

Nonstop laughs in fun-filled 'California Suite'

Performances of the Farmington Players production of "California Suite" continue through Nov. 21 at the Farmington Players Barn in Farmington Hills. For ticket information, call 553-2956.

By BON WEIBEL
SPECIAL WRITER

Neil Simon, hotel suites and hilarious comedy are almost always a sure bet. Perhaps that's why the Farmington Players have the winning trifecta ticket for their production of "California Suite."

Director Judie Rosati has fashioned a fun-filled evening, consisting of four playlets about visitors to Hollywood's famous Beverly Hills Hotel.

For openers, there is a marvelous pair of rooms. Pastel walls, tasteful decorations and French doors overlooking a lush California garden — provide a posh, soothing environment that is counterpoint to the frantic crisis each guest experiences.

First, we meet a "Visitor from New York." That would be Hannah Warren, played by Karen Southworth. She has come to California to settle a dispute with her ex-husband, Billy Warren, played by B.J. Alpern, over the future of their daughter.

The humor in this piece depends almost entirely on the rivalry between New Yorkers and Angelenos. Alpern has the look and style of a laidback, over-the-hill California surfer.

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Southworth, looks the part, but doesn't come across as an in your face New Yorker. Her smart-mouthed repartee seems artificial. A more hostile, superior attitude would do wonders for her character.

Next up is a "Visitor from Philadelphia." Carl Orsini is a scream from his first giggle, as Marvin Michaels, who has come to California to celebrate his nephew's bar mitzvah. The fun begins when he awakes to find he has spent the night with a hooker — "a gift" from his brother — and his wife (who has just arrived) is knocking on the door.

Well, as you might guess, the wife discovers the drunken lady of the evening — and that is major trouble for poor Marvin. Maggie Savage scores as the betrayed wife who coolly decides not to get mad, just get even. Besides, it was his first sin — and one of omission, rather than commission.

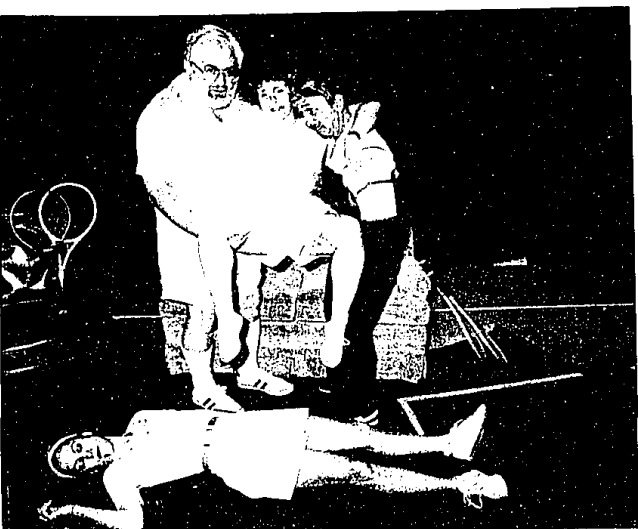
The next guests are, "Visitors from London," who arrive for the Academy Awards. Linda Bodnar turns in a sparkling performance as an English movie maven who is not only concerned with a

"hump" in her dress and winning the Best Actress award — but with winning back the love of her bisexual husband.

Ralph Rosati gives a balanced reading to a difficult role — that of a man walking the tightrope of complicated human relationships. Slowly and expertly, Rosati reveals his true nature as the story unfolds to a warm and tender ending.

Finally, we meet the, "Visitors from Chicago," an all-out farce about two couples on vacation together. Jim Cave and Kathy Booker combine with Ralph Rosati and Linda Bodnar to give us non-stop laughs. A tennis game leads to a sprained ankle — a struggle in the bedroom, cut fingers, wounded egos, mock fights — and a wild finish in which all swear they had a good time and are still friends.

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



Funny show: Jim Cave of Farmington Hills (standing), Kathy Booker of Walled Lake, Ralph Rosati, and Linda Bodnar (on the floor) of Livonia, in a scene from the Farmington Players production of Neil Simon's "California Suite," through Nov. 21.

Plymouth Symphony to feature original work, jazz quartet

"Night Rivers, Symphony No. 3" by Anthony Iannaccone will have its "World Premiere" presented by the Plymouth Symphony 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13 at the Novi High School Auditorium, 42064 Taft Road, Novi.

Also on the program is "African-American Symphony," by Sfil, and guests artists the Jack Brookshire Jazz Quartet.

Tickets are \$12 adults, \$10 seniors/college students, \$5 K-12 students and available at Novi Parks and Recreation, Beitner Jewelry, 904 W. Ann Arbor Trail, Plymouth, Evolve Music Center, 215 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth, Giftfinder, 302 E. Main, North-

ville, Bookstall on the Main, 101 N. Main, Northville, Dearborn Music Co, 42679 Ford Road, Canton and at the box office 30 minutes before the performance. For information, call 451-2112.

You can meet Iannaccone 1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 6 at Madonna University, at 196 and Levan in Livonia. He will be conducting a seminar and workshop in Room 186 on the Madonna campus. Participants will have the opportunity to purchase tickets for Night Rivers' world debut on Nov. 13 at a reduced rate. For information, call 591-5177.

"Night Rivers" is a symphony in one movement. Its central

focus is the evolving flow of a few basic musical gestures from dreamlike states of calm equilibrium to torrential passages of intense fury back to refined repose.

The composition derives all of its thematic, textural, and timbral material from the first seven bars of music. These opening sound shapes and interval patterns are recycled in many forms throughout the work to evoke and ultimately to fuse two distinct images borrowed from the poetry of Walt Whitman: "night" as used by Whitman, in the poem "The Sleepers," and "river," a vivid metaphor for "Whispers of Heavenly Death," and "Crossing

Brooklyn Ferry." Iannaccone studied at the Manhattan School of Music and the Eastman School of Music. His teachers include Vittorio Giannini, Aaron Copland, and David Diamond.

Iannaccone's catalog of 50 works is published by 12 publishers and includes many large ensemble pieces and chamber pieces

for voices and instruments. His works are performed by major orchestras and professional chamber ensembles in the U.S. and abroad. Seventeen of his

works are available on commercial recordings. He teaches musical composition, orchestration and arranging at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti.

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