

Voice of the Turtle

THE DOVE AND THE MAGIC CLOAK

Presented by Voice of the Turtle.
Judith Wachs, Director.
Sunday, April 5 at Kresge.
Sponsored by MIT Hillel.

By AMY GORIN

THE FLOWERS APPEAR on the earth, the time of singing is come and the voice of the turtle (dove) shall be heard throughout the land.

The Song of Solomon 2:10-12

Voice of the Turtle provided a delightful and affectionate afternoon of Sephardic music and storytelling Sunday night in Kresge Auditorium. The group, which is made up of Derek Burrows, Lisle Kulbach, Jay Rosenberg & Judith Wachs, was joined for this performance by Robert J. Lurtsema, host of WGBH Morning Pro Musica, who acted as narrator.

The Sephardim are the descendants of Jews who settled in Spain after the Diaspora. Spain expelled its Jewish population during the Inquisition, and the people settled in the middle and near east, in North Africa, and in the Baltic countries. The Sephardic culture is a mixture of culture from these regions, traditional Jewish culture and Spanish culture.

Voice of the Turtle allows its audience a glimpse of the Sephardim in their stories, songs, music and costumes (which are based on ancient designs). The experience will be both familiar and strangely differ-

ent to those whose background is Ashkenaz (Eastern European Jewish).

The program for this performance was "The Dove and the Magic Cloak," an original folktale by David Burrows. The group accompanied the telling of the story with traditional Sephardic songs, and with music played on a variety of modern and medieval instruments. A collection of abstract color slides set the appropriate moods and provided a backdrop to the players and narrator.

The players worked well as a team, and showed themselves to be able in singing, strumming, blowing and pounding. The songs ranged from sweetly sung ballad to fast and intense chant (to the accompaniment of drums).

The story itself is reminiscent of many classic fairytales, both Sephardic and otherwise. Children should enjoy the performances of the group, though a two hour program (with one intermission) may be too long for very young ones.

Many of the songs in the program were celebratory songs to be sung at the spring holidays of Purim and Passover, and the group has incorporated the telling of the story of Purim into the folktale. The audience was encouraged to participate in the traditional practice of drowning out the name of Haman in the Purim story, an act in which both adults and the many children in the audience joined with fervor.

Voice of the Turtle has been performing as a group since 1978, and tours in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Israel.

MTG's strong performances cannot rescue poor material

WORKING

The MIT Musical Theatre Guild.
April 2-5 in the Sala de Puerto Rico.

By BARBARA MASI

YES, SOME JOBS ARE BORING AND working for a living can be trying. But "Working," MIT Musical Theatre Guild's latest production, reflects life a bit too closely — "Working" was work to sit through. Although Director Scott E. Ramsay '89 and company did their jobs with enthusiasm, the choice of this musical was a bad one.

Based on Studs Terkel's collection of real life tales of working told by real life people, MTG's program says of the musical, "The characters in 'Working' are non-fictional. . . . Their names have been changed, but their words have not. . . . The writers [of the musical] have tried to remain faithful to the character's original

words." But real life words do not make real art.

"Working" is composed of an endless and unnecessary series of song-vignettes in which each and every one of the characters we see in the musical's opening song tell why he loves or hates working. Considering that six people wrote the songs for the production, perhaps Stephen Schwartz, who adapted "Working" from Terkel's book, could not bring himself to throw anyone's songs away. During the performance, you can almost hear the audience counting down how many characters are left to sing their woes.

MTG's production opened on a passionless note: like zombies, the music and actors were oddly disconnected. They stood, solemn and unsmiling, dressed as a female waitress, a male trucker, a male bricklayer, a female editor (a concession to sex equality), a paperboy, and so on, singing "All

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Mmmm. . . .
Matza Ball
Soup !!



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