

'Romeo and Juliet' is met with mixed sentiments

Wayne State University's Bonstelle Theatre presents Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Lavinia Moyer, 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Dec. 10-11, 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12. Tickets are \$8-10. The Bonstelle Theatre is at 3424 Woodward Ave. in Detroit. For tickets or additional information, call (313) 677-2960.

BY RIZ SUCHITTA
SPECIAL WRITER

The Bonstelle Theatre, Wayne State's undergraduate theatre company, presents Shakespeare's tragic romance *Romeo and Juliet* for one more weekend. Lavinia Moyer, one of Detroit's most celebrated theatre artists, returns to Detroit to direct the show.

The show opens in Verona, a city teeming with tension due to an ongoing feud between the Montagues and Capulets. The city's ruler angrily issues edicts to keep the peace, but both sides remain primed for battle. Into this conflict, Romeo, a Montague, and Juliet, a Capulet, meet and fall in love. Their secret marriage, the surrounding violence and killings, and the haste of passions and tempers conspire to break hearts and destroy lives until the feud between the families is resolved.

Lavinia Moyer has chosen to set the play in what appears to be colonial India in the 1920s. English dress is mixed with East Indian garb. However, there was no true delineation of the classes, as both the nobility and ser-



Star-crossed and kissing:

Kavita Matani and Dean Cechvala share a passionate moment as the title characters in the Bonstelle Theatre's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. The show runs week-ends through Dec. 12. Call (313) 677-2960

vants wore clothing from both cultures, which lent itself to confusion. When Shakespeare's plays are set in another time period, the political/historical reason is usually highlighted through the costumes and setting. However, Moyer offers few clues why the costumes and the sets reflected the colonial East Indian culture instead of the traditional Elizabethan setting for the play.

The opening scene in the crowded marketplace was laudable for its excellent swordplay and well-choreographed fights, but the old English dialogue was not enunciated clearly enough, and too much of the dialogue was lost. Many of the smaller scenes

overcame the difficulties of speech clarity, and the actors were able to clearly convey the words of the immortal bard.

Dean Cechvala, a graduate of Clintonville High School, played Romeo with a lithe, dreamy approach, and he danced as well as he handled a sword. He was well-matched with Kavita Matani's Juliet. Matani, a graduate of Plymouth-Salem High School, used youthful exuberance and impatient joy to establish her character. The two wove a seductive chemistry between them, developing a quiet and intense passion without being frantically physically. Their expressions and embraces established the anguish and emotion-

al intensity of the star-crossed pair of lovers.

Michael East created a Mercutio who is part Fonz, part James Dean: reckless and bold, wise but driven by his emotions. He cut a sharp figure in leather and shades; one expected him to have a motorcycle in the wings. His swordplay exuded a fierce, concentrated energy.

The male ensemble was ready to rumble with their angry swordplay and fast paced, angry exchanges. Their choreography from a high energy ballet of leaps, thrusts and parries. They were equally stunning in tuxedo evening wear at the Capulet's ball. An opening tango captured the intrigue of the masque ball, and heightened the sexual tension during Romeo and Juliet's first encounter.

The roles of Romeo and Juliet's parents were not as well executed or developed. The actors were oddly and inconsistently costumed in clashing colors, and Lord and Lady Montague were little more than chess pieces on the stage. Lord and Lady Capulet had more opportunity to display emotion in their scenes, but were restrained in almost all of them.

The costumes are a garish blend of colors, with reds and pinks fighting with olive greens. East Indian clothing was overlapped with English garb. The music is an odd mix of East Indian, techno pop and classical. Sometimes it's right on. Other times it's irritating. The selections also come from different

time periods. More continuity needs to be observed to blend a pleasing audio tapestry.

The multi-level set was cleverly designed, with staircases on either side of the set, and move-

able pieces that served as altars, tables and tombs. Even the wall was scorable, as demonstrated by the agility of the male cast.

FARMINGTON HILLS MANOR
presents
THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE
NEW YEARS EVE 2000
7:00 PM-3:00 AM

- NIGHT CLUB STYLE
- PROGRESSIVE DINNER BUFFET
- FEATURING SUE & TONY AND POTATO BAR EXTRAVAGANZA
- PREMIUM OPEN BAR UNTIL 2:00 AM
- DESSERT & CAFFEINATED BAR
- CHAMPAGNE TOAST
- COMPLIMENTARY CENTURIAN KEYSAKE
- WATCH LIVE FROM NEW YORK THE BIG APPLE BRING IN THE MILLENNIUM
- BREAKFAST SERVED AT 2:00 AM

High Energy Non-Stop Live Entertainment featuring a complete Las Vegas Style production of GLITZ, GLEE and Glamour followed by one of Metro Detroit's Hottest Bands 'The Latin Countess' with 5 vocalists and horns. They will perform Motown at its best.

TICKETS
\$250 PER PERSON

CALL FOR RESERVATIONS • (248) 888-8000
Payment by Visa, MasterCard, Cash or Check
23666 Orchard Lake Road • Farmington Hills

'Martin Guerre' on fire at the Fisher Theatre

'Martin Guerre' continues through Sunday, Dec. 19 at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit. Performances 8 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday and 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Tickets \$15 to \$60.50, available at the box office, or call (248) 645-6666.

BY JON KATZ
SPECIAL WRITER

"Martin Guerre," the new musical from the creators of *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*, is artistically magnificent. Its Broadway run at the Fisher Theatre is historically significant.

It's not a Fisher world premiere like *Heidi Dolly* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. It's not even an American premiere; the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis was the show's first stop in the states after a successful tour in England.

