Entertainment Outlook

Female version of hit play The Odd Couple

THE BARRIS BEA FUN OF IT. I recently tried a rather unusual experiment - visiting, barely a week apart. two similar entertainment palaces (dinner theatres, to be precise) that are geographically separated by



The first was the well-known Burt Reynolds Jupiter Theatre, at Jupiter, Florida, some 25 miles up the Atlantic coast from Palm Beach. The second ras the relatively new Stage West at

Mississauga, Onlario, just past the Western boundaries of Toronto.

The Burt Reynolds Jupiter Theatre has been operating successfully for about a decade. Although the famous movie star whose name it pan out and was closed.)

In Jupiter, Florida, I saw a 1960s musical revue called Beenive, a fluffy item with a cast of six singers (all fe-male) and a six-piece rock band on the stage behind the singers. At Stage West, the attraction was the female version of Neil Simon's comedy. The Odd Couple, with Sandy Dennis and Stella Stevens as the stars.

Let's deal first with Beehive. It's an innocuous melange of bits and pieces of some 40 songs that emerged some-time during the 1960s, performed eng-agingly enough by six attractive sing-ers. There is no story line, very little dialogue and not very much in the way of imaginative choreography or set design. The design is straight-forward

The stage is framed by indications of a huge juke box, and all the mustclans and singers perform inside its

The songs include it's My Party, Where The Boys Are, The Beat Goes On, To Sir With Love, Proud Mary, A Fool In Love, Me and Bobby McGee, The Name Game, She's A Fool, You Don't Own Me, Downtown, Make Your Own Kind Of Music, and many more baby-boomer bonances.

There's nothing particularly wrong with these songs or the other ones in Beehlve. What's wrong is what's missing. How does one "cover" the music of the 1960s with nary a nod to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Beach Boys or Bob Dylan?

Perhaps the error was in casting-all

Perhaps the error was in casting-all women, rather than having a mixed cast. So many of the 1960s songs were boys' (or, if you like, men's) songs and thus inappropriate for women. Perhaps the rights to some of those songs were unavailable. Whatever the reason, the imbalance is a glaring one. Come to think of it, had they used a mixed cast, the title may have been unusable. Beehive refers to the women's hair style of that time. en's hair style of that time.

The other aspect of the visit to the Burt Reynolds emporium that went against the grain was the matter of house rules. One has become accushouse rules. One has become accustomed, of course, to the prohibition against smoking during performances at dinner theatres, as well as to the serving of drinks during the actual show. But at the Burt Reynolds Jupiter Theatre, you must finish your drink and all glasses must be removed from the table before the show even starts. In addition, if you want a drink during the intermission, you must order it before the beginning of the first act. the first act.

I asked our waitress why this was so



15 Min. or Free - Lunch Special

LADIES' NIGHT

A letter from the Rotary Club's Eric Sellors asked for free ice time March 29, from noon to 3 p.m. Coun. Gerald Rennie's motion to waive the \$174 charge for ice time

THURSDAY

ing to say one thing and then inter-

rupting herself in mid-thought, makes

her the star attraction in this produc-

The rest of the cast is effective, too,

especially Damon Redfern and Anthony Bekenn, who play two Spanish brothers (replacing the two women with whom Oscar and Felix had a date in the original version) in appropriately broad fashion.

The price range at both the Jupiter Theatre and Stage West is not unrea-sonable. Our seats at the Jupiter were

\$37.50 (U.S.) for dinner and the show.
At Stage West, prices range from \$28.50 to \$38.00, depending on the night of the week. Drinks, in both places,

Both rooms are attractive, but

Stage West seems to me a bit less glitzy. Certainly, The Odd Couple is better dinner theatre fare than Bee-

hive, but I've no doubt the Jupiter Theatre at other times offers equally satisfying productions.

My biggest problem at the Jupiter were those silly restrictions about clearing away the glasses and ordering intermission drinks an hour before you many them. State West in

fore you want them. Stage West in-flicts no such nonsense on its patrons.

Ironically, the Stage West theatre in Edmonton (at the Mayfield Inn) burned to the ground late in February — just as construction was under way to expand its capacity. But Howard Pechet, the executive producer for all three Stage West locations, yows that it will be rebuilt and will reopen within six months.

In the meantime, I welcome the ex-

In the meantime, I welcome the ex-

pansion of the Stage West empire to

No free ice

There'll be no free ice time at the

Acton Arena for the Rotary Club

Skate-a-Thon, council decided Mon-

the Toronto area.



