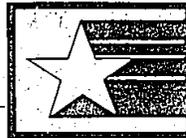


Entertainment

Keely Wygonik editor/953-2105



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Musical revue Show understudies 'Ain't Misbehavin'

Performances of the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "Ain't Misbehavin'" continue through May 17 on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. For ticket information call the box office at 377-3300.

By Keely Wygonik
staff writer

UNDERSTUDIES DONNA Lewis and Ange Smith "Ain't Misbehavin'" If the time comes they'll be ready to step into their roles in Meadow Brook Theatre's presentation of the Tony Award-winning musical revue of over 30 songs written or made famous by "Fats" Waller, the legendary jazz musician of the 1920s and 1930s.

"I'm mesmerized. I catch myself watching them and I say 'no Donna you're supposed to be taking notes, you're supposed to be learning,'" said Lewis of Farmington Hills, an understudy for Julia Lena;

Other familiar musical numbers in the show include "Honeydickie Honey," "The Joint is Jumpin'" and "Your Feet's Too Big."

The production is being staged by Broadway director/choreographer Arthur Faria. Meadow Brook's cast includes a number of performers who have been involved with the production on national, international and regional levels. Ensemble members are Eugene Barry-Hill, Clint Bowers, Julia Lena, Cynthia Thomas and Terry White.

"It's a challenge, we have to wait and watch," said Smith of Southfield, an understudy for Terry White. Both women say their roles fit their personalities. "It's like holding up a mirror, you see your double," said Lewis.

"MISS Julia is very a flighty, flirty bubbly person. She's very energetic," said Lewis, who describes herself as someone who loves people, and likes people to get to know her.

"I play a very upfront, earthy person," said Smith. "If she wants a man she shows him what she's got. She's a tough lady, not shy. I'm a very direct person. It's one of the characteristics things he (Faria) saw. He said, 'you wouldn't be here if I didn't see something.' It's really an honor to work with someone of this caliber."

Being an understudy presents a challenge for each of these talented women. They've never done it before.

Lewis, a graduate of Albion College, recently performed at Detroit's Attie Theatre in "Cruisin' Detroit the Hard Way," and appeared in "Showboat" with the Michigan Opera Theatre Co. Look for her on Channel 7 in June, she's hosting "Fast Forward" a children's show.

SMITH SINGS in a wide variety of styles from jazz to classical and gospel. She has performed at jazz festivals in Italy, New York and Detroit, in television commercials, at the At-



Understudies Ange Smith (left) and Donna Lewis rehearse a song for Meadow Brook Theatre's presentation of "Ain't Misbehavin'."

tic Theatre and Michigan Opera Theatre.

The mother of three grown children, Smith also paints and teaches art at Emerson Middle School in Detroit.

"I came up with music," said Smith. "My mother was a music teacher. I used to sing duets with my sister. I was four, she was five. My mother made us study the piano. When I was five or six, I discovered I could draw. I never thought I'd have a career in music. I went to Cass Tech and wanted to be a fashion designer. Then I got married."

She stayed home to raise her two

sons, and daughter, but never gave up her dreams. "We used to have family art exhibits," she said. "When I went to college I discovered I could sing. I sort of snowballed. I remember saying I would go back to the theater, but I put off a lot of things. I wanted to be a good mom. They wanted me home, and I needed to be home."

With her children grown, Smith dreams of going to Broadway, and would like to have her own jazz group. Art, visual and performing, is her passion. She's taught for 13 years and fondly recalls the time the school wheeled a piano into her

classroom after she mentioned it would be nice to have a glue club.

"I DON'T have set plans. I know I must do something. It's as important as breathing."

Lewis who's been singing since she was a little girl, dreams of going to New York to win a role on a daytime soap opera. "All of My Children," is her favorite.

Like Smith, Lewis believes it's important to give something back to your profession. She has worked with young artists through Attie Theatre's outreach program. "The biggest lesson they pass on to aspiring performers and artists is

persistence pays off.

"You have to keep sticking with it. If it's in your heart, do it," said Lewis. "My father said I'm a dreamer, and I'm going for my dream. It's not going to come to you, you have to be ready for it."

Smith adds, "Be ready when opportunity knocks, keep singing and acting. Sometimes you have to make something happen. Things were slow so I put together a one woman show, and performed it at my church. It was successful. When one door closes, another one opens. If I had given up in 1984, I might not be here today."

