

St. Dunstan's delivers laughs in new season

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook is more than a professional-caliber theatre group. They're members of the community who love having fun ... and sharing the laughter with their audience!

St. Dunstan's 1998-99 season - four entertaining shows offers a season of hilarity and, like St. Dunstan's, it has the deepest affection for family ties. St. Dunstan's members and audiences are part of a special family - and the 67th St. Dunstan's season reflects the group's friendly, fun-loving personality.

Each St. Dunstan's Theatre

Guild of Cranbrook production is performed on Friday and Saturday for two consecutive weeks, and also includes a Thursday night and Sunday matinee performance.

St. Dunstan's fourth annual holiday Children's Theatre production - "The Sleeping Beauty" - will be presented Dec. 11-13. Proceeds are being shared with the Old Newsboys' Goodfellow Fund, to help brighten the season for underprivileged children in the community.

For tickets or information, call St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of

Cranbrook, (248) 644-0527. The theater is at 460 Long Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills.

Here's the season schedule: **"Social Security"** by Andrew Bergman - Oct. 30-31, Nov. 1, 5-7. Sophisticated art dealer Barbara and David are quite content in their Manhattan lifestyle ... but their lives are turned upside down when Barbara's aging, eccentric mother comes to stay. New York clashes with the "Old World" - with hilarious results.

"Moon over Buffalo" By Ken Ludwig - Jan. 22-24, 28-30. Follow the exploits of a past-their-prime theatre couple - and

their melodramatic family and friends - as they stumble through confused preparations for a visit from movie director Frank Capra. A fast-paced comedy by the author of *Crazy For You* and *Lend Me A Tenor*, filled with side-splitting laughs.

"Dear Departed" By David Bottrill and Jessie Jones - March 19-21, 25-27. A colorful - and sometimes bizarre - group of Southerners are brought together by the death of a family patriarch ... and none of them seem to be able to get a grip on life. The old adage "Death is easy, comedy

is hard" is turned inside out, as the family struggles to make sense out of the humorous ironies of life.

"How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" Book by Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock and Willie Gilbert, Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser - June 4-6, 10-12. This Pulitzer Prize-winning musical tells the story of a young

man determined to reach the top of the corporate ladder ... and the woman who's willing to follow him wherever he goes. A delightful satire - with one of the most hummable, toe-tapping scores ever written! Presented in The Cranbrook Outdoor Greek Theatre.

Information for this story submitted by St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild.

Shakespeare a laugh a minute

Shadow Theatre Company presents "The Complete Works of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (abridged)" 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 15-17, and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18 at the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre, 2275 Platt Road, Ann Arbor.

Tickets are \$12, \$9 for stu-

dents/seniors, and available by calling (734) 971-2228.

"You don't have to be familiar with Shakespeare to appreciate the fast-paced silliness of this show, but anyone who has some knowledge of Shakespeare's works will spit their sides," said show director David Blixt.

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prepared to think if you plan to attend this world premier.

Written by Canadian playwright Paul Mason, "Sister Camille's Kaleidoscopic Cabaret" deals with a rag-tag bunch of individuals struggling with their lives. Emceeding the cabaret bunch is Sister Camille. Among the cast of characters is Lord Jake, an eccentric guitar player, Jasper the ape and the half-mad German woman, Mrs. Stoker who's dealing with her own personal demons as she denies the existence of the Holocaust.

"Tummy's young, energetic," said VandenBrink. "He's a risk taker. We need him to take us forward. People have to be prepared to be engaged not just

entertained. In a sense 'Sister Camille' speaks to issues of our culture. I think it will provoke thought and help people think through some of the issues."

For the first time, Trinity House will introduce a live feed video to a production. Lloyd VandenBrink, Susan's husband and set designer for Trinity House, is in charge of bringing the fractured images to the stage for "Sister Camille."

"The camera will be taking in images then bouncing them back through a mirror back onto the stage," said VandenBrink. "The multi-media is new for us and something we want to explore."

New season
This year's operating budget of

\$19,400 funds a variety of programs from a reading of Westland playwright Gary Brdn's "The Outside World," to a staging of Tom Ziegler's "Grace and Gloria," a two character play about a woman in her 40s and another in his 90s who's waiting to die, a Reader's Theatre Festival, "Common Room," a garage-style variety theater, and "Sister Camille."

"We want audiences to experience something they can't get through any other medium - that human presence," said Olson. "The theme for the season is to reflect and redeem the brokenness of the age through brave, truthful and necessary works of art. All you have to do is read the

headlines to see how alien and fragmented our society is and to know we need to do these kind of works."

In the past, Trinity House has relied on a membership fee of \$25 and fundraisers for its operating expenses. Like all nonprofits, the theater struggles to attract audiences and sponsors. To reach patrons, the most direct route through, is letters and phone calls. By painting the white clapboard structure red, they hope to attract attention as cars whiz past on Six Mile. A technical workshop on operating lights and sound is an open invitation for anyone who'd like join the members of Trinity House Theatre, but not necessarily act.

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"Aida."

Pain in the neck?

For sheer large-scale spectacle and melodrama, the MOT production of Puccini's "Turandot" stands alongside last year's production of Verdi's "Aida," and perhaps at the opposite end of Puccini's intimate "Madame Butterfly."

Like "Aida," expect a huge cast, parades and breathtaking scenery. For all the pomp, however, the music is intended to bridge cultures. There are distinctive Oriental influences, Puccini's irresistible melodies and references to early 20th-century composers, especially Stravinsky. "Turandot" is the last mainstream opera, written in the 20th century, that's clearly from

the romantic tradition of last century," said DiChiera.

For years, Puccini struggled with the structure of the opera. While the story appears as a simple fairy tale, the composer wanted the melody and movement to make the definitive statement about the power of love.

Set in antiquity, a Chinese princess, Turandot, poses a challenge to prospective suitors: answer three riddles and her heart is theirs. An incorrect answer, however, is terms for a beheading. (There's a whole new meaning for the "headache of love.")

Unexpectedly, an unknown man, Calaf, succeeds in unraveling the conundrums. But there's

a rub: if Turandot can find out his name before dawn, he'll concede to "losing his head."

Tragedy is a hair's breadth from blissful love. Who'll win? Who'll be able to live for the day when a hair cut didn't include a chop in the neck?

Like Puccini's other magnificent operas, "Turandot" has powerful melodies and swells that make even the most cynical feel the warm wind of love brush their cool exteriors. Apparently, even the ice princess Turandot can't refuse the power of Puccini's melody.

The voices will resound through the Detroit Opera House. "Turandot" is Puccini's largest choral work.

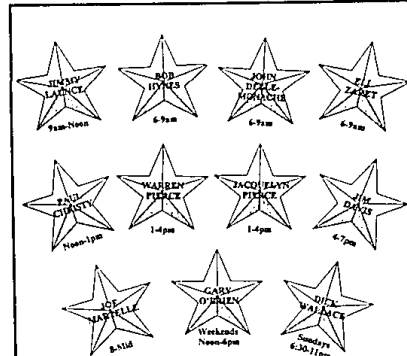
"The adrenaline rush when

you're on stage is incredible," said Tony Lynch of Rochester Hills, who performs in the chorus.

By day, Lynch is a salesman for Air Center Inc. of Troy. By night, he sings at the Detroit Opera House, where he's performed in 10 operas.

Three years ago, he went from a production at Avon Players, a community theater, to sharing the stage with Pavarotti at the Opera House grand opening.

That sounds a lot like the typical realm of possibility of the opera world.



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