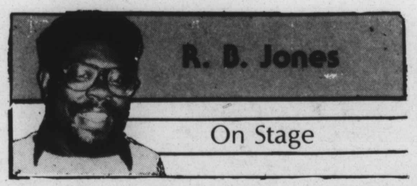


C.P. Taylor's "And a Nightingale Sang" the current production at the Theater Project is like a Currier and Ives print or a Norman Rockwell picture almost idyllic in its portrayal of family life. Yet there is an edge to it, a slightly brittle quality that keeps it from being too sugary.

The play follows the fortunes of the Stott Family from the eve of World War II to the conclusion of that conflict. The family consists of Helen the oldest daughter and narrator of the play, Joyce the younger daughter and the beauty of the family, George the father who plays the piano and sings during various scene changes, Peggy the slightly daffy mother, and Andie the slightly grumpy grandfather.

Despite the fact that all of them could be almost stereotypical characters, there is a realness and a warmth generated by the characters in the play that slowly wins the viewer over.

As the war threatens more and more soldiers come to the small town where the Stotts live and two men enter into the daughters' lives.

Joyce meets and marries Eric, a soldier she does not love deeply but marries out of a kind of boredom and a need for identity and status. Instead of longing for her husband's visits Joyce dreads them.

Helen becomes involved with a young soldier only to find out later that she is involved with a married man.

While the daughters are going through their various love entanglements George becomes an air raid warden and Andie tries to find a more pleasing living space.

The emotions of the family are tested by the air raids, rationing and the very real sense during the early days of the war that the Germans might arrive on their doorstep.

As the war situation improves the concern becomes for the safety of the soldiers and avoiding air raids. As the war declines the emotional turmoil of the two sisters grows yet through it all the family lovingly stays intact.

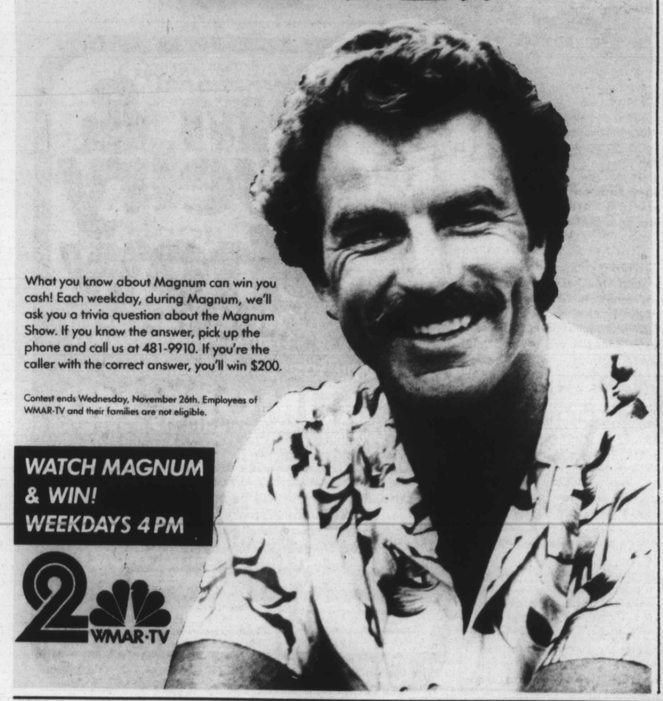
Sandra Shipley who plays Helen does an exceptional job as the self-conscious daughter who narrates the play. She moves effortlessly from narrator to character in a scene.

John Drabik as George also gives a fine comic performance that is funny but steers clear of buffonery. He is also quite good at playing and singing the sentimental songs of this time period with the right touch of earnestness and sentimentality.

The other cast members gave good performances. In fact there was not a weak characterization in the group. The actors are from the Lyric Stage in Boston, Massachusetts and their production is the most conventional play I've seen at the Theater Project in a long, long time.

It is well worth seeing "And a Nightingale Sang" which runs until Nov. 16 at the Theater Project.

WATCH MAGNUM AND WIN!



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Contest ends Wednesday, November 26th. Employees of WMAR-TV and their families are not eligible.

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'A Raisin in the Sun' at Kennedy Center

Lorraine Hansberry's classic drama **"A Raisin in the Sun"** will open a four-week engagement at the Eisenhower Theater of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 15.

The story tells of the impoverished Younger family who is awaiting an ill-fated insurance check of $10,000 which Lena Younger, the matriarch, wants to use to buy a house in an all-white middle-class suburb.

