

THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



Vasanth J. Santosham and Chris Korte star in "Equus" 8 p.m. at Wayne State University's Bonstelle Theatre, Detroit. Tickets \$8-\$10, call (313) 577-2960.

SATURDAY



Stereolab plays its softly 5 p.m. at Clutch Cargo, 65 E. Huron, Pontiac. Tickets \$14, call (248) 645-6666.

SUNDAY



Bobby Slayton, "The Pitt Bull of Comedy," stirs up laughter tonight at Joe's Comedy Club at Paisano's, 5070 Schaefer Road, Dearborn. Call (313) 584-8885 for more information.

HOT TICKET



Renata Palubinskas will show this untitled oil painting on canvas during her exhibition, *Transience*, which opens 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3 at CPOP Gallery, 4160 Woodward Ave., in Detroit. Call (313) 833-9901 for details.

DRAGON TALES LIVE



A land apart: "Dragon Tales Live" opens today with 10 performances at Detroit's Fox Theatre. Join the adventure, deemed appropriate for all ages.

Go flying with this magical new musical

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
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Guinevere DiPiazza might be too young to be a real fan of the popular PBS kids' cartoon *Dragon Tales*, but that hasn't stopped her from happily hopping into costume as "Norm the Number Gnome" in the premier of a live touring production based on the series.

Barely 18 years old, the Livonia native has been singing and dancing her way to graduation in spring at Churchill High School. DiPiazza stars in the production *West Side Story* and has been in school programs focused on dance and theater.

Though she might be considered a "wannabe" by the aspiring dancer only began training seven years ago, she knew right away her passion was performing. Yet even DiPiazza didn't think that dream could come true so quickly. A once "shy kid," she was hired to a cast of 11 adults and two children in the brand-new *Dragon Tales Live*, which opened Oct. 4 to a crowd of 5,000 in Minneapolis.

"It incorporates a lot of songs (kids) already

know from the TV show," she said in a recent phone interview. "They're really in love with it. There's a lot of singing and dancing. It's interactive. (The kids) stand up, dance and sing. They talk back to us."

Dragon Tales Live tells the fantastic story of the "Missing Music Mystery." "Mr. Pop has a sound-

Street Live and *Bear In the Big Blue House*, which is in its second year as an on-stage production. With such a successful roster of touring shows, DiPiazza knew *Dragon Tales* would be a hit. So when the company called her in early September, she quickly packed and prepared to begin work on the show days later. "It's great experience," she said. "Working with everyone is wonderful."

Her grandmother, Nina DiPiazza, said the role and opportunity are fabulous for Guinevere. A Livonia resident, she remembers her granddaughter dancing as "a little tike."

The whole DiPiazza family plans to attend the local performance. Nina DiPiazza bought her tickets in advance. "All the aunts and uncles and grandkids, we're going to make a day of it," she said with enthusiasm.

From the extensive backdrops, special lighting effects and puppetry, the stage bursts with color. During the "blacklight scene," in which DiPiazza portrays a dandelion, characters glow-in-the-dark. In another scene the dragons actually take flight. "Anyone who comes to see it will love it," she said.

The Livonia native is featured in five musical numbers — including *Shake Your Dragon Tail*, *Clap Your Hands* and *The Hum Song*.

Though she's been featured in recitals and productions locally, like *The Nutcracker*,



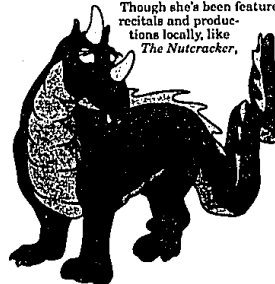
Missing music: Emmy needs help from her dragon friends to solve this musical mystery.

catcher and somehow Mr. Pop's soundcatcher gets stolen and sound starts to disappear from Dragon Land," explained DiPiazza. The story centers on characters 6-year-old Emmy and her 4-year-old brother Max who set out to find the missing music, with help from their dragon friends. Audience members are invited to join along by wearing glowing dragon badges.

Though the show is intended for children ages 2 to 7, DiPiazza said anyone who watches it is sure to enjoy it.

Dressed in a suit covered with numbers, DiPiazza said her character is "just adorable." "His role in the show and in the TV show is that he likes to help the kids out, but he makes them work for the clue."

Dragon Tales Live is a Vee Entertainment Corp. production. The company also produces *Sesame*



Please See **DRAGON, B3**

Dragon Tales Live

What: Take the kids on a *Missing Music Mystery* with their favorite characters from the Emmy-nominated PBS animated program, *Dragon Tales*.

Showtimes: 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Thursday-Friday, Nov. 1-2, 10:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 3-4.

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

Tickets: \$10, \$14 or \$18, limited VIP seats available. All opening-night seats \$12. Call (248) 433-1515.

Contact: For more information, call (313) 983-6611 or go to www.DragonTalesLive.com or www.OlympiaEntertainment.com



THEATER

Corsets, costumes challenge cast of 'Little Women'

BY LINDA ANN CHIOMI
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Andren Shipp draws in her breath as Erika Pfeiffer tightens the corset she's to wear for her role in *Little Women*. This is a first for Shipp who plays Meg, eldest of the four March daughters in the classic coming of age story. The Plymouth Theatre Guild production opens Friday, Nov. 9, at the Water Tower Theatre in Northville.

"It's quite an experience," said Shipp as she tried on the corset in the dressing room before rehearsal. "I like the period but it would have taken me an eternity to dress."

Pfeiffer's laced up and made corsets before so she knows what it takes to get into one. As costume makers, she, Mary Lynn Kunn and Nancy Adams have encountered their own set of problems since they began sewing the long dresses and wintcoats for the cast of *Little Women* two months ago. Pfeiffer owns a business that creates reproductions and period clothing for museums and re-enactors.

"It's difficult to find anything from the Civil War," said Kunn. "None of the costume shops have anything so we did research and contacted a pattern company dealing with period stuff."

Bruce White is having his share of headaches dealing with the production but doesn't seem to mind even though he wears many different hats besides the one as director.



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HUNTERMAN

Coming of age: Jo (Mandy Pascas) talks with her mother (Robin DeMaagd, left) about going to New York to become a writer in Plymouth Theatre Guild's production, "Little Women."

"It's an old classic done many times," said White. "The Civil War era is my favorite period in history. We have been able to add to detail. The inside of the March house is almost like a mansion which has been let go because the father has gone off to war. It's what a Northern plantation would have looked like."

"Some of the costumes have hoops. The younger girls are in petticoats. At home the older girls and women wear a smaller hoop skirt than going out in public. If going to a ball it would have been as big as it could and still get through the door."