

# MOT presents 'Man of LaMancha'

By Mary Jane Doerr  
Special writer

Rarely does this critic attend anything twice. While a music critic's convention prevented attendance at the opening night of Michigan Opera Theatre's "Man of La Mancha," the show was so inspiring that I went back to see it again.

Director and choreographer Ted Forlow, a member of the 1960s Broadway cast, is responsible for this successful recreation of the original production. Using rebuilt sets and the same blocking and choreography, he gives life to the Knight of the Woeful Countenance, who braves the fate of the depraved, the ugly and cynical to bring hope to the

downtrodden.

Hardly the easiest of plays to comprehend, Dale Wasserman's musical play with the witty Joe Darion lyrics is based on Miguel de Cervantes's "Don Quixote." It is the story of hope against despair, of illusion in the face of disillusionment.

Metropolitan opera stars aren't known for their acting talents, but Richard Fredericks is the exception. He credits Forlow with transforming him into the three characters in the role of the Man of La Mancha.

As Cervantes, he descends the long staircase of the black dungeon to await his trial by the Spanish Inquisition. In this den of thieves, he pleads for his most important possession, his manuscript. As the story unfolds, he elicits the help of the prisoners to enact Cervantes's story. The Fredericks then makes himself up to be Don Quixote and directs the play. In the difficult last scene, he transforms himself again into a dying old man who has been defeated by the reality Don Quixote battled.

In the fields near Seville, Spain, Don Quixote "tilts the windmill" to have his sword twisted by failure. He challenges the barber for his shaving bowl, claiming it to be his Golden Helmet.

At an inn, Don Quixote meets his

imaginary lady, Dulcinea, who is really a trollop, constantly surrounded by a group of rough muleteers. As Pedro, the head muleteer, George Hasenstab cracks his sharp whip across the rebuilt Broadway set, bestirring the audience, but not the unflinching Chris Callen, who plays prostitute Aldonza.

Callen comes well endowed with TV and Broadway credits. In addition to acting talent, she has vocal as well, in a chest voice that projects anguish in her song "Aldonza" and a legitimate voice that brings sweetness to her finale, "To Dream the Impossible Dream."

With Jean-Paul Richard, Cam Richards, John Manfredi, Eric von Bleicken and guitarist David Shoup, Hasenstab and Callen make the famous Act II rape scene about as symbolically horrid as any choreography could depict.

A veteran cast of 18 actor/singers double as prisoners and characters in Cervantes's fantasy. Samuel Reni has been Sancho, Don Quixote's loyal servant with four other opera companies. His engaging tenor voice blended with Fredericks's in "I, Don Quixote" to the beat of Jean-Paul Richard's and Cam Richards's flamenco-like dancing horses.



## Guests for Temple series

The Lafayette String Quartet, Oakland University's quartet-in-residence, will perform at 8 p.m. Sunday at Birmingham Temple, 20511 W. 12 Mile, Farmington Hills. Tickets are \$9 and \$8 for senior citizens and students. They will perform works by Haydn, Puccini, Cristanemi (1890) Barker and Mendelssohn.

## Kresge Museum offers art tour

The Friends of the Kresge Art Museum of "Last Lansing are sponsoring a nine-day art tour, "Art Treasures of the Lowlands," Dec. 26 to Jan. 3. Visits to museums in Amsterdam, Otterloo, The Hague, Brussels, Brugge, Ghent and Antwerp are scheduled.

The tour, led by Nanci Winborn and Dorothy Silk, chairwomen for Friends of Kresge Tours, costs \$1,360 and features round trip air transportation, accommodations in the centrally located Marriott Hotel in Amsterdam, the Sheraton in Brussels, transportation to each of the museums and between cities by private bus, museum admission fees and special art guides.

The tour will begin with a visit to the Groeninge, which houses collections ranging from Flemish primitives to Flemish moderns. Other museums on the tour are the Royal Museum of Art in Antwerp with its huge collection of Peter Paul Rubens masterpieces as well many paintings by Rembrandt, Van Eyck, Memling, Jordans, Vermeer and Van Gogh, the Frans Hals Museum of Haarlem, the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam and the Museum of Classic Art in Brussels.

Reservations must be made by Nov. 15. For information, contact Nanci Winborn, 517 675-5671 or the Kresge Art Museum 517 335-7631.

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