

St. D's slates romantic comedy, 'Best of Friends'

St. Dunstan's Theater of Cranbrook will be lightly turned to thoughts of love when "Best of Friends" opens 9 p.m. on the first day of spring Friday.

In this romantic comedy, however, laughs surrounding the season's traditional avocation deal not only with a young man's and woman's thoughts of love, but, what today's psychologists have come to call the mid-life crisis.

Performances of "Best of Friends" are scheduled for Friday and Saturday March 22-23 at the playhouse in Bloomfield Hills. Ticket reservations can be made by calling a 24-hour reservation service, 644-0527.

"Best of Friends," written by James Edward, enjoyed a successful London run featuring Nigel Patrick and Siobhan McKenna. Shortly thereafter, it went on tour in the United States with two companies — one starring Shirley Booth and Donald Woods, another with the real-life husband-and-

wife team of Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson.

"BUT, THIS VERY funny show should be brand-new to most of our audience," said Nancy Brassert, director of the St. D. production. "Best of Friends" never played Detroit on either of its tours, or to our knowledge, has yet been performed by any other community theater in this area."

Weston Meyer and Donna Rydner head the cast. He plays Archer Connaught, successful author and charming, inveterate womanizer. She is Jessie Connaught, enduring his shenanigans and absences with wit and wisdom for 30 years of an on-again, off-again marriage.

Jennifer "Duffy" Wineman provides the edge to the current romantic triangle — young, beautiful, intelligent and mature enough (she thinks) to handle a sophisticated older man.

theater

Susie Bunt-Harian gets an opportunity to sharpen her tongue on the role of the would-be spinster daughter who has grown up with all of this, until she meets an interesting match in the same, sensible lawyer played by Jim Brooks.

Others featured in the cast include Morrie Weiner as an up-tight, much too serious son of the Connaughts; Amy Hayes as his liberated wife; Mary Anne Wilson as a wise-cracking literary agent who has been in love once or twice herself and Vince Hayes as a geriatric former juggler, former justice of the peace and both former and current full-time limber.

ALEC FIESELMANN, producer, reports that still another art had to be brought into play in putting this St. Dunstan's production together. The script calls for two large portraits of leading cast members to be prominent on the set — one of Wes Meyer, looking like the dashing, successful author; another of Donna Rydner, as she would have looked at a certain, considerably younger age.

"But the talent around here was up to the task," says Alec. "Laura Host, one of our members who has considerable experience in portraiture, is doing the paintings. The last brush-strokes may still be drying when we hang the portraits for dress rehearsal, but that's 'show biz'!"

For this family affair, husband Fritz Fieselmann will probably hang the portraits, as he designed the set and is in charge of its construction. Director

Brassert is also doing double-duty as set decorator for the show she's directing, assisted by Grace Loud.

The playhouse is located on Lone Pine Road west of Woodward. A form of valet parking service is available to drivers who drop their passengers at the door and park in the Christ Church Cranbrook lot; a mini-bus returns drivers to the door and chauffeurs them

back to the parking lot after each performance.

The St. Dunstan's board has arranged an opening night afterglow party for cast and members who attend the performance Saturday. Benefit performances of "Best of Friends" have been arranged by St. David's Episcopal Church on Wednesday, Alpha Delta Pi alumnae on Sunday and Alpha Gamma Delta alumnae on March 27.

Encore shows 'Rashomon'

Murder and rape are dual themes in the Cranbrook P.M./Encore Cinema film "Rashomon" to be shown at 8 p.m. March 24 and 25 in the Cranbrook Institute of Science auditorium, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Akira Kurosawa directs the 1950 Japanese film with English subtitles. He probes truth and subjective reality

by using flashback within flashback in the story of a man's murder and rape of his wife by a bandit.

Discussion moderator will be Detroit Film Theatre founder and director Eli Wilhelms.

Tickets, available at the door, include the film and its commentary, an open discussion, program notes and gourmet dessert with coffee.

