

'Pippin' opens Friday at Eastern

CHARLESTON — A musical extravaganza about a naive young man coming to terms with the real world is the subject of the long-running Broadway hit to be presented by the members of EIU Summer Theatre Company '83, beginning Friday at the Doudna Fine Arts Center Theatre.

Pippin, is the title of the show as well as the name of its Candide-like innocent hero, double cast and to be played by Rex Rund and Dan Sullivan. His story is conjured up by a colorful troupe of traveling actors lead by Lewis Blake in the role of a fast-talking, high-stepping mast of ceremonies, who steps forth and promises "a stunning example of magic and merriment."

He further explains that we will follow Pippin's adventures without worrying about historical authenticity (the charac-

ter having been suggested by Pepin, the very little-known eldest son of the Emperor Charlemagne).

The book, written by Roger O. Hirson, portrays the starry-eyed prince's search for his place in the sun. He tries war and finds it thoroughly distasteful. In despair, he turns to his boisterous old grandmother, to be played by Susan Morse, who sings her philosophy in a rousing comic number called *No Time at All*. In it, she advises Pippin to live it up, a course he embarks upon with a vengeance, with the assistance of a bevy of voluptuous dancers. Among these seductresses will be Suzanne Boucher, Julie Hall, Sarah Hardway, Anne Ostander and Laura Pottala.

Steve Scherer will be seen as the hard-living, hard-playing Charlemagne

whose council of war is done as a lively minstrel show. His wife, Pippin's predatory stepmother, to be played by Laurie Hadfield, sings and dances *Spread a Little Sunshine*, another of the musical's showpieces composed by Stephen Schwartz, whose credits include the score for the world-acclaimed *Godspell*.

The handsome widow show captures Pippin's heart will be played by Kathleen Scott and Ian Davis will be seen as her young son. Others in the company are: Dennis Anderson, Lisa Blaylock, Kurt Christensen, Andre Copeland, Jill Followell, Kim Gaffney, Gena Groppe, Paul Mitri, Dan Perry and Ron Tulin.

Director E.G. Gabbard will guide the company through the cheerful anachronisms of the plot that is loosely

derived from history, but dances and sings in a modern mode. The choreographer will be Robert Shook. The semi-*commedia dell'arte* burlesque costumes will be designed by Nancy Paule and the unit setting with many surprises built in will be designed by C.P. Blanchette. June Johnson will be musical director for this swinging, youthful parable that will play at the Theatre for six performances through July 13.

Tickets for the production are \$3.50 for adults, \$2.50 for children and senior citizens, and \$2.00 for EIU students. Reservations can be made by dialing 581-3110. Tickets will be available at the Fine Arts Ticket office from 1 to 5 p.m. daily.

Director Gabbard warns that the production is for mature audiences only.