

# Strong, talented cast in 'Working'

Performances of the Avon Players production of "Working" continue through Saturday at the playhouse in Rochester Hills. For ticket information call the box office at 375-1390.

By Sally Dubets  
special writer

Avon Players summer musical, "Working" (book by Studs Terkel, adapted by Stephen Schwartz and Nina Faso), is a revue-style entertaining and clever look at assorted occupations. Stage and Vocal Director John Delelein traveled the road to the finish with care and forethought, creating a well-paced finished product that is filled with tenderness, fun and frolic.

A strong and talented cast rounds out the "Chorus Line" style production, where each occupation is described by the person singing the song. Although no popular tunes emerged from this concept musical, each song carries with it a truth about working class people. Of particular note is Donna Kussad's strong performance of "Just a Housewife." Through Chuck Thompson's slick choreography (which is masterful throughout) and Kussad's vocal talent, the hum-drum life of a housewife is thoroughly felt.

"Workers" also powerfully illustrates many people who are taken for granted or misunderstood. Tracy Johnson portrays Emilio Hernandez who pleads with a woman outside of a grocery store, "Please do not buy the grapes." The sad story of Emilio, a melancholy farm laborer, then comes to life as the inhumanity of poor working conditions is introduced through Johnson's song. Kathy Zucker provides wonderful harmony in this touching scene.

On a brighter note, lots of workers love their jobs, providing light-hearted entertainment on a grand scale. Cecilia Isabel steps the show with her rendition of "It's An Art." Perfect comedy timing and a love of the limelight are evident in Isabel's per-

## review

formance as a waitress who wants nothing more out of life. A life with regrets is represented by Deb Schiaw's splendid performance of "If I Could've Been" (a more dynamic, less woeful version of "What I Did For Love" in "A Chorus Line"). Ten-year-old Justin Marsico is charismatic as he sings a zesty "Neat To Be A Newsboy."

Cathy Zucker's talent is highlighted in "Cleanin' Women," and Jared J. Hofert is excellent in "Fathers & Sons." Both pieces tell of parents who want to better the lives of their children — another reason for working.

Interesting technical and lighting effects assist Rick Jones, Joel Fabian, Sheila Riley and Amy Sharp who are competent in their singing abilities as trucker, mason, schoolteacher and mill worker, and Mary Bogrette does a fine job in her dramatic monologue about a hooker who has been "de-humanized."

Conductor Dean J. Karavite leads a contemporary orchestra which fully complements the ever-changing spirit of the show.

An integral aspect of "Working" is its successful multi-faceted set which is mobile and technically sound, and Dave Plaskowski's lighting design which aids in the show's intrigue, fast pace and various moods.

The Avon Players' production of "Working" is a must-see quality show, and is a blue-ribbon example of what community theater should be.

Sally Dubets of Southfield is an actress, director and teacher, who teaches at community theaters in the metropolitan area. She is artistic director of West End Productions headquartered in Southfield.



'Evita'

STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Jeanne DeLong (left) and John Sartor perform in the Actors Company production of the musical "Evita" 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Aug. 2-3, 9-10, at the Birmingham Village Players playhouse. The performance is a benefit for the Birmingham Village Players. Call 644-2075 anytime for ticket information.

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