

# Livonia Churchill alumna stars in *Shear Madness*, *The Foreigner*

BY KURT ANTHONY KRUG  
CORRESPONDENT

Robin Lewis-Bedz didn't have an epiphany about acting in the theater. It was just something she always wanted to do.

"I gravitated towards theater early on. I just enjoyed doing it. I felt I could earn a living at it," she said.

The actress, 29, who currently is in *Shear Madness* at the Gem Theatre in Detroit, was active in the Creative and Performing Arts Program (CAPA) at Livonia Churchill High School, where she graduated in 1991. She went on to receive her bachelor's of fine arts degree in theater from the University of Detroit Mercy. From there, she studied in the Professional Actor Training Program at Ohio University, where she earned her master's of fine arts in theater while at Ohio University, she interned at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park in Cincinnati, OH, where she starred in *Miss Julie* and *Rough Crossing*. Additionally, Lewis-Bedz specializes in children's theater and improvisational comedy. She's also an expert in juggling and has a green belt in karate.

The oldest of three children, Lewis-Bedz lives in Dearborn with John, her husband of nearly three years.

In *Shear Madness*, which has an open-ended run at the Gem, she is the understudy to the roles of Barbara DeMarco and Mrs. Schubert until mid-January.

### MYSTERY-COMEDY

One of America's longest-running comedies, *Shear Madness*, which is filled with countless double entendres and sexual innuendo, takes place in a unisex hair salon. The story centers on hair stylist Tony Whitcomb and his customers talking about the eccentric pianist who lives above the salon, who later ends up murdered with a pair of barber scissors.

Things get interesting from there as the audience votes on who the murderer is and



Robin Lewis-Bedz

the thespians play out that scenario accordingly. *Shear Madness* director Matt Callahan also localized the play, making references to Grosse Pointe, Inkster, and other cities within the Metro-Detroit area. Originally written as *Scherenschnitt* by Swiss playwright Paul Portner in 1963, Marilyn Abrams and Bruce Jordan transformed it in 1979 from a serious murder mystery to a mystery-comedy.

"*Shear Madness* is a big fit," Lewis-Bedz said. "You have to find the ultimate core of reality within that."

After her run with *Shear Madness* ends, Lewis-Bedz is looking forward to performing in playwright Larry Shue's *The Foreigner*, which will run from late-February to late-March in Meadow Brook Theatre, at Oakland University's campus in Rochester.

*The Foreigner* is about a shy man named Charlie who doesn't say much. His friends tell people he's foreign and doesn't understand English. People freely talk about others in front of him, oblivious to the fact he understands

every word. Lewis-Bedz plays Catherine, the female lead, who befriends Charlie.

### LENGTHY RESUME

The actress has performed at the Purple Haze Theatre in Chelsea, the Jewish Ensemble Theatre in West Bloomfield, Second City in Detroit, as well as the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Meadow Brook. She has appeared in *The Tropical Pickle*, *Let It Be, All My Sons*, *Dance Like No One's Watching*, *The Day We Met*, *Measure for Measure*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

"Whatever I'm working on at the time is my dream project. I've met so many great people, who are fun to work with and learn from," Lewis-Bedz explained. "Every show presents its own unique set of challenges. The longer you're in this business, you have different challenges. There are days when you show up and you're tired. You have to depend on the other actors to support you and engage you in order to be in the moment, so it's fresh. I'm always learning."

Lewis-Bedz has no Broadway dreams; she likes the work she's doing now, saying that she finds it fun and challenging. In fact, she lived in New York City for under a year and found it too crowded.

"There were way too many people. It got very claustrophobic," she recalled.

In addition to appearing on the stage, Lewis-Bedz had a bit part in Chelsea resident Jeff Daniels' film, *Super Sucker*, as Bobbi, Bartholomew.

"(Daniels) is no different than working with anyone else. He's just a regular guy who's very down-to-earth. He cares very much about the work and the art. He's very fun and accessible."

However, she prefers theater to film because she said that's something magical about performing in front of a live audience; it's true art.

"You don't revisit a scene in film and do it differently than when you (revisit) it eight times a week on stage. That's just not as much room to do that in film."



Rebekah Walker sings classical Christmas music accompanied by John Boonenberg Thursday, Dec. 19.

## Young vocalist focuses on true meaning of Christmas

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

Tired of *Jingle Bells* and *Frosty the Snowman* and ready to hear music that brings out the true meaning of the season? Popular songs are good for getting in the mood to celebrate the holidays but the week leading up to Christmas should be a time for reflection. What better way to start the process than by listening to Franz Schubert's and Bach's *Ave Maria*, Cesar Franck's *Pavane*, J.S. Bach's *Ave Verum Corpus*, Beethoven's *Sonata in E-flat Major* and Pietro Yon's *Gesu Bambino* along with favorites like *Silent Night* and *O Holy Night*? Young soprano Rebekah Walker sings all of this music and more at A Classical Christmas concert Thursday, Dec. 19, in the Basilica of St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church in Livonia.

Some of the selections are on the first CD, *Classical Favorites*, she recorded two years ago at the age of 17.

"I love Christmas music. It makes it so special to hear songs you grew up with," said Walker who studies voice with Barbara Wiltse at Madonna University in Livonia. "My favorite is *O Holy Night*. It's written so beautifully."

Walker first sang the religious song as a student in the choir at Ladywood High School in Livonia. It was there that her father Brady Walker first realized Rebekah's talent. Now he's doing everything he can, including promoting and producing the concert, to further her career. Walker's already sung in front of large audiences with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra but he never dreamed this concert would turn into such a large event.

"We were originally going to do it at the Livonia Civic Center and switched to St. Mary's basilica, a bigger venue where we need to sell 600 tickets just to break even," said Brady Walker. "It's become a tremendous promotional effort but I knew I had to do something when I heard her sing at school. I'm in it for the long haul trying to get the right people to hear her. We're going to be recording the concert for her second CD. She's not your usual voice. It's angelic."

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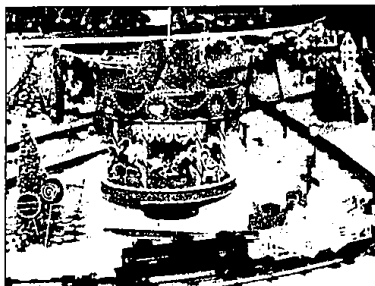
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