

ENTERTAINMENT

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FRIDAY



Tom Spriggs (left to right), Jim Teegarden, and Krystyn Loucks star in the St. Dunstan Theatre Guild of Cranbrook production of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," (810) 644-0527.

SATURDAY



Award-winning children's entertainer Eric Nagler joins the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for two fun-filled performances 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Orchestra Hall in Detroit, (313) 833-3700.

SUNDAY



Dance Theatre of Harlem performs 3 p.m. at Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts in Detroit, (313) 963-2366 or (810) 645-6666.



Hot tip: Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and Darth Vader prepare for their final confrontation in "Return of the Jedi Special Edition" opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters.

SHOW BOAT



Backstage: (Above) Sarah Wiercioch, seated, and her fellow actors, left to right, Jackie Olesko, Danny Dixon and Ibrahim Muhammad, take a break between scenes in a makeshift green room at the Masonic Temple. (Below) a sign posted in the children's dressing room.

Confident third grader boards 'SHOW BOAT'

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

Sarah Wiercioch confides that when she was a little kid she, was "a little shy."

But now the Plymouth 8-year-old has enough confidence to perform in a Broadway touring production of a great American musical landmark, "Show Boat."

The Our Lady of Good Counsel third grader was selected with four other children to join the cast of 60 in the highly acclaimed Harold Prince production at Detroit's Masonic Temple Theatre. She plays young Kim, the daughter of Magnolia and the gambler Ravenal.

For Sarah this is a busy time. In addition to doing "Show Boat" and her schoolwork, she is also appearing as an elf and a clown in Marquis Theatre production of "Winnie-the-Pooh" in Northville.

"Before I did acting or knew



what a Broadway play was, I always wanted to be an actress and singer," Sarah said as she sat in the costume room at the Masonic, where two small dressing areas have been set up for the child actors.

"When I was little, I was shy. But I met Missy Willman and she taught me to sing and act."

The lessons helped Sarah overcome her shyness in a way that

was apparent to others.

"The first Marquis play I did, which I didn't like, I was a mouse in "Red Riding Hood," they said they wanted me for the part because I walked with confidence," she said.

On Saturday a very confident Sarah came into the dressing area with her new friends from the show Danny Dixon, 10, Ibrahim Muhammad, 8, and Natasha Fuller, 7, all of Detroit and Jackie Olesko, 9, of Milford. After the tech crew had put the finishing touches on the elaborate "Show Boat" set, the children joined other cast members for the opening scene in a dress rehearsal.

For Sarah, this is a big move up from the Marquis where she has attended acting camp and performed in many productions.

"I think the stage is bigger and it's more funner and it's fun to meet Tom Bosley," she said.

"Show Boat"

What: Opening engagement national touring company of landmark Oscar Hammerstein-Jerome Kern musical directed by Harold Prince.

Where: Masonic Temple Theater, 500 Temple Ave., Detroit.

When: 8 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays; 7:30 p.m. on selected Sundays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays and 1 p.m. Wednesday March 26 and April 16. Through May 24.

Call: Tickets range from \$22.50 to \$70. For more information call (313) 832-2232. To charge tickets, call (810) 645-6666.

Bosley, the veteran character actor known to Sarah and other children through Nick-at-Nite as Howard Cunningham on "Happy Days," plays Capt. Andy, who with his ever complaining wife Parthy owns the Cotton Blossom, a Mississippi show boat. Bosley originally made his mark as a musical comedy star in "Finale," based on the life of New York mayor Fiorella LaGuardia.

"Show Boat" is the quintessential American musical. When the Oscar Hammerstein-Jerome Kern show first opened on Broadway in 1927, it changed the character of Broadway musicals forever.

Before "Show Boat" musicals were about pretty girls, lively unrelated songs and comic pratfalls. "Show Boat," based on a novel by Edna Ferber, deals with racial tensions, miscegenation, marital di-

See SHOW BOAT 2E

THEATER



STAFF PHOTO BY DANIEL MURPHY

Local playwright: David MacGregor of Livonia, author of "The Adventure of the Elusive Ear," is one of the playwrights featured in Heartland Theatre Company's play marathon.

Marathon showcases local playwrights 'Play By Play'

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER

Like all memorable artistic undertakings, Heartland Theatre Company's "Play By Play" is rooted in honesty and integrity. So, of course, when asked about how the ambitious nonprofit group got its idea for a 12-hour play marathon to raise money, company member Jan Radcliff didn't hesitate. "We stole it," she said.

By next Saturday, the ambitious Birmingham-based collective will get around to begging and borrowing before the high-noon curtain goes up at the Millennium Theatre Center in Southfield. They'll beg people to watch more than 40 short plays of some of the area's finest playwrights. And they'll borrow plenty of resources from a talented range of actors, directors and set designers.

Local participants include: Kitty Dubin, Jan Radcliff, Jim Radcliff, David Stern, Joyce Uzelac, Laurie Logan, from Birmingham; Ashley Ann Back, Shirley Benyas, Kevin Lee Knaus, Cindy Yantis, Marshall Zweig, Beth Rexroat, from Bloomfield Hills area; Margaret Gijkes and Kirk Hanley, from

Farmington; Anthony Dixon, Michael Grogan, from Orchard Lake; Sarah Kamoo, Claudia Rodgers, Bernice Tague, from Southfield area; Tom Bettis and Fred McKenzie, from Westland; and David MacGregor, from Livonia.

Bringing together the theater community

"This is unprecedented for theatre in Michigan," said Jeffrey Nahan, executive director at the Millennium. "It has a strong short and long term effect on the theatre community because it brings so many people together."

Each play runs 8 to 10 minutes with short interludes for set and prop changes. Several intermissions are planned. Throughout the 12-hour production, patrons may come and go as they please while their seats remain reserved, said Nahan, who also directs Actors Alliance, a teaching theatre company in Southfield.

Getting people to buy tickets to a playathon might seem risky, but Radcliff, a Birmingham resident, and

See MARATHON 2E

"Play By Play"

What: A 12-hour marathon of 8 to 10-minute plays by local, regional and national writers performed by over 100 Michigan and Midwest theater artists. Produced by Heartland Theatre Company.

When: Noon to midnight, Saturday, March 22.

Where: Millennium Theatre Center, 15600 J.L. Hudson Drive, Southfield (just north of Northland Center), Southfield.

Admission: \$20. Tickets available at Millennium or any Ticket Master outlet at (810) 645-6666. For information, call (810) 433-1233, or the Millennium, (810) 552-7000, (810) 552-1225.

Proceeds go to Heartland, a non-profit Birmingham based theater company.