## When band plays music, it's strictly make-believe

Continued from Page 5

The idea for Illusion came to Best three years ago when he and his wife were attending a wedding reception. "The dise jockey was so loud that you could honestly feel the air pressure pushing on your body from the speakers of his equipment. And there was no way you could talk to the person next to you, let alone say. "Pass the sail."

On the way home that night, Best said they were listening to CKLW and the big band sound. "I said they were listening to CKLW and the big band sound." I said they were listening to CKLW and the big band sound. "I said the big band sound." I said the big band sound. "I said the big band sound." I said the big band sound. "I said the big band sound." I said the big band sound. "I said the big band sound." I said the big band sound. "I said the big band sound." I said the big band sound. "I said the big band sound is the big band sound." I said the big band sound is the big band soun

person, a DJ, is making a lot on moise."

When his wife them said that he'd have to have a gimmick because "there are millions of dise Jockeys," Best replied that if he was going to be one, he guessed he'd show sildes on the wall of all the big band leaders.
"And she kind of said, 'that wasn't very exciting."
"Then it just hit me within two seconds. I said, I know I can go out and get I so r 20 friends and acquaintances to get up there and quantimize or mimic or life yard, which was a said of the said of

sound."

He'd also go out and get real in-struments that were broken, build bandstands and have mirrored balls turning and the lights running

'I said, 'I know. I can go out and get 15 or 20 friends and acquaintances to get up there and pantomime or mimic or lip synch, what have you, the big band sound.' '

- Mike Best

up and down, and the group would all wear uniforms. "Then one of us would be a disc jockey and play that great sound, but the people in the audience would have something to look at also."

IN ILLUSION, the plane player the disc jockey, working the au-

IN ILLUSION, the piano player is the disc lockey, working the audio equipment.

Of course, a person in the audience who really wants to make the illusion as real as possible won't look for the equipment or what the pianist is sometimes doing off to the side. And the person will forget that members of illusion have such real-life occupations as teacher, newspaper writer, stockbroker naturalist at a nature center. The person should simply enjoy the show.

show.

Best considers the group's vocalist, Andrea Wojack, "a knockout. I don't know what we would do without her," he said. "And when you're five feet away from her or 15 feet away from the band you can't tell... She's incredible."

In addition to Best and Harper Woods resident Wojack, regular members of Illusion include Don Myers of Troy, George Preston of Plymouth, Ken Boldig of Rochester, Monroe Walker of Detroit, Clark Landon of Rochester, Dick Turnquist of Livonia, Peter Smith of Northville, John Pelson of Red-ford, John Gosney of Wixom, Martha Hindes of St. Clair Shores, Best's son, Bob, of Fair Haven, Don Lax of Inkster, Wayne Whilark of Westland and Dave Powers of Detroit.

Westland and Dave Powers of De-troit.

Best noted how difficult it is for Dave Powers, a professional drummer, to pretend to play drums. "And when he's done, we al-most have to carry him off the stage because it's much harder to play but stop short of actually hit-ting. The guy really wears himself out."

unit. The guy really wears nimself unit.

BEST ALSO SAID that Illusion has no intention of taking work away from disc jockeys or from real bands. There are very few real bands performing in the Detroit area today. It takes a lot of money to keep a real big band together. If the person has the money—there's no doubt about it—hender's no doubt about it—band. You can't beat that excitement of live centertainers and live music."

For those who can't afford a real big band but can spend a little more than what a disc jockey requests, Illusion might be the answer.

However, Illusion only performs

swer.

However, Illusion only performs once a month or maybe twice. "We don't intend to or want to work every week."

# Large stage swamps Ayckbourn's comedy

Performances of the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "Ab-sent Friends" continue through Sunday, March 20, on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. For ticket information, call the box office at 370-3310.

Alan Ayckbourn's little two-act comedy, "Absent Friends," gets lost on the Meadow Brook stage like a rubber duckle on a vast theatrical

on the measow flow, stage into the relaber duckle on a vast the attrical sea. A control of the c

Compared to the antic pace of Ayckbourn's hyperactive comedy "Taking Steps," which Meadow Brook Theatre wonderfully produced three years ago, "Absent Friends" nearly runs aground on its own seriousness.

### Cathie Breidenbach

In the plot, five British suburbanites gather for afternoon to a in honor of a tried the lanewri, seen in three years. Three couples — Paul of the soracious rowing eye, married to the hostess, Diana, who knows more than she can stand of her bushand's philandering. John of the non-stop witches, unhapply married to the tacitum, malcontent Evelyn in scarlet boots; and Madge, in constant phone contact with the helpless 282-pound baby of a husband she calls "Jumjums."

INTO THIS matrimonial wasps' nest comes Colin, the friend invited for tea, who proceeds to regale the unhapply married folk with tales of his finance who recently drowned. His friends hoped to console him, but this evanescent Pollyanna doesn't need consoling. He's disgustingly happy. To hear him tell it, his finrace was perfection personified. Marriages bruised by time and the rigors of reality come up short compared to the might-have-been wonders of Colin's marriage that never happened.

Richard Easley plays Colin as an unremittingly chipper fellow. His cheery bow tie, argyle sweater vest and matching caramel shoes all coordinate with his bristly sunshine-

colored mustache. To his "friends" mired in miserable marriages, he's like sunshine and brass bands trying to cure matrimonial hangovers.

to cure matrimonial hangovers.

As the Laciturn swinger, Evelyn,
Sherry Skinker does wonders with a
wad of gum she chaws continually
even white delivering her droll lines.
Wil Love plays her hubby, John, with
an endiess repertoire of twitches and
squirms aggravated by a neurosis
about death and by a rotten marriage "blessed by a miserable baby."
His hyperkinette ansieties are funny
for a while, but by Act II his perpetual motion verges on tedious.

If John has a phabla about death.

al motion verges on tedious.

If John has a phobia about death, Paul is fixated on sexual conquest, Carl Schurr plays Paul as an aggresate, ambitious man-on-the-make whose proper English manners can't gloss over the fact that he's an ego-centric ead undermeath.

Poor Diana lives with him, but wonders why. Jayme Houdyshelh sproven her gift for comedy in amerous other Meadow Brook productions, but she never gets to show her stuff playing the distraught Diana.

na.

As Madge, Jane Lowry gets the dizzlest part in the play and takes off with it. The wooder is this dear, middle-aged dizzy almost likes playing mama to her whale of a hubby.





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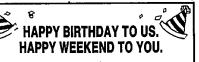
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