Couple share their love playing ragtime piano

Ragtime music brought them together and now it sometimes keeps them

apart.
But Bob and Linda Milne like it that way. Often when they meet, it's over their own upright piano on which they both joyously toll, playing ragtime mu-sic six nights a week. At different

times.

Bob and Linda may be the only hus-

Bob-and Linda may be the only hus-band and wife ragtime pian players in the country. Both play the syncopated music of an earlier era at Chuck Muer's Diggers restaurant, 39555 Grand River, Farmington Hills. Bob performs Mondays 530-10 p.m. and Tuesdays 630-10 p.m. Linda works Tuesdays Fridays from 530-8 p.m. and then rushes over to Charley's Crab in Troy to play from 830 p.m. till mid-night. She works the Diggers' 6-11 p.m. shift Saturday nights and is back at the Crab on Sundays from 10-10 p.m. Love of ragitime music brought Bob and Linda together.

LINDA EXPLAINED, "I didn't know LINDA EXPLAINED, "I didn't know anyone around Detroit was playing rags, but I went to Charley's Crab with a friend and there was Bob playing ragtime. He was not only playing rags other composers had written, be was playing some he had written. To me that was smazing.

Two years later, the couple was married.

Two years later, the couple was mar-ried.
Watching them together, during an interview at Diggers in the middle of Bob's set, the similarities between the two were evident. Both are quiet and somewhat shy. They enjoy talking about ragtime music, of which both are experts. They tend to be wary of per-sonal questions. Linda is demure and frequently re-fers questions to her husband. Bob deems diffident but has a funny streak that starts emerge when he lossess up

that starts emerge when he loosens up a bit. He is also a genius. That's a word he would never use about himself, how-

ever.

Bob Milne not only plays ragtime music in an authentic style, he writes rags. That, too, makes him unique. He is one of the few writers of original

is one of the tew writers of original rags around today.

"All my life I've been able to make up melodies in my head and remember them. I thought everyone could do that," Milne said. His first rag, "Flypaper Rag," he played for several years before he got around to writing it down on anex.

NOW, HE HAS written some 30 rags, six of which appear on his first album, "Boogie, Blues & Rags," released last

'I started playing rags before I really knew what they were. I figured if I hit one hand sooner it would be syncopated and more in-

Reatime pianist Bob Milne

year on the Jim Taylor Presents label. He is a composer of another kind, too.
"It also write art songs called European lieders. This is a distinctive type of vocal composition that came latio being in the 18th century," Milne said. He has written 25 art songs around the poetry of Robert Prost and Michigan poet Stillman Elwell, a personal from "You don't publish art songs," he said. "Publishers can't sell them, and besides that no one ever heard of them. I write them and enjoy them and Linda enjoys them."

bestues that no the even itself of the interest in the interest in the interest in the interest in the interest interest in the in

THAT INCIDENT should have point-THAT INCIDENT's should have pointed out to an alert piano teacher that this was no ordinary student she was challing with. They always known how to play a piano. Before I actually played, it was just a matter that I hadn't moved my fingers over the piano keys enough. But, as far back as I can remember, when a piano player plays, know exactly what notes are belighter returned to the piano in college and began malaying for sin-alones.

Milne returned to the piano in college and began playing for sing-alongs. Moving to Detroit, he played at the Dakota Inan and at the Red Garter Saloon. "I fell into playing ragtime," Milne said.

"I started playing rags before I really knew what they were. I figured if I had to the playing rags before I really knew what they were. I figured if I had to be some plated and more interesting. That's the way I played sing-along."



Bob and Linda Milne both play ragtime piano, at different times, at Diggers in Farmington Hills.

Later, he borrowed a book on ragtime music from the library and taught
himself the rest of what he had failed
to pick out intuitively on his jown. He
still hasn't returned that book, he pointed out.
Milne first played for Chuck Muer in
Dearborn's Sundog restaurant. Five
Dearborn's Sundog restaurant. Five
years ago, after three years at the Sundog, he belped open up Clamdiggers in
Farmington Hills.
When Charley's Crab opened in 1976,
also size of the charles of the charles of the classical music. She began
When Charley's Crab opened in 1976,
classical piano at age 5. "I didn't even

Pearl's Garden

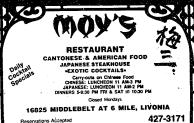
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know about ragtime as a child," she said.

IN COLLEGE she majored in French with the intention of being a teacher. Hearing ragtime music changed all that.

"I happened to pick up a record produced by Mike Montgomery," she said. Montgomery is a well-known Oakland. County piano player and early-sheet-music and pian-oroll collector who is an expert on ragtime and other popular music of the early 20th century.

"I heard Scott Joplin piano roll music. I just had to learn the Maple Leaf

Fourth Street opening 'Ladies at the Alamo'

"Ladies at the Alamo," a comedy by award-winning playwright Paul Zindel, opens at the Fourth Street Playhouse in Royal Oak at 8:30 p.m. Oct. 17 and con-tinues through Nov. 8. Performance times are 8:30 p.m. Fridays and Satur-days and 7:30 p.m. Sundays.

"Ladies at the Alamo" examines the behind-the-scenes intrigues and power plays which plague a famous regional theater and its longtime director. It is an explosive look at the five women who work at playing the game of sur-

vival in the theater.

Rex Reed of the New York Daily
News called it "the most bilarious

female free-for-all since "The Worn-

includes Laurie Johnson of Birming-ham, Elaine Boike of Warren, Emily Schreiber of West Bloomfield, Judy Lee of Ferndaje and Janice Salisbury of Farmington.

Lee of Ferndaje and Janice Salisbury of Farmington.
The production is directed by Peggy D. Miller, with Cal Jones assisting. Technical direction is by Darrell Zink and costume design by Mary Job.
Tickets are available at the theater box office, 301 W. Fourth, Royal Oak, or by calling 543-3656. Box office hours are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-10 p.m.



Laurie Johnson of Birmingham (left) and Elaine Boike of Warren appear in 'Ladies at the



