

ON THE MARQUEE

La Casa

Michael Elwood and Beth Gallger will present a concert at the La Casa Music Series 8:30 p.m. Friday, April 2, at the Birmingham Unitarian Church, 651 N. Woodward. Tickets \$12 at the door, \$10 in advance. Call 646-4950.

Benefit

Birmingham Bloomfield Families in Action is hosting two benefit performances of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Oklahoma" at the Birmingham Theatre 8 p.m. Friday, April 2, 2 p.m. Sunday, April 4. Tickets \$50 per person for April 2 performance, \$25 per person for April 4 performance. For ticket information, call 644-2245.

Oldies dance

Saturday night dance featuring The Laredo's 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 3 at Burton Manor, Schoolcraft Road, west of Inkster Road, in Livonia. Admission \$6. For information, call 562-3170.

Ridgedale Players

Junior actors of Ridgedale Players present the musical "Spring & A Certain" (Which is Easter?), 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 3 and 1:30 p.m. Sunday, April 4 at the playhouse 205 W. Long Lake Road in Troy. Tickets \$6.50 each includes the play, a meal, visit and picture with the Easter bunny. Reservations are required, call 641-7027.

Opera night

Oakland University Community Chorus hosts "A Night at the Opera," 8 p.m. Saturday, April 3 at Varner Recital Hall on the campus in Rochester. Selections from operas by Mascagni, Verdi, Mozart, Bizet, Boilelli, Wagner, von Weber and Musorgsky. Tickets \$8, seniors \$6, students \$3. For information, call 370-3013.

"Elijah"

Fraser Choral, with featured soloists from the Michigan Opera Theatre, and full orchestra, will perform Felix Mendelssohn's "Elijah" 4 p.m. Sunday, April 4 at Temple Beth El, 7400 Telegraph, Birmingham. Tickets \$10 per person. Call 792-SING.

Jazz brunch

Schoolcraft College will host a Jazz Brunch noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, April 4 in the college's Waterman Campus Center. Enjoy vintage and improvisational jazz by the Magnificents while the college's award-winning Culinary Salon Team prepares a feast. Tickets \$25 per person. Call 462-4417 for tickets. All proceeds will fund members of the Culinary Salon Team in future competitions.

Trinity House

Trinity House Theatre features an evening of readings at "Lights Up!" 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 9-10 at the playhouse, 38840 W. Six Mile, Livonia. Tickets \$5, members and subscribers, free. "Quilters" continues through April 3. For ticket information, call 464-6302.

St. Dunstan's Guild triumphs in drama

Performances of the St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" continue through April 3 at the playhouse 400 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. For ticket information, call 644-0527.



BARBARA MICHALS

Sensitive, moving performances by an outstanding cast make the current St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" an evening of powerful drama.

From the moment Randle P. McMurphy (Topper Pennington) enters the ward of a state mental hospital, he is on a collision course with the immovable head nurse, Miss Ratched (Joyce Morehouse). Rebellious to authority all his life, McMurphy's cavalier attitude dooms him in this most highly restrictive environment.

At first unaware of the full power Ratched holds over his life, McMurphy is a selfish con man taking advantage of his fellow inmates. As he comes to realize the extent of Ratched's tyranny, his compassion is stirred for the weaker men in the ward. In time, the others benefit from McMurphy's strength while he, with full cognizance of the risks, becomes a sacrificial martyr.

Brash and brassy as he swaggers about the stage, Pennington's McMurphy is distinct, not an imitation of the famous Jack Nicholson film portrayal. He is more slick con artist than feasting psychopath, giving credence to the play's suggestion that he may be faking to avoid the tedium of prison work farm. This is a more likable McMurphy from the start.



Powerful drama: Joyce Morehouse as Nurse Ratched and Robert "Topper" Pennington as R.P. McMurphy in a scene from St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook's production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

Morehouse plays Nurse Ratched with a flinty, steadfast bitchiness made even more ominous by its quiet understatement. Reveling in her absolute power, noisily ruffles her icy calm.

In no time at all, McMurphy understands Ratched's hold over the others; in the guise of therapy, she emasculates them by attacking their most vulnerable emotions while he wants them to regain some shred of self-esteem and control over their lives.

Joe Dabbs is an intriguing and

poignant Dale Harding, highly intelligent and insightful, but totally cowed by strong women.

Keith Lepard is enormously effective as Chief Bromden the nearly catatonic Indian who has borne silent witness to injustice all his life until McMurphy stirs something in him.

Tom Peterson is compellingly touching as young, stammering Billy Bibbit, so terrified of his mother that the mere mention of her sets him quivering.

Obie Burch's very realistic set works well, and his lighting design is

especially good. Nearly every one of the many quick backcuts is sharply executed for maximum dramatic impact.

McMurphy triumphs in spirit if not in body; St. Dunstan's "Cuckoo's Nest" is a total dramatic triumph.

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

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago presents 3 shows

After a seven year absence from the Music Hall stage, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago returns to Detroit for three performances 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 2 and April 3, and a special family matinee 2 p.m. Saturday, April 3.

Tickets range from \$5 to \$25. Tickets are specially priced for the family matinee, the first child's ticket is \$10 with accompanying parent or guardian free of charge. Additional tickets, adult or children, are only \$5 each available at the box office, 350 Madison, Detroit, or by calling 963-2366 or any Ticketmaster outlet, 645-6666.

The company will bring two former Michigan residents along for the three performances — Krista Swenson of Rochester, and Joseph Mooradian of Dearborn.

The ensemble will offer the American premiere of a new Margo Sappington work, "The Forging Ground," as well as several Twyla Tharp works, including "Nine Sinatra Songs."

Founded in 1977 by dancer/choreographer Lou Conte, the company has risen to international prominence with his highly energetic yet accessible style. The Chicago-based company was created to provide entertainment at senior citizens centers. Yet audiences of all ages were soon clamoring for the ensemble, which expanded to an ethnically diverse, male-female troupe of professional dancers that regularly tours the United States, Europe and Latin America.

In the early years, Hubbard Street's electrifying dances were created exclusively by Artistic Director Conte; recent years have seen the addition of works by such well-known contemporary choreographers as Margo Sappington, Bob Fosse and Daniel Canolow (of Pilobolus Dance Theatre).

The company has recently completed a tour of Europe, and will return to Chicago before beginning its summer festival season.



RUEDY HOFMANN

Dancer: Krista Swenson of Rochester, a member of the Hubbard Street Dance Company, will be performing with the group at Music Hall in Detroit, April 2-3.

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