

# Actor has mind on business, on stage and off

Performances of the Jewish Community Center and Nancy Gurwin production of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" opens New Year's Eve and continues through Jan. 19 at the Aaron DeRoy Theatre at the JCC, 6800 West Maple Road, West Bloomfield. For ticket information call the JCC at 681-1100 or Gurwin at 354-0545.

By Barbara Michaels  
special writer

Like J. Pierpoint Finch, the lead character he plays in the upcoming Nancy Gurwin production of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," Danny Gurwin knows what he wants and goes after it. Only nobody would say that Gurwin does it without trying.

"At 19, Gurwin already has extensive theatrical training and a wealth of stage experience. A University of Michigan sophomore majoring in musical theater, at Thanksgiving he began commuting home to Southfield for rehearsals of "How to Succeed," which his mother is producing at the Jewish Community Center.

Following two major roles in college productions this fall, Paul in "Company" and Che in "Evita," Gurwin's "How to Succeed" rehearsals came at the same time he had to start studying for December fi-

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nal exams.

"You have to be efficient — organize your time, read on the bus, that sort of thing," he said. "I do miss my social life, though. I haven't had much of that lately, with classes until 6 p.m., and then rehearsals 7 to 11 most of the fall."

With finals over December 18 and "How to Succeed" opening New Year's Eve, "I'll be OK," Gurwin said with a laugh. "Next semester I'll take it easy and just study."

The little spare time he has over school vacations he uses to catch up with friends, go to the movies, read, and practice the piano for school. He claims he also tries to rest.

"I really appreciated the need for that now," he said. "I've learned that acting is a business and you really have to take care of yourself — your voice, and your body to always be at

peak for a performance."

Gurwin is very definite about his plans to move to New York and make theater his career.

"It's a frightening concept, but I have friends there, lots of U of M theater graduates who are willing to help," he said. "At school we learn how to handle auditions. Don't forget, New York isn't just Broadway; touring shows and regional theater auditions are also held there."

"I want to do everything, not limit myself to just musicals," Gurwin said confidently. "I think I will succeed because I really enjoy theater so much; I feel more comfortable on stage than I do anywhere else. I've learned acting is a craft and you have to constantly work to improve; those who do are the ones who are around a long time. I'd just like to be a working actor. If I can do that it's an accomplishment."

Besides his current studies at U of M, Gurwin hopes to study in London, either at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts or the London Academy. He is also considering the Eugene O'Neill Institute in Massachusetts, a 14-week intensive program that draws theater students from all over the country.

Gurwin's acting career began at seven when he decided on his own to audition for one of the youngsters in his mother's production of "Annie Get Your Gun."

"I was always singing and listening to show albums at home, and, of course, I knew my mother was very involved with theater," he said.

The youngest of Nancy and Donald Gurwin's four children, each of his siblings sampled theater at some time but decided not to pursue it. "This just happened," Gurwin said of his career decision. "I used to say I wanted to be a lawyer, then half-way through high school I knew I wanted acting as a career. It was a nice surprise for my mother."

Gurwin sang in his middle school choir, then attended Interlochen Music Camp one summer. He actively participated in the theater program at Southfield-Lathrup High School and also appeared in several other of the shows his mother produced. He also spent three summers at Stage Door Manor, a theater training center in New York. Through his mentor



Danny Gurwin stars in the Nancy Gurwin production of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying." The show opens Dec. 31.

there he later toured with a cabaret show to Catskill resorts.

Gurwin said that his mother has always let him find his own way in theater and always made him audition just like everyone else. "She is my best fan and worst critic," he said. "I know my parents are very proud of me. How proud will they be of me when I come back home as part of a national tour."

"It was exciting to see my name in big letters for 'How to Succeed.' It's a nice feeling that I have achieved this level already. I can't imagine being happy with any other goal, but

if acting ever stops making me happy, I'll quit."

The show opens Tuesday, Dec. 31 with a special "Champagne Premier" at 9:30 p.m. in Shifman Hall at the JCC. Tickets \$12.50 per person. Additional performances 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 4, Jan. 11, and Jan. 18; 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 5 and Jan. 12; 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 19.

Barbara Michaels is a retired Southfield English teacher. A theater critic for the last 17 years, she is an inveterate player who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

## Celebrate New Year's Eve with music

Ring in 1992 on a musical note at First Night/Birmingham, a celebration of the arts.

Formed in Boston in the late '70s as a means of deepening cultural interest in the performing arts in a non-alcohol, non-profit setting, First Night was introduced to Birmingham last year. Funded by businesses, organizations and municipalities, performances can be enjoyed in accessible locations from mid-afternoon to midnight.

Admission is \$5 for First Night buttons bought in advance, or \$7 for buttons bought on New Year's Eve. For information, call 540-6888.

Before New Year's Eve Day, buttons are available at the Community House in Birmingham, Tavern on 13, Birmingham branches of Fidelity Bank and Michigan National Bank, Birmingham and Bloomfield Kroger Locations, Crowleys, and Deli Unique (Telegraph Road location) and Morels.

On New Year's Eve, buttons will be available for \$7 at First Night/Birmingham headquarters at City Hall and at several locations around town. Turn in your First Night '92 button to an "Unbutton for Art" location and \$1 will be donated in your name to Cityscapes, an outdoor

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All events will begin on the hour and half hour. Events will take place in the downtown area.

No matter what your musical preference or age, First Night has something to offer — folk music, swing, jazz, country, gospel and classical. The Chentle Sisters, Jimmy "Spoon Man" Krews, The Prism Quartet, Detroit Woodwind Quintet, Jonathan's Family Fun Show featuring magic and comedy are among the many entertainers that will perform.

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