

Entertainment

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Anniversary celebration

Ridgedale Players take nostalgic journey

By Keely Wygonik
staff writer

THE RIDGEDALE Players are celebrating their 60th anniversary with a sampling of songs, dance, comedy and fashion from the 1930s through the 1980s in a dinner theater setting.

Produced and directed by longtime Ridgedalers Helen Stout, Gene Garner and Dawn Hooper, "The Music Goes 'Round'" is being presented 6:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 6, Saturday, Sept. 7, Friday, Sept. 13, and Saturday, Sept. 14.

"We're doing a medley of songs from television shows and commercials," said Garner. "We'll do the Texaco song, 'When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain,' the Howdy Doo song and Mickey Mouse Club. Some of them are funny."

Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. with an 8 p.m. curtain. Tickets for the show and dinner are \$20. Seating for the dinner theater is limited. Call 644-3228 for tickets.

"We've opened our season for about the past three years with a musical revue," said Ridgedaler Mark Carley. "It's become a tradition."

CONTINUING in this spirit of nostalgia, Ridgedale will open its regular season Nov. 1 with the comedy "Arsenic and Old Lace." The story features Abby and Martha Brewster, two very sweet maiden aunts who can't understand what's wrong with sending lonely old men to their eternal resting place with a nice glass of poisoned elderberry wine. Social Security, a modern comedy



Patrick Barnard of Ferndale and Renee Sanger of Troy dance up a storm in the Ridgedale Players' 60th anniversary revue, "The Music Goes 'Round.'"

by Andrew Bergman about Sophie Greengrass, a senior citizen who shows her thirtysomething daughter and son-in-law that she's capable of taking care of herself, opens Jan. 10. The musical comedy "Working" by Stephen Schwartz and Studs Terkel featuring memorable songs from Schwartz, James Taylor and many others, opens March 13.

"The Uninvited," a classic ghost story by Tim Kelly, based on the classic Ray Milland film by the same name, opens May 1.

Founded in 1931, Ridgedale's first home was built as a WPA project under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. The old playhouse

on 10 Mile Road in Oak Park served the group for 52 years.

Originally organized as a private group, Ridgedale staged productions only for its members until 1936, when they "went public" with their first production, "Remote Control."

"WE'VE COME a long way since then," said Carley. "In the beginning we did one show a year. Now we do five, including a musical revue and a full scale musical."

In 1983 Ridgedale faced its biggest challenge. They were evicted from their longtime home by the I-69 freeway expansion. The group found a new theater at 305 W. Long

Lake Road in Troy, west of Livermore, in a one-story cinder block building that had been a church.

"The move was quite difficult for us at first," said Carley. "Every year we have had to make some sort of improvement to our property in order to create a better theater and to make the theater experience more comfortable and enjoyable for our patrons."

Among the improvements are widening the auditorium, raising the stage and roof, redecorating the lobby and lounge area, paving the parking lot and installing air conditioning.

"We were very fortunate that when we moved out here, much of our south Oakland audience came with us," said Carley. "But ticket sales fell off as we tried to establish ourselves in our new community."

That's changed. Troy area residents now make up a majority of the audience, and ticket sales are picking up every year, said Carley. "After every production we have an afterglow and serve sandwiches and coffee to the audience," said Susan Masters, a Ridgedaler for over 39 years. "It's one thing we do that no other theater group in the area does. The people just love it. It's a nice way to spend the evening."

The theater seats about 100 for dinner theater, 180 for dramas and 165-170 for musicals. Tickets, with the exception of the dinner theater, are \$2.

THE GROUP hopes to attract more members, especially from the Troy area. They are holding an open house 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 8, at the Ridgedale Playhouse.



Bob Grimm and Sonia Milton of Rochester Hills clown around in the "The Music Goes 'Round.'"

"You don't have to have acting experience," said Masters. "For every person on stage there's eight or nine back stage. There's a lot of camaraderie in the group. We draw members from all over the metropolitan Detroit area. You make friendships that last a lifetime."

For membership information, call Kent Martini, 398-2725. Ridgedale also has a youth theater

group made up of the children of the adult Ridgedale members. Members learn how to act and sing and produce a play from top to bottom. For information, call Ruth Van Sullchem at 641-0086.

