THEATER

SRO's 'Deathtrap' is a first-rate production

SRO Productions presents Ira Levin's "Dechtrap," 8 pm. Fri-days-Saturdays, Oct. 16-17, 23-24, and 2 pm. Sundays, Oct. 18 and 25, at The Burgh, northeast Burg Road, Southfield, Tickets 88, 87 seniors I children, call (248) 827-011. BY BON WEIBEL SPECLA WAILDER

"A story well calculated to keep you in suspense," introduced the popular "Suspense" series on radio and TV from the 1940s through the 1960s. It's a perfect description of SIO Productions' current show, "Deathrap" at The Burgh in Southfield. Ira Levin's classic mystery-thriller is the longest running play of its type in the history of Broadway, Unfortunately, SRO's "Deathrap" is scheduled to run only through Sunday, Oct. 25. It



(left) and Toby Booker in a scene from SRO Productions' "Deathtrap."

more. It's a first-rate

deserves more. It's a BEST-rate production.
The performers create riveting characters. Director, Ralph Rosati begins slowly, deliciously shapping a story of murder and intrigue, then building it to a dramatic ending. The excellent setting includes a spectacular

collection of lethal antique weapons (battle axes, crossbows, daggers, knives, awords and guns) – which you just know are going to be used.

Atmospherics are terrific. Splendid lightening and thunder provide just the right accent to a

dark and stormy night. Mood music is ceric, scary stuff by film composer, Bernard Herrmann ("Psycho," "Vertigo," "North by Northwest," "Journey to the Cen-ter of the Earth," and others).

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"Deathtrap" is a play within a play. A once successful play-wright, Sidney Brubl, is softering through a dry spell and embarrassing flops. His wife's fortune is about spent, when a writing protégic sends him a script for review, Sidney recognizes it as the perfect thriller—two acts, one set, five characters, a juicy murder in Act 1, unexpected developments in Act 11, sound construction, good dialogue, laughs in the right places, highly commercial. Guess what? These lines describe the "Deathtrap" that Levin has written and the audience is about to experience.

The play has more twists and turns than an aptieted boa constrictor, and takes you on a roller-conster ride of emotions. Sidney appears to con (not true into allowing him to collaborate on the certain bit (called of course, 'Deathtrap'). Deception and jealowsy ensue – and before the evening is over, we have at least three dead bodies (one more than once) and perhaps two more possibilities. And there are only five people in the east!

Joel Grossman scores big time as the scheming Sidney. This urbane man of wit and charm goes from joking about murder for fame and fortune – to actually planning one. Is it just an act? Linda Bodnar is very good as Myra Brull, the confused wife who almost has a heart attack when her bushund toos with the

idea of murder. What would it take for her to have the Big One? Keith Prusak gives a sterling performance as Clifford Anderson, the aspiring writer. At first, an innocent collaborator on a play, we learn he has a more sinster side. Does it include murder? Toby Booker effectively portrays Sidney's mild-mananered attorney, until he realizes he can get rich writing a play about the evening a events. Would he kill to get what he wants?

Judie Hill as the eccentric Dutch psychic, Helga Van Dorp, steals every scene she's in. The heavily accented clairvoyant warns of impending murders and fake murders to bring about real murders. Could she be attempting to deceive us all? My advice – don't believe anything you see until the last minute of

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Michigan Opera Theatre presents "Turandot," an opera by Glacomo Puecini 8 pm. FridgySaltriday, Oct. 16-17; 2 p.m. Sanday, Oct. 18 at the Detroit Opera
House, (corner of Madison Ave.
and Braadway, Detroit, a cross
from the Detroit Athletic Club
Teketes: S18. 595, add (21) 8747464 or (248) 645-6666
By MANY JANE DOERR

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In Chinese folklore, to know a In Chinese folklore, to know a man's name is to possess him. In Puccini's Chinese opera spectacular "furandot," to sing above an orchestra and chorus of hundreds with powerful high Cs is to possess the role.

dreds with powerful high Cs is to possess the role.

Soprano Alessandra Marciamed this role as her signature piece again Saturday evening for Michigan Opera Theatre's glorious season opener at the Detroit Opera House. Her performance is a vocal feat that sets her apart from others in that rare breed of dramatic sopranos. It is not the mere size of her incredible voice and the way she sustains the high notes over two grueling acts, but in the seven years since she last appeared here, her delivery has become more precise.

Her command of the stage is equaled by the formidable tenor Richard Margison as Calaf, the Unknown Prince. The interna-

lar acts.
"Turandot" is a gory tale of a heautiful ice princess. She reigns in terror by entieng her would-be suitors with three unanswerable riddee about hope and blood. Got the answers right, the suitors become husband and king.

All of them get the answers wrong and lose their heads like WJBK-FOX 2's Lee Thomus who played the ill-fated Prince of Per-sia. With all the heads on sticks, the scene might be the French Revolution.

This savingery take place at the Forbidden City in Peking, represented in a contemporarily plain set from the Washington Opera. Traditional in its lines (with the classic stairway to the dropped-down throne out, of the ceiling and flanking sides), the scenery did give Yuroslavian director Dejan Miladinovic a fibulous opportunity to feature his colorfully chad cast with dramatic lighting. The Ping, Pang, Pong scene (Frank Hernandez, Cesar

Ulloa, and Jerold Siena) was nicely accentuated. Most effec-tive was the chorus movements perfectly in synch with conductor Steven Mercurio's leadership in the orchestra pit.



