

# 'Luv' will keep audience amused

By BARBARA MICHALS

Like a comic valentine, "Luv" tickles the funny bone while it assails human foibles. The current production by St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook offers lively, amusing views of love's permutations.

The Murray Schisgal comedy concludes its run with performances at 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday at St. Dunstan's Playhouse on the grounds of Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills.

Harry Berlin (Morris Weiner), a sort of wilted flower child, is about to jump off a bridge when he is spotted in the nick of time by his old college chum Milt (Keith Lepard). Catching up on their recent histories, Milt confesses that despite his prosperous appearance he is miserable because his wife Ellen (Bonnie Cook) won't give him a divorce to enable him to marry his new flame. Since Harry confesses he has never

## review

known real love, and since Ellen would like a more enthusiastic lover, Milt decides he will solve all their problems by getting Harry and Ellen together. Despite the apparent success of his plan, the second act finds all three characters still feeling miserable.

WITH HIS woebegone appearance, ruffled hair and ill-fitting rags, Morris Weiner's Harry succeeds in personifying failure. Harry has roamed the world in a futile search for the answers to life's mysteries: ever since the day a passing dog picked him out of a crowd, raised its leg and let him have it.

A born loser, Harry has no idea how to respond to love when it is handed to him. Though his marriage to Ellen is surely doomed to failure (they fall in love mainly on the strength of a mutual preference for flamenco guitar-playing over classical guitar), there is something appealing in his wide-eyed naivete.

Keith Lepard's Milt is all brass and bluster. A part-time dealer in second-hand hirc-a-brac, Milt deals with love like it is a commodity to be bought and sold. He is selfish and grasping, the least sympathetic of the three, but Lepard succeeds in keeping Milt a comic bungler rather than a repugnant schemer.

As Ellen, Bonnie Cook's delivery is

nice polished, and she has a strong stage presence. Ellen is torn between her normal sexual desires and her superior intellect which makes her dissatisfied with every man she has ever known. Which she must submerge to satisfy the other part of her.

Co-directors William Everson and Nancy Scott keep the laughs coming smoothly, partly from some great one-liners and partly from the broad physical comedy of characters wrestling, bellowing love songs, and even jumping off bridges.

Everson also designed a strikingly realistic set. The lights of the Manhattan skyline form a background for the pedestrian walkway of a New York bridge, its pillars laden with graffiti.



## Classic triangle

An older lord (Peter McBryan of Grosse Pointe) with a young wife (Patricia Ann Verellen of Romeo), who has a young lover (Christopher Howe of Rochester) is the romantic triangle in the Oakland University production of "The Mandrake" by Machiavelli. Performances of the bawdy comedy continue through March 1 in the Studio Theatre of Varner Hall on campus near Rochester. For ticket information, call 377-2000.

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