

Entertainment

Keely Wygonik editor/953-2105



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Comedy about marriage very entertaining

Performances of the St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook production of "Company" continue through Feb. 15 at the playhouse, 400 Lane Pine Road between Lambert and Cranbrook Roads in Bloomfield Hills. For ticket information, call 644-0527.



Barbara Michals

Who needs marriage, anyhow? Everybody does according to the Stephen Sondheim musical "Company," which takes a highly critical look at marriage, but concludes in favor of it. The current production by St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook features strong vocal talent in a lively, very entertaining show.

"Company" consists of a series of vignettes and musical numbers that view marriage through the eyes of Bobby (Gary Jones), a perennial bachelor in his mid-30s, and the five couples who adore his company, fuss over him endlessly, and try to get him married.

AS EXPRESSED by the chorus of husbands singing "Sorry-Grateful," Bobby's friends send him mixed signals about wedlock. Beneath their joyous poses each couple hides frustrations and disappointments. Yet the play makes it clear, that even

though marriage has plenty of shortcomings, it is still preferable to any alternative.

"We all need somebody, not some body," says Amy (Duffy Wineman), one of Bobby's friends who is herself reluctant to commit to marriage.

Bobby fears it might be too late for him, all the good women seem to be already taken. Of his current girlfriends, neither kinky Maria (Kimberly Brown), nor dizzy-blond April (Julie Miller) seems quite right.

Jones plays Bobby in an unusually laidback manner, but he has a winning smile and powerful voice that delivers fine renditions of the solos "Someone is Waiting" and "Being Alive" as well as contributing to many ensemble numbers. Wineman is wonderful as Amy, the bride-to-be who gets cold feet at the last minute. She delivers the dif-



St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook cast members Duffy Wineman (left), Kim Brown, Gary Jones, Julie Miller, Fran Hayes, Jeri Spina and Laura Raich celebrate romance in the musical comedy "Company."

fricult patter song "Getting Married Today" at frantic speed and with good comedic flair.

Brown is outstanding when Maria sings "Another Hundred People," a plaintive reminder of the loneliness of modern urban life, while perky Miller is winsome and wide-eyed adorable when April sings "You Could Drive a Person Crazy" and "Barcelona" in a high pitched voice.

AS THE ultra cynical Joanne, now

bor with her third marriage, Fran Hayes captures the bitch in "Little Things You Do Together" it does not quite do as well with "Thelma Who Lunch."

J. Andres as David and Laurie Mil as Jenny are very funny in the "Joe Scene, and Jeri Leigh Spina is enticing as sweet, Southern-accented Susan. The remainder of the castre competent, but do not give

under director Isabel Himelhoch and musical director Barbara Anne Gowans, the ensemble singing always sounds fine and everything is well-paced. Himelhoch also designed the simple but effective set.

St. Dunstan's has chosen to set this 1970 musical in the present, which only serves to make bits and pieces of the show seem more dated than if left in their original year.

Nevertheless, "Company" is a well-executed, thought-provoking show that focuses on external truth: Marriage is a rocky road, but worth the trip.

Barbara Michals is a retired Southfield English teacher. A theater critic for the last 17 years, she is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

Barbershop chorus sings od-fashioned love songs



"Stay Tuned", 1991 Pioneer District Quartet Champions Bruce Lamarte, (left), Dennis Goro, Lee Hanson and Brian Kaufman of Canton, perform in the Detroit-Oakland County annual barbershop show of the Gentlemen Singers Chorus, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 14-15 at Schmidt Auditorium, Middlebelt, south of 8 Mile in Livonia.

The Detroit-Oakland Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America performs 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 14-15 at Schmidt Auditorium in Charonville High School, 20155 Middlebelt, south of 8 Mile in Livonia. Tickets \$10, all seats reserved, call 562-1989.

If the song "Sweet Adelines" comes to mind when you're uttering sweet nothings in your sweetheart's ear, treat her to "A Musical Valentine" presented by the Birmingham-based Detroit Oakland Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Even if you've never heard of "Sweet Adelines" you're sure to enjoy the Gentlemen Singers Chorus and the fun, loving, energetic singing style of "Gas House Gang," one of three champion quartets that will be performing.

"All of the songs will be sweet-heart songs," said Bob Hock, ticket chairman. "We've got songs for sweethearts of all ages."

The Gas House Gang ranked among the top three barbershop quartets in the world at the International Competition in Louisville, Ky. in 1981.

Our featured quartets include "Stay Tuned" and "Stay Tuned". The distinctive sound of "Swing Stix" has captivated their audiences in the onset. This exciting quart brings barbershop harmony to life in traditional favorites from the heritage of American popular song.

A style reminiscent of the Androsters, and the Boswells, this outstanding foursome puts barbershop on the swing, every time they take stage.

In competition in San Antonio, Tex. in October 1991, "Swing Stix" captured the International Quartet Championship and are the reigning "Queens of Harmony" of SweetAdelines International.

"Stay Tuned" four veteran quartet performers who got together in February 1991 to determine how well their individual voices might blend singing in the barbershop style, went

on to win the District Championship in October 1991. They will represent the Pioneer District of Michigan at the International Competition in New Orleans in July 1992.

The Detroit-Oakland Chapter rehearses 7:30 p.m. Mondays, in Birmingham. For membership information call Robert Sillman, 569-7517.

The Wayne County Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America is practicing new music for their upcoming annual show "Tin Pan Alley Goes to War," Friday and Saturday, March 6-7, at Mercy High School Auditorium, 29300 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

Matthew Coombs, director of the Cascades Chorus of Eugene, Ore., has been called by the Wayne County Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society to direct its award-winning Renaissance Chorus, said Ken Casey,

president of the Livonia chapter. Coombs, 35, directed the chorus several years ago, until he left to join Disney's MGM Studio complex in Orlando, Fla. He worked in special effects, and was assistant director of the Orlando barbershop chorus. He left to take over directorship of the Eugene chorus for two years.

When Coombs previously directed the Renaissance Chorus, the group numbered up to 60 men and regularly ranked at or near the top of competition in the Pioneer District of Michigan and southwestern Ontario.

Casey and Coombs invite all men who like to sing "the old songs" to practice with the chorus 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Newburgh United Methodist Church, 46300 Ann Arbor Trail, east of Newburgh Road, in Livonia.

For more information, or tickets for the March 6-7 shows, call Ed Wojtan, 425-2727.

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