

# Bouncy 'Vanities' touches interesting questions

By BETTY MASSON

It seems only fair if women sports writers are to be allowed in men's locker rooms, men sports writers should be allowed in women's locker rooms.

Playwright Jack Heifner claimed the privilege in his play "Vanities" at Vittorio's dinner theater in Livonia.

Opening with a look at three high school cheerleaders going over their routines in the fall of 1963, Heifner takes an amusing look at what makes three popular girls tick.

As a light, bouncy vehicle, it keeps the audience laughing at the girls' vanities. It's timely, in keeping with the nuttiness of "Animal House," and can be considered as inconsequential as a cheerleader's pompon.

On the other hand, if you are concerned about the education of girls, it does touch on some interesting questions. Why are these girls such featherweights, for instance? Is it because of their total commitment to being popular? And what happens to the unpopular girls?

We find out what happens to the popular girls, according to Heifner, as the play moves from high school to a sorority in 1968 and a New York apartment in 1974.

Kim Carney is outstanding as the pessimistic, prissy, Joanne, who seems to be the dumbest of the bunch. Her moves are perfect.

"I want to go to college," Joanne

says, "but I sure don't want to learn anything."

Joanne's dreams revolve around membership in a good sorority, marriage to her high school sweetheart and four children. Joanne gets what she wants, which philosophers tell us can be dangerous.

Beth Taylor plays Mary, who also knows what she wants — freedom from her parents. In her search, she passes believably from a pompon girl to a sophisticated modern who owns a pornographic art shop.

Elizabeth Townsend Brown (who was called on at the last minute to replace

Margaret Heinze) looks and acts the competent big sister type in the first two acts. The organizer, the future physical education teacher, Kathy does not really know what she wants, and this I find unbelievable. I think what the author gives her is out of character for Kathy. My high school Kathy wound up with a handsome husband and six sons and is now coaching an olympic swim team.

But maybe there is hope for Heifner's Kathy. She finally has time to read all the books she didn't read in college, because she was so busy being popular and running everything.

"Vanities," a Phil Marcus LEaser production is directed by Esser and Jeff Nahan. Reservations for Friday and Saturday night can be made by calling Vittorio's, 33201 Plymouth Road at Farmington Road, 425-8333.

## Violinist Zukerman conducts orchestra

Pinchas Zukerman, known to Detroit audiences as a virtuoso violinist, made his debut as a conductor with the Detroit Symphony Chamber Orchestra recently. He was joined in the concert by his wife, Eugenia, a flutist. He has made regular appearances here; this was her first.

The dual role, as violinist and conductor, has never been an easy one for musicians. In the Bach Concerto No. 1 for Violin and Orchestra, he performed in both capacities. As a violinist he was impeccable. His tone was strong, forceful and totally convincing. Every note sounded carefully rehearsed, yet there was no mistaking the passion of Bach's concerto or Zukerman's love of it.

The melody he spun out over the orchestral ostinato in the second movement was particularly beautiful. The piece of the third movement was played with full-bodied exuberance. Virtuoso passages for the violin were executed with ease.

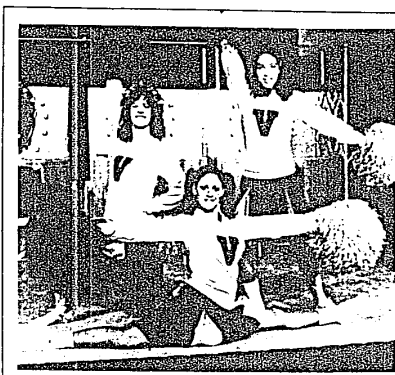
As the conductor for this piece, Zukerman faced the audience and only turned occasionally to cue the orchestra. This position worked to the advantage of the concerto. Members of the orchestra had to listen very carefully to their soloist and match his interpretations of the music. They did this admirably.

It was when Zukerman ascended the podium that weaknesses in his conducting became evident. Mozart's Concerto No. 1 for Flute and Orchestra was elegant and vibrant and seemed to contain all the hallmarks of Mozart's style. Haydn's Symphony No. 84 represented the epitome of classicism in form and style.

Members of the orchestra played their individual parts well, capturing

the essence of style of both composers. Yet there were times when Zukerman's intentions weren't clear. Some entrances and cutoffs were ragged rather than neatly executed. Some entire passages seemed to be out of focus. Still, there is no doubt that Pinchas Zukerman is an enormously talented man. His conducting simply wasn't equal to his playing.

Eugenia Zukerman made her Detroit debut as a soloist in the Mozart concerto. She played with clear, solid tones, but had some trouble with technique. Not all of her octaves were accurate and she had difficulty negotiating certain passages in the cadenza of the first movement. Some notes were lost and the rhythms weren't entirely clear. The cadenza of the second movement, however, was exquisite.



Kim Carney (left), Beth Taylor and Margaret Heinze are three high school cheerleaders who grow up in "Vanities," at Vittorio's Dinner Theatre of Livonia Friday and Saturday nights through May. Ms. Heinze, who had to leave the cast temporarily, will be returning soon.



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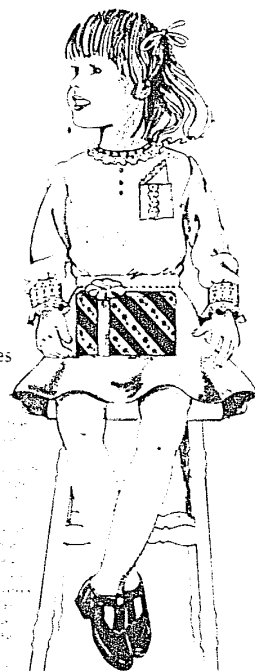
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