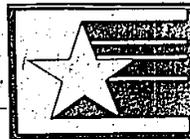


Entertainment

Keely Wygonik editor/953-2105



Thursday, April 2, 1992 O&E

(C178)

'Catch Me If You Can'

Cast delivers one-liners in comedy

Performances of the Avon Players' production of "Catch Me If You Can" continue through April 4 at the playhouse on Trevelock Road in Bloomington, Rochester Hills. For ticket information call the box office at 375-1390.

Avon Players' current staging of the redundant "Catch Me If You Can" is a two-hour one-liner comedy/mystery with a punch line.

Actually, the over-written Jack Weinstock and Willie Gilbert exercise in patience has four lines that explain the plot. "My wife is missing," "You're not my wife," "I don't believe you," and "I knew you were in on it!" These lines are perfunctorily blurted out several times throughout the course of the evening.

Beginning with "My wife is missing" is Wayne Dossin as the handsome Danny Corban. Dossin says lines far too quickly (when not missing the line) which makes him impossible to understand at times, and the audience cannot appreciate funny dialogue as the character's anguish. Dossin also has a boisterous habit of walking away from fellow actors and not looking at them, which places a funny focus on the matter at hand.

THE "YOU'RE not my wife!" angle of the show is Sharon Parratt as fake wife Elizabeth Corban. Parratt is a fine and charismatic actress whose craft has been better served in other productions into which more elbow grease was rubbed. Detail was missing in Elizabeth as stereotypical



Sally Dubats

and stock "bad guy" reactions rampant.

A Columbo/Groucho Marx character slithers in and out making for fairly decent comedy. Inspector Livine is played by Joseph LoGiudice. Although most of LoGiudice's lines are of the "I don't believe you" ilk, to his credit, LoGiudice gives them a nice crispness and twist each time which provides variety.

Joe Hartwell serves as a plausible Father Kelleher, a friend to Elizabeth Corban who tries to convince Danny Corban that, yes, she is his wife. After Father Kelleher befriends the fake wife, he is killed and comes back to life, and after he allegedly murders somebody else, Danny Corban is still saying in Act III, "I knew you were in on it!" No kidding.

Don Lindstrom gives the best performance in the show in the snappy and funny role of Sydney. Sydney is Danny Corban's only "alibi" as the deli man has seen Danny's real wife.

"Catch Me If You Can" is a show in dire need of the audience's ability to suspend belief, and director Kay Montross does little to establish a sense of realism. Miles of conversation take place at center stage, evincing no responsibility for the blocking of a three-act play. The cast could possibly have managed better had Montross considered each character more thoroughly.

George Kosak has created an absolutely beautiful cabin interior complete with a moose head and fireplace, and the technical points of the show run with finesse.

Script problems are still the worst theater troll in this production. When a murder takes place, none of the characters question the fact that the inspector doesn't cart dangerous suspects off to jail. The punch line (and secret) ending somewhat makes up for poor writing, but it is still no excuse for the redundant dialogue that is difficult for any actor or director to overcome.

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



Joseph LoGiudice portrays Inspector Livine and Sharon Parratt is Elizabeth Corban in the Avon Players' presentation of "Catch Me If You Can."

Talented performers in 'lovely' rendition of 'My Fair Lady'

Performances of the Jewish Community Center and Nancy Gursin production of "My Fair Lady" continue through April 11 at the Avon Playhouse, Theatre at the MCC in West Bloomfield. For ticket information, call the JCC at 661-1100 or Gursin at 354-0545.

With tremendously talented performers in the principal roles, Nancy Gursin Productions offers a perfectly "lovely" rendition of "My Fair Lady" at the Jewish Community Center.

The Alan Jay Lerner-Fredrick

Lowie musical adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" still sounds as fresh and buoyant today as when the landmark show first opened in 1936.

This is the familiar tale of how professor Henry Higgins (Ronald James Otulakowski) turns cockney flower-seller Eliza Doolittle (Diane Mather Byding) into a lady by teaching her to speak proper upper-class English.

HE TACKLES the task on a challenge from fellow linguist Col. Pickering (Sam Jungermann). Headly



Barbara Michals

with his success, Higgins forgets that Eliza is still a human being and has feelings too.

The two scenes in which Eliza denounces Higgins as a cold, egotistical bully work especially well in this production because both stars imbue

their characters with such strong personalities that sparks really fly when they clash head-on.

Otulakowski is superb as Higgins, much more dynamic and vocally talented than most who are cast in the role. "I'm an Ordinary Man" takes

on new dimensions with the vibrant Otulakowski, and "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" is now more of an open admission than a creeping realization.

Hyding is an energetic, feisty Eliza, and her wonderful voice shows to full advantage in "Wouldn't It Be Lovely," and "I Could Have Danced All Night."

Jungermann is endearing as the well-meaning Pickering and joins in on "The Rain in Spain," and "You Did It" with gusto.

The always reliable Edgar A. Guest III is delightful as Alfred P. Doolittle; Eliza's ne'er-do-well father as he belts out zesty renditions of "With a Little Bit of Luck" and "Get Me to the Church on Time."

In supporting roles, Mark Honeyman is well-cast as the hopelessly infatuated Freddy Enysford-Hill, and he offers a pleasing version of "On the Street Where You Live." Nina Kircher is a convincingly refined Mrs. Pearce, Higgins's housekeeper, and Gary Lee Temple and Gary Sek-

erak provide lively back-up as Alfred Doolittle's drinking buddies. However, Maria Menozzi is much too youthful to be credible as Higgins's mother.

DIRECTOR NANCY Brassert delivers a first-rate production that fairly glows with professional polish except for small lapses in some chorus scenes. Choreography by Valery Mould is lively, as is Martin Burwell's musical direction.

Diane Brynola's costumes are quite attractive, including the traditional black-and-white gowns for the Ascot races scene. Mike Gordon's set design works well, whether for Higgins's sedate drawing room or the vendors, clustered around Covent Garden.

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

Musica Viva presents 'The Romantic Flute II'

Musica Viva Concerts (Biele International Series) will feature the triple talents of internationally acclaimed award-winning performers Flutists Maartika Jarvi, Ginka Geroeva Ortega and pianist Francisco Silva, in a concert for two flutes and piano, 8 p.m. Friday, April 10, at Christ Church, Cranbrook, 470

Church Road, Bloomfield Hills. The concert will feature works by Doppler, Kohler, Martini, and Telemann. Tickets \$15 in advance, \$17 at the door. Call 473-2228.

Estabon Jarvi is a member of the newly formed La Coreana Symphony Orchestra in Spain performing widely throughout Europe

and North America. This concert signals her Michigan debut.

Bulgarian born Geroeva-Ortega has toured four continents with radio and TV broadcasts, was awarded the "Michigan Musical Ambassador" and "Artist Award Tribute" and is the founder and artistic director of Musica Viva Concerts.

Born in Brazil, Silva has recorded the complete works of Flavel on the Amadeus label with a wide concert career throughout Brazil and North America. Acclaimed for his "perfect interpretation and true artistic soul" he holds a graduate degree from the University of Michigan School of Music.

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