

THEATER

'I Remember Mama' is a heartwarming comedy

'The Players Guild of Dearborn presents John van Druten's "I Remember Mama" 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, March 26-27 and 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 28 at the theater, 21730 Madison (near the southeast corner of Monroe and Outer Drive) Dearborn. Tickets \$11, call (313) 561-TKTS, or (410) 277-5164 for directions or information.

BY SUZ SUCHYTA
SPECIAL WRITER

Director Harold Jurkiewicz, distinguished Guild alumnus and Broadway veteran, has assembled a talented cast for the Guild's heartwarming production of "I Remember Mama."

Set in turn-of-the-century San

Francisco, "I Remember Mama" is a touching and amusing look at an immigrant Norwegian family's life and times as seen by a young girl as she approaches adulthood. Steeped in family warmth and the American dream, the play is a tribute to the many founding families who sought a new life on American soil.

Jurkiewicz has created a strong, cohesive cast with distinctive, standout personalities, even among the children. Patricia La Framboise is warmly believable as the steadfast and determined matriarch of her clan. Richard Bulleri is the proud patriarch and loving

father, exuding an accented version of "Father Knows Best."

The children are delightful and distinct: Lauraclady Plague's optimistic and energetic Degmar, Alaina Roniewicz's sullen, yet perceptive, Christine, Jeff Ostrowski's steadfast Nola, and Alicia Ryan in the role as both the adult and child Katrin, the dramatic daughter who longs to be a writer, whose memories narrate the play. Their cousin Arno was played with enthusiasm by Derrick Marshall. Bill Runley is a delightful curmudgeon as Uncle Chris, the gruff and bellowing uncle who enjoys frightening annoying relatives while cementing friendly

alliances with the children on the sly. Runley captured the character's impatience, subterfuges, accent and limp with finesse.

Ron Deihl's cowering and nervous Mr. Thorkelson generated appreciative laughter, as did the double-talk and antics of the three judgmental nuns, humorously portrayed by Betty Barryman, Saundra Sanburn and Elma Johnson.

The onstage appearance of master carpenter Gordon

Mosley's vintage automobile replica, with superb sound effects, nearly stole the show. A labor of love, the auto toiled across the stage, evoking the delight of the audience. Set designer Dave Reynolds senior's unique scrim upstage of the family's main room facilitated an interesting perspective of arriving and departing guests.

Most of the costumes looked good and were well-suited to the era, with a few notable exceptions such as Christine's black

bodiced 1970s vintage granny dress in the opening scene, Katrin's classmates' ill-fitting outfits, and the walk-on's overdone hedge-podge attire.

The stage crew was noisy and slow, and dropped a bed, wrestled with a table, and could be heard to be talking in the wings. The lighting crew brought the stage lights up prematurely several times opening night, catching crew members still on stage. Hopefully, they will cede the comedy to the actors.

'Dearly Departed' funny

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook presents "Dearly Departed," a comedy by David Bottrill and Jessie Jones, 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, March 26-27 at the theater, 400 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Tickets \$12, senior citizens and students, \$10, call (248) 644-0527.

BY MARY JANE DOKER
SPECIAL WRITER

After the opening lines of the first scene of St. Dunstan's comedy "Dearly Departed," it is perfectly clear. The play is not nearly as funny as it seems. At the funeral of this family patriarch, there are tears — tears of laughter. Surly and mean is the way Raynelle describes her dead husband. The deadpan manner Sally Garrison delivered her lines as Raynelle makes the show funny.

What makes it even funnier is the way each person in the Turpin family acts when their father, Bud, drops dead after his wife, Raynelle, reads him a condemning letter from his rebellious sister, Marguerite.

Definitely these people don't represent the upper echelon of Southern society or Southern hospitality. What they do represent is the uncouth, natural sentiments of everyday people. In their truthfulness and absence of malice is an appeal that directors Sally Garrison and Marlene Loucks have captured with simplicity.

Ed Guest is both Bud, and son Ray-Bud. While playing Bud, not too difficult since he dies within a few moments of the opening curtain, playing Ray-Bud takes the finesse of simplicity to portray this utterly uncomplicated, would-be macho, and good-looking blue collar worker. Cheryl Scheraga is outstanding as his kindly wife Lucille. Co-director Sally Garrison is Mother Raynelle, matronly and compassionate, yet with evenly timed and punctuated lines that always bring in the laughs.

Kimberly Parlove and Jeffrey Beasly are perfectly matched as Suzanne and Junior, consumed with their marital discord and disobedient children. Parlove is annoying as the nit-picky wife,

and Beasly is so totally distracted by this economic and domestic discord, it is hard to realize he is acting.

