

Art Beat features various happenings in the suburban art world. Send Wayne County arts news leads to Art Beat, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Scholercraft, Livonia MI 48150, fax them to (734) 591-7279, or e-mail (fax a text file) to lchomin@oci.homecomm.net.

HOT FAMILIES WANTED

The Livonia Rotary Club and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp's International Exchange Program are looking for families or singles to host a French jazz group Aug. 10-13.

The 19-member Ecole de Musique d'improvisation Jazz will perform Sunday, Aug. 12 at Rotary Park in Livonia. Hosts will be responsible for the musicians from dinner time Friday night until Monday. The only criteria is a friendly attitude.

This is the fifth Blue Lake sponsored music group hosted by the Livonia Rotary Club.

For more information, call Bill Cameron at (734) 622-2643 or send e-mail to bump@ucom.com.

DINNER THEATER

The Great Ypsilanti Train Robbery of 1916: An Evening of Historical License returns 6:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Aug. 3 to the Angel Golf Club, 6 West Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti.

Tickets are \$39.95 per person and include choice of three entrees. Advance ticket purchase

and meal selection is required. Call (734) 483-0135.

The Great Ypsilanti Train Robbery of 1916: An Evening of Historical License is loosely based on a real heist, that's still unsolved. Ample amounts of historical license allow for a creative blend of history, comedy and music.

SYMPHONY CONCERTS

The Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, along with the Plymouth Historical Museum, the Plymouth Community Arts Council, and Canton Project Arts, kick off the Passport to the Arts & Culture program with two free family concerts 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 3 in Kellogg Park, Plymouth and 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 6 in Heritage Park, Canton.

The program features a chamber orchestra performing summertime music including ragtime, waltz, a little Berwain, Bizet, and Wagner, and the all American march - John Philip Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*.

For more information, call the symphony office, (734) 451-2112.

ART IN THE PARK

The Arts League of Michigan is looking for students throughout the entire Detroit area who have an interest in pursuing the arts as a career and are eager for an experience that will challenge and engage them.

Art in the Park, July 30 to Aug. 10, is a four-hour a day program offered at no charge to students in grades 7-12. Under the guidance of a professional artist, students will create art in the park at Nankin Mills in Westland after lessons in the visual arts, poetry and photography.

In 1999-2000, the Artists Mentorship Program students worked in dance, literature, vocal and jazz music.

For more information, call (313) 870-1680.

FINAL DAYS

Time is running out to view traditional black and white and contemporary color woodblock prints by Farmington Hills artist Michael McCullough. The one-man show, sponsored by the Livonia Arts Commission, continues through the end of July at Livonia City Hall, 33000 Civic Center Dr., east of Farmington Road.

McCullough, who grew up in Redford, offers subjects that appeal to a variety of tastes. Nature scenes featuring endangered African animals, and women in veils, force viewers think about the subject matter.

McCullough does decorative works as well including fruits, vegetables and dining scenes that can be placed on a kitchen wall. Look for them at local art fairs. Best of all, the works are reasonably priced.

For more information, call the Livonia Community Resources Department, (734) 466-2538.

STILL LOOKING

The Plymouth Community Arts Council is looking for an electric ceramics kiln to help them build their art programs. They could also use five easels for their figure drawing classes. If you can help, call Leslie Greenstein, (734) 416-4278.

WRITING SEMINAR

Are you tired of writer's block? Need inspiration to pick up a pen and start writing, or some tips that will help you craft a story?

Cheryl Vatcher can help you during writing seminars offered during writing seminars offered 1-3:30 p.m. Saturday, July 28 at the Noble Public Library, 32901 Plymouth Road, Livonia (\$40), and 1-2:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 24 and July 31 at the Plymouth Coffee Bean, 884 Penniman, (\$35).

Coming up with ideas is easier than you think. If you've already formulated a story, and want to work on it, Vatcher, a Plymouth writer who earned a master's degree from University of Michigan's School of Education, has penned articles for several metro Detroit newspapers.

For more information, or to register, call (734) 414-8680.



Final days: Michael McCullough prods viewers into thinking about subjects ranging from endangered animals to ethnic traditions.

MUSIC IN THE PARK

The Plymouth Community Arts Council continues its Music in the Park series with Liberty Brass Quintet, which includes members of the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, at noon-Wednesday, July 26 in Kellogg Park, Plymouth.

