

'Professor Pompous' will visit the center

By LORAIN McCLISH
The Whistlestop Theatre, a new children's drama group, will bring its first play to the Farmington Community Center for two performances Feb. 12, at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. "Professor Pompous in the Potato Patch" is designed to appeal to elementary school children, but it can be enjoyed by all ages.

It concerns Professor Pompous, who teaches archeology and Indian history. When he takes his students on a dig in Farmer Mac's potato patch, the plot thickens with Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi Indians, crooks and ghosts.

The play is entertaining fun with young actors, from 6 to 18 years of age, which at the same time teaches a good bit of history. To add to the fun, audiences are invited to meet the cast after every performance.

WHISTLESTOP Theatre is the brain child of Taffy Jones, a resident of Bloomfield Hills who formerly had her own television show in New York. She wrote "Professor Pompous" and has organized and directed the young people in the company who are all from Detroit's northwest area.

She is a deacon at Kirk in the Hills in Bloomfield, where the theater got organized. It took its name and went on the road because so many children have little chance to see live theater.

Ms. Jones' assistants are David Barnett of Berkeley; Jody Newton and Nancy Lee Fawcett of Birmingham; and Betty Jean DeShaw of Franklin, who have since made while stops in community centers, schools, churches and nursing homes.

The young company has helped create the costumes, sets and props, which are all custom-made for packing up and moving about easily.

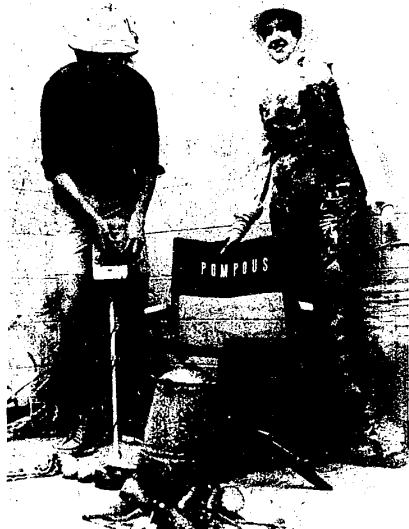
Donovan Shand, who stars as Professor Pompous, also is a member of his school drama group at Birmingham's Groves High School.

Miriam Twardon, who plays Mrs. Pompous, belongs to her college drama group at the University of Detroit.

MS. JONES invites young people who want to join the theater, or groups who would like to schedule a performance, to call Ms. Newton at 642-9217.

The performances scheduled for the community center on Feb. 12 mark the first appearance for the theater in Farmington.

Admission is \$1 and reservations are required. Tickets are available now in the center, at 24705 Farmington Rd., or patrons can call the center, 477-8404, for reservations.



Professor Pompous, played by Donovan Shand of Franklin, uses his underground metal detector to search for Indian artifacts in his dig in Farmer Mac's potato patch, with the help of Mrs. Pompous, played by Miriam Twardon, a student at University of Detroit. The children's play, staged by The Whistlestop Theatre, will be given in Farmington Community Center Feb. 12.



TED STRASSER
Master of ceremonies



ERNEST A. JONES
Guest conductor



MISCHA LEFKOWITZ
Violin soloist

Cabaret Concert comes with Mardi Gras theme

Oakway Symphony's cabaret concert will be different this year. It is being held earlier this year—at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19, instead of in the spring.

And there will be a Mardi gras theme for decorations in the Madonna College Residence Hall, Levan north of Schaefer in Livonia.

Finally, it will be a more informal scene, with sandwiches and bar service from 7-11 p.m. instead of a dinner. The price will be \$5, and tables for eight will be available for \$40.

Tickets are available at Hudson's Westland, Northland and Oakland Mall; Hammell Music and Madonna College in Livonia, and Royal Music in Royal Oak.

THE FOURTH annual cabaret concert will have a prominent radio personality as master of ceremonies and a long list of soloists, according to Francesco DiBlasi, conductor and musical director.

Ted Strasser, who writes the script, researches, and hosts WJR's "Patterns in Music," will be emcee. Strasser, a self-confessed sentimentalist who carries a pad of paper to jot down ideas for songs to match various

themes, has headed the Sunday morning broadcast since June 1968.

Violinist Mischa Lefkowitz, 22, will be soloist in "Zigeunerweisen," a recreation of Gypsy airs by the brilliant 19th century Spanish violinist, Pablo Sarasate.

