

'A Little Night Music' beautiful show

Performances of the Jewish Community Center and Nancy Gurwin production of "A Little Night Music," continue through April 10 at the Aaron DeRoy Theatre at the JCC in West Bloomfield. For ticket information, call the JCC at 661-1100 or Gurwin at 354-0545.



BARBARA MICHAELS

Aaron DeRoy Theatre. The Nancy Gurwin production features talented vocalists and engaging performances.

Set in turn-of-the-century Sweden, "A Little Night Music" examines different views of love. For some it is a cherished ideal, for some just a game, and for some only a fond memory.

For aging Fredrik Egerman (Kors H. Van Mourik) marrying an 18-year-old is an attempt to capture his youth. But after 11 months of marriage Anne (Lynne Sherwood) his second wife, is still virginal.

When Fredrik is unexpectedly reunited with a former mistress, the famous actress Desiree Armfeldt (Jane Shaffmaster), both start to re-examine their ideas about love.

Meanwhile, Fredrik's son Henrik (Eric Parker), studying for the priesthood, is hopelessly in love with Anne, and Desiree's current lover, arrogant Carl-Magnus (Erich J. Jungwirth), is possessively jealous of her renewed interest in Fredrik. Add in Carl-Magnus' unhappy wife Carlotta (Lori Murphy) and Anne's lusty maid Petra (Ilana Rosenbaum) and ship them all off for a weekend in the country under the watchful eyes of Desiree's mother (Nancy Gurwin), an aged courtisan, and her young daughter Frederika (Sarah Beth Radke).

The beautiful Sondheim score is written completely in waltz-time. While the plaintive "Send in the Clowns" is the benediction song in the show, other particularly good numbers include "Night Waltz," "The Glamorous Life," "You Must Meet My Wife" and "A Weekend in the Country."

Jungwirth, Murphy and Rosenbaum have particularly strong alter egos: the chorus of Gay Les Temple, Cathie Zucker, Maggie Clennon, Will Rodgers and Lisa Jacobs also sounds very fine. Only Shaffmaster's voice seems



Romantic show: Erich J. Jungwirth (left), Jane Shaffmaster and Kors H. Van Mourik star in the Nancy Gurwin Production of "A Little Night Music."

thin among all the vocal talent. Radke is noteworthy as a youngster with strong stage presence.

Director Kathi Bush and music director Martin Burwell once again are successfully teamed, and the show flows seamlessly. Since Sondheim's lyrics tell most of the narrative, it is a pleasure to have them well-enunciated and never overpowered by the musical accompaniment.

Visually the production works well also, with Patricia LaFromboise's frothy costumes and set

designer Leonard Walkowicz's floor and sliding panels in soft shades of aqua, mauve and lime green.

Valentine's Day may be over, but there's still plenty of romance in the air at the Jewish Community Center with "A Little Night Music."

Barbara Michaels is a retired Southfield English teacher. A theater critic for the past 20 years, she is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

Production magnifies impact of poetry



SALLY DUBATA

lected poems presented by the authors.

The performances will take

place in Ortonville on Mill Street at Brandon Township Hall March 27, 28, April 2, 3 and 4. Call 628-1488 for times and reservations.

Roberts' program presents a fascinating fusion of poetry, painting, music and theater against an all-white backdrop to magnify the impact of the poetry. Included in the assemblage is Edward Haworth-Hoepfner of Rochester Hills, professor of English at Oakland University, whose poems are touching and thought-provoking.

Each of the several poets casts a personal aspect of everyday life worth hearing and seeing. "We have published 'Still Life With Conversation' through Ridgeway Press. The performance of the work in this manner presents the book as true art. These are not going to be characters on stage, but poems. Poems dressed in white, a living painting," said Roberts.

The show has been in rehearsal since August, and Roberts says it is the most difficult thing she has ever presented.

"Still Life" also attempts to alter the perception of those who might be reluctant to listen to poetry and its attached stigma. "Don't worry about getting it; if we've done our job, it'll get you!"

Sally Dubata 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 Livonia.

George Bernard Shaw 'reappears' in drama

"George Bernard Shaw — the great Irish playwright, wit, reformer, and self-professed social prophet — will 'reappear' at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 26 at Oakland Community College, Royal Oak Campus, 739 South Washington at Mark McPherson stars in his own one-character drama — "Immodestly Yours, G.B.S."

Tickets for "Immodestly Yours, G.B.S." are \$8 for general admission and \$6 for seniors and students. They will be available at the door on March 26. Tickets are also available at the OCC theater box office or by calling 544-5588. For information, call 544-4903 or 544-5551.

"We hope that 'Immodestly

Yours' will interest a broad cross-section of our community," said theater manager Glenna Hansen of Birmingham. "An additional reason for bringing in a play about Bernard Shaw now is its relationship to March being Women's History Month. Many people may not realize that Shaw was an active feminist who spoke out for

the 'new woman' and equality of women."

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