## Lounge theater under way with a delightful show

Detroit's latest innovation in theater, lounge theater, has opened with a viva-cious production of "The Robber Bride-groom" at the Sheraton Southfield Ho-

el.

Performed in Vesterday's lounge, the musical runs at 8 p.m. Sundays-Mondays through Dec. 22.

Lounge theater, unlike dinner theater, allows its guests to watch an entertaining production without the expense and fuss of a dinner. Instead, theatergoers are allowed to sit and relax with a few drinks while watching the show.

SEATING FOR the show is intimate-by leveled around three sides of the stage. This enables all the patrons to easily see the entire action of the show. Seats also are available around the bar. Waitresses working in the lounge be-fore and during the production are dressed to blend in with the show, thus

enhancing the production.

While the bar is open during the

While the bar is open during the show, the waitersess are unobtrusive to the action on stage. In fact, most partons are gratefully unware of their presence during the show.

"The Robber Bridegroom" follows the lives of several notorious and illustrious residents of a small, recently settled town near Rodney, Miss. All the music and humor is "down-home" in nature, as the townspeople are portrayed in an earthy, tightly knit manner.

ner. Producers Larry Cohen and Hank Krajewski have picked a difficult show

review

to open the lounge theater. Director/ choreographer Michael Burden, though, has taken the challenge given him and has turned out a fine show.

THE PERFORMING area with which Burden was given to work is wider than it is deep. Many directors would have had trouble staging 12 actors and three musicians (few of whom ever leave the playing area for more than a few minutes at a time) in such a restricted area.

than a few minutes at a time) in such a restricted area. Not Burden. Burden chooses to keep his actors moving. The show is fast-paced from start to finish, and those performers not in the action are kept on an upper level of the playing area or off to the sides, sitting on the floor. Traffic jams are rare in this production, even in the delightful dance numbers. Another of Burden's traits is to pull the best out of even the weakest of performers. All his actors are more than competent in their roles. Few, though, are outstanding. What makes this production succeed is the sense of "plain of" fun" which runs rampant throughout. Weak singers give their all, as do adequate dancers and actors. What counts here is that the excitement and enthusiasm generated by the cast is infectious enough to quickly draw the whole audience into the sixty. As the Robber Bridegroom Jamie

As the Robber Bridegroom Jamie Lockhart, Brett Reynolds is not the

dashing, debonair hero/villain that would be expected. Instead, his charac-ter is one of innocence. He is a hand-some child in a man's body who wants things his own way, especially his

AFTER A SHAKY start. Reynolds' singing voice has a certain appeal to it, though it is not especially strong for

this show. He, like the rest of the cast, is having fun with his role, and the charm he eardes while doing so is fetching.

John D. Elliott, as the rich land owner Clement Musgrove, is a laid, back, natural actor who appears to completely fit into his character. An accomplished local actor, Elliott has mastered the use of his face and vocal

ne sino successa in presence cence.

As Rosamund, Patricia M. Kelley portrays Musgrove's available daughter as a sweet yet cunning, naive yet sexually agressive young woman who

## 'Song' playing special matinee, 'Annie' upcoming

Neil Simon's "They're Playing Our Song" continues its extended run through Dec. 20, with a special holiday matinee added to the performance schedule at 1 p.m. Dec. 17 at Detroit's Fisher Theatre.

Fisher Theatre.

All reserved seals are at a single price for the special matine. Tickets are on sale at the Fisher box office, phone 872-1000, and CTC ticket outlets.

"They're Playing Our Song," with music by Marvin Hamilsch with lyrics by Carole Bayer Sager, is still running on Broadway. The production in Detroit stars Victor Garber, 'best known for his role as Jesus in the film "God-spell," and Marsha Skaggs, who appeared in the National Company of "Grease."

OPENING DEC. 26, "Annie" brings back the National Company which had a six-month run at the Fisher in the 1976-79 season. The National Company still stars Norwood Smith as Daddy Warbukar Snorwood Smith as Daddy Smith Smith



Victor Garber and Marsha Skaggs co-star as two people in love Vernon, an Academy-Award-winning composer, and Sonia, a witty lyricist of contemporary pop songs, in "They're Playing Our Song."

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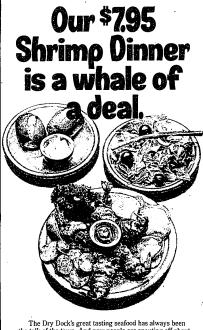
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