

Come to the 'Cabaret' in St. Dunstan's outdoor Greek Theatre

BY LINDA ARN CHOWEN
STAFF WRITER

When Judie Cochill heard St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook was staging the musical Cabaret the Bloomfield Township jazz vocalist knew she had to make time to try-out for a role. Cabaret is more than musical entertainment, it's music with a message.

"It's a wonderful story," said Cochill who plays Fraulein Schneider, a German woman who falls in love with a Jewish man. The production opens Friday, May 30, in the outdoor Greek Theatre at Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills. "Cabaret's a popular musical. You walk out not humming but with thought processes going. This just mustn't happen again. History doesn't have to repeat itself. It's lovely and dark and funny in places."

"Fraulein Schneider is a charming older woman who had been rich and now has to rent rooms in her home. She has a flirty relationship with Herr Schultz (played by Fred Shulak). When Nazism is evident she gives up the possibility of marriage."

Cochill is as moved by the music and lyrics written by



Stacy Williams (left), Fred Shulak, Judie Cochill, Jeff Davidson, and Kevin Edwards rehearse a scene from 'Cabaret.' The production is being put on by St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook in the outdoor Greek Theatre.

John Kander and Fred Ebb as the story. From the bittersweet but upbeat So What to the soul searching What Would You Do, she takes the words to heart. But that's true wherever she sings.

Wednesday, June 11, she'll join the Matt Michaels Trio for an evening of jazz at Ron's Fireside Inn in Westland. She can be heard on Michaels' new CD, The Matt Michaels Trio & Friends. In between perform-

ing and recording Cochill sings with choirs at Christ Church Cranbrook and Temple Emmanuel in Oak Park.

MEANINGFUL MUSIC

"What Would You Do I can't get through it emotionally. It's an incredibly powerful song," said Cochill. "I'm always personalizing the music I sing. Emotion just happens to well up from whatever I sing

whether it's pop, standard or jazz. The lyrics drive the song. I choose music that means something to me."

Cochill's ability to relay emotion through song is one of the reasons director Nancy Brassert is delighted to have her in Cabaret. Brassert last worked with Cochill nearly 20 years ago at St. Dunstan's in South Pacific. Brassert's been a member of St. Dunstan's since 1969 and in charge of sets for 20 years.

"Judie's a wonderful singer and a fine performer," said Brassert of Birmingham. "All of the leads are seasoned professionals. That's very important. Cabaret is a very intimate show. In Greek theater you're outdoors and can't play it that way. I tried to make it more intimate by establishing a night club scene with chorus members sitting at tables."

Brassert introduces the underlying theme, the rise of Nazism, by bringing in officers in brown shirts in the second act.

"This is set in Berlin in the 1930s," said Brassert. "There was sexual freedom everywhere. Moral decay was at a high point. This is the hardest show I've had to direct. We

have two love stories going on at the Kit Kat Club. We have a 17 member chorus who are spectators, 11 Kit Kat cast members, a 12 member orchestra behind the stage, and the emcee who threads his way through the show and is a constant reminder of this theme. The challenge is trying to relay this message without making it a downer. You're not going to come out whistling and singing and laughing. It's a reminder that this is something that could happen again. It's a very entertaining show but an underlying serious show."

"That's not to say audiences won't enjoy themselves. Brassert did when she saw the production in New York in January. "I like the songs Cabaret and Money, Money. Money, all the music and lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb who also wrote the musical Chicago," said Brassert. "And coming to the Greek Theatre is sort of a happening as long as you dress for the weather. It gets chilly out there at night. But it's very special because there are only nine Greek theaters in the country."

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'CABARET'

What: St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook presents the Tony Award-winning musical. Not recommended for children under 18 because of sexual innuendo, OK for mature children age 14 and up

When: 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, May 30-31, and Thursday-Saturday, June 5-7

Where: Outdoor Greek Theatre at Cranbrook, 400 Lone Pine Road, between Cranbrook and Lahser roads, Bloomfield Hills

Tickets: \$16, \$13 seniors and students. Call (248) 644-0527 or visit the Web site at www.StDunstonsTheatre.com. Special \$50 dinner/theater package available Friday, May 30, includes choice of five entrees at Ocean Grille in Birmingham, call (248) 645-5936

MOVEMENT

FROM PAGE B1

itself mired in a large deficit, it decided to pull funding from the festival, and that's something May is hesitant to forgive.

"The fact that the city does not support us shows a lack of insight of what this event means to the city," May said. "But we're fighting that. Win or lose, this is something that we had to do."

PLEDGE

Nevertheless, the parade to an electronic Memorial Day weekend marched on and festival organizers made up in part from the lack of funding by a pledge from Detroit artists to play for free.

Festival Director Derrick Ortencio said about 75 percent of the artists performing at the festival are Detroiters, and that some of the international artists will also be playing for free.

Organizers are also selling buttons on their Web site (www.movementfestival.com) and in shops around the Detroit area to help make ends meet.

"We've got a lot of support,"

Ortencio said. "It seems as if the community has pulled together but it's been a lot of hours of hard work for a lot of people."

More forgiving of the city of Detroit than May, Ortencio said the city did pitch in to help, especially by providing the venue for the event.

"The city has been supporting us in a number of ways," Ortencio said. "They just didn't have the funding."

