



Corinne Abatt editor/644-1100

Thursday, February 16, 1984 O&E

(F)1E

Teddy bears Local artist helps us stitch the all-American toy

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

For Carolyn Vosburg Hall, writing a book isn't just writing. Quite literally, she creates the subjects for her non-fiction books which now number seven. For her latest work, "The Teddy Bear Crafts Book," this act of creation amounted to some 75 teddy bears and teddy bear related objects — an awesome undertaking even for a giant-size talent like Hall's.

Two receptions to celebrate the publication of "The Teddy Bear Crafts Book" will be held on Saturday. She will be guest of honor at a 10:30 a.m. to noon reception at the Jabberwocky Toy and Book Store, 336 E. Maple, Birmingham and at 1-4 p.m. at Baldwin Public Library, 309 Merrill, Birmingham.

The hardcover book, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Company at \$20.50, contains both color and black and white pictures of Hall's bears along with detailed instructions and patterns for making more than 25 bear-related projects. Everyone acquainted with this artist and her work, knows she can produce in soft sculpture almost anything you can name — from a turnip to a typewriter to a teddy bear.

And the minute she puts her hand to something, it becomes more art than craft. That's because she conceptualizes and designs the directions for others to follow.

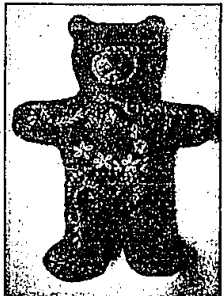
"I had a problem doing this book," she said, "because I've been so heavy into serious art. Then I realized they (teddy bears) are a form of folk art."

FOR THIS latest book, as in many of the others, she researched her subject, sketched her ideas for projects, drafted the patterns, chose the materials, made each one herself and documented the step by step procedure in both illustrations and text.

Over the two years that the teddy bear book was in preparation, she discovered a lot about these beloved toys which are as all-American as hot dogs and apple pie.

Certainly, it is assumed, Hall herself grew up loving a teddy bear. Impossible to imagine her without one.

Well, that's not exactly the way it was, she implies. She is standing in the room in her house exclusively devoted to teddy bears. She considers them prototypes rather than simply toys. A few choice ones will be saved until some future grandchild lays claim.



Hand-embroidered designs give this serious-looking bear a touch of whimsy.

"My own bear?" she questions. "It wasn't really my sister's bear and it wasn't even new. We found him — when I was about five. He had no ears. My mother made flower petals (of fabric) for his ears. He had no eyes and there was a hole in one leg."

So, she adds, her bear had flower petals ears, underwear button eyes and a patched leg.

With poetic, or maybe artistic justice, the first project in the book, a traditional, handmade, early 1900s style model, is named "Carolyn's Bear." This one has many of the features of those well-made early bears — glass eyes, embroidered nose and mouth, articulated disk joints and that quizzical expression which immediately endeared him to children nationwide.

CONTINUING in the book, the reader/artisan will find many projects to choose from — bean bag bears, Victorian style riding bears, knitted bears, stockings bears, dressed bears, bear puppets and bear chairs.

Hall covers the history of teddy bears, laced with a bit of controversy about whose bear came first.

While an American, Morris Michtom made and sold the bears on this side of the Atlantic and received permission from President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt, to name his bears after him, a German lady, Margarete Steiff, and her nephew were making and selling bears and other stuffed animals in that part of the world.

"In psychiatric language, they're transitional objects," said Hall explaining they help children make the change from total dependence on parents to self-determination.

And no one has more fun in the room full of bears than Hall who brings out one after another with a kind of pride young mothers have when showing off their children.

SHE PICKS UP a small stocking bear which as the name implies is made from a nylon stocking. But, with all those fuzzy bears around him he looked naked, said Hall, so she made him a fur coat and Hall and family nicknamed him "Flasher Bear."

She likes the feet of a printed velvet. She likes the feel of a printed velvet. She likes the feet of a printed velvet. She likes the feel of a printed velvet.



Bean bag bear is made of richly colored velvet.



Carolyn Hall's bears, made especially for her newest book, vary widely in size, material, function, construction and design. The family pet, a bit jealous of the bears getting all the attention, plunked himself neatly in first row center.

