

Escape winter

Experience 'A Comedy of Errors,' film and visual arts



ANN DELIN

I've always found the dead of winter to be the time that the mind is most receptive to new ideas. Could it be the succession of dreary days that generally occur in February that has us looking for a bit of escapism?

For those who like to escape with laughter, the Planet Ant Theatre offers "A Comedy of Errors." Royal Shakespeare Company alumna Gillian Eaton directs the production, that

brings an on-line twist to the bard's beloved comedy. Set in the virtual world of ephesus, "A Comedy of Errors" is a quirky diversion worthy of the always unique cultural center of Hamtramck. The production begins Thursday, Feb. 24 and runs through Sunday, March 19.

Film

Maybe you'd like to immerse yourself in perverse perspectives on reality. As a maker of non-fiction films, Errol Morris may never be a household name. His works, however, rank with the most unforgettable films of the past quarter-century. Critic Roger Ebert calls his 1978 mas-

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terpiece "Gates of Heaven" one of the 10 greatest films ever made. *Newsweek's* David Ansen describes him as a "true original."

Now there's "Dr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Luchter, Jr.," showing Friday-Sunday, Feb. 25-27 at the Detroit Institute of Art's Detroit Film Theatre. It's the story of a self-styled "execution technician," who repaired and designed prison execution equipment -

only to become part of a movement of "revisionists" who claim that the Holocaust never happened. Compare "Dr. Death" to the current film "The Green Mile," which also uses a death row setting to illuminate the extremes of human nature. What you get with Morris is less of the "Hollywood" feel, but not necessarily less style.

Another example of his mastery is "The Thin Blue Line," a much-acclaimed 1988 film.

Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* called the work "brilliant...a vision that is both poetic and perverse." Morris describes it as the only movie ever made that solved a murder. It's showing Monday, Feb. 28 at the Detroit Film Theatre.

Exhibit

If your method of escape is through the visual arts, consider the "Shanghai on the Move" exhibit currently running at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The show features several prominent figures on the contemporary art scene in China, which has seen an explosion of avant-garde art in the past

twenty years. Hu Jie Ming, a painter and video artist, uses his talents to examine the distortions and expectations about Chinese culture in the Western media.

Hu Jie Ming's fresh perspectives are also revealed in a segment on Detroit Public TV's BACKSTAGE PASS, airing 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 20. It's an edition that includes an interview with Errol Morris, and a look at Planet Ant's "A Comedy of Errors."

New ideas? They happen all the time in theater, film, and the visual arts.

Welcome them like the first breath of spring.

Oliver from page E1

in professional theater for 10 years.

"There's no way to close the curtain as we had to develop something that has levels," said Blynn, referring to the bridge, "as we won't be doing a lot of set changes."

Since the 6-foot-tall bridge has to hold several children, the crew spent no time in construction. It took nine members four, 10-hour Saturdays to complete. Friends and relatives also helped along with children in the cast.

"Theater is good because you make friendships," said Andrea Heglen of Plymouth.

"That's what's neat is we're really getting to know each other," added Jamie Deltsch, a chorus member from Farmington Hills. "We're all friends."

"It's so fun," chimed in Meghan Symons of Canton. "We all came Saturday and sang our 'Oliver!' songs while we were painting."

Like Guerrero, chorus members have sacrificed to participate in community theater in the final weeks before opening night, the cast was rehearsing six days a week.

"The challenges are fitting in school and listening for your

cues," said Brittany Norris of Plymouth. "You have to know when to respond."

Toby Booker's faced a different set of problems in his role as Mr. Bumble, the hard-hearted windbag who likes to assert his authority over the orphans. He has plenty of experience under his belt. In addition to acting in the Guild's "It's a Wonderful Life" earlier this season, Booker has been in productions with Farmington Players and SRO Productions in Southfield. He also plays Tony in "Tony and Maria's Wedding" in various locations around town including

Summit on the Park Community Center in Canton. The next show there is scheduled for Saturday, March 18.

"The fat suit I wear underneath is hot," said Booker, "and learning the cockney accent."

Marc Rosati doesn't mind the costume and beard he has to wear to play Fagin, the harsh man who truly loves the gutter-snipes in his charge. A substitute teacher for Farmington Schools, Rosati has been in community theater 10 years, and did small skits as a student at St. Mary's of Redford.

