

ON THE MARQUEE



KEELY WYGONIK

Valentine's Day events
full of sweet surprises

Monday is Valentine's Day, and if you're looking for some unusual ways to say "I love you," here are some ideas.

Tell the world, or at least metro Detroit, how you feel about your sweetheart. For a \$50 donation to Ronald McDonald House of Detroit, you can send a Valentine message up to 30 words. On Monday, Feb. 14, WNIC's Jim Harper, Steve Gannon and The Breakfast Club, will read the first 50 messages received prior to their 6-10 a.m. broadcast on WNIC 100.3 FM.

To participate, send a check for \$50, payable to the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit, to WNIC, 150001 Michigan Ave., Dearborn, Mich. 48126. Call (313) 846-8500 for information.

For \$100, Karen Kevorkian-Price and her partner, Jackie Sutherland, will write and record an original song or spoken-word story. Send-a-Song records professional quality studio recorded audio cassettes, which sound comparable to the radio. "We take the feelings in your heart and express them for you in song," said Kevorkian-Price. Sing they began Send-a-Song/Send-a-Story 15 years ago, they have brought many couples closer together through their service. For details, call (810) 545-1239.

The Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra and Shirley Love, mezzo soprano from New York's Metropolitan Opera, will present a concert "Affectionately Yours," at Temple Beth El on Sunday. A dinner will precede the concert at 5:30 p.m. The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets for the dinner and concert, a benefit for the BBSO, range from \$50 per person to \$100. Concert-only tickets will be available at the door for \$15 per person beginning at 7 p.m. For tickets or information, call (810) 645-2276. Temple Beth El is at 14 Mile and Telegraph in Bloomfield Township.

Guest conductor Donald Schleicher will lead the Southfield Symphony Orchestra in a Valentine's Eve concert 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 13, at the

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Entertainment next week:

- Find out what's new at the movies.
- Reviews of "I Do I Do!" now playing at the Birmingham Theatre, and Meadow Brook Theatre's "You Never Can Tell."

Local gal stars in 'Crazy For You'

Karen Ziemba was in all the musicals at North Farmington High School in the 1970s. She's performed on Broadway and stars in "Crazy For You."

BY KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER



From the time she was a little girl, Karen Ziemba, who starred in musicals at North Farmington High School, and later Broadway, knew she wanted to be a performer.

"I've taken dance lessons since I was 6. I excelled at it, and it made me happy to make other people feel good. It's very satisfying," said Ziemba, who will be coming home Feb. 15 to March 6 to star in the new Gershwin comedy "Crazy For You" at the Fisher Theatre.

"It's pretty exciting," she said in a telephone interview from her hotel room in Cincinnati where the show was playing. "I'm very proud to be doing this show. People walk away feeling lighter than air — like they can dance, and it's so funny. It makes them feel good."

Ziemba portrays Polly Baker, the only woman in Deadrock, Nev., a town of 157 men in the 1930s. Her life takes a turn when rich, pampered playboy Bobby Child is sent to town by his domineering mother to foreclose on a long-vacant theater. Immediately love is in the air along with fast-breaking plot twists, high-stepping dances and plenty of chorus "dames and guys in the spirit of the great, glamorous, musical comedies of the Broadway Theatre."

"Polly is the daughter of the man who owned the old theater — now it's a post office. Her mother, who used to perform in the theater, is dead, and her father is always reminding about her. Bobby falls in

ON STAGE

"Crazy For You"

*Theater: Fisher Theatre, 3011 West Grand Boulevard, at Second, Detroit.

*Curtain time: Opens 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, closes 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 6. Performances 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 7:30 p.m. Sundays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

*Tickets: Range from \$32.50 to \$55. Call Ticketmaster (810) 645-6666 for tickets. For information, call (313) 672-1000.

PREVIEW

love with Polly and wants to make the theater work, but Polly is a very straight-forward gal.

"The music is unbelievable, and the dancing is fabulous. It's a love story, but it's also a side-splitting comedy."