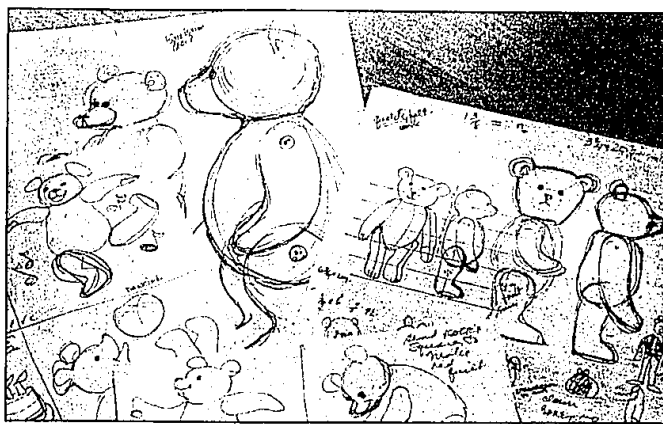
But, even with the fun and kidding, Hall quickly explains that she has no thought of ever setting up a bear production line. One of each is all she ever cares to make.

"I'm really a designer," she said, "and this (writing books) draws on all the stuff I like to do."

And while she's now celebrating the bear book's entrance into the marketplace, she's already well launched into the next book. Her large home workshop with its floor to ceiling storage cabinets of material, plastic storage boxes of eyes, noses and trims appears busy with new projects underway and sketches of new characters on the drawing board.

Her bears were on the cover of last November's Ford Times and were pictured in two other magazines, the October and November Woman's Day and the October, Decorating Craft Ideas.

Publishers are beginning to find her and, as any writer knows, that means the career is first rate. Or to put it another way, for Carolyn Vosburg Hall, teddy bears are a transitional object between good and very good.



Carolyn Hall's extensive art background is a vital part of her books. Here is where the ideas take shape — on the drawing board.

Staff photos by Mindy Saunders

After weeks of anxious expectations, the beginning of Maestro Gunther Herbig's tenure as music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra has begun.

Herbig's official debut Saturday consisted of an all-Beethoven program. It was broadcast over the classical music station WQRS and was seen on WDIV-TV (Channel 4). In spite of other major events downtown, including the Hearns boxing match, the musical event was sold out.

In a rare occurrence, Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young came on stage to speak briefly before the concert. He made his preference clear by indicating that he wouldn't stay for the concert but would attend the fight instead. Hopefully, he will find a less hectic opportunity to enhance his musical horizons.

Thus, stumbling between these ceremonies and over a seemingly endless network of cables and microphones placed in entrances and passageways, we maneuvered our way to our seats for the music.

IN TERMS of making a program pleasing and appealing, the choice of Beethoven is a safe bet indeed. The one possible risk is that of predictability, which is the common pitfall of the standard repertoire.

Here, Herbig proved masterful by exposing us to a Beethoven one rarely hears in live performances. The compositions themselves are among the most frequently performed works — the Leonore Overture No. 3, the Violin Concerto and the Symphony No. 7. The rare aspects in terms of the quality of the performance was manifested especially in the Leonore Overture and the concluding symphony.

The opening overture came through as a substantial, dramatic piece of music. After all, Beethoven didn't engage in his painstaking revisions to come up with yet another cute, inconsequential tidbit.

A case in point was the trumpet fanfare, customarily sounded behind the stage. In this performance, the first fanfare sounded more remote than the second, which in itself might be only a trivial detail. But the combination of such details resulted in the total, moving impact of the work.

The soloist in the Violin Concerto was German-born Edith Feinmann, who appeared here almost two years ago. There is no question that her talent and ability are impressive and substantial. There is some doubt, however, that this particular masterpiece is the best-suited vehicle for her particular talent.

WITH THE exception of a noticeable blunder in the final movement, Feinmann demonstrated a remarkable technique. The clarity of her tone was exemplary. Yet her lines lacked the necessary full body, even though they were, as a whole, very arctic.

This was especially true in the first and third movements. But in the middle movement, her style created the feeling of a cliff-hanging suspense. In retrospect, it seems that the Khatchaturian violin concert, which she played during her previous engagement here was far more suitable for her.

The ultimate in rewarding moments was attained in the performance of the seventh symphony. It is frequently suggested that Beethoven's odd-numbered symphonies, except No. 1, are more dramatic and, possibly, more significant than the rest. While this might be true, it does not imply that the former should be lifeless and stagnant.

This performance showed that drama, triumph and joy can combine into a formidable force. The dynamic range was wide, with the stormy crescendos resembling those in a Brahms symphony.

The pauses between movements were minimal, which had mixed effects. Between the first and second movements, for instance, this makes good sense. The A minor opening chord in the second movement doesn't make much sense unless it is perceived as a bridge between the concluding A major chord in the first movement and the main theme of the second.

Between the second movement and the scherzo, however, a longer pause seems to be in order. But what truly counts is what takes place between the pauses. One is seldom privileged to hear such a vivacious final movement with an accelerated coda that provided it with an even more climactic impact.

If this event is any indication, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and its new director are off to a good start.

Herbig makes official debut



Avigdor Zarnopp