

## THEATER

## 'Light up the Sky' will make you feel warm all over

Farmington Players present "Light up the Sky," 8 p.m. Nov. 8-9; Nov. 14-16, and Nov. 21-23; and 2 p.m. Sundays, Nov. 10 & 17, at the playhouse, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road (1 1/2 mile west of Orchard Lake Road), Farmington Hills. Call (810) 553-2955.



VICTORIA DIAZ

The Farmington Players' production of Moss Hart's "Light Up the Sky," may not exactly set the heavens ablaze, but it contains enough laughter and glowing moments to make you feel warm all over on a chilly November night.

At the heart of its success is a savvy cast and crew who seem to well understand Hart's love for the theater and the "diamond people" he brought to life.

Directed by Cynthia Tupper, this 1948 comedy looks at a motley crew of show folk on a jittery opening night in Boston. Swathed in oh-so-elegant tuxes,

silks, satins, furs, and "diamonds," and making 1948 jokes about iron lungs, Mortimer Snerd, and "the bomb." Hart's players are really more accurately a cast of caricatures than a cast of characters.

There's the beleaguered producer, his goofy wife, the glamorous "stah" of the show, her "Hah-vahd" spouse, the overly-emotional actor, the gin-playing stage mother, the young (idealistic) playwright, the quiet ghost writer, the wise old showman, some drunken Shriners, and one fez-wearing individual who turns out to be a savior (well, almost).

As producer Sidney Black veteran actor Ralph Reenti does a good job in a demanding role. Mostly, he delivers with a kind of brisk and zingy spark that's great fun to watch. When, occasionally, this nerve appears to fade into the Ritz-y woodwork, his character seems just a tad tiresome and "talky."

As his wife, Frances, cute Suzanne Rogers gets to swish around glitteringly in enough "diamonds" to light up the sky. She also gets to deliver lines like "Make it fast, will ya bub?" She

## REVIEW

appears to get a genuine kick out of her character who sounds as if she's drifted over from a cast of "Guys and Dolls" production somewhere, or dropped in from the funny papers. The fun is catching.

Playing leading lady, Irene, the statuesque and talented Mary Ann Tweedie seems perfectly cast.

From the moment she makes her boffo, boo-hoing entrance, till the final lines of the production, she's a stellar attraction and an absolute smash on this stage. Somehow, she manages to

appear utterly elegant and absolutely ridiculous at the same time, striking just the right tone for her self-obsessed — but charming — character.

Dennis Broadhead is a delightful (though damp!) thespian, and Kathleen Monticello a wry, riotously-funny state mother. Bob McSweeney succeeds quietly

as a kind of voice of reason. Most of the time, Thomas E. Adams is an endearingly-befuddled playwright, although, now and then, he appears to be focused slightly away from the action of the play.

Marge Wetzel, Ves Spindler, Jim Snideman, and Glenn Lacy round out an able supporting cast.

Special recognition should go to Brian Tupper for his knock-out set design. It's really one of the stars of this show, as are the post-war "New Look" costumes by Barbie Amann, Emily McSweeney, and director Tupper.

Victoria Diaz is a free-lance writer who specializes in theater and books.

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