# Ferguson soars to trumpet high

By JIM WINDELL

review

"You have to come and hear Maynard Ferguson in the great spirit of adventure," Ferguson said before his first of a pair of concerts at the Royal Oak Music Theatre on Saturday night.

Jazz is a musical form that encourages adventure, the high-note trumpet artist was saying.

His audience during the first show didn't need the reminder from Ferguson. His swinging, flashing orchestra saw to that. And Ferguson himself, as he has been doing for some three decades, provided raw excitement with his astounding trumpet virtuosity.

A steel-gray, floppy-hired, 51-year-old band leader, Ferguson doesn't just bring his 13-piece band into town, do a gig and then split for the next auditorium in the next city. Ferguson is not that kind of musician or bandleader. He is not only an excellent jazz trumpet player — in the early '50s as a leader in the Stan Kenton trumpet section he was voted best trumpet player in jazz three years in a row — but a showman who enjoys performing in front of an audience.

HE CALLS IT "communicating" with his audience. Whatever it is, fans at the Royal Oak Music Theatre got an extra-special amount of it Saturday night. Ferguson was in rare form.

With tremendous energy and enthusiasm, Ferguson put his orchestra through some familar paces to begin the 90-minute show. "Give It One" featured a sparkling soprano sax solo by Mike Migliore, and Eric Traub warmed up Joe Zawinu's "Birdland" with a blistering tenor sax solo.

The Nick Lane and Ferguson composition "Gabriel" that Ferguson always introduces as a "jazz-gospel-spiritual-rock-march" got a brassy treatment and an ear-splitting Ferguson solo. Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon" was given new life with a bouyant tuba solo and the decisive, precise work of the trumpet section.

These usual Ferguson tunes were mixed with some new material. "I Think Everybody Loves the Blues" was bluesy and attractive because of the strumming guitar of Tom Rizzo; this song undoubtedly will show up on Ferguson's next album, which will be recorded in early April.

Music from Leoncavallo's opera "Pagliacci" was the highlight of this concert. Ferguson's favorite opera, and title song he has recorded and frequently uses in his concert performances, "Pagliacci," got a new twist this time out.

EVERYTHING PRIOR was a build-up to this classial number given a 25-minute version. In the hands of another performer or bandleader, this could have been pure corn. Not so with Ferguson.

New keyboard man David Ramsey began with a long, classical electric intro, setting the mood. Ferguson, who had stepped into the wings, appeared in mid-audience with his flugelhorn, playing a resonant, slow solo that had substance and subtlety.

Moving around the audience, most of whom appeared transfixed by his audacious and emotional flugelhorn, Ferguson concluded this portion of the song in front of the stage, where a young woman rushed up and kissed him.

In a familiar gesture, he flung his arms up, horn clutched in one hand and triumphantly headed back for the stage. The song continued and reached a crescendo after a Roberto Pettchia drum solo and a trumpet choir effect from the four-man

THIS WAS ONE OF Ferguson's most effectively exciting moments in several years of thrilling performances.

Ferguson has the ability to combine the showman with the artists and have tremendous fun along the way. Something else he said before this concert was that the day he found something more fun to do would be the day he stopped plyaing the trumpet.

Ferguson's fans can be cheered by the fact, so evident in this performance, that the iron-lunged performer hasn't found anything more fun to do than blast impossible notes on his horn.

# Troupe updates fairy tale brightly

By SHROYER KEARNS

review

Just in time for the Easter Parade, along came the Southfield Repertory Theatre with its production of "The Emperor's New Clothes."

Presented Saturday and Sunday at the Southfield Civic Center auditorium, it was a timely reminder of the dangers of vanity and obsession with high style.

Ralph Valatka, director, founder and artistic director of the SRT, however, polished this very up-to-date and stylish version of the Hans Christian Andersen story into a little gem.

All the old stereotypes were turned topsy-turvey for the afternoon and topical dialogue had the adults in the audience laughing along with the children (though often for different reasons.)

Remember the roguish weavers who set out to swindle the foolishly vain emperor of his fortune while exposing him as an idiot to his people? They magically became a charming pair of itinerant adventurers, Zan played by Ralph Benaim and Zar played by Patricia Quinn.

Resembling Persian elves, they cleverly plot to set all right in the misguided realm at great risk but not for personal gain.

Their desire is only to find adventure wherever it might be and in the process to save the livelihood of the local weaving colony which has been cheated and abused by the wicked prime minister, Han, played most wickedly indeed by Hal Doyle.

THIS PRODUCTION easily entertains, yet instructs. The mistreated local artisans — helpless in the face of restrictive trade regulations enforced by Han and cheap imports produced by Zan and Zar — see their traditions and their union shop disappearing.

Scott McCue brought special vigor to his role as Fah, an activist weaver, resembling perhaps a semi-Oriental Lenin. Rae MacIntosh and Robert Cafagna brought a measure of pathos to their roles as the other weavers.

Cafagna also doubled as the General, whose task was largely to lead the evil Han off to prison amid the cheers of all present.

The emperor, Dale Van Dorp, was a surprisingly regal and likeable despot. Oh, a little foolish, possibly just a bit cruel, and more certainly stupid. But he carried off that long red underwear in a truly imperial manner.

THE EMPRESS, played by Debbie DeCeco, complete with the vapors and tears, stirred up sympathy in the young audience. She wasn't really stupid and proved it by being smart enough to let the minister think she was.

The sets for this production were most attractive. The Oriental locale was suggested by simple flats and wall hangings. A most interesting backdrop with a "secret sliding panel" suggested the workroom in the palace well. These happy additions were the work of W. MArch McCarthy II and Bob Habeck.

Making positive use of the limitations of the Civic Center auditorium, most entrances and exits are from the back; the closeness makes possible a great deal of audience participation.

To climax their rescue of the weavers, Zan and Zar scattered "rubies" to the audience as well as to the actors. Children were invited to help carry the Emperor's train as he paraded in his imaginary splendor.

It wouldn't have been surprising to have heard a small voice cry out, "But he has nothing on!"

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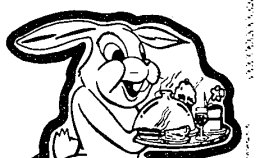

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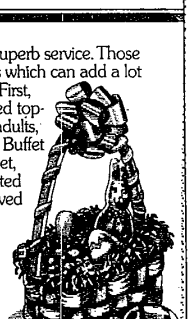

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