

Music's her life: Flutist will direct 'La Mancha'



Deborah Scott conducts a rehearsal of "Man of La Mancha," scheduled for performances the last two weekends in August at the Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus.

GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

DEBORAH SCOTT does not separate her professional from her personal life. "There is no clear line between fun and my job," said the flutist and teacher who takes on the musical direction of "Man of La Mancha" this month at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

A West Bloomfield native, now living in Southfield, Scott was one of seven music teachers selected in the United States to perform last month at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Director of bands at Anderson Middle School in the Berkeley School District, Scott also teaches instrumental music at four of Berkeley's elementary schools.

"I don't consider myself a conductor. I'm much more interested in teaching. It's a vehicle to help kids mature as people," she said.

HER THREE performances at the Kennedy Center were on the flute, playing music by American composers.

"I was hoping for that experience to provide a springboard to local performance opportunities."

Now organizing a chamber music quartet, Scott said, "I have no desire to be part of a large symphony."

A graduate of the West Bloomfield school system, Scott did her undergraduate work at Western Michigan University and received her mas-

Recalling being taken to concerts and symphonies, flutist Deborah Scott says: 'I guess I was a rare bird in the 1960s.'

ter's degree from the University of Michigan. Just this year, she received a specialist degree in applied flute at U-M.

Scott didn't decide to become a musician until she was entering her freshman year in college.

"I think it was because I didn't have a female role model. Women were always in the string section. June Ludwig (to former West Bloomfield High school band director) was a motivating force."

Getting ready to begin her college freshman year at Western, she made a last-minute switch out of biochemistry.

"I had enrolled and even met my roommate. I was going to be a limnologist (to study water sciences)."

HER IMPULSIVE career switch didn't upset her parents, Agnes and Julian Scott. "They were incredibly wonderful about it."

"We (she has three brothers) grew up in a house where we heard a lot of music. It was a musical environment."

She recalls being taken to concerts and symphonies. "I guess I was a rare bird in the 1960s."

Scott's father is a manufacturer's representative. Her mother, a former West Bloomfield school board member, fought for music classes and an acoustically excellent auditorium when the high school was first built.

Scott, now 32, played there with the West Bloomfield Symphony, renamed the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony to expand its audience and support.

"At that time," Scott said, "it was probably the best community symphony in the metro Detroit area."

DOWN THE LINE. Scott thinks she might teach in a small college and play her flute in a regional chamber music ensemble.

"I do have an inner peace. I want to strive for great things. But I can be accepting of myself as I am. There is always someone better."

She does look forward to marriage and a family. For now, she continues her private flute lessons, singing with the Schoolcraft Community College chorus, playing at weddings and frequently commuting to Ann Arbor to see her boyfriend. "He's a clarinetist but is working as a computer programmer."

Scott will be directing "Man of La Mancha" performances the last two weekends in August with experienced leading actors and high schoolers in smaller roles.

Then in September, it's back to guiding 10-13-year-olds whom she strives to nurture — not just musically — but as a way of expanding their other horizons.

Cable channels put public in limelight

By Tim Smith
staff writer

Weaving bits and pieces of video content into a viewable, informative public access program requires hard work from residents and cable company staffers. It isn't glamorous or a money maker.

But public access programming is still alive as a vehicle for residents to get their messages across on the cable television screen.

Exactly how well it is doing, though, depends on the level of commitment from cable companies and municipalities, and on enthusiasm from community members themselves.

That commitment appears to be strong from most area cable franchises and municipalities, who are in agreement that, while public access is no longer the craze it was in the early '80s, it has become functional fare.

Commitment from all three groups may be strongest in Farmington/Farmington Hills, where the mode is labelled "community access."

METROVISION SERVICES the city, with much assistance from the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission — a liaison between the company and city.

"Community access is an increased opportunity for residents' messages to get across to each other," said Lark Samouellan, executive director of the oversight commission.

