## Light fare fills theater calendars in August

Comedies and musicals dominate August theatrical fare at playbouses in metropolitan Detroit.

Summertime traditionally calls for productions that are light. The beaviest subject many people want to consider during the sun-oxaced vacation season is whether orange or lime-colored golf balls are easier to find in the rough and whether sun lotton with paba potency of air prevents pecling.

whether sun follow with paba potency of alsy prevents peeling.
Although many professional and community theater groups take a briak from production during the summer, there's an assortment of comedies, musicals and one-acts in August for those addicted to live theater no matter what the season.

At Wayne State University's Hilberty Theater in Detroit, many student thropians are vacationing. The Hilberty stages aummer productions with smaller casts and less elaborate sets and costumes than the full-scale classical theater it favors during the regular season.

UPSTAIRS ON the Hilberry stage, "Cole," a musical revue of Cole Porter tunes, alternates with an English mys-tery thriller, "A Murder Has Been Ar-ranged" by Emlyn Williams. "A Mur-

der Has Been Arranged\* runs through Friday and \*Cole\* runs through Satur-day, during the Summer Theatre Festi-val.

day, during the Summer Theatre Festival.

Downstairs in the studio theater the fare is two one-acts shout contemporary black life, "The Prodigals" and 'Ortio," both by Don Evans, which rotate in repertory with 'Relatively Speaking' by Alan Ayckbourn. The Prodigals" and 'Ortio," run through Friday, "Relatively Speaking" runs through Saturday,
For ticket information, call the box office at 577-2972.

At Oakiand University near Rochester the theater department closed its production season in the pring with 'Marry Marry,' and in July it offered an Arts for Youth camp.

This is the scool successful season for the one-among septime of the one-a

THE THEATRE Gulld of Livonia-Redford will produce two one-acts Fri-days-Saturdays, Aug. 17-18 and 24-25, for its Summer Studio Productions. The workshop presentations, featuring di-rectors and players new to the guild,

are "Impromptu" by Pulitzer-Prize-winning playwright Tad Mosel and "Whiskey," a Western spoof by Ter-rence McNally. For ticket information,

At Will-0-Way Apprentice Theatre in Bloomfield Township, the music of Ste-phen Sondheim rings out for the sum-mer production, "Anyone Can Whitle." The musical comedy about a wacky woman politician runs through the mid-dle of September. Call 644-4418 for ticket information.

A lawyer and complications with his several mistresses is the subject of The Button' at Somerset Dinner Theatre in the Somerset Mall, Troy. The comedy by Ben Starr will run through Saturday, Aug. 25. For ticket information, call 643-8865.

tion, call 643-5885.

Zany himnor wins out over sophisticated wit and satire in this summer's comic offerings. "Brewster's Millions' opens Friday and continues through Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Renry Ford Museum Theater at Grecafield Village in Dearborn. It's a tale, set in the 1920, of a million-dollar inheritance, with dixying twists in the control piot. Call 271-1820 for ticket information.

Most community theater groups take break from production during the unmer and concentrate on readying

the upcoming season of plays. The Birmingham Village Players unique old building is deep in sawdut as the lobby is reconstructed and the sound booth enlarged during the summer. The village players is the third oldest theater group in the country, going into its 63rd continuous season.

THE FARMINGTON Players is rehearing workshops that will be presented at the September meeting and is planning the diabolical details for "Frankenstein," which will open the season in October.

season in October.

Auditions for "Arsenic and Old Lace"
begin in August for the Spotlight Players. "Arsenic" will open the production
season after a members party Saturday, Sept. 8, to celebrate the group's
25th anniversary. Through the years
Spotlight Players has also been known
as the Wayne Summer Theater and the
Wayne-Westland Theater Guild.

Thesplans from the Plymouth Tho-atre Gulld won't be on stage until fall, but members are chaning next sea-son's productions and will tend a cot-ton-candy wagon at the annual Plym-outh Fall Festival.

