

SPECIAL EVENTS

'Rugrats' — A Live Adventure' for actress

BY KIZZY WYONIK
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It's easy to get discouraged when you're 24, living in New York, away from family and friends, and trying to break into show business.

"Wherever you go there will be someone better than you, but you'll be better than someone else," said Amy Sonne, a 1992 graduate of North Farmington High School who is appearing in the "Rugrats — A Live Adventure," opening April 30 at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. "As long as you love it, it will work out. You'll be happy that you did it."

Sonne started taking dance lessons when she was three years old.

"I wanted to be 5-foot-6 and have long legs," said Sonne who is 5-foot, 3-inches tall.

After graduating from Michigan State University, Sonne moved to New York City in 1997 after graduating from college. She got the part in "Rugrats" after answering a dance call for female dancers, 5-foot 3-inches and under last September. She's been touring with the show since October, and called from Knoxville, Tenn.

"It turned out pretty good," said Sonne who is doing something she never dreamed of, portraying Phil in the "Rugrats — A Live Adventure."

"I wanted to go on tour," she said. "Dressing up as baby Rugrat has been a good adventure."

Sonne worked in children's theater for two years in college. One of the things she likes "Rugrats" is that it's for children.

"This show is often their first

"Rugrats — A Live Adventure"

When: 7 p.m. Friday, April 30; 11 a.m., 3 p.m., and 7 p.m. Saturday, May 1 and May 8; 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Sunday, May 2 and May 9; and 7 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, May 4-7.

Where: Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Tickets: \$25, \$19.50, and \$12.50, call (313) 983-6611 for information, or (248) 433-1515 to charge tickets.

exposure to live theater," she said. The show draws everyone from babies to adults, but especially children ages four to eight who regularly watch the popular Nickelodeon series show on TV.

"Rugrats — A Live Adventure" brings the show to life with music and colorful sets. It's the same show that came to Detroit last May with some changes.

"Some of the characters are different," said Sonne. "We have a new cast and crew."

As the curtain rises, it's a

rainy day, and the babies are left in Grandpa's care. Chuckie's afraid of thunder. Tommy invents a "People-A-Tor," an invention that makes toys come alive. As long as there are people around, Chuckie isn't afraid, but the "buddy" Angela steals it. With help from his friends, Chuckie tries to get the "People-A-Tor" back.

Imagination, sharing and friendship are some of the lessons children learn as they enjoy this fun-filled production.

Sonne describes her character as "funny. His twin is Lil. They love to play in the dirt and eat worms."

Because her character is so playful, Sonne said she can be creative. "There aren't many restrictions for physical movements," she said.

Detroit is the end of the road for Sonne who will be leaving the show to spend the summer at Michigan, a family camp for University of Michigan alumni in Boyne City.

She won't be dancing. "I've been director of the nature center for the past three summers, they offered me the job again," said Sonne. "I love camp, it's a great way to work with children. I'm interested in environmental education."

After the summer, Sonne plans to move back to New York City.

Her dream is to teach dance and dance history at the university level. In the meantime, she'd like to dance or perform in musical theater. "I'd really like to dance with a modern dance company, but there aren't many opportunities," she said.

Dancing is what's she doing now, but Sonne isn't sure if it will be her life's work. "Who says it's what you have to do forever," she said.

Having the support of her family has meant a lot. They go to all of her shows, big and small. Besides "Rugrats" Sonne's theater credits include productions of "West Side Story," "Hello Dolly!" "Anything Goes," and "Company."

"My family has supported me all the way," she said. "I've met people who don't have family support."

Immunity among top winners at Detroit Music Awards

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
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The diversity of the Detroit music scene flourished Friday night as the reggae band Immunity, the folk group The Luddites, the country act Forbes Brothers and pop singer/songwriter Stewart Francke came up the top winners at the Detroit Music Awards.

Immunity took home Outstanding Reggae Artist/Group, Outstanding World Artist/Group and Outstanding Artist/Group. Deserving Wider Recognition, while its "Live" album won Outstanding World Music Recording at the ceremony held at the State Theatre. Immunity members Jonathan Pettus and Bill Koggenhop were named Outstanding World Music Vocalist and World Music Instrumentalist, respectively.

The Forbes Brothers swept the

country awards adding Outstanding Country Recording, Country Artist/Group, Country Vocalist, Country Instrumentalist and Country Songwriter to their resume.

Some of the winners

Ruling the pre-show award ceremony held in the mezzanine level of the State Theatre, The Luddites won Outstanding Acoustic Artist/Group, Outstanding Folk Artist/Group and Outstanding Artist/Group. Deserving Wider Recognition in the folk category, its album "100 Years of Lunacy" was named Outstanding Acoustic/Folk Bluegrass Recording.

After a four-song set, Francke added Outstanding Local Rock Artist/Group, Outstanding Rock/Pop Songwriter, and Outstanding Local Rock/Pop Recording for "Sunflower Soul Serenade" to his mantle.

His organization, the Stewart Francke Leukemia Foundation, was given this year's Special Achievement award for community and charity work. Francke was diagnosed with the disease and had a bone marrow transplant last year.

"I just want to point out that as far as the Leukemia Foundation goes, a lot of people worked very hard on it. My sister Kit is somewhere out there. She worked very hard on it and also gave me bone marrow," he said.

