

'My Three Angels' spreads joy anytime

By Helen Zucker
special writer

The Birmingham Village Players production of "My Three Angels" is an enjoyable theater. Performances of the play directed by Paulette Slayden continue at 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday at the playhouse in Birmingham.

I've no idea why the players chose to close the season with Sam and Stella Spewack's Christmas play, but no matter. "My Three Angels" is such a charming piece of work, it's as delightful in May as it is in December.

The play tells about three escaped convicts who descend upon, and befriend, a family in French Guiana.

Bill Haycock, as Joseph (convict 3011), is quite wonderful. Haycock is easily the best actor in the troupe. He's perfectly at ease on stage, and his deft movements and the pleasure he takes in delivering his witty lines add much to the production.

HE'S PERFECT as a brilliant forger and as a man who knows about wines: "Ah, '97, bottled the same year I was."

Theater delays show's opening

The Southfield Civic Theatre has delayed the opening of its production "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" to the weekend of May 22.

The musical comedy, with music by Stephen Sondheim, will be presented at 8 p.m. May 22-23 and 2 p.m. May 24 at the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building Auditorium on Evergreen Road at Civic Center Drive.

review

he says, sniffing a cork. He is at his best as a master salesman. Joseph can sell anything to anyone.

Brian Clouthier is good as Alfred (convict 4707), the hot-blooded young man who has bashed in his stepfather's head with a poker, over money for a woman.

Jerry McKeon is endearing as Jules (convict 6817). A domestic man at heart, he takes pleasure in an armchair, a set table, the evening paper. His crime was doing away with his wife's lover.

The family whom the three convicts help includes Emille Ducotel, nicely played by Des Dwellier, and Mme. Ducotel's devoted husband, Felix, portrayed with believability by Art Underwood.

Delicate Dana Quell-Cough plays a pretty Marie Louise Ducotel, the couple's daughter. Marie Louise is in love with Paul, who recites poetry to her. As Paul, Don Schore clumps about, looking expensive and cadish. He is attracted to Marie Louise but prefers to marry a "cow" for money.

MILLER WEISMAN is sinister as Henri Trochard, the uncle who owns everything, and everyone. Trochard blows in like the black plague. In a bit part at the finale, Kim Cooke is the Lieutenant, in spanking whites, and he comes on like a breath of fresh air.

Mme. Ducotel opens the play by announcing her terror of the "thieves who are fixing our roof." The "thieves" fix everything, not merely the roof by the end of the play, and Mme. Ducotel's

growing fondness for the three angels with numbers on their chests is quite understandable.

"They're not thieves, they're murderers," Felix Ducotel gently remonstrates. An impractical man trying to run a general store in Cayenne, French Guiana, in 1910, Ducotel has managed to confuse the books, sell next to nothing and lose his capital on a stock venture.

He has never really recovered from the takeover of his department store in France by his ruthless cousin, Henri Trochard.

THE SET of the Ducotel's living room, straw doors and all, deserves special credit. Mike Seitzer is responsible for the design. The living room is divided by hanging strips from the general store.

Whoever thought of all the neat touches - Rembrandt hanging on bur-lap walls, the honey landscapes, lamps and tablecloth - did a nice job. Much of the imagination in this show was the work of the production staff.

A bit more movement about the stage, especially in the first act, would have helped speed the play on its merry way. But a good script goes a long way.

This is the final production of the season by the village players, a group of hard workers who have given much pleasure to the community over the years.

This season's offerings were not up to the standards maintained in previous years. Only two of the productions were really high quality. A full house is evidence of the players' reputation, but full houses don't mean the level of acting should be allowed to fall.

If anything, a crowd of eager theatergoers should spur the players on to take chances, do stronger plays, live productions. Perhaps an infusion of new blood is needed for the playhouse on Chestnut and Hunter.



DICK KELLEY/staff photographer

Charlie Brown and friends

Linus (Karen Mitchell, left), Charlie Brown (Jeff Foran) and Lucy (Mary Irvine) are part of the "Peanuts" gang in the Birmingham Musicals' Opera Ensemble production of the musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." The show by Charles Gassner will be presented at 8 p.m. Friday at The Community House, Bates and Townsend, Birmingham. Foran, a practicing attorney in Bloom-

field Hills, has appeared in many musical and variety shows. Members of the opera ensemble in the cast include Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Irvine, Susan Beck as Snoopy, Martha Welton as Schroeder and Pat Mills as Patty. Eleanor Whelan, president of the musicale, is pianist accompanying the production. Admission charge at the door is \$2.

Focal Point teaches film making

Focal Point, a seminar in film and videotape, will be held June 21-27 at Kingswood School Cranbrook.

Focal Point participants receive instruction in a workshop format and make their own films and videotapes. Guest artists exhibit and discuss their work nightly.

Enrollment is limited to 36 participants in super 8 mm film making and

15 in videotape production. Fee is \$240. Boarding is available for an additional \$50. All materials and equipment are supplied.

Project coordinator is Nadine Maynard, film instructor at Kingswood and Cranbrook Schools.

FOCAL POINT film making instructors are John Prusak, professional photographer/cinematographer who won a bronze Hugo award at the Chicago International Film Festival, and Mike Friend, award-winning art and film instructor.

The film making program will be expanded this year to include instruction

in animation.

John Walter, producer/director of Legal Tapes Inc., and former television broadcast technical director, will instruct Focal Point's video segment, which this year will include training in the programming, production and technical aspects of cable television.

For more information call Nadine Maynard at 645-3200.

Focal Point is one of a variety of summer programs held on the campus of Cranbrook Educational Community, an educational and cultural organization that includes Cranbrook Schools, Cranbrook Institute of Science and Cranbrook Academy of Art.

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