This year's productions include Christmas with Santa, Dec. 7 and 8; The Easter Show, April 4 and 5; and Summer Play, June 19, 20, and 21.

Local singer to perform at eatery

Fonte D'Amore in Livonia treats diners to "A Night in Europe," featuring performances from Broadway and Opera including "Phantom of the Opera," Verdi and more. Wednesday nights beginning Sept. 11.

Kaye Rittinger, a dramatic soprano from West Bloomfield, will be joined by an alternating cast of professionals including Scott Jensen, a noted bass/baritone from the University of Michigan Opera. Accompaniment will be with Stanley Wal-

don and Sister Rose Carmel Burgess. Rittinger has been successful in breaking the stereotype of Opera as "stiff and uptight," as she personalizes her performances by approaching each table and telling a story about every Opera or Broadway show she performs.

Named after owners John and Lina Del Signore's hometown in the center of Italy, Fonte D'Amore (meaning "fountain of love") celebrated 18 years in the same location, 32130 Plymouth Road, between Mer-

riman and Farmington Roads in July.

Fonte D'Amore specializes in homemade breads and pastas, veal and seafood dishes.

Reservations are required due to the limited capacity. Guests are asked to make reservations between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. as the entertainment begins at 7:30 p.m. Cost is \$25 and includes a special Opera Buffet entree, antipasti, soup, salad, entree and dessert. For more information, call 422-0770.

table talk

Schoolcraft College

Schoolcraft College's American Harvest Restaurant and Professor's Pantry reopened for the fall semester on Sept. 4. The restaurant is staffed and operated by students in the college's award-winning culinary arts program. Hours are noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday for table-side service, noon to 1:30 p.m. Friday for buffet. Reservations are recommended, call 462-4423. Professor's Pantry offers, fresh baked breads, pastries, salads and entrees to go. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The restaurant is in the College's

Waterman Campus Center. The college is at 18600 Haggerty Road, between Six and Seven Mile Roads in Livonia.

Marco's

Marco's in The Village Commons, Farmington, is holding a wine tasting, and fixed price dinner 6 p.m.-Monday-Sept. 16. The evening begins with a tasting of Italian wines, cheeses, freshly baked breads, crackers and fruit 6-7 p.m. The kitchen and dining room staff will be serving a special Italian fixed price dinner planned to complement the wines. Entree choices include grilled swordfish with garlic sauce, Filet Mignon with Gorgonzola, Chicken Breast Capriciosa, and Veal Ragout. Cost per person is \$32. Seating for dinner will be by reservation only, call 477-7777 by Wednesday, Sept. 11.

Marty's Cookies

On Tuesday, Sept. 10, Marty's Cookies, both the downtown Detroit and Birmingham stores will donate cookie proceeds to Detroit Orchestra Hall. Jumbo cookies are priced at about \$1 each. Last year Marty's raised about \$1,500. The stores are at One Kennedy Square, corner of Fort & Griswold, Detroit, and 310 East Maple Road, between South Woodward & Hunter, in Birmingham.

Area resident stars in EMU musical

Held over by popular demand, Pamela Cardell of Westland, takes the stage and boards the Ark at the Eastern Michigan University Sponberg Theatre September 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14 in "Two by Two," a light-hearted Richard Rodgers musical about Noah and the flood.

Cardell portrays Noah's wife, Esther. A senior, Cardell is majoring in theater, and has performed in several musicals at EMU. "Two by Two," opened on Broadway in 1970 starring Danny Kaye as

the 600-year-old Noah. After successful collaborations with Oscar Hammerstein and Lorenz Hart, Rodgers began looking to grand subjects, and famous stars for his plays.

That proved to be a winning combination for "Two by Two," a musical version of Clifford Odets' "The Flowering Peach," a story that deals with Noah and the flood, and covers such contemporary themes as the generation gap, ecology, the bomb, family, faith and the future. Tickets are \$4 for the Thursday,

Sept. 12 performance, \$4 for Friday, Sept. 6, and Sept. 13, and Saturday, Sept. 7 and Sept. 14. Tickets for EMU students are \$6. For reservations, and information, call 467-1221.

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