

# It's the fourth time, but musical is still fresh

Performances of the Trinity House Theatre production of "Junior High" by Paul Patton continue through Saturday, April 28, in Livonia. Tickets are \$6. For reservations call 464-6302.

By Richard Marsh  
special writer

Staging the musical "Junior High" is becoming a regular occurrence at the Trinity House Theatre. The Livonia group is putting on the show for the fourth time since it was written in 1981.

In spite of the numerous times the musical has been done by Trinity House, it continues to wear well, and played to a sell-out house Saturday evening.

## review

Written by Livonia resident Paul Patton, the musical is a nostalgic look at life, as a 13-year-old at a Detroit junior high school in 1965.

The combination of lively music, strong acting and excellent staging by director Timma Peterson make the show a truly enjoyable night out.

Thanks to good makeup and costumes, most of the cast are able to present the proper visual imagery of junior high students. Ronald Evans as greaser Jon Harris is the hardest to visualize in the role of a junior

high student because of his large body size and mature facial features.

DAN GRAJEK as Benny Hopkins, through whose eyes we see the story, gives a fine portrayal of the wimpy Benny. The only thing detracting from his performance Saturday was a few seeming lapses in remembering his next line.

Grajek is backed up by a fine supporting cast, all of whom deserve acclaim for their work.

The four-piece orchestra — Catherine Krenk on piano, Terry Birkett on guitar, Neal Krenk on bass and Eric Fass on drums — is up to the task of providing lively accompaniment and is one of the keys to the success of the show.

Most of the weaknesses in the production come from the script itself. After a rousing start, the play drags needlessly long in the first act. There also are some scenes which do not flow with the rest of the show.



JIM JAGDFELD/staff photographer

Dan Grajek as Benny Hopkins (center) gets roughed up by Ron Evans as Jon Harris (left) and Dan Rimer as Ken Coffee in the musical "Junior High."

One example is the pajama party scene where the mother of one of the girls crashes the party because she does not want to be home alone. This bit seems like it was borrowed from another play and stuck in.

The resolution of Harris' beating up Benny because Benny is a "weasel" seems a bit too tidy as well.

Although the show is set in a junior high, some people may find the circumstances and characters more appropriate for a high school setting. It depends on the playgoer's back-

ground as to where these events fit, junior high or high school.

One thing which does seem out of place is the way the show closes. Usually when the cast takes its bows and the finale is played that is the end of the show.

In "Junior High," after the finale, the monologues of five of the characters heard in the beginning are repeated by the respective actors. Whatever effect is achieved by closing with the monologues is lost by having the finale coming before-

hand. His parents felt it was time he had a place of his own. After all, he was 15.



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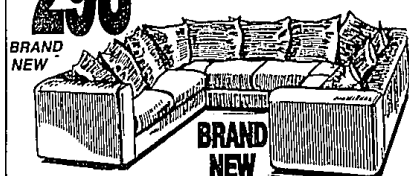
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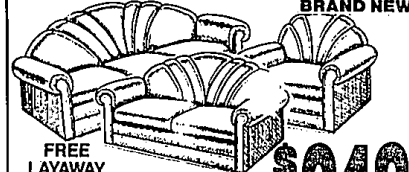


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