

3-7-1971

Holes are found in 'Umbrella' script [Review of Michael Gillespie's play *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* at the Teatro Maria, Milwaukee]

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by Curtis L. Carter

The Marquette Players have put a great deal of work into their world premiere stage production of "Umbrellas of Cherbourg." But unfortunately the vessel is too flimsy to reward their effort to any great degree. "Umbrellas" is Michael Gillespie's adaptation of Micheal Legrand's film, with musical orchestration arranged by Vicki Geisheker.

A French musical comedy, "Umbrellas" is set in a small town in France. The theme is familiar and predictable romantic melodrama. Guy, a young mechanic, is in love with Genevieve, daughter of Madam Emory, the proprietress of a small umbrella shop. Madam Emory opposes her daughter's interest in Guy and steers her toward Roland Cassard, a wealthy but kind and benevolent older gentleman.

The romance of Guy and Genevieve is interrupted when Guy is called to military service in Algeria, but not before a night of bliss. She is left with a baby. The romance cools with the passage of time aided by mother's pressures to marry Roland. Genevieve and Roland marry. Guy returns and goes through some difficult post-army readjustments, then happily marries another girl. The play ends when Guy and Genevieve meet accidentally and uneventfully at his garage in Cherbourg. She says, "The baby looks a lot like you. Come take a look." He doesn't. She leaves. That's it.

Performance-wise, the evening had some very nice scenes, especially in the second part: a dinner scene where Ro-

land announces his intention to marry Genevieve, the brothel scene, the moments where Guy and Madeline finalize their married plans showed performers at their best moments of clarity and expression.

Joseph Orsatti (Guy) and Larry Russo (Roland) perform convincingly in their respective roles. Nancy Scharf as Madam Emory carries her musical role adequately. She experiences less consistency in the acting where her feelings sometimes appear to lag behind gesture and bodily movement, leaving the latter without substance.

The set, designed by Thomas J. Gannon, is visually interesting in its own right. Consisting of multi-level colored stage planes and a background of abstract design created with vertically placed right-angle bars, it provides an attractive setting. The stage space is uncluttered, allowing for easy mobility.

Director Leo Jones uses the space imaginatively for the creation of scene changes which depend upon gesture and lighting rather than props. Absence of props and generally clean lines of movement spare the production of dramatic encumbrances which its frail structure could not have sustained without dragging intolerably.

The valiant efforts of the Marquette Players do not erase the overriding opinion that they are working with a very thin and inconsequential script.

"Umbrellas" continues at Teatro Maria, 1210 W. Michigan Ave., Oct. 8-10, 13-16, 22-26, 8-15 curtain, except Sunday, 3:30. \$2.50, students \$1.50, Saturday 50 cents more.