

THEATER

St. Dunstan's puts heart into musical revue

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook presents "Heart and Music: Broadway's Best in Song" — a musical revue fund-raiser to benefit lighting equipment improvements for the Cranbrook outdoor Greek Theatre. Performances 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Feb. 12-13 at the theater 400 Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills. Tickets are \$16 per person (show only), \$20 per person, reception and show, call (248) 644-0527 or (248) 684-0698.

BY MARY JANE DOERR
SPECIAL WRITER

In this season of romance, there is a love song for everyone's musical taste at St. Dun-

stan's Theatre Guild's cabaret "Heart & Music, Broadway's Best in Song." So delightful are these group of seven dancing singers, this musical revue should be called St. Dunstan's Best in Song.

Jamie Richards directs this distinctive affair (and stars in it) with flair. Numbers are woven together through the common Valentine theme accented by John Mattiello's carefully planned choreography and the stylish costume changes from Steven Petix and Body Works, Inc. A blackened stage highlights artists and colorful slides featuring the names of each Broadway musical as the singers

feature the show's hits. No commentary is needed to disrupt the smooth flow of the mood swings.

The selections are mostly from the contemporary musicals including — "A Chorus Line," "Big," "Godspell," and "Rent" — with a little Bob Fosse (to show off Mattiello's fine choreography) and some Stephen Sondheim in between.

Marlene Loucks on the keyboard, Carl Stewart on drums, and Eleanor Strubel on bass meshed all of these love songs into a medley.

Given the energetic style of this group of singers, they sparkled in the music from "Rent," and in the grouped Fosse

numbers, "All That Jazz," "Me and My Baby," and "Razle Dazle." Without the heavy amplification, the music from "Rent" was melodic and appreciable.

Always, when so many songs are presented in an evening, the musical range is demanding. Each singer in this cast had an impressive personal style featured to advantage by the carefully chosen memorable repertoire. No one who sees the show will forget Joey Johnson's version of "Love Changes Everything" from Andrew Lloyd Webber. Johnson is in his range in this ballad tune and puts his heart into the music to make it a highlight. He also scored strong-

ly for his rendition of "Bring Him Home" from "Les Miserables," even taking the finale in lovely falsetto.

Peggy Lee has personality in her voice. Her jazzy rhythm and timing was perfect for the show stopping "24 Hours of Lovin'," and her vocal agility was wonderful for the embellishments in "Day by Day." Particularly versatile in her acting and singing was Kendall Doman changing herself from the brainless Audrey in "Somewhere That's Green" ("Little Shop of Horrors") to a sophisticated love duet with Scott MacDonald in "Unworthy Of Your Love."

MacDonald not only accompanied Joey's solo "One Song Glory" ("Rent") on the guitar but had the vocal depth to sing a powerful "Stars" from Les Miserables.

Two moving performances came from Kim Brown who sang heart throbbing "I dreamed a dream" ("Les Miserables") and "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" (Evita). Teaming up beautifully was Jeff Drewna and Krysta Irvine in a natural "Last Night of the World" ("Miss Saigon"). Drewna also teamed up well with Jamie Richards in a clearly articulated "All for the Best" ("Godspell"). Nicki Stacey also articulated well in her narrative numbers like "Stop Time."

With a show like this, with all of its musical and artistic appeal, there really was no good time to end the evening of show stoppers.

Mary Jane Doerr of Troy is a freelance writer who specializes in theater.

Benefit from page E1

music. While a melancholic country song is quite a melodic distance from the traditional classical concert offerings, the BBSO hopes Scilliano's name recognition will help to attract patrons to the dinner reception and silent auction prior to the benefit concert at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills.

"Most people who come to our concerts support the other arts as well," said Carla Lamphere, BBSO executive director.

The key, according to Lam-

phere, is to broaden audiences for the BBSO by bringing in new musicians and musical styles. Part of the appeal for Sunday's concert, said Lamphere, is the collaboration between violinist Hart Hollman, the principle chair with the BBSO, and music students from Wayne State.

