

THEATER

Actors have 'leg up' on Robin Hood

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYBY
SPECIAL WRITER

"Robin Hood: The Musical" will be presented at 7 p.m. Thursday, July 20 and 21; 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday, July 22; and 1 p.m. Sunday, July 23 by Stagecrafters Youth Theatre at the Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Tickets are \$5 (all seats reserved). Call (810) 541-6430.

Members of the Stagecrafters Youth Theatre really take the theatrical "good luck" wish of "break a leg" to heart. Three broken legs — make that ankles — play an important role in "Robin Hood: The Musical."

Bill Bradley of Beverly Hills is almost passed on the May tryouts because he is recovering from a broken ankle. "I was playing with the dog outside when a bad fall caused the injury," said the sophomore at Birmingham's Groves High School.

But try out he did. With leg in a cast, Bill was successful in winning the top role of Robin Hood.

"I was a little worried about being in this role, because it requires that I do a few stunts. But an air cast on my leg under my boot allows me to handle these responsibilities," said the actor of seven years. This is his second Stagecrafters production.

A broken ankle was responsible for another Beverly Hills resident, David Hake, getting the role of Little John.

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Bill Bradley

"The actor assigned this role was injured when he fell during rehearsals," Hake said. "I was asked to step in for him."

Hake, also a sophomore at Groves, has been in two previous Stagecrafters productions. In addition, he has performed in a number of plays throughout the metro area for the past 10 years.

"I like acting because I can take on the personalities of many different characters. It's like being a little kid and playing," Hake said.

In addition to sharing an interest in the theater, these friends and neighbors (they live just two doors from each other) also share a love of tennis. Both Bill and David were members of their school's junior varsity tennis program this past spring.

The third and most recent broken ankle is on the director, Dan



Merry band: David Hake of Beverly Hills as Little John (left to right), Bill Bradley of Beverly Hills as Robin Hood, and Adam DePetris of East Pointe as Friar Tuck in Stagecrafters Youth Theatre production of "Robin Hood: The Musical."

Rose, vocal teacher at Birmingham's Berkshire Middle School. He was helping a friend build a treehouse for their children when he fell off the structure's roof.

Because of the string of broken ankles, members of Stagecrafters Youth Theatre are no longer encouraged to say "break a leg" when their fellow thespians go on stage.

At any rate, "Robin Hood: The Musical" features lively tunes, swashbuckling adventure and laughs.

This musical is the story of the outlaw Robin Hood who lives in Sherwood Forest with his merry followers. Impoverished citizens

led by Robin Hood are waging a battle against the evil Prince John. Lady Merle of Cornwall hopes to make John more popular to his subjects by forcing Maid Marian, Robin Hood's childhood sweetheart, to marry the prince.

It's up to Robin to stop the marriage, defeat the nasty sheriff and secure the land for the King's return.

Helping Robin in his task are other area youngsters, including Libby Pryby and Eric Hahn of Beverly Hills, J.P. Zannit of Birmingham and Catherine Bergman and Courtney Clancy, both of Troy. Ruth Vansulichem of Troy is a producer.

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JULY

7:00 Detroit Symphony Orchestra
8:00 Berthoven's Big Five w/conductor Neeme Järvi • 8 pm
9:00 Classical Kids "Beethoven Lives Uppstairs" • 12 pm
10:00 Russian Favorites w/conductor Neeme Järvi • 8 pm
11:00 Laser Light Spectacular: Hollywood Blackbust • 8:30 pm

24 American Family Theatre's Pinocchio • 11 am

25 The David Sanborn Group

AUG

3 Dave Koz
14 Weezer w/Tenacious D and The Dog
17 An Evening with Barry Manilow
18 Always...Patsy Cline — Stage Presentation
19 The Robert Cray Band w/Tat Marlow
20 Judy Collins/David Gates formerly of Bread
24 Dave Matthews Band w/Dorime Iams
26 Soul Asylum w/The Jayhawks, Matthew Sweet and Victoria Williams • 6:45 pm
29 The Neville Brothers featuring Aaron Neville w/Alan Neville
31 Shari Lewis • 7 pm

SEPT

1 Roger Whittaker
2 Joan Baez

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Troy Players offer spirited 'Secret Garden'

BY BENITA GREEN
SPECIAL WRITER

"The Secret Garden" is being presented by the Troy Players July 21-23, 28-29. Shows are at 8 p.m. with 2 p.m. matinees on Sunday. Tickets are \$10, \$9 for senior citizens and \$9 for students younger than 18.

Usual opening-night jitters aside, the Troy Players' first performance of "The Secret Garden" was a spirited one.

Based on the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, with music by Lucy Simon and book and lyrics by Marsha Norman, "The Secret Garden" follows the self-discovery of Mary Lennox (played by Brooke Andros), a bitter, lonely girl, who, orphaned after a cholera epidemic in Colonial India, is shipped off to the English countryside manor of her unresponsive uncle, Archibald Craven (Phil Paonessa).

Mary soon finds out that the manor is haunted by the spirit of her Aunt Lily (Jennifer Combs), as well as the overwhelming sorrow of her uncle, and his conniving brother, Dr. Neville Craven (Kevin Edwards), who both resent Mary's disturbing resemblance to the well-loved Lily.

There are many good voices in this musical production, and the rapport among the actors gives sparkle to what might otherwise be a tedious show, as much of the action drifts between reality and the dream-state of Mary's mind as she remembers her parents in India and discovers the secrets of her new family in England.

Phil Paonessa makes a strong impression as the reclusive, invalid, Archibald. He plays the heavy-hearted widower with soulfulness and "Where in the World," a song about Archibald's attempt to forget Lily, left many in the audience sniffling. Parker Plague, of Canton, who plays Archibald's sickly young son, Colin, has a sweet light voice, and scenes between himself and Andros, of Livonia, are alive with a refreshing, innocent honesty.

The supporting cast is fine as well; Kimberly Cruchon is cool and spooky as Mrs. Medlock, the intimidating housekeeper of Misselthwaite Manor, while both Doug Clark (Dickens) and Jodie Kuhn (Martha), as the Yorkshire servants who befriended Mary, lighten the dark story with their cheerful singing. Jennifer Combs (Lily), Emily Raymond (Rose Lennox), and Kevin Edwards (Captain Albert Lennox) also make fine appearances in this production.

The only distraction was the various attempts at British accents, which wandered from Australian to Michigan to American Southern, and occasionally settled on England.

A few more notes drifted in occasionally from the orchestra pit, which also tended to drown out

REVIEW

voices, due to an inadequate sound system.

The director, Michael A. Gra-
vame, made the most of the small

stage and constant scene changes, with chorus members doubling as stage hands.
The set, created by Randy Polega, Jeannette Soman, and Steve Czank, was simple but inspired. A few special effects made nice touches as well.

The show, although meant for audiences of all ages, may be especially delightful for young children, as they watch the protagonist, Mary, metamorphose from a sullen, unhappy child into a life-affirming teenager, from a weed into a flower.

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