

# Singer Lou Rawls performs with a difference

Thursday, July 28, 1983 O&E

(R-0C)(O)13C

By James Windell  
special writer

When you compare a seasoned entertainer with a newcomer, the difference — though perhaps subtle — is remarkably important to success.

Take the difference between Lou Rawls and Jan Spencer.

The folks at Meadow Brook Music Festival had a chance to make this comparison last Saturday night when Spencer opened the show for Rawls.

The 7,000 or so people sprawling over every corner of the Meadow Brook grounds was there for Rawls. Jan Spencer, Channel 4-TV's "Go For It" singer, apparently making her first major Detroit-area concert appearance, was an added attraction.

While an attractive woman with an appealing personality and a voice to

## review

match, she has a lot to learn about winning over a crowd. She dresses well, is beginning to develop a stage patter between songs and has just come off an English tour with Martha Reeves.

BUT SPENCER's thing doesn't sound all that natural yet. At times you sense she is forcing herself.

The drummer in the trio backing Spencer tended to overpower her voice so that more than once in her 30-minute set her lyrics were indistinguishable.

This is not meant as an attempt to

write off the career of Spencer, who is a talented young singer. She established a good groove and some audience rapport with her version of Marvin Gaye's "Ain't That Peculiar" and her last song, Kenny Loggins' "Can't We Go On Together." This was a near miss.

All of this is a preamble to a Lou Rawls review. Yet what happened between Spencer and the Rawls segment further emphasizes my essential point.

Becoming miffed by an intermission that stretched to 30 minutes as Rawls' band seemed to be dragging its collective feet in setting up, the crowd began

boiling and clapping in rhythmic derision at the delay.

BUT ONCE Rawls sang the first few notes of his opening song, all the irritation was forgotten. A polished, seasoned performer can have that effect on an audience.

Resplendently dressed in a silver-and-black vest over a white shirt and black slacks, Rawls completely captivated the audience for 30 minutes.

With a 13-piece band, two leggy and talented backup singers and his ability to stamp his distinct imprimatur on even the most mundane material, Rawls was in command of the situation when he was on stage.

He knows his audience, and he sings the right combination of middle-class soul songs to keep the show going at a comfortable pace. Both his songs and

his monologues have an appeal to working-class and middle-class whites and blacks. His voice, a rich baritone that can be pleading, cajoling or shouting, has gotten deeper and richer over the years.

You can never fault his delivery, even if his view of male-female relations is — at least in his shows — somewhat to the right of Phyllis Schlafly. His monologue about a domestic crisis and his songs are, by implication, unliberated. But Rawls can get away with this.

THE BRASSY sound of his orchestra helps set the tone for the blues in "Hootchie-Googie Man" and "I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues" and he styles "One" (from "A Chorus Line") into a warmer and somehow more appealing song than usual.

After singing some tunes that might be included in a Lou Rawls' "greatest hits" album (like "Tobacco Road" and "Love is a Hurtin' Thing"), he ended his show with some songs from his latest album, "When the Night Comes."

If Jan Spencer stayed through Rawls' show, she may have learned a few tricks for the future. As Rawls sang about liking people — particularly "groovy people" — he shook the hand of every person in the first row.

A nice touch, and this consummate professional didn't even miss a beat while doing it. That takes some doing, too.

Meadow Brook Music Festival concerts are presented in Baldwin Pavilion on the Oakland University campus near Rochester.

## 2 related one-acts dramas provide stimulating evening

By Debi Barasman  
special writer

The Farmington Players' presentation of William Hauptman's one-act plays "Comanche Cafe" and "Domino Courts" is intelligent, sensitive and completely balanced technically and artistically.

Don't miss these dramas. You'll leave feeling amused, mentally challenged and mildly disturbed.

Hauptman's one-acts, second-place winners of the 1983 Michigan Festival of American Community Theatres Competition, sensitively display five likeable misfits coping with the bleak existence of Depression-era Oklahoma.

