

Dinner theater comedy shines

By R.S. LEIDER

review

focused eyes and expresses a loving warmth and triumph of spirit.

One rarely sees this in any person — let alone the characters in the play. He makes the entire audience feel at ease with the handicap. You can relax and greatly enjoy the moments of time shared with him.

Beth Carpenter as Don's mother is at once harsh and loving. She eats her son's heart out, then selflessly puts the pieces back together. We are privy to a most unusual mother/son relationship. Ms. Carpenter's acting is deep and intense, yet warm with acerbic wit and humor.

ONE OF THE FINEST moments in the play is when Mr. Baker, after carefully cleaning and polishing an apple, hands it, arm outstretched, to Jill the girl in the next apartment. Remember when the witch hands Snow White the apple? You've never seen that moment more alive than in this show, Disney included.

Norm Skaggs plays Baker with a sensitivity, sense of humor and inner vision few actors are blessed with. His face plays expertly around his un-

happy Greenwich Village new wave director, Ralph Austin. Austin is not a likeable fellow. He is dirty looking with elephantiasis of the ego. And besides, he's Don about to take the girl away from him.

Turk takes Austin vile. His is a bright performance with little thanks. He does such a fine job, you'd really want to kick him on the street.

In this tight ensemble it seems unfair to pick a best performance. At the



Norm Skaggs of Bloomfield Hills and Mary Whiting of Rochester are the romantic leads in "Butterflies Are Free" at Mr. Mac's Stable in Dearborn.

same time, fairness dictates that Mary Whiting be mentioned in that category. Her Jill Tanner is delightful dizzy. She is well meaning, even when she is unintentionally cruel. Behind the blonde mop is a mass of precision gears.

Ms. Whiting gives Jill, a first as being typical airhead of a young girl on her own, a depth of love and caring. The character grows to a full person by the end of the play. Jill and Don may not stay together, but you know they

will be good for each other while they do.

THE SET by Alan Joseph and Ms. LaRose suits the production perfectly. They don't try to make you think they had done more than they have. It is a notch above the normal dinner theater set.

"Butterflies" plays until Aug. 23. If it were only just the play for the evening it would be a pleasurable experience; however, with dinner, it is doubly so.

second runs
Tom Panzenhagen

The highlight of the season comes Sept. 20 with "The Searchers," John Ford's pseudo-saga starring John Wayne as a bigoted frontiersman who searches relentlessly for a niece kidnapped by Indians. Shot in part in Arizona's magnificent Monument Valley, "Searchers" is beautifully filmed and Wayne, thanks to Ford's superb direction — gives the best performance of his life.

Friday's "Home Movies" is a film by Brian De Palma, the director of "Carrie" and "The Fury" in addition to a film class he taught in New York. He adds call it a "delightfully free-form comedy," but it's more like a bad mishmash of ideas that seem to have come off the tip top of De Palma's head. "Shadow of a Doubt," the Saturday feature, is a seldom-seen Alfred Hitch-

cock film. Joseph Cotton plays a murderer who likes to torment his victims before doing them in. Screenplay unlikely as it may seem, by Thornton "Our Town" Wilder.

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"Experiment Perilous" (1944), 12:30 a.m. Friday on Channel 58. Originally 91 minutes.

If you can stay up late enough there are a few films of interest this week, starting with the Hedy Lamarr vehicle. Vehicles are all you can call Hedy's films because they were '30s and '40s equivalents of "Charlie's Angels." Ah, but if only any of the angels were as alluringly glamorous as this 31-year-old Hedy. The plot of "Perilous," by the way, involves a woman who may or may not have committed murder. Also starring George Brent.

"The Outlaw" (1943), 3 a.m. Saturday on Channel 62. Originally 123 minutes.

Howard Hughes made a couple of good films — "Hell's Angels" (1930), "The Front Page" (1931) — and several bad ones. "Outlaw" must at least be called a curious film. It was made in '43 but not released for another three years, during which time Hughes hyped the picture by claiming censors were holding it back. When finally released, there was havoc. Jane Russell in the brassiere designed by Hughes especially for the part. Most curious, though, is the decidedly homosexual relationship ascribed to Billy the Kid (Jack Buckle) and Doc Holiday (Walter Huston). Certainly worth seeing, if only for the suggestiveness. Also starring Thomas Mitchell.

New theater plans season

Dramalab, Inc., a Michigan nonprofit corporation, announces the opening of its theater, the Fourth Street Playhouse, 301 W. Fourth, Royal Oak.

The playhouse will have its grand opening Sept. 5 and will present a season of seven productions during the 1982-83 season.

The Fourth Street Playhouse season includes: award-winning playwright David's Hamet's "The Woods," opening Sept. 5; Pulitzer-Prize-winner Paul Zindel's "The Ladies at the Alamo," opening Oct. 17; winner of both the Obie and Outer Critics Circle Awards, Mark Medoff's "When You Comin' Back Red Ryder?" opening Nov. 28; "The Private Ear" and "The Public Eye," an evening of one-acts by "Equus" author Peter Shaffer, opening Jan. 23; "Relatively Speaking" by the British Neil Simon, Alan Ayckbourn, opening March 5.

The box office is open from 6-10 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and on every performance night. The box office telephone number is 543-3666.

To request a brochure with complete information about performance schedules, plays and tickets, write or call the Fourth Street Playhouse.

How to submit entertainment news releases

News releases, photographs or other information for the entertainment pages can be sent to Ethel Simmons, entertainment editor, at 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012.

The entertainment pages include news, features and reviews on movies, music (pop, rock, jazz, country), night life, restaurants, special attractions, theater, TV and radio.

The phone number of the Birmingham office is 644-1100.

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"Home Movies" (1980), 7 and 9:30 p.m. Friday, and "Shadow of a Doubt" (1943), 7 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, both at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward, phone 832-2730, \$1.50. Running times 90 and 106 minutes, respectively.
The Detroit Film Theatre's seventh year is under way at the institute with Friday, Saturday and Sunday night programs through Dec. 20. The Friday shows feature recent films either new to Detroit or which have received relatively little exposure here.
Saturday's fare showcases established films — from "Alexander Nevsky" to "Kiss Me, Stupid" — and the sole focus Sunday nights, starting Aug. 24, is on Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa, director of such pictures as "Seven Samurai" and "Throne of Blood."

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