

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



(BWT, Ro, FSC)

Thursday, April 2, 1987 O&E



Cathie Breidenbach

Bill Kux charms as nerdish hero

Performances of Woody Allen's "Play It Again, Sam" continue through Sunday, April 19, at Meadow Brook Theatre on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.

The wonder of the variously named characters who play Woody Allen clones is that he can make women fall for a whiney neophile whose body and make macho men almost sorry for a wimp who blathers in public about his sexual insecurities.

In Meadow Brook's funny "Play It Again, Sam," Bill Kux pulls off the tough job of playing the Woody Allen character. He's a wimp. Maybe it's because he's better looking than Allen. The chicken chest has filled out and the peculiar charm of the Allen character is not so incomprehensible as it is with the pallid nebbish of Allen himself.

"Play It Again, Sam" is Woody Allen's 1960s commentary on the contemporary mating game. When the wife of Allen Felix, an intellectual

urban nerd, walks out on him, his friends, Dick and Linda, step in to raise his spirits and find him some female companionship. Allen makes a fool of himself with a succession of women.

Felix's hyperactive imagination provides the best comedy in "Play It Again, Sam." When his imagination kicks into high gear, the lighting dims and the audience gets to see the people in his fevered thought.

BECAUSE WOODY Allen/Allen Felix has a movie fetish, film characters come alive and kibitz over his shoulder. Bogart, his ultimate hero, coaches Allen on how to make time with "Gone With the Wind."

Robert Grossman, a Southfield resident who is executive producer of Nancy Gurwin Productions, and Donna Zatkin, also of Southfield, who is producer of the theater company, talked about their upcoming plans over lunch last week at Machus Red Fox in Bloomfield Township.

Besides the upcoming show at the Jewish Community Center (community theater, not dinner theater productions) and the dinner theater at Mama Mia's, there is Gurwin's one-woman show to be considered, and the scheduling of the next season at the JCC.

Michael Goodman, a former associate, asked Gurwin to bring her shows to the JCC when Dr. Morton Plotnick, the JCC's executive director, asked Goodman to help in starting a theater season there.

The season opened with "Funny Girl," starring Gurwin as the comical Ziegfeld Follies star Fanny Brice.

"It just took off. Even the Sunday matinees were terrific," said Gurwin of the show's eight performances.

Deciding on a change of pace, Gurwin's group went with the somber Broadway hit, "The Diary of Anne Frank," about the young Jewish girl and her family hiding from the Nazis in World War II.

"We had an artistic success," said producer Zatkin.

"But a financial disaster," finished Gurwin. The critics liked it, but the public, surprisingly, stayed away in droves.

Goodman, who also played a role in "Anne Frank," ended his participation with the new community theater after this show.

ALTHOUGH Gurwin has done "I Do! I Do!" before (as well as "Funny Girl"), Plotnick asked her to do the show again. Gurwin, who started her production company 11 years ago, first appeared in "I Do! Do!" with Phil Marcus Ester of Livonia, in 1976.

One of the difficulties in presenting shows at the JCC, Gurwin and Zatkin agreed, is the scheduling, because there are so many other activities also being booked there.

Rehearsal time, in the Aaron Deyo Studio Theatre where the shows are presented, often is not available, and actors have to prepare their parts in rooms other than those in which they will perform.

"Fantasticks" has been moved from an opening date in May to

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