

# Meadow Brook rings a winner

By ETHEL SIMMONS

## Review

Michael Tylo and Patricia Reilly make an enchanting pair of costars (or, possibly, trio, since he plays twins) in the Meadow Brook production of Anouilh's "Ring Round the Moon."

This fantasy, artfully directed by Terence Kilburn, has a strong cast in all its supporting roles, including Polly Rowles as the young brothers' aunt.

Sets by Donald Beckman and costumes by Mary Lynn Bonnell are purposefully exaggerated, enhancing the plot's larger-than-life presentation. Action takes place in the Winter Garden of a country chateau in pre-World War I France. The spring blooms in this garden room are startlingly huge and exotic in appearance.

**THE MEN'S** dress is mostly realistic, in strange contrast to the women's costumes, especially some evening dresses of stunning impact that caricature high fashion.

As the twins, Hugo, an insolent rascal, and Frederic, a sensitive soul, Michael Tylo displays as convincing versatility in the dual role.

Both twins are appealing in their

separate ways. Tylo strides onstage manfully as the bold, conviving brother, and truly seems a different person when he assumes the mannerisms of the shy, kindly brother.

He is also a fair and handsome young fellow, as attractive a leading man as he could hope for, which lends more charm to the story's fairy-tale-like theme.

Tiny, slight Patricia Reilly has a regal quality and large-eyed allure as the ballet dancer Isabelle, hired to impersonate a guest's cousin who will attend the ball at the chateau that evening.

There is a hypnotic quality about Ms. Reilly's characterization that makes the innocent dancer both vulnerable and charismatic.

**POLLY ROWLES** has perfect diction and a way of making each line full of humorous treasures, portraying the wealthy, jaded but immensely practical Madame Desmores, the aunt in a wheelchair.

Ms. Rowles and Mary Benson as Capulet, her companion to these many years, have a hilarious scene to which the audience responds with warmth:

The ever-romantic Capulet gossips and babbles on, pulling herself back periodically with, "I've said too much!"

Eric Tavaris as Patrice Bonnelles, secretary to the millionaire Messerschmann, and Cheryl Giannini as Lady India, are a pair of illicit lovers.

He looks slightly absurd in his tuxedo, she decidedly wicked in her daring red ballgown and headpiece.

They dance a wild tango that is a comedy scene with dialogue, too.

Leigh Burch is the young dancer's mother, a music teacher who would happily push her daughter into the arms of a wealthy, well-born man. She is funny, brazen and just what you might expect of a "stage mother."

Throughout the play, the lives and feelings of the moneyed class is contrasted with that of such humble folk as the paid companion, the ordinary girl (vs. the rich girl), and the obsequious butler.

**THE RICH** do not come off too well in this story, and money is even flung about and torn up in the Winter Gar-

den. Money, it seems, does not buy happiness, but neither does poverty, and the message skates wittily across this line.

Martha Gaylord, a statuesque brunette beauty, very nearly overwhelms her role as the rich girl, Diana Messerschmann, who is engaged to the modest Frederic.

She displays all those snobbish qualities we love to hate, and it is easy to believe she is the pampered, willful daughter who always gets her way.

Jerry Jarrett is Diana's father, a gutsy millionaire and self-made man. He's vigorous in his stylization (and almost makes us gasp when he tears up the money).

The fantasy has our heroine of strong backbone stand up to these rich, misguided souls. She is a treat to behold in the elegant white ballgown of her choice, and more than a match for any of those to the manor born.

French playwright Jean Anouilh's "Ring Round the Moon" was adapted for the English-speaking audience by Christopher Fry. Performances continue through Dec. 21 at Meadow Brook on the Oakland University campus near Rochester.

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