



Gay Ziegler

Even good acting can't spark play

Performances of the Avon Players production of "First Monday in October" continue Friday-Sunday, Feb. 22-24, and Friday-Saturday, March 1-2, at the playhouse in Rochester. For ticket information, call 656-1130.

By Gay Ziegler
special writer

Avon's "First Monday in October," directed by Edward Duke and Bob Saoud, is a strangely flat yet eloquent production. While the acting is splendid, this just isn't the sort of play that brings an audience to its feet.

In fact, it doesn't do much for the emotions at all. The dialogue is too crisp and precise to be believable, better to be read than spoken, and the conflict, though vaguely interesting, doesn't ring true.

The play deals with the obstacles faced by the first female appointee to the Supreme Court. This old-boy network likens her seating to having a nun at a stag party. But she's tough and after saying and proving that "a woman can ovulate and think at the same time," she prevails.

Patterned roughly, and just as conservatively, after Sandra Day O'Connor, she takes on a William O. Douglas kind of liberal. Despite his consistent radicalism, the liberal resists her appointment, calling her "Just — ess" (as in authoress, sculptress).

THESE TWO GO at it, locking horns over myriad First Amendment issues, from the rights of pornographers and atheists to the legitimacy of multina-

tional corporate behavior. It seems unlikely that these sorts of verbal exchanges would be common place in the chambers of the Halls of Justice.

But the two fall at each other nicely. Becky MacIntyre appears to be as competent as her character. She speaks with authority and conviction, showing an understanding of the issues. Jim Hughes has a peculiar talent. An early misreading of his performance might categorize him as uncertain, halting. But it soon becomes obvious that his every movement is planned and well rehearsed.

At first it is unsettling that he doesn't follow a strict first-speak-and-then-you-speak formula, but then an awareness dawns that in real life people do stomp on other's lines and grunt out of turn. His charm is that he is the person, not just the character.

Jeff Foran, as his assistant and staunch admirer, also fits the role snugly. He conveys a dash of naivete with the promise of growth and strength. His interpretation is honest and thoroughly credible.

HILL DOERING is a strong yet accessible chief justice. He plays the part tenderly.

As for the other justices, you never saw such a bunch. Berobed, firm-chinned, they lean in their yearly photograph, hoping this time to convey a flicker of humanity. Their somber humor is a nice touch.

Avon is incapable of constructing an smutty act. Its work always classy. And the set-change music, from a Bach Brandenburg Concerto, adds elegance to the performance.

upcoming things to do

IN CONCERT
Five winners in the Oakway Symphony Society Young Artists Competition will be presented in concert with the Oakway Symphony at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24, at Heron High School in Farmington Hills. Prizes provided by the Michigan Foundation for the Arts and Oakway Symphony will be awarded at the concert. Musicians will perform under the baton of Francesco DiBiasi. Winners are Christi Chapman, a University of Michigan French horn student, first prize; Mark DuBois, oboist, second prize; Theresa Tomoko Mack, pianist, third prize; Claudia Chudacoff, violinist, fourth prize; and Tony Cross, violinist, fifth prize.



Young artist Christi Chapman plays Sunday with the Oakway Symphony Orchestra.

MEADOW BROOK
"Toys in the Attic," Lillian Hellman's tale of obsessive love within a New Orleans family, will begin a four-week run at 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at Meadow Brook Theatre on the Oakland University campus near Rochester. The cast includes Priscilla Morrill as elder sister Anna Berniers, Jane Lowry as younger sister Carrie Berniers, Bethany Carpenter as Lily Berniers, Michel Cullen as Julian Berniers and Joanne Arnold as Albertine Prine, Lily's mother. The production is directed by Meadow Brook Artistic Director Terence Kilburn. For further information and reservations, call the box office at 377-3500.

TOP ENTERTAINER
Gerry Woo, 17, of Troy earned Entertainer of the Year honors recently at LaNette's in Fraser after winning nine consecutive shows in Channel 4's "Saturday Night Music Machine" contest. The Troy Athens High School senior faced competition from singers throughout the Detroit area since the contest began in October. Among prizes he won were 10 hours of studio recording time and a trip to New York to meet with a major record company executive. Woo is a member of the National Honor Society and has

participated in student government, drama club, marching band and various choirs at Athens.

'THE LARK'
Paul Amend of Farmington Hills is appearing as Brother Ludven in the Kalamazoo College Theater Department's winnace production "The Lark." Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, Feb. 21-23 and Feb. 28 to March 2. In Batch Playhouse on campus in Kalamazoo.

NEW YEAR
A Chinese New Year Celebration Party, for the Year of the Ox, will be held at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, at Somerset Inn in Troy. Hostesses are Donna Wong, 1984 Miss Chinatown, and Karen Hsu, 1984 Queen of Far East Festival. Hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, lion dance, cultural performance and live music are part of the celebration. Tickets are \$25 per couple for members of the Association of Chinese Americans Inc. and \$30 for non-members. For further information call 553-9075 or 549-5032.

Theaters are a treat

Residents of local group homes are also often in attendance, she said, along with children from the Tri-Cities Therapeutic Recreation Group, a project for handicapped children, sponsored by the parks and recreation departments of Wayne, Westland and Garden City.
Most children who attend are between 4 and 10 years old, O'Rourke said.
Dinner theater performances at Maplewood are held throughout the school year on the second Tuesday of the month. Next production — a "pizza theater" — will be "The Pied Piper," presented by the Ann Arbor Good Time Players.

Final production of the season will be "Lollipop Legend" on April 9, done by Other Things & Co. from Oakland University near Rochester. That will be a "dessert theater," O'Rourke said.
Several surprises are planned for next year. "I'd like to do something new every year," she said. "Right now, we're looking into the possibility of having a professional storyteller come in, or we may have a clown workshop."
"WE'RE ALWAYS looking for suggestions," she said. "If anybody has any ideas for us, I hope they won't hesitate to speak up."
To contact Maplewood Community Center call 525-8848. Information on Peanut Butter Players can be obtained at 559-3892.

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