

MEADON BROOK THEATER
Classic: Stacie Guerreso (Helen Keller) and Lauren Dowden (Annie Sullivan) in Meadow Brook Theatre's production of William Gibson's "The Miracle Worker."

## Cast works 'Miracle' with Gibson play

Meadow Brook Theatre pre-sents "The Miracle Worker," through Sunday, Nov. 15 at Meadow Brook Theatre in Wilson Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, Tickets \$24-\$35, call (248) 377-3300.

BY MARY JANE DOERR SPECIAL WRITER

Meadow Brook Theatre's "The Miracle Worker," is a gripping look into the intimate lives of a dysfunctional post-Civil War Alabama family coping with the impossible. An acute congestion of the stomech and brain has left an infant daughter with two crippling disabilities. Now the unruly blind, deaf and mute 7-year-old is ruling the household with food throwing tantrums and screaming fits. The family placates her with candy.

Miracles, like beauty though,

are magnified in the eyes of the beholder. This wonderful William Gibson classic gets its impact through the close up and personal view of the miracle that took place between the unmanageable, and anything but dumb Helen Keller and the indefatigable Annie Sullivan. Meadow Brook Theatre's production gets its impact from Lauren Dowden's prominent portrayal of the Irish Annie, Helon's famous and once blind teacher. Dowden gains favor with the audience with her humorous manner of saying her lines and the favor of the Kellers (skeptical of the Annie's tough love approach) when she teaches Helen to fold a napkin. Dowden is spontaneous in the way she plays the famous dining room seene with Stacie Guerrese as Helen. Her responses to Peter Aylward's harsh Captain Keller

are well timed.
Chris Ann Voudoukis foils these two with a soft version of mother Kate. As the sarenatic brother James, Adam Rochinad is a solid force that finally brings about the turning point in the plot. Sandra Love Alakhey Calhoun, Garriot Ges Martha, Percy, and Lujuana Lighty maid. Ashley Percy and Junits add a light hearted its severity. Kathorine Hardy, Katie Johnston, and Claire Kander as the three blind children are worthy of mention.

Unlike in the intense 1962 film, this Meadow Brook production, with its homey Victorian setting by Feter W. Hicks, and Debra I. Wicks' direction, dwells on the captivating reality of the story, benefiting from the play's infallible theatricality. Of

course, Helen, played by 10-year old Guerreso is the heart of the story. She must learn only one syllable to one word for this entire role but acting out Helen's engression is demanding.

Guerreso does it with static eyes, an expressionless face, darting movements that startle and lots of screening. Later in life, Helen herself turned all that screaming into audible speech to become a world famous lecturer – after she graduated from Radcilife College with honors.

The miracle in this play takes place when Helen conceptualizes the relationship between finger spelling and objects, which unfortunately takes place behind the well instead of in front of it where everyone can see Guerreso. Despite that, she turns those few momenta, when Helen identifies the spelling of water, into a Kleenex moment.

## Purple Rose from page E1

character drama about adultery, featuring razor sharp performances from the theater's artistic director Guy Sanville and Sandra Birch and John Lepard, actors who have become part of the Purple Rose informal company of regional talent.

Ribant said the theater is dedicted the restrictive learning.

icated to producing local play-

icated to producing local play-wrights.

"We've looked around and tried to get plays developed. We get about 200 scripts a year from playwrights asking if we can produce them," he said. "We try to discover works that have something to say."

try to discover works that have something to say."

A recent coup came this past winter when nationally recognized playwright Lanford Wilson brought his new play "Book of Days" to the Purple Rose for its debut production. Daniels has a longatanding relationship with the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, having appeared in several of his plays on Broadway and television. Ribant said "Book of Days" helped bring national attention to The Purple Rose.

Ribant has been with the Pur-ple Rose from the beginning and

2 'People here in the Midwest don't necessarily. need to know the New Jersey jokes and what matters in midtown Manhattan is not that Important. We do have a Midwestern voice, things that relate to working class people, people who've decided to make Michigan their home.'

Alan Ribant Purple Rose Managing Director

his story is similar to Daniels'. He is a native of Detroit and a graduate of Wayne State University. He worked in sales for several Broadway productions and then decided he wanted to come home. He found the commercial New York theater want' interhome. He found the commorcial New York theater wasn't interested in doing non-musical theater. Ribant said even Neil Simon has been forced to take his plays off-Broadway.

Ribant said due New York theater scene is also centered around the Big Apple.

