

Launce stars in 'Private Lives'

Guests who came to dinner — dinner theater, that is? Jimmy Launce, WJR radio personality, that's who. Launce, a West Bloomfield resident, made his debut in Somerset Dinner Theatre on Sept. 24 in the starring role as Elton in Noel Coward's comedy "Private Lives".

Radio listeners know Launce as host of the "Jimmy Launce Show" from 10 to 11 a.m. to noon at 780 on the dial.

Besides his radio show, Launce has performed in theatrical productions starring as Don Juan in "Don Juan in Hell" and playing lead roles in "Harvey," "Outward Bound," "Don't Drink the Water," "Dial M for Murder," "The Man Who Came to Dinner," "Anastasia" and "Our Town." Launce is past president of the Scottish

Rule Players and serves on the board of directors of American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Screen Actor's Guild. He also finds time for countless charitable organizations.

"Private Lives" is an intimate comedy, and the plot could have been drawn from anyone who has more than one trip down the aisle. The plot's about a honeymooner whose "real" shows up not only in the same city at the same time but at the same hotel with adjoining balconies and with a new mate also.

This is another Turgeon-Guest production, the third for Somerset's Dinner Theatre.

Pierre Turgeon of Farmington Hills is featured as Victor. An actor, director and producer, Turgeon starred at Barney Chasman in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," which opened the Somerset Dinner Theatre last January and played to a packed house for 16 weeks.

More recently, he directed the last Somerset hit, "Star Spangled Girl" which just closed after another 16-week run.

Turgeon has appeared in "Kiss Me Kate," "Cactus Flower," "One, Two, Three" and numerous others. He is well known for his characterizations and has appeared on Detroit television with Andy Williams. You'll probably recognize him from a new television commercial for a local restaurant chain, now being seen.

Marva Benson appears in the role of Amanda. Her first public appearance was at the age of four, and she's had stars in her eyes ever since. Her most recent appearance was in "Plaza Suite" which played the Bedford Inn Dinner Theatre for several months.

Her versatility as an actress has won her numerous leads in "Present Laughter," "Lo and Behold," "Visit to a Small Planet" and countless others.

Sandra Sutherland is appearing in her third Turgeon-Guest production in the role of Sybil. She recently appeared as Muriel in "Plaza Suite" and was the alternate for Jeanette in "Last of the Red Hot Lovers."

Another recent success was her role as the Amazon Queen in "Rage of the Belt." Along with her acting talents, Ms. Sutherland is a writer.

The director of "Private Lives" is in the hands of Kathryn E. Sutton. She has directed such favorites as "Blythe Spirit," "Rage of the Belt" and numerous short plays. She also was the director for the road company of "Plaza Suite" for T-G Productions. In "Last of the Red Hot Lovers," Ms. Sutton portrayed Elizabeth. The Theater in the Somerset Mall auditorium will have gone through a real face lifting by opening night. There will be soft lighting, earth-toned floral decorations with walls and slatted planters, filled with fall foliage, adding to the wall decor. All will be made more intimate by flickering candlelight. The room has seating for 150 patrons.

A buffet dinner is served at 7:30 p.m. every Friday and Saturday with an 8:45 p.m. curtain. Reservations are necessary and tickets are available at Alfred's Restaurant or by calling 643-8865.

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