

Zany family makes funny show



Happy journey

Kate Bernard of Livonia (left), Maureen Pickens of Farmington, Jesse Heindl of Farmington Hills and Robert Rhone of Redford portray the Kirby family in the new Unity Theatre Company's production of "The Happy Journey to Tronntown and Camden." For more information, see the upcoming calendar in the Entertainment pages.

Comedy 'Alone Together' needs more momentum

Performances of "Alone Together," presented by the Avon Players, continue through Saturday, Nov. 22, at the playhouse in Rochester Hills. For ticket information, call 739-4600.

The Avon Players production of "Alone Together," a contemporary comedy, is low-key and spotted with a lack of enthusiasm.

The staging has merit in that it

does define playwright Lawrence Roman's scathing indictment of the new breed, "me first" generation. The comic rendering projects insight into one more facet of the over-worked generation gap theme.

Basically, the Butlers, George and Helene, rejoice when the last of the three great sons leaves the nest. Long earned and long deserved peace and privacy is promised. Predictably the rejoicing is short-lived as

each son returns.

Each junior Butler is a walking product of the '60s, a self-centered, non-conforming individual, without consideration for his parents' sensibility.

The clashing of the two value systems, traditional and upstart, endows the comedy with complex touches and in turn becomes a timely social commentary.

Sue Warner as Helene, the harassed mother, carries the entire production. She displays a strong flair for

'Oliver!' suffers from cast with colds

The Troy Players production of "Oliver!" continues through Sunday, Nov. 23, at the Troy Community Center. For more information, call 679-1285.

Lionel Bart's musical "Oliver!" based on Charles Dickens' expose of London's workhouses, gin mills, thieves and street life needs good dancers and good voices to come alive. Alas, the Troy Players production of "Oliver!" seemed to have a cast struck with flu.

Directed by Dominic Patrick, the cast tried to give its all, but Christopher Locke, who looked scary enough to play Bill Sikes, had laryngitis, and "Oliver!" without a scarily Bill Sikes isn't an "Oliver!"

The workhouse children who dou-

bled as Fagin's boys sang in a high treble broken by hoarse notes. Kenny Grider as Oliver sang clearly and did a nice rendition of "Where Is Love?" Kenny and many of the children, especially the little girls doubling as boys, displayed spirit.

Deena Pearlman as Nancy easily stole every scene without trying to. Her clear voice and ability to act transcended the production. Pearlman badly needed someone to act with, but plucky Brian Armbrust as the Artful Dodger was uninteresting and so was the hoarse Sikes.

STEPHEN KIERSEY got in some good moments as Fagin. Alone on stage, Kiersey gave an amusing rendition of that clever song, "I'm Reviewing the Situation."

Several people sitting near me

commented that they always enjoy the Troy Players' "smaller productions." I concur. In fact, I have seen several stunning plays done by this group — plays that use one good set, plays that make full use of the deep stage and don't call upon technical assets this theater doesn't have.

The 40 actors and the crew involved in "Oliver!" try their hardest to use their playhouse well, but

sometimes less is more. I wish a full recovery to everyone who gamely got up onstage with the flu — or even a cold.

Helen Zucker has many years of experience reviewing for newspapers and magazines in Michigan, New York and Massachusetts.

table talk

New Beaujolais

Hogan's Restaurant in Bloomfield Township will celebrate the arrival of Beaujolais Nouveau from 10 p.m. Wednesday to 2 a.m. Thursday. Because of strict French wine regulations, the wine cannot be served until midnight. A special menu, to complement the wine, also will be featured.

Wild game

A seven-course gourmet meal is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 24, at Hogan's in Bloomfield Township. Buffalo, wild boar, venison and other

autumn fare will be served at Wild Game Night. Tickets are \$35 per person. For reservations, call 626-1800.

For wine buffs

A shipment of Beaujolais Nouveau is destined for the 333 East in the Omni International at Millender Center in Detroit. The wine arrives at 12:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, when it will be rushed to the Omni. Available through December at the restaurant or at Tastings, the lobby bar, will be Gorges Du Boeuf at \$3.29 a glass or \$16.45 a bottle. A local wine being offered through De-

Special Sundays



The exciting Champagne Brunch at the Bistro M is a feast for the eyes and palate.

Spectacular fresh fruit, omelettes to order, hot carved items, chilled salads, pastries galore and the champagne flows.

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Call 559-6500 for reservations

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Special dinner

The Lark in West Bloomfield will host a Back-East Dinner at 7 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Nov. 24-25. Mary and Jim Lark, the restaurant's own

ers, will offer their favorite dishes from other restaurants they visited recently. Le Cirque, New York, will be featured with Shaved Fresh White Truffle, and from the Robert Morris Inn in Oxford, Maryland, there will be Fresh Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Cake. For more information about the multicourse dinner, priced at \$60 per person, call 681-4466.

