

Despairing drama worth seeing

Thursday, March 27, 1980

CJSD

Due to mechanical error, several paragraphs of the following review were omitted in the Thursday, March 20, issue. Here is the entire review:

By GAY ZIEGLER

"A rose can grow out of a dung hill; a child can escape the trap of ignorance and poverty." This is the central theme of Paul Zindel's "The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds," as perceived by Director David Stevens in the Student Enterprise Theatre production at Oakland University.

Performances of "Marigolds" continue Friday-Sunday in the Studio Theatre at Varner Hall on campus near Rochester.

Director Stevens adds, in the program notes, that the play forces us to ask why lives are wasted. Answers are hard to come by, but there is merit in just the questioning.

In the play, death, hopelessness and despair predominate. The plot revolves around a woman whose youthful aspirations were crushed by an ill-considered marriage; a daughter, on the brink of mental collapse who flirts with sexuality and who lapses into hysteria and ruthless cruelty; another slightly out-

of-step daughter whose ludicrousness draws jeers at school, yet shows potential for flight from enslavement and a feeble home-care patient.

IT IS A STORY of victims and near victims, a grim story.

Audiences crave productions that leave them humming or smiling. Nobody likes to feel uneasy. But "Marigolds" is enriching, giving a sense of lives in which niceties are unknown, theater dates are not the norm.

It is a play that deserves attention, and the handling of it at the Student Enterprise Theatre is of high quality.

As Beatrice, the destructive-protective mother, Nancy M. Bright is supreme. She understands pathos. She is at once hateful, yet tender. When she threatens to chloroform the pet rabbit, she does so with chilling conviction.

When she nurtures or recognizes an afflicted hurt, she brings tears. She elicits conflicting feelings. Ms. Bright is well-suited for this kind of Tennessee Williams-Edward Albee dilemma. In addition, she handles the delicate art of

feigned telephone conversations masterfully. She has a firm presence.

Lisa Marie Kalella as Tillie, the daughter destined for freedom, also conveys a conflicting image. She appears delicate and vulnerable, yet her strength and immunity are evident. Ms. Kalella's facial expressions are most notable, showing sensitivity, intelligence, passing pain and a vision of better things. She has a haunting quality.

As Ruth, the half-crazed daughter, Flora McIntyre is physical, vibrant, perhaps a bit too strident. Even screamers tone down once in a while. Her tendency to omit and flail was most effective in seizure scenes. She also delivered her lines with a comedic sense that provided some relief for the audience.

HANK KRYSKALLA as the senile patient Nanny doesn't say a word. But she shows the slow movements of advanced, sick old age adeptly. Watching her trying to maneuver a teaspoon of honey into a cup of hot water is painful but sure to evoke appreciation for her attention to detail.

Mary Jane Bochnig's stage appearance as Janice Vickery was brief, but she was funny and again gave the assemblage an opportunity to smile. This is no fairy tale. Talk of being surrounded with "rabbit crap and a corpse," allusions to a former patient with worms in his legs, blood-curdling screams, the mother's despairing, "What's left for me?" do not bring pleasant sensations. But for its sense of serious theater, this play, like its young protagonist, will be a survivor.

Error 'lost' 35 minutes

The lead paragraph of the review of "The All Night Strut" incorrectly stated the length of the musical revue. Critic Jim Windell's copy actually read:

"Isn't inflation something? A gallon of gas for \$1.30. An all-night strut in an hour and 50 minutes." The musical revue continues through April 13 at the Birmingham Theatre.

Film views canals

The Community House in Birmingham continues its Travel Film Series as it explores "England by Canal Boat" at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

This film journey, photographed in color by veteran James Metcal, brings Metcal's son-in-law, Fran Reidelberger, to The Community House to do the narrating.

Tickets are available at The Community House, Bates and Townsend. "England by Canal Boat" takes viewers through England's network of more than 3,000 miles of gracefully meandering canals. Reidelberger first takes armchair travelers from the London Basin via Regent's Canal and Little Venice, winding for miles northward through reborn Coventry, bustling Birmingham's Gaslight Basin and on into the medieval Town of Chester, still sitting behind its ancient Roman Walls.

England's numerous canal waterways are today often referred to as "The Gentle Highway." Yet, as viewers will learn, the gentle highway hasn't always been that way. It ushered England into the Industrial Revolution and transformed her from a nation of cot-

tage craftsmen into a manufacturing metropolis.

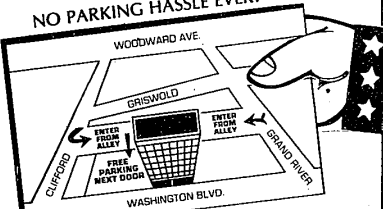
THOUSANDS OF TONS of raw materials and finished products were hauled along these canals until engineering advancements resulted in the replacement by convenient trains. These canals are preserved today by history and recreation-loving Britons as a monument to England's great Industrial Revolution.

Viewers will see how the canal locks work, the Waterways Museum at Stoke Newington, Sulgrave Manor — the ancestral home of George Washington, and even Chester Packet, one of the last of the horse-drawn canal boats.

Other sites visited on this canal cruise include the Stratford on Avon, where people flock to see Shakespeare by boat; Mobery Junction; and the famous Wedgwood China Co.

Preceding the travel film program, The Community House will serve dinner typifying English cuisine (served from 6 p.m.).

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