A fashion and music show tonight at 9 p.m. at Detroit's Fifth Avenue Downtown in Comerica Park will kick off the festivities, and present a chronological journey highlighting the evolution of musical genres and parallel fashion trends.

Movement 03 begins at noon Saturday and runs until midnight on Monday.

Ortencio said conceptual stages at the festival will be introduced for the first time this year and that all of the stages will return the focus of the event to Detroit.

"From an artistic standpoint, this festival will be very important to artists in this city and give them an opportunity to get the recognition that's due to them," Ortencio said.

The Movement stage will be

dropped down to the lip of the bowl in the Hart Plaza Amphitheater for more intimacy. The High Tech Soul stage will offer an eclectic lineup of hip-hop, jazz, neo-soul, house and techno.

Another new area will be the Music Institute stage, with an enclosed DJ booth meant to pay homage to the legendary Detroit club at 1315 Broadway that helped launched the Detroit techno sound in the 1980s.

The Underground stage will feature more experimental electronic music.

As an added attraction, the Movement Festival has partnered with Native Instruments to put together a three-day program of panels, workshops and discussions. Participants include the Detroit Film Coalition, the Detroit Historical Museum, Remix Magazine and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. The program will offer festival-goers a hands-on, up-close and personal experience with progressive artistry and technology. Schedules for specific demonstrations and panels will be posted online.

Detroit DJ Mike Grant will be performing at the event, and he said he's glad to see the

change of guard, despite the fact that he was a member of the artistic board for the 2002 event.

"Honestly, it should have been in the hands of the Detroit music community in the first place, and that's where it is now," Grant said. "It's unfortunate, but we learn from our mistakes."

And in spite of the pitfalls experienced by High Tech Soul and the lack of funding, Grant is predicting that this year's festival will shine through.

"This is Mecca," Grant said. "Without Detroit, techno music wouldn't be as popular as it is today. It's been said before, but Detroit has almost become a genre of music."

May said that this year's festival will also be a proving ground for High Tech Soul, which was awarded a three-year contract to run the festival.

"This year, the festival will be for the people, by the people and about the people. The way it should have been in the first place," May said. "What makes it a good thing is that we care about the artists, but we're tapped into the business side of things, too."

Mike Murphy is a Livonia resident and musician.

THE MATRIX RELOADED

MOVIE SCHEDULE

AMC AT LYONIA MALL	AMC LIVONIA 20	AMC FORUM 30
AMC LAUREL PARK	BEACON EAST	CANTON 6
BIRMINGHAM PALLADIUM	MIR SOUTHWATE 20	PHOENIX AT BELL AIR CTR.
EMAGINE NOVI	SHOWCASE DEARBORN	SHOWCASE STERLING HTS.
PHOENIX AT WEST RIVER	STAR FAIRLANE 21	STAR GRATIOT
SHOWCASE WESTLAND	STAR JOHN R	STAR ROCHESTER
STAR GREAT LAKES CHALLENGE	STAR TAYLOR	UA COMMERCE TOWN

THE MATRIX RELOADED: RATED PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED. Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13.

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—TED DEMME, FOX-TV

"Douglas and Brooks are LAUGH-OUT-LOUD FUNNY!"
—JENNIFER LINDVALL, THE MOVIE WHITE

The In-Laws

The cake is going to hit the fan.

MOVIE SCHEDULE

AMC FORUM 30	STARTS FRIDAY, MAY 23	AMC LAUREL PARK
AMC LIVONIA 20	BIRMINGHAM 8	CANTON 6
MIR SOUTHWATE 20	NOVI TOWN CTR. 8	PHOENIX AT BELL AIR CTR.
SHOWCASE DEARBORN	SHOWCASE STERLING HTS.	SHOWCASE WESTLAND
STAR FAIRLANE 21	STAR GRATIOT	STAR GREAT LAKES CHALLENGE
STAR JOHN R	STAR SOUTHWATE	UA COMMERCE TOWN

THE IN-LAWS: RATED PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED. Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13.

JIM CARREY

Bruce ALMIGHTY

In Bruce We Trust?

ITALY'S FRIDAY, MAY 23

MOVIE SCHEDULE

AMC FORUM 30	AMC LIVONIA 20	BIRMINGHAM PALLADIUM
AMC LAUREL PARK	BEACON EAST	CANTON 6
BIRMINGHAM PALLADIUM	MIR SOUTHWATE 20	PHOENIX AT BELL AIR CTR.
EMAGINE NOVI	SHOWCASE DEARBORN	SHOWCASE STERLING HTS.
STAR FAIRLANE 21	STAR GRATIOT	STAR GREAT LAKES CHALLENGE
STAR JOHN R	STAR SOUTHWATE	UA COMMERCE TOWN

THE ITALIAN JOB: RATED PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED. Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13.

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THE ITALIAN JOB

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AMC FORUM 30	AMC LIVONIA 20	BIRMINGHAM PALLADIUM
AMC LAUREL PARK	BEACON EAST	CANTON 6
BIRMINGHAM PALLADIUM	MIR SOUTHWATE 20	PHOENIX AT BELL AIR CTR.
EMAGINE NOVI	SHOWCASE DEARBORN	SHOWCASE STERLING HTS.
STAR FAIRLANE 21	STAR GRATIOT	STAR GREAT LAKES CHALLENGE
STAR JOHN R	STAR SOUTHWATE	UA COMMERCE TOWN

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