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# Director oversees Music

By ETHEL SIMMONS

looks the part of an individual who has enjoyed the Ann Arbor culture and leisure lifestyle.

Now he and his family have moved to Grosse Pointe Park, where he is just 10 minutes from his Music Hall office and not far from other city attractions such as the symphony and art institute.

"I've been trying to get hold of new scripts to read and I've been going to new playwrights workshops at the Attic Theater, looking for a show to produce here," he said.

Wilson also wants to find established scripts for which the Music Hall can mount its own productions. He mentioned the Birmingham Theater's upcoming production of "The Gin Game" as an example of how that theater is putting productions together.

**POSSIBILITIES** for the Music Hall, Wilson said, could include the Broadway dramatic hit "That Championship Season" and Neil Simon shows that have not toured, such as "God's Favorite."

In a related area, Wilson will attempt to find if Detroit has a market for a repertory company at the Music Hall.

"I'd like to set up a series and offer

the best of the current regional theaters, inviting the Arena Theater in Washington, the Guthrie Theater in Minnesota and the ACT in San Francisco to each bring a production for one week.

"If there's an audience base, then we could build our own repertory company," he said.

"We could draw on major names, get top repertory actors — the Tammy Grimes, the Brian Bedford — and supplement them, building a strong Detroit company.

"That's at least three to four years in the offing," Wilson added.

The current 1979-80 season is underway, with a dance series that has been acknowledged as the best in the Midwest, a headlines series featuring

show business celebrities in concert, a family series with special attractions, and the solid beginnings of a theater series.

"A LOT OF this year I inherited," Wilson explained of the mostly booked first season.

The theater season is still shaping up. The National Company of "Da" with Bernard Hughes and the National Company of "Eubie" are both coming to the Music Hall.

"I want to find another nonmusical and a musical," he said.

Wilson is already negotiating the dance season for next year. He also is arranging special programs in conjunction with dance concerts at the Music Hall, including lecture-demonstrations and master classes.

"I would like to arrange a dance weekend with local companies," he said.

Unlike some cultural endeavors whose ledgers are filled with red ink, the Music Hall's financial situation "couldn't be better," Wilson reported. The venerable old hall is operating strictly in the black.

According to Wilson, one reason he was selected by the Music Hall's board of trustees is that he has had good results building subscriptions.

The dance series currently has 3,000 season subscribers, an audience he expects to build to 5,000-6,000. The headlines and family series both have topped 3,000.

**AS A BONUS** to subscribers, Wilson hopes to plan some events that are open to subscribers only, such as receptions. In the past, these kinds of activities primarily have been offered to the general audience.

Wilson said that the Music Hall can satisfy a variety of audiences.

The show "Your Arms Too Short to Box With God" was a smash hit, opening in mid-June and held over through the first week in August. "It proved there's a strong audience available in the summer," he said.

The dance series draws a strong suburban audience, Wilson noted. The family series, expanded this year from one performance on Sunday afternoon to five shows, has strong support from Southfield, Royal Oak and Livonia areas, he said.

Although he hopes the Music Hall will be producing its own shows by 1980-81, Wilson's goal is to continue offering a variety of things and "never become just a theater."

The historic Music Hall continues on a restoration program and will have the grand drape, or main curtain, and auxiliary curtains resembling the original ones hung by the end of this year. In the next two years, new carpeting and seats will be installed.

Major electrical repairs, redoing the stage floor and updating the backstage technical area are other projects.



Shields and Yarnell will bring their comedy to the Music Hall on Feb. 26-March 2 in one of the concerts on the family series.



Pearl Bailey, singer and Broadway star, will open the headlines series, appearing Nov. 13-18.

## Karras' movie shown at benefit

Alex Karras will appear at a special all-dread premiere benefit showing of "Jimmy B. and Andre," a made-for-TV movie filmed entirely in Detroit. It features Karras and several performers trained in Detroit's theater companies.

The premiere, presented by the Michigan Chapter, American Society of Interior Designers, to benefit the American Lung Association of Southeastern Michigan, will be held on Friday, Nov. 2, in the Renaissance Ballroom of the Detroit Plaza Hotel.

Festivities begin at 7 p.m., with the showing of the movie scheduled for 9 p.m.

Tickets are priced at \$50 for a special patron reception in the Cartier Ballroom. An open bar and a table of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres will be provided, along with a chance to mingle with Karras and other performers featured in the movie.

A special premiere party, offering complimentary wine, a wide selection of hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar, also will begin at 7 p.m. in the Renaissance Ballroom Foyer. Tickets for this event are \$35.

