Roger Reeves, fireman in clown's garb, amuses Harbinger dancer Cheryl Heinrich. They will be part of the entertainment at Harbinger's third annual benefit "Le Cirque et La Danse," Friday at Detroit's Roostertail.

Players bring out force of 'Little Foxes'

Performances of the Troy Players production of "The Little Foxes" by Lillian Hellman continue at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday at the Troy Community Center, Big Beaver Road and I-75. Tickets at $4 for adults, $3 for students and senior citizens are available at the door or by calling 879-1285.

review

By Helen Zucker
special writer

The Troy Players production of Lillian Hellman's absorbing play "The Little Foxes" is good theater.

The lively cast, directed by Joe Burdick, gets really involved in this drama about a monstrous Southern family, and there's rarely a dull moment.

It's bared fangs in the living room during the 1900s when the agrarian South was on the verge of becoming industrialized, and the play deals with the incredibly selfish Hubbard family, their business machinations and the havoc they wreak on the people they marry.

(If you liked "The Betsy" or "Wheels," you should love "Little Foxes." It's simply cotton mills instead of cars.)

Lisa Newell is touching as the "only aristocrat," Birdie Hubbard. You want to kick Newell occasionally for being so browbeaten by her lout of a husband, but her upbringing has been too gentle to allow her to do more than get flustered and drink in private, and Newell makes us understand Birdie's lost life.

I loved Birdie telling us she dislikes Leo, her own son.

GEORGE HOTZ as Oscar Hubbard, the bullying lout who has married Birdie for the cotton plantation her family couldn't keep after the Civil War, is loud, smirky and has moments of power. He's quite hateful.

W. Gerald McCray as Benjamin Hubbard, the brother with a better front, turns in a fine performance. He's a more genial thief who makes up Southern customs when dealing with Northern businessmen: "The last toast is a good toast — proves Southerners are still on their feet."

McCray has some fine moments trying to stay a gentleman while engaged in stealing bonds.

Lillian Rosender turns in the strongest performance of the evening as Regina Hubbard Giddens. Rosender has a laugh like the Wicked Witch of the West. She's a fine and finished actress. She exudes energy and the kind of locust-like appetite that wants to eat up the world, let alone Chicago.

Lance Bosley looks a bit too much like a clean-cut, nice young man as Leo, the detestable young bounder with a lady in Mobile and a hatred of work. Bosley moves well though, and he gives us a Leo who simply wants English clothes, likes to beat horses and is a spoiled brat rather than a truly horrendous creep like his father, Oscar.

Bosley is too likable to give us a Leo who is going to grow up to be another Oscar.

LISA JERRELL wakes up in her final scene as Alexandra Giddens, the pretty 17-year-old, who loves her dying father and realizes what a swarm of locusts she lives among. Jerrell is a young Southern belle. That's a hard role of play these days, and she does a good job of flouncing about without seeming too precious.

Charles Ray is a wonderfully kindly looking Horace Giddens, the dying banker who returns to his hateful wife and his hated home after five months of "thinking" in a hospital. Ray gives us a man whom we believe would leave $1,700 in a drawer for a servant he likes, and a man clever enough to have outsmarted his wife if he had lived.

LaTanya Jimerson is great as Addie, the servant who loves Alexandra. Addie is all eyes, and she tells us, "There's people who eat the earth, and people who watch the eaters." Jimerson exudes watchful intelligence, a thorough knowledge of the South, warmth and common sense.

Reginald Metts flaps about as Cal, a servant who's always on errands. Metts has a teriffic face. The set was fine. Could've been a bit lusher. But more to the point, the spirit was there.

Ridgedale offering 2 1-acts

The Ridgedale Players will present "Mixed Doubles," a comedy by Fred Carmichael, for its final production of the 1981-82 season.

The play will be given May 7-9 and 14-16 at the Ridgedale Playhouse, 8501 W. 10 Mile, Oak Park. Curtain times are 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, 7:30 p.m. Sundays.

An afterglow of sandwiches and coffee will follow each performance and is included in the admission price of $5.

upcoming
things to do

● **FIRST FRIDAY**
Vocalist Ursula Walker and pianist Buddy Budson will be heard at the free First Friday Jazz concertfrom 5-8 p.m. Friday in the J.C. Penney North Court at Northland Center in Southfield. Husband-and-wife team Walker and Budson are Detroit natives whose musical skills are in the forefront of Detroit's contemporary jazz movement.

● **EDEN GLEN**
The Joe Grande Jazz Trio plays for dancing and easy listening from 8:30 p.m. till closing Thursdays-Saturdays at the Eden Glen restaurant, 2085 W. Big Beaver, Troy. The Red Garter Dixieland Jazz Band entertains from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sundays at New Orleans Brunch, served from 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

● **BROTHERS GRIMM**
Henry K. Martin Productions of Bloomfield Hills will present the Brothers Grimm classic "Hansel and Gretel" Saturday, Tuesday and Wednesday in the Community Arts Auditorium at the Michigan State Fairgrounds in Detroit. Show times are 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. Saturday; 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday. Call 557-1228 for ticket information on this children's production.

