

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



Thursday, April 23, 1987 O&E

(O&E)

upcoming things to do

CHILDREN'S SHOW

An original musical production for children in grades K-6, "Mommie Drives a Dump Truck" will be performed by Other Things & Co. 1-2 p.m. Saturday, May 2, at the Community House in Birmingham. Tickets at \$3 are available at the Community House. Children under 5 must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call 644-5832.

NIGHT OUT

The Sun Messengers, a Detroit-area band, will play at Bates Street Night Out from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Thursday, May 7, at the Community House in Birmingham. The 11-piece band plays music for listening and dancing. Tickets to the monthly social evening for adults are \$5. Tickets are available at the door or by calling 644-5832.

ARMY BAND

The five-star 389th Army Band will give a free two-hour concert and show at 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 8, at Varner Recital Hall on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. The program is part of a cross-country tour to celebrate the Constitution Bicentennial and the 25th anniversary of the birth of the Army Materiel Command. The program at Varner Hall will be a potpourri of 200 years of American music. Free tickets are available by calling the university's box office at 370-3013 any weekday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

INNER LIGHT

Stefan Kukuryga and Paul Vorhagen will appear in concert at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 3, at Harmony House Records of Birmingham. The Inner Light Records recording artists also will give concerts in the area at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 17, at Harmony House in Rochester Hills and 2 p.m. Saturday, May 30, at Harmony House in Farmington Hills. The free concerts celebrate release of the duo's new album, "Enlightened Sector."

WILL-O-WAY SHOW

Phillip Martin of Hazel Park stars as Mel Edison, lead role in the Neil Simon comedy "The Prisoner of Second Avenue" at 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays through May 9 at Will-O-Way Theatre in Birmingham. Martin replaces Dale Bishop of Birmingham, who was killed Saturday in a car crash. Each Saturday night show is followed by an afterglow, open to all theatergoers attending that performance. For ticket information, call 644-4418.

SUNDAY CONCERTS

Dennis Vernier, vocalist, guitarist and song stylist, will give a free concert 2-4 p.m. Sunday at the Center Court of Somerset Mall in Troy. Other concerts in the Sunday series include Borkowski and Roschacki.

folk singers, May 10; Eddie DeSantis, easy swing and the big band sound, May 17; the Marvin Kahn Trio, jazz, May 24, and the George Benson Trio, jazz, May 31.

TALENT TAPESTRY

Students from the Warren Consolidated School District are displaying and demonstrating artistic and cultural talents during the "Tapestry of Talents" show Thursday, April 30, through Saturday, May 2, at Oakland Mall in Troy. Among the musical talent will be high school stage bands, varsity choirs, handbell choirs, solo and ensemble groups, and elementary music groups. Artwork and vocational art also will be featured.

OUTDOOR SHOW

St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook will present the musical "Oklahoma!" for its annual outdoor show at 9 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, June 4-6, at the Greek Theatre at Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills. For tickets, call 644-6527.

AT MURDOCK'S

Fast City will play jazz from Thursday, May 7, through Saturday, May 16, at Murdock's in Rochester Hills. The next attraction will be Alexander Zovile, with jazz, Thursday, May 21, through Saturday, June 27.

SPRING FESTIVAL

The 10th annual St. Pat's Spring Festival will be held from 2-9 p.m. Sunday, April 26, at St. Patrick's Senior Center in Detroit. Seven hours of continuous Irish entertainment will be offered in two locations. Among groups performing are New Old Stock, a Spig of Ireland, Larry Larson/Ed McGlinchey, Jack Cahill/Kevin Murphy, Jim Perkins, Chowder Society, Blackthorn, Birmingham Celtic Pipes & Drums, Jim Buckingham, Murphy's Men, Charlie Taylor, Marty Burke, Tanist and Pat's People. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for "the older children."

DOWNTOWN HOEDOWN

The Budweiser Downtown Hoedown will be held Friday-Sunday, May 8-10, at Hart Plaza on Detroit's riverfront. The event is the world's largest free celebration of country music. Stars include Crystal Gayle, Ricky Skaggs, Lee Greenwood and the Charlie Daniels Band, as well as local talent. Entertainment begins each day at noon and continues until 11 p.m. For schedule and performance information, call 257-9559.

