

American plays scheduled at Bonstelle Theater

A bicentennial season of six American plays will be presented by Wayne State University for 1975-76 at the historic Bonstelle Theatre on Woodward Avenue. The subjects come from

American legend, history and show business, and are treated in a variety of ways—realistic, poetic, epic and musical—all by American authors. Opening the season (and playing

through Friday) was James Baldwin's "The Amen Corner," the work of one of America's greatest black writers of plays, novels and essays. It's a moving drama of ghetto life that was first produced in 1955 and became a Broadway success a decade later.

"George M.," the season's musical comedy offering, is built on the life and work of America's most popular variety actor, and one of Broadway's all-time great showmen, George M. Cohan. It is scheduled to open Nov. 28.

The 1925 Scopes "monkey" trial,

now receiving wide attention during its 50th anniversary year, is the basis of Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's "Inherit the Wind" which is being revived beginning Jan. 23.

N. RICHARD NASHT's "The Rainmaker," which opens Feb. 27, brings to the season the work of a playwright who is primarily a television writer. This romantic comedy, his most famous play, is in fact an expanded television script which became a stage hit and later a film and a musical "110 in the Shade".

This is followed by Howard Sackler's "The Great White Hope," his prize-winning Broadway success based on the tragic fate of the first black heavyweight champion of the world, Jack Johnson, during the early 1900's. It opens at the Bonstelle April 23.

The season closes with a dramatization of the Smoky Mountain legend of Barbara Allen, "Dark of the Moon" by Howard Richardson and William Berney. A musical folk fantasy written when the authors were still graduate students, it won the Maxwell Anderson Award for verse drama and was bought for a 1945 Broadway production.

It opens at the Bonstelle May 28, 21 years after its first appearance on that stage in May, 1956.

The productions will each play for two week-ends, with 8:30 p.m. performances Fridays and Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. matinees Sundays. Only exception is the musical "George M.," which will play three week-ends. Brochures with complete information about the Bicentennial season at both the Bonstelle and the Hübner Theatres may be requested by calling the WSU Theatre Box Office at 577-2772.



James still swinging

Harry James and his Swinging Band will appear on the Groves Big Band Jazz Series at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 30, in the Groves High School Auditorium, Thirteen Mile and Evergreen roads. Tickets are available at Marty's Records, Birmingham. Information about the program and the entire series is available by calling 644-3354. The series is a nonprofit cultural program sponsored by the Groves Boosters and partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

3 cancellations at Music Hall

Music Hall has cancelled three shows in its theater series and is exploring legal action against three New York theatrical agents.

According to managing director Manuel Levine, the cancellations are "Red, White & Vaudeville," with Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, "The Music Man," and "Ola Koko," an African musical by the Nigerian Theater Company.

Caesar-Coca and Music Man were inserted into Music Hall's Theatre Series in late August when the American Shakespeare Theatre cancelled its entire 1975 tour due to bankruptcy, and budget cuts at colleges where it was to have performed.

Ola Koko, also a repertory company, appears to have suffered a similar fate. Levine said in a letter to subscribers. He emphasized that these are the only two actual changes on Music Hall's original series of 17 events announced as its Bicentennial season.

WHILE THESE two cancellations

are unavoidable, "Music Hall has suffered damages, financially and in its credibility with subscribers," the manager added.

As a second attempt to compensate a record number of theatre subscribers, Levine announced they will have a choice of "any combination of any two events from any shows on the Center's current season including the 40th and international series, any of the varied events still to be booked for the coming season, and three recently contacted shows. These new shows will include:

The Detroit premiere appearance of Dmitri, the Swiss mime who in Europe is considered equal to, if quite different from, Françoise Marcel Marceau, to perform Dec. 2, 3, 4, and 6.

A special "pre-Bicentennial" engagement of "1776," will be presented Dec. 26 through New Year's Eve. Sam Gallus' new and critically acclaimed production of "Give 'Em Hell Harry," starring television's Ed Nelson will be presented Feb. 17 to 21.

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