

# wine Richard Watson

William Gibbs III was in town recently. Bill — Brother Rice class of '68, Michigan State University class of '72, which makes him a bit younger than Bronco Nerd of Michigan's Kalkaska Mountain Winery — is most recently of Felton-Empire Vineyards.

His purpose in being here, in addition to visiting his family, was to announce his decision to make his winery a significant marketing matter in the Detroit area.

His presence has been evident for a couple of years but just barely. Now associated with a new distributor, Bill has seen our area as a significant national market for his 15,000-cases-a-year winery and has decided to concentrate his attention on us as one of his prime "outstate" markets.

It is a good decision. Michigan is a prime consumer, probably fourth nationally, of California wines.

**THE WINERY ITSELF** is in the low mountains above Santa Cruz, surrounded by madrone and redwood. It was originally used, from 1945-64, as the famous Hallcrest Winery. In its day it was the producer of some of the finest cabernet from California.

The property lay quiet for the next 10 years until the mid-1970s when Bill, winemaker Leo McClosky and two others joined together to purchase it and its limited amount of grapes. The two had been at Ridge together and decided to strike out on their own to purchase grapes selectively and process them in Felton.

When winemakers are free to purchase their grapes, they can make anything they want to and are not dependent on their own grape production. Leo and Bill have taken advantage of this

and have, over the years, produced a large array of wines. However, personal preference seems to be aiming them in a Germanic direction, their preferences being gewurztraminer and, most important, while riesling. The latter has been especially effective for them. They have won much national acclaim for their late-harvest desert wines and have done nearly as well with their table wine production.

Their goal is to be known as table wine producers. The late harvest is a quirk of nature they plan to take advantage of when they can.

**ADDITIONALLY**, two excellent reds have been made recently. A full, complex and warm pinot noir from 1979 is a beautiful thing. Small amounts are in Michigan, to be followed by a 1980 cabernet sauvignon using Hallcrest grapes just loaded with good fruit and balanced with strong tannins.

In addition to the pinot noir, a riesling and a gewurztraminer, both from 1981, are now on the shelves. Worthy of investigation.

And then there is the unfarmed grape juice they have bottled. Several different grapes have been used in this venture but riesling and benjolais have been most successful. Designed as a quick cash-flow operation, it has been a huge success for them, essentially allowing them to buy time for their aging wines.

The first six years of Felton Empire have been interesting ones, and successful as well. The future looks good with Leo in the winery and Bill on the road making white wines in a world that cannot seem to get enough of them.

# Oakway presents young performers

"Artists of Tomorrow," featuring winners of the largest such competition in Michigan, will be the fourth concert of the 1983 season for Oakway Symphony Orchestra at 3 p.m. Feb. 20 at Harrison High School, 12 Mile west of Middlebelt, Farmington Hills.

From a field of 42 contestants, five musicians filled out the top-prize positions. Mark Aghababian of Livonia, pianist, received first prize of \$1,000. He played the Third Movement of the Khachaturian Piano Concerto.

A University of Michigan student, Aghababian has won numerous awards and recently won a four-year scholarship at the School of Music, studying under Dr. Fisher at the university.

Aghababian attended Interlochen for four years and has participated in many master classes. A finalist in the Plano Technicians Concerto Competition, he also has won in a competition sponsored by the Detroit Musicians' League.

**BIRMINGHAM RESIDENT** Carol Sahokin began her singing career at age 13 in the character of Chavalah in "Fiddler on the Roof." A UM graduate, she has pursued her studies in voice performance with Katherine Hillgenberg.

A member of Pi Kappa Lambda, Sahokin placed second in the advanced division of the 1982 Regional



Oakway winners are Mark Aghababian (left), Tony Cross, Carol Sahokin, Maria Fattore and Jeffery Zook.

National Association of Teachers of Singing competition.

Tied for third place are Maria Fattore, lyric soprano, and flutist Jeffery Zook.

Fattore, a graduate of Eastern Michigan University, has performed in France and Germany as well as in America. She is a member of the American Musical Cabaret Vocal Trio, the Michigan Lyric Opera and the Com-

ic Opera Guild of Ann Arbor. Her teachers are Prof. Ena Thiessen of Hanover, West Germany, and Prof. Glenda Kirkland of Detroit.

U-M freshman Jeffery Zook began the study of the flute at age 10. A graduate of Interlochen summer programs, he has studied with Jacqueline Haffo. Selected as soloist at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival for three years, he also has performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

He is winner of the Flute Division in Seventeen Magazine and General Motors National Concerto Competition at the Eastman School of Music. He studies with Judith Bentley.

**TWELVE-YEAR-OLD** violinist Tony Cross won the fourth-place prize in the

competition. Among his credits are a performance with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at a Young People's Concert and a stint at the Aspen Music Festival and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He studies with Stephen Clapp at the conservatory.

The program for the concert includes Weber's Op. der Fretschutz, Mozart's Concerto No. 2 in D Major, a selection from Gerahwin's "Porgy and Bess" and J. Strauss's "Laughing Song" from "Der Felderdmarsch."

Tickets at \$6, \$3 for senior citizens and students, are available at Madonna College, Hammel Music, Botford Inn and Southfield Cultural Arts Division, or can be obtained by calling Oakway Symphony's office at 476-6544 or 522-7846.

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## Auditions open for production

The Fourth Street Playhouse will hold auditions for "G.R. Point" by David Berry from 4-11 p.m. Wednesday in Royal Oak.

For an audition appointment call 543-9666.

Each candidate must present two prepared monologues of one-to two minutes each and bring a resume and a picture to the audition.

"G.R. Point" is a story of soldiers in Vietnam. It will be directed by David

Kelley, a Vietnam veteran who is former director of theater at Hillsdale College, currently working on his Ph.D. in theater at the University of Michigan.

Cast needs are four white men (early to mid-20s), three black men (early 20s to mid-30s), one Hispanic man (early to mid-20s) and one older Vietnamese woman.

"G.R. Point" opens April 15 and runs Thursdays-Sundays through May 28.

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