Acting and singing are outstanding in 'Edwin Drood

of Edwin Drood" continue through Sunday, Dec. 10, at the Dirmingham Village Players, For ticket information, call the box office at 644-2075 anytime.

Edwin Drood Is either an odious Dieli or an unfortunate vietlm of plealous rage. He is wa arraganta ortends to go to Egypt to build a road to Alexandria using the brieks of the Pyramids. Yet, he can sensitively break of this engagement.

Actually Edwin Drood is a woman, a Miss Alice Nutting, a starstruck airhead who is hated by all the actors at the Muste Hall Royale in London, where "The Mystery of Edwin Drood Tukes place.

Actually, the play takes place at the Village Players in Birmingham, where hooting, booing, laughing and

any other kind of vulgarity is accoup-able as part of the fun and confusion. Who is disguised as who? Who really kills Edwin Drood? Is he cally dead? (No body is found, only a bloody ceat.) Nothing is for sure in this delight-ity, strongly acted and beautifully sung three-hour mystery-and-musi-cal special. A musical within a musi-cal, the setting is a theater of Charles Dickness' day (Dickens left this novel unfinished), where any-hing goes. Actreases storm off the stage. Mr. William Cartwright (Dan Castle), who tells the story, and the audience vote on a possible killer.

JOHN JASPER (David Padulka) is the cathedral musician of Cloister-ham, and he is an opium addict Openly grolesque, his guilt is too obvious. He is in love with Rosa Bud (Janis Bender), who is about to marry Edwin Drood (Susy Leonard), Jasper's nephew. Into the scene comes an easily provoked Neville

French and Viennese desserts such as buche de Noel (holiday yule log), croquembuche (small cream puffs shaped into Christmas trees), plus Dobos and Sacher tortes for one of



Landless (Mark Carley), who ohviously has had prior unpleasant encounters with Drood.

No one is above suspleion, Including the Rev. Mr. Crisparkie (James
Masters), whose cloak may be only
covering more passionate desires.
But the audience doesn't know all
the facts about the intertwined relationships of the characters or their
true natures.

Anyone who enjoys English mystery will love this handsome production. Some 23 actors are in the show,
many with substantial parts. They
are all strongly cast in their roles as
actor or singer. For the role of Rosa

the displays at the Cranbrook House and Garden Auxillary's annual "Holdiday Tables 1999" celebration. Greenwald's desserts are just for viewing, however, to go along with a French "Belte Epoque" after-theater evening display by Ron Fox of the Whitney and Van Dyke Place, who has created a busish red and cobait black table dressing. The "Holdiday has challed dressing," The "Holdiday displays and cobait days and the state of the stat

day-Sunday at Cranbrook House in Bloomfield Hills. Admission is \$6 at the door, \$5 presale. For more infor-mation call 645-3149.

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Bud, director Lindsay Balmer and musical director Joan Bowes cast soprano Janis Bender to handle the difficult vocal solos

musical director Joan Bowes east soprano Janis Bender to handle the difficult vocal solos. David Padulika takes on the villain's part, that of John Jasper, with vengeance, and he adds to it a strong tenor voice. Cynthia Pritchard is a real queen of the red-light district as Princess Puffer, Mark Carley and Barbara Vorvea also make strong showings as suspicious characters Neville and Helena Landiess. In the show within the show, Miss Alice Nutting storms off the stage because the other actors are jealous of her for the attention she has received in the English press A creeks Sasy Lonard in the roles of Alice Nutting, Edwin Drood and possibly the shadowy fligure of Dick Datchery, can be a horny prima don-

na one moment and the next, a debo-nair young man. She is really sensa-tional.

THE CASTING is so even. No one THE CASTING is so even. No one upstages anyone else, especially the masterful Don Castle as William Cartwright. With audience members shouting remarks at him, he ad libs all evening, making some very funny comments.

comments.

The dramatic style of acting and the English style of speaking give this show appeal, but the music is interesting, with a series of patter

songs and difficult vocal harmonics.
Particularly striking are the "Moon-lail Reprise," "No Good Can Come
ffrom Bad" and "The Name of
Love." A solid ensemble of seven
backs up the singers, from the pit.."
It is impossible to reveal the outcome of this scintillating mystery,
Every night it changes, since the audience decides who is the murderer.

Mary Jane Doerr of Troy is a fulltime teacher and freelance writer who specializes in opera and musical theater.

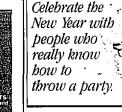
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upcoming things to do

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hynch, caroling, clowns and a chance

for the children to give their Christmas list to Santa in person. There are two scallags, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Saturday-Sunday. An additional scating at 6:30 p.m. Friday also is available. Admission is \$4 per person. For ticket information call the community center at 477-8404.

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