

Fine cast stars in dullish mystery

Performances of "Whodunnit" by Anthony Shaffer continue at 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday at St. Dunstan's Playhouse in Bloomfield Hills. For ticket information, call 644-0327 anytime.

By Barbara Michals
special writer

"Whodunnit," the current offering by St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook, is a murder mystery that seeks to spoof itself — the classic eight-character, closed-circle, 1930s British country house, "You mean one of us has got to be the murderer?" game. While St. Dunstan's provides an impeccable cast of period types, "Whodunnit" is not funny enough to make it strictly as a spoof and not clever enough to make it as a serious mystery. The only appropriate response to "Whodunnit" is "who cares?"

Seven invited guests and their host assemble at an English country house on a stormy night. The hostess who ostensibly did the inviting never does appear. The police are called in after the first murder, and a second murder occurs right under their noses as they try to reconstruct the first crime.

Thomas Peterson III does an outstanding job as Andreas Capodistrous, billed as "an ally Levantine." With an uncanny ability for blackmailing everyone he meets, Peterson positively oozes across



Barbara Michals

the stage like primordial slime. In his wake he leaves seven characters with both motive and opportunity to do him in.

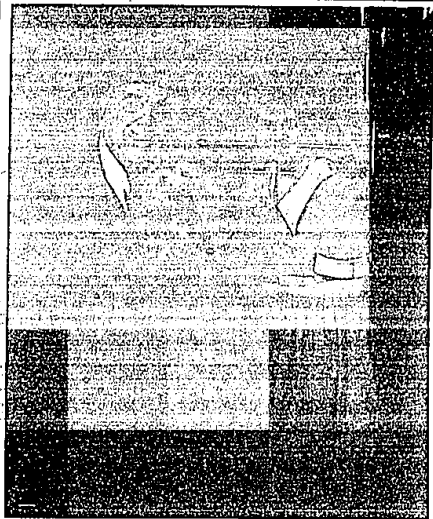
Bill Everson is wonderful as Perkins, the doddering old butler who likes to nip at his master's whisker and lord his class consciousness over the likes of Capodistrous.

Gary Walker as the lawyer-host and Ron Wheeler as a rear admiral are both eminently respectable, with Wheeler blustering as well. Pat O'Malley plays Lady Tremurain, the snooty, bitchy aristocrat, to perfection.

Dennis Campbell's society deb is appropriately flighty and vacuous, while Andrew McMechan plays her fiancé with an amusingly impenetrable upper-crust accent and the requisite dash of boredom. Melissa Malcolm Butler draws laughs as the bungling Dame Edith, a very nearsighted eccentric

archaeologist.

In the second act, the seven surviving characters do a complete change of personas, and all acquit themselves well. They are joined by Michael Lipschaw, serviceable as "a stolid copper," and David Butler as Inspector Bowden. Admitting a fondness for 1930s detective fiction, Bowden decides to play the unconventional fictional detective. Merely slipping on a cape, however, does not create characterization.



John H.L. Watson of Birmingham is Daddy Warbucks and Sarah Charley of LaSalle, Ontario, is Annie in the Windsor Light Opera production of the musical "Annie."

upcoming things to do

• 'ANNIE' RETURNS

The Windsor Light Opera Association production of the musical "Annie," which was a sellout even before the tickets hit the box office in May 1985, returns for performances beginning Saturday, Nov. 9, at Cleary Auditorium in Windsor. The show is directed and produced by John H.L. Watson of Birmingham, who also plays Daddy Warbucks. Another area resident in the cast is Fred Shulak of Southfield, who appears as one of the Hooverites. Sarah Charley of LaSalle, Ontario, stars as Annie. Performances run Friday-Sundays, Nov. 15-24. The Sunday, Nov. 17, performance is a matinee. For more information, call the box office at 519-989-9514 from noon to 5 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays.

• 'FABULOUS '40S'

"Boogie Woogie Big Boy," "White Christmas" and a host of other tunes will be remembered in song at "The Fabulous '40s" concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24; 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 25; and 8 p.m. (cabaret concert) Saturday, Oct. 26, at Orchard Lake Community Church, 5171 Commerce Road, Orchard Lake. Tickets are \$5 for Thursday-Friday and \$10 (including snacks and beverages) for Saturday. For reservations call 682-0750.

• 'FALSE MAGIC'

The world premiere of William Mewe's comedy "False Magic" opens Thursday, Oct. 31, at the Studio Theatre in Varner Hall at the Oakland University campus near Rochester. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 31; Fridays-Saturdays, Nov. 1-2, 8-9 and 10-11; and 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 6. The production is sponsored by the Center for the Arts and the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance.

