

Creative Living

Bob Sklar editor/953-2113



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Night boasts blend of music, history

By Linda Ann Chomin
special writer

Music and history of the local variety will share the spotlight Friday, April 12. The Plymouth Historical Museum and the Plymouth Historical Museum will team up to present "A Night of Music and History."

The evening begins at 8 p.m. when, under conductor Russell Reed, the Plymouth Symphony presents its final concert of the 1990-91 season, "Cello Primo," in the auditorium of Plymouth Salem High School, 46181 Joy Road, Canton.

The performance will festively conclude the orchestra's 45th anniversary season. Cellist Norman Fischer, a former Plymouth resident who last performed with the orchestra in 1971, will be guest soloist.

"It's a real thrill for me to have contact with the orchestra after all these years," said Fischer during an interview from his Ohio home.

After the music ends, a special afterglow, "A Celebration of Musical History," will be held in the Plymouth Historical Museum, 155 S. Main, Plymouth.

The afterglow will feature the grand opening of new museum exhibits: "100 Years of Carnegie Hall," an exhibit saluting the Plymouth Symphony's achievements over the past 45 years; and a display of antique musical instruments.

ON THIS evening celebrating music and history, the concert program will include "Sulte No. 3" by Johann Sebastian Bach, "Cello Concerto" by Sir Edward Elgar and "Concerto for

Orchestra" by Bela Bartok.

Bartok's "Concerto for Orchestra" is pure tour de force. "Unlike most concertos, which focus on a single instrument, it features virtually the entire orchestra," Reed said.

"Written in the 1940s, it's a brilliant work, a rhythmic and powerful piece."

Highlighting the evening's performance is the return of Norman Fischer, originally from Plymouth. He'll be featured soloist in "Cello Concerto," written by Sir Edward Elgar.

"It's a wonderful, romantic concerto written in the late 19th, early 20th century," Reed said. "Elgar's 'Cello Concerto,' it isn't really performed, but only by the finest of cellists."

"This particular piece by Elgar is unique, one of his last works and greatest masterpieces," Fischer said. "It is autobiographical in nature. It represents an individual's yearn-

ing for this time gone by, the passing of an era."

AFTER COMPLETING studies at Interlochen Arts Academy and Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, Fischer founded the Concord String Quartet. For 16 years, he concertized in the United States and abroad.

Recording more than 40 works as the quartet's cellist, Fischer appeared on television and radio. His honors include the Naumberg Chamber Music Award, an Emmy Award and Grammy nominations. He performs on a Florentine cello dated 1760.

Fischer now performs with his wife, pianist Jeanne Klerman Fischer, as the Fischer Duo.

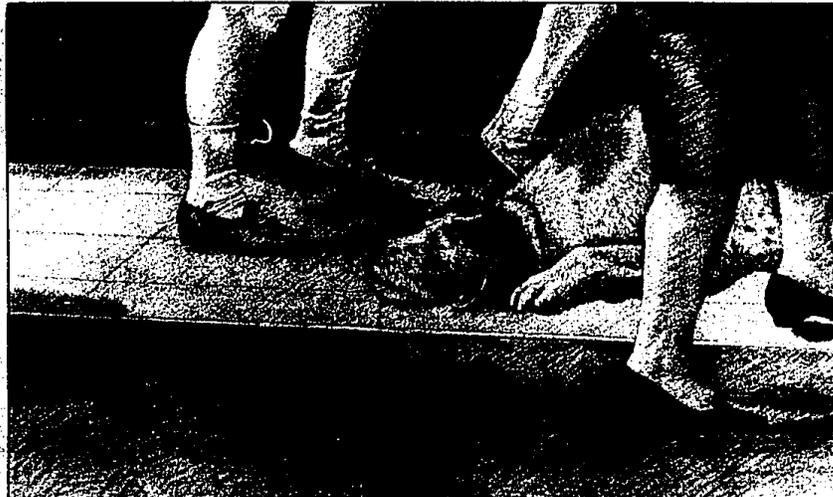


Norman Fischer
guest cellist

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"Innocence," a graphite drawing, focuses on the face as do many of Gwen Dietrich's sensitive portrayals. Dietrich enlarges and emphasizes the eyes in her work. She believes there is truth in the words of American sculptor Hiram Powers: "The eye is the window of the soul; the intellect and will are seen in it."



