

# Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor 644-1100



Thursday, June 14, 1990 O&amp;E

(O17D)

## 'Kip Synatra' is their claim to fame

By Mary Jane Doerr  
special writer

**T**HE NEW MUSICAL "Kip Synatra's Mobile Musical (A Memorial)" is a moving tribute to the greatest undiscovered songwriter of the last four decades.

No one has ever heard of Kip Synatra, but then composer Gerald V. Castle of Harper Woods and playwright-lyricist Michael C. Vigilant of Auburn Hills are not famous either at least not yet. Castle and Vigilant want that to change.

The two men are seated casually around the director's table, beneath the newly renovated stage at the Birmingham Village Players playhouse, where their newly created

musical is being fully mounted for the first time, opening Friday, June 22. The articulate Vigilant says, "We are obsessed with making a success out of our songwriting team." His creative partners, Gerry Castle, and Castle's brother Dan, a Troy resident, who is director of the show, are just as fervent.

A land surveyor by day, a graduate journalist by choice, Vigilant has teamed with Blue Cross employee Gerry Castle since 1982. Together they have produced "Folled Again! Two Musical Melodramas" published by Samuel French Inc.

"WOULD YOU BELIEVE... A Stable" and "The Little Star: A Christmas Fantasy" are due for publication by Contemporary Drama

Service this year. Tim Kelly, the most published playwright in America, has hired the team to set to music his farce "Phantom of the Opry." "Kip" is one of only eight musicals listed in the Samuel French International catalog this year out of 2,000 submissions.

The idea of "Kip" germinated in Vigilant's mind as a magazine article. Dan Castle jokingly calls it the product of Mike and Gerry's adolescent minds and warped alter egos. "It is a metaphor for the baby boomer generation."

Kip's musical journey starts in the 1950s. In an airstream trailer (created by set designer Jim Balmer), Kip travels with his bands, the Wetsports, the Gnat Pack, Francisco Bizzarro, the Lost Conquistadors, and the Band of Limerats. His therapist, his first date, his three ex-wives and his parents tell his story.

The 12 actors never leave the stage as they travel across America, make a sea-sickening journey to Africa and a disappointing trip to Hawaii, and choreograph a nuclear holocaust for the half time show of the 50th annual Orange Bowl. Kip's left-of-center attempts to hit the big time never quite succeed.

"HE IS ALWAYS a step behind, never quite in synch," adds the quiet Gerry Castle. On stage in the musical, Castle is literally the leader of the band, the guitarist.

Musically, the show runs the gamut of American pop music — rock, big band, swing, rap, folk, punk-a-billy, calypso and show tunes.

"As children we all hated disco so we left it out," said Dan Castle.

Gerry Castle has composed 19 tuneful pieces that are not easily forgotten. The melodies can stand alone as do Vigilant's lyrics, but Castle's accented musical style promotes Vigilant's clever wit in such songs as "You Can't Suck to a Girl with a Teflon-Coated Heart," "Opposites Attract" and "Fetal Position."

Most striking is the mini-musical which takes place in Act II. Vigilant describes it as a "touched view of marital destruction." Cindy Price-



Chris Gerback (left), Tim Reinman and Marjorie Gluckman rehearse scene for "Kip Synatra's Mobile Musical." The show has been added to the 1989-90 season as a fund-raiser to benefit the Birmingham Village Players Building Fund. Performances will be at 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, June 22-23, 29-30 (tickets \$8). In place of the customary preview night show, the musical will be presented Wednesday, June 20, as a benefit for the Altie Theatre (tickets \$15). For ticket information call 644-2075.

day-Saturday, June 22-23, 29-30 (tickets \$8). In place of the customary preview night show, the musical will be presented Wednesday, June 20, as a benefit for the Altie Theatre (tickets \$15). For ticket information call 644-2075.

hard and Ed Guay's powerful voices and emotional interpretations drive home the love story about a couple who fall in love ("Infatuated" and "Doomed"), marry ("A Lifetime from Now") and divorce in about 20 minutes. Joey Johnson as the child follows with a terribly sad "Weekend Dad and Part-Time Mother."

Gerry Castle studied music theory with well-known composer James Hartway at Wayne State University in Detroit. He writes evenly for the voice, keeping the music in the middle ranges for belting and puts his ensemble of four (bass, keyboards, drums and guitar) on the stage for obvious balance and rhythm.

"HOW DO YOU stage a new show? Obviously, you can't rent a video at Blockbuster and go home and watch it on TV," said Dan Castle. (After this production Samuel French will have a video available.)

The inventive-actor/director Dan Castle has taken his freedom experimentally. A human petting zoo will be in the lobby, with characters from the show in the boxes, as the audience arrives. Costumes in the show, he said, are a cross between those of "Madame Butterfly" and "Godspell" and fly in and out of the sky to be done by the actors. The curtain is never used. Styrofoam vegetables have been created for the song "I

Hate Peas, Lima Beans and Cream Corn." Four slide shows provide a travagance.

"For security reasons I can't tell you why the piece is called a mobile or give away the surprise ending," said Dan Castle. (Vigilant is part of the action when the secret is revealed.)

The show is co-produced by Lindsay Balmer and Bill Haycock. Village Players member Helen Balmer, who is the wife of the set director, Jim Balmer, and mother of Lindsay Balmer, couldn't help but add, "This term is going to be famous. I just feel it. The show is beautiful."