For information, call (734) 416-4278.

FILMMAKERS MEETING

The Metropolitan Filmmakers Coalition is holding a meeting on

proposals and grants for film projects 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 26 at the Specs Howard School, 19900 W. 9 Mile Road, Southfield. Morrie Washawski, author of *Shaking the Money Tree*, is hosting the meeting; copies of his book will be available for purchase. Call Nichole Sylvester (313) 492-0422, Alisa Lomax, (313) 492-3800 or visit filmcollective@aol.com for information.

Madame X from page C1

both are originally from the area, they decided to bring the musical to Ann Arbor for its world premiere.

Heart touching

"One piece of advice," said Hammonds, who's directing the musical. "Bring plenty of Kleenex. The music and the story are riveting. Paul Bruce writes melodies that touch you in the heart."

Hammonds has come a long way from studying theater with Gloria Logan at Plymouth Canton Educational Park. Years of experience with community and professional theater prepared him well for the challenges of mounting a new production. In fact, the years he spent as a technical director for the Michigan Opera Theatre touring company led to his decision to move to Chicago in 1992, and audition for professional theater. He gained more experience after forming the nonprofit Marquee Theatre with colleagues.

"I learned that a lot of shows can take seven to 10 years to develop," said Hammonds. "*Les Miz* was five hours long the first time they presented it and just last December they took it down again."

Putting together a musical

Dann Kraft knew from studying musical theater at the University of Michigan that productions go through a number of revisions on the road to Broadway. Kraft, who plays the role of Helene, eventually plans on moving to New York for a career on stage.

"The most exciting part was learning how a brand new musical is put together," said Kraft, a graduate of West Bloomfield High School. "In a workshop there are changes constantly being made in the script. Once it goes to Broadway, it's frozen."

The Hammonds are working

night and day to perfect *Madame X* before it reaches that point. Not that the two mind. Theater is a common love. Hammonds met while performing in the *Secret Garden* with a touring children's company in Chicago.

All of the hours traveling back and forth between Chicago and Detroit have only heightened their enthusiasm for the production they plan to open in Chicago within the next year.

"One of the first things he brought up when we met was *Madame X*," said Stephanie, who plays the lead role. "We realized in the first draft it needed sketching in, needed to have the characters fleshed out," said Stephanie, who studied theater with Dean Cobb at North Farmington High School before moving to Chicago in the mid-1990s to pursue a professional career.

"We put a creative team together to strengthen the flow. Paul developed a new musical number. We wanted to see how audiences here would react to it. It was a logical one to come back to before putting it up in Chicago. We've had several rewrites since rehearsal started June 26."

Audience Talkbacks, along with written surveys passed out after each performance, will lead to further adjustments.

"It's a great opportunity for them to help develop a Broadway show," said Stephanie. "And it's a chance for the performers to see how it works when you're in fast-paced rehearsals and to see the creative process and comment on it."

"It's not every day an actor gets to work on a musical and create a role without comparing it to someone else's," added Jeffrey.

Helping hands

Local actors, set designers and directors like Nancy Florkowski

are happy about having the opportunity to help develop the professional production. Florkowski, director of youth theater Tinderox Productions, along with Plymouth Theater Guild members Ken Kuna and Cynthia Lewandowski, will be able to look back and remember their part in producing a hit musical. Kuna designed and built the set for the production which takes place between 1890 and 1910. Lewandowski is company manager. Florkowski, as assistant director, is part of the evaluation process.

"I study it as they're performing their lines, the spacing during the play, watching for audience reaction," said Florkowski, a Redford resident. "I'll be at all or most of the performances as we try to perfect it."

"It's a dynamic production. It challenges the emotions. I enjoyed the movie, but I enjoy musicals. It's the caliber of *Les Miz*. It's that strong. I'm proud to be part of this. It's so professional."

This is Leif Halston's first professional production and he's using every chance he gets to improve his acting technique. Halston, a West Bloomfield resident, plays Young Raymond, Madame X's son.

"You have to watch people to learn to act," said Halston, who recently played the lead in *Oliver* at Tinderox production at Masonic Temple in Detroit. "I learned lots of times it seems like you're over reacting but you're not. And I learned to project."

"I'm pretty excited. When I first read it I didn't understand it but then I stayed for the read-through. It's a tragedy and a good story."

