



In 'Grandpa's Attic'

The Renaissance Chorus of Western Wayne County will present its annual show, this year called "Grandpa's Attic," at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, March 1-2, at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills. The chorus will sing favorite melodies and patriotic songs.

Also on the program is Night Howls, a comedy quartet from Minneapolis/St. Paul. In addition, the young Ivy League will appear Friday night. For more information call Lew Koppitch at 349-7291.

'Road to Mecca' fine exam of artist's role

Performances of the Theatre Guild production of "The Road to Mecca" continue through Saturday, March 9, at the Theatre Guild playhouse in Redford. For ticket information call the box office at 538-5678.

By Bob Weibol
special writer

The Theatre Guild's season of plays about artists continues with a splendid, thought-provoking production of "The Road to Mecca."

It is by South African playwright Athol Fugard, who has written much about racial strife (most notably "Master Harold and the Boys"). While this play is set in his homeland, it tells of a different sort of intolerance. It is about an artist's struggle to remain true to her vision, which puts her into conflict with her neighbors.

Peggy Joyce is superb as Miss Helen, an aging artist whom the community views as something of an eccentric. An early widow, she copes with the inhospitable outer world by creating her own inner world.

Miss Helen constructs weird concrete sculptures of owls, camels and

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other creatures for her garden — which she calls Mecca. And she bathes her small cottage in candlelight — creating what she calls "a city of light and color more splendid than anything imaginable."

ONCE FIERCELY independent, the nonconformist but enticed Miss Helen is faced with the prospect of giving up her statues and "garden for an old-age home."

Trying to talk Miss Helen out of this choice is her rebellious and troubled young friend, Elms, a schoolteacher from Capetown. Patricia Jones brings great energy and insights to the role of Elms. At times, however, her anger boils over into badgering Miss Helen, which tends to make her less sympathetic.

Rick Hudson is excellent as the Reverend Marius Byleveld, the villain in the piece. On the surface he appears a harmless pastor looking after the interests of his flock, which in this case is to get Miss Helen into a home before she hurts herself.

It soon becomes quite obvious, however, that the good reverend is really speaking on behalf of a rigid moralistic community which has no tolerance for Miss Helen's lifestyle. The residents will stop at nothing to rid themselves of the village oddball. Playwright Fugard and director Rebecca Smith combine to show us that we should not be frightened of free thinkers and look upon them as dangerous. On the contrary, the vision artists bring to the world is to be cherished, even if it doesn't agree with our version of the truth.

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

Olive Garden celebrates Venetian Carnival

A "Carnival of Venice" is being celebrated through Sunday, March 24, at the Olive Garden Italian Restaurant in Livonia. Cuisine, regional wines and festivities of Venice are

highlighted. Four Venetian favorite dishes (Pizza Bianca, Chicken San Marco, Seafood Torello and Pasta Venezia), a traditional dessert, Tiramisu, and Venetian wines are available. Authentic Venetian carnival masks are on display and for sale.

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WE DO. Our main goal is to bring you good, solid, local news that you will find for many years to come. We do that twice each week in 13 newspapers.

But throughout the year we also sponsor and promote a variety of events that benefit our communities. Events like the Wayne County Park System's Family Fitness Day, the Marriott Soccer Classic, 10K Runs, and educational seminars. We care about people of all ages and show it with support of such organizations as Oakland County's Food Bank, the Holiday Gift Drive, and Project Graduation. Youngsters in a number of schools will enter the second annual birdhouse building contest, and we've taken an active role in the promotion of recycling in our communities.

No, we don't swoop into our communities when a story breaks, turn on the bright lights, and focus on the stage for a few minutes, and then disappear. We're here every day, in and out.

And we're happy about it. We hope you are too.

Observer & Eccentric
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