

# It energizes audience

## 'Apple Tree' is youthful production

By DONALD V. CALAMIA

These tales about the human condition, based on short stories written by Mark Twain, Frank B. Stockton and Jules Verne, make up the current musical production of "The Apple Tree" at the Southfield Civic Theatre.

Sheldon Haneck and Jerry Dock are the authors, with added material by Jerome Cornsault.

Director Gordon Ostrowski, best known locally for his work with the Stagecrafters, assembled a highly talented cast of youthful performers who energetically tell the three separate and humorous tales.

Appearing in the roles of Adam, Captain Sanjour and Flip the Friar, Charming is Brian Schulz, who recently won

the University of Detroit Award for supporting participation in the Poetry Festival.

Schulz was cited for his portrayal of Mark in "The Shadowboxer."

Portraying his roles with both charisma and charm, Schulz appears to be working almost too hard at making the play enjoyable for his audience. This causes him to lose out on some of the subtleties needed for his role as Adam in "The Diary of Adam and Eve."

With that sequence finished, Schulz makes fine use of his musical and comic abilities which more than enable him to explore his other roles to their fullest.

Paradoxically, Benjamin George Wheeler, who later plays the balladeer and the narrator in the show, has his finest

moments as the snake in "The Hairy."

A HIGHLY OBTUSE and totally nonverbal dancer, Wheeler's rhythmic yet serpentine movements and facial expressions provide for a number of exciting and memorable moments.

Tough poor diction in this, and especially in later segments, tend to hamper Wheeler's total performance, his concentration and high energy levels sustained throughout the show contribute to its overall success.

The most performance of the evening, however, belongs to Jane Shaffmaster, whose not-quite-refined Carol Humeletta antics in all three segments give way to both the evening's biggest laughs and most touching moments.

Shaffmaster, whose

assort of talents include singing and dancing, has proved to be a highly versatile actress who can easily handle a broad range of characters.

As Eve, she is poignant and eager to please, as Princess Humeletta in "The Lady and the Tiger," she is cunning and confused, and in "Passionella," she is innocently ignorant yet worldly.

In each, Shaffmaster is successful in her unique characterizations, a task in which many actresses cannot complete.

OTHER FINE moments in the show belong to Ed Hardy as King Ark and the Producer, Thomas Hartman as the Prisoner, and Lisa Craig as the Oscar Presenter.

Completing the fine cast are John Harard, Robert Higgs, Brian Gorman, Rob Jones, Mar-

though, who captured David Wilson's occasional by-fall to do the blowies when staging the chorus numbers.

Medical direction by William Jones is lively and well-suited to the values of the cast, and costumes by Barbara Oleszenko are both colorful and exciting.

The Southfield Civic Theatre will be presenting "The Apple Tree" at 8 p.m. this Friday and Saturday in the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building.

For more information call 354-9883.

Political lawn signs ordinance is defeated


Farmington Hills City Council in a split vote defeated Monday a resolution that would have allowed the posting of political signs on residential lawns.

In a 4-3 vote, the council decided to continue the current sign ordinance that allows political supporters to post signs only in their windows.

Voting against the change were councilmembers Jan Deane, Joanne Swenson, Joe Akatech and Keith Deacon. Deacon previously voted for

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