

THEATER

Actress shares 'Family Secrets' in JET comedy

BY KEELY WYGONK STAFF WRITER

Michael Keaton cloned himself in the comedy 'Multiplicity' to satisfy the many roles his life demanded...

audience to "the family" in five monologues. "Family Secrets" is the longest running one-person show in Off-Broadway history.

Howells will be directing the production, which takes the audience on a funny, heartfelt and poignant roller-coaster ride.

"It's quite silly, it's a full evening, like five shows for the price of one," said Merson.

"Family Secrets" written by husband and wife Sherry Glaser and Greg Howell introduces the

"Family Secrets" When: Through Jan. 12. Performances 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays; 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays.

wants to bring her to a family gathering. Bev, the mother is a recovering manic depressant.

Sandra, one of the daughters, is a punk rocker. Rose, the grandmother finds love in her old age.

One of the lines in the show, is "if we weren't family we'd all be strangers." Being in a one-woman show is challenging, and also fun for the actress who is looking forward to returning to meter Detroit where she has lots of relatives.

JET artistic director Evelyn Orbach directed her in the first role she ever played - Evelyn, in "The Tenth Man," presented in 1964 at the center's old theater on Meyers in Detroit.

"I was 14, and they cast my father in the show so he could drive me to rehearsal," she

remembered. "In the show I played a bride haunted by her dead groom. Evie is an old friend of mine. I've known her all my life. She gave me my first dramatic role. It was Evie, her sense of dignity and what theater can be that inspired me. She's the first one who said I could do it. I've had a good career."

Merson, who now lives in Los Angeles has performed on Broadway, and made many film and television appearances including the film version of Neil Simon's "Lost In Yonkers," and the Miramax film "Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead."

On Broadway she appeared in "Saturday Sunday Monday" and "Children of a Lesser God."

DANCE

Sugar Plum Fairy, Cavalier return in 'Nutcracker' ballet

Here's a round-up of local "Nutcracker" ballet performances.

Lakes Area Civic Ballet Company presents "The Nutcracker" 7 p.m. Saturday Dec. 14, at West Bloomfield High School Auditorium, 4925 Orchard Lake Road. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door.

Professionals dancers are Christine Bove, who danced with the Arizona Ballet Company and now serves as the ballet mistress for the Lakes Area Civic Ballet,

and Juan Sanchez, a dancer from Miami. He will dance as the Nutcracker Prince.

Pre-sale tickets can be obtained by calling (810) 666-1971 or at Terri Newman's Dance Shoppe, 7330 Highland Road, Waterford. Call (810) 623-9160 for more information.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Michigan Opera Theatre. At The Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. Eighteen performances, through Dec. 22. Tickets \$13-\$35, call the DSO box office (313) 833-3700, or Ticketmaster (810) 645-6666.

Eric Johnston's Detroit Ballet presents the "Nutcracker" at Farmington High School, 3200

Shinawase, Farmington 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13. Tickets \$10 adults; \$7.50 children 13 and under, call (810) 473-9570.

Performance at the State Theater, Michigan Ave. (one block west of Wayne Road), Wayne 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14. Tickets \$5 adults; \$3 children, call (313) 721-7400.

Midwest Dance Theatre "Nutcracker" performance at South Lyon High School, 1000 N. Lafayette, South Lyon 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13. Tickets \$8 adults; \$5 students and seniors. Performance at Mercy High School, (11 Mile Road at Middlebelt), Farmington Hills 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec.

14. Tickets \$12 adults; \$9 students and seniors, call (810) 486-1962.

Artistry In Motion Dance School in Southfield will present "The Nutcracker Ballet Suite," 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14; and 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14 at Southfield Lathrup High School, 19201 W. 12 Mile Road. Tickets \$12 adults, \$10 adults. For more information, (810) 557-9320.

The performance will feature Detroit-area African American youth and guest artists Waverly Lucas, and his wife, Vena Gilreath-Lucas, to dance as Cavalier and the Sugar Plum Fairy. Mr. and Mrs. Lucas are co-founders and artistic directors of

Balletnic Dance Company in Atlanta, Georgia.

Rose Marie Floyd's Contemporary Civic Ballet Company presents "The Nutcracker," 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 14 at Warren Woods Middle School, 13400 E. 12 Mile Road (at Schoenherr) Warren. Tickets \$8, call (810) 641-9063 or (810) 546-7484.

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