

# Meadowbrook's 'Jest' sequel keeps up humor

BY BARBARA MICHAELS  
SPECIAL WRITER

Though theatrical sequels have a long tradition of being inferior to their originals, the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "Jest a Second," James Sherman's sequel to his funny "Beau Jest," holds its own in the laugh department.

While the laughs do not always flow as abundantly as in "Beau Jest," there are many very funny moments in "Jest a Second," both verbal and visual. The cast, mostly carried over from the "Beau Jest" production, continue to be excellent, this time under Phillip Locker's very able direction.

"Jest a Second" picks up about a year later than "Beau Jest." Bob and Sarah (John Seibert and Linnea Todd) are now married, Bob having converted to Judaism and Sarah now pregnant and three weeks overdue. A family dinner has been planned to celebrate Sarah's mother's birthday, and brother Joel (David Ellenstein) has promised to bring his new love Randy to meet his folks.

The catch is that Randy is male, not female, and Joel has great trepidation about telling his parents he is gay. When the

## REVIEW

crucial moment comes, Joel falters so badly that Bob ducks into his closet, dons an outfit he wore in "La Cage aux Folles," and poses as a female Randy.

When the truth comes tumbling out at the end, this time around there are some surprise twists that seem very unrealistic and forced. Nevertheless the play abounds with the same warmth and love of its predecessor.

Seibert continues to be irresistibly charming, whether he's playing Bob, posing as Randy, or sometimes forgetting and answering as the one when he's dressed as the other. Seibert also handles Bob's overzealous pursuit of his new religion with gentleness and credibility.

Todd is once again fine as Sarah, equally believable when she's being cranky about her long-term pregnancy or lovingly supportive to her brother in his emotional turmoil.

Ellenstein makes Joel's distress very believable and sympathetic to her brother in his emotional turmoil.

Ellenstein makes Joel's distress very believable and sympa-

thetic. A loving father, he fears losing his children now that his ex-wife is filing for exclusive custody and plans to use his homosexuality against him. A loving son, he truly fears hurting his parents, even though he's the one who previously gave Sarah a pep talk about having the courage to tell her parents the truth.

As the parents, Miriam and Abe, Henrietta Heremelin and Robert Grossman continue their very memorable portrayals of two unforgettable characters.

Heremelin's Miriam remains incessantly meddling and upon receiving her birthday gifts she turns into such a self-sacrificing martyr one is ready to wring her neck. Then she delivers a very moving, redemptive speech in which she explains she can never stop worrying about her children as long as there is still so much hate in the world.

Grossman's Abe is still quibbling and crabby. He's hilarious in his attraction to Bob/Randy and his determination to stay physically close to her.

As a real Randy, John Michael Manfredi is very likable, warm and wise, a nice addition to the family.

# Plymouth Guild shows revue

BY SUE SUCHYTA  
SPECIAL WRITER

The Plymouth Theatre Guild launches its 50th season with *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, a musical revue celebrating favorite Broadway musicals. The show runs two more weekends, Fridays and Saturdays, Oct. 25-26 and Nov. 1-2, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, Oct. 27, at 6 p.m. at the Water Tower Theatre on the campus of the Northville Psychiatric Hospital. Tickets are \$12 at the door, and \$11 in advance. For information, call 810-349-7110.

PTG's musical gala provides a

talented mix of more than 50 performers, featuring director James Morini's voice students and community theater regulars. To accommodate the fast pace and diversity of songs, the stage was dominated by an expanse of steps, which accommodated the entire cast for company numbers and provided an effective way to create vignettes on different levels when featuring highlights from a given musical. The actors, dressed in basic black, used quick and clever costume pull-on pieces to rapidly change their appearance between numbers.

The group numbers were

impressive, from the opening number, *A Little Night Music*, to the closing number, *Applause*. *Do You Hear The People Sing*, from *Les Miserables*, ended the first act on a stunning note, while the men of the company opened the second act with a stirring rendition of *BUI-DO!* from *Miss Saigon*.

Comic relief came from ongoing "interruptions" from the *Nunsense* nuns, who comically beleaguered talented narrator Debbie Pletzer by sneaking in their production numbers. Talented soloists were the rule of the evening.

## THEATER



Have your first cup of coffee this Saturday morning with "Our House," Detroit Edison's Home Energy Conservation Show. Let Tom Tynan and Paula Engel get your mind percolating this Saturday at 6:30 a.m. Find out ways to make your home more energy efficient, saving you money and helping to preserve the environment at the same time.

Sit down with "Our House" this Saturday at 6:30 a.m. on WDIV-TV, Channel 4.



Turning energy into solutions.  
**Detroit Edison**



THE  
**Observer & Eccentric**  
NEWSPAPERS  
**WNIC 100.3 FM**  
Detroit's Next-Root

**SUGARLOAF'S 2ND ANNUAL novi art fair**

**OCT. 25, 26, 27, 1996**  
Novi Expo Center • Novi, MI

**300 FINE ARTISTS & craft designers**  
from 39 states & Canada

Daily Admission \$6  
Friday - Sunday 10-6  
Children under 12 FREE  
Parking FREE compliments of Sugarloaf  
Demonstrations • Entertainment

DIRECTIONS: Located on I 96 NW of Detroit at Exit 167. Go south on Novi Rd. Right on Expo Center Dr. During Fair call (810) 389-7003

Discount admission coupons available at Farmer Jack or call 800-210-9900 before October 18

**FARMER JACK**

Joined All & Crafts Fair since 1976

**HOMER ROWS** Observer & Eccentric

**WALT DISNEY'S WORLD ON ICE**  
Produced by KENNETH FELD

**THE SPIRIT OF POCAHONTAS**

**NOV. 19-24**

**FOR TICKETS CALL: (810) 540-0660**

**Find THE DISNEY STARS AND YOU MAY WIN TICKETS TO SEE THEM!**

**Observer & Eccentric SEARCH GAME**

Here's how to win:

1. Find all four pieces in today's Classified Section.
2. Cut out each game piece and paste into the correct square.
3. Fill out the entry form and mail to:

Discretionary Contest  
10011 Schoolcraft Rd., Livonia, MI 48150

4. Winners will be announced in the Nov. 4 and Nov. 7 editions of the Observer & Eccentric Classified Section.
5. If you are a winner, you must call (313) 953-2162 by 5 p.m. Nov. 13 to claim your tickets. We will mail the tickets to you.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline for entries: 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 27. Twelve winners will be picked in a random drawing. Each winner will receive four tickets to the Nov. 19, 1996, 7:30 p.m. performance. Winners who do not call by Nov. 13 will forfeit their tickets. Employees of the Observer & Eccentric & their families are not eligible to win.