

# Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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## Actors revamp, reopen theater

By Susan Thygeson-Aktry  
special writer

**I** ADMIRE THE PEOPLE of the Stagecrafters for the major task they have undertaken in renovating the Baldwin Theater, which will be a state-of-the-art theater upon its completion this fall," said Patrick Lynch of Birmingham.

Lynch is cast in the title role of Harold Hill in Meredith Willson's classic musical, "The Music Man," which will premiere Friday in the Stagecrafters' newly revitalized Baldwin Theater, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak.

"The members have poured their

time, talents, financial resources and energy into this project, and it shows," Lynch said.

"The Baldwin Theater, which was until recently the Washington Theater in downtown Royal Oak, is another example of a theater which was used for a time as a movie theater (like the Birmingham in downtown Birmingham), and is being converted back into a legitimate stage theater," he said.

LYNCH, WHO IS a funeral director with the family owned Lynch Funeral Directors in Clawson, is married to professional actress Mary Callaghan Lynch, who appeared recently at the Birmingham Theater in "Hello, Dolly!"

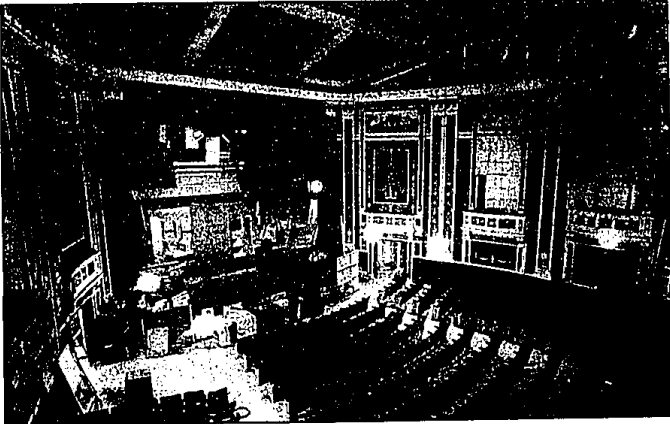
This is her husband's first appearance with the Stagecrafters.

"It's been very interesting to perform the part (the lead in "The Music Man") for two different, very capable directors, Isabel Himmelhoch at St. Dunstan's last year, and now Hal Robinson in Royal Oak," Lynch said. "It's all fresh and new with Hal's direction."

Jean Stopke, who will play opposite Lynch as Marian the Librarian, in the upcoming show, also appeared in the St. Dunstan's production, but in another role.

"Pat (Lynch) makes me feel pretty. I think we have a very good . . . rapport. I have a lot of respect for his talent," she said. Stopke explained that it was at Lynch's suggestion she decided to audition for the current production. This will be her first appearance with Stagecrafters since 1976, when she appeared in the Bicentennial production of "Annie Get Your Gun."

Stopke has demonstrated her penchant for learning as an alumna of Eastern Michigan University in speech and drama, a June graduate of the Detroit College of Law, and a new employee of the office of the Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson.



photos by GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

The Baldwin Theatre, which for a time was the Washington Theatre movie house in Royal Oak, returns to its original name and again offers live theater, after renovation by the Stagecrafters.

The community theater group has taken over the Baldwin, opening the first show of its new season, "The Music Man," on Friday. For ticket information, call the box office at 541-6430.



Birmingham resident Patrick Lynch is "Professor" Harold Hill, who turns a small Iowa town topsy-turvy when he promises to teach the children how to play musical instruments and to form a boy's band, in the musical "The Music Man."

DIRECTOR Harold J. Robinson has made 16 years with Stagecrafters, during which he has directed "Visit to a Small Planet," which toured England in 1983; "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," which won the Furry Festival award for best production, and a number of other plays. Robinson's wife Rosemary is co-producing the current work with Stagecrafters Beverly Lloyd.

In addition to directing "The Music Man," Robinson has been co-chairman of the Baldwin Restoration Committee with Al McMillan of Royal Oak, who is a manufacturer's representative for Trans-World Electronics in Livonia.

McMillan and his wife Jean have been working at all hours of the day and night coordinating volunteer efforts.

"We purchased the theater in November of 1984 from the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority and proceeded to renovate and alter the theater to seat 348, and provide new facilities for intermission reception and for the handicapped," McMillan said.

"Essentially, we cut down the seating capacity from 755 to 348. About 80-90 percent of the work has been done by our own volunteers. We've had to hire an architect, a builder, a licensed electrician, plumber and professional plasterer, but we did everything else that didn't require a licensed tradesman.

"IT'S ENORMOUSLY expensive, but we'll have a million-dollar restoration for under \$300,000, because of the work we've done ourselves. We've been told by those who've seen lots of theaters that this is the most beautiful one," he said.

"I'd like to stress we resurrected this 1921 building from a fate worse than death. If your readers can identify with saving an old building and they want to support these efforts, they could buy season tickets that are only \$40 for six shows," said McMillan, who was the Stagecrafters' president when the group took on the Baldwin project.

President of the Stagecrafters since March, and a 13-year veteran of the group is Laura Camp of Troy.

"I think that one of the special things about this group is that it attracts people from so many walks of life, bound by a common interest in theater," she said.

Campo, who is an account supervisor for Vucum, a computer graphics company in Troy, said, "I wasn't looking for a group to join — just a chance to dance." She said she found more than she had sought.

Because of the responsibility of being president of a group involved in such an ambitious undertaking as the move from the Bowers Street playhouse in Clawson to the Baldwin, and the restoration — all while proceeding through a successful fall season of

shows — Campo has put her personal interests on hold to concentrate on the group's goals.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR for "The Music Man" is Marsha Kline of Royal Oak, who is a medical secretary in Rochester. Kline was partially responsible for the exquisite casting of the show and assisted in the blocking, some of the dance and facilitated character development.

The assistant to the director, Karen Bodoia, is a music teacher in Troy, who teaches piano and sings with the Cantata Academy in Detroit.

"I've never been among people who work so very hard without realizing it," she remarked. "It's like giving birth, and the baby is opening night. It's wonderful!"

Deana Gravel of Troy plays Ethel Toffelmier, the "Piano girl" and girlfriend of Harold Hill's cohort, Marcellus. She is in her 15th season with Stagecrafters.

Said Oravec, "I was in the first musical in the old building and the last," referring to the Stagecrafters' former home. "This'll be our 30th season. I didn't want to miss being a part of our first show in the Baldwin."

Oravec, a professional actress-model in commercials and industrial films, is also a junior in communications at Oakland University.

"The biggest thrill of doing this show is that my son, Mike, is in it and it's his first show," she beamed.

ANOTHER YOUNG Michael in the show is the male child lead, Michael Trepanier, who plays Winthrop Paroo, and who played that role before in the Oak Park High School production of "The Music Man." Trepanier attributes his stage success to music teacher Deana Wolf, who identified his talent and was instrumental in getting him to successfully audition for the role of Annel in the St. Bede Players of Southfield production of "Annel and the Night Visitors" in 1983.

Female child lead in the play, Amarillis, is played by a very talented 8-year-old from Troy named Katie O'Shaughnessy. She is also rehearsing for the Michigan Opera Theater productions of "Pagliacci" and "Gianni Schicchi" at the Fisher Theatre. In addition, she is appearing in the Peanut Butter Players (professional children's luncheon theater) in Union Lake.

O'Shaughnessy has taken dance lessons for six years and piano lessons for four, and her performances are many. Said the youngster, "I like being in 'Music Man' because the people are so nice, but I don't like it because it seems like there are so many rehearsals! I feel like I'm being pushed!"

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