

ON THE  
**MARQUEE**

**"Broadway Bound"**

The Birmingham Village Players production of Neil Simon's "Broadway Bound" opens at 8 p.m. Friday, May 14, at the playhouse on the corner of Hunter Boulevard and Chestnut Street, south of Maple, in Birmingham; call 644-2076. Shows 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through May 23. Sunday shows 7 p.m. May 16, 2 p.m. May 23. Thursday show, 7 p.m. May 27.

**Auditions**

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble will hold auditions at noon Saturday, May 15, in Room 132 of Varner Hall on the campus of Oakland University, Rochester. Call 370-3924 or 632-7198.

**"Steppin' Out"**

Troy Players present "Steppin' Out," written by Richard Harris, at 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, May 14, 15, 21, 22; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 16, at the Troy Community Center, 520 W. Big Beaver Road, Troy. Call 879-1255.

**Classical Bells**

The fourth annual Classical Bells in Concert will be presented at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 16, at Mt. Hope Congregational Church, 30330 Schooldcraft, Livonia. A kaleidoscope of classical, sacred, and popular music will be performed on English handbells and accompanying instruments. Tickets are \$7 each; seniors over 65 and groups of 10, \$5; call 425-7861.

**Youth orchestra**

The Livonia Youth Philharmonic will hold auditions 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 15, at Churchill High School in Livonia. Membership is open to young musicians from the Detroit metropolitan area. Call 261-5764 to schedule an audition appointment.

**Jazz**

The Ron English Quartet will perform at Laurel Park Place from 1-2:30 p.m. Sunday, May 16, in the North Court. Upcoming Jazz and Fizz concerts will include Corcovado, June 3; The Johnny Allen Trio, July 10; and the Steve Wood Quartet, August 15. Laurel Park Place is east of I-275 at West Six Mile and Newburgh roads in Livonia.

**Opera theater**

The Verdi Opera Theatre will be featured in Southfield's Concerts in the Garden Series at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, May 16 at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 21000 Franklin Road, Southfield. High tea in the English tradition served at 3 p.m. with concert to follow. The program will feature Commentatore, Dino Valle, baritone; Christina Romana Lypceky, mezzo-soprano; and Peter Antonio Scava, a virtuoso of the bayan. The bayan is a member of the accordion family and has a keyboard range that covers the same range as a grand piano with an overlap. Tickets are \$7.50; call 354-4717 for reservations.

**Lahser student makes MOT debut**



MARY JANE DOERR

Wall-to-wall mirrors at the Lascu School of Ballet in Bloomfield Hills reflected ballerina Kelly Knechtel's petite form in black tights and white leggings rehearsing the Grand Pas de Deux with her T-shirted partner, Dmitri Mikhayenko.

The famous dance is from Tchaikovsky's "The Sleeping Beauty," a production in which the couple debut as Aurora and Prince Florimund, with Michigan Opera Theatre in the 10 a.m. Thursday, May 27, student matinee.

Both are longtime students of Jacob Lascu of West Bloomfield. Kelly is a beauty, but, despite the late hour and long rehearsals, she is not sleeping.

"This is the reason we need a ballet company in Detroit," said Lascu seated in front of an old magazine picture of him and Kelly when she was 11. "I teach them and when they become good, they leave and go to other cities." The 20-year-old Mikhayenko, formerly of Southfield, recently joined the Miami Ballet as a principal dancer.

Last year Lascu, who has made his mark in Detroit as the choreographer of the ever-popular "Nutcracker" with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, joined MOT to choreograph "King Roger" and "Samson and Delilah." This year he is working on "Aida" and the full scale production of "The Sleeping Beauty."

Drawing his professional talent from the vacationing National Ballet of Canada, whose dancers are avail-

**"THE SLEEPING BEAUTY"**

Theater: Masonic Temple, 500 Temple, Detroit  
Opens: Thursday, May 27 through Sunday, May 30  
Curtain times: 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Thursday, May 27, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 28-29, 2 p.m. Sunday, May 30, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 30.  
Tickets: Price range, \$12.50 to \$63.50. Box office, 874-SING, Ticketmaster, 645-6666.

**PREVIEW**

able in May, Lascu has Karen Kain alternating with Kimberly Glasco and Margaret Illmann as Aurora (Sleeping Beauty), and Serge Lavoie dancing Prince Florimund (Desire), all from the CNB.

