



Cathie Breidenbach
special writer

'It Had to Be You' is winsome comedy

Performances of "It Had to Be You" by Joseph Bologna and Renee Taylor continue Fridays-Saturdays through June 13 at Somerset Dinner Theatre at the lower level of Somerset Mall in Troy. Dinner is available at 6 p.m. at Sebastian's or at 7 p.m. at Cafe Jardin. Cocktails and show only also are available. Curtain is at 8:45 p.m. For reservations call 649-6629.

By Cathie Breidenbach
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The zany, touching romantic comedy "It Had to Be You" at Somerset Dinner Theatre peels off layer upon layer of uninhibited nonsense to reach the heart, sweet core of a love story set in New York one snowy Christmas Eve.

Theda Blau lives in a one-room, walk-up apartment decorated in a highbrow shabby chic style that would give an interior designer apoplexy. Schmaltzy Christmas decorations hang everywhere and a deer head hurls above the bed with antlers dripping blood.

The place suits Theda, the tousled-blond flibbertigibbet who

lives there. Set Designer Mel Kramer cleverly makes the narrow one-room set work as an extension of Theda's fruitcake personality. Mary Whiting is delightful as Theda, a sometime actress and would-be writer who lives on uninhibited impulse and pipedreams.

AT AN AUDITION Theda sets her sights on Vito Pignoli (Joseph Haynes), a hot-shot director of commercials, and lures him to her apartment. No passive Cinderella who waits for Prince Charming to make his move, Theda seduces him, then steals his pants and hides his shoes to keep him captive long enough to fall in love with her. A blizzard outside and his bad back work in Cupid's favor.

Joseph Haynes plays a convincing Vito, a man-about-town, outwardly content with his life. Theda manipulates him into critiquing her dreadful "comedy" about a Russian aristocrat tortured by the demon Rasputin. In the process, she uncovers his secret longing to write.

She feeds him vegetarian seaweed delicacies, threatens acupuncture for his bad back and dances to Russian gypsy tunes. He



Mary Whiting is Theda Blau, an aspiring actress, and Joseph Haynes is Vito Pignoli, a director, who is the subject of her romantic intentions in "It Had to Be You" at Somerset Dinner Theatre.

is captive, but not amused.

Her impulsive antics work through his veneer, and they bicker their way to real knowledge of one another. One unpredictable thing leads to another in this offbeat romance aptly directed by Annette Madias.

Call it a fairy tale or a hallucination, "It Had to Be You" is riddled with comic absurdities and underlying warmth. Happily, only the end of this "boy meets girl" play is predictable.

BEFORE THE SHOW in the downstairs theater, Jimmy Launce Productions offers theatergoers a choice of dinner at Cafe Jardin in the Somerset Mall court or at the elegant Sebastian's. On a recent evening, Sebastian's theater menu

featured four entrees — broiled whitefish, chicken, crab and vegetables baked in phyllo leaves (delicious), roasted half duckling in a subtle glaze (excellent), and braided sirloin tips with morels.

All diners include a chef's salad, house-baked breads and rolls served with three whiffs of butter in different subtle flavors, two vegetables, tea or coffee, and a selection from Sebastian's sinfully scrumptious pastry tray. Sebastian's waitpeople are attentive and knowledgeable and the atmosphere comfortable yet cosmopolitan.

Cathie Breidenbach of West Bloomfield has always loved theater. A former high-school English teacher, she works in public relations, advertising and as a freelance writer.



Frank Hursley
special writer

Teens play addicts in strong one-act

Performances of "Addict" by Jerome McDonough continue at 2 p.m. Sundays through March 22 at Will-O-Way Repertory and Apprentice Theatre in Birmingham. For ticket information, call 644-4418.

By Frank Hursley
special writer

A group of talented, crusading teenagers from various Birmingham high schools appear in the one-act play, "Addict."

Staged at Will-O-Way Theatre, the vehicle is, in a sense, a modern morality play designed to convey a poignant message by means of a series of dramatic vignettes depicting the dead-end results of alcohol and drug addiction. A host of characters are presented in playwright Jerome McDonough's searing statement and all of them, as a result of their addiction, exceed the point of no return.

Environment, peer pressure and the striving for achievement or acceptance are some of the influences dramatized as contributors to enslavement. Once the bondage to the drug becomes entrenched, reality becomes distorted to such an extent that it leads to self-inflicted injury or complete disorientation, with equally tragic results. This cause

and effect appraisal is graphically portrayed.

Each vignette is composed of dramatic monologues with pantomime replacing props. One scene reinforces the other and the message comes across loudly — drugs are deadly.

THE YOUTHFUL performers are too numerous to mention individually and some do interchange into more than one tragic character. Francine Jo Hachem's direction keeps the pace flowing, accentuating each somber scene without loss of purpose.

At the close of the performance, a spokesperson from Common Ground gave insight into the tremendous crusading effort carried on by the organization. The speaker stressed the critical factor for rehabilitation is that the individual addict must recognize he or she does have a severe problem. A suggested prescription for alleviating the problem is to encourage transferring absorption with the substance of abuse to a neutralizing interest or activity.

The production is part of Will-O-Way's team effort, a group called We Can Hear You — organized to remedy juvenile addiction — whose members are to be commended.

Frank Hursley of Birmingham, a sales engineer by profession, is a longtime theater buff.

table talk

Menu specials

St. Patrick's specials including corned beef and cabbage and Irish lamb stew will be on the menu Tuesday, March 17, at the Clarkston Cafe. Beer and other beverages will be green. New Age composer-pianist Jim Bajor will be joined by Miriam and Company, who sing and play

traditional Irish instruments, for entertainment from 5 p.m. to midnight.

Irish stew

Irish lamb stew and corned beef and cabbage will be specials on the menu for St. Patrick's Day, served at both lunch and dinner at the Troy Hilton Inn.

Chef returns

Chef John Evans has returned to the Roman Terrace in Farmington Hills, rejoining Chef Frank Crac-

chiolo. Evans will feature various char-broiled entrees including Black Angus filet mignon and sirloin steaks. Other selections on the menu highlight the restaurant's northern Italian cuisine.

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In the Embassy Suites Hotel-Southfield on Franklin and Beck, off Northwestern Hwy, adjacent to I-696 near Telegraph Rd. For reservations, call 350-2000.