DAN DEAN/Staff photographer

Mike Vigilant (left) wrote the book and lyrics and Gerry Castle the music for "Kip Synatra's Mobile Musical (A Memorial)," which will be staged for the first time at the Birmingham Village Players.

### table talk

#### East, West

Master Chef Jeff Gabriel, who teaches in the culinary arts program at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, will cook an "East Meets West" dinner at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Keith Fannier's Les Auteurs in Royal Oak. Cost is \$35.50 per person. A wine package, selected by Maître D' Michael Morrisette, is offered at \$14.50 per person. For reservations call 544-2887.

#### Tea adventure

The Mad Hatter, Alice and the March Hare will re-enact Lewis Carroll's famous tea from 3-5 p.m. Monday, June 25, at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham. Several of the guests will be invited to join the characters at a special tea table. After the tea, Alice will give children instruction in tea etiquette. The family tea is \$21.50 per person. For reservations call Pauline Palozzolo at 642-7900.

### Observer & Eccentric®

#### CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

644-1070 Oakland County  
591-0900 Wayne County  
852-3222 Rochester / Avon

IT'S INTERESTING  
IT'S EXCITING  
IT'S STREET SCENE  
Read it every Monday

TASTE'S  
GREAT!  
Every Monday

Men, if you're about to turn 18, it's time to register with Selective Service at any U.S. Post Office.

It's quick. It's easy.  
And it's the law.

**DON PEDRO'S**  
Authentic Mexican Cuisine

**\$9.95**  
MEXICAN SAMPLER PLATTER FOR TWO

Includes: Steak Fajita, 2 Tacos, Chiles, Enchilada, El Padre Burrito, Tostada, Guacamole Dip, Rice & Beans.

Dine In Only • With Coupon • Expires 6-30-90

FREE BANQUET ROOM AVAILABLE  
Mexican or American Cuisine

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

**it's BERKSHIRE MADNESS**  
A Musical Presentation  
Murder Mystery Dinner Theater

Now Playing At The  
**BERKSHIRE HOTEL**  
26111 Telegraph Rd. (at 10 1/2 Mile) Southfield  
Package Prices Start at \$89.00  
Call now at (313) 358-4333

**Smiley Brothers**  
A TRUSTED NAME SINCE 1924

Only at Smiley's can you compare these world class pianos

**DETROIT**  
875-7100  
5310 Woodward  
Daily 9-5 Sun. 10-4pm

Grands and Consoles  
Bechstein, Schimmel,  
Kimball, Wurliatzer, Sojin.

**BIRMINGHAM**  
647-1177  
1010 N. Hurst  
Daily 10-6 Thurs. 10-8

BIRMINGHAM OPEN SUNDAYS 1PM-5PM

**A Roaring Good Time!**

There's nothing like a friendly dinosaur exhibit to bring the whole family together for old time fun. At the Detroit Science Center, from May 18 through September 23, you'll marvel at how time flies and imagination soars on you while away the hours taking in a large part of long ago. You'll be transported in time to a world where bigger was better and where you are greeted by the calls of the creatures themselves. It's all just a small part of the world as it was at the Detroit Science Center — A great way to pass the time!

**THE DETROIT SCIENCE CENTER**  
A great place to discover, 577-8400

**Southfield PERFORMING ARTS Center, Inc.**

**THEATER & FINE DINING**  
COMPLETE BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS  
SUNDAY MATINEES - BRUNCH 12 NOON - SHOW 2 P.M.

**"PUMP BOYS & DINETTES"**  
JUNE 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10  
STARTING JUNE 15th  
MOTOWN REVUE

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY**  
6:00 pm - Cocktails at cash bar  
and complimentary hors d'oeuvres  
7:00 pm - Dinner - Choice of Entree  
8:00 pm - Show Time  
\$12.00 per person - Show Only (\$18 preferred seating)  
\$18.00 Dinner & Show  
SUNDAY MATINEE  
3:00 pm - Brunch  
5:00 pm - Show Time  
\$10.00 per person - Show Only (\$12.00 preferred seating)  
\$15.00 per person - Brunch & Show  
Seating - \$15.00 - Brunch & Show  
\$39.00 Overnights Accommodations (only with tickets)  
\*Tax and gratuity included, does not include alcohol  
\*\*Based on double occupancy, does not include tax

**CALL FOR RESERVATIONS: 577-4800 ext. 2242**

**YESTERDAYS NIGHTCLUB LIVE BANDS**  
WED. - SAT. 6:30 TIL LATE

**DAYS HOTEL**  
DAYS HOTEL/CONFERENCE CENTER  
17017 West Nine Mile Road  
Southfield, MI 48075

**Inexpensive Indulgence.**

**\$49** per room\*

Treat yourself and your family to our "Weekend Getaway" package, and see what our relaxed environment can do for your state of mind.

- \*rooms with whirlpool tubs available
- \*complimentary continental breakfast
- \*use of indoor pool, whirlpool, sauna and exercise room
- \*kids stay free in same room with parents
- \*Tivoli restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner
- \*Right Angle Lounge for your enjoyment
- \*shopping at nearby Twelve Oaks Mall

Additional packages are available. Ask about our Suite Packages, some including dinner and theater tickets. Call today for reservations:

**313/553-0000**

\*From \$49 per room/based on availability. \*\*MENTION THIS AD FOR A FREE UPGRADE TO A WHIRLPOOL ROOM

**Clarion Hotel**  
Farmington Hills  
14525 W. 12 Mile Rd. • Farmington Hills, MI 48334