

'Thurber Carnival' Revolves Humorously Around Women

Reviewed by E. M. BRONER

The anger of James Thurber and the 36 flats created for "A Thurber Carnival" which was presented by the Birmingham Village Players last weekend and will be repeated Friday and Saturday, were the stars of the evening. In Thurber's special fiction women on leer, dominate, overwhelm their misqu Coast husbands.

Man's greatest triumph is never indirectly the pan almost never confront her directly) proving her wife wrong. Man sees woman in the sketches, "The Unicorn in the Garden" and "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," but it always best in "Mr. Preble Gets Rid of his Wife," works himself into drunken stupor shopping for her during the "busy merchandising season" in "Gentlemen Shoppers," is murdered by her in "The Little Girl and the Wolf," and gleefully proves that muffled direct knowledge in "The Wolf at the Door."

IT ISN'T THAT Thurber is against love. In the delicate "The Last Flower" love is the hope of the world—but love is always betrayed by the emergence of the hausfrau. Indeed, one of the flats, enlarged from a Thurber cartoon, shows a husband cowering outside his house that has taken the shape of his wife. Man enters the world of woman in fear and trembling.

In "The Unicorn in the Garden" the wife, who reports to the psychiatrist that her husband has seen a white unicorn with a golden horn, is herself institutionalized, and "The husband lived happily ever after." In "Walter Mitty," the poor man says to his ever-shopping wife, "Things close, I've been thinking. Doesn't it ever occur to you that I've been thinking?"

THE GREATEST line in the play is Mr. Preble's trying clumsily to murder his wife in order to marry his secretary. "Let's go

BAA Slates Dance Program As Next Event

Members of the recently formed Choreographer's Workshop will present a "studio" program in dance composition at the Bloomfield Art Association's Birmingham Art Center May 17 at 8:30 p.m. and May 17 at 8:30 p.m.

The program, which is open to the public for a nominal admission charge, is the first of its kind to be presented in the area and is the result of experimental efforts of the part of this semi-professional group in describing an approach to choreography.

The dancers, who are not yet ready to call themselves a company, are teachers of the dance in local schools. They formed the workshop, with Pat Wellig of Wayne State as their mentor, as a forum for self-expression in the areas of dance composition.

THE PROGRAM, which will attempt to show the creation of a dance as it relates to other art forms, makes use of moving patterns and rhythmic patterns and the movement built upon them to describe poetry or a painting. In one segment a dancer will describe a painting in dance while a narrator explains why the movements were chosen. In another portion, Doc Andrus will provide auto-harp and vocal accompaniment for a dance based on a poem.

In addition to the "live" presentation, a film "Dancer's World," narrated by Marsha Graham and using her company to demonstrate dance technique, will be shown.

MEMBERS OF the Choreographer's Workshop are Jesse Sinclair of Southfield, a teacher at Kingswood school; Mia Anderson of Detroit, teacher at Birmingham Conservatory; Joanne Kuehl of Birmingham, teacher at Groves High School; Ada Bardinole of Detroit, who teaches in the Detroit area; and Holla Lawrence of Birmingham, Shirley Duff of Royal Oak and Shirley Steinman of West Bloomfield all of whom teach in schools in the Oakland County area.

down to the cellar." There is a final plan for man in the last line of the play: "The women will now please keep their seats while the men leave the auditorium. They need, God knows, a head start."

Thurber's second irritation, after women, is the "conspiracy of confusion in the outside world. People always miss the point or try to make reason out of nonsense (as in the "Pet Department"). Speaking as Thurber in "File and Forget," the character realizes there is no one you can reach anymore.

THURBER IS playful with the sacred, whether in literature (Shakespeare) or history ("I Grant had been Drinking at Appomattox"). He is sentimental in a Heywood Brown style, in "The Last Flower," and war. His constant battle with the distortion of the language by the advertising world and the flip mind is in "Take her Up Tenderly," mostly foggy rewrite of famous poems by lack personalities. This is not to say that Thurber is dull. He manages to be terribly funny, if satiric. In a London Bridges of one-liners that open and closes the show, each punch line of a joke or tag-line of a cartoon is convulsive.

