Daphne' is wildly funny in musical 'Sugar'

By Helen Żucker

Ridgedale Players' production of "Sugar," directed by Barbara Anne Gowans, is energetic, competently acted, and graced by a hilarious performance by Dan Castle. If the eve-

actee, and graced by a hilarious per formance by Dan Castle. If the even ing fails short, it has to do with the undstinguished score. Versico of "Some Like It Hot." The 1959 movie about two male musicians who have to disguise themselves as women and leave Chicago as fast as possible is, by now, a comedy classic. I'll lay-odds the movie version will still be funny in 2039, and the musical will have been laid to rest. I will hever know how respectable musicians like Jule Styte and Bob Merrill managed to turn out music and lyrics that are best forgotten. Merrill, after sil, is the guy who did the score for "Funny Girt."

Helen

Zucker

Joe, the "Size 48 Daphne," steals the show. Castle has easy timing, sly eyes, enormous grace for a big man, and a sweetness that shines through his wisecracking. Castle, dressed in a creise tower of lace, and Bob Bower, as the eternally romantic Sir Osgood Fielding, have the best number in the show.

When Bowers, as an elderly millionaire, falls for "Daphne," and the two dance in the mocolight to "Beautiful Through and Through," this Mutt and Jeff pair of lovers can't help but be funny. Castle, litting into a pirouette, would be funny wherever he was, and Bowers, rolling his cestatic eyes at his "girl" who could squash him with a palm, is a visual comedy that works everytime.

KIM FOX IS smart, spunky and

fast-talking as Joe, the sax player who becomes "Josephine" after witnessing a mob massarer in a Chicago garage. It's Joe who has all the ideas and manages to get "Daphne" and "Josephine" into the all-girl band that takes them to Florida. And it's Joe who winds up with Sugar, the Marilyn Monroe character played as a sweet sexpot by Carole Mocert. Moceri does a nice job using Marilyn's breathy voice.

David Reed, as Spate Palazzo, the chief mobster, wears the loudest taps I've ever heard and manages to tap dance himself into a very funny death scene. Jim Patton and William

iap dance himself into a very runny death secue. Jim Patton and William Holl as Dude and First Hood tap dance after Spats, creating a wonderful racket wherever the three of them show up. Their suits are great.

Debble Himelhoch shricks like an army sergeant as Sweet Sue, leader of the band. She's all brass. Danle! Fuller is nicely ineffectual as Blenstock, the band's manager who is never where Sweet Sue wants bim to be. Hick Davis turns up as a believable Missidan's Contractor, a Train Announcer, a Conductor, and this exversil members of the cast fills in during crowd secues.

The scene outside the Musicians Union hall and the company singing

"Sun on My Face" on the pullman are particularly lively. The '20s cost-tumes by Doris Harmon and Donna Backus are fine, and Donn Kerr's wigs are funny. Valerie Modif's choreography is amusing and sometimes inspired. Jonn Bows energetically directs six fine musiclans.

A lot of work went into 'Sugar," and it's evident. The script is unkill-

Helen Zucker has many years' experience reviewing for newspapers and magazines in Michigan, New York and Massachusetts.

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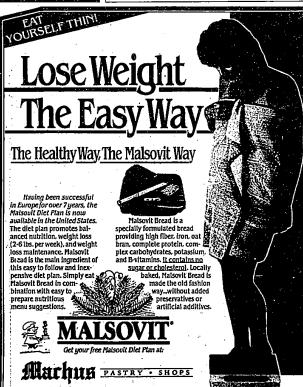
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