Darren DeWitt's enjoyed the learning experience as much as Halston, even though he's rarely acted in production at the Bonstelle and Studio theaters at Wayne State University for the last two years. DeWitt plays the grown-up Raymond fresh out of law school.

"I learned to attain a certain level of emotion quickly," said DeWitt, a Wayne State University theater major who recently danced in *Sleeping Beauty Ballet* with the Michigan Ballet Theatre based in Rochester. "One of the best things I learned was to communicate honesty in your work and not to think about it."

"I have to address the jury in two large monologues. Raymond doesn't understand the emotions he's feeling for this woman he doesn't know. I end up speaking

from the heart and it has to appear off the cuff."

Playing Raymond is helping DeWitt to learn how to do that. It's a skill he'll need upon arriving in New York after graduation. DeWitt loves musical theater and plans to earn a living behind the bright lights.

"It's really like a hometown

show that will be taken to Chicago and then New York," said DeWitt, a Farmington Hills resident. "It brought a level of professionalism to the local theater scene. It's a good mix of well seasoned actors with actors from the community. It shows me what the professional world is like."

university musical society

2nd Annual International Theater series

Three Performances in Ann Arbor

Shoohed Peter (A Junk Opera)
Featuring the Tiger Lillies
Music by Marty Jacques
Directed and Designed by Julian Crouch and Phelim McDermott
Wednesday, September 12, 8 pm
Thursday, September 13, 8 pm
Friday, September 14, 8 pm
Saturday, September 15, 7 pm
6-12 midnight
Michigan Theatre
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Host a Venue: Michigan Theatre

Guthrie Theater
Eugene O'Neill's Ah, Wilderness!
Directed by Douglas Wager
Friday, March 8, 8 pm
Saturday, March 9, 8 pm
Power Center
The Saturday evening performance is sponsored by: [Logo]
The Saturday matinee performance is sponsored by: [Logo]
Sponsored with support from the Michigan-Bonstelle Theater Funds and the Bonstelle Arts Fund Program

Theatre de la Jeune Lune
Molière's Tartuffe
Directed by Dominique Serraud
Friday, October 24, 8 pm
Saturday, October 27, 8 pm
Power Center
The Saturday evening performance is sponsored by: [Logo]
The Saturday matinee performance is sponsored with the generous support of Bonstelle and Bonstelle Consort

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university musical society

39th Annual chamber arts series

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor

Hagen Quartet
Sunday, October 28, 4 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
Presented in memory of David Bonelle

St. Petersburg Conservatory Chamber Ensemble
Tuesday, October 30, 8 pm
Michigan Theatre
SPONSORED BY: [Logo]

Bretano String Quartet and Mark Strand
Haydn's Seven Last Words of Christ
Sunday, January 13, 4 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
Host a Venue: Michigan Radio

Da Camera of Houston
Mozart's Prokofiev's Paris
Saturday, January 26, 8 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
SPONSORED BY: [Logo]
Host a Venue: Michigan Radio

UMS/UM Co-Commissioner
Harold Blackwell
Florence Quivar
From the Diary of Sally Hemings
Wednesday, February 13, 8 pm
Sunday, February 17, 4 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
Host a Venue: Michigan Radio & MCR 91.3 FM

Da Camera of Houston
Espanola for a Condemned Book
Sarah Rotherberg director and pianist
Music by Frédéric Chopin
Texts by Charles Baudelaire
Wednesday, March 28, 8 pm
Power Center
Presented with the generous support of Bonstelle and Susan Bonstelle
The performance is co-produced by UMS and the University of Michigan
Host a Venue: Michigan Radio

Emerson String Quartet and the Kalcichstein-Larueda-Robinson Trio
Friday, April 5, 8 pm
Michigan Theatre
Presented with the generous support of Bonstelle and Linda Bonelle

Takács Quartet and Robert Pinsky
All the World for Love
Saturday, April 13, 8 pm
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
SPONSORED BY: [Logo]
Host a Venue: Michigan Radio

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WPON 1460 AM
Mon.-Fri. 6:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.
& 2:00 P.M. - 4 P.M.
Call 248-332-1460

1. This was Duane Eddy's biggest hit and charted in June of 1960. It was also the title from the movie starring James Darren and Tuesday Weld.
SABCEUE Y'HTERE OGUYN

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