved and though his absence that the several country of the property of the proper

has marvelous control over what promises to be an excellent voice.

IN TILLER'S WRITING, Mina must flipflop between being an adoring as the property of the pr

Contest offers musical comedy award

Applicants are being sought throughout the nation for entries in the 1978-79 competition for the David B. Marshall Award in Musical Theatre. amounced J. Roland Wilson, general manager of the Professional Theatre Program (PTP) at the University of Michigan.

Program (PTP) at the University of Michigan. Named for U-M alumnus David B. Named for U-M alumnus David B. Marshall and established by a gift from the Contempo Communications Foundation for the Arts. Inc.. the award offers a stipend of up to 82,000, one of the largest monetary awards available for gifted young plawrights. lyricists and composers.

The David B. Marshall Award, established two years ago, has

received much national attention and

received much national attention and has been cited by Variety. Back Stage. Show Business and several other national theater publications. In establishing this award for new mascial plays in American theater. Marshall has said: "American musi-cal theater needs new vision. It needs to dare, to take risks, if it is once again to take hold of our imagination. The missical theater is a powerful medium with which to create joy, to clebrate life. Our hope is that we are on the threshold of a great creative adventure. We welcome all who wish to lead the way."

Three honorable mentions were named in the 1977-78 competition.

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Those awarded honorable mentions were Kelly Hamilton. Albert Reid and Harry Haldane.

The application deadline for this season's award is Jan. 31, 1979. In accordance with seeking high quality work, if no manuscript is considered worthy of

an award, no award will be made.

For application forms and more information for the 1978-79 award, write Marshall Award PTP Office.

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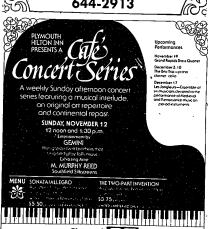
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