

Rousing production of 'Oliver!' staged

Performances of the Birmingham Theatre production of the musical "Oliver!" with book, music and lyrics by Lionel Bart continue through Jan. 2 at the theater, 211 S. Woodward, Birmingham. The production is directed by Jack V. Booch. For ticket information call the box office at 644-3533.

By Gay Ziegler
special writer

A few of reviewing's hackneyed paeans will have to be dusted off for the Birmingham Theatre's production of "Oliver!" since clichés often say it best, "Hollering," "fast-paced," "colorful," "thoroughly entertaining," all serve nicely here. There is not a weak link in the chain of performers.

The stage is filled with quite plausible lusty wenches, hard drinkers, scoundrels, wails, and an occasional gentleman or lady. Each actor's actions are consistent with the character. Spoken words are audible and the songs are pleasantly melodious.

This is not surprising since the stars are long on credits. They represent even-

review

ry facet of the entertainment industry and the lead, Jack Carter, as Fagin, has himself done just about everything. He brings considerable talent and experience to Birmingham. His performance Tuesday night did not belie his bio, which tells of Emmy nominations and worldwide recognition.

Sharing the billing, and the international reputation, is Shari Wallis. She is well suited to the role of Nancy since she was awarded that part in the Academy-Award-winning movie version. Wallis has a fresh vibrancy.

HAPPILY, TALENT does not end with the main attractions. Robert Miller Driscoll as Mr. Bumble is superb. He has a command of the stage and a marvelous ability for conveying his character's absurdity.

Not to be outdone along that line, Mary Leigh Stahl, as his counterpart, is

equally ridiculous, overstated and thoroughly enchanting.

Martin Biersbach is remarkably suited for the title role. His blue-eyed blindness adds a special note of charm. The floodlights light up marvelous flashes of innocence and ire in those eyes. His strongest suit, though, is that he doesn't feel compelled to emote, or to stage his character. He is Oliver.

Not to be overlooked is Mark Coffin as the Artful Dodger. He is the most relaxed with an acquired accent, and his character's crafty movements and devilish manner seem almost innate. Also notable is Luis Rosta, whose piano accompaniment and musical direction are outstanding.

THE PRODUCTION was not without flaws, though they were technical in nature. The sound system was often annoying, causing some voices to have a hollow resonance. At one point, it took on a life of its own.

And, during the final scene, the audience nearly succumbed to the machine-induced London fog. The drama of it all was lost on those of us who were gasping, wheezing, and coughing.

The Dickens-based play itself is not for everyone. Just a few of the songs are memorable and the storyline, once enjoyed, doesn't withstand repeated tellings very well.

But, "Oliver!" is good family holiday fare, especially if you feel in need of a little heart warming.



Jack Carter is Fagin, who leads a band of pick-pockets, in "Oliver!" at the Birmingham Theatre. The show includes many local actors, among them Harvey W. Venia of Pontiac (left), Joe Deighan of Birmingham and Jon Berberian of Southfield.

The stage was filled with quite plausible lusty wenches, hard drinkers, scoundrels, wails, and an occasional gentleman or lady.

FREE ADMISSION
THIS AD WILL ENTITLE THE BEARCAT TO ONE FREE ADMISSION TO THE BIRMINGHAM THEATRE PRODUCTION OF "OLIVER!" SUNDAY THROUGH THURSDAY WHEN A BEARCAT IS PURCHASED. OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 14, 1982.

KEEFO CINEMA
Orchard Lake, Rd. at Canal St. Pk. 114 (Behind West of 12th Street)
ALL SEATS \$1.50. Call 622-1007.
NOW SHOWING THRU THURSDAY, DEC. 2.

Weekdays & Sat. 7:15 & 9:15
Sundays 1:15 & 3:15

MISSIONARY (M) 215 S. 7th St. 115

Wheat Jacks
408 W. MAPLE ROAD
BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN 48010

2 for 1
Celebrity Dining Club

Become a member of the
Celebrity Dining Club
Join Now!

