

# Meadow Brook's obsession with playing it safe

"Dangerous Obsession," a psychological thriller runs through *Saturday, Jan. 30 at Meadow Brook Theatre, Oakland University campus, Rochester Hills. Performances Wednesday-Sunday, curtain times vary. Tickets \$19.50-\$35, call (248) 377-3300, or Ticketmaster (248) 646-8888.*

BY FRANK PROVENZANO  
STAFF WRITER  
provenzano@oakhome.com.net

The most telling feature of "Dangerous Obsession" at Meadow Brook Theatre is that the onstage drama doesn't attract the slightest interest until the unwitting house guest pulls out a

handgun. He points it to force confessions and to demand nothing less than the truth from his unsuspecting hosts — or else. (No need to point the gun at a critic.)

That gun-toting premise, by the way, can be found in easy formulas for television dramas and insipid soap operas. Need a boost of dramatic urgency? Point a gun. Not exactly an original idea. And unfortunately, that bit of dramatic trickery comes at the end of the interminable first act, whereby the only anticipation is how many alcoholic drinks can be imbibed by the cast before intermission.

Once it's clear that the visitor,

## REVIEW

John Barrett (Robert Morgan), has arrived with a mission to confront the couple who he and his own wife. The review turns as it's revealed that Barrett's wife was in a "tragic" car accident. Who's to blame? Where's justice to be found? And for that matter, where was Mark Driscoll on that

fateful night?  
Darrett has his own ideas. He has arrived carrying a briefcase filled with bits of evidence to prove his case. Of course, he enforces his right to make a case by shooting off his gun every now and then and holding the Driscolls hostage to his plan. Barrett's intention straddles the line between an obsession and self-righteousness, but is never altogether believable.

Meanwhile, Mark and Sally Driscoll (Tracey Copeland) are coaxed into discussing their own tenuous bonds of marriage. And soon, it's their own relationship that's on trial. The notion of

mutual trust has long been discarded.  
But can the truth save them or bring on their demise? Never mind any statement about love, suspicion and the human condition. This play's resolution is something borrowed from a poll taken at a dinner theater production.

Dressed up as a domestic play about revenge and a psychological thriller, ultimately "Dangerous Obsession" suffers from a lack of plausibility.

The problems aren't with the production or the acting, but with N.J. Crisp's script filled with one too many cute and

nearly arrived at revelations.

It doesn't help that Meadow Brook attempted to make the play more intimate by localizing several of the locations within the drama. Apparently, noting that the Driscolls are from Grosse Pointe Park and that Barrett is from Royal Oak is intended to make the story appear less unlikely. Doesn't work.

Overall, "Dangerous Obsession" suffers from being overly neat and tidy, which makes it all too safe and predictable. Just like a made-for-TV movie. All that's missing are the commercial breaks.

## Fun from page E1

Lisa Andros of Livonia plays Rose Alvarez, the leading female role, while her daughter, Brooke, is cast as Kim MacAfee. Stephen Sall of West Bloomfield stars as Kim's dad, Harry MacAfee.

Stephanie Travis of Southfield is in the teen chorus. Children's chorus members include Kandace Carr, Tabettha Tyberca and Darlene Vangel of Redford, and Kelley Stowers of Westland.

"Bye, Bye Birdie" opened on Broadway on April 14, 1960. The music was written by Charles Strouse. Lyrics are by Lee Adams, the book is by Michael Stewart. The show ran for 607 performances on Broadway.

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Masonic Temple, 500 Temple, Detroit. Tickets are \$5. Call (313) 535-8992.  
■ "Jack in the Beanstalk" continues at the Marquis Theatre, 135 E. Main, downtown Northville, through Sunday, Jan. 16. Tickets are \$7. Call (248) 349-8110 for show times.



ANN DELISI

You've heard the expression, and maybe even used it. "I may not know everything about art, but I know what I like."

Traditionally, it has been uttered as a put-down or suggestion that a particular work is unappealing and devoid of meaning. In recent years, the expression seems to have evolved a bit.

Now it's more of a worthless piece of trash out of here." Diplomacy and civility just may be a vanishing art.

challenge to the actors to preserve the story's comedic intent. The current production, which runs through Jan. 30 at the Fisher Theatre, stars Judith Hirsch, Cotten Smith and Jack Willis. The functor in "Art" is over the value of an expensive piece of modern art that Hirsch considers just a waste of white on canvas.

In the next edition of Detroit Public TV's BACKSTAGE PASS, airing at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 16, series producer Mark Nathanson provides a behind-the-scenes look at the production with Cotten Smith and Jack Willis.

Debate  
The value of art is rarely a consensus, whether it's exhibited in a museum, gallery, or on a Detroit Public TV series.

Even though some of the Detroit area's most knowledgeable observers of the arts scene help select the attractions to be featured on BACKSTAGE PASS, there's often what I like to call a healthy debate about the segments used.

I'm sure there was a time when purists questioned the value of photography as an art form. The new technology's powerful works of photographers throughout the 1900s squelched that notion.

Among them is Sandy Skoglund, featured in *Life* magazine as one of the world's top 100 photographers. Her work is also internationally known for her sculptures, and work in alternative media is further evidence of her stunning versatility in creative expression. Skoglund's work is being exhibited through Feb. 4 at the Elaine L. Jacob Gallery on the campus of Wayne State Uni-

versity.  
"Misbehaving! Works from the Studio of Sandy Skoglund" includes photographs and sculptural elements from various installations in a career retrospective.

Marsha Miro hosts a feature story about the exhibit and the artist on the Jan. 16 edition of BACKSTAGE PASS.

Cyber art  
Cyber art is now the new frontier. While some artists are skeptical, others see it as the medium of the future. Certainly, it is a simple way for artists to exhibit their works.

Good and bad art will always be in the eye of the beholder. There are those who believe even the atrocious stuff deserves special merit. Browse the Museum of Bad Art ([www.mobas.com](http://www.mobas.com)) for an eye-ful.

I know what I like, and sometimes it's a good laugh.

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