Entertainment

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(Wb-4C,T,Ro-7D,F-7CYO)5C

Scaring listeners

Detroit-area writers, actors work on radio mystery



Actors record the weekly broadcast. (Above) Margaret Laflan and Richard Blumenfeld go over a script. (Below) Michael J. Pieper (left) and Carlos Saxon discussione of the scenes.



"ILLIE JAMES JONES wants to frighten you to death.

make Ille a little unsettling twice weekly.

"It started live years ago with an idea after listoning to Wilt's mystery theater. I was fascinated by 1. I got the idea to do a radio show," said the producer of "Proceed with Caution Radio Theatre." I didn't want to do straight dramas.

ducer of "Proceed with Caution taums.
"If didn't want to do straight dramms.
It wanted earle stories out of ordinary situations. The idea is, I want to scare the hell out of listeners."
The half-hour series, leaning more toward meloderam than the macabre, airs at 10:30 a.m. Mondays on WDTR-AM and at 8 p.m. Thursdays on WDTR-AM and at 8 p.m. Thursdays on WDTR-

AM and at 8 p.m. Thursdays on WDTR-FM.

Jones, a Hamtramck High School English teacher, wrote the first 13 episodes originally broadcast on WCHB-AM and bankrolled production costs without sponsorship funding. Since "Proceed with Caution" debuted a year ago, Detroik Aris Council grants and of would-be actors, semiprofessional performers and writers have eased the program's shoestring budget.

The cast, which changes with cach new episode, rehearses in Jones' Detroit home several times before taping in the cramped recording booth at WPON studios in Bioomfield Township.

BUT STOP-AND-GO recording ses-sions, informal rehearsals and cramped quarters don't bother some actors, like Bloomileld Hills mother-of-two Nancy Matejak. "That's show biz. I'm an aspiring ac-tress. You try to do anything you can," she said.

she said.

Matejak views the radio experience as another star on her broadcast acting resume. The former commercial artist has performed on stage and taught the ater workshops but is aiming for commercial film and television work.

"My goal is to make this lucrative within another year or my husband is going to make me work," she said with a lugh. "I've been doing this (acting) for four years."

For Birmingham playwright Therese McGes — one of several amateur and semigrical solutions are also as the semigrical solution and semigrical solutions are semigram. Proceed with Cauthou'r provides an audience for stories that might otherwise gather dust at home.

"It's a fun thing to do. It's nice to get it produced," said McGes, who's working on a dramatic play and several comedles in her spare time. "I'm past 50. They're (actors) all quite young. I'm very much their senior. But i'm hoping I can do more with them."

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JONES SPENIS two to four hours taping the actors' parts at WPON before mixing in sound effects and editing— another six to eight hours in post production—on portable equipment at home.

"We don't know much about him," Matejek noted. "As an actor you just go into things not knowing what you're reading for. He had a major audition for a TV pilot of the same series. It's possible it really could succeed. I think there's a real method to his madness." With limited broadcast experience and an untested dramatic market in Detroit radio, Jones systematically researched his idea before recording the first two pilots.

Jones, who holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in theater from the University of the parts degree in theater from the University.

the first two pilots.

Jones, who holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in theater from the University of Detroit and a master's degree in education from Wayne State University, is an experienced actor and director. While in college, he also wrote several scripts, one which won a writer's featival in 1976 and was staged at the Muste Hall in 1977.

He convinced a college business class to conduct market surveys in Detroit and wrote the first 13 episodes in his spare time after work.

"I did one thing toward it every day," he said.

"It would nave been two years sooner but I got sidduracked. I got involved in a soap opera produced by Channel 62. I started working on it, but it didn't go anywhere."

THE EXPERIENCE set his own project back but didn't dampen his enhusiasm for broadcast drama. Instead, it brought him together with local actors, broadcasters and other professionals who have an interest in drama.



Willie James Jones, producer of "Proceed with Caution Radio Theatre," gets ready for a taping session at radio station WPON in Bloomfield Township.

Meanwhile, Jones continued writing and in late 1984 taped pilots for the program and began shopping for a pan out ("they want to invest in someone with a reputation"), he paid for air time and production costs out of his cown pocket. program and began shopping for a sponsor. When aponsorship didn't par sponsor. When a production corpus the part of the

upcoming things to do

POLICE DRAMA
John Amos, who starred as Sam in
the Birmingham Theatre production of
Atiof Fugard's 'Master Harold'...
and the Boys,' returns to star in the
police drama 'Spilt Second' by Detrolter Dennis McIntyre. The play will
open a four-week engagement Friday,
April 4, at the Birmingham Theatre.
For ticket information, call the box office at 644-2533.

**MUSICAL OASIS

"The Sunday Afternoon Thing,"
featuring the muste of Joel Mabus, will)
be presented from 5-7 p.m. Sunday,
April 6, at the Birmingham Unitarian
Church in Bloomifeld Hills. The concert series offered by the Musical Oasis
of Birmingham will present the muste
of Jim Perkins, from 5-7 p.m. Sunday,
April 13, at the church. Tickets for
each concert are \$4. For more infor-

mation, call the Musical Oasis at 540-4155.

4155.

• 'GOOD DOCTOR'
Neil Simon's "The Good Doctor"
opens a four-week run at Meadow
Brook Theatre at 8 p.m. Thursday,
March 27, on the Oakland University
campus in Rochester Hills. The cast includes Detrolt actress Juliet Randall
and Meadow Brook favorites Dona
Werner, Donald Ewer and Joey Golden.

For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.

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• JAZZ SOUNDS

The Jazz Guitar Ensemble at Oak-land University will present its second concert of the season at 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 1, in Varner Reclail Hall on campus. The free program will have arrangements of music by Jazz greats and also originals by Steven Carryer, the ensemble diryctor. Among memi-

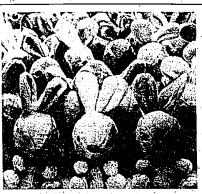
bers of the jazz ensemble is Rick Matle of West Bloomfield.

JOINT CONCERT
 Two show ensembles in the Oakland
University commercial music program

will appear in a joint concert at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 13, at Varner Recital Hall. University Drive and Starshine perform Broadway, pop, jazz, rock and







This Easter everybunny is dining at our buffet.

Make this Easter a wonderful family disling reperience. Spend a part of your Easter at our incredible Easter buffet. No matter what time you arrive you'll find a sumptious assortment of tender july carved meats and other entrees, critin fresh aslads, tempting appetities, delictious and have you'm mouth watering. But of have your mouth watering. But of all, each family member can eat as much as they'd like, all for one low price.

price.
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Michigani Jan 16400 J. Hudson Drive Southfield, MI Call for reservations 559-6500