## Family charts a path to recording stardom

By JIM WINDELL

"Wo're that close," the father of the Barnowski clan said holding his titumb and index finger a millimeter apart. That's an agreed upon fact in the Barnowski family. Talk about the furewith recording contracts, top nightclub appearances and television programs drifts casually around the living room of the Birmingham home as the seven Barnowski kisk, better known as the remarkable entertainment group Relation, sit around looking like ordinary kids and their parents like ordinary kids and their parents ("People don't really know how far we've come," Mark, lead guitarist and on-stage emcce for Relation, said continued that the parents of the stage family with a lot of kids who spend little time at home and often how tow oans and a truck parked in the driveway, In recent years, the family has toured as much as 40 weeks in a year.

With appearances, however, in ma-

year.
With appearances, however, in ma-ior clubs such as the Hilton Riviera in With appearances, nowever, in major clubs such as the Hillon Riviera in Palm Springs, Calif., Flitzgerald's and the MGM Grand Hotel in Reno, Nev., and the Sahara Tahoe in Lake Tahoe, Nev. Relation has gotten important notices. But, they still wait for the big break that everyone in the family is sure will come.

THE WRITING, production and re-lease of their first album, "Relation: 1980," earlier this year may attract the attention of a large record company with the prospect of more recordings and appearances for the four-brother and three-sister singing and musical group.

and three-sister singing and musical group.

It has taken the family 11 years to get where it is and each member has worked very hard to come within a whisper of stardom.

While 25-year-old keybaard player and musical arrow 12 per and musical arrow 12 per and to a singilar to the play antionally recognized," other family members point out that in the past years the group played every wedding, fair and

shopping center they could find to gain experience and exposure.

In 1978, they even had an appear-ance on Chuck Barris' nationally tele-vised "Gong Show." They proudly state that they had a perfect 30 points from the judges.

vised "Gong Show." They proudly state that they had a perfect 30 points from the judges.

Wally, an athletic and talented young man who finished first in his Brother Rice gradualing class despite being on the road during school months, experiments. We started claudy qualty modifferent instruments. Mark, Ken and I all played instruments, so we formed a trio in 1968. Two years later when Steve was 8, he joined us.

"By that fall, we had six members after Gayle and Laurie joined up. Finally, Julie, who is the youngest member of the Barnowski clan at 16, didn't want to be left out and she came into the group four years ago."

Relation is presently made up of 27 year-old Ken on drums, Wally on keyboards, Mark on lead guitar and emec. Steve on bass, Laurie on keyboards and Gayle and Julie as singers. All members of the group four keyboards and Gayle and Julie as singers.

and Gayle and Julie as singers. All members of the group sing and dance attensive professional training in voice and chorvography. In their shows, as well as in their album, they emphasize harmonies and showcase the multi-alented aspects and styles of the seven members. "When we do a show," Wally said, "we try to appeal to a family audience. The songs we do range from 190s numbers to more contemporary things including a country medley ranging from Gene Autry to Willie Nelson."

THEY WRITE some of their own songs and their album is a collection of 12 original songs in a variety of styles with a heavy flavor of current pop, country and rock melodies.

"We wanted to show the recording industry that we have a variety of styles and that we have the talent and are willing to work for ourselves," Wally said.

are withing to work for ourselves, wai-ly said.

The album, which is getting favor-able response and surprising amounts of air play in diverse parts of the coun-try, is a joint effort of the Barnowski

family that is a model of a cooperative spirit.

Mark, Steve and Wally composed the songs with arrangements by Wally. Most of the instrumental music is by Relation and production and dinnocing was by their own Parent Production.

Relation, Inc. is a legal corporation which helps to organize the group in a structured, but friendly business relationship, Ken Barnowski, Jr. is president (he also has an accounting degree from Eastern Michigan University), and Steve is vice president. Mark is president of the record label R&A Records while Steve handles the diling chores of a regular newsletter that goes to an estimated 5,000 readers. Wally maintains a file of every record company, radio station and newspaper in the country and each major media source got a hand-written letter, a copy in the country and each major media source got a hand-written letter, a copy the media of the source of the source of the country was a constant, they haul their own lighting, stage equipment, wardrobe, sound equipment and sour teachician.

"Oar act is self-contained," Steve

technician

warming, some depinters and successful exception of the control of the board, but he has a more important function.

more important function.
..."We use dad to get us out of financial trouble," Mark said, only half joking.
What these seven kids have learned along the road to stardom in the entertainment business is how long that road sand how much work it takes. "We hope," Mark said about the future," that we can be at the top of our line and major force in entertainment."

Mark also added "We're not afraid.

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Mark also added, "We're not afraid to work to make what we want hap-

pen."

But, dad is always quietly in the background adding a cautionary note and never letting anyone get too many stars in their eyes: "We're doggone close, but we're not there . . . yet."

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A Birmingham family, the Barnowskis, are still tion, they are: (left to right) lower: Laurie, Gayle, waiting for that big break that will push them into Wally and Julie and upper: Mark, Steve and Ken. the national spotlight. Known professionally as Rela-

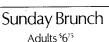
Forsake Today for the Jollity of Long Ago

## Oakway Symphony season to begin

Oakway Symphony Orchestra begins the new season with a musical sampler drawn from eight of Rodgers and Hammerstein most famous musicals. The two performances, at 8 p.m. Sept. 20 and 3 p.m. Sept. 21, will be held at Harrison High School's Performing Artists Unlimited (PAU), produced Warriston High School's Performing and Markey Henderson will provide music, singing and dancing aladmission is \$6

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