According to Samouellan, that opportunity has been heeded well in Farmington/Farmington Hills. She said there is a two-month waiting list for Metrovision's access workshops. More than 50 producers are active in the medium, and about 800 residents have been trained on its equipment since the system started in 1982.

"It's an educational opportunity (for residents) to keep up with the state of technology," she added.

Cable company representatives and government officials from most areas are pleased with how public access programming is working. In addition to Metrovision, other access-providing cable franchises in the area include: Both Cable Communications in Birmingham, Continental Cablevision in Southfield and West Bloomfield, and United Cable Systems, which services 11 communities including Rochester and Troy.

THE ONLY problem spot seems to be Southfield, where opinions differ on how much commitment should be made to public access programming.

All cable companies feature public access and local origination programming, the latter supported by advertisers and produced by cable staffers. Officials from all of them say they are committed to continuing access programming.

The cable franchises are basically set up the same way, providing the means for residents to learn the technology of the trade before actually beginning program production.

Residents sign up for multilesson workshops, where they learn everything from conceiving program ideas to editing the final edition for viewing. After the workshops, they

take off for the studio, or if more advanced, out into the community with portable equipment.

What they produce is a potpourri of community-related activities, including governmental debates, business, high school sports and events, religion, arts and counseling programs. In Birmingham, residents have filmed a children's story hour.

PUBLIC ACCESS programming is viewed favorably by most community and cable officials. But some concern lingers about how enthusiastic the public actually is about the medium.

"I think Metrovision has made a real effort to be more responsive to the requests of the community," said Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick.

"They have provided very competent people to work with our people," Birmingham assistant city manager Steve Schwartz said. Both Communications has done an able job coordinating its public access Channel 11.

Schwartz said Booth was "quick to realize Birmingham has so many organizations, and people with high energy levels, and were able to tie in and utilize them."

BOOTH'S PUBLIC access manager, Cheryl Lott, said the channel may be even more popular with Bir-

mingham residents than local origination programming.

"The community itself uses it a lot and work well with each other," Lott said.

"There's a need for this type of programming, and getting across the community's ideas and promoting organizations."

West Bloomfield Township trustee Gordon Allardice, a member of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Advisory Board, wouldn't critique Continental's performance there since the system started in 1985.

"It's too early to make a determination if Continental is holding up its end of the agreement," said Allardice. "They have made facilities available, but they don't put a heckuva lot of emphasis on it."

"One of the biggest problems is the public doesn't seem to be that interested," he added.

BUT HE stressed that it's too early to accurately gauge public interest.

In Southfield, friction reportedly exists between Continental and at least one member of the Southfield-

Lathrup Village Cable Commission about commitment to the program.

But most other cable representatives contacted appear satisfied with their current situations.

"We are finding that our facilities are in demand," said Jim Vonderhaar, public access manager for United Cable Systems, a company with studios in both Troy and Rochester.

"We're getting calls from residents interested in one phase or another. They're having fun and learning something at the same time."

VONDERHAAR SAID United Cable is strongly committed to access programming, noting there are five studios — in addition to the main office in Royal Oak — and a mobile video truck used by workshop-trained residents to shoot activities.

He said city officials from the United Cable area have been upbeat about public access programming there.

Where public access is really working is in Farmington Hills, where Metrovision, the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission and

city officials have combined with residents to produce ample programming on Channel 12.

The programming is different at Metrovision than the others. Channel 12 includes both public access and local origination programming. But programming director Judy Grosse said there are no commercials on the station, and the mix is working well.

"By viewing what other people are doing on Channel 12, others want to be involved," Grosse said. "They are more aware about what community access programming is all about and what it offers."

THE OUTREACH effort of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission has done much to let people know about Channel 12.

"We're entirely different than 99 percent of all other systems," said Samouellan. "Other cities have left the initiative of getting residents involved up to the cable company staff."

(Those cities) are not as aggressive in their involvement. You need PH outreach to the community for it to be successful."

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