This Neo-Latin mischief, set in Mantua, Italy, about 1625, involves a variety of mistaken identities. Authentic, live music with period instruments will be provided by Reasonable Fascimile, a Renaissance duo of Anno and Rob Burns of Rochester. Tickets are \$5 general admission and \$8 for students and senior citizens. For further information call 370-3013.

• DANCE CONTEST

A dance contest, which began Monday, Oct. 14, continues Mondays for 10 weeks at Glencoe of Farmington Hills at 17815 Middlebelt. Weekly winners will receive dinner for two at Glencoe. Grand prize is a trip for two to Las Vegas. The contest is only open to amateurs. There is no entry fee. For further information call Gary Wood, general manager at Glencoe, at 851-8213.

• AVON PLAYERS

The Lerne and "Loewe classic" "Camelot" continues as the 1985-86 season's opener at Avon Players community theatre. Thursdays-Sundays, Oct. 24-27, Oct. 31 to Nov. 3, and Thursday-Saturday, Nov. 7-8, at the Avon Players Playhouse on Washington Road in Avon Township. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 7:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets for adults are \$5 for all performances; student and senior citizens tickets are \$2.50 for Thursday and Sunday performances. For further information call 458-1130.

• AT FOLKTOWN

The Playhouse will be presented in concert at 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, at the Folktown coffeehouse at the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen, Southfield. The Playhouse consists of the Maine-based duo Liliane Labbey and Don Hinkley. Combining the voices of Labbey and the classically trained guitar of Hinkley. For tickets, at \$8 call 655-6848 from 6-8 p.m.

• ARCHIBALD'S MUSIC

A new dance floor and live entertainment is featured from 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at Archibald's in Birmingham. Archibald's Seafood Bar & Grille also offers live cocktail music from 5-7 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays. Mike Quatro continues through Saturday, Oct. 26. Jerry Libbey performs Wednesday, Oct. 30, through Saturday, Nov. 2.

• BIG BAND

The big band sounds of the '40s will be performed by J.C. Heard and his orchestra at 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 2, at the Oakland Community College Smith Performing Arts Theatre on the Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills. An optional pre-concert dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Tickets for the dinner/concert combination are \$16.50 per person at the box office through Monday, Oct. 28. Tickets for the concert only are \$9 per person. Students and senior citizens will receive a \$1 discount. For further information call 471-7700.

• MURDER MYSTERY

Farmington Players will open its new season with the murder mystery "Laura," playing Friday-Sundays, Oct. 25-27 and Nov. 1-3, 8-10, and Thursday-Saturday Nov. 14-16, at the Farmington Players Barn in Farmington Hills. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. Thursdays and Sundays, with tickets at \$4.50. Curtain is 8:30 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, with tickets \$5.50. For ticket information call 626-5061.

• FRENCH FARCE

"Cat Among the Pigeons," a French bedroom farce by Georges Feydeau, continues at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Oct. 25-26, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 27, at Wayne State University's Bonstelle Theatre in Detroit. Cynthia Knobloch of Rochester plays a leading role, as Viviane. Other major roles are taken by Michael Mendelson of Farmington Hills, Dennis Kleinsmith of Southfield and Linda Quiroz of Franklin. For ticket information, call 577-2960.

• STAGE I

The Neil Simon comedy "Come Blow Your Horn" will be presented by Stage I Productions at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturdays, Nov. 1-2 and 8-9, and 7 p.m. Sundays, Nov. 3 and 10, at the Novi Community Building. Area residents in the cast include Nancy Keough of Birmingham as Connie, Janet S. Laxson-Artushin as Peggy and Charles Gale of Westland as Buddy. Tickets are \$4 for all seats. For further information, call 340-7673 or 624-9485.

• SATIRE OFFERED

Eastern Michigan University's Department of Communication and Theatre Arts presents Thornton Wilder's satire, "The Skin of Our Teeth," continuing at 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 24-26, at EMU's Quirk Theatre in Ypsilanti. Included in the cast are Samer Ajluni of Bloomfield Hills, Fred Bock of Canton and Peggy Kasevich of Livonia.

Information for the Upcoming calendar may be submitted to Ethel Simmons, Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Mailing address is: P.O. Box 503, Birmingham 48012, or 36221 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Entertainment events should be open to the public. Preference is given to information about residents of, or events within, the circulation area of the 12 Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

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