

# Kid Rock from page E1

In 1990, in support of his debut album "Grit Sandwiches for Breakfast" (Jive), he toured the United States with Ice Cube and Too Short. From there he jumped to the ill-fated Continuum label ("The Polyfux Method") before releasing 1996's "Early Mornin' Stoned Pimp" on his own label, Top Dog.

His independent releases sold more than 12,000 copies, picking the interest of Andy Karp, an artist and repertoire representative for Lava Records. After hearing "The Polyfux Method," he and Flom traveled to Detroit to see Kid Rock perform.

"We flew out to see a show at the State Theatre and there was 1,600 kids hopping up and down at the show. The show is truly like a great rock show in the tradition of Kiss meets the Beastie Boys. It blew me away. It's total entertainment," Flom explained.

"Devil Without a Cause" was recorded at the White Room and Temple of the Dog studios in Detroit. A number of Detroiters aided in the process, including Big Block's Kenny Tudrick, Chris Peters of Getaway Cruiser, and Robert Bradley, and Andrew and

Mike Nohra, all of Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise.

"This is one of the better ones," Kid Rock said of "Devil Without a Cause." "We did it right."

To mix the song "Badwidda," Kid Rock headed overseas to the famous Abbey Road Studios in London.

"That was an experience. We were doing it first class. It was cool because there was all these kids in the front (of the building) and stuff about John Lennon was written on the walls," said Kid Rock, who DJed the Beastie Boys' Grand Royal Christmas party last December.

With "Devil Without a Cause," Kid Rock and his band Twisted Brown Trucker add a new dimension to his music — country. Kid Rock, known to his mother as Bob Ritchie, and Flom said that his inspiration comes from the variety of music Kid Rock listened to growing up in Macomb County.

"He was raised on music as diverse as everything from Hank Williams to Lynyrd Skynyrd to Ice Cube to Guns 'N Roses or whatever. Kid Rock is a force of nature."

Although Kid Rock has been doing the rap/rock thing for years, he wanted to make this a top-notch effort. There was one factor that proved a little troublesome for Kid Rock, however. Perfecting his vocals.

"The rock thing took a little work. I had to learn how to sing," he explained with a laugh. When asked how he practiced, he added, "Like everybody else — driving in the car."

# Gem from page E1

more than 40 properties in the downtown theater district area seemed risky at best, Forbes determined not to save the Gem Theatre is arguably one of the most gutsy preservation moves in Detroit's history.

"Losing the Gem would have been like losing a front tooth," said Forbes in his typically understated manner. "The true test is whether we'd do it all over again," said Forbes, with an ear-to-ear grin. "The answer is 'Yes.'"

With his characteristic Scots-like charm and gregariousness, Forbes christened the new address for the Gem by introducing an spirited rendition of the Scottish traditional, "Bless This House."

At the completion of the song, Forbes gave a thumbs up to the performer, then stepped from the stage and onto the cabaret-style floor seating. Moments later, the curtain rose.

It was a perfect moment of propriety, accomplishment and modesty. Perhaps it wasn't a coincidence that it had the inimitable sound of Scottish bagpipes.

After two weeks of warm ups, "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" opens the Gem Theatre's new season.

Like past popular productions at the Gem, "I Love You, You're Perfect" aims straight for an irresistible hook and tap-along melody. It's the type of musical theater filled with jazzy songs, biting lyrics and rapid pace that appeals to mainstream audiences.

If "All Night Strut" and "Forever Plaid" had audiences lined up

at the Gem, then "I Love You, You're Perfect" surely won't disappoint.

Foking fun and probing the irrational impulses of men-women relationships, the bouncing skits and songs peel away at the inherent — perhaps unbridgeable — differences of those looking for the ideal relationship.

Catchy and delightfully ditty, "I Love You, You're Perfect" is, in some ways, an updated account of Sondheim's award-winning "Company."

Cleverly, the show — which has been running for two years in New York — combines the irresistible elements of cute and tidy lyrics with the realizations that relationships are blissfully painful.

For the most part, "I Love You, You're Perfect" doesn't probe beyond superficial appearances. Nor does it intend to. Several of the skits could have found a place on the former TV show, "Men Behaving Badly." Especially, "Single Man Drought," "A Stud and a Babe" and "Wedding Vows."

Meanwhile, the more biting songs seem to toss crumbs of truth about gender differences, and the proverbial anxiety about the "e-word" — commitment.

The two-acts of musical skits will surely appeal to younger audiences wondering if there's anything relevant in today's theater. Ah, love, misunderstanding and what one will do in the name of pride.

"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" combines expectations about love with the need for security.

# Tour from page E1

and when you hear Gershwin, you think New York."

Engelkes crossed over himself. He was first attracted to the trombone by a jazz performer when he was growing up in a small town in Iowa.

"I had Tommy Dorsey records that my dad listened to a lot. I was also wearing braces at the time and might have taken up the trumpet otherwise. But I now know I made the right decision," Engelkes said.

A performance by the New York Philharmonic in Ames, Iowa, switched the brass player to classical music, though he enjoys doing "pops" programs when a Tony Bennett or Mel Torme come to sing with the Symphony.

"It's fun when we get to do it and with Gershwin we get to do a little of that," Engelkes said.

Tilson Thomas, who became music director of the San Francisco Symphony in 1995, has continued to program a lot of music by Gershwin and other American composers.

"For instance, he's an expert on Charles Ives. We do the main pieces, but he pulls out pieces we've never heard, like "The Stepples to Mountains" piece," said Engelkes. "He also speaks to the audience about the pieces. He will often talk about them for the first time and even symphony members will learn something."

On Sunday afternoon, the Symphony will perform Gershwin's "American in Paris" and his Second Rhapsody for Orchestra

and Piano with Tilson Thomas doing double duty as conductor and pianist, as he does on the new CD. To balance the Gershwin, the Symphony will offer Mahler's First Symphony in D Major ("Titan").

"Mahler's First Symphony, we were talking in rehearsal that the must have been in his late 20s, his songs of the Wayfarer. These are truly beautiful tunes, emotional pieces. We're marveling at how wonderful a piece it was and we know what was to come," Engelkes said.

The "beautiful tunes" and songlike qualities are often regarded as Gershwin's greatest strengths as a classical composer as well and Engelkes said the similarities as well as the differences in the composers went into the programming decision.

"I think Ann Arbor is getting the best program, the best of both," Engelkes said.

Gershwin never lived to fulfill his promise as a classical composer. He died in 1937 at only 39. But he left behind a rich legacy of hundreds of songs considered the cream of American standards and orchestral music that is widely loved and influential in the use of modern rhythms.

The UMS continues its celebration of Gershwin with the program "Gershwin: Sung and Unsung" Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 9-10, featuring soprano Dana Hanchard and tenor Ted Keegan performing songs from "Porgy and Bess" and "Lady Be Good" and rare, unpublished songs from the Library of Congress.

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