

ON THE MARQUEE



KEELY WYGONIK

Make time for merry holiday concerts, plays

Be sure to save room on your busy holiday schedule for the arts. Stay tuned to Entertainment for listings of holiday concerts and programs in your community.

On Wednesday, Nov. 24 from 7-10 p.m. the State Fairgrounds Coliseum in Detroit will be filled with regional talent as Hudson's presents the Thanksgiving BandBash.

High school bands, including Athens High School in Troy, will compete in a number of areas to win the honor of marching in the next day's Michigan Thanksgiving Parade as the BandBash champion. The competition is open to the public, tickets are \$4 per person, available by calling 923-7400 or at the State Fairgrounds Coliseum the day of the event.

One event you surely won't want to miss is the Nightnotes concert 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 26 at Hagopian World of Rugs, 850 South Maple, Birmingham. Classical Bells, composed of handbell directors and accomplished ringers, will ring in the holiday season with a concert of seasonal favorites and works composed especially for them.

Ring in a six octave set of English handbells with more than 70 individual bells, plus a four octave set of chorchimes, the Livonia-based ensemble has appeared at the Fox Theatre, Orchestra Hall and in the Detroit Thanksgiving Day parade. Tickets are \$12 per person, call 646-7847.

It's a tale of two "Carols," this holiday season at Oakland University as Meadow Brook Theatre presents "A Christmas Carol" for the 12th consecutive year while the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance presents "Inspecting Carol," a satire about a theater mounting its umpteenth production of Dickens' classic.

"A Christmas Carol," will run Nov. 26 through Dec. 30. Ticket information is available through the Meadow Brook box office at 377-3000 or Ticketmaster, 646-6666.

Benny & the Jets are performing 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at the newly opened Pappa China's Italian Restaurant at 24587 Eight Mile Road in Redford. For information, call 255-7989.

Congratulations to the Oakland Shores Chorus members who attended the 47th annual International convention and competition, Nov. 2-7 in Indianapolis, Ind. All are members of Sweet Aids.

See MARQUEE, 2C

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Entertainment next week:
 Find out who won our "Dogs Say the Darndest Things" contest.
 Make plans to see "The Nutcracker Ballet" in your community.

'Lettice and Lovage' smashing success

Lettice Douffet is a tour guide at the dullest house in England. To liven things up, she embellishes history, just a bit, with hilarious results.

BY VICTORIA DIAZ
SPECIAL WRITER



If you're seeking entertainment that will leave you smiling, don't miss The Village Players' production of Peter Shaffer's "Lettice and Lovage." In the contemporary comedy, Lettice Douffet is a middle-aged English tour guide with a tendency to embellish history a bit when she feels it needs embellishing. If the real story is dull, she reasons, why not enliven it with a lot and a little of fantasy now and then? It keeps her motley little tour groups from nodding off as they trudge through musty old Fustian House ("the dullest house in England") and, for the frustrated actress, it's certainly a lot more fun in the telling.

Trouble is, the lot and the little soon grow into embroidered fantasies of rather monetarily filigreed proportions. And almost before she knows it, Miss Douffet is called on the carpet at the no-nonsense offices of the Preservation Trust in London.

There, she comes up against one Charlotte Schoen. Schoen, whose very soul is surely sensibly shod, is commander-in-chief of tour guides like Miss Douffet and a dedicated guardian of historical truth. Despite hilarious histrionic pleadings, Lettice is given the ax by the all-powerful Schoen, and that would seem to be that.

But Lettice's troubles have just begun. And, for the audience, so has the fun, in this smartly paced play directed by Stephen Tadevic. As the lovable, loquacious Lettice, Sandy Martin is a smashing delight. Her way with Peter Shaffer's words, her body language, and her comedic timing are all a treat to watch and listen to. But what clinches her success with this role is a kind of charged and sparkling energy. Her Lettice is like a star burning in a dank collar in today's Dark Ages. The more desperate the situation becomes, the funnier Martin gets and the brighter she seems to burn.

In a challenging role as the prim and proper Miss Schoen (who admittedly cares more for buildings than for their inhabitants), Joan Reddy manages to bring warmth to what appears at first to be a rather unlikable character. She's a fine flat-footed foil, often at her best when totally exasperated by Lettice's flights of fancy, or when imbibing a bit of Lettice's homemade, heartwarming quaff.



STEPHEN CAYRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Comedy: Joan Reddy (left) stars as prim and proper Charlotte Schoen, and Donna Snyder as her flustered secretary in the hilarious "Lettice and Lovage."

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REVIEW

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secretary is a riot, and Warren Dolmecker as Lettice's long-suffering legal defender is also a stand-out. Playing an imaginary drum at an imaginary execution toward the end of the play, he's a small show in himself.

