

Wigmaker engages in some hairy escapades

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deus" boomed into the room through a speaker attached to the wall. Elizabeth J. Brooks of Birmingham, who plays Baroness Waldstatten, hurried in for a quick fix. Weisse placed her before one of the six, lit mirrors, removed a complicated wig, and fixing it firmly in place on Elizabeth's pretty head, made a few

quick, deft motions, a few licks with a comb and sent the actress out looking like a magnificent patron of the arts, circa 18th century.

Mary Murphy, who plays Susanna, a proletarian, ran in, saying her skirt wouldn't stay up. "Hold it behind you," Weisse said, fixing a mob cap on Mary's head. Susan Diebolt of Rochester, who plays Katharina Cavalleri, Salleri's pupil, sat down before a mirror to have her curls rearranged. Weisse fixed Diebolt's curls, then ran down a passageway, holding wig glue, a powder puff, a comb, a brush and three hairpins.

THE FINALE of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" was playing when Weisse came back with Robert B. Jordan, a Citizen of Vienna. He sat down to have his wig removed, and Weisse said breathlessly, "We must have quiet around here." That concluded the interview in the wig room in the basement of Wilson Hall.

It's easy to understand why Weisse wants to spend her life flying to the Kennedy Center, to Sarasota, to the Michigan Opera Theatre, to the Pittsburgh Opera and to Meadow Brook Theatre to create wigs. There's magic waiting in the wings, and she's one of the people who makes the magic.

A petite, dark-haired, rosy-faced woman who wears her own hair in careless curls, Weisse is a meticulous worker.



DUANE BURLISON/staff photographer

Susan Berg Diebolt of Rochester, who plays Salleri's pupil, Katharina Cavalleri, has her wig styled by Weisse.

Eric Tavares delivers stand-out performance

Performances of "Amadeus" at Meadow Brook Theatre continue through Sunday Oct. 30, on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. Ticket information call the box office at 577-3300.

Meadow Brook's splendid production of Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus" percolates with wit seethes with intellectual passion.

The play offers nothing for everyone — the glittering grandeur of Joseph II's resplendent Vienna court in the late 1700s, the fawning silliness of courtiers, the tantalizing delectable anablistic Hanzy-panky in a flay of potticoats, plus Mozart's soaring, inimitable music and the bit intelligence of Antonio Salleri's real dilemma.

Eric Tavares brings mastery to the role of Salleri, infusing his power in the part with the bass voice that he keeps and never lets languish in a own resonance.

The depth of Salleri's frustration at his own mediocrity music comes through in his voice. His fury at a God who would bow genius on Mozart, a ludicrous, untitled, joke of a man given to scabulous conversations, smolders in Tavares' voice.

SALLERI'S INTELLIGENCE comes through in Tavares' intense delivery style, barbed with bitter humor and afflame with passionate dedication to music as a high-ranking court lackey to Joseph II. Salleri plays politics with hard charm, but he treats the silence to what he's really thinking, satiric asides that bristle with wit.

Even when the decrepit, broken old musician rises limply from his wheelchair and nips across the



Cathie Breidenbach

floor, he speaks rapidly, like a much younger man, in a voice charged with passion. One expects a rickety old voice to match the rickety old body.

The incongruity unsettles. Is this bad acting? No. Director Charles Nolte wisely chooses to drive home the power of Salleri's obsession with Mozart's genius, an obsession that destroys the man's pleasure at his own worldly success, poisons his moral principles and haunts him to his dying day.

Young Simon Brookings, who plays opposite Tavares, balances superbly the ambivalence of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He acts the braying clown, the egocentric schlemiel, the bigoted, womanizing wastrel. De-

spite the arsenal of derogatory adjectives that apply to him, Brookings' Mozart comes across as a playful, lovable misfit passionately dedicated to music. He wins hearts and when he dies young, we grieve at the injustices of history as much as Salleri rails at the injustices of heaven.

Liz Zweifler shines as Mozart's pretty wife, and she plays Constance as a woman only silly on the surface, unlike the lower-class ditz-brain portrayed by Elizabeth Bertridge in the movie version of Peter Shaffer's play. Geoffrey Beauchamp as Joseph II brings out with understated skill the comedy of the Austrian emperor who hides his limited intellect behind an equally limited vocabulary.

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