

Thursday, May 6, 1982 O&E

Performer finds roles that fit like a glove

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

BRING A FORMER Golden Gloves boxing champion, as well as a professional actor makes Gregory Edward Gray of Southfield feel that some roles are a perfect fit.

The young black actor currently is playing the role of Eddie Satin, slick fight promoter and manager in the musical "Golden Boy" at Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre in Bloomfield Township.

He also is one of the actors being considered for the starring role of Joe Louis, the world's champion, in an upcoming made-for-TV movie about the Detroit boxer's life.

For an interview at the office of the Eccentric Newspapers in Birmingham, Gray arrived a little late, after phoning first to explain his car had gotten a flat tire.

"I PRAYED on it," he said later, explaining his reasoning to being late for the interview. "Most people wouldn't say it's a flat tire, but Gray has made prayer important to his career goals and his entire life's purpose."

An easy-going manner, a smile and determination help Gray pursue his dreams. Seated in an office chair, he had a loose-leaf notebook in his lap with newspaper clippings about his past performances.

Not apparent at first glance was the Bible, held lightly on his lap. But when the actor started to talk about his life, he soon brought God into the conversation.

Not apparent at first glance was the Bible, held lightly on his lap. But when the actor started to talk about his life, he soon brought God into the conversation.

Gray is positive about having opened a career "as a black young man in areas where there's not a lot of work for a black actor."

HE NAMED, as actors he admires, Vincent Price, George C. Scott, Sidney Poitier, the Fonda's. "That's the direction I'm going," he believes. "I got there because of my boxing spirit."

Gray would like to go into the ministry, to take courses, six months from now. In the meantime, he continues to develop his performing talents.

The script for the TV drama about Joe Louis is called "God Is on Our Side," and Gray considers that a nice touch.

"My career is sort of similar to Joe," and I look somewhat similar to him," he said. "The actor who I'm called upon to play is a young Joe and an older Joe and have some boxing ability."

Gray, who has a full head of dark hair, shaved his head when he played the starring role of prizefighter Jack Jefferson in the powerful drama "The Great White Hope" for the Civic Players Black Theatre in Kalamazoo.

"BALDNESS RUNS in my family," he said with a grin, "and I was afraid my hair wouldn't grow back."

The Detroit-born actor's father was a Golden Gloves champion in the service.

"I was raised to fill his shoes and dream," Gray said. Gray used to box in the living room with his brother, who is a year younger.

He brother had a damaging blow, Gray recalls. With a father who was a professional trainer and, "from scared of being hit by my brother," Gregory soon was honed into a Golden Gloves champ.

He was on the national Olympic Trials boxing team in 1972, in addition to being a Golden Gloves champ from 1966-67.

But Gray didn't want to limit himself to what he considers the cliché of a black man's road to success through a boxing career.

AT CASS Technical High School he was motivated by a teacher, Pierre Renier, who taught him techniques in acting and also "to be strong, open-minded, willing to accept things as they were, to adjust to things in an honest way."

Later in the interview, Gray returned to the topic of his favorite teacher. "He's a white man, but he was about the most inspiring person I met in my life. That opened my eyes. You realize it's a person, not skin color."

After high school, Gray went on to pursue his bachelor of fine arts degree in drama at Michigan State University in his hometown, degree at Stephen Colburn in Los Angeles. He received strong critical praise for his roles in "The Great White Hope" and "Raisin in the Sun" both of which he also directed, in Kalamazoo.

He also starred as Dale Jackson ("D.J.") in the Civic Theatre production of "Medal of Honor Rag" and directed the Black Theater Company's "Purle."

He appeared in productions at Wayne State University, as well as on the campuses of U-M and St. Stephens.



Actor Gregory Gray, a graduate of Cass Technical High School and Michigan State University, is appearing in "Golden Boy" at the Will-O-Way Apprentice

Theater. While acting, he plans to study for the ministry.

Big musical 'Golden Boy' overwhelms theater group

By Margo Parker
special writer

review

performances at 8:30 p.m. May 21-22 and 28-29. For tickets at \$6 call 644-4418.

Please turn to Next Page

The lovely voices of the two leading performers cannot overcome the other inadequacies in Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre's current staging of "Golden

Mother's Day Brunch
10:30-3 p.m.

A beautiful fresh orchid will grace every table as well as a choice of Scalloped Potatoes or Hash Browns, Baked Ham, Crepe Seafood, Newburg, Smoked Salmon, Bagels and Cream Cheese, crispy salads, jello molds, potatoes, vegetables, rolls, rolls, biscuits and gravy, and Strawberry Shortcake is the dessert!

Cocktails and wine will be available from noon. Dinner featuring the 25-foot Wicker Works. Salad Bar will be available from 3 p.m.

\$9.25 Chidre under 12 **\$4.75**

NORTHLAND HOTEL
10000 Stephenson Hwy 175
1-800-MICHIGAN 4098
(313) 679-2900

Enjoy
Mother's Day
at a
MACHUS RESTAURANT

OPEN 12:00
Telegraph and Maple
Bloomfield
Reservations 626-4200

Sly Fox
725 South Hunter Birmingham Reservations 642-6900

Dinners 12:00 Noon to 10:00 p.m.
3270 W. Big Beaver Road
(formerly Pipers Alley)
Reservations 649-1840

Dinners 12:00 Noon to 9:00 p.m.
located in Great Oaks Mall
Livermore Rd. and Walton Blvd.
Rochester
Reservations 652-1177

Breakfast Buffet
11:00 to 2:00 p.m.
\$4.95 Adults/Children \$2.50
Dinners 2:30 p.m.
20 West Washington
Clarkston Mills Mall
Reservations 625-6800

Machus
ADAMS SQUARE
CAFETERIA-STYLE DINING
OPEN 11:00 A.M.
643 So. Adams
Birmingham
644-2240

The
fresh-fried
Friday Fish
Feast

All the lobster and other seafood delicacies you can eat. Friday evenings at the Haymarket.

Reservations required
\$24.95, all ages.

Troy Hilton Inn
Maple Road at Stephenson Hwy
(313) 581-5000.



wjoi
FM 97

THE MUSIC'S AS BEAUTIFUL AS THE NAME.