

# 'Daphne' is wildly funny in musical 'Sugar'

Performances of the musical "Sugar," presented by the Ridge-dale Players, continue through Sunday, Jan. 22, in 7:30 p.m. For ticket information call 644-5555.



**Helen Zucker**

By Helen Zucker  
special writer

Ridge-dale Players' production of "Sugar," directed by Barbara Anne Gowans, is energetic, competently acted, and graced by a hilarious performance by Dan Castle. If the evening falls short, it has to do with the undistinguished score.

"Sugar" is a musical version 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 never know how respectable musicians like Julie Styne and Bob Merrill managed to turn out music and lyrics that are best forgotten. Merrill, after all, is the guy who did the score for "Funny Girl."

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 crisper lower 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 moonlight to "Beautiful Through and Through," this Mutt and Jeff pair of lovers can't help but be funny. Castle, lifted into a piousette, would be funny wherever he was, and Bowers, rolling his ecstatic eyes at his "girl" who could squash him with a palm, is a visual comedy that works every-time.

The music aside, Dan Castle as KIM FOX IS smart, spunky and

fast-talking as Joe, the sax player who becomes "Josephine" after witnessing a mob massacre 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 Moore. Moore 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 Hall as Duke and First Hood tap dance after Spats, creating a wonderful racket wherever the three of them show up. Their suits are great. Debbie Himelech shrieks like an army sergeant as Sweet Sue, leader of the band. She's all brass. Daniel Fuller is nicely ineffectual as Bienstock, the band's manager who is never where Sweet Sue wants him to be. Rick Davis turns up as a believable Musician's Contractor, a Train Announcer, a Conductor, and like several members of the cast fills in during crowd scenes.

"Sun on My Face" on the pullman are particularly lively. The '20s costumes by Doris Harmon and Donna Bueckus are fine, and Donna Kerr's wigs are funny. Valerie Mould's choreography is amusing and sometimes inspired. Joan Bowes energetically directs six fine musicians.

able, the story pulls the viewer along. It's too bad the songs aren't up to what the witty characters and three good vectors need.

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

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