Before the rockers: The

Ann-Arbor based team of Joan Mor-ris, mezzo-

soprano, and William Bolcom, pianist,

bring their

repertoire of

music to the

American Artist Series

on Jan. 9.

pre-rock American

Movies, Page 6B

On THE MARQUEE



Travel magazine honors The Lark

Archer was sworn in as mayor, and the North American International Auto Show opens Saturday, Jan. 8, at Cobe Holl. Besides car, Detroit, and the surrounding suburba, rae gaining a reputation for something else—out-standing restaurants.

This month Conde Nest Traveler magazine named The Lark restaurant of West Bloomfield as the 11th best restaurant in the United States. Two other Detroit restaurants made "The Top 60" list of restaurants in the country — Van Dyke Place was 21st, and The Whitney was 27th.

The only other restaurant in mid-America scorling higher than The Lark was Le Francais of "Wheeling, Ill., a Chiego suburb, which ranked Tourth Le Bee Fin of Philadelphia took the number one spot.

Simpler than the Lark was 50 strained of Swheeling, Ill., a Chicago suburb, which ranked Tourth. Le Bee Fin of Philadolphia took the number one spot.

Chef Macus Haight was the principal chef of Le Bee-Fin before Joining The Lark, and was also a chef at Le Franceis for several years.
Find out for yourself why The Lark is as wonderful at an Austro-Hungarian dinner the restaurant is hosting 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 24 and 25. The menu will feature the cuisine of the Habsburg Empire. Estree choices include panified venison cutlets with sour cream or beef steak and onlons with caraway seeds. Cypsy violinists will entertain you at this dinner which costs \$67.50 per person not including beverages, tax or gratuity. The last day for cancellation without charge is Jan. 15.

The Lark is at 6430 Farmingten Road, north of Mape Road. Call 661-465 for reservations.

Schoolcraft College in Livonia has the cure for post-holiday blues — a Winter Getaway on Saturday, Jan. 15, featuring the gournet cuisine and the Johnny Trudell Orchestra, and a Mardi Gras Celebration, Feb. 12, with New Orleans cuisine, dancing to the Disieland sound, and entertainment by Peter Madcat Ruth and SCool JAzz.

The menu for the Winter Get Away dinner which will be aerved at 7 p.m., includes potato & leek soup, Caesar salad, roast prime rib, potatoes with Asigo cheese and winter vegetable mediay. The cost is \$35 per person. The Mardi Gras dinner is \$30 per person.

Schoolcraft College is at 18600 Haggerty. Both events will be in the campus' Waterman Center. Call 462-441 for details.

Keely Wygonik is editor of the Taste and Entertainment Sections of the Observer & Eccentric

Keely Wygonik is editor of the Taste and Enter-tainment sections of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She welcomes your calls and com-ments, 953-2105, fax 591-7279, or write: Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc. 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Entertainment next week what to waten for in ententainment next week:

Hugh Gallagher reviews Willy Russell's Broadway smash "Shirley Volentine," now playing at Meadow Brook Theatre.

"Philadephia" and "Wreatling Ernest Hemingway," open Jan. 14 at area movie theaters.

American Artists Series features duo

features Pulitizer-Prize winning composer and planist, William Bolcom, and his wife, Joan Morris, mezzo-sprano.



A recital by the Ann Athor based duo, Bolcom & Mor-ris, is a delightful visit to the glory days of 19th and sic.

20th century pre-to-senses.

slc.
They'll be in the spetlight for the second offering of the American Artista Series senson 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9, at Kingswood Auditorium, Cranbrook Campus in Bloomfield Hills. Tickets are \$13.50 per person, students \$7.50. Use the new entrance to Cranbrook, 1221 N. Woodward, north of Lane Pine Road, For more informs

PREVIEW

William Bolcom, a Pulitzer-Prize winning composer and planist, is skilled in all musical forms. Joan Morta, his equally versalitle wife, is a trained mezzo-soprano.

For more than a decade, they have received rave reviews nationwide for their brand of musical nostalgia, sprinkled with humor.

Their program will include selections from Scott Joplin, George Gerthwin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and Rodgers and Hart.
A 2 p.m. proview lecture by Bolcom is included in the ticket price.
New York City-based soprano Susan Botti will join the Chamber Players for a Michigan premiere at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 20 of "Homage a TS. Eliot" by contemporary Russian composer Sofia Gubaidlina, along with works by Mozart and Dvorak. A lec-



ture preview begins at 2 p.m.

The program at 3 p.m. Sunday,
March 20 with the Chamber Players
will include a quartet by Malcolm Arnold and trios by Arnold Cooke, Marcelle de Manziarly, Khachaturian and
Ernest Chausson. Preview lecture at
2 p.m.

For the fifth and final concert at 7 p.m. Sunday, May 1, the Chamber Players will perform quintets by Amy Beach and Brahms and a trio by Babadjanian.

'Little Me' is pure fun and laughter

REVIEW



Demonstrating that well-executed, unabashed goofiness can indeed be timeless, the Birmingham Theatre's revival of the 1962 musical comedy "Little Me," is a joyous romp unhampered by any pretensions of social signifi-

cance.

