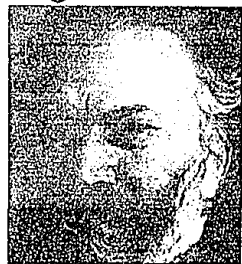
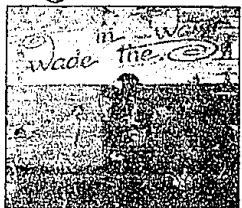


FRIDAY



The Detroit Symphony Orchestra presents Brahms' Requiem, for the first time in over ten years, 8 p.m. at Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$13 to \$63, call (313) 576-5111.

SATURDAY

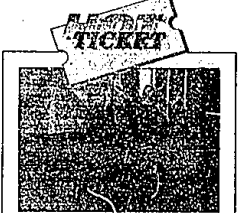


"Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions," opens at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit. Admission: \$5 adults, \$3 children, call (313) 494-5800 for information.

SUNDAY



Check out the ice sculptures in Kellogg Park, The Gathering and Central Parking Structure in downtown Plymouth during the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular. The free winter festival features ice carving competitions, a 24-hour light show, and other activities. For more information or directions, call (734) 459-9157.



Olympic medalist Nancy Kerrigan stars in "Grease on Ice" 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17 at Joe Louis Arena, 600 Civic Center Dr., Detroit. Tickets \$40, \$27.50 and \$17.50 available at the Fox Theatre and Joe Louis Arena box offices and all Ticketmaster outlets. To charge tickets, call (248) 645-6666, for more information, call (313) 983-6606.

JULIE HARRIS has winning hand in 'GIN GAME'

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER
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New York Times theater critic Ben Brantley has hailed Julie Harris as "the greatest American stage actress."

It is an accolade earned over nearly 60 years on stage, a record five Tony Awards and a record 10 Tony nominations.

And it all began growing up in Groesse Pointe.

"I grew up near Detroit and my parents were great theater fans," Harris said in a telephone interview. "They admired Noel Coward, Gertrude Lawrence, Helen Hayes, Katherine Cornell, great actors like Alfred Lunt."

Harris is now part of that illustrious theater hall of fame and will join another esteemed stage veteran, Charles Durning, for a week's run of "The Gin Game," Jan. 19-24, at the Music Hall.

It was another, now long closed, Detroit theater that first introduced Harris to the stage.

"We went to Broadway shows on stage at the Cass, and it was the most wonderful atmosphere I'd ever seen," she said. "We were also great movie fans and loved Jimmy Cagney, Bette Davis and all the others."

Harris said she had wanted to act since she was 10 or 11 years old. She won her first notice playing a 12-year-old when she was 24 in Carson McCuller's "A Member of the Wedding," which she later repeated memorably on film.

D.L. Coburn's "The Gin Game" was first produced in 1977 with stage legends Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy as nursing home residents Weller Martin and Fonsia Dorsey, who engage in increasingly antagonistic games of gin rummy.

The current production by the National Actors Theatre under the direction of Charles Nelson Reilly opened on Broadway in spring 1997 to rave reviews. Harris received her 10th Tony nomination for her performance as Fonsia.

"When the Cronyns first saw the play it was in production in Hollywood and at the end of the play Weller kills Fonsia, and they said they couldn't have that so they asked Don Coburn to change the ending, and it became very successful and won the Pulitzer Prize," Harris said. "The Cronyns took it to Moscow and London. It had a long and happy life."

The revival, now on national tour through May, is also having a long and happy life and offers some changes of its own, thanks to an inspiration from Harris.

"When Tony Randall decided to produce it, it was because he had



Test of wills: Stage veterans Julie Harris and Charles Durning play volatile gin rummy opponents Fonsia and Weller in the Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Gin Game."

WHAT: "The Gin Game" with Julie Harris and Charles Durning
WHERE: Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison Ave., Detroit
WHEN: 8 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, Jan. 19-23, 3 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 23-24

TICKETS: \$25-\$46.50 at the Music Hall Box Office and all ticketmaster locations. For more information, call (313) 963-2366. To charge tickets, call (248) 645-6666.

done "Inherit the Wind" with Charles Durning and George C. Scott. He asked Charles what play he'd like to do and he said "The Gin Game" with either me or Ruby Dee, and I guess Ruby likes to work with her husband Ossie Davis so I got the part," Harris said.

