



Getting Around

By **ETHEL SIMMONS**

Stand-up comedy some place for lady

Can a girl who played Snow White find happiness as a stand-up comic? For Susan Ives Cook, who is originally from Birmingham and is back in Detroit performing a comedy routine, the answer is probably yes. Ms. Cook has been acting since the age of 10, when she first appeared in college productions. At 22, she played Snow White in a production presented by Henry K. Martin's children's theater.

She studied acting at Wayne State University and received a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Detroit in 1975.

Her high school years were spent at Seaboard High School in Birmingham, where her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Cook, still live.

TALL, with blue eyes and auburn hair, Ms. Cook has an exuberant yet pixielike quality.

She said, "People have told me. No one's going to laugh at you. You're too pretty. I think that's a charge. People will laugh if you're funny."

Ms. Cook doesn't really seem to prefer comedy to straight dramatic parts. But her acting path has led from drama to improvisation to comedy routines.

She now lives in Los Angeles, actually in an apartment in Hollywood, and is currently on what she calls a "promotional tour."

"I've been doing stand-up comedy for a year now," she said. Her first appearance was at The Comedy Store in L.A. "I started out with four minutes."

Her present routines go anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes and include not only one-liners but characters and impressions. Ms. Cook writes her own material ("A good one-line joke costs \$25 to \$300" from a writer).

"IT'S NICE to play Detroit doing stand-up," she said. "I took a chance and breezed into town."

She got into town last Thursday and checked to see if the Railroad Crossing in Detroit was still doing comedy.

She played there Friday and Saturday, doing guest sets. She'll be back at the Railroad Crossing, on Eight



Susan Cook wants to make people laugh.

Mile Road just east of Mound, on Thursday night, appearing with Ron Conrad. Ms. Cook expects to go on between 10:30 and 11 p.m.

Her parents hope to attend the performance that night.

For acting parts, Ms. Cook goes by the name Susan Ives Cook, but for comedy appearances she prefers the billing Susan Cook, because she thinks

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It sounds more like a comedienne. After her show Thursday in Detroit, Ms. Cook will be going to Chicago for more comedy showcases. She explains that these dates will probably be without pay (as in her Detroit guest spots) but that they provide showcases for comedies to be seen.

The same holds true in L.A. where some of the clubs allow comedies to get up and use their material. But she isn't disturbed by this, considering it a good opportunity to be spotted for paying jobs.

MS. COOK has performed in many stage productions in Detroit and was highly praised by critics for her characterization of Helena in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at The Theatre.

She was a member of The Completely Different Company, an improvisational company based in Detroit, which played the Raven and the Roman Ode. Later, she went to Chicago to study at the Second City workshop and was a member of The Refutation Company doing improvisations before being asked to join the Second City touring company.

Then she road managed a team of comedians in L.A. whom she had met in Chicago.

What made Ms. Cook decide to do comedy? "I got completely bombed out of my mind over a guy," she said matter of factly. "So I decided I would like to make other people laugh."

According to Ms. Cook, "People won't laugh at the same things from a woman. They don't like political things from a woman at all."

How about jokes on sex? "Anybody will laugh at sex," she responded.

Ms. Cook continued, "Women are developing a new kind of comedy." She talked about Bob Hope and Morey Amsterdam introducing the one-liners, then Joan Rivers coming along with a comedy put-down of herself and Phyllis Diller and her Fang (her husband) routine.

Lily Tomlin started a new tradition, with characters and character monologues.

MS. COOK SAID some of her own characters include an old lady in a bank and Mae West in the ghetto. Sometime she does children and she also talks about male-female relationships.

She wasn't scared when she went on stage with a comedy routine for the first time. "I'm used to being on stage. I was more scared when I got off."

Musical 'Birdie' brightens stage

By **BARBARA MICHALS**

Bouncy and bursting with energy, "Bye, Bye, Birdie!" continues its run Friday and Saturday evenings through August at the Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre in Bloomfield Hills. The well-staged production is thoroughly entertaining.

"Birdie" is the popular musical comedy that lightly satirizes rock stars, American teenagers and uptight parents.

Conrad Birdie, a swivel-hipped rock-and-roll star patterned closely on Elvis Presley, is about to be inducted into the Army, leaving behind millions of downhearted fans. As a publicity gimmick, Birdie will bestow a farewell kiss on young Kim Macafee, the president of his local fan club in Sweet Apple, Ohio.

Birdie's visit to Sweet Apple has pronounced effects on the Macafee family and further complicates the private life of his manager, Albert Peterson. Peterson must try to keep the uncooperative Birdie in check while he juggles the affections of his loyal secretary and his box constrictor mother.