10° WINGS

TUES. & WED.

ROSSING

and she smiled and said, "That's the way Burt wants it. He doesn't want a

lot of tinkling glasses during the per-

Barris

Beat

Only when the show began did I re-alize what a foolish notion this was. When the rock band began to blare

forth, it would have been impossible for anyone (including the performers) to hear the tinkle of a thousand

Whatever my reservations, Beehive played to a full house the night I was there — a Tuesday night in the sixth week of the show's run — so I guess

people accept such allly restrictions.

Stage West, at Mississauga, is a larger (430 scats) room, well con-

structed for the purposes of dinner theatre. (The capacity will be in-creased to 600 when the balcony is

Unlike the Jupiter Theatre, where you ordered dinner from a set menu, Stage West has a fairly extensive buf-

·fet, which I like because you have

The sight lines are very good (as they are at the Jupiter) and the high celling gives the room a spaciousness that is welcome, although it may at

times create some minor audio prob-

The Odd Couple, with fuss-budget Felix Unger and slob Oscar Madison transformed into Florence and Olive,

is still a very funny play, and Sandy Dennis is particularly effective in squeezing every laugh possible out of the revised Neil Simon text. The Stella

Stevens role is perhaps not as reward-ing, but Ms. Stevens does reasonably

But there's no doubt that the distinc-

tive Sandy Dennis style, that tentative

nervousness of hers, that way of start-

glasses above that din.

completed.)

more choices.

RESTAURANT - L.L.B.O. 7 MAIN ST. NORTH

"Door Prizes"





THURS., APRIL 16th 8:00 P.M.

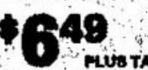
SUMMER'S BACK!!

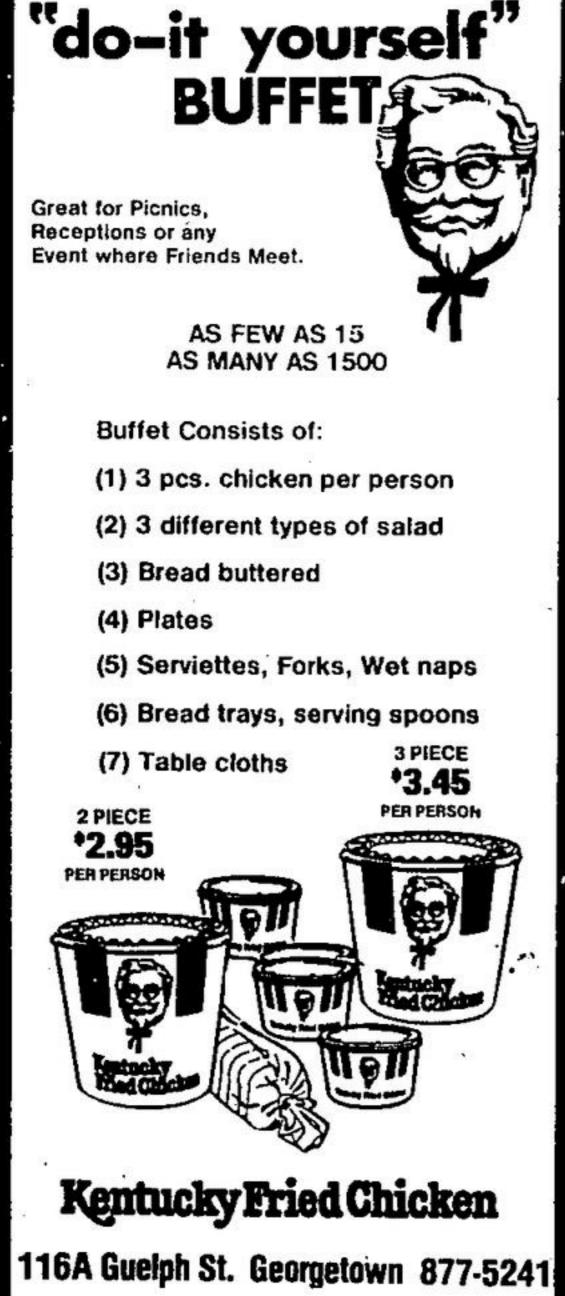
BIKINI & BUNS CONTEST & SURPRISE MEN'S CONTEST

4:30-7:30

SUNDAY BUFFET

All You Can Eat





TREAT YOUR GUESTS

WITH A