

Cranbrook grads form theater group

Several former Cranbrook students who studied the performing arts together in high school have recently found themselves working together again in a slightly more professional capacity.

Daniel Kanter and B. David Green, who were co-presidents of the Cranbrook theatrical society, Ergasterion, decided to continue their association at the University of Michigan by founding a company known as The Actor's Ensemble.

To help them they called on many old Cranbrook students and Ergasterion members, also at U of M, such as Michael A. Cooper, Kay Carney, Susan Gratch, Elizabeth Gratch, Lawrence Schrenk, Fred Noon, Jerry Kanter and Michael Bachar.

They found other Birminghamites willing to assist, including Philip Siegel, Susan Holtzman and Laura Hitt, formerly of Seasholm, and Vicki Kirschner of Detroit Country Day.

The Actor's Ensemble operates by using a close-knit, freely communicating company to develop good rapport on stage. The members, who are selected through a process of intensive auditions and interviews, participate fully in the management of

the company. Green and Kanter developed the ensemble idea while working under Charles Geroux, chairman of the Cranbrook Performing Art Department.

This season, "The Actor's Ensemble" is attempting its most ambitious project ever, Eugene Ionesco's absurdist comedy, "Macbett."

Although Green and Kanter presented "An Evening of Ionesco" while at Cranbrook, they believe this production is far more difficult, chiefly because of its Shakespearean overtones.

Slightly deviating from Shakespeare's "Macbeth," "Macbett" emphasizes the senseless atrocities of war, the corruptive influence of power, and the cyclical nature of history, while it lampoons everyone from Shakespeare to former President Richard Nixon.

"Macbett" will be performed at the Arena Theatre in the Frieze Building (corner of State and Washington) on the University of Michigan campus. It will run Wednesday-Sunday, with all performances beginning at 8 p.m. General admission tickets are on sale at the Michigan Union and at the door. For more information, call ticket central, 763-2071.



Pianist to play

Fontaine Laing will be the guest artist with the Pontiac-Oakland Symphony, Friday, Dec. 1 at 8 p.m. at Varner Hall, Oakland University. Ms. Laing, who has her master's degree in music from the University of Michigan, will play the Schumann Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in A minor, opus 54. Ms. Laing is now studying with Flavio Varani at Oakland University and has performed at Brunch with Bach. She is a member of the Detroit Chamber Artists Quartet and Tuesday Musicals. Tickets will be available at the door or by calling the symphony office, 334-6024.



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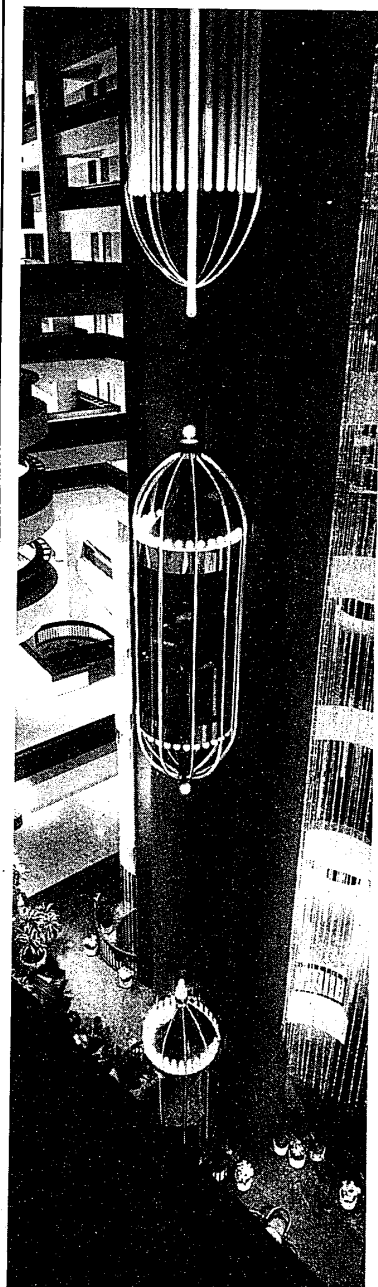
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An actor rehearses for the children's musical, "Scat." Costumed actors will perform some of the play's songs at a Bloomfield Hills School District presentation Dec. 4.

School district hosts in-residence theater

Professional theater has arrived in Bloomfield Hills schools.

This fall, professional directors Taffy Jones and Brenda McDonald, through the Whistle-Stop Children's Theatre, have been working with students and teachers on the production of "Scat."

A special slide presentation on the program will be made at 8:30 p.m., Monday Dec. 4 at Conant Elementary School in Bloomfield Hills. Actors from "Scat" will be in costume and will sing some of the songs from the show.

The Whistle-Stop Children's Theatre will be in residence at Booth Elementary School starting the second week of January. Tryouts for that production will be held at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 16. "Scat" will be in residence at Hickory Grove Elementary School in February and again at Vaug-

han Elementary School in the spring. Taffy Jones wrote, directed and produced the musical. Brenda McDonald wrote the music and lyrics and directs the large chorus for "Scat." Sheila Devlin is the musical arranger and accompanist. Other staffers include: Betty Appleton (dance choreographer), Becca Smith (artist), Calvin Bowler (photographer), Troy Frever (percussionist) and David Barnett (technical advisor).

Children in the program learn all phases of the theater. They participate in everything from costumes to stage managing. The entire school takes part in the project.

Dorothy Norton, principal of Conant Elementary School, will present some conclusions about the artists in-residence program at Conant during the Dec. 4 program.

Stagecrafters to conduct drama mini-workshop

The Stagecrafters will conduct a free workshop on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 1 p.m. at the Stagecrafters Playhouse, 176 Bowers in Clawson.

The workshop will cover what happens behind the scenes in theater. It will also focus on producing and directing, in preparation for future productions with the youth theater group.

Auditions for "Punch and Judy," a slapstick musical comedy adapted from the classic puppet show, will be held the following Saturday. Additional information about tryouts will be

available at the Dec. 2 meeting. The play's director will be on hand to answer questions and offer tips for auditioning. "Punch and Judy" will be presented at the Community House in Birmingham on Jan. 20.

The meeting is open to young people and adults. Adult assistance is frequently needed for directing, musical accompaniment, costuming and other areas. Stagecrafters membership is open to students aged 12-17.

For additional information, call Jackie Jamney at 947-9990.