

# At Mercy High

## 'New Majority' brings religious rock to Hills

BY SHERRY KAIHAN

If the New Majority, the Redford Township musicians who will be bringing their newest rock musical to Farmington May 8 and 9 will look in their copies of the Old Testament they will find that Psalm 81 describes them right down to the ground.

Sing aloud to God our strength. . . . Have a song, sound the trumpet, the sweet lyre with the harp. Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon on our festival day.

"Truth of Truths" is the name of the religious show in which members of this youth organization are currently expressing their musical and religious feelings. In Farmington their drums will beat and voices rise in Mercy High School, Elmer Mile and Middle Belt. The show will start at 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 8 and at 7 p.m. Sunday, May 9.

WHILE THE majority of the group had mainly from Redford Township, some are from other cities. Kenny Burton, for example, is a Garden City resident. By day he is a maintenance man at Schoolcraft College, by night he does rental work in the thought of King David. And who else are among these young

people whose work already has received praise from metropolitan Detroit newspapers who played to full houses three nights running at Clarendonville High School in "Truth of Truths," and who are currently being scouted by the Music Hall?

The New Majority coalesced more than four years ago in St. Valentine Catholic Church, Redford Township. Their first effort to show what they could do with voice and instrument was a production of "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Their success with this drew them in 1972 to "Godspell." But what to do next?

It was Father Auth, associate pastor of St. Valentine, who started them on the hunt for their next vehicle. He had a tape of "Truth of Truths" which he had heard in Toronto, but he had no idea of how to find its producers and tail it down for production.

pleased he was his, show was having its first stage production.

Mrs. Lepper, an unusual singer on a producer with Lou Zirklo as coproducer. A director was picked: Jeanette Setkova. A musical director: Carol Horning, also volunteered for, but third year with the group.

She's a choir director of the Clarendonville senior and junior high schools. In the moments that wonder when she was not leading choirs and performing singers and an orchestra for the "The Sound of Music," she was rehearsing a chorus, a five piece rock band and a 12 piece orchestra for "Truth of Truths."

For the most part there is no speaking in this rock opera. Miss Horning explained. "It is a series of songs about Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, David and Bathsheba and moving up to the time of Jesus. There are 12 main solo parts.

MISS HORNING recalled the first time she attended a rehearsal of the New Majority.

I grew up on a farm and had a little old lady piano teacher and a sedate music life. . . . I didn't care for rock music. But I was so impressed with the talent that I went ahead with it.

I used to get headaches from Superstar, but the more I listened, the more comfortable I became with it. The experience helped me grow musically.

It is fun. I enjoy working with kids who are so enthusiastic. The only drawback is that it is so time consuming, but the performers make it worthwhile. They're a five band.

The members of the cast second her opinion. It is a group which really cares and that makes them special," declared John Zirklo, a senior at Catholic Central High School who will be seen as Judas Iscariot and heard as a member of the chorus.

Keith McFadden, who plays Jesus in the musical, remarked that "I heard about the group in 10th grade and fell in love with it. . . . A member of the Redford Union High School chorus, glee club and madrigal singers, he added "There is no way I could live up to my part but the group has influenced me a lot in the way I conduct myself."

Benny Burton regards his part in the production as a serious event. When I am on stage I am part of the person I'm playing," he said. "This is the only way to do it.

However, like the rest of the performers,

he enjoys the backstage fun and lumbering up of vocal chords by singing Beatie songs with the other singers.

DEBORAH PANEK, a former Redford Union student, turned harem dancer and chorus member, also finds the experience rewarding.

I like to spread the good news of the Lord," she said. "We have a lot of young people who are not Christians and it gives them something to do that is important."

It is appropriate that with a name like Truth of Truths, he is head of the sound crew and when not singing, he will be

A solist in the production, he has occasionally discovered that his name leads to confusion. Once he introduced himself to a man with the words "I'm Christian. Shaking his hand, the man replied "I'm Jewish."

Christian plays guitar, sings in clubs around the city and is soon to put a demonstration record of some of his songs. In "Truth of Truths," he is head of the sound crew and when not singing, he will be

found sitting in the audience with his music board trying to bring forth the vocals in the best possible way.

Gene Brady has a confession of roles. Former student of St. Valentine and Catholic Central high schools, he is at one moment the voice of God. Then, as Peter, Philie condemns his son to death.

When I started with the group, I was skeptical and thought they were a lot of boys milking," he said. "Later I found they are really decent people who really believe in what they are doing. We are not doing the show for ourselves, but everyone gets something from it. It's a team effort. No one has a major part. Everyone is equal. There is great camaraderie and joking around together. It's not just a job, but a whole spirit."

MRS. LEPPER feels a very strong attachment to group members. They are in and out of my house all the time," she commented. "We're like a community. We work together six months and you can't do that without developing strong ties. We pray before each rehearsal and performance."

### Thompson finishes aviation program

Paul J. Thompson, son of Mr. and Mrs. James B. Thompson, 2677 Kurkade Lane, Farmington Hills, graduated from the aviation technician program at Northrup University's Institute of Technology, Inglewood, Calif.

He is eligible to take the Federal Aviation Administration examinations for the airframe and powerplant certificate. Thompson attended Farmington High School. He is a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association.

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