However, the Fisher's traditional proscenium stage, unlike the Guthrie's thrust stage, more closely resembles that of a Broadway theatre. Following the Guthrie run the show had to be totally re-blocked. Other changes will be made based on its three-week stay here. The Fisher is thus entitled to a share of trout bragging rights.

And brag they should, as *"Martin Guerre"* will surely take its place alongside *Les Mis* and *Saigon* as an amazing achievement in theatre. With a major-league cast, music and lyrics you will remember on the way home and long after, and a love story that has survived for almost a half-millennium, *"Martin"* is a mega-musical for the ages.

The show is based on the true story of Martin (Hugh Panaro), a 14-year-old boy in the 16th century French village of Arleat who does not consummate his marriage to Bertrande (Southfield native Erin Dilly). Accused by jealous rival Guillaume (Jose Liann) and the suspicious Catholic villagers of incurring the wrath of God on their crops, Martin flees to become a soldier in the Religious Wars.

Seven years later, when Martin is stabbed in battle, he asks best friend Arnaud (Stephen Buntrock), as a final wish, to tell Bertrande that he's sorry. Arriving in Arleat, Arnaud is mistaken for Martin. He's also hailed as a hero because life-giving rains arrive at the same time.

Three months after that, Arnaud and Bertrande have fallen in love and conceived a child. That would be just lovely if it was the end of Act 2. It's not. Martin didn't die on that battlefield. He comes back a man in all respects and wants what's his. What does the law have to say about it? When, if ever, did Bertrande know whom she was sleeping with? And to what lengths will Guillaume go to eliminate both men once and for all?

Producer Cameron Mackintosh, composers Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg and lyricist Stephen Clark sought not

to equal *"Les Mis"* and *"Miss Saigon"* as an epic production. *"Martin"* is a much more intimate story and is told on an appropriately smaller scale. There is no barricade, no helicopter. There is, however, a 12-ton set piece by John Napier that will not disappoint special effects fans. We'll just call it *"The Wall"* and leave the details for your enjoyment.

Panaro, Buntrock and our own Erin Dilly had better, like New York; they'll be there for a long

■ 'Martin' is a much more intimate story

time following the show's scheduled April 2000 opening. They are exciting, attractive and extraordinary performers. Jose Liann earned his huge ovation as Guillaume, and Michael Arnold as village fool Benoit was a particular favorite in this most sensitive role.

There are at least three poten-

tial breakout songs in the score. "How Many Tears," Bertrande's solo, will be an audition standard for a generation, much like "I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Mis*. "Live With Somebody You Love" and "Without You as a Friend" are the men's duets. You can expect to hear them all as pop recordings when word gets out.

It will likely be two years before *"Martin Guerre"* comes back on a road tour. See it now. You'll treasure the memory.

BIRMINGHAM BLOOMFIELD ArtCenter Gallery Shop

Is the place to shop for all your gift giving needs this holiday season and every season. Hand crafted holiday merchandise is in stock now and includes:

Ceramic tiles, evening bags, handmade dolls, ornaments, hand-dyed silk scarves, handmade photo albums, fine gold and silver jewelry with precious stones, hand blown glass, perfume bottles, photographs and paintings.

Holiday Sales Schedule

"Small Works" fine art sale

November 23 thru December 30 - DeSalle Gallery

Glass Sale

November 26, 27 & 28 - Robinson Gallery

Jewelry Sale

November 26, 27 & 28 - Robinson Gallery

Fiber Sale

December 2, 3 & 4

Extended Holiday Hours

Monday - Thursday, 9:00 am - 7:00 pm

Friday - Saturday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sundays in December, noon - 4:00 pm

MAKE THE BBAC YOUR SHOPPING DESTINATION

1516 South Cranbrook Road

Birmingham, Michigan 48009

(248) 644-0866

WWW.BBARTCENTER.ORG

SPONSORED BY THE OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS

Picasso
Graphic Magician
Prints from the Norton Simon Museum
Now through January 16, 2000

Trace the career and life of this starting and original 20th-century master through his print work.
Call 419-255-8000 for more information.

Public Access: Museum with Honor, September 1954
All works by Pablo Picasso ©1999 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artis Rights Society (ARS) New York.
The exhibition has been organized by the Norton Simon Museum and the G. S. & G. Center for Visual Arts at Bard College. The exhibition has been made possible by a generous grant from J. and J. P. Foundation.

The Toledo Museum of Art

HOLIDAY FAVORITE
Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*
adapted and directed by Charles Nolie
November 20—December 26

Meadow Brook Theatre
Oakland University's Professional Theatre
For tickets call the Box Office
(248) 377-3300
(Phone no. holds over 4)

Tickets also available at all Ticketmaster locations.
(248) 645-6666

Presented with the generous support of
GMAC
Financial Services

SEATS STILL AVAILABLE FOR THESE DATES!

Thursday, Dec. 2, 8:00 p.m.	Friday, Dec. 17, 8:00 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 3, 8:00 p.m.	Saturday, Dec. 18, 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 4, 2:00 p.m.	Saturday, Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 5, 2:00 p.m.	Sunday, Dec. 19, 2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m.	Sunday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 6, 8:00 p.m.	Tuesday, Dec. 21, 8:00 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 10, 8:00 p.m.	Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 11, 2:00 p.m.	Wednesday, Dec. 22, 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m.	Thursday, Dec. 23, 2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 12, 2:00 p.m.	Thursday, Dec. 23, 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.	Friday, Dec. 24, 2:00 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 16, 8:00 p.m.	Sunday, Dec. 26, 2:00 p.m.
	Sunday, Dec. 26, 6:30 p.m.