RUSS AND JANE Dunbar of The Village Players designed the magnificent sets to go on John Hall's three revolving stages. What a scene is in progress the flats on the reverse side of the set are being changed for the next scene. There are bars, restaurants, Christmas trees, beds attached to striped flats, and each change of the scene is a surprise.

The over-sized fire hydrant and street scene during the Walter Mitty episode helps bring out the theme of the man overwhelmed by everything around him.

ALL THE ACTORS are spirited and competent, if not always consistent in their performances. Jean Hall as the dumb, big-eyed redhead, says her suggestive one-liners with complete innocence. She gives the most varied performance, being an obtuse mystery-fan in "The Macbeth Murder Mystery," and capturing the hideous irritation and menacing quality of Mrs. Mitty.

Bob Davis had a light voice and a brittle manner that make him excellent as the veterinarian in "Pet Department," as a drunk in "Gentlemen Shoppers," or the incredulous listener in "Macbeth Murder Mystery." When the role calls for greater extension of personality, Davis is not up to it. He is unable to burlesque enough, to really let go for the drunken General Grant. He falls as Walter Mitty, forgetting that Mitty is achieving nothing but in abstracting himself from life. There is pathos in the character that is not realized.

DYKE DWELLEY, with his rich voice, is fine as the castaway, as

Concert Organist Featured in Last of Season's Series

Virgil Fox, one of America's most well-known concert organists, returned to present the last concert of the season of the St. James Concert series Tuesday at St. James Episcopal Church.

Organist at the Riverside Church in New York city, Virgil Fox has played throughout the world. He has appeared with the GBS-TV Symphony under Alfredo Antonini, Philadelphia, Boston "Pops" Rochester Civic, New York Philharmonic and Detroit symphonies and at the Worcester Music Festival.

He made his debut as a concert organist at the age of 14 in Cincinnati. His appointment at the age of 20 as head of the organ department of the Peabody Conservatory, oldest and one of the most renowned conservatories in America, was an honor of signal significance.

The U. S. Treasury estimated that eight million Americans now regularly purchase series E savings bonds through the payroll savings plan where they work. Their purchases average \$100 million worth of series E bonds a month.

PTA Honors Mrs. Loomis At Meeting

Many projected education innovations are expected to find excellent answers from an authoritative voice when the PTA Council holds its annual dinner meeting on May 27 in Seaholm's Maple Room.

Barbara Harned is unusually beautiful. She enacts her silently decorative roles with joy and energy. Terry Iverson is a crisp narrator. Nels Kimball comes into his own as a stiff floor walker who becomes drunk and still-restrained, somewhat unbens.

Bette Matousek was fine in "Take Her Up Tenderly," repeating endlessly, yet with variety, "I love it!" about a tasteless rewrite job.

THE DIRECTION by Bill McCall made the pace swift in such a sketch as "Gentlemen Shoppers," and drew humor out of what could have been an endless repetition of the Whiffpoof Song. There is also a crispness in the long narrative of "Macbeth Murder Mystery." But, even though the script seems to call for stylized performances, nowhere do the characters seem conscious of each other. It is always a one-man-show of the actor speaking.

It was a tricky show to light, and Ed Deer created with light and Joan Schmidt and her jazz combo did with music—they underlined, excited, lightened and even sweetened the temper of the play.

Retiring teachers will also be honored. They are: Lillian Clawson, art teacher at Barnum; Marston Wilson, principal at Bloomfield Village; Ruth Boltz, fifth grade teacher at Adams; Dana Tyson, second grade teacher at Pembroke; Gladys Holloway, commercial teacher at Seaholm; Ruth Murray, fourth grade teacher at Quorum; Meryl Smiley, industrial arts teacher at Barnum; Marjorie Rainey, second grade teacher at Beechery.

