

Local Rock Opera a Powerful Work

By JOHN DASH

I had a great time last week being disillusioned. I discovered that Moses was neither a hoary old hunk of granite that discovered locomotion nor a hoary old matinee idol with an advanced case of lockjaw.

Don't know where I got the first idea. I suspect an illustration from a Bible stories book. I know where I got the second, and according to that script, Charlton Heston eventually went on to do battle with a bunch of people dressed up in ape suits.

Last week it all went by the board at a sparkling production of a rock opera, *Becoming — The Man and the Mountain*, a locally written, composed and produced piece that had the audience leaping to their feet during a thunderous last ovation.

Becoming is the story of the Israelites' deliverance from the hands of Pharaoh and into the Promised Land, and from the credits on the playbill, seems to be pretty much of a family production.

Michael Lester wrote the music; his mother Helen had a hand in the lyrics; and his sibs Steve and Jody played in the band. Lester is a graduate of Aquinas Institute and is now in his junior year at Ithaca College.

Lyrics were also composed by John Cielinski and Joe Bartol, and the remainder of the band included Bruce Nardi, Jeff Greene and Fred Thompson.

Altogether, this group, with a little more exposure, would make "Where Is Our God" and "You Are the New Sun Lighting" as memorable tunes as any on the New York stage.

Becoming was staged by Summer Showcase '73, an offshoot of Brighton Showcase and the Brighton Youth Agency at Council Rock School.

Pulling together nearly 50 enthusiastic and talented young people into shape was Thomas D. Avery, director of theater arts for the Brighton School District. Avery, an enormous man with an ability and a vision to match, got his cast to mime both the plagues and the parting of the Reed Sea with startling impact.

The principal singers in the cast proved themselves more than capable of their roles. We especially noted Alan Gruber as Joshua, who finally led the Israelites into Canaan, with a very lyrical appreciation of the wonders ahead; William Jarvis as Aaron, firebrand revolutionary; Debbie Blakeslee, as Sephora, a woman puzzled and felt shut out of Moses's vision; and Sue Alfieri, one of the Hebrews, whose brief spotlight indicated that we should see her in larger roles very shortly.

Andrew Hammond sang a most convincing God. Jenny Sparka, as the grieving wife of Pharaoh, worked a most moving scene; and Daryl Friedman as Pharaoh did a fine imitation of RMN making things perfectly clear.

Louis Gritter played Moses, a man torn with his vision, beset by domestic problems, and still a dynamic leader of his people. He played the role to perfection. His final song, in which he leaves his people in the hands of Joshua, as he ascends the mountain to the fulfillment of his life, his death, evoked tears. It was a shining performance.

The final show of the group's season is *Oliver*. It will be played at Council Rock School through Saturday.



Alan Gruber sang the role of Joshua, the man who finally lead the wandering Israelites into the land of Canaan.



ALL IN THE FAMILY
Sarah Child

Poor Sarah's Vacation Almanac

—If you find the togs worn by tourists to Mass in the summer resort churches ultra liberal, take a look at what is being worn in your own parish these days.

—A Universal Truth: The woman who leaves dirty coffee cups in her sink before starting off on an 800 mile marathon with her family is going to return to find dirty coffee cups in her sink. And some bonus dust balls under the beds.

—If the stack of books you took on vacation came back untouched either you had a marvelously busy time or your summer lodgings had a TV set that could pick up Watergate hearings.

—The child who is old enough to read a menu and vote against Chinese subgum for five is old enough to take a vacation alone.

—Whether you go to the city or country, seashore or mountains, and you have children under 12, band-aids are the one item you're sure to run out of.

