

Acting quite good in Neil Simon drama



Thanks to SRO Productions' current staging, I think I finally figured out why I have always hated Neil Simon's "The Prisoner of Second Avenue." Written in the 1950s, when every family's personal problems were the fault of "society," "Prisoner" presents us with Mel Edison, a middle class Manhattanite who is breaking down under job strain, the world's indifference and life in the big city.

We, the audience, are supposed to think "Yes, life certainly is terrible. It's a wonder I haven't cracked up myself." Well, with the perspective of the 1990s and Ralph Rosati's interpretation of

ON STAGE

"The Prisoner of Second Avenue"

★**Theater:** SRO Productions, at the City of Southfield's Historic Park "Theburgh" on the northeast corner of Civic Center Drive and Berg Road.
★**Curtain time:** 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, through March 20.
★**Tickets:** \$7 general admission, \$6 seniors and children. Call 354-9362.

Mel (as both actor and director), we see our hero for what he really is: a whining, irritable little nudge who has managed to survive to the age of 60 only because he is married to a saint.

REVIEW

I mean, there really is an awful lot not to like here. Oh, by the way, as you may have guessed from the author's name, this is supposed to be a comedy. My personal prejudices aside, the acting in the show is quite good. Rosati consistently brings out Mel's bad side, and then manages a very credible transformation into a calm and nurturing Mel at the play's conclusion.

Real life wife Judi Rosati plays Mel's wife, Edna, with both passion and good comic instincts. The two of them are at their best as Mel slips into his nervous breakdown at the end of Act I and at the end of the play as Mel manages to save Edna from falling into the same darkness from which he has just returned.

"Prisoner" is fairly close to being a two-person show with just a brief appearance by Mel's brother and three sisters. One can't help wonder if Simon didn't throw these four in just to give his leads a scene in which to catch their breath. Although each part is played adequately, even the cast members look like they're not quite sure why they are there.

Dennis Broadhead is quite good as Harry, the overbearing brother, and deserves a better part next time for his effort.

In closing, I might suggest to SRO that Neil Simon has written some wonderful plays in recent years ("Rumors," "Broadway Bound" and "Brighton Beach Memoirs" to name three) and might question why SRO, along with so many other groups keeps dragging back tired, dated material like "The Prisoner of Second Avenue."



Couple: Real life husband and wife Ralph and Judi Rosati star as Mel and Edna Edison in SRO's production of "The Prisoner of Second Avenue."

Mark S. Carley is active in local community theater, both onstage and behind the scenes. He is a member of the Birmingham Village Players and Ridgedale Players in Troy.

St. Patrick's Day events feature traditional music, food

BY KEELY WYGONK
STAFF WRITER

Mick Gavin of Redford is a father of three boys and musician who wants to pass his love of Irish music on to the next generation. He and his sons, Mike, 17, and Sean, 7, will be among the musicians performing 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursday, March 17, at the ninth annual Irish Fest of Irish Music, Song and Dance at the Bonvicini County Club, 1950 Telegraph, between Seven and Eight mile Roads in Detroit. Admission is \$6, children are free. Call 537-3489 for information.

"There were so many young musicians around, and we had a lot of calls over the years from people who wanted to know what was going on culturally for St. Patrick's Day," said Gavin. "This is

a way for families to introduce their children to Irish music."

There will be continuous entertainment with musicians representing the finest in traditional music from Ireland, Scotland and Cape Breton. In addition to Gavin and his sons, featured performers include Ed McGlinchey, John Sands, Charlie Wilke, Terence McKinney, Jessie-Ann Redon, Steve Tom and Jim McNell, the Kitty Heinmann Celi Dancers, and members of the U.S. and Canadian Champion City of Detroit Pipe Band.

Corned beef and cabbage dinners will be available. There will also be a cash bar. **Botsford Inn** at 28000 Grand River at Eight Mile in Farmington Hills is presenting an Irish Feast Recreation featuring au-

thentic dishes 5 p.m. Thursday, March 17. The cost is \$14.95 per person. Call 474-4800 for reservations.

The menu, planned with help from the Detroit chapter of the Irish American Culture Institute, will feature such authentic Irish dishes as brown soda bread, Dublin Prawns (shrimp), a beef pot roast made with Guinness (a stout ale), Colcannon (a potato dish with cabbage and onions), chicken and ham pie and sweets. Authentic Irish music will provide an added touch to the evening's mood.

Blackthorn, the Detroit-based Irish band, will perform at the Southfield Civic Center, Room 115 in the Parks and Recreation Building, 3 p.m. Sunday, March 20. Tickets for concert and high

tea are \$7.50 or \$4 for concert only. Call 564-4717 for information.

Blackthorn consists of Richard McMillan, guitar, cittern, mandolin, tenor banjo and vocals; Fred Klein, keyboards, accordion, pennywhistle and vocals; Gary McMillan, 5-string banjo, guitar and vocals; and Dennis Green, guitar, bass and vocals.

The folk quartet will capture the sounds of Ireland in a blend of traditional and contemporary musical styles performing jigs and reels, sea chanteys, ballads, sing-alongs and topical songs of today. **Sweet Lorraine's Cafe** on Greenfield just north of 12 Mile in Southfield is celebrating St. Patrick's Day on March 17 and throughout the week. Walk in, use call-ahead seating or make a res-

ervation (for groups of six or more) the week of St. Patty's to sample Sweet Lorraine's version of traditional Irish dishes.

Vegetarians will find an array of exciting options including Vegetarian Irish Stew served over

roasted garlic mashed potatoes with Irish soda bread muffins.

A mixed grill combination of tender pork loin (with a Guinness glaze) and Irish Mist splashed shrimp kabob with fresh whiskey fennel sausage is sure to tempt others.

Magic show for kids

The Southfield Cultural Arts Division of Parks and Recreation presents magician Ronnie Coe in the Kids Concerts series 1:30-2:15 p.m. Saturday, March 19 in Room 115 of the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen. Tickets are \$3.25. Call 354-

4717. Coe is one of the metro area's leading magical entertainers. With magic full of situation comedy and audience involvement, he is versatile and adaptable to all ages and audiences.

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