

KEELY WYGONIK, EDITOR
953-2105

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ON THE MARQUEE



KEELY WYGONIK

Give us a jingle about upcoming holiday events

Let the holidays begin! No matter where you live, there's a lot to do and see in the suburbs. We kick off our holiday season coverage with listings of "The Nutcracker" performances. We'll update the list every week.

There's still time to submit announcements of holiday concerts and plays to be listed in Entertainment. Don't be left out in the cold.

Nathan White of the Detroit Producers Association based in West Bloomfield is busy planning the group's yearly holiday bash. It will be at Second City on Tuesday, Dec. 14. Tickets are \$20 and must be purchased in advance. Admission includes dinner, a Second City Performance, and seeing and being seen by Detroit's top directors, producers, writers and actors. For more information, call 737-4240.

Two unlikely compatriots provide the backdrop for the hilarious "A Couple White Chicks Sitting Around Talking," to be presented by the Farmington Players, 8 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays Dec. 3, 18 at the Players' Barn, 32332 Twelve Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills. Written by John Ford Noonan, the play, directed by Bob Meyers, is a modern day award-winning comedy that takes place in suburban New York. For tickets call 553-2956.

Mary Bromer's Lunch Bunch Players and Genetti's Hole in the Wall restaurant in Northville are teaming up to present the musical "Wizard of Oz."

See MARQUEE, 11B

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Entertainment next week:

- Hugh Gallagher reviews Meadow Brook's production of "A Christmas Carol," a seasonal favorite.
- Robert Grossman plays Victor the reluctant police sergeant in "The Price" at the Jewish Ensemble Theatre.

Audiences treasure 'Nutcracker Ballet'

■ The ever popular "Nutcracker Ballet" is at the movies, and coming to a theater near you this holiday season.

By KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER



Panned by critics when it was performed in 1892 at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Ballet" has become a holiday treasure. This year you can relive the magic at the movies, at live performances in your community, or by tuning in Channel 56, 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19 or 9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24. The televised version features local and nationally-known artists, and is a joint project of Oakland Community College and Oakland Festival Ballet Co.

"George Balanchine's The Nutcracker," a joyous interpretation of the classical holiday ballet is now showing at metro Detroit movie theaters. This feature film combines the classic beauty of the New York City Ballet stage production with the sparkling talent young film star Macaulay Culkin as the Nutcracker Prince under the direction of Academy Award-winner Emile Ardolino.

In the movie, Tchaikovsky's melodic "The Nutcracker" is performed by the New York City Ballet Orchestra under the direction of David Zinnman.

On the home front, area dancers are on their toes rehearsing for local productions of "The Nutcracker Ballet" to be presented throughout the metro Detroit area.

■ The Plymouth Symphony and Plymouth-Canton Ballet Company, with guest artists Dawnell Dryja and Florian Rouillero of the Metropolitan Ballet Theatre, will present "The Nutcracker" 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 3-4 and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5 at Novi High School's Fuzer Auditorium, 24062 Taft Road at 10 Mile. Tickets — \$14 adults, \$8 children, reserved seating. Call, 461-2112. There will be a Sugar Plum Fair Tea after the Sunday performance to meet the dancers with refreshments and special treats. Tickets are \$2.



Clara and Mice: Julie Furr of Canton as Clara, and Mice, Megan Thorp, Jacquelyn Williams, Sara Hessel, Daniel Cebulski, Jeremy Conn, Emily Benish, Kristen Kern, Starr-Jones, Kristen Bernacki, Kimberly Black, and Larry Fox in a scene from "The Nutcracker" presented by the Plymouth-Canton Ballet Company with the Plymouth Symphony.

PREVIEW

■ Livonia Symphony Orchestra with Contemporary Civic Ballet directed by Rose Marie Floyd, will present "The Nutcracker," 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4 at Churchill High School's Carl Auditorium, Newburgh at Joy Road in Livonia. Guest artists are Katita Waldo and Mikko Nissinen from the San Francisco Ballet. Guest conductor is Volodymyr Schosliuk. Tickets are \$15 adults, \$10 seniors, \$8 children. Call 421-1111.

