

Hard-hitting drama lands some punches



BARBARA MICHAELS

"Golden Boy," Clifford Odets' hard-hitting drama, focuses on an aspiring young boxer in pursuit of the American dream.

The current production by the Jewish Ensemble Theatre lands some major punches, but falls short of a knock-out.

Director Robert Grossman admits in the program notes that the play's "socio-political conscience" is dated; instead he finds value in the characters' "desperate happy-sad yearnings." This production gives these yearnings some fine moments of major dramatic, but there are also a lot of unfortunately comic moments in places they don't belong.

In New York City of 1937 Joe Bonaparte (John Biedenbach) comes of age and seizes an opportunity to enter professional boxing. Growing up as a poor, beset, skinny kid, Joe sees boxing as a ticket to fame, fortune, and self-respect. However, his immigrant Italian father sees only heartbreak when his talented violinist son deliberately risks ruining his hands.

Peter Bellanca is outstanding as Joe's loving father, mostly mild-mannered but increasingly embittered and frustrated by his son's behavior. Keeping his characterization understated to perfection, his few passionate outbursts become all the more effective.

Biedenbach is strongest when his emotions blaze into virile outpouring of self-anger or when he hides his self-doubts behind his boastful conceit and false brava.

"Golden Boy"

THEATRE Jewish Ensemble
Theater production, Aaron Dero Theatre, Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield.

CURTAIN TIME 8 p.m. Wed. & Thurs.; 8:45 p.m. Sat.; 2 & 7 p.m. Sun., through May 21.

TICKETS \$11 to \$22 with discounts available to students and senior citizens. Call (810) 780-2500 or (810) 645-6666.

REVIEW

do. He is most tentative as the plucky kid talking his way in the door or the moonstruck suitor of Lorna, his manager's girl.

Cheri Johnson is wonderful as Lorna, the willowy and smooth "tramp from New Jersey" shaken by doubts about her pursuit of the American dream.

Steve Tadevic is very credible and consistent as Giglio, Joe's taxi cab driver, brother-in-law, meant to exemplify the working class masses. Giglio has ambitions of his own, but his seem tempered by a firm sense of realistic limitations.

John Manfredi is equally believable as a hard-boiled boxer or Joe's tough union-organizer brother. David Glover has a commanding stage presence as Moody, Joe's manager, but he had a few verbal stumbles on opening night.



Drama: John Biedenbach and Jim Porterfield in a scene from the Jewish Ensemble Theatre production of "Golden Boy."

Violinist Robert Yang provides beautiful on-stage accompaniment throughout, a kind of "fiddler in the ring," but his 19th century attire is totally inexplicable.

Joe Haynes, perfect in his brief appearance as an elderly friend of Joe's father, is much too comic as Rosy, the sleazy fight promoter. Along with Marshall Zweig's Massimo Fuselli and the strutting street people between scenes, these characters are Runyonesque parodies, fine for "Guys and Dolls" but comically out of place here. Some dated dialogue may be partly to blame, but touches like the violinist simulating a wolf whistle at a where suggest the director's hand.

Jim Porterfield fails to give much dimension to Tokio, Joe's trainer, intended as a norm of good sense. Roxanne Wellington does the best anyone could as Anne, Joe's over-sexed sister.

Opening and closing the production with cast members frantically beating their hands on the floorboards is unquestionably dramatic, but the symbolism gets lost. The same for when Fuselli plants a Mafia-style kiss on Joe, which meets with a collective "huh?" from the audience.

Barbara Michaels is an inveterate player who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

Fund-raising new challenge for dancer



MARY JANE DOERR

To walk around in Joanne Danto-Honhart's shoes would mean changing shoes at least 4,000 times in 20 years. It would also mean knowing what it is like to dance the premiere role for ballerinas — that of the white swan/black swan in Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake."

She has danced the role nearly 200 times with companies from Detroit to Frankfurt.

This weekend Michigan Opera Theatre presents "Swan Lake" at Masonic Temple. Instead of changing her English "pointe" shoes, Danto-Honhart is changing hats, from that of an artist to one as a fund-raiser. She is heading up Michigan Opera Theatre's "Friends of the Ballet," a volunteer group committed to raising money to support ballet productions.

Including raising the money to buy those "pointe" shoes, which cost over \$35 a pair.

"The cost of those shoes has put a good many ballet companies out of business," said Danto-Honhart, a seasoned professional who will not be thrown off balance by the black/white issues of her profession's artistic and financial demands. She has taught at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, University of Michigan, Indiana University, and the Academy of Gothenburg and been a soloist with the Joffrey Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, the National Ballet Company, and the Chicago Ballet.

Her most memorable performance of Odette/Odile ("Swan Lake") was at Detroit's Music Hall as principal with the Pennsylvania Ballet in 1975.

"I guess that time was so special because so many of my friends were in the audience," said Danto-Honhart who lives in Bloomfield Hills. She is a graduate of Birmingham Seaborn High School and is married to her junior high school bus buddy, Keith Honhart. She is the mother of a 16-year-old daughter.

That special feeling, of being a dancer on the Music Hall stage, has never left her, and Danto-Honhart stays on her toes serving on the Music Hall board working to keep her dreams alive by bringing top quality dance companies to Detroit. Last fall, she instigated the successful "Evening of Ballet Stars."

Mary Jane Doerr of Troy is a full-time teacher and freelance writer who specializes in opera and musical theater.

"Swan Lake"

THEATRE Michigan Opera
presentation at Masonic Temple Theatre, 500 Temple, Detroit.