"Key Exchange," a one act at the ourth Street Playhouse in Royal Oak, about bleyclists in New York's Cen-

James Harbour is Bir Charles Jasper and Short Nichota is his socretary, Miss Groze, in "A Myrder Has Boen Arranged."

tral Park. The play by Kevin Wade runs through Saturday, Sept. 1. Fourth Stroct's Midnight Studio pro-ductions offer two improvisational one-acts by Megan Terry. The plays origi-nally evolved through improvisation

**300** 

Katie Sikoraki and Richaid Klautach portray one of two couples who become involved in intrigue in "Rolatively Speak

and continue to evolve at each evening's performance. Calm Down Mother and Ploneer both focus on women's changing roles in society. Call the box office at 543-3566 for ticket in-

## Singers communicate Stephen Sondheim's songs well

Performances of the Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre production of the musical "Anyone Can Whistle-continue at 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Satur-days through Sept. 22 at Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre, 775 W. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Township,

By Debi Barsamian

Despite some rough edges, Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre is presenting a fine production of "Anyone Can Whis-tle."

A minor musical, with book by Ar-hur Laurents and music and lyrics by Stephen Sondhelm, it is not the most memorable show. Still, the musical does offer some wonderful Sondhelm songs such as "Anyone Can Whistle" and "Everybody Says Don't."

Director Cella Merrill Turner has recognized this and cast those individuals who best communicate these songs. And Will-O-Way's production presents some outstanding talent. Chester Jamison, Chris Scheller and Eileen T. Weiss paticularly shine.

Jamison portrays J. Bowden Hap-good, the newcomer who turns the town upside down. He is wonderful. From start to finish, Jamison is in furn control of a character for whom you'll only feel fondness.

AS CREDIBLE as his acting is, his singing is even better. Jamison is a beautiful tenor who sings with empathy and sincerity. Every one of his songs is

her wards and the ally and love interest of J. Bowden Hapgood.

Weiss' performance is outstanding. She is detailed and dynamic. One can sense she is a motivating force behind the entire production.

Seeing her alone is worth the price of a ticket. Her rendition of "Anyone Can Whistle" will bring tears to your eyes.

Scheller portrays Cora Hoover Hooper, the town's mayoress. Scheller's character is enjoyable, con-niving and mischievious. She's the most likeable despot you'll ever come

ano ancerny. Every one of his songs is a pleasure.

Welss portrays Foy Apple (a head nurse) and Fay's alter ego (a lady from Lourdes). Fay becomes the defender of lady from play than in ber first scenes. Perhaps

she was affected by opening night

MANY PEOPLE perform in the cho-rus. And for the most part, everyone contributes equally and helps balance the significant talent of those in the leading roles.

Still, there are awkward moments when one can see chorus members searching for a one or signal that will initiate their next assigned activity.

It really is critical that all cast members present a believable, three-dimensional character. Without every-one consistently playing make believe, the audience is jarred back to reality and loses touch with the illusion, which is the goal of the entire company.

In addition to giving first-rate per-formances, Jamison and Weiss also can be applanded for their contributions in choreography and set design respec-

Jamison's talent as choreographer is highlighted in "The Cookie Chase," a dance number in the third act.

It is humorous, entertaining and styl-ish. The chorus members enjoy the dance as much as the audience does.

WEISS HAS designed a set that is speedily efficient and lengts itself easily to the action of the play.

It is unfortunate that such a set couldn't have been decorated more creatively. The painting is flat and not as imaginative as the script demands.

Musically, Will-O-Way has again proven that a large orchestra is not all essential component of a pleasing and entertaining musical production.

Sharon Thomas on plane and Marri Rachmiel playing flute provide a aim-ple and pleasing accompaniment. They never loss touch of the needs of the so-loists, and both musicians offset the

All in all, this is a warm, happy little

good tastes

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