

# New Second City revue sure to outlive O.J. trial

By BOB SADLER

**Second City** — Just because Second City — Detroit's production is entitled "It's Phone Home," it doesn't mean that O.J. jokes dominate.

"It's Phone Home," the troupe's fourth revue, has the catchiest title, edging out "Kevorkian Unplugged," their second revue. The seven member ensemble has undergone some changes. Tim Pryor of Farmington Hills, and Jerry C. Minor of Fenton, have moved on to other things. Pryor paying more attention to his family and other life in the ad business, and Minor to work on a one-man stage show.

Joining the cast are longtime Detroit stand-up Rico Bruce Wade, previously a member of the touring company, and mysterious Grant Krause of Detroit, whose only other credits include Wayne State University's theater program, and a stint as a bouncer at Second City — Detroit.

"It's Phone Home" opens with a sketch ripped from the Simpson case. Nancy Hayden as Marcia

## "It's Phone Home"

Where: Second City — Detroit, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit  
Curtain times 8 p.m.  
Wednesday-Sunday, 10:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday.  
Tickets: \$12 to \$18, call (313) 965-2222.

Clark, and Chris Smith, as Johnnie Cochran, review potential jurors who each, in their own way, are doing their best to be dismissed. The only other reference to the trial of the century was this wisecrack uttered by Smith in a later sketch: "If an ex-football player was going to go crazy and kill his wife, why couldn't it have been Frank Gifford?"

An appealing element to humor Second City-style is the way quick-hitting vignettes are used as breaks between longer sketches. Some of the evening's heartiest laughs come from these short, sweet morsels.

Andrew Newberg of Rochester,

and Jackie Puritan of West Bloomfield, joined Smith and Hayden for a well-oiled place chronicle what seemed to be a rollercoaster ride — until the pilot announces they have arrived safely at Metro.

Musical numbers are sprinkled throughout to maintain pace, and these things on a high note, "It's Phone Home" gives the Motor City new too-tappers like "I Think I'm Gonna Die Today," in which Newberg, Wade and Krause play crows about to become hamburgers, "I'm in Love with a Convent," and "Disneyland Detroit," the show's grand finale.

Overall, the verdict on this show is fun. A few of the sketches don't quite hit on all cylinders at this point, but in time, those bugs can be worked out or better still, new sketches will take their place.

The only question remaining is whether the Simpson trial will outlast the run of "It's Phone Home."

To leave a message for Bob Sadler, call (313) 953-2047, mail-



CHRISTOPHER LARK

Funny scene: Nancy Hayden and Rico Bruce Wade act up in Second City — Detroit's "It's Phone Home."

box 1895, on a Touch-Tone phone, or write to him care of Let's Go!, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

## Writer beset by literary characters



MARY JANE DOERR

unexpected happenings.

The unexpected guest in the out-of-formula murder mystery is a floundering writer, Peter Knight, perplexingly played by Mark Dressman with a smile on his face but no tongue in cheek.

Haunted by the ghosts of literary past, characters created by the world's great mystery writers while writing during a storm in a

deserted Vermont Victorian manner isolated from the outside, Knight's creative imagination which has run dry, suddenly runs wild.

An "ethereal" talent agency has sent him a group of Topper-like actors, who know and dislike each other. Knight seeks to dispense with the rules of mystery writing but this cast can only play by the rules making things difficult for Knight. He loses control because he doesn't know what is going to happen since he hasn't written the mystery yet.

Agatha Christie's imaginative mystery writing provides a wealth of material to humorize. As Fiona Babcock knitting an octopus sweater (of a non red color), Shirley Biggs, does an exceptional job

satirizing Mrs. Boyle of "Mousetrap."

This part is not the only role satirized by the witty playwright. Jennie Cron is the sassy sweet ingenue, Kay Kelsey, Shelly Slater is the pregnant maid Addie; Bob Kaiser is the forbearing butler and Jeff Haddad is the over zealous juvenile, Dick Stanton. The unhappily married couple, Lydia and Jordan Dillingham, is played by a sexy Mikki Malatesta and a crass Doug Noel. Marilyn Randa, as the housekeeper Minna, gives a Bob Evans touch of reality to the show, unable to see the actors as Knight sees them.

Like the meticulously hand stenciled wallpaper on Joe Urkshus' handsome set, director Rob Chrenko has guided the actors into a clever mix of humor

## "Out of Sight... Out of Murder"

Theater: Troy Players, at the Troy Community Center, 520 West Big Beaver Road, (at I-75), Troy.

Curtain times 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 19-20; 2 p.m. Sunday, May 21.

Tickets: \$9 adults, student and senior citizen discounts available. Call (810) 879-1285.

and mystery, winding it all up into a surprising Pygmalion ending.

Outsight! Mary Jane Doerr of Troy is a fulltime teacher and freelance writer who specializes in opera and musical theater.

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