

'The Fantasticks' receives a fresh interpretation

The Meadow Brook Theatre production of the musical "The Fantasticks" with book and lyrics by Tom Jones and score by Harvey Schmidt, continues through May 15 on the Oakland University campus near Rochester. For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.

By Helen Zucker
special writer

The inventive, lively production of "The Fantasticks" at Meadow Brook Theatre is sheer fun. A splendid cast, clearly directed by Judith Haskell, brings freshness and zest to this poignant musical.

The book and lyrics by Tom Jones and music by Harvey Schmidt have worn well since "The Fantasticks" first opened at the Sullivan Street Playhouse in New York in 1960. This "little"

review

opus is still playing in that 150-seat house Off-Broadway, and, though only 23 years old, it has been done in Khar-toum, Helsinki, Berlin, Istanbul, Tel-Aviv, Johannesburg, London — in short, everywhere. As a Japanese critic said, after seeing "Fiddler on the Roof," "It's so Japanese! The same universal appeal obviously applies to 'The Fantasticks'."

The plot involves two fathers who foster love between son and daughter by pretending to disapprove of the match, by building a wall between neighboring properties they wish to join . . . Where have I heard this before? Ah yes, Restoration Comedies,

Shakespeare . . . Never mind. It still works.

Keith David, a talented actor with a voice as big as the house, is marvelous as the Narrator, hilarious as El Gallo, (he steals the "Rape Ballet") and often touching. He fills his role with nice touches, tucking the Girl's tear into his vest pocket, treating the Boy with gentle irony as the Boy rushes out into "the gleaming world," weaving seamlessly in and out of the narrative. Much of the show hangs upon David's shoulders, and he carries it easily.

JAISON WALKER, a fellow with a terrific voice, beautiful diction and a body he is in total control of, is very effective as the Boy (Matt). Walker has a great slouch and is capable of moving from ramrod stiffness to limber grace in a split second.

Walker pours his heart and his voice

into "I Can See It" and literally makes us see the world he hungers for. As ardent lover, disgruntled young slouch and returning prodigal son, Walker is superb.

Von H. Washington as the Actor (Henry), the ancient who scrambles Shakespeare delightfully, climbs in and out of trunks and demands lights. Washington is hilarious. He has the best lines and makes the most of them.

Robert LeVoy-Wright, as the Actor's sidekick, the Man Who Dies (Mortimer), dies brilliantly. His death throes are the highlight of a show filled with highs. Wright never makes a false move. He's a pro. I wish him a larger part made to the measure of his enormous capacities, in his next play.

Tamara Tunie is a pretty and touching Luisa (the Girl). Tunie has a lovely voice and evokes 16-year-old rapture,

pain and the bright passing bubble of girlhood emerging into womanhood the moment she opens her mouth.

HUGH L. HURD as Hucklebee, Matt's father, and Norman Matlock as Bellomy, Luisa's Dad, the asthmatic and goutish pair who need a wall as much as their children do, do a very funny rendition of "Plant a Radish." They're especially effective standing in the "Watteau Tableau," beaming away at the end of Act I, and suddenly screaming away at each other in "This Plum Is Too Ripe," discovering they are different sorts of gardeners at the opening of Act II. One loves watering, the other hates water. But their deep friendship overcomes their differences, and they lend a solid believability to this airy fantasy.

Eddie Robinson, a gifted mime, fills

the role of the Mute deftly. He fills a multitude of roles, including playing the Wall and a bricklayer admirably.

I didn't get the rationale behind Barry Griffith's tilted, minimal stage. I gather the upended circle marked the parameters of home, the safe gardens, but the tilt made for unnecessary dancing difficulties. The minimal, inventive set, flitting silk, walls and a few chalk marks on the stage, would have done just fine. But I'm not going to complain about so small a defect in light of the enormous enjoyment Robert McNamee, conductor/pianist; Christa Griz, harpist, and everyone connected with this show gave the audience.

My thanks to Meadow Brook Theatre for ending the season on a high.

Troy Players masters mystery of 'Wait Until Dark'

Performances of the Troy Players production of Frederick Knott's suspense drama "Wait Until Dark" continue at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday and May 13-14 at the Troy Community Center, Big Beaver and I-75. Tickets at \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and senior citizens are available at the door. For reservations or information call 879-1285.

By Gay Ziegler
special writer

review

The last act of "Wait Until Dark" will scare the socks off you, though you may be unnerved more by special effects than by a comprehensive understanding of the plot. The convoluted storyline, with all its twists and turns,

often requires a concentration that detracts somewhat from appreciation of the acting. Still, the play is a thriller that should delight seekers of chills.

Briefly, the plot revolves around a photographer, his blind wife and a musical doll that all the bad guys want.

The leader of the evil-doers, played by Dick Booley, is villainous incarnate. He seethes with malice. Booley is especially strong when conveying his character's less mannered, more demonic side.

His two reluctant accomplices are played by David Zubick and Phil Martin. Zubick gives his character a certain trustworthiness, a humanity. He is forceful and in charge. Martin is a charming underdog and provides much-needed comic relief.

