

Great cast breathes life into 'The Cemetery Club'



The Ridgedale Players production of "The Cemetery Club," directed by Hal Saffron and Jacqui Saltz, is a treat. The actors blow the dust off Ivan Menchell's script, and breathe life and humor into this trenchant play.

In the hands of a small, wonderful cast, Menchell's tribute to three feisty widows from Queens, becomes an evening filled with high spirits, zingy one-liners, and moments of truth that turn on a dime. The timing is so good that I forgot that Menchell's script is too long. Selma Cohen is in her element as Doris, the staunch conservative. Cohen's dry delivery, her solid presence, her enactment of a woman who, four years after her husband's death, cannot move on, carries her performance into the realm of Icon of Ridgity. Cohen

REVIEW

gives a transcendent performance. Lori Jacobs exudes charm as Ida, the cookie-baking grandmother who realizes she wants to move on and have a life of her own. Ida is realistic enough to know she needs someone to care for. Ida's home is a place of warmth where her friends meet, and where we have no trouble envisioning a new man settling in. Jacob's performance makes Ida the central character, the one who keeps everyone else on the same side of the loop.

Eugenia Garner works her way from filly to honest in the meatiest role in the play. As talky, flamboyant Lucille, Garner barges onstage asking the price of her mink coat, hat, muff, (Doris always knows the price), telling us about all the men who can't keep their eyes off her changes wigs with lightning speed, cuts her brides-

ON STAGE

"THE CEMETERY CLUB"
Theater: Ridgedale Players, 205 W. Long Lake, Troy.
Curtain time: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 19-20, 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21.
Tickets: \$8; senior discount \$1off Sunday performance. Call 433-1572.

maid's dress into a disco outfit, and calls a seance "a Seder." Garner manages to be adorable; she turns in a poignant, intelligent performance as a woman who finally emerges into the light of day and is able to say goodbye to a dead man she should have said goodbye to 30 years before. Gene Ewald, as the plighted butcher Sam, keeps asking, "What field?" as he moves from one woman to another. Ewald moves about "the field" in his worker's cap and trenchcoat, look-

ing the soul of ambivalence as he waltzes toward Ida, then waltzes away at a hint from her friends.

Ewald has a marvelous moment when Garner asks him what he thinks of her pendant; he leans into Garner's cleavage and asks, "What pendant?" Andrea Gleason does a handsome cameo as Mildred, a fourth woman Sam packs into his carload. She's obviously an "extra."

The pickings in Queens are rich. Sam invites Ida to eat "kosh Chinese." The three women forgive each other anything and everything, and we believe them. The 1940s living room set and the cemetery, ill-kept ivy and all, designed by Jack Tilletson and decorated by Laura Weidner, Linda Bruder, Michelle Hubert and Holly Helsten, are inventive. Kudos to everyone involved.

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

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Classicalists upcoming classical music concerts. Send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Entertainment editor, The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is 591-7279.

COMMUNITY

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Music director Timothy Smith in concert 7 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21 in the Great Hall, 2676 John R. 1/4 mile north of Auburn and John R. Admission is free.

COLLEGE

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OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
Vocal Jazz Ensemble and Afram Jazz Ensemble will present a concert "Jazz Through the Years" 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 18 in Verner Recital Hall on the Oakland University campus in Rochester. Call 370-3013 for tickets.

SERIES

DETROIT CHAMBER WINDS
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