

*A new musical theater in the area, Limelight Theatre, is presenting its premiere production with "Closer Than Ever" at the Rockville Jewish Community Center (To 5/16). It was a fine starting effort by the group with a sextet of very enthusiastic singers. Allie O'Brien presented a wonderful but simple stage set of see-through panels which suggested the "transparency" in the interrelationships of the characters. The musical skits all contained the bittersweet poetry of Maltby and Shire within lovely and pleasing music. All twenty numbers show some romantic, social or personal conflicts concluding with the positive fact that people manage to live through them all. The only fine talent seen on stage was David Kozisek who showed a vocal, acting and psychological maturation in his presentations. John Dellapora was in good voice and charming on stage but sometimes a little wooden. Michael Grew hit so many "false notes" that jarred especially in the group singing. The solo pianist was excellent but she wasn't a good accompanist as she preceded the singers rather than followed them so that she could have covered the vocal errors especially of Mr. Grew. The women (Katie Nigsch, Elizabeth A. Hester and Elizabeth Parsons) all showed too much jarring nasality although they were vocally very compatible with the opening number of the Second Act with "Three Friends" which was the best performed in the show. Director Jay D. Brock was very successful in effective stage action throughout. This opening show for this new musical theater bodes well for success in the future as the whole affair was quite classy. (Reviewed by Bob Anthony)*