

'Luv' brightens dinner theater

By R.S. LEIDER

review

The latest recipe for entertainment from Theatre of the Arts goes something like this:

Take one bridge; two acts of Murray Schisgal's comedy "Luv," three high-energy actors, season well with some creative directing by Michael Keller and add to a magnificent Macbus meal. The result is a very satisfying dinner-theater evening on a Friday or Saturday through Nov. 8 at Mr. Mac's Stable in the Parklane Towers in Dearborn.

The show opens with the Quincy Jones rendition of "Bridge over Troubled Water." Then comes Harry Berlin, looking like a shaved, mustachioed beatnik who has sunk so low that he doesn't even know his own name. He has no future except to jump off the bridge and is about to when Mill comes along and intervenes.

MILT AND HARRY turn out to be college classmates. As Harry, in his rags, slowly drops his tale of woe, Mill, a picture of prosperity, is all sympathy. You see, "Luv" has simple room for more than one miserable fellow. Mill is ridden with frustration because his wife won't release him to marry the girl he loves.

Ellen, the wife, appears. She too is miserable. Mill, attempting to wiggle out of this triangle of misery, decides to try and get Ellen and Harry together, and thus win the freedom to marry the girl he really loves.

With the initiation of this intentional wife-swapping and the biting, yet very funny, one-liners, a delightful story of misery via a search for love develops.

Though the script is a mastery of black comedy, the production's strength lies with its three performers.

Laurie Meecker portrays Ellen as a shattered woman looking for true love. The character has the problem, however, of being more intelligent than any potential mate she can find. She submerges her intellect but then is truly never happy with anyone for long.

Though Ms. Meecker's acting is bright and consistent, we sometimes don't know exactly which side of Ellen is

showing. Perhaps this adds to the frustration of the character.

Harry is basically an emotional cripple who degenerates throughout the show. He is a hopeless, yet amusing case. Played by Del Borison with expert physical schtick, you can't help but bellylaugh for this sad sack looking for love although not knowing what it is.

Rowson knows what getting a laugh is. His constant rugging is sometimes annoying but usually entertaining.

Weakest of the three is Carmen Trotto. He is the ultimate straight man to Rowson and Meecker, but his timing is off at points because his lines seem to come too slow. His happy "used car salesman" type approach to the role is perfect.

KLIER HAS directed the show tight and with great care. The characters always make the proper move. No matter where you sit in the restaurant, there is action to be seen and a laugh to be had.

The food at Mr. Mac's Stable was grand. The service is very accommodating and the choice of entrees is too good to choose from. With soup or quiche, a Macbus salad and then prime rib, baked chicken or stuffed flounder, the dessert, if there is room, is a confectioner's treat.

Musician boosts Olde Towne Jazz

David A. Campbell, a former Birmingham and Franklin resident, is launching a jazz festival in Traverse City, where he now lives.

Campbell and his wife, Jan, are co-producers and promoters of the Olde Towne Jazz Festival, which will be held Oct. 31 through Nov. 2 at Dill's Olde Towne Saloon.

Campbell has been playing Dixieland and ragtime music since he was 14. He has played in several bands over the years including Josh Sautler's Riverboat Seven in Wisconsin and Harry Hibbard's Riverboat Six in Traverse City. He was one of the founders of the Back Room Gang, which has been around 10 years, playing for six years at Dill's.

The Back Room Gang has a cassette tape on the market, having played in the Schuss Mountain Jazz Symposium for three years in a row, and is hot band for the coming Olde Towne Jazz Festival.

"THIS FESTIVAL was conceived by me," said Campbell. "I wanted to see a quality fest here in Traverse City that would continue on an annual basis, and one that would be promoted on a semi-annual level.

"The most important thing in a fest like this is to have top bands perform, bands that create interest to jazz buffs anywhere."

Guest bands at the Olde Towne Jazz Festival include Tom Saunders and the Scandals Four, a small blues band from Detroit, the Cakewalkin' Jass Band from Toledo, with Ray Heltger as its leader, and the New McKinney's

Clifton Pickers from Detroit, with vocalist Dave Wilborn who was a banjo player with the original band organized by Bill McKinney in 1927.

Two weekend packages are being offered. One includes two nights' lodging at the Waterfront Inn on E. Bay, three meals at Dill's, Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, evening concerts featuring each band, and an open jam session the afternoon of Nov. 1.

Cost of this package is \$120 per person. The in-town package (No. 2) is the same as above, less the two nights' lodging for \$65 per person.

Reservations can be made by sending check or money order to Jan Campbell, 19049 Co. Rd. 651 So., Cedar, Mich. 49621. More information is available by calling Mrs. Campbell at 1-616-228-6265.

DAVID CAMPBELL, who was born in Detroit, moved to Franklin in 1941. "My boyhood was spent there amid the beauty of that town," he said. Campbell attended Franklin Elementary School, Earsum Junior High School, Baldwin High School for one year, and then graduated from Birmingham (Seaholm) High School in June 1953.

He then attended the University of Wisconsin until 1955 when he transferred to Michigan State University where he received a B.S. degree in urban planning/landscape architecture in 1958.

The U.S. Army was next, with a six-year stint in the Reserves. The Campbell's family was in the retailing business in Birmingham, starting the Campbell's Village Store (no longer in town).

Chefs' group gives awards

The Chefs' 200 Social Club will present its Chef of the Year Award and its Loyalty Award at the club's annual ball on Monday at Roma's of Bloomfield in Bloomfield Township.

Joseph Beato, executive chef at Henry Ford Hospital, will be named Chef of the Year. The Loyalty Award goes to Peter J. Callas, chef-instructor at Wayne Community College.

Several hundred persons involved in the food industry of metropolitan Detroit will attend the ball. A cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception precedes the roast prime ribs of beef dinner, the awards presentation and dancing.

The Chef of the Year Award is given annually by the club, honoring a chef for his contribution to the skillful trade of the culinary arts.

The Loyalty Award, also a yearly award by the membership, is given to the individual whose dedication and loyalty uphold the image and prestige of the 200 Club.



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Comedy star

Joe "no-no" Nipote, a native Detroit, has returned to the metropolitan area for appearances through Saturday at The Comedy Castle at Stafford's in West Bloomfield. In Los Angeles for less than two years, Nipote works out of the Los Angeles Comedy Store and the Laff Stop. He recently opened for Tina Turner in Las Vegas. Future projects include a pay television special with Carl Reiner. For further information and reservations, call 545-2576.

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