THESE THREE, at various times, prey on Dianne Biermat as the blind wife. In this role, Biermat is startlingly genuine. For one thing, she has a distinctive face. Since the play focuses on her sightlessness, this is a real asset. Biermat's features register the feelings she cannot permit her eyes to. She makes us aware of her keenness of touch and smell as she feels her environment and cranes forward to hear things that most of us would miss. Biermat was cast well.

As her husband, Jim McCool had a small but significant role. McCool was at ease and conveyed tender humor.

Yet another bright spot in the evening was afforded by the performance of Allecia May Tuormina as a 9-year-

old neighbor who comes in to help the wife. Child actors are too often incredibly cute, or precocious, or annoyingly earnest. Tuormina is none of these. When she's supposed to be bratty, she's a bona-fide brat. When caring, she really seems to care. She's like any cute kid on the block.

There were only 30 people in the audience Friday night. There should have

been more. The marvelous projection and enunciation seemed for naught. But the players gave a packed-house performance.

Joe Burdick and Diane Schell are to be applauded for this production. The staging was solid and the set and special effects, critical elements in this vehicle, were outstanding.

ON THE TOWN

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Mandarin House
Chinese Restaurant

6580 Orchard Lk. Rd. Between 14 & 15 Mile 855-5115

Chief J. H. Pan

10% OFF

TOTAL CHECK

Try our House Specialty Mao-Tse Tung Chicken & Szechuan Wolf-Ton

FREE ADMISSION

THIS AD WILL ENTITLE THE BEHOLDER TO ONE FREE ADMISSION TO THE MOVIES

KEEGO CINEMA

Orchard Lk Rd at Case Lk Rd. 11 Mile West of Telegraph

MAX DUGAN RETURNS

(PQ)

GENERAL CINEMA THEATRES

SUNDAY MATINEES 2:00 PM SHOWS BEGIN 2:15 PM

SOMERSET INN

1100 S. 10th St. 735-1111

COMING!

THRESHOLD

IT'S TIME TO FEEL GOOD AGAIN, MAX DUGAN RETURNS

Rip's

Keyboard Wizardy
Lari Zee - Mon-Thurs
Norm Duffy Fri-Sat

Secretary's Week
Luncheon Specials
from \$2.00

Drink Specials with lunch:
Manhattan \$5.00 Martini \$5.00

Open Daily 11 am-2 am Sunday 1 pm-2 am Sidelight SPECIAL HAPPY HOURS!
Free Valet Parking Available - Live Music Nightly

888 W. Huron - 1 Block West of Telegraph - 683-1118

MOUNTAIN KING
CHINESE MANDARIN RESTAURANT

山王飯店

Specializing in Mandarin, Szechuan Cuisine - More than 200 dishes for your selection.

Luncheon specials include: soup, egg roll or fried wonton, fried rice & tea.

Lunch Specials 11:30-3 P.M.
CARRY-OUT SERVICE

675 E. Maple
RICHMOND HILL
644-2373

Mother's Day MAY 8

Sunday Dining from Noon

Dinners from \$8.95

Featuring Virginia Baked Ham, Prime Ribs of Beef & Roasts

Let us Lamb

after

Ballroom Room 11:30-2:00
Adults \$7.95 Children under 5 yrs. \$4.95

Kingsley Inn

Woodward at Long Lake • Bloomfield Hills • 642-0100

TEL-EX CINEMAS

Telephone 354-9757

SPECIAL BARGAIN SHOW
THIS WEEK'S BARGAIN:
WITHOUT A TRACE

\$1.25
AT ALL TIMES

Guess what's back!

Dearborn Inn's Famous Seafood Fantasy in the Early American Dining Room

Friday Evenings 6-10 P.M.

\$15.95
(children 12 and under \$7.50)

NO RESERVATIONS
— Coming Soon —
New dinner menu in the Ten Eyck Tavern

The Dearborn Inn
20301 Outwood Blvd., Dearborn, MI 48124-6099
(313) 271-2700

"DELPHI TAUGHT ME STAINED GLASS"

Imagine the beauty of a stained glass window or Tiffany lamp in your home. You can create this same beauty in one of our stained glass classes. We'll show you how. Nearly 5,000 people have learned stained glass from Delphi.

We offer Professional Instruction, the widest selection of glass & tools—and direction for your creativity!

Our 4 Week Beginning Stained Glass class starts next week. Tuition is \$25 but you can take \$5 off with this ad.

Open 7 Days. MasterCard/VISA/AmEx

DELPHI Stained Glass

1073 E. Long Lake Troy, MI 48064 528-1687

6018 N. Wayne Rd. Westland, MI 48185 729-9188

With 7 Locations We're America's Source for Stained Glass

May 8 Isn't An Ordinary Day. This Isn't An Ordinary Restaurant. Honor your mother at a very special place. Make reservations here. Where you'll enjoy personal attention. Marvelous dishes. All the little niceties. To make May 8 the kind of day your mother deserves.

WATSON 2014 W. 12 Mile 374-4410
Bloomfield Hills 28605 624-8811
Bloomfield Hills 28605 624-8811
Bloomfield Hills 28605 624-8811
Bloomfield Hills 28605 624-8811