

THEATER

Spirited SRO cast shines in Shakespeare spoof

■ You don't necessarily have to know your Macbeth to enjoy the humor, but it helps.

SRO Productions presents "The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of Macbeth," 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, through Sunday, Aug. 9 at the city of Southfield's Theburgh on the northeast corner of Civic Center Dr. and Bergh Road, one block east of Telegraph, Southfield. Tickets \$8, senior adults and children under 12, \$7, call (248) 821-0701.

BOB WEINER
SPECIAL WRITER

Southfield's SRO Productions current show is a mad, mad world of farcical fun and theatrics. The title is clue enough that you're in for the spoof of your life: "The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of Macbeth."

The idea of course is that the good ladies are theatrically challenged and anything that can go wrong, will. And does it ever.

During opening remarks, a spotlight doesn't work. The first scene is played backward, instead of toward the audience. When they finally get things turned around, you have three curtains (not unlike the TV show "Let's Make A Deal") and as performers appear from each curtain, they're not unlike some of the audience's outlandish gags for that show.

Under the effervescent direc-

tion of Nancy Harrower (who obviously knows her Shakespeare) one hilarious scene after another cascades over the audience, each one more preposterous than the previous one, complete with a dazzling array of costumes, props and special effects.

You don't necessarily have to know your Macbeth to enjoy the humor, but it helps. Briefly, three witches hail Macbeth as the future king. To assure their prophesy comes true, Macbeth (with encouragement from his wife) kills the present king, Duncan, and asserts others who might stand in his way, including his friend and fellow warrior, Banquo. Lady Macbeth is haunted by the blood on her hands, hence the line, "Out damn spot. Duncan's son, Macduff, gains revenge as he challenges Macbeth in mortal combat, hence the line, "Lay on Macduff!"

It's Shakespeare at his bloody best. In the hands of this spirited and talented cast, it's rollicking good fun. The ensemble, in various roles, includes Marc Rosati, Emily McSweeney, Barbie Amann, Ralph Rosati, Marge Wetzel, Dennis Hubel, Joan

Boufford, Kathy Booker, and Robin DeMaagd.

Barbie Amann is full of energy and a comic delight as Macbeth. The original Lady Macbeth couldn't make it so a stagehand, Ralph Rosati, has to step in at the last moment. His hairy chest, finely trimmed mustache and sumptuous wig are a visual treat. His comedy is never better than when he takes a pie in the face, a la Soupy Sales. His real-life son, Mark Rosati, scores as an over-the-top adjudicator who finds the show "daring and gripping," and in drag he makes a lovely Gwyneth.

Joan Boufford, Kathy Booker and Robin DeMaagd are a laugh riot as the three witches dancing about the kettle to the tune "That Old Black Magic" instead of the famous speech "Double, double, toil, and trouble."

Emily McSweeney is playful as Lady Macduff. Marge Wetzel is wonderful as the ghost of Banquo, and an even bigger scream on roller blades as Lady Macduff's son, Dennis Hubel has his moments as the harried director attempting to create order out of chaos.



Just a farce: Kathy Booker (left), Joan Boufford, Robin DeMaagd, Emily McSweeney and Marc Rosati in SRO Productions' presentation of "The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of Macbeth."

No power doesn't stop the show at Players Guild of Dearborn

Players Guild of Dearborn presents "First Dates and Fickle Hearts," a collection of classic comedies and farces, 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, July 31 and Aug. 1; 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 2, 12730 Madison (southeast of Monroe and Outer Dr.) Dearborn. Tickets \$10, call (313) 561-TKTS. BY RYAN MALIKIAN
SPECIAL WRITER

The show must go on. That is the best way to describe Friday evening's performance of "First Dates and Fickle Hearts" at the Players Guild of Dearborn. As many people know, many areas in Dearborn have been without power since the large storm swept through the metro-Detroit area on July 21.

Despite the lack of electrical power, the Players Guild was full of energy. "First Dates and Fickle

Hearts" was a collection of four one act comedies directed by Kirk Hans.

Despite Mother Nature's inconveniences, the cast acted out their first performance without a hitch. The Guild's rehearsal the prior evening. In fact, they performed without the comfort of a stage or for that matter a building. The lack of electricity in the building forced the performance to be held on the side in the parking lot. The Guild was apologetic for the inconvenience. In fact, they refunded the ticket price or exchanged the tickets purchased for Friday's performance to another day.

After the black stand-up backdrop was in place, and the car windows rolled down to allow the music to be heard, the first act began.

Anton Chekov's "A Marriage Proposal" was first on the agenda for the evening.

Gavin Milner played Ivan who asks Stephanie, played by Nick He Lied to Her Husband." Henry, played by Dan Dobrovich, has written several love poems to Aurora, Kim Donovan, and she has lost the letters. The two fight about what would happen if Aurora's husband had found out. Once the husband finds the poems, the rest can be left to the imagination. The acting in this play was much more believable.

At first it seemed as though the actors were a bit nervous, as may be expected, but they seemed like they were acting. The true test of an actor is to make the audience believe that they are that character.

At times the actors couldn't be heard, but outside forces were more to blame than the actors. Milner began screaming so much that he began to sweat profusely. As he was getting into his character, he seemed to relax a bit.

The topic of the play, a family arguing about land, was not extremely interesting, and the

acting matched. Not to worry, there were three other plays in the evening.

Moving on to the second one-act play, Bernard Shaw's "How He Lied to Her Husband." Henry, played by Dan Dobrovich, has written several love poems to Aurora, Kim Donovan, and she has lost the letters. The two fight about what would happen if Aurora's husband had found out. Once the husband finds the poems, the rest can be left to the imagination. The acting in this play was much more believable.

After a short intermission, the

performance continued with "Red Carnations." Hands down the best performance of the evening. This hilarious one-act about two men meeting the same girl, whom neither have seen before, leaves the audience laughing, especially with the unexpected twist at the end. The audience believed the performances by the cast, which included Dan Dobrovich, Don and Brooke Andres. In fact, as the scene closed with a kiss, the audience burst into laughter mixed with clapping.

Nature called again, as birds

began chirping consistently throughout the final one-act, Chekov's "The Brute." The widowed Mrs. Popoff, played by Maria Kovac, owes money to Mr. Smirnov for her husband. Yet in the midst of their quarreling, the two seemed to fall in love despite threats to murder one another. Kerry Plague as Mr. Smirnov, played his role to perfection.

All in all, the performance of "First Dates and Fickle Hearts" was an experience. The very accommodating crew seemed to be proud of their work as they should be.

DESTINATION: CRANBROOK

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