

# Fresh transfusion of new talent in Attic festival

By JOHN MacCOLL

Have you ever wanted to see a traditional folk tale from the island of Java?

No, eh? Well, how about a poetic narrative that plays with the past and envisions the future?

Oh, too artsy? Then why not a grand review of Leonard Bernstein's American musical theater music?

ALL THIS and more is in store for you as the Attic Theater presents its third Performing Arts Festival, running through May 24. A collection of 16 groups blend their talents to present a month-long menagerie of dance, music, poetry, mime and drama.

"We are trying to bring talent from around the state to Detroit and provide them with an opportunity to perform before the Detroit audience," says Sam Pollack, talent coordinator for the festival.

"Many of these groups are not known outside their hometowns. Conversely, it brings to Detroit a fresh transfusion of new talent that we don't often get to see."

"Much of it is very different. In fact, a couple of the mime groups have

styles never seen in the Detroit area." Without a specific formula for applicants, Pollack traveled Michigan for much of the year looking for new groups.

"The first year (1978) we ran for two weeks. Then in 1979 we did three weeks," he says. "Word got around about the project and people started calling asking for an audition."

"I chose groups that offered something different. A natural mix of mime, musicals and straight plays developed without me having to organize it. I stuck to what I like."

THE SPREAD of talent is outstanding. While not relying on any one style or type of program, the Attic people have done everything possible to insure that as many different groups are seen by as many different theatergoers as time permits.

"Key, the whole idea is to bring theater to the people," says Pollack. "Some of the shows are free and done at Hart Plaza, others are at the Cafe Harmonie on Randolph, while most are performed at our building on Lafayette."

"A lot of the outdoor work is done during the day, but we will run as many as six shows starting at noon and

ending after 2 a.m., so time and place should be no problem."

"The Baptist," presented by the Paddy Players, depicts the preaching of John the Baptist. Jazz, rhythm and blues and gospel music are used to narrate this holy tale.

Michael Filisky, known mainly as a mime, tries out the world of words in the premiere of his "When Did You Start Eating the Wall Street Journal?" Combining an original text with adaptations from magazine ads, a letter from the Pope, something from the pages of the New York Times and an interview with his mother, Filisky describes it as "an evening of insanity that makes sense."

THE AMOUNT of talent necessary, the expertise to stage and organize and the support of the public makes this one of the most ambitious programs of the year.

It is a chance for all elements of the theater community to display their wares. All tastes are played with equal enthusiasm.

From the children's shows to the Bernstein musicals, from the contemporary drama to the poetic license in mime, it is a festival rich in personality as it strives to entertain.



The Oldesters mime group also is a part of the festival. (Photos by Eric Smith)

For reservations and program information, call the Attic Theater at 963-7789. A brochure with times and dates is available.

Group rates, series specials, student and senior citizen discounts all are available. Ticket prices range from free to \$5.



Bill Clynne as Bernard Shaw and Carol Purdon as his love and leading lady co-starring in "Dear Liar" during the Attic Theatre Performing Arts Festival.

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