

Strong presentation of anti-nuke dark comedy



Performances of "When the Wind Blows" continue through Saturday, Feb. 2, at Trinity House Theatre at Trinity House in Livonia. For ticket information call 464-6302.

By Bob Weibel
special writer

Theater may be suspended reality, but at times it gives one pause. And that is the point of the Trinity House Theatre presentation of "When the Wind Blows."

Director Sarah Heeden has fashioned a show that not only presents challenging concepts but delivers, for the most part, stellar performances and high production values.

The play is by British writer-illustrator Raymond Briggs. It was originally written as a cartoon book. On stage, it takes the form of a satire, anti-nuclear arms, dark comedy. Perhaps, anti-faith in "the powers that be" might be more to the point.

"When the Wind Blows" is about a middle-aged British couple (Jim and Hilda Bloggs) and their preparations for the big bang. Jeffrey Heeden and Beth Temple perfectly capture the essence of the Bloggs — he a slightly hunching retiree, she a dutiful British wife. Both are innocent, trusting, non-political types. They don't know much about missiles with atomic warheads.

THE BLOGGS, nevertheless, are determined to follow every instruction in the government manual no

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matter how absurd. It is this blind faith that survival is possible — if they do the correct thing — that is so funny in act one, and which becomes ever less so in act two after the bomb blast.

Superb sound effects heighten the impending disaster. In act one, as Mr. Bloggs builds his "inner core refuge," we hear increasingly intense rumblings as if nuclear shock waves are approaching. In act two, it

changes to after-shock winds that blow through their shattered home to a furious crescendo as radiation fallout begins to take effect.

The set is finely detailed and the props are outstanding. One has the sense of a genuine English country cottage.

Faults are few and far between. The opening seems a bit slow, and noisy scene changes break the mood at times. Heeden and Temple certainly are not middle-aged — a fact accentuated by an intimate theater. It hardly matters, however, because the play's ideals are so powerful, and both performers understand that satire reveals the truth most effectively when it flows from characters and situations, not artificial funny business.

A group discussion follows each performance.

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

upcoming things to do

• 'LOVE LETTERS'

"Hart to Hart" stars Stefanie Powers and Robert Wagner bring A.R. Gurney's hit play "Love Letters" to DeWitt's Fisher Theatre for a Valentine's engagement, Tuesday-Sunday, Feb. 12-17. Tickets are on sale at all Ticketmaster outlets and the Fisher Theatre box office. To order by phone call 645-6666. For more information call 872-1000.

• 100TH SHOW

The Attie Theatre's 100th production, "Teibele and Her Demon," by

Isaac Bashevis Singer, runs through Sunday, Feb. 17. Performances are Wednesday at 7 p.m., Thursday-Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 5 and 9 p.m., and Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m. For tickets call the Attie box office at 875-8284. Discounts are available to groups, students and senior citizens.

• BARBERSHOP HARMONY

The Detroit-Oakland Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society presents America — My Home" at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Feb. 15-16, at Livonia's Schmidt Auditorium. This

evening of classic barbershop harmony features the Gentlemen Songsters, Chorus and two Champion quartets: Blue Grass Student Union from Louisville, Ky., and Power Play from Macomb County. Tickets are \$10 with group rates available for the Friday evening performance. For information call Bob Rock at 562-1989.

• MOSCOW THEATRE

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