■ Michigan Ballet Theatre's 28th annual "Nutcracker Ballet" with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Francesco Di Biasi will be performed 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12 at the Louis B. Schmidt Auditorium, 20155 Middle-

built Road, Livonia. Guest artists are Jennifer Gelfand and Daniel Macaja of the Boston Ballet. Tickets range in price from \$12 to \$15, call 496-1514. Tickets are also available at Hammel Music in Livonia. Children can meet, and have their picture taken with the Sugar Plum Fairy, and sample refreshments from the Kingdom of Sweets after the 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11 performance. Tickets are \$7. Call 427-9155 for information, and tickets for the Sugar Plum Fairy reception. ■ Oakland Festival Ballet performs "The Nutcracker" at the Birmingham Theatre, 231 S. Woodward, for 12 shows Dec. 10 through Dec. 19. Guest artists Randi Ulevog, Robert Royce, and Dennis Lue of Detroit's newly formed Metropolitan Ballet Theatre, will appear in featured roles. The ballet is choreographed by Cornelia Sampson, founder of Oakland Festival Ballet Company, and director of the Rochester School of Dance. Curtain times are 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. for Friday performances (Dec. 10 and 17); 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. for Saturday and Sunday shows, (Dec. 11-12 and Dec. 18-19). Tickets available through all Ticketmaster outlets and at the Birmingham Theatre box office, 644-3533. Seats for Friday matinees are \$10 each; prices for all other performances are \$15 for children and seniors, \$17 for adults. ■ The Livonia Civic Ballet Company will be presenting two performances of "The Nutcracker" 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12 at Churchill High School in Livonia. Tickets are \$9 adults, \$7 students and senior citizens in advance. Tickets will be available for \$11 at

See NUTCRACKER, 11B

Mystery worthy of applause

If you're an armchair sleuth, you should take a break from that armchair, and get yourself over to the Northville Water Tower Theatre, where the Plymouth Theatre Guild is performing Agatha Christie's 1952 (and still-running-in-London) whodunit, "The Mousetrap." You won't be sorry.

For those (few) of you who have never seen "The Mousetrap" for road Christie's short story, "Three Blind Mice," from which it was taken, it goes something like this: On a dark and stormy evening, an eclectic assortment of individuals gather together inside a rambling, old English guest house, seeking shelter from the storm. A main topic of their conversation is a murder which has just occurred near the mansion. As they all warm themselves by the fire, become acquainted, and get settled in, they begin to suspect that the murderer may lurk not just nearby, but actually within their midst. They also begin to fear, of course, that the perpetrator of the crime has chosen one of them for his/her next victim.

As had luck would have it, they are absolutely right. (The murder scene is deliciously spine-tingling.) In this drama of secrets, Deborah Kandler is nicely naive and pleasantly ditzy as Mollie, the breathless, rather inexperienced proprietress of the just-opened-for-business Monkswell Manor. Randy Polega, playing her devoted, but oddly distracted husband, Giles, turns in a good performance, also. Jeremy Wright is delightfully dorky as a bizarrely-costumed



Suspicious cast: Mark Minkin of Redford (bottom row, left to right), Dabbie Kandler of Westland, Randy Polega, and Diane Kremser. Top row, Jeremy Wright of Westland, Heidi Schuster of Southfield, Ford Sutherland and Bob Ketterer star in "The Mousetrap."

ON STAGE

■ "THE MOUSETRAP"
* Theater: Plymouth Theatre Guild, at the Water Tower Theatre on the campus of the Northville Regional Hospital, 41001 W. 7 Mile Road, one mile west of I-75, Northville.
* Curtain times: 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 4; 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 28.
* Tickets: Adults \$8, seniors and youth \$7. Call 349-7110. Tickets available at the door, or in advance at Heavenly Bakery, 43053 W. 7 Mile Road, Northville, Sir Speedy Printing Center, 485 S. Main, Plymouth.

boarder who calls himself Christopher Wren, and likes to think of himself as an architect. Diane Kremser seems to be perfectly at home in the role of the dour and grumbling know-it-all, Mrs. Boyle. Ford Sutherland as the surprisingly-shrewd Major Motcalp, Heidi Schuster as the mysterious, manfully-attired Miss Caswell, and Bob Ketterer as the cosmetically-enhanced Mr.

Paravichni all seem to be enjoying themselves. Mark Minkin, arriving on the scene via snow skis, and portraying Detective Sergeant Trotter, ably rounds out the cast (although one sometimes wishes Christie had not put so many words into his character's mouth). Overall, the well-drilled cast does a good job not just separately, but also as a team. Veteran director Robert Weibel is to be commended for emphasizing that the success of a performance lies not just with the performers onstage, but with the backstage crew as well. His own set design (faintly-oppressive, and accented with just the right touches of blood-red), plus set construction (John Jordan and crew), costumes (Mary Lynn Kura, Gail Mesner), makeup (Heidi Schuster), lighting (Bill Potter, Jeannette Soman, Laura Anderson), and sound (Richard Brown) all deserve some special applause. Victoria Diaz is a Livonia-based freelancer, who specializes in arts and entertainment articles in the metro area.



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