—We started out with the idea that a station wagon would give our three children ample room on those long trips to visit their

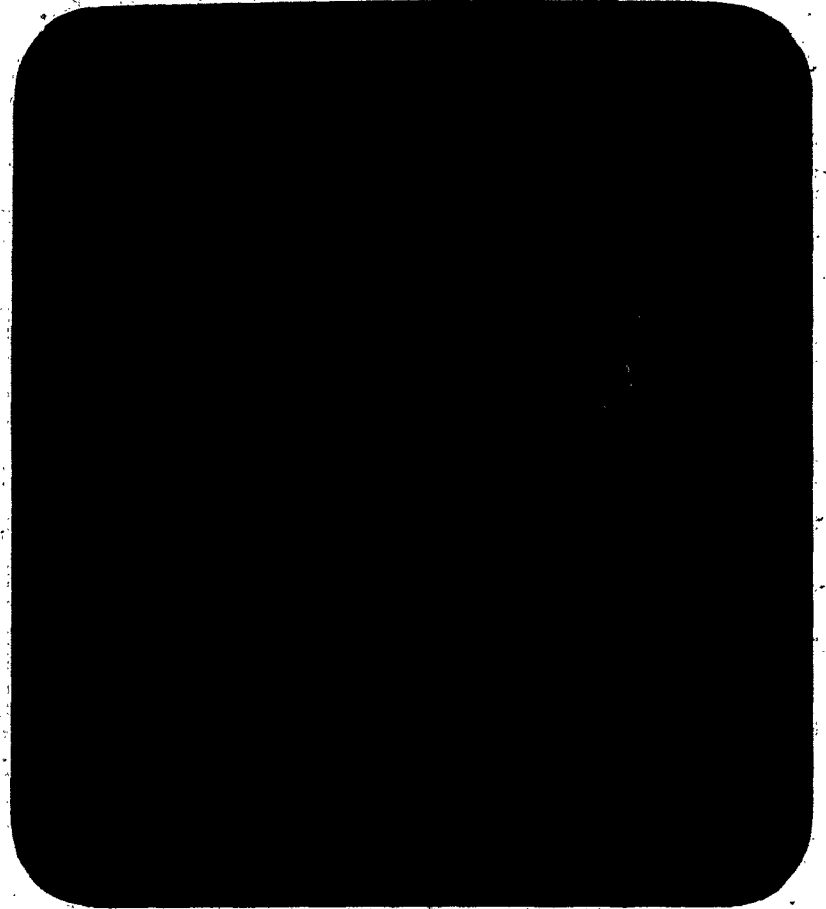
grandparents. There would be no excuse for intra family fighting. Now we know. Not even a double decker bus from London could prevent that.

—Since we have three youngsters we tend to visit the fast food restaurants a lot in our travels. They're fast, cheap and our kids think you haven't lived until you have had a hamburger and french fries for breakfast.

—Speaking of food I've yet to hear anyone ever say they came back from a vacation slimmer than they left.

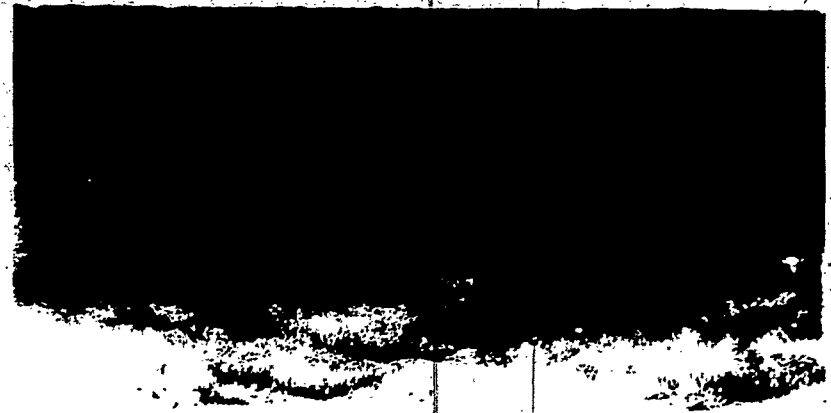
—The only distressing thing about coming home after a five day absence was finding that the leaves on our newly planted London Plane tree were turning yellow. A quick trip to our local agricultural center and a confab with the county agent revealed I'd watered it too often and too little. His advice: Water only every 10 to 14 days and then soak it to the tune of 30 or 40 gallons.

—My husband and I always have at least one togetherness spat during his couple of weeks off. But only about important things, i.e., how often to retie the tomato stakes or which roadside stand has the best corn, etc., etc.



Photos by Susan McKinney

Moses, sung by Louis Gritter, tells his wife Sephrona, sung by Debbie Blakeslee, of his divine mission.



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