

Rivals are unevenly matched



'M. Butterfly'

Philip Anglim, who originated the role of John Merrick in "The Elephant Man," stars as Rene Gallimard and A. Meep as Song Liling reprises the role taken over from B.D. Wong on Broadway in the play "M. Butterfly," Tuesday-Sunday, April 16-21, at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit. To charge tickets by phone call 645-6666.

Performances of the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "Sleuth" continue through Sunday, April 21, on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. For ticket information, call the box office at 377-3300.

When evenly matched adversaries pit will against will and match brain against brain, that's gamesmanship at its most exciting. Anthony Shaffer's "Sleuth" dramatizes an articulate, suspenseful game between fairly matched rivals — Andrew Wyke, a rich, egocentric and aging writer of detective fiction, and Milo Tindle, a handsome, bright, but poorer travel agent in his prime.

Like bucks bashing antlers over a doe, Wyke and Tindle trade jibes and insults about Marguerite, Wyke's wife, and Milo's lover. The audience never meets the beautiful, spendthrift prize they both claim, but she nevertheless raises the emotional ante in their high-stakes match. The dynamics of Shaffer's play, just like the dynamics of any good game, depend on balancing the wit, the cleverness, and the will to win of worthy opponents.

Mismatched players in Meadow Brook Theatre's production of Shaffer's 1971 Tony-award-winning play diminish the tensions as the two men joust with words and use deceit



Cathie Breidenbach

to best one another. Fine acting, Peter Hick's opulent manor house where the action is set, and energetic staging in the Meadow Brook production can't overcome the lukewarm suspense that results from unevenly matched opponents.

Director Charles Nolte pits the formidable slinger of words and wit Arthur Beer as Wyke, against the able actor Alexander Webb as Tindle, but Nolte stacks the deck by making Tindle too gentlemanly and passive to thrust and parry with Wyke. Nolte further slants the playing field (to mix games-playing metaphors) by getting Tindle drunk so the young man, already disadvantaged because he is playing on his adversary's home turf, becomes even less a match for Wyke's aggressive, demeaning gamesmanship.

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

table talk

Culinary arts

First place scholarship money was awarded to Oakland Community College (Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills) in the recent culinary arts competition hosted by Opus One restaurant in Detroit. OCC won the competition with a recipe for Grilled Chicken Breast with Duck-Sausage with Salsa and Passion Fruit Beurre Blanc, and a recipe for Chocolate Grand Marnier Terrine. The winning team included two instructors, Chef Dan Rowson and Chef Roger Holden, and students Jeffrey Baker, Thomas Bennett, Shannon Estelle and Keill Thistis.

New entrees

Hudson's Restaurants has added three new entrees to its menu. These include Hot and Sour Scallops, Three Mushroom Stroganoff and Broiled White Fish. The dishes, priced at \$7 and \$7.50, are available throughout the day.

Menu updates

The Summit, River Bistro and Cafe Rio, three restaurants at the Westin Hotel at Renaissance Center in Detroit, have updated their menus. Prawns and Scallops in Paul Prudhomme's spicy seasonings, at \$32.95, is one of the sauteed specialties on the dinner menu at the Summit.

Opera dinners

Buffet dinners for the Michigan Opera Theatre's 1991 spring season are being provided by Bowman's Catering at the newly renovated Masonic Temple in Detroit. Next dinner, with the production "Ariadne auf Naxos," will be from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, April 13; Wednesday, April 17, and Saturday, April 20, preceding performances at 8 p.m. Dinners also are planned for "The Magic Flute" and dinners and a brunch for "Madame Butterfly." For more information call Bowman's at 398-1680 or the Masonic Temple at 832-7100.

TV's Channel 56 announces 10 percent more audience

The audience for Detroit's public television station, WTVS/Channel 56, rose 10 percent during February when compared to the same period last year. Both the prime-time and full-day audiences were measured by the Nielsen rating service.

A total of 845,000 local households watched the station during the average week in February, matching the record-high levels of viewership established in the November sweeps period. The increase is a likely factor in the success of the recent "Festival" pledge drive on WTVS, which raised a record \$1.2 million. "Our winter season programming has sustained the momentum of the fall, which featured the blockbuster 'Civil War' series," said Robert Larson, WTVS president and general manager.

"The audience gains are not only an indication that public television is delivering on its promise of quality programming, but that viewers are recognizing its value," added Frank Stella, WTVS board chairman.

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