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ON STAGE

"LETTICE AND LOVAGE"
 *Theater: Village Players of Birmingham, 752 Chestnut Street, corner of Hunter Boulevard, south of Maple, Birmingham.
 *Curtain time: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 19-20.
 *Tickets: \$10 adults, \$8 students, available at the door, but reservations are recommended. Call 644-2075.

members of the Birmingham-based group have paid careful attention to the play.

Victoria Diaz is a Livonia-based freelancer, who specializes in arts and entertainment articles in the metro area.

Talented cast captures spirit of 'Private Lives'

BY BOB WEINEL
SPECIAL WRITER

The Theatre Guild has returned once again to the venerable work of Noel Coward. This time it's "Private Lives," a witty, sardonic left jab at domestic tranquility.

Director, Rebecka Smith's talented cast captures the spirit and style of the sophisticated comedy made popu-

lar by Coward in the 1930s.

The characters in "Private Lives" are educated, intelligent, world travelers. They are elegant and gracious. Except, of course, when Coward cleverly exposes their imperfections. Then, it's a jolly good free-for-all as

they go at each other with barbs and sarcastic putdowns — culminating in juicy quarrels and roasting hotbeds.

Charles Van Housen is engaging as Elyot, who is honeymooning in France with his new bride. One moment caustic, the next debonair and charming. He has a knack for delivering Coward's cynical lines with just the right edge.

For example, "Certain women should be struck regularly, like a gong." Anyone who can make that line work in the 1990s obviously has created a great character.

The new bride, Sibyl, is played by Maggie Patton. She is captivating as a manipulative, giggly, lovestruck

See TALENTED CAST, 2C

REVIEW

IN CONCERT

Southfield Symphony Orchestra with the St. Hugo Festival Choral.
 Concert time: 7 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21 at St. Hugo of the Hills Church, 2215 Opdyke, Bloomfield Hills.
 Tickets: Season tickets, \$30 adults; \$20 seniors and students 18 and under. Pre-concert tickets, \$9 adults; \$6 seniors and students. Call 354-4717.

No. 6 in B Minor, "Pathetique," and Mozart's Overture from "The Magic Flute."
 "Symphonie Pathetique," Tchaikovsky's sixth and last symphony, is considered a masterpiece and his swan song. The introductory dark theme climbs slowly into a romantic melody, beginning explosively and continuing into loud and soft contrasts. The intermezzo movement features an unusual 5/4 time and is followed by a march-like third movement, closing with a grief-laden finale that has become Tchaikovsky's epitaph.

"The Magic Flute" is the result of Mozart's lifelong dream to create a "German" opera; at the suggestion of a well-known theatrical manager and producer, Emanuel Schikaneder, to create a work on a spectacular and supernatural subject. Mozart's "The Magic Flute" is based on German poet Wieland's fairy tale, "Lulu, or the Magic Flute." Mozart died nine weeks after its first performance in late 1791.

See SYMPHONY, 2C

Symphony, choral present concert

The St. Hugo Festival Choral, under the direction of choral director Kim Bishop and symphony conductor Valery Leonov, will be featured in the Southfield Symphony Orchestra's first concert of the season Sunday, Nov. 21, at St. Hugo of the Hills Church in Bloomfield Hills.



Conductor: Valery Leonov will conduct the opening concert of the Southfield Symphony Orchestra on Nov. 21.

The 60-member choir will perform Schubert's "Miss No. 4 in C-Opus 46," which was composed by Schubert in 1816 and is distinctive as a Viennese "church trip" without the violas as well for its demanding soprano solo. While the piece originally was composed in a simple and restrained style, Schubert later added parts for trumpets, drums and oboes.

Bishop has been director of the choir for two years and has a master in music education and choral conducting degree from the University of Michigan. He is a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy.

Now in its sixth year, the Choral was founded by Michael Gehab. Two years ago, Gehab left for a position in New York State, and Bishop assumed the post. The choral performs two or three large concerts each year and at Masses each Sunday.

"We are very pleased to be hosting the Southfield Symphony again this year," said Cynthia E. Dalley, St. Hugo music director for the past nine years. "The acoustics of the new church, which is 4 1/2 years old, seats 1,000 and is on 30 acres, makes a beautiful setting."

PREVIEW

St. Hugo's offers a prestigious four-manual, 68-rank Zimmer pipe organ, a 28-rank Casavant Feres and a Bechstein piano, which accompanies the choir. Dalley and the Zimmer organ were featured in last season's March concert with the symphony orchestra.

"We are fortunate to have the kind of chemistry where friendships work among the people from the Southfield Symphony, the choral and St. Hugo's," Dalley said. "We are looking forward to this and future joint endeavors." The program also will feature the symphony orchestra performing Tchaikovsky's "Symphony

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