

Thursday, December 4, 1980

Theatre of the Arts show pulls big crowd



Beth Carpenter of Ypsilanti and Del Howison of Birmingham co-star in "The Owl and the Pussycat" at Mr. Mac's Stable in Dearborn.

"The Owl and the Pussycat" attracted the largest opening weekend audience ever at Mr. Mac's Stable when the light comedy began its run recently.

"The Owl and the Pussycat" is the first show of the Theatre of the Arts' fourth season. This also is the second subscription season for the dinner theater, which puts on its performances Fridays and Saturdays at the Machus restaurant in Dearborn.

"Usually a musical is the best thing for this time of year," said Michael J. Klier, producer for all Theatre of the Arts productions, "but we already had 'Oscar' running at the Georgian Inn. So with the current successful run of 'Play It Again, Sam' at the Wine Tasters in

Sterling Heights I thought people wanted to laugh."

"Oscar," a musical revue of Academy-Award-nominated tunes, plays Fridays and Saturdays at the Georgian Inn in Roseville. "Play It Again, Sam," a comedy by Woody Allen, is running Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 13 at the Wine Tasters.

A FOURTH location has joined Theatre of the Arts dinner theaters. Rudy's in Rochester, also known as Greektown North, begins operating Saturday.

It is the only dinner theater in the metropolitan area featuring Greek cuisine. Shish-kebab, lemon rice soup and

baklava are some of the offerings.

In keeping with the Greek feeling, Producer Klier has given the show arena staging. The theater-in-the-round seats the audience on all sides of the stage and on different levels.

Opening production at Rudy's is "Same Time, Next Year," co-starring Liz Kercheart of Warren and Greg Tatum of Bloomfield Hills.

THE NEW DINNER theater begins with the show at 6 p.m. Saturdays, followed by dinner. Dinner is at 2 p.m. and the show afterward on Sundays. Rudy's is on Main Street in downtown Rochester.

Ms. Kercheart also is appearing in

"Play It Again, Sam" at the Wine Tasters, with dinner at 7 p.m. and show at 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Tatum was last seen in "A Thousand Clowns" at the Georgian Inn.

"Oscar" at the Georgian Inn offers dinner at 7 p.m. and the show at 8:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. For "The Owl and the Pussycat" at Mr. Mac's, it's dinner at 7 p.m., show at 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Further information about Theatre of the Arts is available by calling the production company's offices in Royal Oak at 288-0450.

Reservations for Rudy's may be made by calling 288-0450 or 652-7333.



The twosome takes another look at its romantic relationship in the Theatre of the Arts production, playing at the Machus restaurant in the Parklane Towers. (Photos by Tom Treuter)

Message of hope lessens gloom

By GAY ZIEGER

review

The play's gloom should not deter people from Paul Zindel's "The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds," the current production by the Avon Players.

The play has a message, namely that even in the midst of human decay and rot a creative seed can be nourished and grow into a new life form. Hence the slight glimmer of hope in an otherwise grim scenario.

"Marigolds" continues Friday through Sunday and Dec. 12-13 at the Avon Playhouse, 1185 Washington Road, Avon Township.

Zindel captures the essence of despair and shows what a life devoid of dreams can become. His play is reminiscent of Langston Hughes' plea to "hold fast to dreams, for when dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

BEATRICE, the mother of the play's family, is broken, in body and in spirit. Boose only releases a greater anguish and rage. She cries "What is there left for me?" and "I added up all the parts of my life and came up with a zero."

Immortality was within Beatrice's grasp, or so she imagined. With her grace and talent, she would set the world of dance afire.

But her mother had been long dead when her sickly, beloved father implored her to marry so she'd be taken care of, she did just that. And the marriage brought her nothing but daily dreadful reminders of mortality.

She soon traded in her "dancer's legs for varicose legs." The marriage lasted long enough to produce two daughters, one "half-crazy," the other "half-test tube." When the divorce necessitated that Beatrice earn her own money, she began to care for the feeble and the sick in her disheveled hotel.