Esther Rolle

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Esther Rolle, who plays Lena, won an Emmy Award for her moving performance in the television film "Summer of My German Soldier" and is also well known to television audiences for her starring role in "Good Times."

London born Delroy Lindo will be playing Walter Lee, the older son, in this production.

John Fiedler is recreating the role of Karl Lindner, which he played in the original Broadway production. Other members of the cast include Kim Yancy as Beneatha, Lou Ferguson as Joseph Asagai, Kible Joyner as Travis, Stephen Henderson as Bobo, and Joseph C. Phillips as Murchison.

Harold Scott directed **"The Mighty Gents"** both at the Kennedy Center and on Broadway. As an actor he last appeared on Broadway in Lorraine Hansberry's **"Les Blancs."**

The production will play Monday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m. with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday at 2 p.m. There will be no performances on November 17, 24 and 27 (due to the Thanksgiving holiday).

'Doubles' is funny stuff

The billing read, Gabe Kaplan and Robert Reed star in the Broadway comedy hit "Doubles." And it did, except Gabe Kaplan wasn't there for the opening night.

Seems he contracted bronchitis which laid him low, so his understudy went on. Bob Adrian adroitly filled the role of Lennie, leaving one to wonder whether the play would be improved with Kaplan in the role.

The story is set in the locker room of a tennis club, where a regular foursome plays once a week. All are Jewish, with ethnicitisms dropping all over the place, which leaves a kind of void of understanding those unfamiliar with a lot of the slang words and idiomatic expressions.

The play is funny, while there are not that many knee-slapping belly laughs, the play evokes almost a constant titter, and smiles seemed pasted on the faces of the audience as a mood developed during the production.

In Our estimation, the play seemed more surface than the usual theatre fare — in fact, it seems oriented to a TV production, or a made -for-TV movie.

All the ingredients are there, including enough nudity and swear words to give it an R rating. There are more male bare bottoms shown than you usually would expect to see. But then, all of the action takes place in a men's locker room.

The one female role is handled by Kathleen McCall in the role of Heather, the towel girl, who fflits in and out of scenes playing an air-head encased in a gorgeous body.

The story line uses the weekly tennis game as the basis for the revelations of four men, three Jewish, one WASP, who explore lifestyles of each other, developing a love-hate type of relationship, which is of course resolved before the final curtain.

Using the technique of the "blackout" there are many scenes in the play, some involving just a 4 or 5-minute stint. Guy, the WASP Character continually spouts obscure facts as relevant to present situations. The role is ably handled by Peter Flint, who played the role in the Broadway production.

Adrian plays Lennie, a loud-mouth chronic insulter who has difficulty accepting Guy as a friend. For, friendship is the name of the game here. All of the foursome meet to escape from their at-home situations.

Arnie, played by Peter Shuman, is the unlikely looking roue, who is dedicated to seducing the wives of his friends. He says he prefers married women, since most of them are sexually unhappy at home.

George, played by Robert Reed, is facing an investigation by the SEC over some suspect deals his stockbrokering has engendered. He has a heart attack, which somehow helps the group to coalesce.

This may all sound complicated, but it is all done in a lighthearted vein, with fast-paced action, so there is never a ponderous lull in the proceedings.

It is a good play, but more shallow than expected. For a pleasant evening of theatre, we heartily recommend "Doubles," but if you're looking for some heavy drama — uh huh. After all, the star of the play, Gabe Kaplan, made his mark as a comedian.

He is remembered best as the teacher in the TV series, "Welcome Back Kotter."

"Doubles" will be at the Morris Mechanic Theatre through Dec. 6. For ticket information, (301) 625-1400.

Rheba (Martha Ellon-Saunders) feeds a "Love Dream" to Donald (James A. Brown) in the Spotlighters Theatre production of "You Can't Take It With You," playing weekends until November 30. For more information call 752-1225.

—Choral Arts

Continued from page 4

West to study at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. He made his New York City Opera debut in November, 1985 in Philip Glass's "Akhnaten."

Maynor has performed with numerous opera companies including the Virginia Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Chicago Theater. As a recitalist and oratorio singer, he has sung throughout England, France, Spain and the United States.

The November 15 performance will begin at 8 p.m. in Kraushaar Auditorium at Goucher College.

Michael Austin

Kevin Maynor

Single tickets are $13 and $15. Season subscriptions and group rates are available. For more information call 523-7070.

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