

'The Immigrant' a warm story

The Michigan premiere engagement of "The Immigrant: A Hamilton County Album" by Mark Harelik continues through Sunday, April 22, at Meadow Brook Theatre on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.

The story of Haskell Harelik, a Yiddish-speaking Jew who fled persecution and pogroms in his native Russia to immigrate to the little town of Hamilton, Texas, is at once the rags-to-riches story of one hard-working immigrant and a four-character drama about friendship bridging differences.

IMAGINE HERELIK in 1909 fleeing alone and nearly penniless to a backwater Texas town. Imagine him selling bananas door to door from a rickety cart when he could speak only a few broken words of English. Imagine being the first Jew in a town filled with born-again Southern Baptists. Life wasn't easy.

When Haskell first arrives, the Perrys take him in. Milton, the stiff



Cathie Breidenbach

suspicious town banker, overcomes his natural reserve and sets Haskell up in business. Through the years, as the three Harelik sons are born, the wives develop a friendship despite their different roots and religious beliefs.

Jayne Houdyshell's performance as the buxom housewife with a kind heart rings true with every line, and Pauline Lapor as Leah evolves convincingly from a frightened foreigner to a woman at home in her new world. As Haskell's family and his business thrive, the friendship between the two couples does also. The story of their friendship with its differences and its misunderstandings provides the core of the drama within the larger story of Haskell's life.

Fine acting and an engaging story about good-hearted folk makes for warm entertainment but not for wonderful theater.

For starters, director Howard J. Millman sets a leisurely pace that lingers over every event like a Texas drawl lingers over vowels. Theoretically the slow-moving pace ought to suit a play set in the South early in the century, but the pace subtly underlines movement of the story, especially in the second act which has additional dramatic difficulties.

peccally in the second act which has additional dramatic difficulties.

PART OF THE problem is that the tale is true, a multi-generational family saga written by Mark Harelik, grandson of the real immigrant Haskell Harelik. Fact shouldn't dictate the shape of the drama, but author Harelik lets them when he feels obliged to carry the story of his grandfather's life through to the end when the old man dies just short of his 100th birthday.

Core of the play's dramatic action revolves around the friendship between two couples. The climax and resolution of that story, however, happens long before old Haskell dies. The playwright should have stopped while he was ahead. Instead, he drags out his grandfather's remaining years with a couple of pseudo endings that bog down an otherwise warm and engaging story brought to life by an outstanding cast.

Cathie Breidenbach of West Bloomfield teaches college writing classes and works as a freelance writer.



Jane Houdyshell and David Breitbarth appear in the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "The Immigrant."

On the Town

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

DON PEDRO'S

MEXICAN SAMPLER PLATTER for TWO

\$9.95

* Includes: Steak Fajita, 2 Tacos, Chiles Enrichido, 2 Padres Burros, Tostada, Guacamole Dip, Rice & Beans.

Dine In Only • With Coupon • Expires 4-15-90

Not valid with any other offer.

FREE BANQUET ROOM AVAILABLE Mexican or American Cuisine

24366 GRAND RIVER (3 Blocks W. of Telegraph) • 537-1450

Includes: Steak Fajita, 2 Tacos, Chiles Enrichido, 2 Padres Burros, Tostada, Guacamole Dip, Rice & Beans.

Dine In Only • With Coupon • Expires 4-15-90

Not valid with any other offer.

FREE BANQUET ROOM AVAILABLE Mexican or American Cuisine

24366 GRAND RIVER (3 Blocks W. of Telegraph) • 537-1450

SOMERSET'S SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES

APRIL 8

ONITA SANDERS

Harp & Vocals

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Open to the public at no charge

SOMERSET MALL

Big Screen Radio Crossover, Troy Sunday 12-5 Monday, Thursday, Friday 10-9 Other Days 10-6

*Saves \$ 2.00 off cover charge

Easter Brunch Buffet!

Sunday, April 15 - From 11 am - 3 pm

Some of Our Features:

- Grilled Marinated Chicken Breast
- Salad
- Cure #1 Ham
- Butter Roast Almondine
- Assorted Egg Dishes
- Vegetables
- Corned Beef Hash
- Desserts
- Breads And Much More!

Reservations Suggested 851-5540

4343 Orchard Ln. Rd. (At Lene Place) N.E. Corner of Crosswinds Mall

CREATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE

851-5540

The Chamberlin

PRESENTS

SUNDAY NIGHT JAZZ In the Tavern

JOIN US FOR DINNER AND/OR COCKTAILS AND LISTEN TO

The Sounds of Jazz

EVERY SUNDAY IN THE TAVERN STARTING AT 6:00 P.M.

ALSO

OUR MAIN DINING ROOM IS OPEN 4:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M. ON SUNDAYS

Coming Soon to the Chamberlin Our New Elevator to Service Our Restaurants and Banquet Facilities

In the Holiday Inn • Dearborn • 22900 Michigan Avenue

278-6900

1992 OLYMPIC PREVIEW...The Best of The Best!

Campbell's Soups

1990 TOUR OF WORLD FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONS

Presented by TOM COLLINS

ONE PERFORMANCE ONLY!

Gold, Silver and Bronze Medalists from Olympic and World Competition, Live and In Person!

Wed., APRIL 11 **8:00 p.m.**

JOE LOUIS ARENA

On sale at Joe Louis Arena Box Office and

TICKETMASTER

HUDSON'S & HARMONY HOUSE

CHARGE BY PHONE (313) 645-6666

GROUPS (25 or more) call (313) 567-7474
General Information call (313) 567-6000

Christopher Bowman
United States

The Duchesnays
France

Jill Trenary
United States

Grzegorz Filipowski
Poland

Patricia Neske
West Germany

Wynne & Druar
United States

Paul Wylie
United States

Klimova & Ponomarenko
Soviet Union

Landry & Johnston
Canada

Bechke & Petrov
Soviet Union

Viktor Petrenko
Soviet Union

Yamaguchi & Galindo
United States

Usova & Zhulin
Soviet Union

Gordeeva & Grinkov
Soviet Union

Kurt Browning
Canada

Midori Ito
Japan

Sato & High

The Sounds of Jazz

★ The World's Top Ice Skating Champions ★

(Cast of skaters may change due to injury or other unforeseen circumstances)

Observer & Eccentric NEWSPAPERS