"We're trying to cultivate music appreciation throughout the community," said Lamphere. To demonstrate their commitment, the BBSO is sponsoring a Young Artist Competition, to be held April 26-27. The competi-

tion will begin 4 p.m. each day at Lahar High School in Bloomfield Hills.

BBSO is in the fourth of a six-concert season that stretches to mid May. For the past six years, the 200-member orchestra has been named best community orchestra at the Motor City Music Awards.

Typically, about 60 musicians perform at each concert. All members have professional experience. Many members also play for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and in Michigan Opera Theatre productions.

The annual benefit is the largest fund-raiser of the year for the BBSO.

The program includes Vaughan Williams' "Flos Campi" (The Flowers of the Field), Mendelssohn's "Incidental Music to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'" excerpts from the ballet "Gaye" by Khachaturian, and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Russian Easter Overture."

The concert is underwritten by Bloomfield Plaza, Pontiac & GMC, Kent and Yvonne Shafer, and Raymonds and Lynn Wert II.

Sound from page E1

Lisa is directing, dad Don designed the sets, and brothers Nicholas and Austin are altar boys.

The Plymouth Theatre Guild recently reduced its membership fee to \$1 a year to attract more help in putting on its productions. The Andresses were one of the families who responded to the call.

"The Sound of Music" brings back fond memories for Lisa and Don who played parts in the dramatic musical two weeks after returning from their honeymoon. High school sweethearts, the two first met in Drama Club in 1976 at Churchill High School in Livonia. They attended the revised version of "The Sound of Music" on Broadway last October.

"We try to keep it fresh," said Andrea, a 15-year veteran of directing. "I'm putting some of the changes from the Broadway version into it. We're trying to make it a lot more like the movie starring Julie Andrews. If they come to see it they'll be the first to see the revised version if they can't afford to see it on Broadway."

Don and Lisa have worked on dozens of theater productions over the years. Whenever Lisa directs a production, Don designs and builds the sets.

"This is a challenge because there's no fly space to drop sets to change scenes and there are no wings, so I had to figure out a way with a track system to move sets in and out," said Don. "Instead of black outs, we'll change the scenes while the production is running. It's going to be a great show. It's a great group of people."

Continuing the family tradition, Brooke began early to polish her dance steps at Miss Bunny's and Miss Harriet's dance schools in Livonia. After graduating from the Creative and Performing Arts program at Churchill High School where she is studying theater, Brooke hopes to attend Yale before trying to make it on Broadway. Next to meeting the actress who plays Maria in the revised Broadway production of "The Sound of Music," the biggest thrill of Brooke's life was auditioning for the Broadway play "Parade" last May.

"It was the most incredible experience," said Brooke. "It was at the Ford Theater where they were rehearsing 'Ragtime' and we got to watch and meet some of the cast."

Since age three when she was in the chorus of "Wizard of Oz," Brooke has wanted to be an actress. After plenty of hard work, Brooke's dreams have been coming true. The 15-year old was in the children's choir of "Music Man" at the Fisher Theater. She also sang in the chorus of "La Bohème" for the Michigan Opera Theatre's grand opening of its refurbished Detroit Opera House.

The Donovans met Don and

Lisa 17 years ago while acting in the Players Guild of Dearborn's "Gypsy." Now, Kim and Joe and their four children are rehearsing for one production or another all year long.

"This is our third time doing 'The Sound of Music,'" said Kim of Farmington Hills. "I love it because it's a love story and children have such a wonderful part in it. We find theater to be a nice fun family hobby and a lot of shows kids can be in the chorus." Singing the high notes can be a little tricky for Paul Luoma, Jr. because his voice is changing but acting the part of Kurt Von Trapp is a piece of cake. The 13-year old said being relaxed and having fun eliminates any tension he might feel on the set his father Paul, Sr. helped build.

"It's been a great experience to meet new people and make new friends," said Luoma, Sr. of Farmington Hills. So far, Kristen Curle is the only member of her family in the Plymouth Theatre Guild. As producer, Curle makes sure that lighting, property and sound crews are all on cue. "The camaraderie is special," said Curle. "Twelve weeks before a show opens you start with 30 strangers. By closing night, you tell each other favorite stories. I'm always amazed at how people become a family."

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