Consider memberships for a gift for all occasions for family and friends.

Call 626-2630
9 A.M. to 8 P.M.
MONDAY thru FRIDAY

SEA SHELL SURF & TURF RESTAURANT
Daily Breakfast & Chop
Call for your
LIVE LOBSTER \$12.95
Includes salad, potato or vegetable
Exp. 12/8/82 WITH THIS AD

DAILY FRESH SEAFOOD
1886 JOHN R. CLOSED
Just W. of 18th St. SUN. 689-1258

We're noted for our excellent prime rib, steaks, fresh seafoods, bountiful salads and irresistible home made desserts.

KOGYS

"HAPPY HOUR"
Two For One
4 pm to 8 pm Daily

Charles Rowland
At the Keyboard
Tues.-Sat. Evenings

755 W. Big Beaver Troy 362-1262
In the Bottom of the Top of Troy Building

the meating place
FOR THE VERY SPECIAL EVENT

Fresh Seasonal Food

Elegant Menu tailored for you
by Chef McKenna

Be a guest at your own party.
For any occasion make it special at

the meating place
Orchard Lake Road at Pontiac Trail
851-0080
A FEW DATES OPEN FOR DECEMBER '82

A plan for all seasons.

The Payroll Savings Plan is one of the easiest, safest ways to get started on the saving habit. Even if saving has always seemed too difficult in past seasons. A little is automatically taken out of each paycheck toward the purchase of U.S. Savings Bonds. You'll never miss it, so you'll never spend it! It just keeps growing for some coming spring or maybe a warm vacation during a cold winter. It's a plan for all seasons. For all Americans.

Take stock in America.

When you put your money into the U.S. Savings Plan, you're investing in the future of our country. For more information, call 1-800-4-A-SAVE.

CELEBRATE
Our Exciting New Menu!

The Only Game in Town for Fine Food 'N Fun

We have more varieties than ever to tempt you—65 NEW items, and over 150 items to choose from. Bring your appetite and a friend and discover what's new, different and delicious in Seafood, Spicy Mexican Dinners, Stirry Barbecue-Style Dinners—and much, much more!

Carlo's Murphy's

SAVE \$4.00
ON BARBEQUE-STYLE DINNERS FOR TWO
Twice as much fun! Dig into your choice of two barbecue-style dinners heaped with goodies like spareribs, barbecue chicken, barbecue shrimp, baby back ribs and barbecue porkloins.

FREE!
NACHOS OR POTATO SKINS WITH ANY TWO DINNER ENTREES
Choose from 3 types of Nachos: Mexican Beef, Garden Of Eatin' Potato Skins, Irish Mexican, Barbecue Style Pizza.

SAVE UP TO 20%
ANY MEXICAN COMBINATION DINNER \$4.95
More varieties than ever. Six big dinners with choices of tacos, tostitos, quesadillas, chile rellenos, enchiladas, burritos, churros.

29244 Northwestern Hwy Southfield, 352 0330

CLASSIC CHRISTMAS:
Timeless Yuletide Tales & Carols
Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts

Christmas isn't Christmas without friends, family, songs of the season and stories of Christmas. This year, spend part of your holiday with the Music Hall Center and Yuletide Tales and Carols. A delightful, unique way of bringing the joys of the season to you and yours. Stories rich in tradition, strong in meaning, told by some of Detroit's own celebrities.

Evening Performances — 7:30 p.m.
December 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12
Matinee Performances — 2:00 p.m.
December 11 & 12

\$6.00 Adults, \$4.00 Ages 12 & under.

Charge tickets by phone with VISA, MasterCard, or American Express by calling 963-7680.

Tickets also available at the Music Hall Box Office and all C.U. Outlets.

Special Group Discounts: call Peg Sullivan 963-7622.

Make plans now for your family to be a part of CLASSIC CHRISTMAS: Yuletide Tales & Carols. December 7th thru 12th at the Music Hall.