

**THEATER**

# Revue will benefit St. Dunstan's Greek Theatre

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook presents "Heart and Music: Broadway's Best in Song" — a musical revue fundraiser to benefit lighting equipment improvements for the Cranbrook outdoor Greek Theatre.

Performances 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Feb. 6-6 and Feb. 12-13 at the theater 400 Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills. Tickets are \$15 per person (show only), \$30 per person, reception and show, call (248) 644-0527 or (248) 584-0888.

Cabaret-style seating will be available in the front section of the theater for patrons who make a donation of \$30 or more per ticket. These patrons are also invited to attend a reception prior to the performance. Standard seating is also available for a ticket price of \$15 each.

The event features music: An evening of Broadway favorites, old and new including songs

**"Heart and Music: Broadway's Best in Song" will enable St. Dunstan's to make substantial enhancements to the quality of lighting in the Greek Theatre.'**

*Amy Lynn Smith*  
St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild, vice president

from "Rent," "Les Miserables," "Ragtime," "Miss Saigon" and many other well-known musicals.

"And the show has plenty of heart, thanks to the talented performers, directors and production staff who are contributing their time and talents to creating a truly memorable evening in support of a great cause," said Amy Lynn Smith, vice president of St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild.

The Cranbrook Greek Theatre is one of only a handful of Greek-style amphitheaters in the entire country.

"Heart and Music: Broadway's Best in Song" will enable St. Dunstan's to make substantial enhancements to the quality of lighting in the Greek Theatre — to better showcase the beauty and majesty of this glorious outdoor theatre, said Smith.

"Heart and Music: Broadway's Best in Song" stars Kim Brown, Kendall Doman, Jeff Drewno, Krystyn Irvine, Joey Johnson, Peggy Lee, Scott McDonald, Jamie Richards, Nicki Stacey. Jamie Richards is directing the show, music director is Marlene Loucks, choreographer is John Mettello.



Rehearsing: St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook cast members rehearse for the opening of "Heart and Music: Broadway's Best in Song."

# Strong performances key Bonstelle's 'The Piano Lesson'

August Wilson's "The Piano Lesson" continues through Feb. 7 at the Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit on the campus of Wayne State University. Tickets \$8 to \$10, call (313) 577-2960.

BY SUE SUCHTIA  
SPECIAL WRITER

Set in 1936 Pittsburgh, "The Piano Lesson" explores the struggle of an African American family over their reverence for the past and their dreams for the future.

Boy Willie has a one time chance to buy the land he has farmed for others for many years. He realizes that selling the family's heirloom, a hand-carved piano, will give him enough money to buy the deed and his dream. However, his sister Berniece won't part with it because the piano is carved with the images of their ancestors, and endowed with their spirits — indeed, her father died taking



Drama: Joel Steingold as Boy Willie and Judi Williams as his sister Berniece, in a scene from "The Piano Lesson."

the piano from the descendants of their ancestors, slays owners. The struggle between the piano's significance to their past and the

a better future are key to the story.

However, playwright Wilson's story, as rich as its characterizations and narratives are, becomes weighed down with lengthy dialogues — there are simply more stories and back-ground than the story needs. After developing all of the characters and letting the audience watch the clash of wills build to a crescendo, Wilson ends the play with a disappointing short-cut allowing supernatural forces, instead of the forces of his strong characters, to resolve their difficult conflict. Even though his characters treated the supernatural as believable elements in their lives, he sells them short by not letting them reach their own resolution, however painful and wrenching.

Joel Steingold, who recently turned in a strong performance

as Van Helsing in "Dracula," carried the same charisma and powerfulness into the role of Boy Willie. Fiercely intent on buying the farm he has worked as a sharecropper, his energy fills the stage, and his single-minded purpose comes across strong and forcefully.

Guest actress Judi Williams matches him as Berniece, the strong-willed sister whose quiet will matches Boy Willie's vocal anger.

Isiah Davis III as Doaker is a natural to his role of the older and wiser relative, delivering the

wisdom of experience in a quiet yet firm, impossible to ignore, manner. He serves as the buffer between Boy Willie's headstrong anger and Berniece's steadfast stubbornness.

Technically, there was some carelessness. Although the windows were backlit to denote day and night, the characters always stepped out the front door into a pitch black night. And after Berniece filled a tea kettle at the tap, she removed it from the stove less than a minute later — not enough time to even take the chill off.

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