CURTAIN TIME 10 a.m. Fri., May 5; 8 p.m. Fri. & Sat., May 5-6; 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sun., May 7.

TICKETS Range from \$11 to \$63. Children sit with their parents for \$10 each with the purchase of one or more full-priced adult tickets. Call (313) 874-SING or Ticketmaster, (810) 645-6666.

PREVIEW

cial because so many of my friends were in the audience," said Danto-Honhart who lives in Bloomfield Hills. She is a graduate of Birmingham Seaborn High School and is married to her junior high school bus buddy, Keith Honhart. She is the mother of a 16-year-old daughter.

That special feeling, of being a dancer on the Music Hall stage, has never left her, and Danto-Honhart stays on her toes serving on the Music Hall board working to keep her dreams alive by bringing top quality dance companies to Detroit. Last fall, she instigated the successful "Evening of Ballet Stars."

Mary Jane Doerr of Troy is a full-time teacher and freelance writer who specializes in opera and musical theater.

James Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band to play with LSO

James Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band will join the Livonia Symphony Orchestra for "Jazz with Class," 8 p.m. Sat., May 6 at the James P. Carli Auditorium, Churchill High School, (Newburgh Road south of Joy Road), Livonia. Tickets are \$12 adults, \$8 senior citizens, \$5 students. Tickets available at the door, Hammell Music in Livonia, Jacobson's at Laurel Park Place, Madonna University, and Livonia Civic Center Library. For more information, call (313) 421-1111.

James Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band specializes in spirited traditional jazz music from the first 50 years of jazz history. They play turn-of-the-century ragtime, New Orleans and Chicago Jazz of the 1920s, and small-band swing of the 1930s and early 1940s.

PREVIEW

James Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band specializes in spirited traditional jazz music from the first 50 years of jazz history. They play turn-of-the-century ragtime, New Orleans and Chicago Jazz of the 1920s, and small-band swing of the 1930s and early 1940s.

the 1930s and early 1940s. Members of the band can be heard individually on over 150 albums, and as a band they've made even with a Grammy nomination for "Sippie," their Atlantic recording with blues singer Sippie Wallace and Bonnie Raitt.

They will be joined for the symphony, under the direction of Francesco DiBlasi for "On the Road," and "Berlin Medley," and also present several selections of their own.

The symphony will perform Brahms' Academic Festival Overture, Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral from Wagner's "Lohengrin," three dances from the Gayne Ballet of Khachaturian, and Polovetsian Dances from Prince Igor of Borodin.



Guest artist: James Dapogny's Chicago Jazz Band will be performing with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra on May 6. Dapogny is the band's leader and arranger.

Japanese choir, Plymouth Oratorio Society present concerts

Yokohama Mokuyukai and Ann Arbor Cantata Singers, and Plymouth Oratorio Society will be featured this weekend in concerts at local churches.

A joint choir concert featuring the Yokohama Mokuyukai and Ann Arbor Cantata Singers will be presented 3 p.m. Sat., May 6 at

Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 10000 Beech Daly, Redford. There is no admission charge, and a short afterglow will follow the concert. For information, call (313) 937-3170.

The Mokuyukai choir hails from the city of Yokohama, Japan where they began singing in 1939.

They perform a broad repertoire of songs including Japanese folk music, and sacred music from around the world.

Ann Arbor Cantata Singers are dedicated to performing all types of music from baroque to contemporary.

Plymouth Oratorio Society will be presenting its ninth choral concert 7:30 p.m. Sun., May 7 at St. John Neumann Church, 44800 Warren Road, Canton. No tickets necessary — free will offering will be taken during intermission, and a reception will follow concert. For more information, call (313) 455-8353.

POS will be performing "Requiem" by Gabriel Faure and "Gloria" by Francis Poulenc. Featured soloist is soprano Carolyn Pratt, a soloist in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota community.

Nardin park United Methodist Church Music Series presents

Anne and Todd Wilson, renowned solo keyboard performers, 7:30 p.m. Sun., May 21 at the church, 29887 W. 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. There is no admission charge, a reception will follow concert. For information, call (810) 476-8860.

Mama Mia

Banquet Facilities Available

27770 Plymouth 15345 Beech Daly
Livonia 48150 Redford 48239

427-1000 537-0740

The 27th Annual International St. Florian Strawberry Festival

Saturday & Sunday
May 6 & 7
NOON UNTIL 9:00 P.M.

- Fantastic Strawberry Related Goods
- Cordons Entertainment
- Indoor Las Vegas - \$500 Max.
- Serve Dancing
- Polish Food - Games
- Prizes - 70 - 8000

St. Florian Church is located East of I-75 and south of Chrysler East in Farmington.

Midwest Artisans Market

a juried show of fine art & quality crafts

Oakland Community College
Orchard Ridge Campus—Bldg. H

May 6
10 am—4 pm

\$2 admission • under 10 free
Drawing every hour for \$35 gift certificates
10% off Orchard Lake Rd.

Daily Promotions
(313) 971-7424

Mother's Day BUFFET

HOLIDAY INN - LIVONIA WEST
SUNDAY, MAY 14 - 10 A.M.-3 P.M.

Receive a Complimentary Souvenir Photo for Mom

Enjoy chef's specialties such as: carved prime rib, peel and eat shrimp, beef stir-fry, grilled chicken breast with pineapple salsa, an array of breakfast items and a fantastic dessert bar.

Adults \$16.95 • Seniors \$14.95 • Children \$7.95

Holiday Inn
LIVONIA WEST
1-275 St. Mile Road • Livonia
Reservations Necessary
(313) 464-1300