

ON THE MARQUEE

Village Players

The Village Players will open its 1993-94 season with "A Few Good Men," by Aaron Sorkin, 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24, at the playhouse, 762 Chestnut St. Birmingham. Shows Fridays and Saturdays through Oct. 2, matinee 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 28. Call 644-2975 for ticket information.

Oakland University

Oakland University's Department of Music, Theatre and Dance will present "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 24-25 in the Verner Recital Hall on the Oakland University campus in Rochester. Gordon Reinhart of Westland makes his O.U. directing debut with the show. Tickets \$10 general, \$8 senior, and \$5 student. Call 370-3013.

Livonia Symphony

The Livonia Symphony Orchestra will present its first concert of its 20th season 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 2 in the James Carl Auditorium of Churchill High School, Newburgh at Joy Road in Livonia. Featured soloists is award-winning pianist Anthony Tomasi. Tickets \$12 general; \$8 seniors age 62 and older; \$2 students 12 and older; and \$3 children under 12. Call 421-1111 or 464-2741.

Group Du Jour

Group Du Jour, the Farmington area Philharmonic will present a concert 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 26, at Farmington High School, 32000 W. Shawwassee, Farmington. Tickets \$12 and \$10 students and seniors. Call 478-2075.

Plymouth Symphony

Sample gourmet foods and hear the Plymouth Symphony perform at "A Night Out at the Porterhouse," 1058 South Main, Plymouth, 5-9 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24, to benefit the symphony. Donation \$5 per person. For information, call 455-6770. Symphony season begins 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 9, at Belleville High School Auditorium, 501 W. Columbia, call 451-2112 for tickets.

Meadow Brook

Oakland University's Meadow Brook Theatre Guild is sponsoring a "Spotlights" a juried arts and crafts show with over 100 exhibitors, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 25-26, on the campus in Rochester. Admission is \$2 with free parking. For information, call 370-3316. Oakland University's Meadow Brook Theatre season opens 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 30 with "The Foreigner." Shows through Oct. 24. Call 377-3300 for times and ticket information or Ticketmaster, 645-6666.

Concert band

Birmingham Concert Band kicks off its 1993-94 concert season 8 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 3 in the auditorium of Churchill High School, Evergreen Road north of 13 Mile Road in Beverly Hills. Tickets \$7 family, \$3 adults, \$2 students and seniors. Rehearsals are held 7:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesdays at Groves High School. Membership open to all adults. Call 474-4997, 647-7586 or 852-9036 for information.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Entertainment next week:

- Find out what the Livonia Symphony Orchestra is planning for its 20th season which opens on Oct. 2.
- Birmingham Village Players present "A Few Good Men."

Westland native shines in 'Evita'



KEELY WYGONIK

Like the woman it portrays, "Evita" Andrea Bocelli, Lloyd Webber's and Tim Rice's documentary put to music, is captivating and full of surprise. Westland native Dan Cooney, a graduate of John Glenn High School, as the revolutionary Che Guevara, helps piece together the story of Eva Peron who married Juan Peron, president of Argentina in the 1940s and became one of the most powerful women in the world. She died of cancer at age 33 but her legend survives.

Cooney's fine tenor voice and energy help keep the show moving. He's all over the stage, running and changing roles like a chameleon. One minute he's the narrator, the next an observer, a waiter, even a reporter. During Act II, he's dragged from the crowd by soldiers, a victim of the Peronist regime.

Cooney is handsome and likable as Che. Dressed in army fatigues with a beret, he looks the part of a revolutionary.

"Evita" opens in a Buenos Aires cinema. The movie, on a suspended screen in the middle of the stage, is stopped to announce Eva Peron's death. Images of actors on stage are superimposed on screen with film of Eva Peron's funeral.

Throughout "Evita," flashes of film showing the Perons in power blend into the theatrical landscape. You forget the screen is there and the film helps you visualize the woman and her time.

Through Che, the audience witnesses Eva's ascent to power. Using

"EVITA"
Theater: Fisher Theatre, Fisher Building, 3011 West Grand Boulevard, at Second, Detroit
Curtain time: Performances 8 p.m. Sunday through Saturday, 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 7:30 p.m. Sunday through Oct. 3.
Tickets: Range from \$25 to \$42.50 Tuesday through Thursday, Saturday, Sunday matinees and Sunday evenings. Tickets \$30 to \$47.50 Friday and Saturday evenings. Call Ticketmaster, 645-6666. For more information, call 872-1000.

REVIEW

men to advance herself, Eva Duarte, a poor village girl, becomes a model, broadcaster and film actress.

Eva and Juan Peron, played by David Brummel, meet at a charity concert. She evicts his mistress and moves in determined that Peron become president.

Donna Marie Asbury as Eva is strong and believable. She has a powerful voice and stage presence. David Brummel is believable as Col. Juan Peron, one of several military leaders close to the president. He'd like to be president, but hesitates; Eva pushes him.

