**ENCHANTED EVENING**

A revue reviewed

This seems to be the mouth for musical revues.

The Little Theatre in Sullivan is into the second and final week of *A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine*, the first half of which is a revue highlighting songs from 1940s movie musicals. This coming weekend Indiana State University's Summer Stage in Terre Haute will present a musical tribute to George Gershwin in a cabaret theatre atmosphere at Hulman Center. Next week the Charleston Community Theatre will present its summer revue *Broadway Then and Now* for four performances at the Tarble Arts Center.

And right now EIU's theatre department is winding up a six-performance run of *Some Enchanted Evening*, a revue featuring the songs of Rodgers and Hammerstein, one of the longest and most successful collaborations in the history of American musical theatre. There's no unifying concept to the show, and the songs are presented in no particular order. Some of them are classics that have become a part of our lives - *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top*, *It Might As Well Be Spring*, *There Is Nothin' Like a Dame*, *I Enjoy Being a Girl*, and, of course, the title number. Others may not be so well known - *A Fellow Needs a Girl* (from *Allegro*), *Lonely Room* (from *Oklahoma!*). But they all still exert their magic. They're fresh and alive, joyful and absolutely glorious.

As packaged by the Rodgers & Hammerstein Theatre Library, the show calls for three women and two men in a theatrical setting, first "backstage," where the songs are sung as personal interplay, and then "on stage," where they are "performed" for the audience. The EIU production is directed by Gerald Sullivan, who likes to do things on a magnified scale. The cast has been expanded to seven women - Cathy Berns, Karyn Cornwell, Denise Cougill, Janice McCowan, Carolyn Moran, Elizabeth Welsh — and five men - Mike Gibson, Frank Ristucci, Scott Siasgessere, Deere Smith, Darren Tuggle. G.P. Blanchette has provided a delicately latticed set with tree trunks silhouetted against a backdrop sky that keeps changing color, from blue to green to red etc. The performers are in evening dress, looking and behaving their best, as for a school prom. This makes for a genial, pleasant but somewhat restrained evening of entertainment. These are young people with talent and energy rarin' to go. Why not let them? Every once in awhile it happens, as with McCowan's magnificent guttural during *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair*, but it lasts only an instant before she resumes being very ladylike.

For the ensemble numbers, the performers are usually paired off, boy-girl, boy-girl. That means there's a girl left at each end all by her lonesome. Sometimes they change partners, but they don't dance, at least in the first half. For some reason, most of the dancing (choreography uncredited) comes in the second half.

Some of the songs are preceded by snippets of dialogue from their shows, although they may not necessarily be related. Thus, the men lead up to their *Kansas City* number (Act I of *Oklahoma!* by looking at dirty pictures in Jud's "Little Wonder" (Act II). The performers are personable and amiable. Standouts include Gibson, who puts life and spirit into everything he does; Cougill, who exudes with her usual politeness; Tuggle, who dances up a storm in *Kansas City*; Smith, who uses his rich baritone nicely in *This Nearly Was Mine*; and Sullivan, who shines with Gibson in *Sixteen Going on Seventeen*. And there is Berns, always easy on the eyes and singing every number beautifully with feeling. When she holds center stage, it is indeed a "grand night for singing."

Best of all, there are those wonderful songs. Musical director June Johnson gets good sounds from her singers, with a big assist from the on-stage instrumentalists - pianists Jim Litzelman and Bart Rettberg and percussionist Karen Plaut.

All in all, this EIU production is an enchanting evening. There are performances at 8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday in the Fine Arts Center Theatre.