

Creative Living

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Indian Villagers reversed 'burbs trend

By Joan Boram
special writer

This the first of three stories on houses in Indian Village and the lifestyles of the people who live in them. The 11th annual Indian Village Home and Garden Tour is scheduled for Saturday. For information, call 489-0537.

A couple of decades ago it was predicted that early in the 21st century, the boundaries of Detroit, Chicago, and Cleveland would expand and merge into a "Megalopolis."

It's 1990, and metropolitan Detroit is inching toward Ann Arbor. Ann Arbor, in turn, is creeping up on Gary, Ind. It looks like Megalopolis is just around the corner.

No wonder, then, in the face of such dramatic expansion, that a slow, steady movement back into cities has been almost unnoticed.

"When a man is tired of London he is tired of life," Dr. Samuel Johnson said in the 18th century. It could have been said of any major city at any time in history, and Americans today are relearning the truth of Johnson's aphorism.

In keeping with a national trend, downtown Detroit is attracting new residential construction. Along the waterfront, several fine old buildings have been converted to residential use.

And older, established neighborhoods such as Corktown, Palmer Woods and Indian Village are luring suburban families who appreciate the quality of the architecture and the convenience of living near the city's cultural institutions and, often, near work.

WHILE DETROIT, like other cities, has had its ups and downs, Indian Village has remained a vibrant community of 350 stylish old homes. Thanks to the efforts of dedicated villagers and significant residential architecture by Albert Kahn, George D. Mason, William B. Stratton and others, the neighborhood was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The Village has also been entered as a state and city historic district.

When Pat and Henry Stallings II bought their house on Ingoquo, they thought they knew what they were getting into. They had restored a house in the West Village when they moved to Detroit from Birmingham.

Then, in 1983, they bought the 4,000-square-foot house on Ingoquo that they live in today. Built in 1917 for Armin Rickel, president of the H.W. Rickel Malt Company, the house is a hybrid of design. Rickel took out the building permit himself, so the architect is unknown.



Henry and Pat Stallings with their children Michelle, 4 1/2, left and Jennifer, 2 1/2, enjoy a moment together in the dining room of their Indian Village home.

"The house had been empty for two years," said Stallings, "and the heat and plumbing had been shut off. We knew that it needed work, but we never thought it would be 1 1/2 years before we could move in."

THE WOODWORK, including the wainscoting leading up the imposing staircase in the front hall, had been painted and needed to be stripped. The mantle had been painted and needed to be stripped. The pewter accents in the living room and dining room had been painted and needed to be stripped. The floors needed to be refinished. Sixty percent of the house needed re-plastering. It needed new wiring and new plumbing.

"There was no grass in the back yard. We took out 350 bags of leaves," Stallings said, adding that he is still abashed at that.

"We thought we could do the stripping ourselves," said his wife, a systems consultant for AT&T. "Henry was with the First Independence National Bank then. We'd come home, eat, change clothes and get to work."

It didn't take long for reality to set in. Eventually the Stallings had crews on two shifts working to make the seven-bedroom home livable. "We were just going to strip the woodwork on the first floor and in the upstairs hallways," she said. "But one of the workmen didn't understand and he started on one of the bedrooms. So we wound up stripping the whole house. We finally moved in May, 1985."

TODAY, the Stallings and their daughters, Nichole, 4 1/2, and Jennifer, 2 1/2, are giving new life to an old house. There is a tank of helium in the hall, used to provide balloons for the girls' birthday parties and a Christmas ornament still hangs from the chandelier in the entrance hall. The lawn and flower gardens are Stallings' pride and joy and there are plans to install a covered 20-by-32-foot swimming pool along the back of the house. The house was featured on the 1988 Indian Village house and garden tour.

Stallings has traveled extensively and his collection of native arts and crafts enhances the house's period charm.



A fine assortment of masks from China, Ghana, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast and Fiji is installed in the wainscoting's panels. Egyptian masks and vases from China grace the dignified mantel. The cozy, pickled oak library, with its heavy ceiling beams, is alive with photos of family and friends.

Why did they do it? Why would anybody leave a fine home in the suburbs and take on the grief, to say nothing of the expense, of restoring an older home?

The woodwork and wainscoting in the hall and along the staircase were stripped and redone. Some masks which Henry Stallings collected are mounted along the stairs.

Maestro claims Detroit done him wrong

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Gunther Herbig experienced many ups and downs during his six years here as music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. It was the downs that prompted him to accept

the position as music director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. His final week here followed a world tour with the Toronto Symphony.

Strikes or work stoppages (depending on which side is using the terms) clouded both ends of his time here. The first took place in 1982

when he was scheduled to make his debut here as guest conductor. The rehearsals were held, but the performance was canceled because of the strike.

The issue was the so-called "conductor clause," a provision in the contract that gave the musicians a

voice in the selection of the music director. Management was attempting to rescind it. The clause survived and Herbig was the first beneficiary of it when he was chosen for the post following his 1983 debut at the Meadow Brook Festival.

A work stoppage occurred again at the beginning of the 1987-88 season and it resulted in a major overhaul of the management staff. Herbig announced his resignation the following season, but stayed on to fulfill the balance of this three-year contract.

MAJOR EVENTS DURING HERBIG's six years were the hiring of a new concertmaster, establishment of the Detroit Symphony Chorus, the permanent move from Ford Auditorium to Orchestra Hall and the European tour in January 1989.