Harris had worked with Durning twice before and with director Reilly 11 times, including her acclaimed performance as Emily Dickinson in "The Belle of Amherst."

"I said to our director Charles Nelson Reilly, wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a scene where Weller asks Fonsia to dance," Harris said. "We're sitting on the porch of this nursing home and there are noises from magicians and televisions and radios coming from the inside and we have Weller ask Fonsia to dance."

Harris said Coburn's first reaction to the suggestion was an

emphatic "No."

"Then he thought about it and said what a wonderful idea. After all Charles Durning is a champion ballroom dancer. He did 'Queen of the Starlight Ballroom' with Maureen Stapleton on television. It's a touching moment and makes our production a little different than others."

Reviews of the play always mention the final dance as a character defining high point.

Harris said there is a strong rapport between Durning and herself. This is their second two-person production, having appeared in Hugh Leonard's "The Au Pair Man" for Joe Papp's Lincoln Center Theatre.

"I love and adore Charles Durning and I think he feels pretty good about me. He's really wonderful to work with," Harris said. She has similar admiration for Reilly, known to most people as a giddy comic actor who has frequently graced celebrity quiz shows. But his credentials as a director include such serious drama as "Paul Robeson" with James Earl Jones and Harris in "Belle of Amherst" and "Death of a Salesman" and several opera productions.

"He doesn't have preconceived ideas for a part," Harris said. "He works to use what you bring him, which is wonderful. He leaves it to you to strike out. He's also full of fun, which is great."

When asked to name her favorite roles, the list is long as are the accolades that go with them, including performances as Joan of Arc in "The Lark" and Mary Todd Lincoln in "The Last of Mrs. Lincoln." Her film work includes her unforgettable performance with James Dean in "East of Eden." On television she has won Emmys for "Little Moon of Alban" and "Victoria Regina" and won popular following for her work on "Knots Landing."

At 73, Harris shows no signs of retiring. Following her work in "The Gin Game," Harris is planning to perform in Claudia Allen's "Winter" at the Victory Garden in Chicago. She says wistfully that it's "another play about people at the end of their lives."

She said a producer has also expressed interest in a play she did last summer in Seattle about South Africa, Lisette Lalcat Ross' "Scent of Roses."

Finally, there are plans for a tour in 2000 of "The Belle of Amherst" and Harris' reaction to that sums up her ongoing love for her craft.

"I love the play and I love Miss Dickinson, so it's no chore at all."

MUSICAL THEATER

Rev. preaches the 'The Gospel at Colonus'

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER
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When the Rev. Earl Miller was asked to replace Morgan Freeman for the 1985 Arena Theatre production of "The Gospel at Colonus" he didn't have to worry about being "right for the part."

After all, Freeman used Miller as a model for his portrayal of a Pentecostal preacher.

In 1983, Leo Breuer was developing his idea of retelling Sophocles' "Oedipus at Colonus" the setting of a black Southern Church at St. Catherine's College in Minnesota. He took Freeman and fellow actor Carl Lumbly to Miller's church in St. Paul.

They came to my church and observed the style of a black preacher and his theme.

WHAT: "The Gospel at Colonus," a presentation of the University Musical Society.

WHERE: The Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor on the campus of the University of Michigan.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15, Saturday, Jan. 16, Monday, Jan. 18, 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16 (one-hour family performance); 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17.

TICKETS: \$10-\$34. For family performance, \$20 adults, \$10 children. Call (734) 764-2534 or (800) 221-1228.

Friday through Monday at the University of Michigan's Power Center.

Miller was attracted to the play because of its theme. "There is redemption which is the same as for the Christian faith. It's from the Greek theater, but the ultimate theme is

redemption," he said.

Breuer conceived the idea of telling the story of Oedipus through the preaching and music of a black church with music composed by Bob Telson. The production at U-M will feature C. Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys of Alabama, J.D. and Jovetta Steele, the Original Soul Stirrers and the Detroit-based Duke Ellington Centennial Choir.

Despite his early involvement with the play before it opened at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1983 and the involvement of J.D. Steele, Progressive Baptist's choir director, Miller was reluctant to take an acting part when it was offered.

"I got involved when the production went to the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. At that time



Revival: Greek tragedy and American gospel music come together in "The Gospel at Colonus."