Entertainment

Thursday, November 29, 1990 O&E

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Different dialects Actress does a variety of them

steff writer

N "A SHAYNA MAIDEL" for the Olney Theatre. Kathy Danzer played Luisa, who spoke "three different ways heavily accented Yiddish-Polish. hea Yiddish and straight English. "It was about European and family survivors," said Danzer.

In "Beau Jest," the refreshing comedy at the Birmingham Theatre, she plays a Jewish girl living in Chicago, and in one scene, at a Seder dinner in her apartment, "I speal liberue, for the blessings."

T've learned dialects before, "she said, "Mississippi dialects for

"Two learned dialects before," she said, "Missistippi dialects for 'Crimes of the Heart' and 'Bllost Bor 'Crimes of the Heart' and 'Bllost Muses' For this one ('Beau Jest'), we decided to go with a Chicago sound, which is 'flat' — and that's not a judgment."

The slim, attractive, dark-haired actress spoke enthusiastically about her role in the current production, which runs through Sunday, Dec. 16, at the Birmingham Theatre. The comedy by James Sherman has potioned for another production, a New York one, early next year.

"WEVE HAD SO much fun work-

"WE'VE HAD SO much fun working on this play," Danzer said. Glving some background on the show, she mentioned, "The first production had a long run at the Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago. I believe

this is the second production."

Sherman, who wrote "Beau Jest," is playwight-in-residence at the Wiscory Gardens and is on the facultious of the second City Training Centered to the second City Training Centered to the second City Training Centered to the second City She said. "She makes up a guy — David Steinberg, a dector and hires someone to pretend to be him. She requests someone Devish."

As it turns out, the escort service ends Bob, who isn't dewish but he is an actor who has appeared in "Fidder on the Roof," which comes in handy when he participates in the Seder dinner.

Allen Fitzpatrick, who starred in New York's revival of "The Rothschilds," is Bob. The hilarious and expert cast also includes Michael Cooke as Chris, her real boylriend, Judith Granite as Miram, her mother, David S, Howard as Abe, father, and Bruce Katzman as Joe, her brother.

MOST OF THE roles Danzer has performed have been contemporary ones. "People don't know if I can do the classies," she said, in her Birningham Theatre dressing room. "I'm afraid it's too late to play Justet, but would like to play that the play whose name I can't men-

a super-tition not to mention in the theater).

Danzer has had quite a thing going with the comedy-drama "Crimes of the Reart". She took over the role of the Reart". She took over the role of the Reart". She took over the role of the Reart is the part or the part of the part of the part of the part of the Reart is the part of the Reart is the part of the Reart is the Reart

Babe, "the one who shoots her hus-band."

Danzer then went on the national tour of the Broadway show, playing Meg for a year and a half. Detroit-ace a undernees saw her as Meg, whom she describes as "the trashy one," at the Power Center. "It was the biggest theater I've ever been in my life." she said.

Asked which of the two sisters she preferred playing (she has yet to play the third). Danzer said, "I hate to say I liked Meg best because she's such cheap Christmas trash, but I'm more similar to Meg. I understand what makes her tick."

She enjoyed playing Babe, the old-er sister, as well. "It was very help-ful to me. I knew exactly what Meg, the little sister, needed."

DANZER IS from Montana. The

actress started her theatrical career as a child and did 10 years of sum-mer stock before she left the state. She went to the University of Mon-tana, where she received a bachelor

sale went to the Oniversity of motion and where she received a bachelor of line arts in acting and directing. Studying directing was "really helpful" to her as an actress. "A director really needs to look at the whole pic, and as an actor keeps you nizack to look at the whole pic, and as an actor keeps you nizack not have the sale of the sa

days of radio, in whice sae previously appeared.

Now living in Manhattan, Danzer inially has her own apartment after having roommates and sublets for years. Because she has been on the road all year, she hasn't spent too much time in her apartment, however.

much time in her apartment, howev-er.

She has been separated for the last
year and a half from her husband,
Greg Johnson, a director, stage man-ager and teacher, whom she met
when he was assistant director on
the Broadway production of "Crimes
of the Heart." Johnson later directed
the Birminoham Thoater production



Kathy Danzer stars in "Beau Jest" at the Birmingham Theatre.

Versatile Charles Nolte returns to Meadow Brook

Performances of "A Christmas Carol" open at 8 tonight (Thurs-day, Nov. 29) at Meadow Brook Theatre. The production runs through Sunday, Dec. 30. For tick-ct information, call the box office at 377-3300.

HAT BRINGS a stage director back to Meadow Brook Theatre year a fraction direct. A control of the stage of th



Charles Nolte directs 'A Christmas Carol' versity of Minnesota and artistic di-rector of the university's five the-

Enversity campus in Rochester Hills, he has directed some 40 pro-ductions Since his first one "The Andersonville Trial," in 1971. In the east of that production was Booth (Olman, who stars as Scrooge in Meadow Brook's "Christmas Carol." Nolle's play "A Summer Remem-bered" had its premiere at Meadow Brook Later this year, Nolle will di-rect "Inherit the Wind."

rect "Inherit the Wind."

"THIS PLAY IS a bloody good Christmas story Besides, it is my Christmas and I love it." Note said between rehearsals with the east's 30 young and old performers. It old hakes 2" weeks to mount "A Christmass and actives so many of the action of the control of the co

There are a number of versions of A Christmas Carol" but Notte

prefers the traditional, straightfor-

prefers the traditional, straightforward one that is true to the original. It is his imnovation to have a chorus of eight sing Christmas carols in the lobby before the show and then as part of the show.

"Some directors try to inflict their own egos onto their productions. They feel they are modernizing it and making it relevant to today's audiences. What is the point in taking the story from, say, Marley's point of view or making Scrooge into a cartoon character?" Note queried. This show is Meadow Brook's big-gest success, with its 5½ week run

This show is Meadow Brook's big-gest success, with its 54 week run 95 percent sold out. The set built nine years ago even had to be re-placed with a new one last year. Strangley, the theatrical tradition of mounting "A Chrissmas Carol" is American and is not done in Eng-land.

"THE SHOW IS saturated with the Christmas spirit," Nolte said, "Scrooge has a terrible vision of his dreadful past and his destiny. He

'This play is a bloody good Christmas story. Besides, it is my Christmas and I love it.

arises, changes his ways. Tiny Tim is saved. Cratchit gets a warm workshop and everyone lives happily ever after."

"The Voyage of Edgar Allen Poe" is quite a different story, centering on Poe's memories and delusions. Pourteen years ago, the University of Minnesota asked Nolte's colleague, Pulitzer-Pirze-winning Argento to compose an opera for the league, Pulitzer-Pirze-winning Argento to compose an opera for the State of the Poe's and what he wanted in the "Poe's" and what he wanted in the "Poe's" and what rect, and "Of everything I do — teach, direct, act — writing is my favorite,"

said the 64-year-old Nolte, who is working on a new opera libretto with a New York composer, Benjamin Lees, about Mexican leader Maximilian.

Born in Duluth, Notte is a graduate of Yale, the met Terence Kilburn in the 1950s when he was starring in 'The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial' on Broadway and Kilburn was in 'Teahouse of the August Moon.' His enormous list of credits makes his accomplishments as a weiter, actor, director look as if success has come easily. easily. "Everything is hard in the theater Nothing comes easily," Nolte said.



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Lawrence DeVine, The Detroit Free Press
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nour. Better action under more astute direction aren't to be found elsewhere in
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