● **SOMERSET INN**
Laura Thompson offers pop and jazz music, singing and playing the piano at the Somerset Inn, 2601 W. Big Beaver, Troy. She appears from 8 p.m. to midnight Mondays-Saturdays.

● **AT ARCHIBALD'S**
Back from a recent tour with Bob James, Alexander Zonjic is performing Tuesdays-Saturdays through July 3 at Archibald's, 333 S. Woodward, Birmingham. For more information and performance times call 642-9400.

● **MAXWELL'S MUSIC**
Jazz is provided by the Sheila Landis Band on Monday at Maxwell's in the Farmington Holiday Inn, 28123 W. 10 Mile Road, Farmington. Attractions will pour out danceable sounds, playing the Top 40 on Tuesdays-Saturdays through May.

● **CLASSIC FILM**
"Harold and Maude," classic film starring Ruth Gordon and Bud Cort, is presented through May 16 at the Merrie Melodie Theatre in MeadowBrook Village Mall, Avon Township. The Paramount Picture directed by Hal Ashby co-stars Vivian Pickles, Cyril Cusack, Charles Tyner and Ellen Geer. For show times call 375-0011.

● **WAGON WHEEL**
The Rick Hall Band plays through Sunday at the Wagon Wheel Saloon, Rochester and Big Beaver roads, Troy. Stuart Mitchell appears Monday-Tuesday and Fine Hats opens Wednesday, continuing through May 16.

● **ETHNIC FESTIVAL**
The Ukrainian Festival will be offered this weekend at Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit. The riverfront festival runs from noon Friday until 10 p.m. Sunday. There are 26 serving kitchens and beverage booths on the lower level. Free entertainment is presented for more than 25 hours.

● **HARBINGER DANCE**
"Le Cirque et La Danse," the Harbinger Dance Company's third annual dinner dance benefit, will be held at the Roostertail in Detroit. Clowns, mimes and jugglers will entertain. A special performance will be given by the Harbinger Dancers. Tickets are $65 per person, black tie optional. For reservations and information call Harbinger at 477-7104.

● **THE GNOME**
Charles Boles and Friends perform soft jazz on piano with vocals, accompanied by bass, from 9 p.m. till 1 a.m. Fridays-Saturdays at the Gnome, 4124 Woodward, Detroit.

● **'JOHN, PAUL'**
"According to John/Paul," the long-running revue featuring songs of John Lennon and Paul McCartney, continues through June 5 at the Grease Pit Theatre beneath Doug's Body Shop, 22061 Woodward, Ferndale. Performances are at 9 p.m. Fridays and 7 and 9:30 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is $6 at the door. Reservations are required, and seats must be claimed prior to curtain. For reservations phone 399-1040.

Big musical 'Golden Boy' overwhelms theater group

Continued from Previous Page

Boy," another overly ambitious production in an overly ambitious season at Will-O-Way.

"Golden Boy" is a social message story from the 1930s, in which author Clifford Odets takes on class and racial prejudices against a boxing gym backdrop. Capturing the despair of two lovers whose feelings transcend their backgrounds and their circumstances is a challenge which seems a little beyond Will-O-Way's capabilities.

Troy Burgess as boxer Joe Wellington has a great deal of youthful enthusiasm and a winning voice but needs a little more polish as an actor. Danielle Blanchard Guest as Lorna Moon, his manager's moll, creates the right sense of irony in her relationship with the idealistic young fighter but doesn't quite convey the tragedy of their affair.

They're mismatched in age, too, but all this doesn't stop them from creating a forest of goosebumps when their voices rise together in the haunting, fateful duet "I Wanna Be With You."

AN ENTHUSIASTIC, if generally inexperienced supporting cast moves "Golden Boy" along at a swift pace. Steve Pyykkonen as Joe's avaricious manager, Randall J. Milberg, is a cartoon of a gopher.

Gregory Edward Gray shows more experience in his part as a crooked promoter, with a voice like black satin.

Simple but effective choreography highlights this production of "Golden Boy." While "Don't Forget 127th Street" may lack the grit and funk of Harlem in the 1930s, this big production number is spirited and well staged.

Even set changes in this show are an improvement over previous productions. The author's intent is realized as one scene flows into another, using the simplest of set pieces and furniture.

For a big musical to succeed, though, all elements must be in agreement. Acting, singing and dancing talent must be found in actors with suitable demographic qualities for the characters they portray. While the voices in this production are generally strong, overall the performances lack the intensity required by the dramatic storyline.

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