Based on a novel by Patrick Dennis (author of "Auntie Mame"), "Little Me" was adapted for Breadway by Neil Simon, with music by Cy Coleman. In a spoof of the classic regastoriches tale, film star Belle Poitrine (Charles Busch) reflects back on her life and the men who influenced her efforts to acquire wealth, culture, and social status.

The young Belle (Courtency Col-lins) was an impoverished girl from the wrong side of the tracks who fell for the very blue-blooded, all-Ameri-can hero Nobel Eggleston (Jonathan Beck Reed). Categorically rejected by Nobel's haughty mother (Stephen Joseph), Belle sets out to make her-self worthy of Nobel, armed only with innate spunk and a knock-out figure. The delightfully versatile Reed acsocial status.

ON STAGE

"Little Me" ★Theater: Birmingham Theatre, 211 S. Woodward.

★ Curtain time: 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; 7 p.m. Sundays; 2 p.m. Wednesdays, Sundays and Thursday, Jan. 27, through Jan. 30.

★Tickets: Range from \$19.50 to \$37.50, available at the Birmingham Theatre Box office and all Ticketmaster outlets. Call 644-3353 or Ticketmaster, 645-6666.

tually plays seven of the men in Bello's life; the vainglorious Nobel; miserly Mr. Pinchley, Belle's rich "sponsor," the French entertainer Val du Val, who teaches Belle to keep her chin up in adversity; the naive soldier Fred Poltrine, who marries the pregnant Belle; Hollywood director Otto Schnitzler, who furthers her film career; impoverished Prince Cherney, who awards her social status' and finally the smug Noble Junior.

Whether dancing in his wheelchair as the elderly Pinchley or padding

around on his knees as the pint-size Prince, Reed manages to make each of his characters uniquely wacky. There's some inspired nonsense with getting his mustache on and off at the right times and even an occasionally ad

getting ats musicates on and off at the right times and even an occasionally ad-lib.

Busch, who has built his career playing female characters, is a divine Belle. Stretching his elegantly-clad figure languidly on the chaise lounge or strutting his curvaccous legs in high heels, Busch is funny and endearing with only a light hint of camp. The gender-bending non-traditional easting gives added dimension to the doubte-entendres Busch delivers with perfect drollery.

Collins is pleasing as the young Belle, full of spunk and noble of heart, and sounds fine musically. As she matures, young Belle grows to look and isound more and more like Busch's Belle, and they coalesce grandly in the title song duet.

The show's best-known songs are "I've Got! Your Number" and "Real Live Girl.," but nearly all the musical numbers are upbeat charmers. Particularly for are the rousing "Deep Down Inside," accompanied by live choreography, and Busch's cheerfully wicked "Don't Ask the Lady What the Lady Did Before."

The principals are supported by eight talented players who each fill multiple roles as well as provide the chorus. The entire cast smoothly accomplishes lightning costume changes.

Director/choreographer Worth Gardner has become the Birmingham Theatr's most reliable asset. In recent seasons he has given Birmingham audiences a stunning "Man of LaMancha," a clever version of "The Wizard of Oz," and a very innovative "Oklahoma!"

With "Little Me" he returns to the Birmingham a level of polish and pro-fessionalism that had so far been sorely lacking this season. He'll be back for two more Birmingham pro-ductions this year.

Scot Woolley's musical direction, James Morgan's go-for-baroque set, and Michael Bottari and Ronald Case's lush costumes all provide valuable enhancements. "Little Me" is pure fun and laugh-ter — nothing more, nothing less.

Barbara Michals is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up or all the New York productions.

Meadow Brook premieres 'Shirley Valentine'

Willy Russell's Broadway smash "Shirley Valentine" is making its De-troit area premiere at the Oakland University Meadow Brook Theatre

University Meadow Brook Theatre beginning Jan. 6.
Winner of several Tony awards, this humorous one-woman show will run Tuesdays through Sundays until Jan. 30.
Ticket information is available through the Meadow Brook box office

at 377-3300. Tickets are also available at TicketMaster outlets. Call 645-6666.
Shirley Valentine is a witty yet bored 42-year-old housewife. Her kids have grown, her husband is inattentive, and there seems to be nothing left to do but talk to the walls — literally.

ally.

The tables turn in Shirley's life, however, when a feminist girlfriend

offers her a free ticket to Greece.
She must then decide whether to continue a life of tedium and responsibility or ly off to one of adventure and romance on the Mediterranean. The decision she makes could chenge her life forever.
The role of Shirley Valentine is played by Jayne Houdyshell. Houdyshell had setted in 22 Meadow Brook productions, the last of which was

au the New York productions.

Yalentine'
"Barefoot in the Park" in 1991.

Houdyshell also received local acidism for her 1986 performance in the Attic Theatre production of Anne Sullivan in "Monday After the Miracle."

"Shirley Valentine" also marks the 84th and final show to be directed by Meadow Brook's artistic director, Terence Kilburn.



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