Then there is the self-righteous, irritating Marguerite, played to perfection by Betsie Robinson. As Marguerite who is always ready with a satirical and degrading remark for everyone, Robinson's performance adds to the success of the play. Ned Schneider does a masterful job of playing the triple roles of Norval, and Clyde and Reverend Hooker whose wisdom will hardly hook anyone into believing. Elizabeth A. Robinson is delightful in the role as Delight simply because she is so undelicious. She blows bubble gum bubbles well, too. Linda Parker Watson does a memorable performance as both Veda and the floozy Juanita. Kimberly Parlove, Elizabeth Robinson, and Cheryl Scheraga do well as the trio "Joy of Life Singers."

Carl Parlove has the fun of being Royce, the son of the irritating Marguerite, and does it with charm.

Show spotlights DIA program

BACKSTAGE PASS



ANN DELISI

Maybe I'm just happy to be back in this space after a Backstage Pass hiatus due to Detroit Public TV's March pledge drive. Why also would I think of a booky Steve Martin routine as I sorted through the interesting local arts and music offerings around town.

In the 1970s, with disillusionment over Vietnam and Watergate at its peak, Steve donned one of those narrow-through-the-head novelty hats and strummed a banjo in a comedy act that some critics attacked as silly. Maybe that was why it went over so well. Steve maintained that it was impossible to be sad while playing a banjo.

Although his contention remains unconfirmed by the psychiatric community, it was a memorable spoof of the entertainment industry at a time when everybody seemed to need

a laugh. If the arrow didn't grab 'em, maybe the banjo would. That philosophy is certainly evident this week as Backstage Pass presents some innovative approaches in the performing and visual arts. Let's start with the Detroit Institute of Arts. Not content with using the drawing power of such high profile exhibits as the current Gordon Parks retrospective to boost attendance, the DIA is attracting families with Hudson's First Fridays. When you add a hands-on workshop, a world music series and other activities to the impressive galleries and exhibits, it becomes a fascinating and affordable entertainment package.

"It's snowballing. Since we started in November, we're getting more folks each month. Many are repeat visitors, but the diversity of the music and activities is attracting a whole new audience with every event," says Elaine Adams, coordinator of the DIA's First Fridays.

In an industry where critics laud the innovative and scorn the derivative, it's little surprise

that the New Orleans Klezmer All Stars are receiving praise from both musicians and the media. John Popper of Blues Traveler calls it the most brilliant music since P-Funk, while the Chicago Sun Times hailed the soaring melodies and funky backbeats for helping to create new musical traditions. Now, let me get this straight. It's traditional Jewish music of celebration, mixed with funk and blues, performed in venerable folk houses like the Ark in Ann Arbor. But wait, there's more, I'll throw in the bamboo steamer and the pocket fisherman. You can get an earful of the New Orleans Klezmer All Stars during a Channel 66 studio performance, along with visits to the DIA and Chris Turner's PASS edition, running Sunday, March 28 at 5:30 p.m. and repeated Thursday, 5:30 p.m. and Friday at midnight on Detroit Public Television.

Whether it's the arts, business, or relationships, few things in life thrive without innovation. In other words, if Steve's approach worked for him, maybe we all should try it.

