

# 'Album' recaptures '60s memories with charm

The Michigan premiere engagement of the Actors Alliance Theatre Company production of David Rimmer's "Album" continues at 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 8:30 p.m. Sundays through May 22 at the arena theater at the Lycee International, 30800 Evergreen, Southfield. For ticket information call the box office at 644-1326.

By Cathie Breidenbach  
special writer

The play "Album" by David Rimmer is like a perfectly cooked fried egg smiling sunny-side-up from the plate. It's hardly a gourmet theatrical feast, but it's one of life's small pleasures. "Album" shows off excellent acting and staging by the Actors Alliance Theatre Company, and the four-person cast fills the theater-in-the-round with vitality and the gentle colors of memory.

## review

"Album" is a nostalgia play. If you thought the films "American Graffiti" and "Diner" had exhausted the possibilities of what it was like being a teenager 20 or so years ago, squeeze a nitch out on the dusty shelf for David Rimmer's little play, "Album."

Annette DePetris as Peggy is an exuberant 14-year-old complete with pigtails and baby fat. Proof of the magic of theater comes when she and Rodney Moeller, who plays a complex Boo, are "making out" and decide to swap bubble gum as an added intimacy. With pink-elastic passion they complete the maneuver and the audience believes that it's watching a couple of 14-year-olds playing at love. That's a sticky bit of fine acting.

Triah, played by Irene Schwyer, grows before our eyes from a skinny confused kid to a vulnerable, caring woman and Kirk Haas plays a thoroughly believable Billy.

Annette Madias' expert directing keeps the action lively and uses music of the '60s to create both mood and meaning.

NOTHING CAN recreate the feelings of a time like its music. The Beachboys, the Beatles, and Bob Dylan make more than background music as the four teenagers in the play struggle through the years 1963-67. Music shapes their lives, its stars are their heroes and it keeps them afloat in troubled times by giving them the words to describe how they feel.

Other times have other poets and prophets, but for these teenagers in the '60s, music speaks with the truest

voice. "Album" weaves music through the lives of Peggy and Billy, Boo and Triah, not just to flavor our memories of the times, but to show us how central it was to their coming of age.

Coming of age meant one thing — figuring out the complex business of sex and eventually "doing it." "Album" makes us remember the titillation of the times — "making out," playing strip poker and talking about getting to first, second or third base — times when sex was never far out of mind but "doing it" was put on steamy hold.

"Album" doesn't whitewash memory. The teenage years for the four characters are riddled with anxiety, but there's none of the jaded, "Is that all there is?" business about sex. When they finally "do it," sex turns out to be a genuine big deal, an experience that touches at the core of being a caring human being. That's nostalgia served sunny-side-up.



Annette DePetris as Peggy and Irene Schwyer as Triah enjoy some innocent fun, in the Actors Alliance Theatre Company production of "Album."

# Orchard Ridge's 'Bedroom Farce' pleases audience

By Dan Greenberg  
special writer

"Bedroom Farce," a two-act comedy by Alan Ayckbourn, premiered last weekend in the first homegrown production in the Orchard Ridge Theatre Performing Arts Theater at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

Able directed by English professor Sandra Sutherland, the sparkling production represented extensive cooperation by campus departments and community groups.

The delightful farce involves four

## review

couples in three bedrooms with seven doors — no mean feat to stage anywhere. The set, designed by Orchard Ridge newcomer, Jamie Mason, the technical director, fits the Orchard Ridge Theatre thrust stage perfectly. It is always a pleasure to see stage doors (and there were seven of them) slam without wavering the scenery walls.

The set was three side-by-side bed-

rooms, separated only by lighting changes, which worked perfectly as the four couples meandered, tromped and blizzed through each others lives and loves.

SPACE DOES NOT permit describing the merry plot intricacies but the cast of eight energetic, talented performers did a marvelous job entertaining the audience with "Bedroom Farce's" witty and incisive social commentary.

Malcom and Kate (Gregory Hill and Barbara Nixon), the one couple whose marital enthusiasm remains unaltered, were the most energetic. Nixon carried out a bright, spirited romp in

and out of bed and bath, clothes and nightgowns (sometimes under the quilts when her room was darkened).

Dry, overplayed and absent-minded Ernest (Robert Myers) was the perfect foil for his wife, Della, whom Emily McSweeney played pleasantly as a dim-witted, upper-class British lady. The lady's destructive son, Trevor (Art Lomas) and his wife, Susannah (Linda Symke), seem bent on destroying every marriage in sight — of course, in a good-natured, terribly British way. Among the near-casualties of this marital violence are Jan (Mary Ellen Owen), Trevor's former lover, and her bedridden husband, Nick (Douglas G.

Mason), whose agonizing sacroiliac twitch kept the audience in stitches.

Got all that? The audience certainly did because of Sutherland's direction effectively using these eight performers and a host of volunteer technicians drawn from students, staff and the community.

# American Film House completes films on artists

American Film House in Birmingham recently completed a three-film assignment for the Archives of American Art, an organization funded by the

Smithsonian Institution. The project consists of profiles of three artists from Detroit and Chicago and details their attitudes about their

work and their lifestyles. Filmed in Detroit, Chicago and New York, the films profile John Hegarty of Detroit, Richard Hunt and Roger

Brown of Chicago. The films are intended for use on public and cable television channels. American Film House is at 558 Ann.

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