# Strong cast delivers 'Unexpected Tenderness' in JET production

"Unexpected Tenderness," by Israel Horovits, through Sunday, March 23, Aaron Deltoy Theatre, 6600 W. Maple Road; West Bloomfield. 7:300 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays; 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sundays, \$13.\$23, (810) 788-2900.
BY HELEN ZUCKER SPECIAL WRITER

The Jewish Easemble Theatre production of Israel Horovitz's 'Unexpected Tenderness,' direct by Randell Forte, is dynamite. A very strong cast transforms this play about jealousy, abuse and madness into an absorbing saga about the disintegration and ultimate regeneration of a family.

and ultimate regence-family.

John Michael Manfredi, as
Archie Stern, does wonderful
things with his skewed diction

and simmering anger that lies so noar Archie's surface. A truck driver who functions well as the provider for his parents, wife, two kids, a house and piano, Archie is also a paranoid control freak who cannot control his impulses. He drags his daughter out of a girl scout meeting by the hair, peers into the windows of his house to see if he can catch his wife doing something amiss, forbids his wife to go swimming at the Y with his mother, and beats his son when the boy defends his mother. Manfredi places us squarely in the world of Othello wherein Desdmann's life hangs on whether or not she can produce a stolen handker-chief. Archie leves his wife but her life hangs on whether sho's playing the piano that's forbidden to her, or on what sho's

Susan Arnold as Molly Stern, the preity wife who commits the sin of making breakfast in her bathrobe, is wonderful, Molly knows Archie is a powderkeg, but she loves her husband, Molly tries her best to pretend life is normal. Arnold plays Molly with accrbic wit and intolligence, makes us feel the power of primal family bonds and how hard it is to leave even when she does. Adam Rochkind is imaxing as son Roddy, Kochkind spends a lot of time tailing us 'we have nothing to fear but fear itself' as he rehearses for a speech contest. As his speech about Rocsevelt goes through changes, we understand that Roddy is telling us the greatest fear in his life is his father; that he can be crippled in

many ways if he does not grow up differently. In a moving scene wherein Roddy sits on his father's lap learning to steer his father's truck, Roddy tells us that, "four minutes was the only time my father hugged me." Rochkind has incredible pre-

time my father hugged me."
Rachkind has incredible presonce for so young an actor. He
makes us believe Roddy can
grow up to trust women at
understand the consequences of
his actions, to keep his familyall the things Archie cannot do.
Hilary Hernandez is cry fine
as Sylvie, the daughter who
plays the piano and lives in a
storm of embarrasment. Hilary
makes us understand that Sylvie
feels sine is somehow to blame
while she is having boy scout vistors. We believe her, and her
tears and attempts to tell Archie
she leves him as her mother

defends her with a bread knife.

Henriette Hermeihn Weinberg,
Archie's spry mether who dreases in a closet. With her black tie shoes, outstheck heir and flashes or underlying exhaustion, her firm belief that generations of men have been allowed to do terrible harm to the women in her care. Haddie tells funny stories to Roddy, propels her delicate frame around her bulky husband's, and we are not surprised when Haddie, the caretaker, dies before her husband.

Roy Dennison, as Jacob Stern, listens to everyone while pretending he's dying of Parkinson's Dennison has a tough role; looking and speaking like a stroke victim has enabled Jacob to live with Archie for 10 years. He's totally self-absorbed,

yet not unlovable. Jacob refuses to join the mourners, yet he dies shortly after, yelling, "don't leave me alone!"

Jim Shanley does a terrific job as crude Willy, Archie's employee. Willy is the catalyst, and if there's a flaw in the play it's that: Willy doesn't seem to know a thing about Archie after years of riding with him. Stanley gives us an unconcious lago, a ladies man drunk on testerone. As for the questions: what do Molly and her kids do for money, and where do they go until they wind up living with a vegue cousin? Well, perhaps it isn't worth asking. They wind up okay.

The set, lighting, costumes,

worth asking. They will alpohas.
The set, lighting, costumes, props, are all first rate. Kudos to Mary Anne Davis, Evelyn Orbach and crow.

## 'Same Time, Next Year' a laugh, a minute

SRO Productions, sponsored by the City of Southfield, presents Bernard Stade's 'Sam Time, Next Year' 8 pm. Friday and Saturday March 14-15 and March 21 and 22, and 2 pm. Sunday March 16 and 23 at The Burgh, 2080 Cluic Center Drive at Berg Road, Tickets \$8, adults, 75 senior/child. Call (810) 827-0700.

Another couple have checked into The Sea Shadows Inn in sunny California, for what will turn out to be a 25 year continuing saga of hanky panky. The featured fiblis this time are Judi Rosati and Joel Grossman, in SRO's playful production of "Same Time Noxt Year." Playwrigh Bernard Slade's comedy has tickled the funny bone of community theater audiences for many a season. And Southfield's SRO troupe continues the laughs.

You may want to overlook one item, of course. The jokes are at the expense of marital fidelity.

The escapade gets its laughs

the expense of marital identy.
The escapade gets its laughs
from the bountiful guilt of both
parties. Rosati (Doris) and
Grossman (George) rationalize
that they are basically good fam-

SUCARLOAF'S SRD =

ing.
While they get together annually, we only see Doris and George at five year intervals. So, the play is something of a nos-

the play is something of a nos-tagia trip.

The first encounter in 1951 is pure lust. The fifth year is a cele-bration. Doris is now a blonde. They drink champagne, talk of their kids and deal with their guilt. George complains, "I'm Jewish and have to live with mine. You're Catholic and can get yours with one sitting."

The 1961 meeting is the most hilarious. George is experiencing his first bout of impotence. Not to worry. Doris arrives eight months prognant and has the baby in the room.

By 1965, she has a successful business, has moved to Beverly Hills, gone back to school and become a liberal free-spirit hippie. He, she learns, is a Republican and voted for Goldwater. The laughs from the

ily folks with one imperfectionthey need to meet once a year to
maintain their sanity.

Director, Mike Megerian, does
a fine job of pacing and putting
to good use the comedic talents,
of Rosati and Grossman. And
Rosati's castumes are outstanding.

While they get together annually, we only see Doris and
George at five year intervals. So,
the play is something of a nostaligat trip.

her business and joined the idle-rich. Her husband has had a heart attack. George's wife has died. He is doubly guilty. She knew about the affair for 10 years and said nothing.

seems, is about to confess to
Doris's husband on the phone. At
the last minute, he identifies
himself as a priest. Doris, you
see, has been telling her husband all these years that she
goes to a retreat with the nuns.

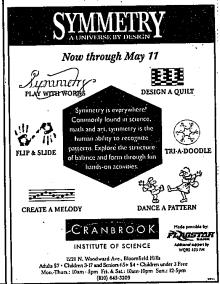
By the time 1975 rolls around,
memories abound. Doris has sold













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