Lefkowitz will soon join the first violin section of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He studied at the Special Music School in Riga, Latvia, and in the U.S. with Mischa Mischakoff, former Detroit Symphony concertmaster.

Lefkowitz has performed at the Aspen Music Festival and the Blue Hill Festival in Maine last summer.

He gave concerts in Austria, Switzerland, southern France and Finland.

GUEST CONDUCTOR will be Ernest A. Jones, a familiar figure with the Oakway Symphony. Jones is chairman of the board of D'Arcy-McMann and Masius, Inc., advertising agency, and has kept active in music circles since his days as first trumpet in the University of Michigan band.


DiBlasi will lead the orchestra in several light classic selections.

Other soloists will be announced next week. Printed tickets say the emcee will be Fat Bob Taylor. Taylor had to cancel after he took a new job as disc jockey at an Ann Arbor station.

DiBlasi will guest conduct at Mt. Clemens High

Francesco DiBlasi will be guest conductor in a concert by the Mt. Clemens Symphony Orchestra at 8:15 p.m. Saturday, in Mt. Clemens High School. DiBlasi is musical director and conductor of the Oakway Symphony Orchestra.

Soloist in that program will be Harriett Gerlach, who will play Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1. Tickets will be available at the door.



Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

Thursday, February 10, 1977 (F) 1B

Youth in rehearsal for 1977 music tour

By LORAIN McCLISH

One hundred high school students have been chosen to become part of Musical Youth International's 1977 concert program. Fourteen of the Michigan youth are students in North Farmington High School, the largest number from any high school in the state.

It is the 13th season for Musical Youth International, which auditions students for musical skills and citizenship qualifications in preparation for a series of pre-tour concerts. The program will climax this year with a five-week summer tour through Finland, the Soviet Union and Denmark.

In rehearsals every Sunday afternoon, are Stacey Avery, Phyllis Bieri, James Evans, Bud Ferguson, Marsha Freeman, Beth Gaiser, Kevin Howley, Bruce Rice, Jenny Roberts, Clayton Scowcroft, Douglas Schultz, Julie Ziegler, LouAnne Szewczyk, and Todd Langen.

THE ENTIRE 1977 chorus works under the direction of George T. Still, head of vocal music in Farmington High School, returning for his second season with MYI.

He said all of the students chosen "went through a pretty stiff audition and I am sure I've got the best of the lot."

Three from the North Farmington High School contingent are in the MYI Symphonic Band: Schultz, Ms. Bieri and Ms. Szewczyk. They read their music as they play. "But the chorus members have to memorize everything and that takes some doing," he said.

Both conductors have toured abroad with university musical groups, and both say they are eager to return to the Soviet Union.

An experienced adult staff of 10 will accompany the group. Still says many of the 100 are working as many hours as the law allows to pick up their part of the tab. Some monies have been donated to allow talented inner city music students to join the tour.

STILL IS NOT yet certain of the group's exact itinerary, although he feels the format will be much the same as last summer when the tour took in Wales, Scotland and Britain.

He is preparing standard light concerts to be given outdoors and at festivals; sacred concerts to be given in churches and cathedrals; and mixed concerts that will be given for teen groups.

He expects there will be invitation to stay in private homes and he hopes there will be time for sightseeing and person-to-person visiting.

Musical Youth International was founded in 1964 by the late Dr. Lester McCoy, of Saline, who considered it to be the ultimate ideal of his professional career.

The purpose of the organization is to select annually the 100 best high school students with musical talent within driving range of Saline, to form a musical unit.

The group, through of music, aims to carry the message of world friendship to a selected area and experience for themselves the culture of that area.

In its 12 years of it has visited all the world's inhabited continents and has many invitations for further visitation.

Each December the MYI holds a reunion concert in Saline, when the new group makes its initial appearance. Still is now in his eighth year as director of vocal music in the local high

school, and in his second year as chairman of the music department of Farmington Public Schools.



Audition winners for Musical Youth International chorus from North Farmington High School are (from left) Beth Gaiser, Julie Ziegler, Jenny Roberts,

Marsha Freeman, and Stacey Avery. Rehearsals will continue every Sunday with director Ted Still before leaving on a five-week tour.



Male members of Musical Youth International for 1977 are (from left) Bruce Rice, Todd Langen, Clay Scowcroft, Jim Evans, Kevin

Howley and Bud Ferguson, working out with director Ted Still. (Staff photos by Harry Mautte)