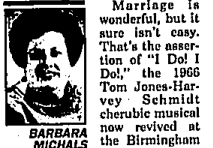


# 'I Do! I Do!' engages audience in tale of bliss



Marriage is wonderful, but it sure isn't easy. That's the assertion of "I Do! I Do!" the 1968 Broadway musical now revived at the Birmingham Theatre.

Starting with their wedding in 1894, "I Do! I Do!" follows Michael (William Katt) and Agnes (Kathleen Rowe McAllan) through 40 years of marriage. While the show is a romantic fantasy to marriage, it is also a realistic acknowledgment that the food to wedded bliss can get bumpy enough to cause blow-outs.

Jones and Schmidt are best known as the creators of "The Dick Van Dyke Show," the record-setting Broadway musical still running after 34 years (though no one can quite understand why). As with all their shows, the tinkle score of "I Do! I Do!" is simplistic, pleasantly light, bubbly and less filling.

The best-known song in the show is "My Cup Runneth Over," the newly-wed Michael's adoration of his sleeping spouse. Also hummable are "Together Forever," the couple's wedding day promise, and "The Honeymoon is Over," when success has gone to Michael's head and his affections start to stray. Also memorable are the comic "Nobody's Perfect," when Michael and Agnes each present a litany of the other's faults, and the lively "When the Kids Get Married," a wish-list of how the couple will use their new freedom.

Katt, the former star of television's "The Greatest American Hero," is a personable enough actor to keep the affections of both his wife and the audience when the already chauvinistic Michael lets success turn him into an arrogant, swaggering bully. Katt is not a singer, however. Although this is not his first musical, his

## ON STAGE

**"I Do! I Do!"**  
 \*Theatre: Birmingham Theatre, 211 S. Woodward.  
 \*Curtain time: 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturdays; 7 p.m. Sundays; matinees 2 p.m. Wednesdays, Sundays and Thursdays through March 13.  
 \*Tickets: Range from \$19.50 to \$35. Call (810) 644-3333 or Ticketmaster (810) 645-6666.

## REVIEW

voice in "I Do! I Do!" ranges from passable to awful.

McAllan is an accomplished singer who sparkles as Agnes. From the start her character has plenty of spunk, and she makes it clear that although Agnes may play the traditional role of the Little Woman, she is no push-over.

While some aspects of marriage seem universal and immutable, some lines in the show are so passé they literally leave the audience gasping. On their wedding night Michael tells the 13-year-old Agnes she has now officially lost her youth.

Midway in the show Michael sings "It's a Well Known Fact" that "men of 40 go to town women go to pot." When the children do marry, Agnes feels worthless, her usefulness as a person is over.

Under director Karen Azenberg, the production moves at a lively pace, and gets as much characterization into the show as the meager script calls for. James Nioona's clever scenic design frames the couple's double bed with an attractive array of impediments of domestic life.

Barbara Michaels is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

Classical music lists 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

**LIVONIA SYMPHONY**  
 Slavic Classics and Winter Dreams featuring piano soloist Leszek Barkiewicz, 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19 in the Carli Auditorium of Churchill High School, Newburgh at Joy Road, Livonia. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at the door or by calling 421-1111 or 464-2741.

**ROCHESTER SYMPHONY**  
 "Broadway Showcase" 8 p.m. Friday, March 4 at Varner Hall on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester. Tickets \$12, \$8 children 12 and under, available at the door or call 651-4181.

## CURTAIN CALL

Curtain Call lists upcoming theater performances. 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.

## AUDITION

**FARMINGTON PLAYERS**  
 Casting call for Christopher Hampton's "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 21 at the player's barn, 32332 Twelve Mile Road, Call 653-2955 or 355-0471 for information.

## COMMUNITY

**TROY PLAYERS**  
 "Kiss Me Kate" opens 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 25 at the Troy Community Center.

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

### SERIES

**AMERICAN ARTISTS**  
 New York City soprano Susan Botti and the Midwest premiere of a work by contemporary Russian composer, Sofia Gubakullina, Sunday, Feb. 20. Preview lecture 2 p.m., followed by concert 3 p.m. Call 851-5044.

**NIGHTNOTES**  
 Detroit Chamber Winds Night Notes Series presents the Sutherland Ensemble, 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 25 at Hogeopian World of Rugs in Birmingham. Refreshments 8 p.m., concert 8:30 p.m. Tickets \$12, call 362-2622.

**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY**  
 Guarneri String Quartet, 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 20 at Orchestra Hall in Detroit. Call 833-3700.

**DSO VOLUNTEER COUNCIL**  
 Super star flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Principal Flutist Ery Monroe will perform at a celebrity

lunch, 11 a.m. Friday, March 4 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Dearborn. Tickets range from \$35 to \$500. Call (313) 962-1000. Ext. 285 to order tickets, or for more information.

## Marquee from previous page

the orchestra. The soloists are soprano Lori Cleland of Walled Lake, mezzo-soprano Jin Sook Hong, pianist Mariko Kohri of Troy, violinist Barbara Leclair, pianist Cintia Costa Macedo of Bloomfield Hills, pianist Pamela Slomka, and soprano Hye Kyung Yoon of Troy.

The Birmingham Musicale presents Oakland University's artist-in-residence pianist Flavio Varani, performing works by Chopin, Hahn, and Villa-Lobos, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 27, in a benefit concert at The Community House in Birmingham. Tickets are \$20, \$30 for patron (which includes a meet-the-artist reception), and \$10 for students. Call Cheryl Krul at (810) 651-2316.

Concert proceeds will help support the Birmingham Musicale Scholarship program and local music organizations.

Jeannette Lorente of Livonia will sing at the 1994 International Cultural Festival presented by The Ritz-Carlton in Dearborn, Feb. 21-27. She will be singing French songs, accompanied by concert accordionist Peter Souwe during the festival's journey to

France. The festival features wine tastings, cameo concert tues, fashion luncheon buffet, international coffee nights and grand Sunday brunches. Call the hotel (313) 441-2100 or (313) 441-2000 for a schedule of events.

Mercy High School in Farmington Hills is celebrating its 15th annual Auction on Broadway 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26, and 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 26. For information, call 476-8020 or 476-8922.

Make plans to attend the Plymouth Community Arts Council's third annual dinner theater — March Murder Madness, 7:15 p.m. cocktails, 8 p.m. dinner, Saturday, March 5 at Laurel Manor Banquet and Conference Center, 39000 Schoolcraft, Livonia. Tickets are \$40 per person. For more information, call 455-5260.

Keely Wygonik is editor of the Taste and Entertainment sections of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She welcomes your calls and comments, (313) 993-2105, fax (313) 591-7279, or write: Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich. 48150.

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