

# Author James Baldwin speaks about the continuing struggle

By ERNESTINE L. SANDERS

James Baldwin, a major, representative voice in the black community, continues to be forceful, unyielding, and uncompromising when he writes or discusses the struggles of black people in America.

## New music series opens in Southfield

The Southfield Arts Council's 1980 Performing Arts Series begins at 8 p.m. Friday, April 18, in the Lawrence Institute of Technology auditorium, with Edith and Joann Freeman's Melodrama.

This art, the dramatic recreation of poetry with musical accompaniment, was a popular art form in Tsarist Russia but has been lost to the public for nearly half a century.

Edith Freeman fled her native Russia during the revolution and brought with her a collection of Melodramas. Recently videotaped for public television, it is now brought to life on the stage by Mrs. Freeman and her daughter, pianist Joann Freeman. Both are accomplished musicians and have been honored for their contribution to the cultural enrichment of the country.

Next in the series is a performance by the Wayne State University Jazz Lab Band. Directed by Dick Shearer, adjunct professor in Wayne's music department and a professional musician with many of the country's big bands, this jazz group is composed of students and faculty from Wayne State's new Jazz Studies program.

THIS PROGRAM, ONLY two years old, is one of the first in the country to offer a performing arts degree in the study of jazz. Southfield's new pavilion at the Civic Center will be the setting for this concert at 8 p.m. May 28. The final event in the series, at 3 p.m. June 29 will be a performance by the Nonce Dance Ensemble, at the Southfield Civic Center outdoor plaza. This popular, Detroit based dance group is directed by Denise Szykula.

Baldwin, last week, was the final guest speaker at Oakland University in honor of Black Awareness Month. He spoke to the large audience about black people in America, from slavery until now, using bits of his personal history for illustration. Much of what he said was reminiscent of his early essays.

"Social affairs are not, generally speaking, the writer's prime concern. Whether they ought to be or not, it is absolutely necessary that he establish between himself and these affairs a distance which will allow, at least, for clarity, so that before he can look forward in any meaningful sense, he must first be allowed to take a long look back."

"In context of the Negro problem, neither whites nor blacks, for excellent reasons of their own, have the faintest desire to look back. But I think that the past is all that makes the present coherent and, therefore, that the past will remain horrible for exactly as long as we refuse to assess it honestly."

BEFORE HE began to trace his personal history as a direct example of the unceasing black struggle, he likened the Negroes' labor to that of the Hebrews who were told by Pharaoh to make bricks without straw.

Baldwin was a preacher for three years and he often uses analogies from the Bible to draw parallels to his topics and to support his statements.

Born Aug. 2, 1924 in New York, he was the oldest of nine children. His

grandfather was born a slave, and his family, before his birth, had left the South in "a wave of terror."

Although he has no geographic ties to the South, Baldwin said Afro-American carries history with him. He spoke of experiencing the Harlem riots of the 1930s and the 1940s.

With each disturbance, came the question, "What does the black man want?" Baldwin's reply was that the Negro wants more economic gains and civil rights legislation. He also said blacks were the only body of citizens who needed laws to define and protect their equality.

IN THE 1950s Baldwin went south. "I was prepared for the south because a good friend of mine, Sterling Brown, told me no matter what you will see now cannot compare to what I saw when I grew up."

He related these personal experiences to emphasize that none of them — primal flight from the South, riots, civil rights legislation, and the South today — is an isolated event from slavery.

Baldwin continued to be hard hitting and unrelenting. He said white is a state of mind. No one was white until they reached America. White is a metaphor for power. Therefore, it is a moral choice. He ended his speech by saying that history has no prerequisite for the black struggle, and the world must deal with black Americans rather than vice versa.

On the controversial subject of Black English, he said it should be recognized as being a language.

STUDENTS WHO USE Black English in the classroom should be treated compassionately by their teachers. They should not be demeaned in any way because of their language. No method, however, was provided for teachers to use to teach these students to speak and write using standard American English.

Baldwin has recently written his sixth novel, "Just Above My Head," (Dial \$12.50).

Earlier works such as "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "Notes of a Native Son," and "Giovanni's Room" are regarded by some critics as his best books.

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## Hope Lutheran Church is dedicated Sunday

The Rev. Harold Hecht will be the guest speaker for the dedication service of Hope Lutheran Church's new sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 9. The church is at 3300 12 Mile Rd.

Hecht is president of English Synod of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.



REV. HAROLD HECHT

The dedication service will begin with a brief ceremony outside the front door of the building. The congregation will be led with a processional hymn into the new sanctuary.

Herb Geisler, minister of music for Lutheran University Chapel of Ann Arbor will serve as guest organist. The Chapel Hand Bells, composed of members of Lutheran University Chapel community will provide special music.

THE NEW CHURCH was designed by architect Carl Geisler, a member of the parish, and much of the construction was completed by members of the parish community.

"On some Saturdays we had as many as 50 people, giving of their time and talents, roofing, insulating, installing wall board, painting, staining, and doing the major part of the finished carpentry," said the Rev. Victor

Mesenbring, pastor of the church. Construction was done under the supervision of Tim Walquist, a construction manager for Temco Builders.

Walquist estimated that the volunteers saved about \$35,000 in construction costs.

The church will hold open house for visitors on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, March 15-16.

## Ferris State plans ceremony

More than 350 students are included on the list of those who completed the requirements for certificates, associate's, bachelor's and doctoral degrees at Ferris State College during the fall quarter.

The 372 fall graduates are eligible to participate in the official commencement ceremonies to be held in May 1980.

Three Farmington Hills residents are among the expected spring graduates. They are: Janet M. Cassidy, Associate in Applied Science in Court and Conference Reporting; Patrick K. Collins, Bachelor of Science in Marketing; Lee M. Rudofski, AAS in Auto Service.

## Encouraging music

In addition to its 500-acre central camp located on a lake after which it is named, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp also operates Camp Emery six miles north of the main campus in Northern Muskegon County and Camp Douglass five miles southeast of the main camp. Camp Emery is for intermediate band students — grades five through eight — while choir students attend Camp Douglass.

They have performed almost everywhere, from shopping malls to art fairs in their efforts to bring more of an awareness and understanding of chamber music to a wide audience. Their performance in the Nesses' unusually large and beautiful house will be a special cultural experience for those first 65 series ticket holders. For further information on the series contact Dr. Harry Langford at 557-2618 or Sandra Drought at 827-6625.

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