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

National Amusements Showcase Cinemas Shoreline Plaza 1.1 2150 N. Oakdale Rd. Between University & Walton Blvd. 248-373-2660 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows 12:00 p.m. Continuous Shows Daily Late Shows Wed-Thurs, Fri, Sat. NP DEBOTES NO PASS NP THE KING AND I (C) NP FORCES OF NATURE (PG-13) NP TRUE CRIME (R) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN (PG-13) NP THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) ANALYZE THIS (R) CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) 8 MM (R) PATRICK (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	One Valley Warm & Wayne Rds. 313-425-7700 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows 12:00 p.m. Continuous Shows Daily Late Shows Wed-Thurs, Fri, Sat. PATRICK (R) NP THE OTHER SISTER (PG-13) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) 8 MM (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Star Southfield 12 Mile between Telegraph and Northwestern, Off I-96 248-313-STAR No one under age 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 p.m. NP FORCES OF NATURE (PG-13) NP TRUE CRIME (R) NP THE KING AND I (C) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN (PG-13) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) NP ANALYZE THIS (R) NP CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) 8 MM (R) NP THE OTHER SISTER (PG-13) NP MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE (PG-13) NP FAVORITE MARTIAN (PG) NP SHAKEPEARE IN LOVE (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Yucca & Mastercard Accepted Terrace Cinema 30400 Plymouth Rd. 313-261-3330 All shows 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. All shows 12:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. & 9:00 p.m. Would you like to see first looks? Then become a "FREQUENT VIEWER!" COME IN AND FIND OUT HOW Box Office opens at 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday only CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
Shoreline Deacons 1.1 Michigan & Telegraph 313-561-3449 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows 12:00 p.m. Continuous Shows Daily Late Shows Fri, Sat. & Sun. NP DEBOTES NO PASS NP THE KING AND I (C) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) ANALYZE THIS (R) CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) 8 MM (R) BABY GENIUS (PG) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Star Westchester 11365 Rochester Rd., Westchester 248-656-1160 No one under age 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 p.m. NP THE KING AND I (C) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP THE OTHER SISTER (PG-13) 8 MM (R) ANALYZE THIS (R) NP FAVORITE MARTIAN (PG) SAYING PRIVATE IRAN (R) PRINCE OF EGYPT (PG) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Birmingham Theatre 211 S. Woodward Downtown Birmingham 248-644-3419 NP Debut No Pass Engagements Order Movie tickets by phone! Call 44-3419 and have your Visa or MasterCard ready! (A 1% surcharge will apply to all telephone sales) NP TRUE CRIME (R) NP TRUE CRIME (R) NP THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN (PG-13) NP FAVORITE MARTIAN (PG) CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) SHAKEPEARE IN LOVE (R) MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE (PG-13) 8 MM (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Maple Art Cinema III 4135 W. Maple West & Telegraph 248-815-9090 DISCOUNTED SHOWS! WAREHOUSING DEBOTES (PG) CENTRAL STATION (R) THE LAST DAYS (R) LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (PG-13) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
Shoreline Portville 1.5 Telegraph Rd. East side of 810-332-0241 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows 12:00 p.m. Continuous Shows Daily NP DEBOTES NO PASS NP THE KING AND I (C) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) ANALYZE THIS (R) CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) 8 MM (R) BABY GENIUS (PG) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Star John B. 3229 John B. Road 248-285-2070 No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 p.m. TRUE CRIMES (R) NP FORCES OF NATURE (PG-13) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN (PG-13) CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) 8 MM (R) PATRICK (R) SHAKEPEARE IN LOVE (R) LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (PG-13) SAYING PRIVATE IRAN (R) PRINCE OF EGYPT (PG) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	United Artists Oakland Inside Oakland Mall 248-968-9706 JUST THE TICKET (R) CENTRAL STATION (R) THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) WING COMMANDER (PG-13) STEP MOM (PG-13) OFFICE SPACE (R) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Maple Art Cinema III 4135 W. Maple West & Telegraph 248-815-9090 DISCOUNTED SHOWS! WAREHOUSING DEBOTES (PG) CENTRAL STATION (R) THE LAST DAYS (R) LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (PG-13) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES
Shoreline Portville 6.12 4035 Telegraph Rd. East side of 810-332-0241 Bargain Matinee Daily All Shows 12:00 p.m. Continuous Shows Daily Late Shows Fri, Sat. & Sun. NP DEBOTES NO PASS NP THE KING AND I (C) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) ANALYZE THIS (R) CRUEL INTENTIONS (R) 8 MM (R) BABY GENIUS (PG) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Star Westchester 11365 Rochester Rd., Westchester 248-656-1160 No one under 6 admitted for PG-13 & R rated films after 6 p.m. NP THE KING AND I (C) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP THE OTHER SISTER (PG-13) 8 MM (R) ANALYZE THIS (R) NP FAVORITE MARTIAN (PG) SAYING PRIVATE IRAN (R) PRINCE OF EGYPT (PG) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	United Artists 334 Oaks Inside Twelve Oaks Mall 248-349-4311 RAVENOUS (PG) NP BABY GENIUS (PG) NP THE RAGE: CARRIE 2 (R) NP SHAKEPEARE IN LOVE (R) PATRICK (R) NP CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES	Waterford Cinema III 7501 Highland Rd. S.E. corner 16-59 & Williams Lake Rd. 248-666-7900 24 Hour Movie Line (248) 666-7900 CALL 77 FRANKS FIRST Stadium Seating and Digital sound Makes for the Best Movie Experience in Oakland County \$125 (TWO) LOTS SHOWS DAILY NP THE KING AND I (C) NP FORCES OF NATURE (PG-13) NP TRUE CRIME (R) NP WING COMMANDER (PG-13) NP THE CORRUPTOR (R) NP CARRIE 2: THE RAGE (R) NP ANALYZE THIS (R) NP THE OTHER SISTER (PG-13) NP FAVORITE MARTIAN (PG) SHE'S ALL THAT (PG-13) CALL FOR COMPLETE LISTINGS AND TIMES

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