

Thursday, October 14, 1982 O&E

# Meadow Brook fires up 'Macbeth'

The Meadow Brook Theatre production of Shakespeare's "Macbeth" continues through Oct. 31 on the Oakland University campus near Rochester. For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.

By Helen Zucker  
special writer

Where there's smoke there's fire. Meadow Brook Theatre's production of "Macbeth," directed by Arif Hasnani, has fire, energy, blood, gore and smoke to spare.

The smoke comes in shades of London fog, red, off-white and green and reeks of incense. Actors must be immune to smoke inhalation. Several people in the audience keeled over on opening night but came around in time to catch "The Weird Sisters."

Incense is a better smell than the oil petroleum odor that stage smoke exudes, but "The Weird Sisters," a modern version of Shakespeare's "Three Witches," is not an improvement upon the original. The sisters are a very pretty gang, dressed like a punk-rock backup group, and they love their work.

The opening scene, played in rollicking good humor, threw me off balance. "Macbeth" is about the bloody effects of greed piled on greed, and the rest of the production stays pretty close to Shakespeare's intent.

DUNCAN, THE OLD King of Scotland, is nicely played as a lascivious old man by Richard Bradshaw. Old Duncan is accompanied by two little lassies at all times, so we wonder how Macbeth gets into his bedroom to kill him. And there's lots of "bawdy old Norman" stuff going on in the long first act.

There isn't any head of the murdered Banquo appearing over the banquet table, but there isn't any table either. Nor do Birnam Woods come marching up to Dunsinane. This is a production sans props, but for swords aplenty and a bit of plastic food, a candle, elching armor and piles of corpses.

Peter W. Hick's marvelous set — a towering, solid-looking construction

## review

that immediately reminds one of Stonehenge, battlements, castles with winding stairwells — all at once takes care of the prop business. The set transports us into Macbeth's dark, stony world.

But this is a production that builds wonderfully. Lisa McMillan is instantly believable as Lady Macbeth. She's passion, fire and murderous will incarnate, and she never steps out of tone. The sexual chemistry between McMillan and David Regal as her wavering husband, Macbeth, is strong.

Both Regal and McMillan bring freshness to those oft-heard lines: "Out, out, damned spot..." and "...It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The freshness and clarity of the diction throughout is one of the nice surprises we get.

RICHARD HILGER as Macduff is another surprise. Hilger wakes up with a bang upon hearing the news of his wife's and children's murders by Macbeth's henchmen, and the rest of the evening very nearly belongs to Hilger.

He's ferocious in his desire for revenge, and there's a terrific, clattering, dual to the death when he gets Macbeth at the finale. Hilger is a ball of energy that makes the play work.

Linda Ann Gehring is vibrant and graceful as Lady Macduff, and her scene with her son, well played by Matthew Grey, is a high spot. You pity her for her needless death and understand Macduff's rage at the loss of her.

Phillip Locker is fine as Banquo, and Joshua Dawson as Fleance, his son, who has to run about a great deal, looks like a surviving, nimble little fellow. Linda Ann Gehring is excellent in her brief appearance as Lady Macbeth's worried maid, and so is Richard Bradshaw as the doctor who reads Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking speeches

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Cellist Samuel Mayes, who knows that fingerboard, rehearses for Sunday's concert with the Oakway Symphony Orchestra.

# Cello concerto takes an expert

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

The cello concerto of Robert Schumann, says Samuel Mayes, is "even, relaxed, beautiful and serene" as well as full of melody.

Don't let that fool you. It's tough, and it's one of the last pieces a student of cello learns.

"He'd better darn well know that fingerboard before he tackles it," said Mayes, former principal cellist with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Boston Symphony and now on the music faculty at the University of Michigan. "It requires extensive knowledge of the fingerboard alone without even thinking of what it's going to sound like."

MAYES' FINGERS will run the length of the fingerboard at 3 p.m. Sunday when he is soloist with the Oakway Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Francesco Dilibasi. The Schumann concerto is the featured work in the concert in the auditorium of Farmington Harrison High School, 12 Mile west of Middlebelt, Farmington Hills.

Mayes and his wife Winifred, also a cello instructor, talked about the solo literature for the baritone of the string

family as Mayes warmed up for a rehearsal.

Most of the cello concertos popular today were composed by non-celloists: Dvorak, Saint-Saens, Schumann, Haydn — and they added Brahms, who wrote a double concerto for violin and cello.

Robert Schumann (1810-56) was a pianist. "His writings off the piano (for cello) were so worse than Brahms," said Mayes. "Brahms is extremely difficult — that's because they're pianists."

"They'd take one note on the piano here — and another there — which is about 10-12 inches apart. But on a cello, it's quite a leap, you know — way down here on the neck to the top of the cello."

"I WOULD think they (students) would play the Dvorak concerto before they'd play the Schumann."

He thought a moment and added, "I wonder if he'd had a good knowledge of the cello, would he (Schumann) have written such a good piece?"

Those acrobatic leaps on the fingerboard will be particularly noticeable in the first movement of the standard three-movement work.

Although the most often-performed

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# Area actors play in 'Vanities'

The comedy "Vanities" by Jack Helfner will be the next attraction by the Komedey Players Dinner Theatre of Allen Park. The show will open Nov. 5 and run through Jan. 23 with Friday-Saturday evening performances.

The parts of Kathy, Mary and Joanne will be played by Irene Schweyer of Dearborn, Ellie Smith of Southfield and Mary Whiting of Troy. The show will be

directed by William Salisbury of Farmington Hills.

"Vanities" will be the first production in the new Theatre Room of the Allen Park Motor Lodge on Southfield Road between 1-94 and 1-76 in Allen Park. The new home of the Komedey Players has been completely redecorated especially for the dinner-theater format.

The show follows the antics of three Texas women, Kathy, Mary and Joanne, from high school cheerleaders to college roommates to a bizarre reunion in New York. The play has been presented both on Broadway and in dinner theater productions.

THE COMPLETE dinner will be served directly to each table. The din-

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