

## THEATER

## Great cast, set, costumes in 'Never the Sinner'

Jewish Ensemble Theatre presents "Never the Sinner," through Sunday March 7. Performances 7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday and Sunday, 8 p.m. Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday, at the Aaron DeRoy Theatre, lower level of the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple Road at Drake, West Bloomfield. Community forums follow Thursday evening and Sunday matinee performances. Featured speakers include Mort Crim, George Cantor, and Clementine Barfield of So Sad. Call for details. \$13-\$23, discounts for seniors/students. (248) 788-2900.

BY HELEN ZUCKER  
SPECIAL WRITER

The Jewish Ensemble Theatre has staged a great looking production of John Logan's "Never the Sinner." Innovatively directed by John M. Manfredi, the production is sometimes absorbing, sometimes tract-like. The trouble lies in Logan's script. Perhaps it's impossible to take a fresh look at young men who think they're superior enough to murder a child, commit the perfect murder, are accountable to no one, etc.

We've all heard these Wagnerian, Nietzschean philosophies somewhere, and their shadow



In the act: John Hawkinson (left) as Richard Loeb and David Wolber, Nathan Leopold, in a scene from "Never the Sinner."

floats over the play like the image of the hawk Nathan

Leopold opens Act 1 with. David Wolber shines as 18-

year-old Nathan Leopold who drives the car while his best

friend, 19-year-old Richard Loeb, murders 14-year-old Bobby Frank. John Hawkinson as Loeb gives us a nervous, laughing playboy, a ladies man who feels for no one except his best friend.

Leopold agrees to share in criminal acts for sex and the two seal their pact with a ferocious kiss. It doesn't startle anyone; the two seem to have had this pact since early childhood. They both have too much money, no sense of what to do with it, and all the time and freedom in the world. This doesn't have to be grounds for the growth of little murderers, but Logan's script leaves us uncertain about what he thinks of these circumstances.

Hal Youngblood brings a sense of mercy, brains, and world-weariness to the role of Clarence Darrow. The trouble is, we've heard these splendid speeches about great intellectuals who are really ten year old boys at heart. It all sounds like Germany in the 1930s, rather than Chicago in 1924. Darrow gets Loeb and Leopold 99 years and life, and it gives the author a chance to speculate that these two would grow up to be, as Leopold says, "Comfortable, quite ordinary." It's Hannah Arendt on the banality of evil.

Greg Trzaskoma is strong as Robert Crowe, the State's Attor-

ney who wants the death penalty. Trzaskoma makes quoting the Bible seem naive; he's a perfect foil for Darrow's sophistication, and he knows it.

Carey Grim is very strong as Dicky Loeb's main girlfriend, Germaine, and as Reporter #2. Grim strides across the stage with great confidence and seems to be in every pressroom in Chicago.

Lewis Bowen is very fine as Reporter #1; he walks like a brash, cocky man. When Bowen thanks Loeb for an interview, his eyes shine at the story he's gotten.

Jim Shanley is quietly terrific as Reporter #3, and as Dr. White who understands why the killing took place, but isn't interested in the sanity of either Leopold or Loeb.

Evelyn Orbach's artistic direction was superb. The set by West End Studios was inventive, so were scenes and props by Monika Essen, lights by Rita Girardi, and sound by Brett Rominger.

Mary Anne Davis was a fine production stage manager and Ernest McDaniel deserves kudos for tech director. But Edith Leavia Bookstein deserves a round of applause for costume design. I loved the clothes. I could almost imagine Dick Loeb being worried about his suit.

## Oratorio Society concert traces Bach's influence on Stravinsky

Detroit Oratorio Society presents "An Evening with Bach and Stravinsky," 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26, at Kirk in the Hills, 1340 Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills (west of Telegraph Road). Tickets: \$25 (reserved); \$18 (general); \$10 (students); (248) 650-2655.

BY FRANK PROVENZANO  
STAFF WRITER  
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In a short program including two indelible Baroque musical pieces, the Detroit Oratorio Society will offer listeners a gateway to understanding the influence of J.S. Bach on Russian-born Igor Stravinsky, considered among the most influential composers of the 20th century.

The concert, "An Evening With Bach and Stravinsky," will be performed Friday at Kirk in the Hills in Bloomfield Hills.

During the last year, DOS has broadened its repertoire beyond their highly anticipated annual Christmas-time performance of Handel's "Messiah."

On Friday, the 24-member

choir will perform Bach's "Lobet den Herrn," followed by Stravinsky's "Symphony of Psalms," a strikingly spiritual work inspired by the composer's return to his religious roots after escaping Soviet persecution.

The performance of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's Flute Concerto in d minor will feature Joshua Smith, principal flutist of the Cleveland Orchestra.

The upcoming concert features the return to the area of DOS cofounder, Mark Kaczmarczyk, who currently teaches at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

The program offers familiar and challenging pieces, said Kaczmarczyk. "There's always a danger to program works that are too comfortable for the audience."

The 400-seat venue at Kirk in the Hills contains the type of diverse acoustics that allows for the spacious sound of the Bach music as well as the tight string sound of Stravinsky, said Kaczmarczyk.

Bach's influence on Stravinsky can be heard in the modern adaptation of the disciplined Baroque style, which initially had a profound influence on,

Mozart.

In many ways, the success of the DOS reflects the depth and range of the local arts community.

"Most major cities have three tiers of musical groups," said Kaczmarczyk. "Here, there's MOT and DOS on level one, the Detroit Chamber Winds on the second level, then our group."

Many of the 40 members of DOS maintain jobs outside of music. "For singers in the metro area, DOS gives them the chance to practice their art."

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Mark Kaczmarczyk,  
Detroit Oratorio Society co-founder

## Correction Notice

In our February 21<sup>st</sup> ad, we advertised a Sprint PCS phone (model QCP2700) and promotion which included a '30 mail-in rebate, 500 bonus minutes and free long distance.

Unfortunately, this phone and service plan are unavailable due to manufacturing delays.

We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused.



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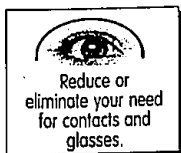
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