Theater foresees a season with 'no duds'

The Birmingham Theatre's 10th anniversary season gets underway in mid-September, and Harry Nederlander, who runs the theater, believes it will be a special one.

Of the shows to be produced for he new season, he declares, "I would say, offhand, there isn't a dud in the bunch." Six productions, as usual, will be offered. "Five of the six are new shows that have never played here." Nederlander pointed out.

a minimum of five weeks, scrept for anniversary season gets underway in mid-September, and Harry Nederlander, who runs the theater, believes it will be a special one.

Of the shows to be produced in the new season, he declares, "I have been seen before in metroplayed here." Nederlander pointed out.

Only the musical hit "Sweet Charity" has been seen before in metropolitan Detroit." The other attractions are three comedies, "The Nederlander and "I'm Not Rappaport"— all of which are still ouring in the musical elastic "Company," and an alpy with dancit still ouring in the musical elastic "Company," and an alpy with dancit still ouring the musical elastic "Company," and an alpy with dancit care the second floor of the building near the theater still ouring the musical elastic "Company," and an play with dancit care the second floor of the building near the theater and the second floor of the building n

gins a five-week run Wednesday, Sept. 14. The other shows all will run a minimum of five weeks, except for "I'm Not Rappaport," scheduled for algaly weeks

try. With its 34-week season, the Birmingham Theatre has more playdates than any other facility in the Detroit area, Nederlander said. He said subscription sales this season are around 10,000, "as good or better than last year," Attendance at the theater is 75 percent of capacity, the estimated, and the theater plays estimated, and the theater plays more than 300,000 people each

to more than soutoue people cau-season.
Although the theater is in the heart of Birmingham, showgoing by residents hasn't picked up through the seasons. "There's no change in attendance from the Birmingham reas," said Nederlander, who has of-ten said be wished more local people would take advantage of having a le-gitimate theater in their midst.

LAST SEASON the Birmingham Theatre presented three musicals, "42nd Street," "Fromises, Promise-er" and "Girl Crazy," and three com-edites, "Biloxi Blues," "Social Securi-ty" and "Doubles."
"One of the shows was only sur-par," he admitted. He declined to say which one, for the record, but

"Doubles" is generally acknowledged not to have been as successful as the others.

George Gernhwin's musical bit 'Girl Crazy,' starring Lorna Lutit, closed the season. "I personally thought it was our best effort," he said. The Nederlander Organization has optioned the show for Broadway "It's under consideration for the future."

The process of the control of the future."

Ticket prices will remain about the same this season as last. Broadway show tickets are now running about \$40-445. Tickets to the Birangham in the \$20s.

In putting together a show, "Our initial thrust is to " use best quality we can possibly afford, even if we're goine "," and what we think we can 'nay." Nederlander said. The Nedu : ander 'Organization, which originated in Detroit, maintains anet in New York for the Birmingham Theatre, "fulltime, for secuting and producing the shows for Birmingham." he said.

JAY BROOKS, who works for the

'We cast them and rehearse them as any Broc : way show. There's no difference in the quality than any touring production."

- Harry Nederlander

Nederlanders as producer in New York, is part of the ad hoc committee that picks the abova to play the Birmingham Theatre. Once the new season gets past the first couple of shows, committee members from Birmingham and New York start putting together lists of shows and stars for the next season.

The Birmingham Theatre usually closes down in July and August, and that's when refurbishing may occur. This season, there will be a full-scale renovation over the next few months, with the lobby and ladies room newly redecorated. "It will be done by the first of the year, It's

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The theater continues to serve li-quor, the result of a hard-won effort to obtain a liquor permit from the city. "It's an amenity that you have to have. As a profit center it isn't," he stressed. Liquor is served from a lobby bar 30 minutes before the show and during intermission.

Asked to comment about Livonia's Omni Theatre, which folded in the middle of its first performing arts season earlier this season, he said: "It was poorly financed. I applaud their effort. It was a tough break. I feel sympathetic."

Program surpasses expectations

"The Greatest Hits of All Time," is the kind of title that tends to turn off classical music purists and attract those who like the lighter touch. In programs of this kind, musical and artistic mediocrity are often the rule.

practically the pavilion. count.

However, these special effects Kapp preceded each selection on

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isola and artistic medicerity are often the rule.

Therefore, It was a pleasant surprise to discover that it is possible even for a light, entertaining program to be designed in good taste. Conductor Richard Knapp, loguber with the Meadow Brook Festival Orchestra, presented the program with lastight and imagination, proving that art and entertainment don't have to be incompatible.

The Meadow Brook Festival Orchestra consists of some of the best area musiclans, mostly from outside the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The fact that several DSO musiclans were strategically scattered among the players holped, of course, But the quality of the rest was such that the duality of the rest was such that the duality of the rest was such that the duality of the rest was such that the quality of t

the program with a short lecture about its background, coupled with some amusing anecdotes. Some of the some amusing anecdotes. Some of the some amusing anecdotes are some associated with TV the form of the some associated with the some some associated with the some manager and the theme from "Masterplece Theater," and Rossin!s "William Tell" Overture, the last portion of which was the "Lone Ranger" theme.

The latter provoked some spontaneous sound effects from the audience.

Other popular selections were by Copland, Rimsty Rorsakov ("Procession of the Nobles"), Borodin Ceranade and Pocturne from String Ceranade and Pocturne from String Ceranade and Pocturne from Strings, Ponchell ("Godgo for Strings), Ponchell ("Gorn" Carmen" suites), NO PROGRAM of popular bits is

Hours") and Dates, the solution, will be solved.

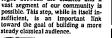
NO PROGRAM of popular hits is complete without Sousa. However, instead of the characteristic marches, which make him into a

storeotype, the work on the program was the little-known orchestral work, "Dwellers in the Western World," consisting of three movements describing the Red Man, the White Man and the Black Man. Even though this musie lan't profound, it offered something different. Following a long applause, Kapp and the orchestra performed a rather lengthy movement from a work by Gotchalk as an encore.

Even the best planned popular

Golchaik as an encore.

Even the best planned popular program is unlikely to produce converted to serious classical music on a massive scale. But this program demonstrated that a meaningful dialegue between the classics and a vast segment of our community is possible. This step, while in itself insufficient, is an important link toward the goal of building a more steady classical audience.



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