"People here in the Midwest don't necessarily need to know the New Jersey jokes and what matters in middown Manhattan is not that important," Ribant

said, "We do have a Midwestern voice, things that relate to working class people, people who've decided to make Michigan their

home." The Garage Theatre has a his-

The Garage Theatre has a history as well.

"This building has been here in Chelsea for 70 years. In the 1920s, it was a garage to store Oldsmobiles as a dealership owned by Jeff's grandfather. Then it fell out of the Daniels family hands and was a plumbing company, a pizzeria and a bus and truck garage," Ribant said.

Daniels bought the building and apent \$300,000 turning it into an intimate 119 seat the-

ater-in-the-round. He rents it back to the theater company for \$1 a year.

It is a small but confortable place where the audience is close to the action. A capital development program will expand the seating to 170 by adding a row of seats on all three sides without destroying the apecial intimacy.

The theater operates on a \$1.1 million budget, raising half from ticket sales.

In addition to providing professional playwrights, directors, designers and actors an opportunity to work, the theater all has an apprentice program to help train five full-time apprentices each year. The program was developed by Daniels based on his experience working at New York's famous Circle Rep.

In seven years, the theater has attracted 169,000 people to its tiny space. The biggest hit has been Daniels' UP hunting comedy "Bacanaba in Da Moonlight," for which crowds would line up outside hoping to get a ticket.

Continuing his dedication to producing in Michigan, Daniels upon the desired in the move made in Michigan with Michigan talent.

"Boom Town: scheduled to run through New 29; followed by world premiere of "The Hole," by Wendy Hammond, Jan. 28 through March 20; "The Big Stam," a comedy by Bill Corbett,

world premiere of "The Hole," by Wendy Hammond, Jan. 28 through March 20; "The Big Slam," a comedy by Bill Corbett, April 8 through May 30; and "Criminal Genius," a comedy by George F. Walker, July 1 through Aug. 22.

Sen Dog from page E1

would see it to be cool and let me explore and go to another label where IG have freedom to be creative," Sen Dog explained.

It worked and SX-10 is now signed to Elektra, he said. Sen Dog also felt that it was time that the public heard from him. "They only heard the Cypress Hill point of view. A lot of things have been said and done. I had been away from the hip-hop seene for awhile. I thought maybe it was time to show up a little bit and let people know I'm still around and that I'm up to a bunch of other things."

"I' had to start with Cypress Hill album."

"V' is a bone-chilling album of graphic atteet scenarios shrouded in gloomy soundscapes of hip-hop, rock and jazz courtesy of DJ Muggs (Lawrence Muggerud). Rappers B-Real (Louis Freese) and Sen Dog trade off on songs such as the gangsta homage "Steel Magnolia" and "Looking Through the Eye of a Pig."

"Muggs is the one who puts together all the munic. I just showed up and wrote verses and stuff to songs. That's my part of it. In my other band, I'm more directly involved in writing the munic and formatting and all that."

Still, Cypress Hill works as a cohesive unit. Sen Dog said.

Still, Cypress Hill works as a

Still, Cypress Hill works as cohesive unit, Sen Dog said.

"We don't jam anything that nabody else digs. If somebody's not vibing into it, we usually don't go with it. It's like, here's rack and if I'm vibing with it really strong or if I have a medium vibe, I have to perform on it, he said.

Sen Dog wrote seven songs with Cypress Hill and five of them ended up on "IV."
"Hopefully on the next album, I'll have more of a bigger role vecally and things like that."
After burning through a sold-out Smokin' Grooves show at Pine Knob in late July, Cypress Hill is returning to play the 1,000-capacity St. Andrew's Hall. Although unaware that his band is gigging at a small club. Sen Dog said he's thrilled to do that.
"I'm not really directly involved in the gigs and stuff like that. But that's a cod thing to do. It's cool to do the big arens or the small standiums or whatever. But when you get down in front of the small joint like it used to be in the early days, that's cool."

days, that's cool."

For Sen Dog, it will even be cooler to do his own thing and tour with SX-10.

"It's a total live thing," Sen Dog said of SX-10. "We bring the guitars and drums and everything. We get hard at times with the raps but it has a real "70s metal feel with a bit of funk and rap in there. That's the formula I guess."

In contrast, DJ Muggs is the sole provider of music for Cypress Hill! live shows.

"I have faith that down the lime I'll be able to put out music that's gonne make people take notice of my talents. I want to be a musician and do what makes me happy the most which is perform and hopefully one day have fun ogain."



