

THEATER

SRO's 'Everybody Loves Opal' rollicking good fun

SRO productions presents "Everybody Loves Opal," 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through March 16; 2 p.m. Sundays March 19 & 17 at the City of Southfield's historic center "The Burgh" (northeast corner of Civic Center Drive and Berg Road, one block east of Telegraph). Tickets \$8 general admission, \$7 senior citizens and children. Call (810) 354-9362 or (810) 627-0700.

BOB WEIBEL
CRITICAL WRITER
Irene Hengstbeck, as Opal, in SRO's Production of "Everybody Loves Opal" is fond of saying, "If you have friends, nothing bad can happen to you." Unfortunately, those she considers her friends

are her worst enemies — they're out to kill her and collect on an insurance policy. It's the perfect premise for a screwball comedy, and SRO does a fine job with the show.

Hengstbeck's Opal is lovable and thoroughly captivating as a wacky junk lady. Though a bit young for the role, her energy and insight into Opal's character make for rollicking good fun.

Opal is your basic eccentric, with odd ideas about storing things. Sugar, for example, is in a Prince Albert can. Opal lives with a stray cat she has adopted in an old Victorian house that has seen better days. All sorts of junk, from stuffed animals to hubcaps and used tea bags on a string adorn the walls. It's a stuff you might call leftovers from a garage sale.

Well, into this humble abode comes a shabby but nice man. It seems they have just narrowly escaped arrest for selling fake perfume. Opal befriends them, and they quickly see she is the ideal

REVIEW

pigeon for their next caper. Fortunately for Opal, this is a gang that can't shoot straight.

Their plots to knock off Opal keep failing. First, she just misses getting hit by a falling ceiling. A hit and run accident misses the target. Even poison isn't enough to knock off the indomitable Opal.

Something even more amazing occurs. After each attempt, one of the gang is won over by the lovable Opal.

First to fall is Gloria, whom Opal offers her last \$39 to buy a slinky dress. Nancy Segal is very effective as the winsome but shallow Gloria, who wants to marry a millionaire or go to Hollywood, whichever occurs first. Meanwhile, she's trying to make an illicit buck.

Next, with a change of heart, is the group's slob, Sol Bozo. Doug

Noel plays this loser to the hilt with great lines like, "I'm not a failure. I just haven't been successful yet." He ends up wanting to pull Opal's little red wagon. "Funny, I was thinking of killing Opal, now I'm thinking of marrying her. Usually, it's the other way around."

Lastly, the sarcastic professor Bradford Winter, gives into Opal's charms after she makes excuses to the police after he tries to poison her. Marc Rosati gives a consistent and entertaining reading in the role of a drunken, one-lung professor with ideas of grandeur.

Also doing good jobs in supporting roles are Toby Booker as Officer Jankie and Jim Cave as the Doctor for the insurance company.

Director, Margo King has paced the show crisply, the set is stunning and Southfield's historic center "The Burgh," a renovated 1854 church, is a charming place



Comedy: Doug Noel (left to right), Marc Rosati, Irene Hengstbeck, Nancy Segal, Toby Booker and Jim Cave in SRO Productions presentation of "Everybody Loves Opal."

to see what Opal does when she freelance writer, who has spent over 25 years in community theater as a director, designer and performer.
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Church presents children's musical

Franklin Community Church will be presenting "How the Penguin Got It's Tuxedo," a musical for children of all ages 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 15-16, and Friday, March 22. Tickets are \$5.

On Saturday, March 23 there will be a fund-raising spaghetti dinner after the 6 p.m. show. Tickets are \$16 for show and dinner, or \$100 for table of eight. Children ages 6-12, \$7, children 5 and under, \$5. Baby-sitting on site is \$3 an hour. All proceeds go to the church. Call (810) 625-7186, (810) 626-1693 or (810) 626-6006.

The musical is a take-off on Rudyard Kipling's "Just So Stories" that tell how the animals got

to look the way they do. The prize winning musical is written by Sally Sawyer of West Bloomfield, a member of Franklin Community Church choir, and directed by Joyce Uzelac, a profes-

sional actress/director and owner of a children's theater camp in Southfield. Sawyer is a member of the Michigan Playwrights, Detroit Women Writers, and Dramatists Guild.

Soprano, baritone sing Broadway hits

Soprano Laurie Meeker and Jim Wilking, baritone, will present a musical program 8 p.m. Saturday, March 16 at North Congregational Church, 36250 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. A dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Tickets for dinner and performance are \$11 and can be reserved by calling (810) 848-1750.

Tickets for the performance only are \$5, and can be purchased at the door. Meeker and Wilking will perform selections of Broadway and popular music, accompanied by pianist Pierre Fracalanza. Featured composers include Beethoven, Loewe, Kern, Rodgers, Schmidt and Strouse.

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