Entertainment



Cast, singing first-rate in 'Oaklahoma!'

Performances of the Avon Players production of "Oaklaho-mat" continue through Nov. 10 at the playhouse on Tienken at Ru-nyon Road in Rochester Hills. For teket information call the box office at 375-1390.

Avon Players presents an energetic cast of "territory folks" in Rodgers and Hammersteins "Oklahoma!" Director Debbie Schlutow gives the homespun musical a traditional 1943 treatment, complete with lighthearted American morals and nenty of charm. plenty of charm.

plenty of charm.

THE MAIN reason for the show's success is its stars. Curly (the boy who is supposed to get the girl), is played by Kim Monterosso with a wonderful litting voice. The classics.

Oh, What A Beaultful Mornin' and "The Surrey With a Fringe On Top' are resurrected with a mix of warmth, and an irresistible deviltances.

Monique Grotloh breezes through "Oklahoma" as Laurey (the girl who is supposed to get the boy) with a crystal clear voice that would melt butter and is right on the mark. The date "People Will Say We're in Lave" Illustrates well the onstage chemistry between the two leads, as well as first-rate singing styles.



THE THRUST of "Obtaboma" is not whether the territory will become part of the Union, but who will lake Laurey to the box social, Judy Privasky does a splendid job as felsy, sally Aune Eller, who alternately helps or hinders (mostly helps) Laurey's love-life. This is a well-developed character with quirks that make her fun to watch, especially as her face changes while dirty pictures are shown to her through a kaledoscope.

Mark Stanger plays Jud Fry with conviction and a peculiar intensity which works to his favor. The terrible moral fiber of Jud's character (who tirst to get the gril) is usually painted singularly with pinup pictures on the wall (Hammerstein's idea), but Stranger interprets lines with a literoeness that implies murden the stranger of the



wards with charisma and dimples. The cowboy is trying to save \$50 to marry Ado Annie, but has trouble counting that high.

NATASHA MONCHAK re-creates a cute Ado Annie who is more appre-ciated in the second act. Monchak extends her character and has more fun as Ado Annie in Act II. Jim Canu puts forth a very like-able Ali Hakim, a peddler who flur-

ries through the territory with faulty goods and false intentions. Canu's comic timing is almost faultless. The chorus provides a nice visual

The chorus provides a nice visual backdrop with pretty costumes and movement. The ladies' hairstyles, however, are not turn-oft-the-century, but rather provide a fast-forward '90s flair. The gentlemen should provide more volume.

Musteal director Lee George provides a predictable execution of "Ok-

lahoma!" as he plays it safely with tempo. Festive songs such as 'Sur-rey, "Kansas, City" and the group number "The Farmer and the Cow-man" would fare well with an origi-

man 'would lare well with an origi-nal flavor, a more up-beat tempo. This risk would create a quicker sense of word-play for the more so-phisticated audience of the '90s. The Avon Players's presentation of 'Oklahoma'' closes with a rousing and strong version of the title song

Monique Grol-loh (left) and Kim Monteross in a scene from the Avon Play-ers' production of Oaklahoma.

Sally Dubats of Southfield is an an actress, director and teacher, who teaches at community the-aters in the metropolitan area She is artistic director of West End Productions headquartered in Southfield

Farmington Players present fine production of 'Blithe Spirit'

Performances of the Farming-ton Players production of "Blithe Spirit" continue through Non. 9 at the Farmington Players Barn, 33332 12 Mile Road in Farming-ton Hills. For ticket information, call 553-2955.

In the spring of 1941, Noel Coward, that most sophisticated and multi-talented of British playwrights, locked himself in his study for a mere five days and emerged with a delightful gift of diversion for England's war-weary populared. Bith 6 Spritt" opened that summer in London and ran for years, earning its place as one of the most popular comedies in English language theater.

NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS CINEMA DIRECTORY Now, in the fall of 1991, on its 50th anniversary, "Blithe Spirit" receives its own special gift in the form of a fine production by Farmington Play-

fine production by Farmington Play-ers.

Coward was a product of Britian's ultra-sophisticated super-cynical post World War I elite, and his plays delight in poking foun at this blase eli-que. "Blithe Spirit" is the story of upper class novelist Charles Condimine (Stephen Kiersey). In an attempt to gather information for a book, he invites Madame Areati (Emily McSweeney), the local medium, to conduct to scance in his living room.

madame Arcati is not a very good medium, but she does manage to conjure up an ectoplasmic represen-

Carley tation of Charles' deceased wife, El-vira (Rebecca Shaffner), Elvira's un-muely return from the dead meets with stern resistance from Charles' current wife, Tuth (Debbie Nym-shack), and causes Charles nothing but anguish. Circumstances and attitudes then combine to create a very lunny and decidedly anti-romantic comedy.

Mark S.

Unable to enjoy Elvira's return.
Charles frantically searches for ways to send her back When Elvira's scheme to win Charles back ends tragically, it merely ereated another inconvenience for him to deal with.
"Blithe Spirit" presents dangerous serritory for an amatuer theater group The play is long and the hu-

mor, though almost non-stop, is sub-tile, droll and drier than Charles' be-loved martinis. Fortunately, this is not ordinary amateur theater cast. Kiersey is a combination of frantic energy and detached sophistication. His lines pop out at machine gun pace, but his diction is so polished that the audience misses little.

Nymshack, as the good wife Ruth, a total professional, even managing to overcome costumes and a wig which make her look like a 1950's

As Elvira, Schaffner is practically perfect. She is a manipulative, pouty vixen who never quite loses her

farm Emily McSweeney does a fine job

Director Sharlan Douglas has done an outstanding job in setting a fast and exciting pace to a show which could easily stall in the hands of less-er talent.

A special technical note of tribute goes to the costume and make-up crews who have created breathtak-ing ghost in Elvira

Mark S. Carley is active in local community theater, both onstage and behind the secures. He is a member of the Birmingham Val-lage Players and Ridgedale Play-ers in Troy