"I am not quite used to the idea of alternating with Karen Kain but I am so honored," said the 16-year-old Kelly, a sophomore at Lahser High School in Bloomfield Hills. Since the end of April, Kelly has been going to school for two hours each day and then leaving for all day ballet rehearsals.

"I have to make up all of my work on my own for these five weeks," said Kelly. "It is very hard for me but it is all worth it. It is so exciting for me to be learning these new dances."

Lascu has changed Marius Petipa's original choreography for "The Sleeping Beauty," eliminating many dances from the Vision and the Wedding scenes making this production much shorter than the full length three hours.



Leading role: Kelly Knechtel debuts as Aurora in the student matinee of the Michigan Opera Theatre's presentation of "The Sleeping Beauty," on May 27.

"I am trying to emphasize the story," said Lascu. "With so many dances the public loses the focus."

Anyone of the 80,000 people who saw Lascu's "Nutcracker" this year will expect him to add his magical tricks and clever buffoonery to this production. One advantage he has at Masonic Temple over the Fox Theatre is the larger stage. "I will use everything technically possible," said Lascu not giving away secrets.

Another advantage Lascu has is Dr. Leslie Dunner, the DSO's expert ballet conductor, (conductor of the

"Nutcracker" and Dance Theatre of Harlem) who will conduct the MOT Orchestra for the six performances.

"I am a very happy man to have such a large family in this area who support and appreciate what I have done over the last 20 years," said Lascu about his many successes as a choreographer and teacher at Marygrove College. "I am proud of what I have accomplished."

Mary Jane Doerr of Troy is a full-time teacher and freelance writer who specializes in opera and musical theater.

**Ridgedale Players hilarious in 'Lend Me A Tenor'**



HELEN ZUEHR

The Ridgedale Players' cabaret production of Ken Ludwig's "Lend Me A Tenor" is hilarious. Directed by Ken Safran, assisted by Jacquil Saltz, this clever, endearing farce about life in the opera business could not be in better hands.

Mark Hammell, a barrel-chested, large fellow with a voice to match, plays Tito Morelli, the world-class Italian opera star who has come to Cleveland to play "Othello."

Hammell is larger than life; his accent is wonderful, he even looks like Othello. He never runs out of breath except when the police or too many women are chasing him. Hammell exudes talent and good will. He's totally believable as a performer who never misses a performance even when he's out cold or presumed dead.

Laura Weidner as Maria, Tito's wife, is as wild, funny, and strong as

**"LEND ME A TENOR"**

Theater: Ridgedale Players, 205 Long Lake Road, Troy  
Closes: Sunday, May 23  
Curtain times: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 14-15, May 21-22, 7 p.m. Sunday, May 16, 5 p.m. Sunday, May 23.  
Tickets: Tickets \$8, Sunday show \$7 seniors. Call 644-8328.

**REVIEW**

Hammell. When Weidner screams, "Come out or I'll kill you!" she's every bit as stormy Italian wife who ever put up with a husband who eats too much, drinks too much, is susceptible to flattery, and is totally dependent on her.

Weidner's traveled look, her arm-swinging accusatory make her part of the wonderful Morelli duo.

Tom D. Coffey, who carries most of the play, as Max, is quite marvelous.

Coffey manages to create a Max who rises from the depths of wimpdom to the towering heights of an Othello who can knock out an audience of 1,000. A few lessons from Tito help. Coffey as Max, also manages to win Maggie, amusingly played by Christa Alessandri.

Maggie, called "Muggie" by Tito, wants to hear bells when she's kissed. Alessandri has an expressive face and she's very funny as Maggie duping her father to get time alone with the man she fancies she loves, or for any reason at all.

Joseph F. Logudice, who resembles a handsome Peter Falk, is terrific as Saunders, the cynical promoter responsible for getting Tito to the hall. When Saunders isn't eating waxed fruit, screaming at the bellboy, or threatening to kill people who've died at an inconvenient time, he orders

Max around as if Max had been born to serve him. Logudice is an inspired manic.

Kent J. Martini as the officious, singing bellhop, is always around when not needed; he's a dingbat who knows opera. So is Andrea Gleason as Julia, head of the opera board; she sweeps on-stage wrapped in silver, looking "like a Cadillac." The timing throughout is split-second.

The Victorian hotel set by Jack Tillotson is canny. As is Grace Ward's opera coaching. Lots of lovely music is scattered among the funny lines. What's to say? It's a crazy, fun night. A grand finale to a fine 61st season.

Helen Zuehr has many years' experience reviewing for newspapers and magazines in Michigan, New York and Massachusetts.

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