His message is not very optimistic. Only one of five characters finds self-acceptance. The others continue their frustrated searching for self-fulfillment.

THE CHARACTER Ronnie links both plays. In "Comanche Cafe" we see an idealistic and misguided young

woman thinking that love of a good man will remove her from the dreary reality she knows. In "Domino Courts" we find Ronnie four years later, bitter and frustrated that marriage has entrenched her only more deeply in that same reality.

Ronnie is portrayed by Yvonne Galomb, whose performance is outstanding. Galomb's character transition from the hopeful young waitress to the frustrated wife is insightful and thoroughly believable. Ronnie's character development serves as the spinal column from which both plays emanate, and Galomb's interpretation and performance contribute significantly to a fine production.

Mattie, the one character mentioned earlier who does find self-acceptance, is the older, experienced waitress confided to by Ronnie in "Comanche Cafe." Mattie is a character who comes to know strength and endurance.

She is portrayed convincingly by Sandy Dietrich, who projects a character who is cryptically wise yet tolerant

of Ronnie's impulsive youth. Dietrich's performance is solid. She interacts well with Galomb.

In "Domino Courts," Joseph Haynes performs as Ronnie's husband, Floyd. He presents a sweet, fumbling and deeply troubled man. Floyd provides much of the comic relief in this play, and Haynes, with a good understanding of the character's function, rises to the occasion with timing and flair.

ONE SMALL criticism is that Haynes' Oklahoma accent is not constant, and there are moments when he is difficult to understand. Still, Haynes presents a believably vulnerable character who can only be sympathized with.

Floyd's best friend, Roy, a paranoid mobster, is portrayed wonderfully by Danny Hicks. His transformation from a cocky, overbearing brute to a neurotically frightened coward is humorous and, at the same time, pathetic. Hicks' performance is consistently good and

by itself worth the price of admission.

Another good performance is given by Nancy Clervi as Floyd's wife, Flo. Her impact is not immediate, but as the play develops, Clervi blossoms into one of the most endearing personalities. You'll thoroughly enjoy seeing her transformation from a meek and submissive wife to a decisive personality that must be reckoned with.

Special mention must be made of these plays from a technical perspective. Phil Hadley's set design sensitively conveys the bleakness of the Oklahoma environment. The sets seem outdoors and dreary and contribute substantially to the mood of each play.

Special congratulations to Hope Nahstoll. Rarely in community theater is costuming as accurate and appropriate as is the case in "Comanche Cafe" and "Domino Courts."

LIGHTING AND sound are also top drawer. From the folk music selections heard before the opening scene to the

drawing sigh of dusk in the final scenes, sound and lighting harmoniously accent these productions.

Directors Sue Rogers and Sharian Douglas (of "Comanche Cafe" and "Domino Courts" respectively) are to

be applauded. Their interpretation and understanding of the mood and theme of each play is intelligent and insightful. They have accomplished much in creating two presentations that will move you emotionally and entertain you.

**Dining & Dancing**

**Henry's Place**

**All Dinners 2 for 1 every night!**  
Complete with Soup, Salad and Potatoes

LUNCHEONS • DAILY  
LUNCHEONS • DAILY  
LUNCHEONS • DAILY

Banquet Facilities

Open 11 am - 1 am Monday thru Friday, 12 pm - 1 am Saturday

18650 Ford Road • 336-5000  
(Just West of Southfield Expressway)

**FREE Balloon Rides**

Saturday, July 30th  
1-6 pm

**Founders Festival Weekend Package**  
\$35.00 per night plus tax  
Max. 4 per room  
Fri. Sat. Sun. July 29, 30, 31  
Reservations Required

**NOW AT MAXWELL'S**

- Trip to the Atlantic Seafood Menu Friday Evenings
- Prime Rib Buffet Saturday Evening
- Sunday Brunch \$7.95
- Bob Springfield - Enjoy music and laughter every Sunday evening, 8 pm - 1 am. No Cover

