

FRIDAY



Tania Velinsky as Little Red Riding Hood shares food with Granny, (played by Diane Dillard of Troy) in Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods," presented by Ridgedale Players, 8 p.m. at the theater, 205 W. Long Lake Road, Troy. Tickets \$13, call (248) 988-7049.

SATURDAY

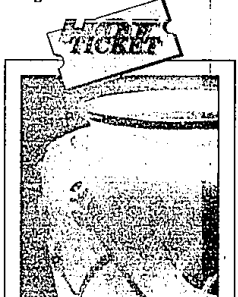


The Renaissance Chorus of the Wayne Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America presents "The Ballad of Frank & Nellie: A Story of Love Alive!" a spoof on the Frankenstein monster story 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. at Mercy High School, 29300 11 Mile Road (at Middlebelt Road), Farmington Hills. Tickets \$10 for matinee, \$12 evening performance, call Jerry Beamish, (734) 427-9140 or John Lynn, (313) 937-1322.

SUNDAY



See the "Rugrats - A Live Adventure" 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$12.50, \$19.50 and \$25. Call (313) 983-6611 for information, or (248) 433-1515 to charge tickets.



The Birmingham Fine Art Festival, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, May 8, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 9 in Shain Park, downtown Birmingham, features 300 artists including glass by Annette Baroo. Admission is free. For more information, call the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, (248) 644-0866.

More than a dancing image



Big step: The Paul Taylor Dance Company performs classic and new pieces from its expansive repertoire, including a tango, entitled "Piazzolla Caldera."

Paul Taylor Dance Co. considered world's pre-eminent contemporary troupe performs at Detroit Opera House

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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OK, maybe image is everything. At least that's the initial impression for anyone not thoroughly familiar with the Paul Taylor Dance Company.

Perhaps it's a sign of their prominence in the rarified world that the New York-based troupe assumes that audiences will know about their history, and the knighted "genius" whose name is on the company.

Didn't know that the Paul Taylor dancers have performed in more than 400 cities in 60 countries? Perhaps you are uninformed about last year's Academy Award nominated documentary, "Dance Maker," about Taylor and his anointed group of dancers?

Forget about first impressions. Get ready for the lasting kind this Thursday through Sunday as the Paul Taylor Dance Company returns to Detroit after a nearly two-decade absence.

The concert is the season finale in an impressive dance series presented by the Michigan Opera Theatre.

"They are acknowledged as the preeminent contemporary dance company in the world," said Bradley Stroud, director of dance at the Michigan Opera Theatre.

OK, so maybe there's more than just image.

In the beginning

The evolution of dance over the last 50 years can be traced through Taylor's soloist days with Martha Graham Dance Company

WHAT: Paul Taylor Dance Company
WHEN: Thursday-Sunday, May 6-9
TICKETS: 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday: \$15-\$42; Sunday, May 9: \$12-\$15
WHERE: Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway (at Madison Ave.), Detroit
TICKETS: \$15-\$42, call (313) 237-SING or (248) 645-6666

Program

- Thursday & Saturday -
 - Mercurio Tidings
 - Eventide
 - Piazzolla Caldera
- Friday & Sunday -
 - Arden Court
 - Sunset
 - Cloven Kingdom

to his prolific work as a choreographer.

"He was there at the beginning of the creation of contemporary dance," said Stroud of Birmingham.

Today, Taylor's choreography is included in the repertoires of nearly every major dance company.

This weekend, the versatile dance troupe will perform a mixed-repertoire program, including Taylor's classic "Cloven Kingdom" and "Arden Court," and newer works, "Eventide" and "Piazzolla Caldera."

Not familiar with any of these dances? Keep it to yourself.

In particular, the show-stopping "Piazzolla Caldera," a spicy piece of tango set to flashy lights and performed in tantalizing costumes, demonstrates how Taylor incorpo-

rates a popular dance step into his own style.

"Every piece is entertaining," said Stroud. "You don't have to tear them apart to figure out what it was about. There's humor in every piece."

Broadening appeal

In contrast to the traditional pieces of American Ballet Theatre, who has performed "Giselle" and "Don Quixote" at the Detroit Opera House over the last year, the Paul Taylor dancers offer "challenging techniques" that draw on contemporary dance and social influences, said Stroud.

