

'Magic Parrot' can charm all ages

Thursday, December 20, 1979

(D3D)

By NANCY MAZZARA

For children of all ages, "The Magic Parrot" is a joy. Fairy tales come alive Friday night as Oakland University's Theatre Arts Program presented "The Magic Parrot," co-directed by James Hatfield and Darla Miller, in the Studio Theatre. The adaptation by Hatfield of an 18th century commedia dell'arte play features a fairy princess in the guise of a parrot, a king and several princesses, and much more. Performances continue weekends through Jan. 12 on the campus near Rochester. Children in the small audience were entertained by magic transformations.

review

loud bangs and flashes of light and efforts by the actors to involve the kids in the production.

ADULTS WERE AMUSED by melodramatic actions of the cast, including maidly batting of eyelashes and villainous twirling of mustaches.

The original play was entitled "The King Stag" written by Carlo Gozzi. It includes some of the traditional touches, such as Renaissance music, typed

characters and a concluding speech by the fairy princess.

The play has a simple plot. King Deramo of Serendip must find a wife. He interviews the princesses who apply, using a magic bust which tells him if they lie by laughing.

Angela, daughter of the second Prime Minister Pantaloon, is the most sincere and it is love at first sight.

But Tartaglia, the first Prime Minister, feels slighted since his daughter has been rejected. So he uses a magic spell to interfere with the King's wedding plans, and all manner of troubles follow.

Edward Asher of Pontiac as King Deramo is a lovable, humbling type of guy. His chosen Queen-to-be, Angela, is played shly by Cheri Ray of Brighton.

The evil-minded Tartaglia is played with obvious enthusiasm by Ivan Cage of Detroit.

The versatile Karen I. Swantek of Richmond is the parrot/fairy princess, the magic bust and a bear. Truffaldino the Royal Birdcatcher, portrayed by Barry Childress of Detroit, spends most of his time trying to catch Ms. Swantek's parrot, except when he's being a stag in the woods.

PETER MC BRYAN of Grosse Pointe Woods as Pantaloon, the second prime minister, puts some true comic touches into his part, such as his Chaplinesque walk and Irish brogue.

Cynthia Cole of Bloomfield Hills appears in the role of Tartaglia's reluctant daughter, Clarissa.

Other comic characters are John Rhadigan of Brighton as the King's butler Brighella, and his lusty country cousin Smeraldina, portrayed by Barbara Holcomb of Rochester. Roles such as stags, guards and an old man were played as second parts by members of the main cast.

The cast of this play does wonderful things with a simple fairy tale. They are helped in their efforts by a talented technical staff. Costumes were done in authentic Renaissance style by Johanna Lubkowsky.

The set was simple, with a plain city wall and square which could double as the King's privy chambers or the enchanted forest of Roncestappe.

Lighting was done with imagination and creativity by master electrician Debora Kingston and assistants Jamie Castagna and Thomas Hansen.



Fairy tale characters are portrayed in "The Magic Parrot," a children's theater event at Oakland University.

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