Unconventional devices like combining film and live performance, creative choreography and Larry Fuller's direction make this presentation of "Evita" special.

The soldiers are all wearing sunglasses. The aristocracy, all seven of them, dressed in black and white, move together across stage humorously connected as if they are one.



ART EMANUELE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hometown visit: The cast of "Evita," David Brummel (left), Dan Cooney and Donna Marie Asbury, visited Cooney's alma mater, John Glenn High School in Westland.

Peron and the colonels play "musical chairs." They rock in rocking chairs and the music stops when they reach the end of a refrain in "The Art of the Possible." They get up, a chair is removed, the song continues. When the music stops, they sit down; the loser leaves stage. This continues un-

til only Peron and one colonel remain on stage. Peron, of course, gets the chair.

Keely Wygonik is the Taste/Entertainment Editor of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc. She can be reached at 953-2105 or fax 591-7279.

Spirited cast puts energy into dated play



HELEN ZUCKER

The Ridgedale Players, one of Oakland County's strongest community theater companies, opened their 62nd season with one of Neil Simon's weakest works. The 1975 musical-comedy, "They're Playing Our Song" seems predictable, and dated in 1993.

Robin Martin Kearney, Assistant Director Tom D. Coffey and a spirited cast do their best to add the edgy humor and quick wit we think of as Simon's trademark, but a willing, accomplished cast can't make a play that isn't there.

Steve Lucev, a lovable looking guy with an easy sense of timing plays Vernon Gersch, a successful songwriter. Gersch works hard, lives in the New York apartment building where Jerome Kern lived, has an analyst, has been engaged to three girls, and at age 34, hasn't a care in the world except whether he's going to get Sonia Walsk, the lyricist he meets when she opens.

Lucev delivers his lines with grace, and we know Gersch is going to wind up with the girl. We know there's going to be Simoneaque frustration over a character named Leo who we never meet. (I would have liked to see the script critic as Gersch can tell Sonia gags like "Talking to you is like

"They're Playing Our Song"
Theater: Ridgedale Players, 205 W. Long Lake Road, Troy.
Curtain time: Shows 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 24-25, 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 26.
Tickets: Tickets \$10, seniors get \$1 off Sunday performance. Call 433-1572 for tickets.

REVIEW

sending out the laundry, you never know what's going to come back."

Nonsense. What's going to come back is more tepid gags. Lucev's performance is better than his role deserves. We hope Simon will think up an interesting plot twist, but Vernon Gersch goes nowhere. Simon doesn't get the two characters we're supposed to care about any poignance, enough of a dilemma to make us care.

Debbie Goody is a highly energetic Sonia Walsk. Goody has great legs and an expressive face and she gives the part all a caring actress could. She has the wit enough to handle really good ballads. I wish she'd been given some. But Marvin Hamlich and Carole Bayer Sager turned in a bunch of thin, highly forgettable songs for this show. Everyone does their best to make them work, especially Goody.

At the end Sonia, stop wearing castoff dresses from plays, buys a wool suit, sheds Leo, and turns down



Season opener: Debbie Goody as Sonia Walsk and Steve Lucey as Vernon Gersch star in Ridgedale Players season opener, "They're Playing Our Song."

a trip to London so she can write songs with Gersch. She was doing what they were given. Kudos to the spirit displayed by dancers Sue Skibic, Lori Jacobs, Annette See, Ron Richards, Gary Sekerak and Gustav, the waiter. Onwards with the season!

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

Everything for Your Home and Garden!

SEE THE LATEST Technology, Products & Services for kitchens, baths, doors, windows, yard/garden, remodeling, arts & crafts, furniture, decorative accessories, pets, electronics, heating, cooling and appliances.

FEATURING:

- Jeff Ball's "Yardening Academy" sponsored by Franks Nursery & Crafts. Lawn Care Workshops: Thurs. & Fri. 4 & 7:30 p.m.; Sat. Noon, 4 & 7:30 p.m.; Sun. Noon & 4 p.m.
- Nursery Sale of evergreen, shrubs, perennials and chrysanthemums from the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association
- "Home Show Pet Show" anchored by Pet Supplies "Plus"
- Special Show Discounts from Exhibitors
- Daily Treasure Chest Prizes
- Thousands of Ideas for your Home & Garden

NOVI EXPO CENTER
SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 3
I-96 and Now Road

Thurs. & Friday: 2:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Sunday: 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Regular Admission: Adults \$5.00; Seniors and Children 6-12 \$3.00; Children under 6 admitted FREE

Special Family Ticket, includes 2 adults and all the children, \$8.00 - available only at Farmer Jack and AAP

\$1.00 off discount admission coupons available at Frank's Nursery & Crafts

THURSDAY IS FRANK'S DAY

Two for One admission with coupon available at...

FRANK'S
NURSERY & CRAFTS

OPENS THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30

Fall

Remodeling Show

September 30 - October 3
NOVI EXPO CENTER