

# Art Institute scores coup with Sargent's show

By CORINNE ABATT

The first thing about John Singer Sargent is that he could paint. I mean, really and truly paint.

Say what you will about his gallery of beautiful people of the Edwardian era. Myself, I love them. He's simply a first class artist. Every painting makes a statement about the person and/or the times. Sure, many of them, were in a sense, the idle rich — not all, of course.

But, this was the only world many of them ever knew, bounded by gentility, propriety, breeding and background. Wearing the wrong gloves, or no gloves, or using the wrong fork, probably ranked with more lurid indiscretions.

ONE READS ON THEIR FACES the belief that they were the civilized world, a world they believed would always continue. This is as clear on the face of the full length portrait of the child, The Hon. Victoria Stanley, as it is on the adults.

Sargent considered this portrait of a 7-year-old child one of the finest of children he had ever done. Her jacket and hat are brilliant red. She holds a riding crop in her hands and her posture and attitude indicate that she has been told who she is, that she knows she will always stand apart from the crowd. She is properly demure but not overly shy, which would have been unbecoming an advantaged child.

While many of Sargent's subjects are delighted with their role in life, almost reveling in it, with proper polite restraint the Hon. Mrs. Charles Russell's face carries a sadness that is both poignant and troubling. What tragedy touched her life? Something is terribly wrong.

All of the fine trappings which were so much a part of Edwardian life and to which Sargent was accustomed provided excellent subject matter for the artist's deft hand and brush — the

swirls of tulle and moire silk, the rich colors of Oriental rugs and damask upholstery, porcelain complexion and hands that never touched dishwater.

Yet, Sargent stretched his skill beyond opulence to the real world of war and Spanish working people. And these, most often watercolors, are as sensitive as they are lovely. As an artist, Sargent could lavish as much love on a cashmere shawl as a tiled lady. And his portrait of "Madame X" is a story unto itself.

She is tantalizing not only because of the then controversial plunge of her neckline, but the blue-violet skin tones. The curve of her arms, the directness of her stance, the slight disdain for any and all who may approach her give this portrait its impact which was all too clear when it was first shown.

NOW IN 1979 all of this may seem like a tempest in a Chelsea teacup. At the time it was shocking. Sargent, however, considered "Madame X" his finest painting. He left it bare of background detail. She stands, arched hand on a table, there for all the world to savor or sneer at.

And when the appetite for elegance is sated, his watercolors, particularly outdoor scenes with people relaxing, picnickers, boaters, soldiers convalescing, ladies sleeping or taking a siesta on the grass, provide a different kind of refreshment.

He moves into an Impressionist style with many of these which are so well suited to a looser approach, soft, secure line and gentle lush color.

As far as the presentation of the paintings and drawings is concerned, it is first rate — easy to follow, well-labeled and attractively hung.

It is a coup for Detroit to be the only American city to have this major Sargent exhibition and the Detroit Institute of Arts, well aware of that, has done an excellent job with it.

The Sargent exhibition runs through Dec. 9.

## Critics to discuss standards

Anyone who has questioned standards used to measure fine arts can now learn some answers.

The Cranbrook P.M. evening class, "Critics' Corner," will feature well-known news media experts in a panel discussion Oct. 29 at 8 p.m. in Cranbrook School.

Guests will be Corinne Abatt, Creative Living editor, The Eclectic; John Egner, Wayne State University

professor of painting; Joy Hakanson Colby, art critic, The Detroit News; Michael Hall, Cranbrook Academy of Art sculpture department chairman; and Marsha Miro, art critic, Detroit Free Press.

The main topic discussed will be the responsibility of the critic to both the artist and the public. Art consultant Mary Denison will moderate.

## Farmington Musicales stages a concert

Members of Farmington Musicales pool their talents for a concert and afterward, set for 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2 in Mercy Center's formal lounge on 11 Mile and Middlebelt Roads. Guests are asked to enter from Gate 4, on 11 Mile.

The \$5 donation will be used to raise money to buy a baby grand piano for the 69 musicale members, who come from all surrounding communities.

"The piano must be used at every musicale meeting for accompanying vocalists and instrumentalists, or for piano solos," said Jan Smith, speaking for the group.

"It is frustrating to work time and again with a less-than-adequate instru-

ment. The musicale has done much to support the community, and now we are asking the community to support us in this effort," she said.

The group gives musical programs in nursing homes, hospitals, and schools. But since 1970, its biggest push has been in the area of helping young musicians further their career through annual scholarship competition. A total nearing \$6,000 has been given so far in this behalf.

IN A RECENT report given to the musicale, it was learned that at least seven of the former scholarship winners have gone on to study music in college, some have attained a bachelor

of arts degree and some a masters degree in music.

"It is these young people, whom the musicale has supported with both funds and encouragement, who are currently, or soon will be our music therapists, teachers, performers, choir directors, orchestra and band members serving this community," Mr. Smith said.

"The Farmington Musicales is proud to have had a part in the shaping of that contribution."

Annual contributions of money go to the Farmington Arts Council, the Farmington Community Band, the two libraries, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Farmington Community

Center, Oakway Symphony and Crusade for Strings.

The club is an affiliate of Michigan and National Federation of Music Clubs, and for years has co-sponsored National Music Week activities in this area with the Birmingham Musicales.

The club has an active madrigal choir, and gives monthly workshops for its instrumentalists and vocalist members.

The Musicales Chorus is directed by Sue McCallum and accompanied by Carolee McDaniel at the piano.

Advance tickets are available by contacting Mary Sue Ewing, 477-8629, or they will be available at the door.

## Italian artist shows at mall

The Italian Study club of Troy is represented in the exhibit of Italian Art and culture at Great Oaks Mall with a sculpture by Gino Testaguzza of Oxford.

The artist, who did the Black Madonna at the University of Detroit and several pieces for Holy Name Church in Birmingham, is showing a Pieta of Fiberglass at the Mall.

It will be on display through this week.

## Youth symphony on Detroit FM

National Music Camp's World Youth Symphony Orchestra (WYSO) will be featured in the new nationally-broadcast "America in Concert" radio series. It will be heard on Detroit's WQXR-FM during the weeks of Oct. 28 and Nov. 4. The series is syndicated by Parkway Productions of Washington, D.C.

WYSO's performances Arts. The center also heard on the series were recorded last summer. The orchestra is Academy and public radio station WIAA-FM, school-age musicians which recorded the from most of the united broadcast concerts.

States and 14 foreign countries. Students are accepted into the orchestra by auditions and must meet challenges from other students to maintain their seats in the orchestra. The orchestra is the most famous ensemble of the 52-year-old National Music Camp, part of the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

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## Passing on by the Milky Way

Out of the Milky Way and into the "galactic boondocks" will be the imaginary trip taken by Cranbrook Institute of Science planetarium visitors during November.

Quasars, black holes and various types of galaxies can be seen in the realm beyond. Planetarium shows are Wednesdays at 4 p.m., Saturdays at 2, 3, 4 and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2, 3 and 4 p.m.

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