

## At LRTG

## Boos Will Be Welcome

By BETTY MASSON

Producing a melodrama today has to be somewhat like the old-time sport of walking across Niagara Falls on a tightrope.

But director Ken Chomont is confident that it can and will be done without a slip.

HE'S HOPING that when the Livonia-Redford Theater Guild opens its first play of the season, "The Drunkard," this weekend, there'll be lots of boos and hisses for the villain, laughter and maybe even a tear or two.

If anyone knows how to lead a cat across the falls safely, it's Chomont. He's had a good deal of experience at this.

From June 1967, until August 1970 (when the theater burned), Chomont was associated with the American Drama Festival at Greenfield Village, sometimes playing the hero and sometimes, the villain, but always in this type of 19th century theater.

As a result, although Chomont lives in Detroit, many in Observersland are familiar with his acting talents and consider him one of the best ADP performers.

He's still associated with the village, taking part in the summer - time "vignettes" which have replaced the ADP. Presently he is writing a new version of "Puss in Boots," along with lyrics and a musical score. This will be the village's Christmas presentation.

Chomont has also designed the costumes for the play and hopes to have a role in it.

He's a graduate of Northwestern University, where he majored in speech, interpretation and theater, and minored in English literature and comparative religions. At the University of Michigan, he studied speech, specializing in the field of theater, and English literature, for his MA degree.

In directing "The Drunkard," Chomont is stressing that "the melodramatic spoof is offensive. The melodrama spoofs itself."

He admits, "The

## Chorus Seeks New Members

DEARBORN

The Dearborn Choral Art Society is beginning Sunday afternoon rehearsals in Cherry Hill United Presbyterian Church, Telegraph and Cherry Hill. Persons interested in performing classical choral works are invited to join. They should contact the recreation department of the city of Dearborn.

The group's conductor is Charles S. Heard, who is vocal music director of the Wayne-Westland schools, as well as conductor of the Westland Symphony Orchestra and the Rackham Symphony Choir. DCAS will perform Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Hodie" and Norman Lockwood's "Carol Fantasy" at a concert Dec. 3 in the Dearborn Youth Center. The spring concert, April 8, will include Borodin's "Polovtsian Dances" and Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana."

## Singles Dance

The Ann Arbor Saturday Night Singles Club is holding Saturday evening dances in the YM-YWCA, 350 S. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor. All singles 25 and over are invited. Dancing is from 9 to midnight.

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melodrama is bad literature. It's not a good portrait of psychology, it has peculiar simplifications, but it is good theater. Every scene is a bravura scene."

For all its ironies and laughabilities, says Chomont, "There's a lot of truth in the play."

"THE DRUNKARD," of course, deals with drunkenness. It tells what happens when the hero, Edward Middleton, is led down the path of drunkenness and degradation by the unscrupulous Lawyer Cribbs. Of course, Edward's wife and daughter are the first to suffer.

But Edward has a faithful friend in his foster brother, William Dowton, the diamond in the rough type, and the play has a comic element in the gyrations of the spinster, Miss Spindle.

"The Drunkard" was first performed in Boston Museum in 1844, and has been around ever since. It started as a series of skits to illustrate a temperance lecture. Gradually the lectures were dropped and the play just grew.

And in much the same way that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" helped point out the evils of slavery, Chomont feels that "The Drunkard" helped bring about the passage of the prohibition amendment.

Ironically, it was revived to celebrate the repeal of prohibition and ran for 30 years in a California beer hall. It was also a popular touring attraction in various pubs and bars throughout the country.

CHOMONT FEELS that community college theaters are interested in staging melodramas (the Southfield Players are also presenting "The Drunkard" this fall) because the audience can participate... through the hissing and the cheering.

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KEN CHOMONT is director of the Livonia-Redford Theater Guild's production of "The Drunkard." (Observer photo)

According to him, this is one way of recapturing our sense of community.

"We look back with fondness on the beauties of the past," he says.

"The Drunkard" will open in the guild's playhouse Friday, Oct. 6, at 8:30 p.m. Repeat performances are scheduled for Oct. 7-8 and 15. Curtain time is 8:30 every night except Sunday, when it is 7:30. Reservations must be made with Carol Lasco, 15710 Archdale, Detroit, and Terry Borovik, 34849 Grove, Livonia.



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## Casting Call

Schoolcraft College students are invited to audition for "Oedipus Rex" by Sophocles, at 7 p.m., Wednesday Oct. 4, and Sunday, Oct. 8, in the Liberal Arts Theater. Plans are being made to stage this Greek drama in masks and special costumes.

## Chorale Needs Altos

The Suburban Chorale will begin rehearsing for a Christmas concert Wednesday, Oct. 4, in Clarenceville High School, 20155 Middle Belt, Livonia. The chorale is looking for more altos. Interested singers should contact Mrs. Stanley Goodman, 8444 Rae Drive, Westland.



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Interested persons should contact Michael Endres at Plymouth High School, Joy and Canton Center Roads.

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"CANDY" (R)  
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"THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE" (R)

**WAYNE Drive-In II**  
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#1 BOB HOPE  
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