Chamber recitals feature extremely capable pianists

Two pianists gave recitals last week on two local chamber series. Jose Carlos Cocorelli, Silver Medal winner of the 1989 Van Cliburn Piano Competition, was the guest artist on the Cranbrook Guild series on Tuesday, April 14.

The next day, French pianist France Clidat gave her program in the Stellar Concerts series, in the Lila Jones theater on the Oakland Community College campus in Royal Oak.

Cocorelli is a young pianist, born in Brazil, who is at the beginning of what could turn out to be a budding career. Clidat, on the other hand, is

already an established artist who is known primarily in Europe. In some cities she is credited as one of the foremost experts of Liszt. Chopin is also high on her agenda.

Getting warmed up for an event is a process that is part of every performing artist. Its duration, however, may vary from a few bars to a complete work or, in some cases, even a complete program.

IN BOTH of these events, the first work turned out to be a casualty of the process. In the case of Cocorelli, it was the Sonata in D major, Op. 28 by Beethoven. In the case of Clidat,



Avigdor Zoromp

it was the Scherzo in B minor by Chopin.

Beethoven's sonata Op. 28 has amply expressive and slinging themes, but little in terms of technique. The excessively slow tempi tended to emphasize every bump in its tor-

tuous but unimaginative ride.

In sharp contrast to such monotony was Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7, with its energetic technique, culminating with the relentless rapid chords in the final movement.

Chopin's Scherzo may have suggested the composer's name in its hoppiness under Clidat's hands in her performance. The Nocturne in D flat major was an improvement, as were the three Mazurkas Op. 17, but the characteristic rubato that these Polish dances require wasn't sufficiently there. The Tarantelle in A flat major and Polonaise in F sharp minor were considerable improvements.

Both pianists featured an impressively strong second portion.

IN THE case of Cocorelli, it consisted of Schumann's Scenes from Childhood and selections by Debussy and Liszt. Some of Schumann's episodes are deceptively simple, but Cocorelli successfully penetrated beyond their surface.

Debussy's Jardins sous la Pluie from Estampes had some instances of

overzealous attack, but still retained a credible degree of fluidity and clarity. La Cathedrale engloutie sounded more authentic stylistically.

In Liszt's "Saint Francois de Paul marchant sur le flots," Cocorelli presented Liszt as a master of scenic description, rather than a champion of raw technique.

There is little doubt that Cocorelli's strength is in works written past the middle of the 19th century.

The first of his two encores, a sonata by the Spanish baroque composer Soler, was propelled stylistically some 150 years forward. The second encore, Chopin's Waltz in E minor, was impressively accurate but also deserving a ticket for speeding.

Overall, Cocorelli is a serious artist with penetrating insight and credible technique. In time his artistic discipline may become more enduring and consistent.

CLIDAT SEEMED a transformed artist in her second portion, consisting entirely of works by Liszt. She tackled some most difficult Concert Etudes with apparent ease and secure technique. The Dance of the Gnomes proved to be especially brilliant.

This was even surpassed with two of Liszt's acclaimed technical monuments — the Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12 and the devilishly difficult Mephisto Waltz. She culminated her program with a Liszt arrangement of La Danza — a theme by Rossini that is more often heard in Respighi's orchestral treatment in La Boutique fantasque. This was an encore piece.

Avigdor Zoromp, born in Poland, educated in Israel and the United States, has a Ph.D. in math and has studied piano, music theory and history.

American Artists Series concert May 3

Mistle of Schumann, Dvorak and Claude Arrieu will be featured by the American Artists Series Chamber Players 7 p.m. Sunday, May 3.

The concert will be at Kingswood Auditorium on the Cranbrook Campus, 500 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Opening with Robert Schumann's Quartet in E flat major, pianist Joann Freeman, AAS founder and artistic director, will be joined by vi-

olinist Ron Fischer, violist Hart Hollman and cellist John Thurman.

The string players are members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra who have been with the AAS Chamber Players during the group's 22 seasons.

Violist Linda Snedden Smith will join the others in the performance of the Quintet in A major by Antonin Dvorak. The program also includes

the trio for piano, violin and cello by Claude Arrieu, one of France's outstanding women composers.

Tickets \$12.50, student tickets are half price. For information and tickets, call 851-5044. An informal reception with the artists follows the concert.

The City of Southfield presents
ICE COMEALY OF 1992
Sponsored by the Michigan Humane Society

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Show Dates: April 24-25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, May 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, May 31, June 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, June 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, July 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, August 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, September 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, October 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, November 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 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