Among the large and talented cast, Judy Fern is a stand-out as Rose Alvarez, Peterson's long-suffering secretary. Her highly expressive face adds considerable comic dimensions to the role. Her pleasant singing voice and spirited delivery are a winning combination.

Steve Glad is also outstanding in the role of Birdie, as greasy and rubber-legged as one could possibly imagine. His considerable gyrations through "Ya Gotta Be Sincere" and "I Got a Lot of Livin' to Do" are exhaustive as well as hilarious.

Del Howison does a competent job as the weak-willed Peterson, struggling to finally stand on his own feet and untie his mother's apron strings. As Mae Peterson, Albert's mother, Henrietta Kryskalla does a fine job

with a role that is a comic gem. Mae smoothers her "sonnyboy" with self-sacrificing love, and any mention of Albert's affection for Rose brings nontoo-sad reminders of his mother's "condition."

Susan Barnett is very convincing as star-struck teenager Kim Macafee, torn between her idol Birdie and her new steady boyfriend. Miss Barnett's little-girl singing voice enhances her characterization but does not do justice to the songs.

Loren Bass evokes sympathy as Hugo Peabody, Kim's lovesick steady. The Turner is engaging as Ursula Merkle, Birdie's most ardent fan and the leader of the lively chorus of Sweet Apple teenagers.

Phil Embury and Elaine Keinert are amusing as Kim's beleaguered, bewildered parents. They ask the musical question "What's wrong with these kids today?" and conclude, "Why can't they be like we were, perfect in every way . . . ?" After ridiculing all the fuss over Conrad Birdie, Mr. Macfee becomes star-struck as Kim and makes a fool of himself when given a chance to be on television with his idol, Ed Sullivan.

Under the direction of Celia Merrill Turner, the Will-O-Way production is fast-paced throughout. The exuberant teenagers tumble out from all over the theater, surrounding the audience with the sense of excitement that has swept over Sweet Apple.

A few low ramps are cleverly used for a variety of purposes on stage. The Telephone Song, a montage of teenagers and telephones is well-staged with a minimum of props. "Birdie" is a happy, fun musical for the whole family.

Concert, play slated

Theater-goers to Cranbrook's outdoor Greek theater will be serenaded with a midsummer pops concert, played on the Christ Church Cranbrook carillon, Wednesday. The occasion is the final production of the 38th annual Cranbrook Theatre School.

"The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie," a penetrating study of the intangible influence of an unusual teacher on the lives of young people associated with her, will be staged at 8:15 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday.

The carillon concert, by University of Michigan carillonneur Hudson Ladd, will precede the final play and is free to all who want to listen from the church lawn. Tickets for the play are \$2 and available by calling 644-9668.

Local cast members, all junior high

school, high school and college students who studied at Cranbrook Theatre School this summer, are Carolyn Curtis, Ann Bowerman and Claudia Lasley of Birmingham; Dorothy Sims, Martha Ortiz, Fred Dilks, Vera Ambrose and Katharina Kasi, Bloomfield Hills; Majorie Cooper, Troy; Linda Ramsay, Heidi Rose and Amy Silberman, Southfield; Cheryl Webster, West Bloomfield; and Jane Covent and Gail Vasko, Orchard Lake.

Directors are Lin Eagle and Heidi Stock of the Cranbrook Theatre School faculty. The theater is at 400 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Cranbrook Theatre School, directed by Annetta Womberger, is sponsored by Cranbrook Educational Community.

How to send news items

News releases, photographs or other information can be mailed to Ethel Simmons, entertainment editor, at 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48013, or delivered to any office of the Observer & Eccentric.

The entertainment pages include news, features and reviews on theater, movies, night life, restaurants, travel, music (pop, rock, jazz and country), special situations, TV and radio.

The phone number of the Birmingham office is 644-1100.

Bennett singing on 'Pops'

Tony Bennett makes a guest appearance on "Evening at Pops" at 8 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 14, on Channel 56. The telecast will be repeated Saturday, Aug. 20, at 8 p.m. Bennett performs a new arrangement of his trademark song, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." And he stirs up fond memories with a Cole Porter medley that includes "What Is This Thing Called Love?"

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Buildings and Homes
Visit the restored, interpreted shops, stores and homes of famous Americans like Lincoln, Edison, Henry Ford, and the Wright Brothers.

Festival Fare
Complete meals are available at the Clinton Inn, Riverfront Restaurant in Sunawee Park, and Heritage Hall in Henry Ford Museum.

Snacks are served at the Feed-bag and Pond 'n' Coop lunch stands, Sunawee Ice Cream Parlor, Sweet Place snack stand, "Owl" night lunch wagon and the Popcorn Wagon. A picnic area is available by raft on Sunawee Island.



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