

## MEADOWBROOK MEMORIES

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asked my husband in the gentlest of tones. "GO!" I replied. Fortunately, we live nearby. The weather was superb and it proved a fun time for all. How happy the exchange students were to see each other since settling in with their host families."

FROM ANOTHER ROCHESTER resident Susan Brown came this reminiscence:

"My first visit to the Meadow Brook Music Festival was to see the Preservation Hall Jazz Band in the summer of 1983. My husband and I were on a house-hunting trip. We went with friends from Rochester Hills who knew all the ropes of picnicking at the festival. Our friends, like us, were native Southerners, but they had adapted happily to the area and had already sold my husband. I was slightly harder to convince (Could a Southern girl make it up North?) but soon I, too, fell for Michigan, Rochester, and the Meadow Brook Music Festival."

"In fact, my husband and I signed the contract for our Rochester Hills home at the 1983 Labor Day Laser Light Show at the festival. Now, for me, summer isn't summer without at least one picnic on the lawn at Meadow Brook."

FROM A LIVONIA CONCERTGOER, Helen Kaiser, came this letter:

"My first memory of Meadow Brook goes back about 10 years. Gladys Knight and the Pips were performing and although the performance was excellent, it was almost secondary to the surroundings. It was a beautiful summer evening — the sky was a brilliant blue and the breeze carried the sweet smell of fresh cut grass. Our tickets were on the lawn and we could lay back and watch hot air balloons as the rainbow of their colors danced across the sky and disappeared over the horizon into the sunset."

"The evening was shared with a very dear friend who was thoughtful enough to provide a picnic dinner complete with champagne and a lovely red rose. A reporter came by to find out if we were celebrating a special occasion and took our picture for possible publication in the newspaper."

"It is no wonder that my first memory of Meadow Brook has brought me back time and again to hear old favorites such as the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul and Mary. My 14-year-old son accompanied me to a Sunday evening concert with the DSO and, to my delight, enjoyed the music, the surroundings (and the girls) and expressed an interest in returning."

JODY KRASHIN'S FOND RECOLLECTION takes a different tack. This is the Farmington Hills resident's remembrance:

"It was a beautiful summer evening in July 1968, the year after Detroit's devastating riots. The bus pulled up to the curb in front of an old dance studio on Woodward Avenue in Detroit. The passengers were waiting, excited and dressed up for a party. Their destination was the Meadow Brook Festival concert featuring a first appearance of the American Ballet Theatre."

"The concertgoers were participants in the Detroit Music Settlement School's first professional dance workshop, an intensive daily month-long course, a program which made scholarships and sliding scale fees available to the city's young people who would otherwise not be able to participate. When scholarship auditions were held, no qualified applicant was turned away for lack of ability to pay."

"The ride out to the rolling green hills of Meadow Brook was a treat in itself for many of these young inner-city residents, but there was much more to come. Transportation and Meadow Brook concert tickets were the outright donation of a woman from Bloomfield Hills, and there could not have been a more perfect gift."

"We arrived early at the festival grounds and took seats in the first rows of the pavilion. The curtains were open and the company was taking their warm-up class. My students were surprised to see the professionals executing the same exercises they were learning in their daily classes. Perhaps they would now believe me when I said they would do these same exercises for the rest of their lives as dancers."

"The curtain closed, the orchestra entered the pit, and hushed anticipation filled the moments before the curtains parted again. As the ballet Les Sylphides commenced, my students had no idea they were watching two of the world's greatest dancers, Carla Fracci and Erik Bruhn — they had no frame of reference. This was their first experience of a professional, classical ballet. They were simply enthralled!"

"The concert experience served to enhance the students' dedication — it gave them a sophistication about what the discipline of dance could produce. It was an eye-opener, a first experience for these enthusiastic young people, and a high point in their arts education."

## This finale is a blast

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Later, in the semidarkness, when the audience is enrapt in the music, Barnett unleashes his instrument, a blue metal box with 16 toggle switches. He flips five to them in rapid succession, and, at a safe distance, five cannons roar.

Ninety seconds later, 11 more blasts punctuate the "God Save the Czar" finale. While the smoke hovers in the air, the crowd leaps to its feet, whistling, roaring, cheering its approval.

In the proper doses, a little emotional overload isn't all that bad.

## Set design challenge

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also arrive directly from St. Louis, but the sets are being designed for the Muni with the Meadow Brook facility's

limitation in mind. The 1989 show will be directed by original cast member Robert Fitch, who also plays Rooster Hannigan. Another veteran of the original cast is Raymond Thorne, who will be re-creating the role of FDR.



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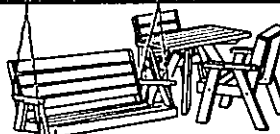
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