Actors Alliance puts energy into sporty 'Godspell'



Christian A. Gardner (left), Nicolo appear in the Actors Alliance The apell" with an athletic motif.

Performances of the Actors Alliance Theatre Company production of the musical "Godspell" continue through Sunday, Dec. 30, at Lycee In-ternational, 30800 Evergreen Road, Southfield. For ticket information call 642-1326.

By Cathle Breidenbach special writer

The Actors Alliance production of "Godspell" puts athletic muscle into the old story of Christ's ministry. The cast of 13, decked out as athletes of all persuasions, offers a biblical revue, a vigorous musical rendition of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Matthew.

Players bound energetically up and down a basketball court, baptizing Coach/Christ, acting out
the parables and huddling around to listen to his

ketbail court, bapuzing Coacar/Curist, acture, ver-the parables and huddling around to listen to his teachings.

William P. Ward, the director, Susan Panek, cho-reographer, and Philip J. Michael, musical direc-tor, succeed in staging fine, foot-tapping songs and dances and high-energy entertainment in this up-dated version of Todospell.

The sports metaphor, in which all the players are

athletes, is a new presentation for the musical. It sometimes works astonishingly well, as when a rich society lady wearing impeccable tennis whites (Anestee DePetris) takes the role of a Philistine as the cast acts out one of the parables. At other times when the disciples stretch their hamstrings and shoot baskets for God, the sports metaphor seems merely a sweaty contrivance.

THE METAPHOR may be a gimmick, but the sneer energy of the sporting presentation keeps the action moving well, as each sport in turn has its moment to shine.

show in keeping with the quote from the book of Matthew, "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." The simplicity of the presentation keeps "Godspell" from being too Broadway allck despite sophisticated musical productions and chereograph;. The story of Christis ministry is, after al, a simple tale, written to reasure common folks that the poor, the merciful and the pure in heart are blesses. Christ sepoused some downright revolutionary ideas, among them the notion that power and wealth are liabilities when it comes time to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

"GODSPELL" TELLS the stories with childlike simplicity and doesn't leave out favorities such as the tale of the God Samaritan, which has topped the biblical bestseller list for centuries. A Sesame-Street style puppet show erecluding and the same humor bright warm humor hards. Parkets was a street style puppet above received the warm humor bright control of the same hards. A session of playing Christ, always a difficult role despite christ's connections up above. Maccagnone plays a gentle Jesus, an almost-Charlie-Brown type makes up for his lack of charisma with goodness and wisdom. He's a good sport who does a softshoe routine with Manager Christian A. Gardner.

Though they're not the cracker jack dancers that some others in the cast are, their routine using hockey sticks for rance is winning.











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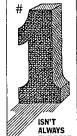
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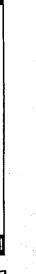
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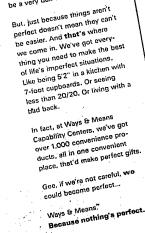
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