

upcoming things to do

• **'SWAN LAKE'**
Tchakovsky's "Swan Lake" will be performed by the Contemporary Civic Ballet, as the final concert of Oakway Symphony's 1984 season, at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 15, at Wrey High School, 11 Mile and Middlebelt roads, Farmington Hills. James Dunne is guest artist. Francesco Di Biasi will conduct the program, with Ernest Jones as guest conductor. For tickets, call 476-8544 or 532-2444.

• **NEW REVUE**
The musical revue "How Many Minutes to Midnight," written by Bloomfield Hills businessman Mort Zieve and Rudy Simons, continues through Sunday, April 15, at the General Lectures Auditorium at Wayne

State University in Detroit. Phil Marcus Easer and Barbara Bredius, along with the Lathrup Youth Theatre, are featured. For ticket information, call 577-3453 or 577-3468.

• **'SOMETHING'S AFOOT'**
Imogene Coca of film, stage and TV will star as Miss Tweed in "Something's Afoot," a murder-mystery musical opening a four-week engagement April 27, at the Birmingham Theatre, 211 S. Woodward. The spoof of Agatha Christie murder novels will run through Sunday, May 27. For ticket information call the box office at 644-3533.

• **VEGAS NIGHT**
Ridgedale Players will host a Las

Vegas Night on Saturday, April 14, from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the playhouse, 165 W. Long Lake Road, Troy. Blackjack, craps, roulette, big ale, beat the dealer and 50/50 will be played. Admission is \$3. Proceeds go

to Ridgedale's Building Fund. For more information call 288-0799.

• **MUSIC FESTIVAL**
Oakland University's Center for the

Arts will present a four-part Festival of Contemporary Music, with composer/performer David Amram, on campus near Rochester. Concerts include "An Evening of Chamber Mu-

sic" at 8 p.m. Friday, April 13; "Home Around the World" at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 14; "Fusion" at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 15, and "Collage" at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 15. For tickets call 377-3015.



Gay
Ziegler

Partners keep laughs coming

Comedy duo Monteth and Rand continue through Sunday, April 15, at the Birmingham Theatre, 211 S. Woodward. For ticket information call the box office at 644-3533.

By Gay Ziegler
special writer

Some long-term partnerships grow predictable and weary. No signs of that with Monteth and Rand, graduates of the Second City improvisational comedy troupe, now at the Birmingham Theatre.

Suzanne Monteth, the more visibly energetic of the two, often emits throaty laughter in response to her partner's banter. John Rand is a master of cynicism and bemused tolerance. They call on audience members to do dopey things and then when they do, Rand roars and Monteth shakes a Carson-esque "What can you expect from a group like this?" glance.

Audience involvement is one key to the partners' magic. I have always cringed at calls for participation and fought off impulses to flee or crawl under the seat.

BUT THERE I was, mooring in a cattle drive, yip-yapping like a bronco-buster, being the squeaky hinge on the door. From the perspective of the morning after, I find it hard to believe.

But that is Monteth and Rand's secret. The pair is so dogged earnest, so filled with good fun, so darned silly, that audiences are swept right up into the mood.

Some skits are better than others but none offends. Some last 30 seconds, some five or more minutes. All deal with life and relationships.

Monteth and Rand create a panoply of believable characters — ham actors, a hard-bitten detective, a flight attendant, a nerd and a housewife nicely-turned-naughty grocery shopper who

sneaks into the store's new X-rated Format are a few.

One of my two personal favorite bits dealt with a stewardess on Allegany Airlines who is forced to radio-call a plane after the pilot dies and the co-pilot parachutes to safety. A control tower voice tries to provide instruction for a person who not only has never been in a cockpit, but who also has repeatedly failed to earn a driver's license.

IT IS ONLY when the air controller likens the steering mechanism to her electric hairdryer that he gets a glimmer of understanding. The skit sustains a high level of humor.

But the highlight of the evening had to be the final joint enterprise when the audience was called upon to provide the premise for a scene by naming an object, a frustrating situation and various styles of theater.

Technical Director Bill Russell, after compiling a list, had the duo improvise a situation until he called out, "Freeze!" and asked for a different mode of acting.

Our perverse group asked them to work with "parrot" and "a digital watch" that malfunctioned and beeped at the wrong time. Not an easy base upon which to build drama. But they did — and some of us were nearly doubled up with laughter.

They took that parrot and malfunctioning digital from the gore of Peckinpah to the elusiveness of Bergman, to the slow Southern decadence of Tennessee Williams, to Shakespeare. And it was with the latter that they further substantiated our appreciation of their artistic intelligence and quick-wittedness.

When Rand intoned, "What wouldst thou doest with a watch digital that doest go 'beep' at a time inconvenient?" she convulsed us. Our laughter was testimony to the success of their endeavors.

review

check for the judge in his chambers. Nice job, Walt.

WHILE MOST of the principal characters failed to live up to the letter of the law, the noteworthy exception was Karen Wendt as defendant Barbara Scott, who was on trial for murder. She played her role with the great emotion called for by the script.

She had a particularly fine moment near the end of the first act in a classic courtroom outburst. Wendt also was outstanding in the final scene as she made her voice crack while on the witness stand in her own defense.

Wendt captured just the proper emotion and passion that the two attorneys lacked throughout the production. The strikingly attractive Kane always looked too happy to be trying a murder case where her stage sister was on trial.

The production staff did a commendable job in support of the drama. The audience was made to feel right at home in the school gym. The curious combination of linen, silverware and basketball hoops overhead was carried off perfectly in tradition of community theater. Down to the daisy on the table and the desert in the middle of act two, the offstage touches were just right.

The audience, however, deserved a little better onstage.

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Franklin show has difficulties

Performances of the Franklin Players theater production of "You, the Jury" by James Heath continue at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday at the Franklin School gymnasium in Franklin. For ticket information call Phyllis Young at 831-0498.

By J. Timothy Penn
special writer

Credit for jobs well done in the face of adversity during the Franklin Village Players' production of "You the Jury" should go to five cast members.

They are Debbie Thompson, Denny Peterson, Jane Roberts, Carmina Tuskal and especially Walt Urban. Indeed, they were the players with the smallest parts in the often flawed production at the Franklin Elementary School, but they all showed patience and a great stage presence during some difficult moments on stage.

Here are a few examples of the difficult situations:

• The lack of passion and intensity by the two main characters — Kelly Kane as Edith Scott, a defense attorney, and Bob Marotta, as a prosecuting attorney.

• Kane's noticeable dropping of a number of lines in crucial situations.

• Bill Barba as the courtroom judge, missing an entrance.
It was in this last instance where Walt Urban as the court bailiff saved the cast some embarrassment. While some of the cast slipped out of character, Urban calmly walked across the stage and announced that he would

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