

# It's Singing Time For LRTG

By BETTY MASSON

People like Jack and Judy Pierson are the unsung heroes of many an organization. It's an awfully good time to do a little singing — since the Livonia — Redford Theater Guild's musical "Sweet Charity" opens this weekend, with Jack Pierson as the musical director and his wife as the assistant musical director. She claims this is a joke since she knows nothing about music, but as guild president she has plenty to do with making it a successful production.

THIS IS the ninth musical Pierson has directed for the guild, but this fact may have been overlooked in the past — the stars usually get all the credit.

When you see "Sweet Charity," and thrill to its vibrant "Rhythm of Life," keep in mind that Pierson has had more to do with the production than just stand behind the footlights and lead the orchestra and the singers. In fact, he has rearranged the "Rhythm," adding new life, making it more complicated and more of a fugue. "Hopefully, it's more interesting," said Pierson. "We've added a big screaming ending."

Both Piersons are enthusiastic about the upcoming production, which opens at 8:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 8, in Bentley High School, Livonia. Performances are also set for Dec. 9, 17, 18 and 19. Curtain time is 8:30 every night except Dec. 19, when it is 7:30 p.m.

Mrs. William Cowen, 7728 Lear Court, Westland, and Mrs. Corky Foster, 15772 "Country Club, Livonia, are the ticket chairmen.



JUDY AND JACK PIERSON

"Sweet Charity" is from a plot by Neil Simon with music by Cy Coleman. It's about a dance hall hostess who decides it's time to look for a husband.

BOTH PIERSONS feel that choreographer Bonnie McFarland has done an outstanding job with the number entitled "Rich Man's Frog." In her version, it's "a non-frog," and very funny. The dance (strictly modern) is performed in a posh nightclub before a group of bored sophisticates.

Because of a change in opening night, "Sweet Charity" has had 10 weeks of rehearsals instead of the normal six to eight, and should be even better.

Also Pierson and Donald Lupp, instrumental music director at Henry Ford

Community College, have assembled a non-professional orchestra which they feel is as close to professional as possible.

Pierson and Lupp chose the best from their associations with students from a wide area. Pierson has been director of instrumental music at Fordson High School in Dearborn for the past six years, has taught jazz improvisation and theory at HFCC.

BESIDES LRTG productions, Pierson has done others for Dearborn and Roseville Park groups; musicals for Fordson High School; lead the Fordson football band; and this year, he is president of district 12 of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association.

Mrs. Pierson works at HFCC, and in her spare time, helps wherever needed at LRTG... backstage. She's appeared in front of the footlights only twice, and quickly decided that this wasn't for her. She's more interested in costumes, makeup and production.

She likes community theater simply because "there's no other place where you meet as many different types of people... it's never dull."

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