Pair deftly does comedy

By HELEN ZUCKER

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Jimmy Launce's production of Bill
Manhoff's comedy, "The Owl and the
Pussycat" at Somerset Dinner
Theatre, is a marvel of crack timing
and high-velocity acting,
Manhoff's cunning play about an
intellectual prig named F. Sherman
ad a child of nature named Dorris W.
common to the read downer in the wrong
guands. The read downer in the wrong
guands. The second of the second of the companion of the

scene by scene, each grows into a big-ger person.

Sherman, the would-be writer who churns out overserious lines such as, Sherman, the would-be writer who churns out overserious lines such as, "The sun spit morning in his eyes... "Ighst his needs, his bodily wants, every inch of the way, Doris, a sentimental, drifting, would-be model, actress, sometime-whore, is a creature of whim who will do anything for love.

SHERMAN EVENTUALLY dumps shighman Eventually campain his poet girlfiend for Doris, and Doris becomes a respectable receptionist for Sterman's sake. The two exchange the names they were given at birth, "Fred," not "Felix," and "Wilgus," not "Wheeling," and start on a clean, real-name footing at the finale. The play closes on this redeeming, upbeat note.

note.

Manhoff, in his sly fashion, and Jimmy Launce and Jaye Cooper, in their understanding of the play, leave us with the feeling that it would be about to pursue a study of this couple and further.

us with the feeling that it would be about do pursue a study of this couple any further. They have embarked on life's true adventure—an honest, male-female relationship, no holds barred. They adore each other and in the living room, and when, and if, it ends, well, never mind. I had the distinct feeling that the dumped poetess was one back at some future time, but that is the subject of another play. The state of the

beautifully rendered in this production.

"WELCOME TO the world of the intellect," Sherman cries, madly kissing Doris' shoulders as he capitulates to his real feeling in Act II.

"I will not commit suicide in torn panties," Doris says primly, standing Sherman's high-minded plan for a suicide leap on its head in the final act. The arid Sherman needs Doris' warnth, her earthbound sense. Dumb, vulnerable Doris needs Sherman's tage to raise her to feel valued. However, in Manhoff's version of the Pygmalion theme, It is Doris who raises Sherman to the level of admitting his needs.

Jimmy Launce plays Sherman, the ook store clerk filled with pretensions Jimmy Launce plays Sherman, the book store clerk filled with prelensions and existential angst to perfection. Launce's "Bool" as he scares Doris out of her hiccups has a nice Jack Lemmon touch, but on the whole his performance is sure, easy, completely his own.

When he asks Doris, "Do I wan 192" the wild bafflement he exudes is wonderful. The nuances Launce brings to this demanding role are very pleasing, very adroit.

JAYE COOPER as Doris nearly steals the show. She turns in an electric performance. She manages to reach beyond Manhoff's textbook study of the girl with no self-esteem, the loser from a household that includes a drunken father, a redneck, sailor brother, a sick mother. She's the high school dropout who would have be come a hardened whore if, she were not, as Sherman tells her, "A very bright girl, if only you weren't too stupid to Know it."

Doris may think she's stupid, but in

pidlo know it.

The state of th

and Ms. Cooper makes this clear as day.
She gives an energetic, extraordinary performance, and Doris emerges, not as a cocker spaniel, but as a St. Bernard who has come to save Sherman's life.

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tricia Reilly (left), Michael Tylo and Cheryl Giannini Meadow Brook's production of "Ring Round the Moon." **Fantasy opening** at Meadow Brook

The romantic fantasy "Ring Round the Moon" will open a four-week run at Mother Brook Theatre at 8:30 tonight on the Oakland University campus.
Written by one of France's most acclaimed playwrights, Jean Anoulh, and adapted by English playwright, and adapted by English playwright, and calciamed playwrights, Jean Anoulh, and adapted by English playwright calcinitiopher Fry, "Ring Round the Moon" can be described as a sophisticated fairy tale. The story takes place in 1912 in the sumptuous setting of a French Chateau.

The dowager of the house injects at 10 for mannic turigue into the listices lives of her twin nephews and her nicee by assembling a bizare groups of guest at a formal ball.

Opening week performances of

Opening week performances of "Ring Round the Moon" are scheduled at 8:30 p.m. today and Friday, 2 and 8:30 p.m. Saturday and 6:30 p.m.

Simday.

The following three weeks will offer performances at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 6 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Sunday, and 2 p.m. Wednesday.

The theater is dark Monday.

"Ring Round the Moon" will run through Dec. 31.

Tickets for all Meadow Brook Theatre performances may be pur-chased at Hudson's or by calling 377-3000, the Meadow Brook Theatre box office.

Package tour goes to show

ngham Community House

The Birmingham Community House is inviting theatergeers to Join a theater party at the Wednesday matine of 'Riling Round the Moon' at Meadow Brook Theater in Rochester.

The Dec. 13 performance will be preceded by a specially planned lunchon at the Village Club in Bloomfield Hills. Round-trip transportation from the Community House is included in the entertainment package. Call 644-5825 for reservations.

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