

Sunday, June 23, 2002

Benefit shows 'That's What Friends Are For'

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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It's 9 o'clock on a Thursday morning and Dionne Warwick is already doing interviews for her upcoming concert at Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts.

After 40-years on the pop music charts the voice is unmistakable. Always the lady, Warwick is delighted about singing with composer Burt Bacharach for the nonprofit venue that brings in internationally-known performers.

Even though they've been friends since the 1950s, it's been more than a year since Warwick and Bacharach have worked together - and the first time they've appeared on the same Detroit stage on the same night - with a 23-piece orchestra.



Burt Bacharach
Some time ago, they decided to

go their separate ways.

Warwick, Bacharach, and composer Hal David were a dynamic hit making team from the early 1960s to early 1970s. As part of the Music Hall Cars and Stars fundraiser they will perform some of the songs from their 30-hit singles and 20-best selling albums from those years.

"We've known each other a long time," said Warwick. "I've toured with him on and off through the years until realizing we had individual careers. We haven't done anything in a while so it will be fun."

From *Don't Make Me Over*, the first song recorded in 1962 to winning her first of five Grammys in 1968 for *Do You Know the Way to San Jose*, Warwick has made a lot of friends in the



Dionne Warwick

Please see **BENEFIT, B7**

Regal couple:
Colm
Feore as
Professor
Henry
Higgins
and
Cynthia
Dale as
Eliza
Doolittle
make an
entrance
at the
ball in
"My Fair
Lady."



NICHOL
COOPER

My Fair Lady worth a trip to Stratford Festival in Canada

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
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The Stratford Festival is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a stunning renovation of the Avon Theatre, a broad cross section of Shakespearean fare including a performance by one of the festival's most distinguished alums, an innovative studio theater and a "lovely" and sexy production of *My Fair Lady*.

The Stratford Festival was officially incorporated in October 1952. On July 13, 1953, Alec Guinness opened the festival in a production of *Richard III* in a tent theater. That season under the bigtop also featured a performance of *All's Well That Ends Well*. Both plays are being presented this season.

Shakespeare has always been central to the Stratford Festival and this year the

See schedule of events page B7

Bard is well represented with both familiar works such as *Romeo and Juliet* and some less familiar works such as the *Henry VI* plays. In August international star Christopher Plummer will take on the difficult role of *King Lear* under the direction of Jonathan Miller.

The Avon Theatre, a traditional stage in a smaller venue than the Festival Theatre, has been given a facelift. The new white facade provides a dramatic entry to a larger lobby. The once cramped seating of the former vaudeville-movie house has been replaced with comfortable seating with lots of leg room. The 1,096-seat auditorium has also been refurbished with new heating and air conditioning and state-of-the-art light and sound systems.

The new Avon also has room for another

theater, the 250-seat Studio Theatre. The idea for this intimate space is to allow the company to "explore" theatrical ideas that might be too daring or too limited for the larger venues. This year the theater will present seven works in short runs.

My Fair Lady

That famous curmudgeon George Bernard Shaw hated the idea that his irascible Henry Higgins and the lovely Eliza Doolittle would ever get together. His play *Pygmalion* ends with Eliza walking out. He later wrote that he thought Eliza and Freddy Eynsford-Hill would marry and open a flower shop.

That would never do for an American musical, so librettist Alan Jay Lerner had Eliza returning to Higgins in *My Fair Lady*.

Please see **STRATFORD, B7**

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