

arts

Next on Festival Theatre agenda: "The Boy Friend"

By HEIDI BEELER
Collegian Staff Writer

Walk into the Playhouse Theater tonight, and you'll walk into a world where flappers dance the Charleston and the turkey trot; while musical numbers drop out of thin air. Where boys meet girls and, against all odds, wins her every time.

"The Festival Theatre's second production of the season, Sandy Wilson's 'The Boy Friend,' opens tonight. A parody of the typical '20s musical, the play 'departs from reality often,' Director/Choreographer Darwin Knight said.

"Dialogue-wise, there's no scene that's any longer than two minutes at the most. It's basically one musical number after another, tied together by kind of a humorous but flimsy story line, typical of the period."

"The production runs through July 10 with performances Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 7:30 pm.



Darwin Knight

"The show operates on two levels," Knight said. "We're operating really as a play within a play. I've tried to set that up with the leading lady's entrance. I mean, she takes a pose and gets a follow spot, and she has a lot of by-play with the conductor. Every entrance is set up as, 'Here comes the star!' And it's the same way with (Percy, the leading man) too."

Percival Browne, a respectable and often stuffy father, is played by

equity actor James LeVaggi. LeVaggi has appeared in productions off-Broadway, on television, and in regional theaters in Virginia, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. What did the Festival Theatre have to offer?

"A pay check," LeVaggi said with a laugh. "It's very instructive, really, to see the level of talent that you find among the students and to watch them grow. In a way, it's a learning process for me, to see how hard they work and how much they've grown in a rehearsal period."

"Plus, you could never turn down the opportunity to work with me," Knight joked. "Whenever I have a funny comedy character part who has to sing, I generally call Jim."

"When you find people whose work you really admire and who, on top of all that, are just wonderful people, it's a joy to work with them."

then you want to stay together. And I think that is reflected in the end product, because it was all put together with love and concern on everybody's part," Knight said.

The cast has been rehearsing for the production for several weeks now.

Elton John back in top form on latest

By RON YEANY
Collegian Staff Writer

"TOO LOW FOR ZERO" Elton John, Geffen GHS 4006

Elton John has renewed his long-time collaboration with Bernie Taupin on *Too Low For Zero*, and the resulting album is John's best since *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, almost a decade ago.

The recent hit from the album, "I'm Still Standing," may have an underlying meaning, a testament to his return in fine form that is hinted at on last year's *Jump Up!*. But on its own, "I'm Still Standing" is an excellent number, and it is so good to hear Elton rocking out like that again.

But the energy doesn't stop there, as witnessed by "Kiss The Bride," another rock 'em out track from the album. This one has Elton in the

uncomfortable position of sitting back and watching an old flame take her vows.

"Crystal" also finds John pounding the keys ones more, this time as a girl comes between John and a good friend. As typical of John-Taupin hits, Bernie Taupin's lyrics are fresh and vivid, as in "Crystal": "The world's your oyster, you're a pearl, but he's a jeweler, my friend. I'm sure that in the end, Crystal, you'll be his little girl!"

John's soft side is exhilarating on *Too Low For Zero* also. The excellent "Cold As Christmas (in the middle of the year)" is a beautiful ballad depicting the slow break-up of a long marriage. "Cold As..." also marks another return from the Elton John vaults, back-up vocals by Kiki Dee (remember their

duet?). Another guest steps in on "I

used whatever happened to be on hand. And suddenly, the real thing is there, the lights are there, and everything you've worked on suddenly falls totally apart."

Although the ten to twelve hour tech rehearsals of the past week have

been difficult, Knight said the cast has made rapid progress.

"We had our first dress rehearsal Sunday night, and I was just amazed," Knight said. "We got through the show without any major hitches."

Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues." Stevie Wonder lends his time on harmonica to this bluesy number that closes side one of the album.

As mentioned earlier, John's original band of Davey Johnstone on guitar, Dee Murray on bass, and Nigel Olsson on drums has returned here. The result is a much tighter

sound not found on any of John's recent albums.

It's so refreshing to hear Elton John back in top form, especially with so much "new music" on the airwaves right now. Granted, much of today's new music is good material, but *Too Low For Zero* outshines the others like a vintage Rolls Royce next to a new Corvette.



Elton John

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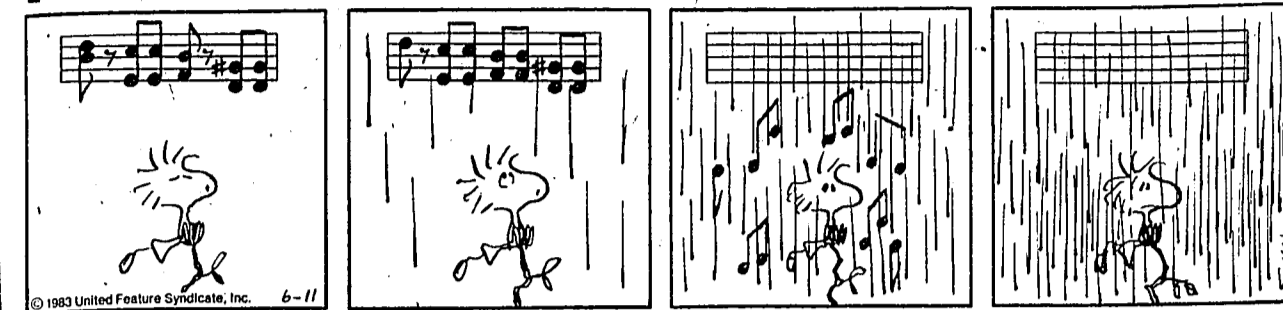
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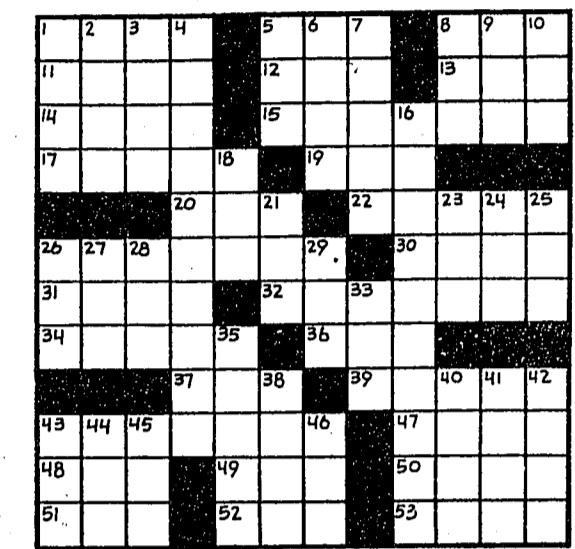
- 1 Nahors
- 5 Book lacking real value
- 8 Prickly seed case
- 11 Atmosphere of majesty
- 12 Biblical character
- 13 Danish zinc coin
- 14 Yvette
- 15 Sufficiently advance
- 17 Chas
- 18 Fixation
- 20 Calloway
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- 30 Pry
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- 34 Kind
- 36 Yellow tuber
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- 43 An ivy-like aloe
- 47 Epilogue
- 48 Ice or stone
- 49 Whooper
- 50 Danish measure
- 51 Aduel
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Down

- 1 Exchange
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- 7 Tiltak
- 8 Kidney bean
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- 10 Sinclair Lewis's nickname
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- 35 Sortie
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- 40 Macheite
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Crossword

(answer's in Friday's classified)



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