



Chuck Moss

Bright revue lauds American musical

Performances of the musical revue "Babes on Broadway," performed by TAP Ltd., continue at the Novit Hilton, For ticket information on dinner and show, or show only, call 349-4000.

Nancy Kolton sings with a sincerity that is essential for any great performer. Her sultry good looks and flashing smile are an added asset to this show.

Troy Players 'Godspell' is a winning production

Performances of the Ridgedale Players production of "Godspell" continue through Sunday, March 27, at the playhouse in Troy. For ticket information, call 644-8328.

"I must confess that since its genesis in the early '70s 'Jesus Movement,' 'Godspell' has never been one of my favorites.

The evangelical musical's self-consciously childish clowning and wide-eyed ingenuousness seems rooted in its counterculture niche. With that grumbling caveat, I must say that Ridgedale's solid musical talents shine through. The disorganized and goofy first half of the show can seem clumsy, but in the more focused and intense second act (the Crucifixion), the cast packs a powerful emotional punch.

The show is an exuberant, New Testament pastiche of songs and

Despite some thin singing voices in the cast, Ridgedale's solid musical talents shine through.

parables, a breezy and affectionate St. Matthew via Haight-Ashbury. Despite some thin singing voices in the cast, Ridgedale's solid musical talents shine through. The disorganized and goofy first half of the show can seem clumsy, but in the more focused and intense second act (the Crucifixion), the cast packs a powerful emotional punch.

The ensemble features David Muma as hippie Jesus. Muma hits just the right chord, as kindly charismatic without being wimpy, inhuman or pompously reverent. Although his voice isn't overpowering, he still makes a credible street Christ.

ABOUT HALF the performers in the remaining nine-member cast are better actors than singers, but the solid backing of many Ridgedale first-string vets carries the group songs through wonderfully. Of special note are Cynthia Kay Fritchard, Eugenia Gardner, Robert Higgle and, most particularly, regular Gwen Elbert. Together, they make a very joyful noise.

Ridgedale's Godfather Dan See gets major praise for direction and choreography that avoids cliché and matches ambition and talent well. The band is effective but not obtrusively located. The minimalist black and grey set makes a perfect backdrop, and Costume Director Doris Harmon's stunning, multi-colored outfits deserve wild applause. If they can make me like "Godspell," that's high praise indeed.

Birmingham resident Chuck Moss is a freelancer who writes on a variety of subjects for the Observer & Eccentric.

"Life is a cabaret, ol' chum," sings Sally Bowles in the musical "Cabaret." And in Michael Klier's newest production, "Babes on Broadway" at the Novit Hilton, the audience is treated to a delightful evening of cabaret-style entertainment.

As in previous productions by TAP (Theatre Arts Productions) Ltd., Klier has assembled some very talented actresses for a rousing salute to the American musical. Singers Nancy Kolton, Mary Nigohsian and Jane Shaffmaster all are accomplished performers in their own right.

Whether singing the heart-breaking "What I Did for Love" from the musical "A Chorus Line," or "Don't Rain on My Parade" from "Funny Girl," these women are energetic, comic and seductive as they present selections from the show's extensive repertoire. In one section, entitled

"But, What If . . ." they sing songs that come from a male's point of view, with amusing results. Another section, "Musical Theatre Trivia," involves audience participation where showgoers play for prizes by trying to identify a musical's title and the name of the character who sings the clue song.

NANCY KOLTON sings with a sincerity that is essential for any great performer. Her sultry good looks and flashing smile are an added asset to this show.

Mary Nigohsian's beautifully trained soprano voice is perfect for the sad ballad, "Losing My Mind," from Stephen Sondheim's "Follies." Seeing Nigohsian's vulnerability during this song is enough to bring tears to your eyes.

To watch Jane Shaffmaster is to

watch a talented comedienne in action. She reminds one of a young Carol Burnett, especially when singing "Adelaide's Lament" from "Guys and Dolls." Her comic timing is flawless and is essential for anyone tackling this song.

But it is "Rebecca," who deserves the loudest applause for her virtuosity as the show's accompanist. She tackles even the most difficult melodies with precision.

This production marks the first show of a new season, which Klier hopes will be as successful as last year's, if not more so. With an ensemble like this one, it won't be difficult for his wishes to come true.

"Babes on Broadway" performances are preceded by a delicious dinner of either broiled swordfish or prime rib.

theater

British comedy offered

Stagecrafters presents "Bedroom Farce," a British comedy by Alan Ayckbourn, at the Baldwin Theatre in Royal Oak.

Performances continue Friday-Sunday, March 18-20, and Thursday-Saturday, March 24-26. All performances are at 8 p.m. except 2 p.m. Sunday, March 20.

Tickets are \$7 for general audiences. Seniors and students receive a \$1 discount for the Thursday and Sunday performances. The box office is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30 p.m. and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.



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☐ Broadcast News
☐ Fatal Attraction
☐ Hope and Glory
☐ The Last Emperor
☐ Moonstruck

***BEST ACTRESS**

☐ Cher, Moonstruck
☐ Glenn Close, Fatal Attraction
☐ Sally Kirkland, Anna
☐ Meryl Streep, Ironweed
☐ Holly Hunter, Broadcast News

***BEST ACTOR**

☐ Michael Douglas, Wall Street
☐ William Hurt, Broadcast News
☐ Marcello Mastroianni, Dark Eyes
☐ Jack Nicholson, Ironweed
☐ Robin Williams, Good Morning, Vietnam

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☐ Sean Connery, The Untouchables
☐ Morgan Freeman, Street Smart
☐ Vincent Gardenia, Moonstruck
☐ Denzel Washington, City Freedom

***BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

☐ Norma Aleandro, Gaby, A True Story
☐ Ann Archer, Fatal Attraction
☐ Olympia Dukakis, Moonstruck
☐ Ann Ramsey, Throw Momma From the Train
☐ Ann Southern, The Whales of August

***BEST DIRECTOR**

☐ Adrian Lyne, Fatal Attraction
☐ John Boorman, Hope and Glory
☐ Bernardo Bertolucci, The Last Emperor
☐ Lasse Hallstrom, My Life as a Dog
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