In the final phase of his tenure here, Herbig seemed much less concerned about being diplomatic than he was when he first arrived. As he spoke about his experiences here, he said, "When I was still in (East) Berlin, I talked to Doral (music director 1977-81) who warned me about Detroit. He said, 'You're going to have a hard time here. He is above all, a civilized man and a sincere, dedicated musician.'"

Another instrumentalist thoughtfully described the departing conductor as "a man of control and understatement leading an orchestra of spontaneity and passion. We may not always have meshed well, but he kept us technically fit. We respect and like him."

THE "GRATITUDE, respect and liking" were much in evidence June 2. Orchestra, chorus and soloists radiated high-voltage intensity as they bent to do the departing maestro's will. The artistic electricity crackled throughout Orchestra Hall, and the musical results fittingly bore the hallmarks of Herbig's leadership — precision, control, clarity and cohesion — as well as a strong sense of dynamic contrast and musical form. There were also moments of real, heart-grabbing poetry and power.

Although the Orchestra Hall windows already displayed posters of Neeme Järvi and big banners proclaimed "A New Spirit, A New Season, A New Look," this night still belonged to Gunther Herbig. Both musicians and audience made that clear.



Gunther Herbig has said that even as a youngster studying a variety of instruments, his dream was always to be a conductor because he was interested in the "totality of a musical work."

those who were "stuck" with the musical event and couldn't get to see the fight where he was headed. I remember it well, I was at the concert.

ANOTHER THORNY ISSUE that strained the relationship between the Orchestra and some segments of the community was the Affirmative Action demand that the Orchestra hire more black musicians or risk losing state aid.

The Orchestra's answer was to waive the "blind audition" and hire black bass player, Richard Robinson, (who was unanimously endorsed by all members of the section).

Herbig said about this problem, "The only way to get enough qualified musicians, as well as potential younger audiences, is in exposing school students to more art and culture. Those who are not exposed to classical music at an early age are less likely to be attracted to it later on. This city, however, does not consider these things to be important. In fact, programs of art and music, which are already poorly funded, are among the first to be cut or eliminated whenever there is another financial pressure."

present administration of the Symphony is making sincere efforts in solving some of the major problems. However, we are not out of the woods yet and there will probably be some more serious problems down the road." (This statement was made before Deborah Borda, executive director, announced her resignation.)

He added, "This is a very fine orchestra — among the very best. We also have a sophisticated and supportive audience, but, unfortunately, this may not prove to be sufficient. The future of such a great orchestra depends on large support and financial commitments. A small number... even with the best intentions, may not be enough."

Would he have done things differently if he could have foreseen the future? "Yes, there is one thing that I would have definitely done differently — I would have never come to Detroit!"

Yet, there was an occasional conciliatory note. The Herbig will retain their Bloomfield Hills home which they hope to visit from time to time. Thus, he plans to keep in touch after his departure. "You will probably see me at some of the concerts as a listener, provided, of course, they will be willing to give me complimentary," he added with a touch of humor that had more serious undertones.

Concert-goers cite Herbig for dedicated leadership

By Isabelle Smith
special writer

Detroit Symphony Orchestra music director Gunther Herbig ended his Detroit career June 2 as he began 16 years before — to the strains of Beethoven and in a spirit of hope and good feeling.

TV crews and an SRO audience began arriving more than an hour before the concert — a gaggle of teens, large parties of young professionals, groups of well-known urban and suburban powers-that-be, a plethora of senior citizens — to wish farewell and God speed to the man, man-born maestro who led the orchestra safely through some of its most perilous years.

The prevailing feeling was almost universally expressed in terms of gratitude, even affection, both for the man and the musician. Words and phrases such as "honest," "intelligent," "a stabilizing force," "intelligent and disciplined," "a man of courtesy and honor" were used repeatedly as this reporter approached concert-goers throughout the hall.

American Symphony Orchestra League board member Marcella Wittliffe said, "Herbig was very dedicated to this orchestra. He inherited a vastly talented but floundering, divided group and turned it into a finely tuned instrument."

music — and the symphony — are in his debt."

• Symphony stalwart Gina Bedrosian was ecstatic about the sold-out house. "What a fantastic crowd. Detroit should be like this all the time. I'm truly sorry that he's leaving. He and Mrs. Herbig (concert pianist Jutta Czapke) are delightful people, and he has been a fine, dedicated conductor. I am grateful for the honest effort he made, in some very difficult circumstances, to keep the DSO world-class. We will miss him — even as we look forward to welcoming Neeme Järvi."

• Former DSO board member Walter Murphy of Southfield (the spark plug behind the Doral/DSO World Tour) praised Herbig as a "solid conductor. He's no Dorati, but his mark will remain. Under the toughest circumstances, he was a force for progress and stability. He may well be appreciated more in retrospect — as was Slaten Kurling. I think he will be a smash in Toronto."

• A young lawyer, who said he didn't find Herbig a particularly "inspiring" conductor overall, insisted, nonetheless, in praising his championship of contemporary music. Herbig conducted three world premieres during his six years and programmed other previously seldom-heard-in-Detroit post-1900 compositions. The lawyer praised his mastery of Mahler, Bruckner and Schubert, "a repertoire, too often neglected before he came."

• A college music student standing nearby spoke glowingly of the maestro's founding of the Detroit Symphony Chorus and of his frequent use of it. "What a plus that has been."