CINEMA SOCIETY

The Royal Oak Cinema Society will have a new home, moving from the Royal Oak Public Library to the Main Theatre, starting Friday, May 15. A five-week repertory series of 35-mm films offers titles

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Intimate Set is extended into audience

By Arlene Funk
special writer

THE TINY PLAYHOUSE of the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford will become even more intimate with the production of "Brighton Beach Memoirs" opening this weekend on Broadway a few seasons back, is the story of a Jewish family coping with life during the Great Depression. It is an autobiographical story of Simon's boyhood.

Some of the action takes place in the front yard, where 15-year-old Eugene Jerome plays baseball and fantasizes about becoming a major league star. Assistant director Tom Hinks said the set has been extended beyond the stage to the floor of the 125-seat theater, where the "front yard" will be located.

"The audience will really feel they are participating," said Hinks of Plymouth, a computer programmer at Unisys.

"THE ENTIRE STAGE is needed for the living room, dining room and bedroom," he added. "A great deal of the play takes place in the front yard. With the closeness of the theater, we are going to have some audience members practically on the same team with (Eugene)."

The comedy will be presented at 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, May 1-2 and 8-9, at the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford playhouse on Beech Daly, south of Five Mile Road in Redford Township. Tickets are \$5. For ticket information, call 522-8057.

"A love letter to the author's past" is how the theater group's publicity describes "Brighton Beach Memoirs." The play offers a series of vignettes about the Jerome family, who live in Brighton Beach, a somewhat poor section of Brooklyn. Times are very tough.

Eugene, who is both the lead character and narrator, is played by 15-year-old Vito Guerra of Southfield. Guerra, a 10th grade student at Brother Rice High School in Birmingham, began acting at age 4. He is a veteran of some 25 school and theatrical productions, appearing with such groups as the Michigan Opera Theater, the Detroit Repertory Theater, the Peanut Butter Players and the Lathrup Youth Theater.

This is the second time Guerra has appeared in "Brighton Beach Memoirs." His earlier appearance was during a school play.

"I like this because it is a realistic

15-year-old," Guerra said. "I can relate to him. He is a fun character."

GUERRA DEPICTS a Eugene who is both exasperating and endearing. He is a wisecracker, obsessed with sports and brimming with curiosity about female anatomy.

But under Eugene's flippancy demeanor is a youth who deeply cares about his struggling family. His narration fleshes out the dialogue and carries the story along.

The object of Eugene's budding sexual interest is his cousin Nora, played by Kathleen L. Lietz of Redford. Nora is a pretty, star-struck teenager who faces an opportunity to join a Broadway play.

David Berg of Huntington Woods plays Jack, Eugene's father, working himself to exhaustion to earn enough money to support his family. Pat Varga of Warren is Kate, Eugene's hard-loving mother.

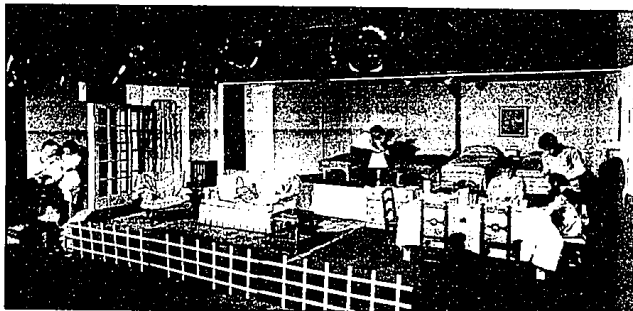
Johan Battle of Detroit plays Stanley, the elder son who is about to lose his job. Blanche, Kate's sister, a sickly widow, is played by Sue Delosier of Lincoln Park.

Amy Rosenthal of Detroit portrays Laurie, Nora's kid sister. The



BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Vito Guerra, 15, of Southfield plays the lead role of Eugene, a character based on Neil Simon himself in the playwright's autobiographical play "Brighton Beach Memoirs" at the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford.



For its production of "Brighton Beach Memoirs," the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford has extended its set to the floor of the 125-seat theater in Redford. The set recreates Neil Simon's boyhood home, both inside and out

— living room, dining room, bedrooms and even the front yard. Performances of the comedy will be given at 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, May 1-2 and 8-9.

director is Mattie Wolf of Berkley.

"We are aware of how poor the family is, but how tightly knit they

are, always acting as a family unit," Hinks said.

"Brighton Beach Memoirs" con-

cludes the Livonia-Redford group's 33rd season.

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