



Jazz cavalcade

Vocalist Marlena Shaw will be one of the stars appearing at the Graystone International Jazz Museum's Cavalcade of Jazz on Sunday, May 22, at the Orchestra Hall/Paradise Theatre in Detroit. For more information, see the Upcoming calendar beginning on 6C.

Producer's companies expanding

Continued from Page 7

Another show called "Kids on the Block," uses life-sized puppets to act out the parts of handicapped people. The show aims to teach children how to understand and communicate with the handicapped. A third educational show, "Who Says I Can't," addresses alcohol abuse and is targeted at middle and secondary school-age students.

Because people go out to be entertained primarily on weekends, many of TAP's professional entertainers work regular jobs during the week and perform only Fridays-Sundays. One of TAP's objectives for TAP is to set in motion enough projects during the day and during the week to enable his entertainers to work full time at what they love best — the performing arts.

He's gradually making progress. "I'd guess that 15-17 percent of those on payroll this year work exclusively in the performing arts. Three years ago it was only 3-5 percent."

KLIER SAYS TAP specializes in light entertainment, and when putting together a show, the company follows a loose formula that "has always worked with audiences." Cabaret shows — "any grouping of songs based loosely on a theme," musical revues and impersonator evenings compose the mainstay of TAP shows.

The touring production "Babes on Broadway" features Broadway songs and impersonations of the women who made them famous. A currently running show, "An Evening with Oscar," pays tribute to Oscar-winning songs. The nostalgic "Motown Review" recreates the Detroit sound of the '60s. TAP is currently developing "Broadway Stage Fright," a new show which ties the cabaret format to a mystery theme and is scheduled to open at the Novi Hilton in the fall.

Klier outlines TAP's success formula: "We sing and we dance if the stage is large enough, and we always try to get the audience involved with

a sing-along section, with our own version of 'Name That Tune,' or a test of the audience's knowledge of musical trivia — with prizes for the winners. Usual prizes are something like complimentary cocktails, but once we even gave away free tickets to Brazil."

Custom-designed shows revolve around the theme selected by the clients or by the company requesting the show. Lyrics, costumes and production numbers play up the theme.

TAP concocted "Truckers on Parade" for a trucking company and "Shake Rattle and Roll" on the car theme for Auto World. On Saturday, May 7, TAP will stage a special show at the Roosterball to raise money for the Arthritis Foundation. "We do a myriad of private shows all over," says Klier, "and we stage perennial favorites like 'I Do, I Do' and 'The Fantasticks' for private parties."

TAP's PERMANENT executive staff includes writers Robert Leider and Bret Blanchard, as well as "Rebecca" of West Bloomfield who does musical direction and arrangements. Cost for a show ranges from \$400-\$500 up to \$2,000-\$4,000, depending on the number of performers and the costumes, lights, sound systems and

choreography involved. This summer TAP will debut at a summer theater opening in an old movie house in Frankfurt, a town north of Traverse City. "Hats Off to Dad" opens Father's Day weekend at the Farmington Civic Center.

Within the next five years, Klier says, he wants TAP "to own a performing center, either in a hotel; an existing building or in a free-standing building. It's always good to have a base. Then you don't have to be dependent on somebody else's business."

Klier also would like to enable more of the entertainers on TAP's payroll the opportunity to work full time, and he foresees two ways that it's already beginning to happen. "Luncheon theater," he says, "is where I see it going." Special packages that include a bus tour, luncheon at a fine restaurant and a "send 'em home happy" show would even the mid-week entertainment doldrums. "I'm personally moving in that direction," he says.

Workshops offer theater professionals another means of earning money. "Many performers go out and teach through the schools; in seminars that last from one day or one week."

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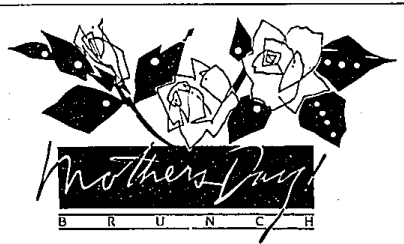
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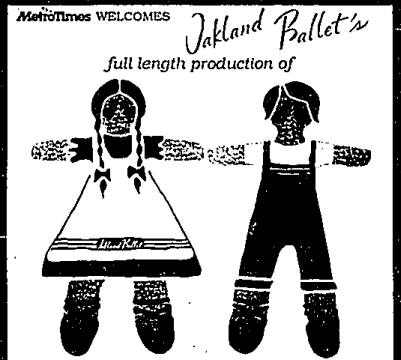
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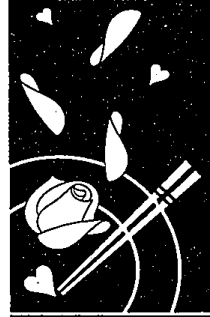
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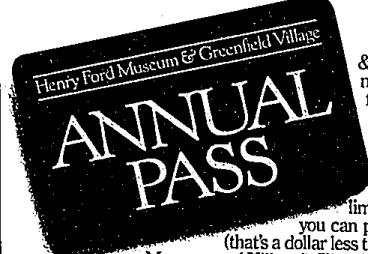


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