

ON THE MARQUEE

Meadow Brook Theatre

Athol Fugard's compelling drama "Master Harold... and the boys" opens 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7 for a four-week run at Oakland University's Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester Hills. For times and ticket information call 377-3300. Tickets also available at any Ticketmaster outlet or by phone, 645-6666.

Dance

The Cultural Arts Division of Southfield is sponsoring their second annual dance sampler, Sunday, Jan. 10 in room 115 of the Parks and Recreation Building at 26000 Evergreen, north of Civic Center Drive. Demonstrations of a variety of dance styles, 2-5 p.m., lessons 7-10 p.m. No partner or experience is needed. For information, call 354-4717.

Avon Players

Neil Simon's comedy "Runners" will be presented by the Avon Players, weekends starting Jan. 8. Call 375-1390 for ticket information.

Ridgedale Players

Ridgedale Players Community Theatre in Troy presents "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" by Brian Clark, starting 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8, weekends through Jan. 24 at the playhouse in Troy. For tickets, call 644-8328.

Talent search

The American Talent search, a national amateur talent competition for young aspiring performers ages 7 to 18 will be at Plymouth-Salem High School, 46181 Joy Road, Canton Township, noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16. In addition to regional award packages such as cash and trophies, American Talent Search provides national winners with a promotional package which could get the young performers on "Star Search." For more information, call 429-2024.

Musical

The Jewish Community Center and Nancy Gurwin Productions will present the musical "The Sound of Music" 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16, through Sunday, Jan. 31, at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple, West Bloomfield. Tickets cost \$15 general admission, \$12.50 seniors, and students, \$10. For information and tickets, call 661-1000, Ext. 342 or any Ticketmaster outlet.

Winter getaway

Treat yourself and a friend to an evening of popular show tunes, light opera and Italian regional cuisine prepared by the award-winning Schoolcraft College culinary salon team at the second annual "Winter Getaway," 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16, at the Waterman Campus Center, 18600 Haggerty, Livonia. The singing troupe of Dino Valle, David Wilson, Jack Morris, and Valerie Yova will perform music from "Cats," "Phantom of the Opera," and other musicals. Tickets \$35 per person, including dinner and wine. To make reservations, call 462-4417.

'Two Into One' feast of laughter

Performances of the Birmingham Theatre production of "Two Into One" continue through Jan. 31. For ticket information, call the box office at 644-3533.



BARBARA MICHALS

Birmingham Theatre's production of "Two Into One," provides an absolute feast of laughter.

Cooney, best known for his comedy "Run for Your Wife," is a master at writing classic farce. This time he turns his characters loose in adjoining hotel suites where they can whirl in and out of multiple doors, wallow in mistaken identities, and generally create mayhem.

By the middle of Act Two, the lunacy has built to such a crescendo that it seems as if the plot could have nowhere further to go, but a surprise development sets in motion a whole new set of absurd situations; the hilarity continues right to the closing lines.

Under Holgate's direction, the actors' comic timing is impeccable, and the laughs flow smoothly throughout the show. After directing and starring in the farce "Land Me a Tenor" at the Birmingham Theatre last fall, and triumphing as the lead in "Man of LaMancha" there last spring, Holgate has become one of the Birmingham Theatre's best assets.

Terrence Caza is enormously appealing as the prominent congressman who lusts after a White House secretary. Initially smooth and debonair, he hilariously loses his cool



Laughter feast: Dorothy Stinnette (left), Mary O'Brady and Terrence Caza in a scene from the comedy "Two Into One," at the Birmingham Theatre through Jan. 31.

when his carefully laid plans fall completely apart.

The congressman relies on the help of his devoted personal private secretary, George, who is so uptight about the proposed assignment that he botches everything. Anderson Mathews is outstanding as George. He has a wonderfully expressive face that never quits as he deftly handles the heaviest comic load.

In George's attempts to cover for his employer he finds himself embroiled in the amorous advances of

the congressman's wife, Pamela (Mary O'Brady), while he dodges a meddlesome hotel manager (David Rogers), a nosy Chinese waiter (Stephen Xavier Lea), and a prudish congresswoman (Dorothy Stinnette) bent on sniffing out vice.

O'Brady and Stinnette are both very credible and amusing. Rogers' soulful eyes and droil delivery are enormously funny, and Lea's bungling waiter, dumb like a fox, is memorably comic.

As Jennifer, the bombshell secre-

tary, Traci Lyn Thomas never quite seems like a femme fatale, but John Schiappa does a nice turn as her very perplexed husband.

"Two Into One" is a merry way to kick off the new year. Word-of-mouth on the show should be excellent providing theatergoers can stop laughing long enough to tout its praises.

Barbara Michals is a retired Southfield English teacher. A theater critic for the last 19 years, she is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

Toy instrumental in musician's career

By KEELY WYGONIK
Staff Writer

Children's toys often become instruments for developing talents. Remember that when your child starts banging on a new drum set.

Laura Oltman who will be performing with her husband Michael Newman in the second concert of the American Artists Series 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17, never planned to play the \$7 toy guitar she ordered from a Sears catalog.

It was supposed to be a prop in a rock and roll band she formed with some friends who lived across the street from her in Livonia when she was eight, and Motown was hot.

"We never played music, we turned the stereo up and stood in front of the

house lip syncing," said Oltman. "We liked to dance, and the radio and were up on the latest music. We had a steel string acoustic guitar that no one could play, and for drums we used boxes and coffee cans."

Oltman said she didn't even especially like the guitar until her mother figured out how to play "Down in the Valley" on it.

"I learned chords, and mostly taught myself how to play," she said. "I really did like playing it."

When she was 12 Oltman started studying classical guitar, and continued her education by studying with the masters including Andrea Segovia. She met her husband Michael at the Aspen Music Festival in 1977. They got married in 1981, and have



Guitar duo: The Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo, Laura Oltman (left) and her husband Michael Newman will be featured in the second concert of the American Artists Series on Jan. 17.

been performing together as the Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo ever since. Both are 35.

Concert tours have taken them to 49 states, Canada, Europe, the Far East and the Caribbean. This year they'll tour California, Arizona, and

make their third trip to Alaska. They have recorded with MusicMasters, Sheffield Lab and the Musical Heritage Society. Their most recent CD "Tango Suite," was issued on the

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