

Art forms interact in Moers photos

By Ira Lax
special writer

Photographer Denny Moers' new work presents new interpretations of age-old images. Dimly lit Italian frescoes are the basic subject matter for his second show at Birmingham's Pierce Street Gallery.

Like his older friend and co-worker Aaron Siskind, Moers uses the flat surface as the ground for his photographs. But whereas Siskind captures poetry in the forms and textures of two-dimensional subway walls, Moers becomes almost literary in his presentation of fresco fragments.

"My allegorical scenes should not be interpreted as preconceived stories," Moers said. Rather, he said he hoped "an enigmatic feeling would be real-

ized" for each viewer. In the same open spirit he avoids the portrayal of obvious religious imagery.

For example, in "Portrait of an Innocent No. 2" and "Enigmatic Thoughts," questions arise. How are these people related? What are their thoughts? Why are they arguing? From where are they escaping? Are they dreaming? They are so full of silent drama that we can't help but wonder what came before and what happened after each scene.

Prevalent in Moers' new work are influences from history, poetry and painting.

"History is an active process," Moers said. His camera is the tool by which he brings the past to life. There is a unique personalization of history here that is heightened by Moers' choice of movement and form.

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This photographer is also a published poet and student of the Black Mountain School of Writers, which includes Jonathan Williams, Robert Creeley and Charles Olson. Moers links their concept of the poem being an interaction between the person and the page with the idea that the photograph is a "poetic statement on sensitized paper."

Another strong aspect of Moers' work is his painterly qualities of translucency and brush-like strokes in a distinctive palette of rusts, grays and browns. These color effects are ob-

tained through the creative manipulation in the darkroom of fixers and toners on the initial black and white print.

Bringing these various influences and techniques to his photographs, Moers' impresses us as a maturing artist in full and creative control of his medium. See these photographs for their insights and their beauty.

The show continues through Saturday, Oct. 27. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday-Saturday, 217 Pierce, Birmingham.

Orchestra, chorale, Gershwin score a hit

By Mary Jane Doerr
special writer

The Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra opened its season Sunday night at Birmingham Seaholm High School with a brand new, brassy then ever sound.

In the past, it has not been Conductor Felix Riemke's style to allow such loud dramatics from his orchestra, but Sunday night he demanded it.

THE BRAZEL Dendard Chorale, along with soloists soprano Ernestine Nimmo and bass-baritone Brown T. Brown, was equal to the powerful approach in a wonderful performance of Robert Russell Bennett's 1936 arrangement of George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess."

Nimmo was Serena in the 1982 Michigan Opera Theatre presentation of the opera version of this Gershwin masterpiece. But she was even better Sunday evening as the range of the soloist, which included "Summertime," "My Man's Gone Now," and two duets with James "Bess" You is My Woman Now, and "O' Lawd, I'm on My Way," gave Nimmo the opportunity to show

off the upper part of her range and her wonderful, expressive "slides" up and down the scale. Her top notes were exquisitely, beautifully controlled and expressively delivered.

JAMES, vice president of the Brazel Dendard Chorale, was at his best in the character pieces where acting and expression were essential to the music. "It Ain't Necessarily So," "There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York." He has lots of rhythm, expression and acting ability as he performs.

The Brazel Dendard Chorale was strong, clear, and exact with its rhythm. The chorale has a satisfying blend of voices, all of whom know how to sing the Southern folk melodies with the accents always in the right place. The words were clear.

The soprano soloist in the chorale who sang "Go On, Go On" and "The Promise Land" was clearly a strong talent though the names of the chorale members weren't listed in her program.

The interpretation by Riemke with the orchestra, an accompaniment matched that of the Brazel Dendard Chorale though a softer sound at times would have been more effective in the



Mary Jane Doerr

powerful climax, "I'm on My Way."

Symphony President Harold Patrick had expressed concern early this week about the slow presale ticket sales and the orchestra's seemingly untimely scheduling of concerts against such events as the possible fifth American League playoff game which, happily, wasn't needed.

The presidential debate on Sunday evening was also a conflict. Despite this, the audience, usually very enthusiastic in its response to the orchestra, filled nearly three-fourths of the Birmingham Seaholm High School Auditorium.

Season ticket sales have been down, but individual ticket sales have equalled last year.

This may have been the season's best concert. It will be hard to top the ex-

citement and the enthusiasm of both the orchestra and the Brazel Dendard Chorale.

THE FIRST half of the concert didn't have the dramatics of the second half. The brass and winds were shaky in Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man."

The familiar Hanson Symphony No. 2, dubbed by the composer himself as "The Romantic," was quite acceptable. The thematic material is familiar to Michiganders as the opening of the Interlochen Arts Academy's Orchestra broadcasts. "The Charlie of Fire" theme song also resembles this symphony with its uncharacteristic three movements.

Strong drama marks opener

Performances of the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford production of "Cold Storage" by Ronald Ribman continue through Saturday, Oct. 20, at the Theatre Guild Playhouse in Redford. For ticket information, call 522-8057.

By Bob Weibel
special writer

The Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford's first show of the season, "Cold Storage," is a thought-provoking little comedy about life's ultimate contradiction — death. The play is a beautifully written conversation between two men in wheelchairs. One is dying of terminal cancer, the other is in for an exploratory.

That may sound like a downer, but it's not. "Cold Storage" is an uplifting, life-enhancing experience.

The play takes place on a hospital roof garden. Tom Loomis plays the role of Joseph Parmigian, an old Armenian fruit and vegetable dealer who has come to terms with his impending death. Tony Mattar is Richard Landau, an investment adviser in fine arts who refuses to accept the possibility that he is about to join the ranks of the dying.

Mattar gives an even, convincing performance as a man with a seemingly impenetrable reserve. He is especially good when revealing Landau's private hell — his guilt at being the only member of his family to escape the Nazis.

review

WE SEE THAT Landau's aloofness from people, and indeed from life itself, makes it difficult for Landau to acknowledge death when he has never accepted life.

Tom Loomis has the meatier role of Parmigian, who attempts to break through the reserve of Landau. Although a bit robust at times for a man about to cross the River Styx, Loomis strikes a nice balance between a philosopher-jester and a compassionate curmudgeon.

Parmigian talks incessantly to Landau, about anything and everything. He talks of things realistic and absurd, of life and suicide, of meaning and no meaning ("I've discovered the secret of the universe — the point is, there is no point to life").

Loomis never allows Parmigian to become an unbearable know-it-all. In the end we see he is a man with loving wisdom who has used ironic wit to make his point — that we must summon the courage to die with honor and laugh at fate. Parmigian and Landau reach an understanding and touch our lives in the process.

There is one more role, that of a nurse, played with appropriate pleasantness and grace by Cathie Sharon.

Concert stars Barry Manilow

The only Michigan appearance of Barry Manilow on his 1984 World Paradise Tour is scheduled for 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 19, at Crysler Arena in Ann Arbor. Tickets at \$17.50 and \$15 are on sale at the Michigan Union Box Office, Hudson's and all Ticket World outlets. For 24-hour information, call the Michigan Union Ticket Office at 783-MUTO.

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