**Holiday Inn**  
38123 W. 10 Mile Rd.  
Farmington Hills • 477-4000

Also at Maxwell's ...  
Live Entertainment  
Nightly • Now Appearing  
**LYRICO**

Summertime is

**CLAM BAKE TIME**

At

**Cacques**

EVERY FRIDAY • 6:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Lobster • Shrimp • Crab Legs • Clams  
Clam Chowder  
Oysters-On-The-Half-Shell  
Mussels • Chicken or Ribs  
Poached Salmon • Smoked Sable  
Plus...New Redskin Potatoes and Corn-On-The-Cob  
and A Delicious Variety of Salads

**ALL YOU CAN EAT • ONLY \$24.95 PER PERSON**

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL 642-1373  
30100 TELEGRAPH (N. OF 12 MILE) IN BIRMINGHAM

**Pearl's Garden**

Serving the finest in  
Chinese & American Cuisine

Luncheons • Dinners • Carry Out Orders  
Chinatown Style Welcomed  
Open 7 days a week  
Mon.-Thurs. 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Fri. 11 a.m.-11 p.m.  
Sat. 12-11 p.m.; Sun. 12-10 p.m.

469 S. Woodward, Birmingham  
644-2913

Northshore

**Network Video**

LEADER IN HOME VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT

HOME VIDEO SALES & RENTALS

**Grand Opening**

FREE 30-day Trial Club Membership with this ad!

**KING'S ROW OF TROY**  
5114 ROCHESTER RD.  
TROY • 689-0661

100's of Titles!!

Video Cassette • CED Disc • Sales & Rentals

All Movies in VHS & BETA

Full Line RCA Dealer Video Equipment Sales & Rentals

Full Line Video Accessories & Blanks • Video Games • Atari

Coleco • Mattel • Professional Film-to-Tape Transfer Service

Club Members Receive 15% Discount on all purchases

JOIN THE CLUB... and Save!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE WILL PAY FOR ITSELF OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

VIDEOTAPE SERVICE

STORE HOURS: MONDAY THRU SATURDAY 10:00-8:00 P.M. SUNDAY Noon-8:00 P.M.

5114 ROCHESTER RD. • 689-0661

**ON THE TOWN**

**SUNDAY BRUNCH**

Highlight your Sunday at Brunch in the newly renovated Pool Terrace Restaurant

Chef Hank Van Daal has assembled what may be the finest NEW brunch in Metro Detroit. Bring the family and friends. Every Sunday from 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

Seniors & Childrens \$6.50 plus tax  
Adults \$7.50 plus tax

**POOL TERRACE**  
at the **Troy Hilton Inn**

1455 Stephenson Hwy., Troy, MI 48064 (313) 583-9000

**Take A Boat To Brunch.**

Friendship  
Saturday and Sunday Brunch Menu  
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Seafood Newburg with Puff Pastry  
Southern Fried Chicken  
Fresh Fruit Bowl  
Cheesecake with Strawberry Topping  
Scrambled Eggs  
Link Sausage  
Lean Crispy Bacon  
Hash Browns  
Assorted Sweet Rolls  
Bagels  
Muffins  
Assorted Chilled Juices  
Iams  
Butter  
Cream Cheese  
Coffee  
Tea  
Soft Drinks

**Goblo Island**  
Our own Island of Fantasy.

Ever imagine what it's like to dine aboard a luxury cruise ship? Imagine no more. Goblo invites you to a leisurely buffet brunch aboard the good ship Friendship. For \$14.95 you'll feast on a delicious buffet brunch and relax on the Friendship's deck. And enjoy a leisurely two hour cruise on the Detroit River. The Friendship leaves the Hart Plaza Dock at 10:30 a.m. and returns at 12:30 p.m.

And if you're planning a party, business meeting, or reception, find out about chartering the Friendship. It's a unique setting for any group up to 100 people. Either way, hurry up and make reservations so you don't get left ashore. For more information and reservations call 249-7500.