

'Your Own Thing' is lacking in something

Dinner theater performances of "Your Own Thing," presented by the Schoolcraft College Theatre Department, continue through Saturday on campus in Livonia. For ticket information, call 462-4400, Ext. 5091.

By Bob Welbel
special writer



Bob Welbel

Schoolcraft College's production of the rock musical "Your Own Thing" is long on enthusiasm and energy but comes up a little short theatrically.

The show has its moments. Too often, however, the performers are singers who happen to be characters, instead of fully developed characters who sing to advance the plot.

Which is too bad, because "Your Own Thing" has the right stuff for an ideal college production. Its key performers are young adults. And it has plenty of '60s humor that pokes fun at the establishment, takes a few shots at authority, makes anti-war statements, has fun with sexual innuendos, and observes that one must be truthful to your yourself, because one day the world will need you.

For good measure, it is loosely based on one of Shakespeare's most joyous comedies, "Twelfth Night."

IN "YOUR OWN THING" the brother and sister (who are musicians) end up in New York. Viola, played by Shelly Behler, dresses as a man to get a job with a rock band (the Apocalypse). The band has a theatrical agent.

And guess what? His name is Orson, played with an engaging personality by Jeffrey Parlette.

Robin McSurley creates the most fully developed character, a high-spirited Sebastian. He also displays a most pleasing singing voice. To complete the plot, he works for Olivia, the owner of a discotheque where the band plays.

Beth Anderson as Olivia has a nice singing voice but often seems to be reading from a script instead of speaking as a character.

As the story progresses, a variety of characters (projected on the rear wall) make humorous comments. They include Buddha (who gives advice to Viola and Sebastian), John Wayne (who makes moral judge-

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ments for the audience), Humphrey Bogart, Shirley Temple, the Pope, Queen Victoria and Shakespeare himself. This was often the best part of the show.

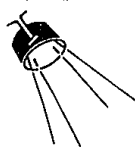
MORE ENERGY from the band would improve the show. Doug Meadows, Leonard Miller, Gregory Gdanec and Glen Josefsky play OK, but they seldom get out of their

backup mode. The show could use a few hard-driving riffs. We're not talking heavy metal, just a few moments of real rock.

Bob Welbel of Westland is a freelance writer, who has spent more than 25 years in community theater as a director, designer and performer.

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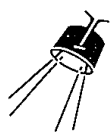
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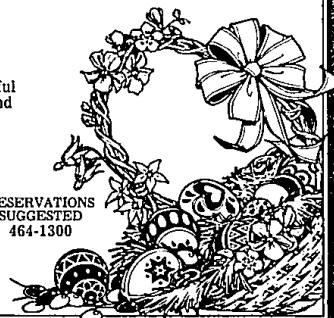
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