

THEATER

Funny 'Bedroom Farce' draws lots of chuckles

Farmington Players presents "Bedroom Farce" 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 3-4, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Nov. 8-11, 10-11:30 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 5 & 12 at the Players Barn, 22322 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, (313) 683-2955, Nov. 4, 11, & 18 performances sold-out.

By MATTHEW DELEZENNE
SPECIAL WRITER

The Farmington Players' production of British playwright Alan Ayckbourn's "Bedroom Farce" opened to a very appreciative crowd Oct. 27. The short, simple, two act play is far from "high theater," but it does draw

chuckles and puffs with its sexual innuendo and physical humor.

Described as "Britain's Neil Simon," Ayckbourn's play deals with — you guessed it — marriage and relationships, and the wacky mishaps they inspire. Misguided and emotionally contipated men are often the butts of the jokes, metaphorical pun intended, and the audience seemed to relate to the humor. The silly, improbable plot revolves around a party being thrown by the married couple Kate and Malcolm. Tension arises from the invitation of Trevor, who was formerly married to Jan, but is now in a troubled

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marriage with Susannah. The problem is that Jan's husband is confined to his own bed with a back injury, and is less than ecstatic about his wife going to a party where she will be in the company of her previous husband, Malcolm, meanwhile, makes it clear that he will not tolerate any couples fighting among themselves at the party, which he is sure will happen with Trevor and Susannah. The cast is completed by Trevor's trouble-making parents, Ernest and Della. The most interesting technical

aspect of the production is the set arrangement. The action takes place simultaneously in the bedrooms of Ernest and Della, Jan and Nick, and Kate and Malcolm. The set is therefore arranged as three bedrooms on the stage, with the lighting directing the audience's attention to the appropriate location of action. The pace of this direction changes according to the action, and at some points all three are lit at once creating a theatrical equivalent of what filmmakers call cross-cutting. The multi-set stage works well in two of the three bedrooms. It falls completely, though, with respect to the action at the home of the

party throwers — Kate and Malcolm.

Some of the scenes at the party are simply nonsensical due to their being placed in a bedroom. These scenes are reminiscent of the soporific silliness of television's highly successful sitcom "Three's Company," but again, criticism aside, the audience laughed, and that's what comedies are for.

The cast as a whole suffered in their performances with the British dialect. On the other hand, all of the performers seemed perfectly at ease on stage with one another, which reflected the premise of married couples very well. It

would have been better to make a couple of scenes change to the script and present the play with American characters, seeing as how there is nothing inherently British about the plot.

Christine Aloe, as the neurotic, self-affirming, latent bisexual Susannah, is a stand-out. Though as Adams portrays Ernest with a charming balance of self-interest and naivete, Susie Skibicki's Kate is perhaps the most energetic performance, but it's most often Marc Rosati, as the antagonist Trevor, who gets the laughs. Erik Carlson, Brian Tupper, Mary Ann Tweedie and Cynthia Tupper fill the remaining roles.

Renovated Music Hall Center launches Youtheatre season

On Saturday, Nov. 4, the young people and families of metro Detroit are in for a treat. After being closed for five months, in order to undergo the final phase of a \$64 million restoration, the Music Hall Center will open its doors to launch Youtheatre's 33rd season of professional live theater performances.

"The Little Prince," a cherished tale of love and friendship from New York's Theatreworks/USA will open Youtheatre's season Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 4-5 at Music Hall Center, 356 Madison Ave., at Brush, Detroit. Tickets \$7 in advance for children & adults, \$8 day of performance at the door. Call (313) 963-2366. Performances are 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 5. The show is for ages 7 and up. One under 6 will be admitted to the theater.

"The Little Prince" leaves his tiny planet to search the galaxy for the secret of what is really important. He journeys to many planets and finally lands on earth in the middle of the Sahara Desert. There he meets an aviator stranded a thousand miles from help after a plane crash. "Draw me a sheep," the Little Prince demands, and with this request he begins to relate his remarkable story.

Adapted from the classic book by Antoine de Saint-Exupery,

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"The Little Prince" is a dazzling flight of fancy. An array of colorful characters — a lonely fox, a pompous king, a miserly businessman, and a well-traveled bird, teach the little prince about selflessness and true love. At the journey's end, he discovers that the something he was searching for was the very thing he left behind.

The writers of Theatreworks/USA's "Little Prince," Jeffrey Lunden and Arthur Fetziman, are authors of the musical, "Wings," based on the Arthur Kopit play and recently produced in New

York and Chicago.

"It is truly fitting that young people will be the first to see this grand palace," said Mickey Miners, artistic director of Youtheatre. "The restoration of Music Hall Center represents our commitment to future generations of theatergoers and we better to experience this firsthand than the Youtheatre audience."

Matilda Dodge Wilson built the hall for repertory theater just before the 1929 crash, widow of the auto pioneer John Dodge. The hall was originally named the Wilson Theatre. The gala grand opening featuring award-winning Broadway performer Mandy Patinkin is 7 p.m. Nov. 16. Call

(313) 963-7321 for information.

Youtheatre shows are grouped by age into two series of six shows each — The Wiggle Club for ages 3-6 and the Movin' Up Club for ages 7 and older.

New this year are pre-show "Playshops" — hands-on mini workshops for young people that are designed to give them exposure to the performing arts in the

areas of creative dramatics, make-up, ethnic dance, puppetry and more. Playshops will be offered before each Saturday morning Youtheatre performance. The cost is \$8 per child, per session, and reservations can be made when purchasing show tickets.

To receive a season brochure, or for more information, call (313) 963-2366.

'Ask The Professor' Monday at Barnes & Noble

"Ask The Professor's" panel of experts will be taping several shows live 7:30-9 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6 at Barnes & Noble, 6575 Telegraph Road (at 15 Mile Road) in Bloomfield Hills.

Stump the pros with a question on any subject and you'll receive an "Ask The Prof" diploma and a

B & N gift certificate.

Currently, "Ask The Professor" is airing on 24 radio stations nationally and is looking to expand to new markets. In Michigan, the show airs locally on (WNIC-FM 100.3) 7 a.m. Sundays; (WDOZ-AM 1310) 8 a.m. Sundays; and (WDTR-FM 90.0) 7 p.m. Mondays and 1 p.m. Fridays.

The show hosted by University of Detroit Mercy, has enjoyed 42 consecutive years of mixing education with fun.

The program is moderated by Edwin DeWindt, (professor of history) and features panelists

George Pickering (professor of religious studies), Claire Crabtree and Hugh Cullick (professors of English), Arthur Beer (professor of theater), Kathy Bush (assistant dean of liberal arts), and Gregory Sumner and Sarah Gravelle (professors of history).

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