

SPECIAL EVENTS

'Lend Me a Tenor' very funny

"Lend Me a Tenor" continues through Nov. 12, at Meadow Brook Theater on the campus of Oakland University. Call (810) 377-3300 or (810) 645-6668 for tickets, show times.



BARBARA MICHAELS

Mistaken identity, double entendres, and general goofiness abound in Ken Ludwig's hilarious "Lend Me a Tenor." Meadow Brook Theatre's current production of this classic farce features a highly polished cast gleefully romping in and out of the six stage doors that help provide the merry confusion.

In 1934 Cleveland, world-renowned tenor Tito Merelli (John Patrick Lowrie) is due to perform with the local opera company. Impresario Saunders (Phillip Locker) has assigned his assistant Max (Scott Mikita) to keep tight reign on "Il Stupendo," who's prone to excess drinking and womanizing.

When Tito takes too many sleeping pills and is presumed dead, Max tries to save the day by

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wearing the tenor's costume and make-up to impersonate him. Soon Tito awakens, dons a spare costume, heads for the theater, and confusion reigns.

Meanwhile, Max and Sanders must juggle the demands of the latter's infatuated daughter Maggie (Kathleen McCall), amorous local soprano Diane (Allison Edwards), society grande dame Julie (Laurie V. Logan), Tito's hot-headed wife Maria (Diane Van Fossen), and an opera-sputing bellhop (Thomas Mahard).

Lowrie is convincing as the temperamental, passionate singing star and makes wonderful use of facial expressions to reflect Tito's shifting emotions, particularly his confusion in the second act.

The role of Saunders allows Locker to showcase his strong flair for comedy. Believing Tito is dead, Saunders vents his frustrations both verbally and physically on the inert body, and Locker's face grows redder and redder from his all-out efforts. He's also terribly funny practicing tongue-in-cheek addresses to the opera audience.

Mikita is a very likable Max, appropriately nerdy in the first act and with greatly increased self-confidence in the second. Tito's attempt to teach Max to loosen up before singing is delightfully comic, and in their duet Lowrie and Mikita demonstrate impressive vocal skills as well.

McCall's ingenious Maggie is a perfect counterfoil to Edwards' sultry Diana. Both use lots of body language as well as fine vocal inflections to convey their characterizations.

As Julie, Logan bespeaks matronly class and thus is absurdly funny when she attempts to be as amusing as Van Fossen's Maria is an amusingly hot-blooded as she is hot-tempered, and Mahard's bellhop is terrifically sassy and droll.

The fast-paced evening of laughs under director Geoffrey Sherman culminates with even faster-paced curtain calls as the cast re-enacts the entire plot in fast-forward. Peter Hick's handsome Art Deco set is well-matched by Barbara Jenks' lush costumes.

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

Madcap romp



Season opener: The Farmington Players is opening its 1995-96 season with "Bedroom Farce" by Alan Ayckbourn, 8 p.m. Friday & Saturday, Oct. 27-28; 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 29, at the Players Barn, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Tickets \$8, call (810) 553-2955. The show featuring Christine Alce (left) and Susie Shubicki, continues weekends through Nov. 18. "Bedroom Farce" is a madcap romp about love, marriage, leaky roofs and the all too common foibles that challenge all couples.

Winter Art Fair Oct. 28-29

Area artists are among those participating in the 22nd Ann Arbor Winter Art Fair, taking place Saturday-Sunday, Oct. 28-29, at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road.

A total 276 of the finest artists and craftspeople in the country will present works in a variety of media, such as traditional and contemporary paintings, sculptures, pottery, jewelry, handwoven clothing and leather bags.

The artists include Charles Hall of Birmingham, wood sculptures; Nannette Wilecek of Canton, fiber; Laura Amendt of Farmington Hills, glass; Karen McDavitt of Farmington Hills, clay; Maureen Voorheis of West Bloomfield, metal and glass sculptures; and Stan Megdall of West Bloomfield, blown glass.

Admission is \$5, free for under age 10. Hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Total 2,500 free parking spaces will be available.

To get to the art fair, take I-94 to Exit 177 (State Street). Turn south to Terrell Road, then right (west) to Ann Arbor-Saline Road. Turn right (north) to the entrance of the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds. The event will take place in a heated facility. Exit 176 (Main Street) will be closed Saturday two hours before game.

The art fair is presented by Audree Levy, whose events were named among the top 10 art fairs in the country by Sunshine Artists magazine in 1993.



Art show: Works by 275 of the finest artists and craftspeople in the country, including Marlene Denn and Kelly Hewitt, will be featured at the 22nd Ann Arbor Winter Art Fair.

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Frame Works features works by Tom Hale

Classic cars take center stage in an exhibit of original paintings, limited-edition prints and posters by Tom Hale through the end of October at Frame Works, 833 Penniman, Plymouth.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, until 8 p.m. Thursday, and 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday. For information call (313) 459-3355.

Hale, an internationally recognized artist, combines realism and abstraction in classic car paintings of Duesenbergs, Rolls Royce, Pierce-Arrow, Packard, Cord, Cadillac, and Ford Thunderbird.

A graduate of Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, the Farmington Hills artist

worked 20 years as a styling designer for General Motors, Chrysler and American Motors before turning to painting full-time in 1985. Hale helped to establish the Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance in 1982. His painting for this year's poster was featured in a six-page layout in the August issue of Automobile magazine.

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