

Tickets go on sale for new production

Tickets went on sale this week for the December production of the Gilroy Community Theatre entitled "In The Garden" opening Dec. 20 at Gavilan College. The original two-hour holiday musical will be presented again on Dec. 21, 27, 28. Curtain time is 8 p.m.

The theatre group normally only produces three productions annually, but due to the unique qualities of "In The Garden" the board of directors voted unanimously to produce the original work authored by Walden Sampson of Gilroy.

Mary Ann Brueggmann, president, said the music is "memorable and our audiences will agree, we feel sure, that the story and the music are appropriate for the holiday season."

Additions to the cast include Natasha Silberstein, William R. Spendlove, Rich Barretta and Steven Edwards. Tickets are available from Dick Bruhn's in both Gilroy and Hollister, Cripino's Delicatessen, Monterey Savings and Loan, and cast members.

First nighters may buy their tickets from the Theatre Angels, a women's organization which boosts Gilroy Community Theatre through sale of opening night tickets and by staging their own social "production" following the opening night presentation. For the holiday musical, the Theatre Angels plan to host a gala soup supper at Gavilan College Student Lounge. Tickets for the soup supper are being sold by the "Angels," as well as the opening night tickets.



NEW MUSICAL - Herb Hopkins, musical director, joins the Gilroy Community Theatre for a special assignment in the production of a new musical by Walden Sampson, Gilroy author and playwright, which will be presented by the local theatre group on Dec. 20, 21, 27, 28 at Gavilan College Theatre. Hopkins is responsible for the arrangements for the orchestra. The musical, "The Garden," has a cast of 31 and is directed by George Costa of San Jose. Rehearsal pianist is Marilyn Guerin. - Photo by John White, Jr.

Holiday entertainment

New musical opening by local playwright

Gilroy theatergoers won't have to travel far this holiday season to find entertainment. The week before and after Christmas will provide four opportunities for a unique experience...the involvement in a world premiere of a new work, the 90-minute musical "The Garden" authored by Gilroy's own playwright, Walden Sampson.

The production has been in rehearsal for several weeks and in the final weeks cast and crew are polishing scenes, constructing sets, and designing early England costumes.

The ambitious challenge is being undertaken at the Gavilan Theatre by the Gilroy Community Theatre headed by Mary Ann Brueggmann, president, and directed by George Costa, San Jose Music Theater director.

Costumes are being created for the 34 cast members of both adults and children by Mrs. Brueggmann, Mary Ann Mattos and Rosalie Andrews. The sets, designed by Costa, are being brought to life by Ed Perkins, a California Highway Patrolman, whose wife, Marie, is cast as "Marion," in "The Garden."

While tickets for opening night on Dec. 20 at Gavilan College Theatre are being sold by the Theatre Angels, tickets for the remaining three performances are available for Dec. 21, 27, 28 from cast members or from the theatre board. For reservations call publicity and promotion directors, Mrs. Mattos, 842-8417; Bill Spendlove, 842-0590, or Bette and Joe Brown at 842-8083. Reservations may also be made by calling the producers, Mrs. Brueggmann, 842-8677 or Mrs. Andrews, 842-5577.

The theatre board selected "The Garden," as its first original work for several reasons: it was created by a local resident; the story and music has a haunting quality about it, making it particularly appropriate for the Christmas season; and the theatre, now in its sixth year, was ready for an innovative challenge.

Others involved in the major production include Herb

Hopkins, musical director; Marc Fluff, choreographer; Marilyn Guerin, rehearsal pianist; Russ Hendrickson, lights; Creighton Yip, choral arrangements; Jack Sampson, poster and program artist; and Frances and Al Bloom, house managers. Stage crew is Anna Solorzano, Jim Almada and Greg Andrews. Stage managers are Ed Perkins and Marvann Mattos.

Curtain time is 8 p.m.



HOLIDAY MUSICAL - "Mrs. Wattrus," played by Sandra Rapazzini, tells the story about "The Garden" to a group of small children appearing in the 90-minute holiday musical that takes place in medieval England. Families are urged to make reservations early for the Gilroy Community Theater production that will play Dec. 20, 21, 27, 28 at Gavilan College Theatre. The music includes "Silver Apples," "Things I've Been Learning," "If I Were Older," and many other melodic tunes written by Gilroy's song writer Walden Sampson.

