



Bob Weibel
special writer

Guild's production is a slick one

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The Theatre Guild is presenting the first Michigan community theater production of "Steel Magnolias." It has all the ingredients to become very popular with amateur groups from coast to coast. The guild sets a high standard that others will find difficult to duplicate.

Co-directors Gail Susan Mack and John Eastman have put together a very talented cast — and her set creates just the right mood. That would be a beauty parlor in a small Louisiana town. It has three chairs (no waiting) and sinks with real running water.

There we meet six wisecracking women who laugh away life's prob-

lems as they gossip and needle each other about ex-husbands, wayward children and personal deficiencies. When tragedy strikes, however, they draw strength and comfort from each other. Every one is entitled to her sorrow. Then they pick up the pieces and get on with their lives.

The show centers around, Shelby, a spoiled Southern belle. She is diabetic and about to be married. She wants children, but that would endanger her life and perhaps the child.

KAREN MYERS brightens the stage with a nicely focused portrayal as Shelby. Her insulin-shock scene is stunning. And she is very good at evolving into a woman with

the character and courage to face the consequences of her decisions.

Sandy Martin plays her mother, M'Lynn, with a quiet strength that is very effective. Martin's agony over her daughter's decision is genuine, her rage at the consequences is compelling.

Martha Hargett is splendid as the worldly proprietress, Truvy. She talks tough, smiles sweetly and delivers husband-bashing one-liners effortlessly.

Stacy Pattison is sweet and innocent as Truvy's young, unsophisticated assistant. Peg Humphrey is delightfully comical as Outser, twice divorced and a local curmudgeon, who likes to say, "I'm not crazy. I've just been in a bad mood for 40 years."

Jan Salisbury is very consistent as Clairee, a rich widow of the ex-mayor. A little more flamboyance, however, would give the role better definition.

The cast never allows the show to wallow in soap opera melodramatics, nor does it go for the easy sitcom laughs — though at times the smart-aleck remarks seem to come from pulpsters rather than characters. Yet, they make natural transitions from comedic to dramatic sequences.

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



Performance added

The John McCutcheon concert at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 26, at the Community Center Farmington-Farmington Hills has been sold out. A second performance has been added the same night, at 9 p.m. Tickets at \$10 are available by calling the community center at 477-8404.

table talk

Oriental food

The Hyatt Regency Dearborn brings a taste of the Orient to the Detroit area with "Wok and Roll, An Asian Occasion," continuing through Saturday, June 23, as part of a nationwide food festival. The event features appetizers, soups, salads, entrees, desserts and beverages representative of Japan, Korea, China

and Thailand, with a California cuisine influence. The menu will be offered during dinner in La Rotisserie and in Giulio and Sons for lunch and dinner. Japanese and Chinese beer, liquor, hot and cold sake, and tea from the Orient will be available in the restaurants as well as lounges.

Vocalizing

Singer Sandy Patton will perform on a program featuring the George Benson Quartet in the Salon Series on Friday, April 27, at Cranbrook House in Bloomfield Hills. For more information, call 645-3635.



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