

It's No Surprise—But Winning Is Great!

By BETTY MASSON

"I shall carry this experience with me throughout the rest of my life," said Owen Dodson in his critique of the Livonia - Redford Theater Guild's presentation of scenes from "Lion in Winter."

Dodson, former professor of drama at Howard University and now consultant to the Harlem School of the Arts in New York, was one of three judges in the competition sponsored by the Metropolitan Detroit Community Theater Festival last week (March 13-19) in the Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium.

Thus it didn't really come as a surprise when word came Tuesday that the LRTG had won \$1,000 for having the best production.

But it was a tremendous thrill, to its cast, to its director, Mary Ann Vosgerchian of Livonia and to all the guild members and fans.

of many years of hard work. All three started in theater when they were children. All three have been active in local productions and have been featured in Observer articles.

For all of them, theater is an avocation, just another part of extremely busy lives. Mrs. Moorehead (more commonly known as Ducky) not only helps her husband, Ed, in his roofing and siding business, but also holds down another office job, and "directs" the seven of their nine children still at home.

And while "Adaptation" was still very much to her mind, she and two of her children tried out for and landed parts in an original musical being staged in Windsor in June.

Mrs. Vosgerchian is working on her PhD degree in theater at the University of Michigan and also teaches creative dramatics for children to teachers at the Flint and Dearborn campuses. She has three children.

Mrs. Martin is a fashion worker at Hudson's, a grandmother and an expert seamstress who is helping with costumes for the LRTG's next production "Plaza Suite."

This multiplicity of talents and the fact that there is no generation gap have helped unite these groups into award-winning units. Both have won before, at CTAM conventions and at the Detroit - Windsor theater competition held in 1961.

ADDING TO IT was the delight of learning that two more of a total of five awards worth \$2,100 had gone to Observerslanders.

Rosemary Moorehead of Westland was named best director and won \$200 for her production of Elaine May's comedy, "Adaptation" for the Wayne - Westland Civic Theater.

Louise Martin of Redford Township received best actress award (\$200) for her portrayal of Mary Todd Lincoln in an original drama, "A Thin Line," presented by the Players' Guild of Dearborn.

The awards for best original play and best supporting actress went to Detroit companies.

Twelve groups in all competed, including those from Troy, Southgate, Wyandotte, Clawson, Warren, Grosse Pointe, three from Detroit, and of course, "ours."

Both directors are enthusiastic in their praise for their stage crews, who went into the strange world of the Institute auditorium and performed like professionals.

The Wayne - Westland crew consisted of Fred Button, Warren Moorehead, Lois Shafer and Norma Schwartz.

Angus Wrigley as stage manager and assistant director and Warren Reinecker who did the scenery and costumes for "Lion in Winter" helped in the production's success, along with Dick Franklin, who set the mood with 12th century music, and Phil Matara, Mark Thomas and Fred Matara, on lighting.

The two lead roles in "Lion" were taken by two guild regulars and long-time members, Howard Egan of Milford and Moyra Taormina of Livonia. Egan, who is also a guild past president, is the branch manager of Dictaphone Corp., a gentleman farmer and the father of six children. Mrs. Taormina, the mother of eight, often works on local radio and television as well as appearing in LRTG plays.

Also in the cast were Katie Beddow, who has also had leading roles with the Farmington Players and with LRTG children's plays; Reinecker, a costume designer at the GM Tech Center, who is also building chairman for the LRTG, as well as being a talented set and costume designer; J. Craig Collicott, who has been active in civic theater for almost 16 years and is currently working on a locally produced feature-length film, "Freedom RIB"; Russ Vogel, who is just out of Livonia's Franklin High School and is hoping to make a career in stage and cinematography; and another play by Miss May, "Hamlet" (Rusty) Aldridge who is also a successful director.

HOW DID WE DO SO WELL? Attention to every detail, as well as love of the theater, seems to be the common denominator among all three of our winners, individually and in groups.

"You pick good scripts, you set high standards, you have open casting... and you get good shows," according to Mrs. Martin, who is one of the busiest community theater actresses in the Detroit area. She is a former president of the LRTG, and being on its play-reading committee, she helped pick "Lion" as its winter production.

Of her own role, Mrs. Martin comments, "I really researched Mary Todd Lincoln. I know all about her. I even know what diabetes (which she had) does to people."

Attention to detail for Mrs. Vosgerchian meant "working ensemble." Every member of the cast and crew was important. She even put her cast members through a series of exercises to increase their sense awareness and worked with them to help rid them of 20th century mannerisms.

For Mrs. Moorehead, it meant the constant drill and discipline which is essential to achieve the right timing in a comedy production. Choosing the right play was also important. She has a penchant for comedy. Elaine May's in particular. She won a Community Theater Association of Michigan award last year with another play by Miss May, "Hamlet" (Rusty) Aldridge who is also a successful director.

It's also the culmination



LOOKING OVER the Observer Newspaper's bulletin which announced the news that they had won in the Metropolitan Detroit Community Festival are (from left) Rosemary Moorehead, Mary Ann Vosgerchian and Louise Martin. All are residents of Observersland. (Observer photo by Bob Woodring)



HOWARD EGAN of Milford played Henry II of England in the prize-winning production. In 1961 he won the Detroit Windsor Theater Council award for best actor. He has appeared in many roles for the LRTG.



MOYRA TAORMINA of Livonia played Eleanor of Aquitaine in "Lion in Winter." She is the mother of eight children, the youngest of whom are 2 1/2-year-old twins. She, too, has appeared in many LRTG productions.



APPEARING IN THE BEST PRODUCTION were, from left, Hamilton (Rusty) Aldridge Jr., Warren Reinecker, Kati Beddow and J. Craig Collicott.

IT'S ALSO THE culmination

of many years of hard work. All three started in theater when they were children. All three have been active in local productions and have been featured in Observer articles.

Chess Classes

DETROIT The Jewish Community Center is offering chess classes on Sundays. Beginners' classes will be at 2 p.m., and intermediate players will meet at 3 p.m. Experienced players will also have an opportunity to study master games. To enroll, call the education services department of the center, 18100 Meyers.

At Harvard

A course in administering arts organizations and activities will be offered July 2 through July 23 at Harvard University. Brochures are available by writing the Harvard Summer School Institute in Arts Administration, Dept. A3, 1350 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Dance Will Be April 9

The Dearborn - Livonia Station, Dearborn, 48124. Singletons will hold their spring dance Friday, April 7, in the Knights of Columbus Hall, St. Francis Council, 21900 Middle Bell, Farmington. Dancing will be from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. The dance will be open to everyone over 21. Admission is \$3.50. Advance tickets may be obtained by writing P.O. Box 2175, Fort Dearborn

Highland Unit Plans Contest

DETROIT The 13th annual indoor games sponsored by the Detroit Highland Dancing Society will be held in St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday, April 9. Children will compete for medals and trophies for the Highland fling, sword dance, Highland reels and Seann Triubhas.

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