Holiday musical

LEAD ROLE - "The Lord of the Manor," the lead role in "The Garden," is played by Charles Spoerri of San Jose. He has the artistic responsibility to charm and repel youngsters, to sing happily, to philosophize, and to repent his cynical ways in the original musical opening Dec. 20 at Gavilan College Theatre. Produced by Gilroy Community Theatre, the show will play Dec. 21, 27, 28. Photos By John White, Jr.



ORIGINAL MUSICAL - Capturing the essence of "The Garden," are these three young thespians appearing in Gilroy Community Theatre's production running Dec. 20-21, 27, 28 at Gavilan College Theatre. Cast of 40 adults and children, are featured in original musical by Walden Sampson of Gilroy which is directed by George Costa of San Jose. Emoting are from left Randy Spendlove, Robbie Perkins, and Heidi Hendrickson.

REHEARSING - Composer Walden Sampson, left, whose original musical, "The Garden," opens Dec 20 at Gavilan College Theatre produced by Gilroy Community Theatre, takes part in rehearsal scene. In Foreground is Charles Spoerri of San Jose who plays the lead "Lord of the Manor," Admission is \$3 for adults, and \$1.50 for students and children. Play will run Dec. 20-21, 27, 28.



TOWN CRIER - "Hear ye, Hear ye." proclaims the town crier, portrayed by William R. Spendlove, as the selfish lord of the manor relents and invites the townspeople to his birthday celebration after banning the children from his beautiful gardens for years. Words are from script written by Gilroy's playwright, Walden Sampson, whose original musical, "The Garden," is being produced by the Gilroy Community Theatre. Show opens the week before Christmas and runs again the week after Christmas. Dates are Dec. 20, 21, 27, 28. Curtain time is 8 p.m.

Original musical Gilroy's newest hit

By ELLEN FUCHS

Walden Sampson's "The Garden" played to a capacity opening night audience and got a standing ovation at its finale. The caliope sounding music set the mood for a simple and touching plot.

George Costa's direction was up to his usual professional standards. The children in "The Garden" were a

Christopher Scott playing the minstrel set the mood of the play with a strong voice narrating the story line. He was effective and did a fine job.

Charles Spoerri excelled as Lord of the Manor, with a powerful singing voice and outstanding acting ability.

Amusing, lively and always in character, Sandy Rapazzini was one of the big hits of the show. She sang, acted, danced and was superb as Mrs. Wattrus.

Turning in supporting performances were David Greene and Rosalind Farotte with beautiful voices, making a charming convincing couple on stage.

Steve Schneickert sounded like Johnathan Winters in a portrayal of Quasimoto. Funny and sweet he turned the audience on with his antics.

Anyone who has heard Lee

Krahenbuhl knows the beauty of his voice. In this play he sang a lovely, tearful song to the Lord of the Manor expressing the simple philosophy of "The Garden"

The chorus was composed mainly of children who were relaxed and inviting with their dancing and performances. The Hendrickson girls were adorable in their professional



WALDEN SAMPSON
...author

delight of enthusiastic acting and won the attention of the audience from beginning to end.

Costa's sets were unique and inventive, prodding our imagination along with the action of the play. The music was poignant and had viewers humming along at the end of each scene.

"A touch of cologne in the air" was a quote from the play which described the beautiful freshly smelling artistry of everyone involved, like a fairy tale book that dropped from a child's shelf into the Gavilan Theatre.



CHARLES SPOERRI
...lead



GEORGE COSTA
...director

performance. The dance numbers were ethereal and dreamy.

"The Garden" will be performed on Friday and Saturday of this week and next. Anyone who has missed it has missed one of Gilroy's most enchanting plays and its originality makes it all the more captivating. Walden Sampson is a man of many talents. This play is a fine illustration of imagination, lyric and musical splendor. George Costa's hand makes it as professional as anything this side of Broadway. Let's hope this will be the start of a yearly Gilroy tradition.