Bocelli's appearance, MOT's 'Werther' create spectacle beyond stage

Michigan Opera Theatre pre-sents Werther," an opera starring Andrea Bocelli, Denyce Graves, Ying Huang and Christopher Schaldanbrand. Music by Jules Massenet. Conducted by Steven Mercurio. Directed by Mario Cor-radi.
Performances at 8 p.m. Satur-day Nov. 6, and Friday, Nov. 12, 2 p.m. Nov. 14 at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. Trotets \$56-\$250. Call (31): 237-SING, or TicketMaster (248) 645-6566.

BY FRANK PROVENZANO

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Right up until he arrived on the Detroit Opera House stage sitting atop a white horse, the

anticipation surrounding Andrea Boselli making his North American opera debut had stirred a grand spectacle, even by opera standards.

Nearly 60 critics from around the world showed up in downtown Detroit. Local media talking-heads put on tuxedes and conducted interviews in the opera house lobby. And the streets outside the opera house were filled with pedestrians walking in the brilliant light cast by the massive towers of the nearby undor-construction Comerica Park.

Without a doubt, Bocelli's debut must be considered among the operatic events of the year of the filling of the Michigan Opera Theatre, but in the international

opera world.

On an exceptionally warm night in late October, the opening of "Werther," starring the world-famous Italian tener in the lead, had the cosmopolitan feel of a historic performance. Partly because of the obvious challenge for a blind singer to perform the difficult dramatic role, there was a palpable rooting for Bocelli succoed. Swooning femnels could be heard, and enger supporter frequently applicated announcement.

Of course, when it comes to

ment.
Of course, when it comes to critically dissecting MOT's "Worther" and Bocelli's performance it depends on how success is defined.

For a debut, Bocelli's performance was more hype than rewarding. Unfortunately, it soon became clear that Bocelli's sofily modulated, fragile tenor was better captured in the confines of either an amplified stage or a recording studio.

At times, Bocelli's voice was overshadowed by Jules Massenet's music, And for a portrayal of an impulsive, love-at-all-cost romantic caught in a tragic tallispin of unattainable love, Bocelli was altogether too emotionally restrained to be believable.

While the nacing and cadden

emotionally personal to the control of the control

a stirring demonstration of the power and subtly of a trained voice and charismatic stage pres-ence.

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Like a bright jewel in the October night, the promise of "Worther" is reflected early in the third act as Graves and Huang shere the spotlight. Graves wocal girth invokes the depth of her pain over desperately loving a man she can never marry. And Huang's vocal dexterity is a delightful reprieve from the syrupy melancholy. Yet perhaps in the end, the knight that rode atop a white horse arrived for another purpose. After all, MOT's "Werther" just wasn't about, papera. There was, no doubt, a higher agenda.

In the end, there's little to crit-

icize when considering the sheer guts required for Bocelli to undertake the demanding role of undertake the demanding rule of Werther. And perhaps equally impressive is Bocelli's willing-ness to broaden his horizons, and bring along an adoring public to the melodramatic spectacle

the melodramatic speciacle known as opera. Thus, in many ways, Bocelli's mere presence on the Detroit Opera House stage is in itself an unqualified success, and a reminder that MOT Managing Director David DiChiera is one of the most creative and persuasive forces in the opera world. To think that more and more people are talking about opera and the future of downtown Detroit's thester district shouldn't be underestimated.

'The Heidi Chronicles' has message of honesty and hope

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook presents "The Heidi Chronicles," by Wendy Wasserstein, 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday Nou. 4-6, at 400 Lone Pine Road, between Cranbrook and Lahser roads, Bloomfield Hills Shuttle service available from Christ Church parking lot across from the theater. Tickets \$12, seniors and students \$10. Call (248) 644-0527.

MARY JANE DOERR SPECIAL WRITER

Amy Lynn Smith makes such an engaging lecturer as professor Heidi Holland talking about 16th century women artists in the opening of scene of St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook's "The Heidi Chronicles" that her lecturing should garner more interest in the subject. This illustrated mini-course in artistory is part of playwright Wendy Wasserstein's Pulitzer Prize winning theatrical view of Americanisms since 1960.

The series of 13 scenes portray

Americanisms since 1960.
The series of 13 scenes portray
and satirize women's issues over
the last 40 years, from Mies
Crane's high school dances to
radical feminine demonstrations.
Though scenningly a one-issue
play (women's rights), St. Dunston's version is a touching, more
mixtures in the constitution materials. universally conceived nostalgic look at baby boomers, flower children and the now generation

children and the now generation from the grassroots up.

As the series of episodes in Heidië life are presented, Heidi and her friends change their orientation from idealism to political radicalism to militant feminism, and end up fully committed to '80s materialism.

Through three decades of the story, Heidi moves from being a women's rights activist to earning a Ph.D. in art history and becoming a world wide expert on

becoming a world wide expert on women artists in history. Society and major national events do not influence her even as she is affected by the changes in soci-

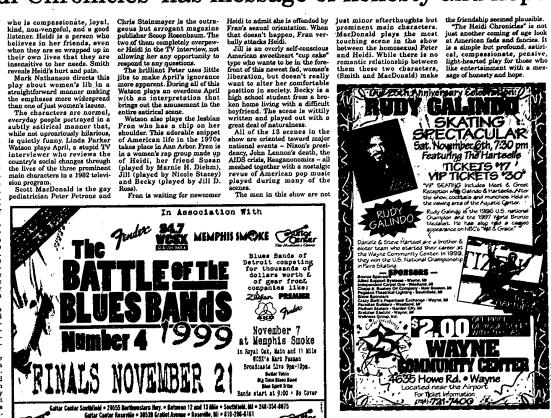
ety. In these character changes Smith excels. She plays a Heidi

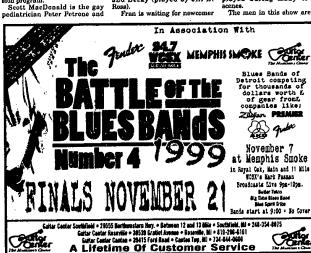
two of them completely overpower Heidi in the TV interview, not allowing her any opportunity to respond to any questions.

The brilliant Peter uses little jibs to make April's ignorance more apparent. During all of this Watson plays an overdone April with an interpretation that brings out the amusement in the entire satirical scene.

Watson also plays the Jesbian Fran who has a chip on her shoulder. This adorable snippet of American life in the 1970s takes place in Ann Arbor. Fran is in a women's rap group made up of Heidi, her friend Susan (played by Marnie H. Diehm). Jill (played by Mernie H. Diehm). Jill (played by Nicole Stacey) and Becky (played by Jill D. Ross).

Fran is waiting for newcomer





🙈 gubu November 7 at Memphis Smoke in Royal Cak, Main and 11 Mile WCSX's Mark Passan Broadcasts Live 908-1208.

Butter Teins

Butter Teins

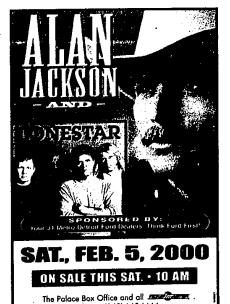
Big Time State

Banda start at 9:00 - No Cover



a star-spangled

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