"I think it's the best character

in the show," said Rosati of Walled Lake. "He's funny and sings comedic songs."

Ariana and Keith Prusak's real life relationship is the exact opposite of the one they share on stage. Married 2 1/2 years, the Prusaks met and fell in love at Eastern Michigan University. This is their fourth show together. Keith plays Bill Sykes, Ariana the role of Nancy.

"He's as rotten as they come, and I'm trying to kill my wife again," said Keith Prusak referring to the role in "Wait Until Dark" where he stalked a blind

"She's a girl of ill-repute but has a heart of gold," said Ariana of Livonia. "She can't let go of this guy that abuses her."

A 60-60 raffish last year paid for the new spotlights used for the first time in "Oliver!" Kuna is hoping the 50-50 raffie will pay for a new sound board and amp to be used for the first time during "Oliver!"

This is a cement room with poor acoustics," said Czaplinski. "The new sound board and amp will help the sound because feedback has been a tremendous problem."

Ensemble from page E1

hope about the person who is passing - a celebration of their life."

Since its inception in the summer of 1991, the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble has been dedicated to the performance of a diverse range of contemporary dance works, and showcasing the work of talented choreographers. The company, based in Rochester Hills, has toured theaters throughout the Midwest, the East Coast, and St. Petersburg, Russia.

They are also committed to educating and informing the public about the art of dance and encouraging the community to explore dance as a source of cultural and physical enrichment.

"This is the only concert that we do in this area," said Bak of the Feb. 18 performance. "We're trying to perform at throughout the area. We had a nice turnout last year."

The company received a good review from the *New York Times* after its Dance Theatre Work-

shop. "It was a rite of passage, a coming of age for the company," said Bak.

"This has been a pivotal season for us to see what we can do to keep the momentum we created from our New York tour going. We're focusing on further developing our local audiences this season."

Next year, the company hopes to tour California and Arizona.

Upcoming performance

If you can't make the Friday concert, you can see the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble at 8 p.m. Friday, May 5, at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts in Clinton Township.

That program, entitled "Motown in Motion," will celebrate the music of Motown in a "razzle-dazzle evening of dance and music." Tickets are \$18 and \$22. Call (810) 288-2222 to reserve yours.

Kick up from page E1

the cast have helped by teaching me. I like the character I play. She's a lot of fun. She's excited about show business but kind of scatter-brained."

Cable's father Bill will be sitting in the audience just as he and his wife did for "Annie." A music instructor for Utica Public Schools and a professional trumpet player, he's proud of his daughter's newly-found career.

"I'm excited for her to be able to participate in quality theater and that the opportunity is

'I'm excited for her to be able to participate in quality theater.'

Bill Cable
Parent

available," said Bill Cable. "They work hard. They have fun. They're very disciplined."

"A Chorus Line" is not recommended for young audiences because of some of the language.

STAY TUNED...

For more than three decades, Cher has solidified Diva status in the entertainment world. With "The Lion" declared her number one diva of all time. To

celebrate the Cher we knew back in the '70s, Universal Music Group has released "The Best of Cher" as part of the millennium collection. Songs like "Gyp-

sys, Tramps and Thieves," "Half-Breed" and "Living in a House Divided" are brought back to life.

Cher's former husband - no, not Sonny Bono - Gregg Allman, has made it to the same CD series with "The Best of The Allman Brothers Band." Hits like "Ramblin' Man" and "Midnight Rider" represent the band's heyday, 1969 to 1979.

Who do The Who think they are? MCA Records has released "BBC Sessions," bringing 26 previously unreleased radio broadcast performances to their fans. Relive the rock phenomenon with renditions of "My Generation," "The Seeker" and "I'm Free." Who knew, in 1964, the band would be reaching yet another generation? That's Rock 'n' Roll for you.

For Madonna, what's old is new again. The Rochester Hills native and pop diva is back with a new single, "American Pie," from the soundtrack to "The Next Best Thing." Due out Tuesday, Feb. 22, the 1971 Don McLean cover song was the most added track on Top 40 radio last week.

What does Don McLean think about all this?

"It is a gift for her to have recorded 'American Pie,'" said McLean according to Maverick Recordings, Madonna's label. "I have heard her version and I think it is sensual and mystical. I hope it will cause people to ask what's happening to music."

By Stephanie A. Casola

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