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features turkey and all the trimmings, along with an impressive array of salads, soups, alternative entrees, vegetables and desserts.

Prices are only \$13.50 for adults, \$11.95 for seniors and children under 12 just \$7.95. Tots under four are free. All prices plus tax and gratuity.

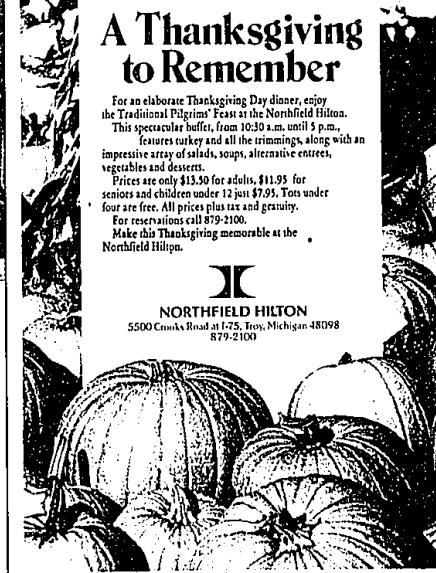
For reservations call 879-2100.

Make this Thanksgiving memorable at the Northfield Hilton.

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A Thanksgiving to Remember

For an elaborate Thanksgiving Day dinner, enjoy the Traditional Pilgrim's Feast at the Northfield Hilton. This spectacular buffet, from 10:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., features turkey and all the trimmings, along with an impressive array of salads, soups, alternative entrees, vegetables and desserts. Prices are only \$13.50 for adults, \$11.95 for seniors and children under 12 just \$7.95. Tots under four are free. All prices plus tax and gratuity. For reservations call 879-2100.

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Barbara Michals

a typewriter was delivered by mistake eight years ago. Carl Fisher as husband Paul, who tinkers with fireworks, where he can't live with Tony Kirby (Lou Jacobi). The leeman son, Janie, is likable as Tony, who quickly understands that the Sycamores have a lot more going for them than money can buy.

Dike Dwellley's sonorous voice and deliberate enunciation give weight to his wisdom, as Grandpa, who quit the business world cold one day and has spent the last 35 years attending college commencement and catching snakes.

DEE DEE ADDISON is a perky, convincing Alice Sycamore, the daughter who, for some inexplicable reason, went to work in a Wall Street office, where she can't live with Tony Kirby (Lou Jacobi). The leeman son, Janie, is likable as Tony, who quickly understands that the Sycamores have a lot more going for them than money can buy.

Trying to justify her family's peculiarities to the very popular Kirby parents Alice's undoing. She loves her eccentric family too much to let the Kirbys disdain them.

Most other performances are fine, including Dee Dwellley as Penelope who writes unfinished plays because

George Martin and Shirley Brower are quite believable as Tony's parents, stodgy but not overly snooty. Jim Ellis does a funny bit as the outraged IRS man confronting Grandpa, who adamantly refuses to pay taxes.

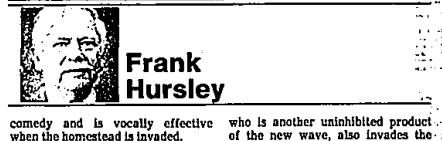
C.J. Nodis is amusing as the out-

going son Boris, Kolenkow, Alice's Russian ballet teacher, and Eileen

presses. Barbara Michals adds a touch of class as the down-at-heel Grand Duchess Olga.

Under direction of Celia M. Michell, the pace slows occasionally, not always capturing the whirling nature of life with the Sycamores. The spartan set is indeed appropriate for a family that shuns materialistic values.

Barbara Michals teaches high school English and journalism in Southfield. A theater critic for the last 12 years, she is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.



Frank Hursley

comedy and is vocally effective when the homestead is invaded.

Robert W. Schultz projects a laid-back senior Butler. However, he comes through for some second-act sparks when George's patience thins.

The three sons are Keith (Joe Canu), Michael (Chris Parker) and Elliott (E.J. Nolan). Each in his own way unwittingly monopolizes the Butler household. The trio of performers, listless at times, manages to create a churlish atmosphere.

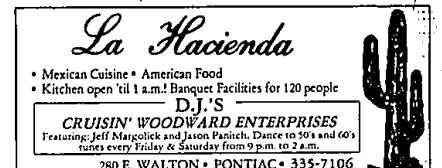
Janie Johnson, a young female

who is another uninhibited product of the new wave, also invades the premises. For a touch of originality, she is a forerunner in a movement advocating celibacy. Stephanie Gall Victor gives some amusing dimensions to her Janie.

Bill MacNeil designed a well-de-

tailed set depicting the Butler residence.

Frank Hursley of Birmingham, a sales engineer by profession, is a longtime theater buff.



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