"Everything in Paul Taylor's choreography is pertinent to what's going on in the world around him," he said.

Of course, it helps that many of the 16 dancers have been in the company since the early 1990s. In the dance world, where athleticism and stamina seem to fade with each passing performance, that's far from typical.

During the last two years, Michigan Opera Theatre's dance series has set out to broaden its appeal.

The intention of trendy dance shows like "Blue Suede Shoes," set to the music of Elvis Presley, and "Dracula" were attempts to get the attention of nontraditional dance audiences.

Apparently, with subscriptions and single-ticket sales increasing, the market strategy has been modestly successful.

"Our theory is to bring the very best in dance," said Stroud. "If people see something really good, chances are they'll come back."



Canadian Brass: Members are (back row, left to right) Chris Cooper on horn, Jens Lindemann on trumpet; (center) Ronald Romm on trumpet; and (front row, left to right) Charles Daellenbach on tuba, Eugene Watts on trombone.

Canadian Brass serious about having fun

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
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The Brass just want to have fun. "It's not just a job," trumpeters Jens Lindemann and Ronald Romm, hornist Chris Cooper, trombonist Eugene Watts and tubist Charles Daellenbach are serious classical musicians. Known collectively worldwide as The Canadian Brass, the musicians aren't above a little showmanship.

In the early years they'd rise to the occasion of a fanfare by standing on their chairs. That was the beginning of a "reputation" in some circles.

"When we did Tanglewood for the first time, they said to us 'This is serious, no totus or anything, we want a serious brass concert,'" said Brass co-founder Eugene Watts. "Then we saw the ad in the New York Times for the summer season and it was a picture of me in a tutu."

The Brass will bring their wit and their musicianship (though not their tutus) to Ann Arbor's Hill Auditorium May 8 as this year's University Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award winners.

Watts promises that the "distinguished artists" won't hesitate to dress appropriately for a bit of "Carmen."

"It's quite an honor," Watts said seriously. "We've been thrilled to be a part of it. The hall is so incredible. It's been a joy and the award just adds to it."

The Brass, now in their 28th year, have appeared under the UMS auspices nine times, most recently in February 1998.

The award recognizes the group for their musicianship and for their involvement with musical education. The group actually began by playing at schools throughout southern Ontario in the early 1970s.

In 1998, working with the Music Educators' National Conference, they hosted "The World's Largest Concert" on PBS for the second consecutive year.

Please see BRASS, E2

WHAT: The Canadian Brass honored as UMS Distinguished Artists
WHERE: Hill Auditorium on the campus of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
WHEN: 6 p.m. Saturday, May 8
TICKETS: \$15-\$50. Call the box office at (734) 764-2538 or (800) 221-1229.
SPECIAL: Gala package with appetizer, dinner, afterglow and concert available for \$300 to \$1,000. For information, call (734) 936-6837.

COMMUNITY THEATER

Plymouth Theatre Guild scares audience with season finale

"Wait Until Dark"

WHAT: Frederick Knott's thriller about three ex-concels trying to retrieve a doll filled with heroin from a blind woman. Not recommended for children under age 12.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, May 7-8 and Thursday-Sunday, May 13-15, and 6 p.m. Sunday, May 9.

WHERE: Water Tower Theatre, 41001 W. Seven Mile Road, (west of I-275 between Haggerty and Northville Roads) on the campus of the Northville Psychiatric Hospital.

TICKETS: \$9, \$8 advance. Call (248) 349-7110.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Sarah Wiercioch is having a good time playing the brat who eventually becomes the "eyes" of Susy Hendrix, a blind woman fighting for her life in Frederick Knott's thriller "Wait Until Dark."

In the first scene of the Plymouth Theatre Guild production, Wiercioch literally throws a temper tantrum. But it's only a part the 10-year-old is playing says mom Susan. Sarah doesn't act like that at home.

"My favorite part is yelling when I'm throwing things," said Wiercioch. "This is my first

Please see FINALE, E2



Nasty character: Keith Prusak, as Harry Roat Jr., is the mastermind who will go to any lengths, including murder, to get what he wants.



Heart stopping: Sarah Wiercioch plays Gloria, a little girl who becomes the "eyes" of a blind woman in the thriller "Wait Until Dark."



In the dark: Ariana Prusak is Susy Hendrix, a blind woman put to the ultimate test of fighting for her life.