Area man plays Teyve

Bill Premin, producer, director and guiding light of Performing Artists Unlimited (PAU), takes the stage as Teyve in that company's production of "Fiddler on the Roof" with a mixture of familiarity and freshness.

PAU has given the play — which runs through Sunday at Northville's Marquis Theater — some new thinking.

"We have a few surprises," Premin said. "Some new ways of staging. I think we've found a way to give people the 'Fiddler' they know and love, but make it as exciting as the first time they saw it."

A Bloomfield Township resident, Premin has played the role of Teyve more than 20 times in a number of different productions.

"I'M REALLY getting to know him. You know, actors talk about really 'getting inside' a character. After all these times, Teyve's inside me. He talks to me. Sometimes he whispers; sometimes he shouts. He's a friend by now. A great, wonderful man. I enjoy helping people get to know him."

Premin is joined on stage by 60 members of Performing Artists Unlimited, which draws on the entire Detroit area for talented, experienced performers.

"The backgrounds of our people are amazing," Premin said. "The Rackham Symphony Choir, Michigan Opera Theater and most of the important theater groups in the area. Some of our people have performed at Carnegie Hall, Paris, St. Petersburg, even the Silverdome."

Bill Premin works in Troy. His wife Judith, who teaches in the Wayne-Westland Schools, plays Yente, the Matchmaker. Other area residents involved in the production are Dean Ukich of Birmingham, who plays Fyedka, and Rae Louis Schwartz, the show's choreographer.

PHIL COLE, of Novi, who works in Southfield, is Yuri, the Russian tenor.

"Fiddler on the Roof" tells the story of Teyve and his wife and daughters, a poor Jewish family caught up in the turmoil of the early revolutionary period in the Russia of 1905. They face their problems with faith and family love.

Among "Fiddler's" best-known songs are "Matchmaker," "Sunrise, Sunset" and "If I Were a Rich Man."

"Fiddler on the Roof" is being performed at the Marquis Theater, 133 E. Main, Northville. Evening performances Friday-Sunday.

For ticket information, call 336-7446.

Seafood tops eatery's menu

J. Ross Browne's Whaling Station has opened in Bloomfield Hills, offering fresh fish, Maine lobster and a variety of beef and chicken specialties.

Located at Telegraph and Square Lake roads, the new restaurant is decorated extensively with authentic seagoing artifacts and hanging plants.

District supervisor Dave Stevens said antique clocks, harpoons, dinghies, ships' wheels and scrimshaw artifacts were collected to give the restaurant an authentic northeastern fishing village decor. Staff uniforms also reflect the seagoing theme.

"But, the important thing," says Stevens, "is the food. We serve fresh fish and live Maine lobster, but only when they're available. The waiter or waitress will tell the customer what seafood is available, along with the prices. Our 'Catch of the Day' is always delivered fresh and will vary from day to day."

ANOTHER FEATURE of the Whaling Stations is a varied wine list, offering a selection of both domestic and imported wines. The lounge features live music Tuesdays-Saturdays, and a weekday Happy Hour offers refreshments at nearly 2-for-1 prices.

The new restaurant is open for lunch on weekdays from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering salads, chowder, seafood and beef specialties, quiche and crepes. Dinner is served from 5-11 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 5 p.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays and noon to 10 p.m. Sundays.

Free parking is available. Reservations for lunch or dinner can be made by calling 334-4694.

Movie premiere

The Brotherhood of Temple Beth El will present the Michigan premiere of the new Tatum O'Neil-Kristi McNichols movie "Little Darlings" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Old Orchard Theater in Farmington Hills.

Proceeds will benefit the Building Fund of Temple Beth El. Tickets are available at the Temple Beth El office, 7400 Telegraph Road, Birmingham, phone 851-1100, from a Brotherhood board member, or at the door.

Wine and cheese will be served before the screening at the theater on Orchard Lake Road just north of 12 Mile Road.

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