Distinguished Achievement honors also went to Detroit radio DJ The Electrifyin' Mojo, jazz trumpeter Marcus Belgrave and rockers The Romantics. The ska/punk band Telegraph and The Suicide Machines paid tribute to The Romantics through song. Romantics singer Wally Palmer played harmonica during The Suicide Machines' cover of "What I Like About You," which

will be included on "Before You Were Punk Vol. 2" due out in July on Vagrant Records.

Other multiple winners included Jill Jack Johnny Bassett and the Blues Insurgents, Thornotta Davis, Jazzehead, Howling Diablos, Sun Messengers, and Fred Hammond and Radical for Christ.

In a moment of pure brilliance, novelist Elmore Leonard gave the Immortal Wines of Soul the Outstanding Band Name prize.

Live energy

The live performances, however, injected energy into the event. The Miracles, without Smokey Robinson, took the stage for four songs — "The Tears of a Clown," "I Second That Emotion," "Ooh Baby Baby" and "Love Machine" — forcing the stagnant audience out of their seats. Punk rockers and oldies fans alike sang and danced in the aisles.

The four-and-a-half hour ceremony also featured performances by Esham, Derrick Starks and Today's Generation, Demolition Dollz, Willie Max, Jeff Hana with Marcus Belgrave, Enemy Squad and the Rat Pack All-Star Rhythm and Blues Revue with a variety of Detroit blues performers.

Rap ruled the roost at the Detroit Music Awards. Kid Rock, who was playing in Grand Rapids Friday night, took Outstanding National Album for "Devil Without a Cause," National Single for "I Am the Bulldog" and Hip Hop Writer/Producer.

Eminem, whose major-label debut "The Slim Shady LP" isn't eligible until next year, was honored with Outstanding Hip Hop Recording for his "Slim Shady EP, Hip Hop Artist/Group and Hip Hop MC.

Support your local artist

"We tried for so long just to get to this point. MTV showed us so much love. I'm sure he'd want to thank his mom, whatever, she's not here. You should start supporting your local artists. You didn't give him any love at first now he's blowing up," said a man who accepted on Eminem's behalf who only identified himself as a producer.

The seven-and-a-half minute, much-touted trailer for "MC5: A True Testimonial" lived up to its hype until director/producer David C. Thomas took the stage. He used the opportunity to shamelessly beg for money.

"If everybody contributed the price of a dinner we could finish our principal photography," he said.

For a complete list of winners, visit <http://www.detroitmusicawards.com>.

Farmington Players shine in madcap 'Don't Dress for Dinner'

The Farmington Players present "Don't Dress for Dinner" by Marc Camoletti, 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, April 30-May 1, 2 p.m. Sunday, May 2; and 7 p.m. Friday-Saturday, May 7-8 and May 14-15 at the Players Barn, 33332 W. 12 Mile (1/2 mile west of Orchard Lake Road), Farmington Hills. Tickets \$12, call (248) 553-2955.

BY BOB WEIDEL
SPECIAL WRITER

The Farmington Players' string of excellent productions continues with "Don't Dress for Dinner," a madcap French farce by Marc Camoletti, (adapted by Robin Hawdon), that starts slowly, then swiftly catapults into one hilarious scene after another.

Under director Bill Salisbury, the cast appeared in great form

on opening night, no easy task when performing a fast-paced physical comedy before a audience for the first time.

Best of all, seldom did any of the outrageous situations appear "staged," they flowed naturally from the well-developed comic characters. For example, they had great fun with a repeated gag whereby cast members stamp out imaginary insects to hide what's really going on — adultery and deception.

The setting is a converted French farmhouse. Bernard has planned the perfect weekend. His wife (Jacqueline) will visit her mother (otherwise known as the "old buzzard"). His sleek Parisian mistress (Suzanne) will stop by to keep the home fires burning, so to speak. Unfortunately for Bernard, and happily

for the audience, the rendezvous doesn't go according to plan.

The scheme quickly unravels, when his wife learns a Cordon Bleu cook (Suzette) has been hired, and his best friend, Robert, is also coming over. It turns out that Robert and his wife are also lovers. She decides to stay home for a little double adultery.

Bernard tries to cover up his intentions, but this only leads to misunderstandings, mistaken identities and clever double entendres. Mix the movie "Clue" with Abbott and Costello's "Whose First?" and you have some idea of the comic absurdity.

Nick Szerbera (Bernard) and Jan Salisbury (Jacqueline) are terrific as the dueling spouses. Mike Megerian (Robert) is suave and debonair and a per-

fect foil for Bernard. His smooth comic timing is first rate.

Julia Spina-Killar (Suzette) creates one of the most definitive characters seen in some time. She brings energy, comic timing and a fair for fun that is a joy to behold. She enters as the cook, but if these folks want to play games, she's game, for a price — as she charges 200 francs for each role she's asked to play (niece, mistress, etc.). Her line, "I've never been so many people or had so many affairs in my life" sums up the show itself.

Georgina Schuetz (Suzanne) has that certain "je ne sais quoi" one expects of a seductress, which made her all the more funny as she impersonates the cook and practically destroys the kitchen and the meal.

Erick Carlson (George) caps the evening's fun when he appears near the end (looking

very French) and confused as to what his wife (Suzette) has gotten herself into.



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