

Entertainment

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Premieres, more musicals coming

By Cathie Breidenbach
special writer

REFRESHING DIVERSITY marks the upcoming '85-86 season at the Meadow Brook, Actors Alliance and Birmingham theaters and at the many Oakland County community theater groups.

The excitement of a number of premieres in the lineup and the fact that there are few duplicate productions promises a bright theater season and one light on its feet with even more musicals than in past years.

Lancelot and Guinevere, Maria and the Captain, Teyva and Golda, Charlie Brown and Scoopy and a bevy of "Chorus Line" hopefuls will strut their stuff. They'll be joined by "Joseph" known for the Coat of Many Colors he wore, and by "Gypsy," best known for what she didn't wear.

Traditional classics by Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen and Dickens anchor this season that's filled with a host of past and present hits from New York and London.

SHAKESPEARE's romantic tragedy "Romeo and Juliet" (Oct. 10 to Nov. 3) opens Meadow Brook Theatre's season of eight plays on the Oakland University campus near Rochester. Then Noel Coward's wit takes center stage (Nov. 7 to Dec. 1) in his partly autobiographical play, "Present Laughter," about a pampered stage star. Tiny Tim returns (Dec. 5-29) to warm hearts in Dickens' "Christmas Carol" now in its fourth sell-out season and fast becoming a Meadow Brook holiday tradition.

Patrick Hamilton's mystery

thriller "Angel Street" brings in the new year (Jan. 2-26). The tale on which the film "Gaslight" was based tells of a sinister Victorian husband who devises a diabolical plot to destroy his wife. Then, Meadow Brook presents the Detroit premiere of "84 Charing Cross Road" (Jan. 30 to Feb. 23), story of the extraordinary correspondence between an obscure London bookseller and a single American woman. Next the comic master, Moliere, pokes riotous fun at greed in "The Miser" (Feb. 27 to March 23).

Anton Chekov, pillar of literature and a doctor by profession, is the subject of Neil Simon's "The Good Doctor" (March to April 20), vignettes about the renowned Russian who wrote plays long before Neil Simon penned his first hit. Rogers and Hart's "Sing for Your Supper" closes the Meadow Brook season (April 24 to May 18). The musical spawned eight enduring hit songs including "Blue Moon" and "Where Or When."

THE ACTORS Alliance Theatre at the Lyceum International in Southfield will present two Michigan premieres and one world premiere in its seven-play season, which opened Friday with "Going to See the Elephant." The title of this drama refers to the yearning to see wonders, the quest for new horizons. Four women on the 1871 Kansas prairie explore the pain and the wonder that comes of the quest as they challenge the rough land.

Next, Frank Gilroy's Pulitzer-Prize-winning drama, "The Subject Was Roses," tells the moving story of how a family wrestles with troubles (Oct. 18 to Nov. 23).

The world premiere of the stage

adaptation of "Miracle on 34th Street" confirms our faith in Kris Kringle alias Santa Claus and in the magic of miracles (Nov. 28 to Jan. 4). Jeff Nahan, artistic director of Actors Alliance, is creating the stage version of the endearing story of book and movie fame.

Then the musical fantasy "Celebration" by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, the pair who wrote "The Fantasticks," follows (Jan. 17 to Feb. 23) and tells of the battle between a young man and an outrageously rich old man to win the heart of a fallen angel.

Ibsen's dark classic drama, "Ghosts," continues the Actors Alliance season, as it unravels how the sins of the fathers return to haunt the lives of the innocent (March 7 to April 13). Next, Arthur Kopit's "End of the World" makes its Michigan premiere (April 25 to May 25). The comedy tells of the shocking reality and "Catch 22" absurdity a young playwright must contend with when he does research on how the world will end.

Closing the season is "Fiddler on the Roof," a heartwarming musical comedy set in the little Russian village of Anatevka where "there is a tradition for everything." The irrepressible Teyva commands the Actors Alliance stage (June 6 to July 27).

"CORPSE" BILLED as a spine-tingling whodunit is en route from eight months in London to a November debut on Broadway and will open the Birmingham Theatre's season (Sept. 20 to Oct. 20). Then, "A Chorus Line" high-kicks its way across the stage (Oct. 25 to Nov. 24) in the return to metropolitan Detroit of this classic musical about stage-struck hopefuls

struggling to make the big time.

Scoopy, Woodstock, loud-mouth Lucy and everyman Charlie Brown ring in the holidays (Dec. 6 to Jan. 9) in "Scoopy," joyous musical comedy that captures the childlike sophistication of Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" comic strip and is the sequel to "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown."

Next is "Brighton Beach Memoirs," based on Neil Simon's own youth, and one of his more recent hits (Jan. 24 to Feb. 23). The hi-larks of Larry Shue's off-Broadway comedy success "The Foreigner" follows (Feb. 28 to March 30).

Taut drama "Split Second" by former Detroiters Dennis Macintyre dares to tackle controversy. The explosive play is about a policeman's haunting examination of his conscience (April 4 to May 4).

The Birmingham's season ends on an upbeat note with the musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Joseph, star of the all-time bestseller, the Book of Genesis, wrangles with his jealous brothers in this frisky fantasy from the Old Testament (May 9 to June 8).

AVON PLAYERS opens its season with "Camelot," the Lerner and Lowe musical about the fabled love triangle between King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and the beautiful Guinevere. "Camelot" runs weekends Oct. 24 to Nov. 9 and will be followed the weekends of Jan. 10-25 by the old John Patrick comedy "Everybody Loves Opal."

Thornton Wilder's touching favorite "Our Town," which tells how life was once lived in a small American town, Continued on Next Page



Sketches show scenes from theatrical hits "Angel Street" (top left), "On Golden Pond" (top right) and "A Chorus Line." Meadow Brook Theatre will do the thriller "Angel Street," Jan. 2-26; Birmingham Village Players, the drama "On Golden Pond," weekends May 18-24; and Birmingham Theatre, the musical "A Chorus Line," Oct. 25 to Nov. 24.

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