"Jimmy B. and Andre," will be shown to both groups at 9 p.m. A two-hour movie, it is scheduled for presentation on the CBS television network in December.

**RESERVATIONS AND** tickets may be obtained from the American Lung Association at 28 W. Adams, Detroit, or by calling the association at 961-1697.

The movie depicts an unlikely but true story of Detroit. Karras portrays Jimmy Butsicaris, whose downtown Lindell AC is renowned as home-away-from-home for professional athletes from across the country.

Andre, the street-wise young boy

"adopted" by Jimmy several years ago, is played by Curtis Yates, a young Detroit actor in his first major starring role.

"Jimmy B. and Andre" traces the growth of the poignant relationship between the hard-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside Greek saloon-keeper and the abused young black youth from the ghetto, through moments of conflict and misunderstanding and finally to mutual respect and affection.

Today, Jimmy and Andre remain close. Jimmy and his brother John are still proprietors of the Lindell AC and Andre one of their closest companions.

**THE MOVIE** was filmed in Detroit for CBS by Georgian Bay Productions Inc., of California with casting and support services provided by Station 12 in Detroit.

In the December telecast, viewers across the country will see many typical Detroit scenes, including the Belle Isle, Indian Village, Greektown, Tiger Stadium, the Murphy Hall of Justice and the Cass Corridor.

In addition to Karras, former Detroit Lion all-pro defensive tackle who made a successful transition to movie and television stardom, "Jimmy B. and Andre" features Susan Clark, who won an Emmy for her powerful portrayal of Babe Didrikson Zaharias in "Babe."

Many other featured roles are filled by Detroit performers from Wayne State University's Hilberry Theatre, the Detroit Repertory Theatre and the Theatre of the University of Detroit.

"We insisted on doing the filming in Detroit," says Karras, "because I knew that it is the only place where the story of Jimmy and Andre could faithfully be re-created."



Pilobolus Dance Theatre returns to the Music Hall on Nov. 6-11 for the dance series, which opened with Twyla Tharp whose troupe performs through Saturday, Nov. 3.

## Weekend

### IN THE SUBURBS

- **The Family Players** — sixth season continues with "Cinders," musical comedy in slapstick style featuring audience participation, at 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2 and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, in Warner Junior High School, 14 Mile between Middlebelt and Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills. Tickets at the door.
- **Somerset Inn** — Pianist Terry Alan plays at restaurant L'Auberge in Troy from 6-11 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sundays for brunch.
- **The Raven Gallery** — presents folksingers Rich and Maureen Del Grosso performing traditional, English, Irish, blues and early jazz, through Sunday, Nov. 4, in Southfield. Show times at 9 p.m. Thursday and Sunday; 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Reservations at the Raven, 557-2622.
- **Eden Glen** — Joe Grande Trio plays for listening and dancing 7:30-11:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; and 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, at this restaurant in Troy. Doug Jacobs and the Red Carter Band plays for Dixieland Brunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sunday.
- **Ha'Penny** — Mike Wise, guitarist and vocalist, plays a return engagement at Win Schuler's Grate Steak and Seafood lounge in West Bloomfield. Wise appears through Dec. 1, excluding Thanksgiving, from 7 p.m. to midnight, Tuesdays through Fridays; and from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturdays.

### IN DETROIT

- **Cobo Arena** — Brass Ring Productions presents Styx, April Wine in concert at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 1. Call 962-1800 for ticket information.
- **Film Panorama** — presents free mid-day movie "Arsenal" (Ukraine, 1929) directed by Alexander Douzhenko, at 2 p.m. daily through Sunday, Nov. 4, in Detroit Institute of Arts 400-seat Lecture/Recital Hall.
- **Attic Theatre** — "Buried Child" award-winning drama by Sam Shepard, through Saturday, Dec. 1. For reservations and ticket information phone the theater at 963-7789.
- **Fisher Theatre** — "Oklahoma!" Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical in revival through Dec. 1. Laurence Guitard and Christine Andrews play young lovers in this production. Box office, 972-1000.
- **"Funny Girl"** — Nancy Gurwin stars as legendary Fanny Brice in Nancy Gurwin Productions dinner theater presentation of musical hit. Performances Fridays and Saturdays through December. Dinner at 7 p.m., show at 8:30 p.m. at the Paridiso, 17630 Woodward. Reservations at 869-9388.
- **Top of the Ponce** — presents Celebrity, with vocals and instrumentals, through Dec. 1 at the Hotel Pontchartrain. Performances begin at 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays and 8:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Top of the Ponce offers a bird's eye view of the downtown skyline, Detroit River and Windsor. Information or reservations at 965-0200.