

THEATER

Actor gets a kick out of performing in 'A Chorus Line'

"A Chorus Line" continues through Dec. 29 at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit. Tickets ranging from \$25 to \$62.50 are available at the Detroit Opera House Ticket Office, Fisher Theatre Box Office and all Ticketmaster locations, call (810) 645-6666.

By MARY JANE DOERN
SPECIAL WRITER

Kevin Burrows is one of the look alike in the chorus line of the national production of "A Chorus Line" now playing at the Detroit Opera House. But to many of his friends in the audience, Burrows a former Birmingham resident, is not just another nameless member of the "kick line."

Burrows grew up in Grosse Pointe and Birmingham when his father was an automotive

engineer at Rockwell International in Troy, and lived there 13 years.

"It was my sister Shannon that started the theater drive for our family, which she dropped it, I guess I picked it up," said Burrows.

He has only one regret about coming to Detroit. The schools are out on vacation during the holidays, which means he cannot visit old friends and teachers at Midvale Elementary and Covington Middle School where he went to school.

"My fourth grade teacher at Midvale, Mrs. Morris, really had a big part in my interest in being on stage. She brought me out of my shell and incorporated dancing into her music class. I have a picture of myself in her class doing a little soft shoe with a top hat and cane.

Once Burrows got interested in theater, he played parts in shows such as "The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker," "Cheaper by the Dozen," and was Oliver in "Oliver" with the First Theatre Guild at the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham and Pontiac Theater IV.

At Sheryl's School of Dance in Livonia he studied tap and jazz while he earned money-making commercials for a Detroit agency — Elias Brothers, Kmart, and Hudson's. Other TV work included "Kid's World Magazine" on CBS. "I remember one ad I did for a national milk commercial. I drank so much milk that afternoon I was sick as a dog," said Burrows.

The son of "fixer-upper" parents who bought old houses and

fixed them up, he moved 18 times from the time he was born in Long Beach, Calif. until he graduated from high school in Cleveland, Ohio. Today, he's still on the move.

As soon as he earned his bachelor of science degree from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., Burrows was chosen to be the international cast of "West Side Story." Once in Europe he was cast for Skimbleshanks in "Cats" in Zurich, singing both in English and German.

"That experience really improved by dancing technique," said Burrows. "Once I had done that show I had the confidence to move to New York and audition for other jobs."

Since moving to New York, Burrows has been on the road.

He was almost immediately cast into the men's chorus in the national tour of "Holler Dolly" then he won a place on "A Chorus Line."

"Cats" was fun because of the costumes and all the make-up," said Burrows. "I felt like a kid getting dressed up. But 'A Chorus Line' means the most to me of any of the shows I have done because everything in the show relates to my personal life."

"A Chorus Line" is considered by some to be one of the best musicals ever written, being Broadway's longest-running theatrical production, and having won nine Tony Awards, the Pulitzer Prize, five Drama Desk Awards, the New York Drama Critics Award for Best Musical, the Obie Award, and the London

Evening Standard for Best Musical.

Original Broadway cast member Bayaork Lee is directing and choreographing this special touring production.

It is the story of the casting of a chorus line. As the choreographer auditions each dancer, the life and personality of the dancer unfolds. As the show goes on the audiences begins to root for their favorite dancer. Finally at the end of the show, those chosen to be a nameless, look alike member of the "chorus line" are announced.

Anybody wondering if Burrows' character Al makes the cut will have to see the show.

"I am not giving away the ending," said Burrows.

BBSO presents concert

The Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra is presenting a "Between the Holidays" Christmas Pops Concert 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 29 at Temple Beth El, (Telegraph at 14 Mile Road). Tickets are \$16 adults, \$12 students. Call (810) 645-2276.

Guest artist is pianist/recording artist, David Syme who will be joining forces with conductor Felix Riemann and the BBSO for Gershwin's classic "Rhapsody in Blue," and the ever popular "Piano Concerto No. 1" by Tchaikovsky. The Orchestra will also perform the Festive "Overture" by Shostakovich and the "Hary Janos Suite" by Kodaly.

Also of note:

The Thursday, Jan. 9, program of the Birmingham Musicale is dedicated to Federation Day of the National Federation of Music Clubs. For general program information, call (810) 647-8329.

Chairman of the day, Beverly O'Connell, will greet special guest Rosalind Haebler, immediate past president of the Michigan Federation and currently serving on several national and state boards.

The recital, beginning 1 p.m., will be at The Community House, 380 S. Bates in Birmingham. A reception, chaired by Gail Shney and Marilyn Van Giesen, will follow the recital.

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