Smiley will also be awarded the teacher-of-the-semester certificate. Each and every PTA member is encouraged to attend this meeting. Reservations may be made through the local school PTA president, Mrs. George Tallburt or George Griscorn before the May 17 deadline.

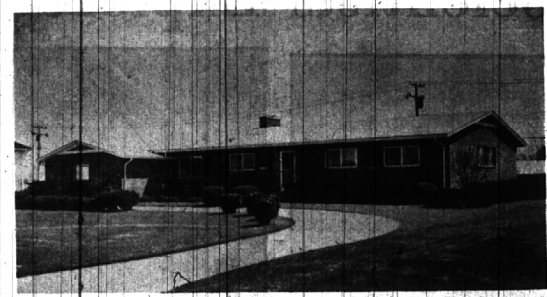
Honored By Invitation

Guest artists at the Southgate Jills' in girls' choral honor ensemble, and their director, Clarence Lichtman; Dennis Eymon, a tenor, and Bob Ater, piano accompanist.

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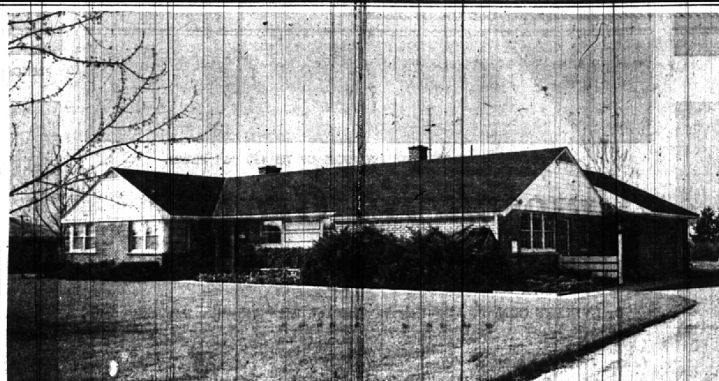


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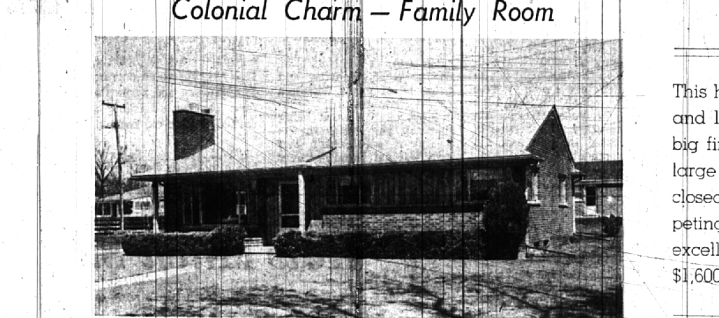
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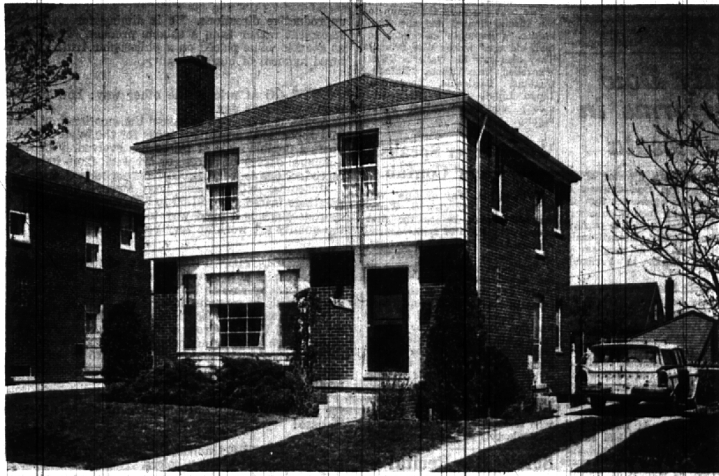
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