Winner of the 1992 Tony Award, "Crazy For You," by playwright Ken Ludwig, incorporates 15 Gershwin standards, music by George Gershwin, lyrics by Ira Gershwin, including "Embraceable You." "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "Bidin' My Time," and "I Got Rhythm."

Ziemba, who made her Broadway debut in "A Chorus Line," starred as Peggy Sawyer in "42nd Street" and won the 1991 Drama Desk Award for her performance in Off-Broadway's "And the World Goes Round," has stayed in touch with her friends from North Farmington High School.

This summer, Linda Regan went back stage after seeing the show in Los Angeles and asked Ziemba to sign her program. The program was from North Farmington High



JOAN MARCUS

Rehearsing: Karen Ziemba and James Brennan rehearse a number for the new Gershwin musical comedy "Crazy For You," opening Feb. 15 at the Fisher theater in Detroit.

School's production of "West Side Story." Ziemba starred as Maria. Regan's brother was also in the show.

"She's just a delightful person," said Regan. "A great gal. It was really something to walk back stage and meet her. In the program she talked about what she wanted to do after graduating from high school — sing, dance and act on Broadway. It's so wonderful that she reached her goal, she's just so talented. I had tears in my eyes at the end of the show. She was someone who set out to do something, and did it."

One of the people who helped nurture Ziemba was Evelyn Kreson, artistic director of the Midwest Dance Theatre. "She made us go to New York to see Broadway musicals," said Ziemba. "She showed us what it was really like to be a dancer."

"I had Karen as a student from the time she was 7 until she gradu-

ated from high school," said Kreson who is still teaching dance. "She was a lovely dancer and a lovely girl. I took the girls to summer dance classes in New York when Karen was in high school. They saw what the competition was like and attended the ballet and Broadway musicals. It gave them an incentive. All of the girls loved Karen. Quite a few of them have careers in the arts."

Ziemba's been on tour with "Crazy For You" for 10 months, and will leave the show in March to star in the Broadway production.

Her advice to other dancers, singers and actors dreaming of Broadway echoes that of her teacher Evelyn Kreson — "Study, and do everything you can to experience theater. There's nothing like it. It's fresh and spontaneous. Every night it's different. Get as much experience as you can."

Musical comedy has women's touch



BARBARA MICHAELS

Jones and Harvey Schmidt, "I Do I Do!" tells the story of the endurance

The hands guiding the musical comedy "I Do I Do!" now playing at the Birmingham Theatre, are all women — director Karen Azenberg, stage manager Jane Neufeld and musical director Helen Gregory.

Written by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, "I Do I Do!" tells the story of the endurance

PREVIEW

of a married couple through 50 years of marriage. It recounts both the ups and downs of the sacred institution, focusing on the embarrassing bride night, the birth of children, two turbulent romances and finally their departure from the family home.

I called Azenberg and Neufeld in New York just before they left for Birmingham, to talk about the show. While both acknowledged that a

female triumvirate was a bit unusual in a production, neither believes that theater discriminates against women.

"Deep in my heart I suppose it's true," Azenberg said, "but I've had wonderful opportunities. Of course, this has all happened in the last few years, and it does take time to work up the ladder. I think the day is coming when we'll see a more even distribution between male and female directors."

See MUSICAL, next page

ON STAGE

"I Do I Do!"

*Theater: Birmingham Theatre, 211 S. Woodward.

*Curtain time: Opens 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, closes 7 p.m. Sunday, March 13. Performances 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; 7 p.m. Sundays; matinees 2 p.m. Wednesdays, Sundays and Thursdays.

*Tickets: Range from \$18.50 to \$35. Call (810) 644-3533 or Ticketmaster (810) 645-6666.

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Illustration of a couple dining.

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Valentine's Dinner:
Dinner for two in the Tivoli Restaurant. Entrees: Striped Sea Emma • Broken White Fish • Filet Mignon • Chicken Wellington • Chargrilled Salmon Fillet • New York Strip Steak • All entrees include Garden Salad, Vegetable, Twice Baked Potatoes, Glass of Champagne & Chocolate Covered Strawberries. **\$42** per couple (tax & gratuity included)
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