TO ADD to her woes, she had a rabbit, a "cottonball compost heap," who often escaped and left trails of droppings. Not a pretty picture. Certainly not

a tale that leaves an audience marveling at the wonder of life.

Camie Mannino is well-suited to the role of Beatrice. She understands the character's duality as at once a nurturer and a destroyer. She balances the comic with the tragic and summons up both a forlorn and an amused look.

On occasion, she gives a somewhat jocular overtone to otherwise desperate situations, but generally her actions and words are consistent with the play's tone.

Stacy White as the daughter who bears the responsibility of lifting a phoenix out of the ashes also is well cast. She remains somewhat detached and untouched by her depraved surroundings but shows beautiful vulnerability when she is advised once too often of her "spaghetti hair" and ludicrousness, which draws tears at school.

Her love of and trust in science lights up her face. All hope rests in her. If there is a future, she is it.

AS THE LESS-fortunate sister, Susan Powell also is capable. In her desire to convey the girl's instability, however, she often comes across as frenetic and strident.

The screaming and frantic movements are too pronounced. These actions serve her well, though, when she needs to issue forth a bloodcurdling scream and is required to simulate a seizure. The force of the latter is so great that the audience reacted nervously.

In this play, we see life at its most elemental level. We see it reduced to mere human and animal waste. We see it always, though, with a slight spark of possibility, with the potential for change.

And it is this potential that makes the living but of it seem worthwhile and the viewing of Zindel's drama equally so.

Show accents music

Focus: HOPE will present a holiday music festival from 3-8 p.m. Dec. 21 in the Fountain Ballroom of the Masonic Temple, Detroit.

The annual Holiday Music Festival, Opus 12 features Detroit jazz, folk, gospel and theater music performers. Already scheduled to appear are Orville Barnes, Ron Coden, Phil Marcus Esser and Barbara Bredius, Matt Michaels and Ursula Walker, Dean Rutledge, Michael Smith, Barbara Barrow and Josh White Jr.

Beginning as a folk festival at the Raven Gallery, the annual event grew to include a second day overflow crowd at the Railroad Crossing.

This year, in keeping with past sellout performances, Holiday Music Festival Opus 12 is moving to the Masonic Temple.

THERE WILL BE a cash bar and cabaret seating. Attended parking is available. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at Focus: HOPE, 1355 Oakman Blvd. or the Railroad Crossing, 6940 E. Eight Mile Road. For more information call Focus: HOPE at 868-7676.

Established in 1969, Focus: HOPE is a civil and human rights organization working to improve the quality of life in the metropolitan Detroit community.

Current major projects include a supplemental food program for 38,000 malnourished mothers, infants and pre-school children (the nation's largest) and an education program designed to promote quality education at Detroit and suburban public and parochial high schools.

Dec. 6 through Jan. 4

A Christmas Delight



Toys for the Young and Old: The World in Miniature—In the Museum, doll houses, miniature furniture, small steam engines, model train displays enrich the Street of Shops.

Holiday Magic in the Village—Homes and shops graced with decorations from

bygone days. Old time sleigh, carriage and train rides, weather permitting. **Crafts at Christmas**—Craftsmen fashion authentic items along the Museum's Street of Shops, in the Village Crafts Center, and throughout the Village.

Joyous Yuletide Music in the Village

and Museum, **Free Hot Spiced Cider**, 10 am - 4 pm in the Town Hall, **Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs**, on stage in the Museum Theater. (Advance reservations, 271-1620, Ext. 414) **Unique Gifts for Christmas**—handcrafted pieces, souvenirs, reproductions.

Greenfield Village & Henry Ford Museum

Holiday Hours—Village: 9 am - 5 pm daily, Museum: 9-5 weekdays, 9-6 weekends. **Special Evening Hours**—(Museum only) until 7:30 pm, Dec. 26-Jan. 4. Closed Christmas and New Year's Days.



Just imagining

Donald Ewer stars as Monsieur Argan, a hypochondriac who falls prey to quacks, in the Mollere comedy "The Imaginary Invalid," opening at 8:30 p.m. Thursday at Meadow Brook Theatre. The production continues through Dec. 28 on the Oakland University campus near Rochester. For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.