"Walking the Dog" recalls the busy sidewalks of New York City on a warm, sunny day. Shades of gray dominate the picture plane. The lines of the concrete sidewalk lead the

viewer's eye to the center of the work; a brown and white English Springer Spaniel, lazily basking in the sun. The pastel, 30-by-38 inches, is priced at \$575.

Artist depicts everyday life in pastel color

By Linda Ann Chomin
special writer

ARTIST GWEN Dietrich creates sensitive portrayals of dogs and people in everyday

situations, using layers of transparent color pastel.

Dietrich's one-woman show, "Dogs and Dames," is on exhibit at Nelson's Gallery in Livonia through April 20.

Dietrich, a graduate of Parsons School of Design in New York City, works with pastel, colored pencil and watercolor. "Degas was the master of pastel. All one has to do is study his work

to learn its versatility," Dietrich said in her Canton Township studio.

"Surrounded by boxes of pastels that included hundreds of reds, blues, blacks and flesh tones, Dietrich talked about her art.

"BECAUSE OF my love and familiarity with dogs, I felt I could be very sensitive in my rendering of the subject."

"It took Dietrich a year of working nights and weekends to complete the 21 works in the "Dogs and Dames" series on display at Nelson's, she said.

Forty hours a week, Dietrich works as a graphic designer for A.R. Brasch Advertising in Southfield, creating ads and promotional brochures.

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This pastel, reminiscent of the Art Nouveau period, is entitled "Starstruck." It's priced at \$400. The black and blue rendering of the lady's long evening glove makes it appear as if cut from lush black velvet.

Staff photos
by
Jim Jagfeld



Left: Artist Gwen Dietrich has exhibited work in Detroit and New York City. The artist keeps her compositions clean and straightforward with a minimum of shapes, forms and overall color. "Juxtaposition" depicts an anxious scene between a Dalmatian and a coveted ball. Dietrich used an impressionistic background to create tension within this pastel, priced at \$550.

Farmsite, crossroads — reminders of pioneering days

NEWSBEAT NUGGETS:

The Livonia Historical Commission hopes to stabilize 10 farm buildings at Greenmead Historical Village during the early '90s.

The commission goes before the Livonia City Council Monday, April 15, to seek support for the \$70,000 stabilization project. Detroit architect Mike Kirk, noted for historical restoration, has drawn up plans.

The Hill House is the farmsite's centerpiece. The Greek Revival-style house, a national historic site, dates back to 1841. That's when Livonia Township pioneer Joshua Simmons, a master builder himself, commissioned Farmington architect Sergius P. Lyon, husband of his niece Lucinda, to design and build it.

The landmark home was the Simmons' third residence on their 160-acre farm, Meadow Brook. The

farmsite, including a barn built in 1829 and a farmhand's house built about 1930, stayed in the Simmons family until 1915.

In 1920, Sherwin and Jean Hill acquired the farmsite to raise dairy cattle. They renamed it Greenmead, after her childhood home in Baltimore. They hired Farmington architect Marcus Burrows to remodel the main farmhouse.

Also slated for stabilization are a second barn, two corn cribs, a chicken coop, the north carriage house, the caretaker's cottage and a three-car garage. The ramshackle south carriage house is expected to be dismantled and rebuilt using original materials.

Improving the outbuildings is especially important.

As Sue Daniel, who chairs the historical commission, put it: "If some-

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thing's not done to these buildings soon, they're not going to be here. They're what makes Greenmead so special. There are lots of old farmhouses but without the outbuildings."

With 1991 the 150th anniversary of the Hill House, it's nice to hear that Greenmead's gravel entrance off Newburgh will be named Joshua Simmons Drive.

The prosperous farm he knew as Meadow Brook was a testimonial to

his pioneering spirit. He brought his new wife, Hannah-Macomber, here from New York, when he was just 25 and built a three-sided log shanty.

It's now a residential gateway to one of southeast Michigan's fastest-growing cities. But its roots are as a farming crossroads dating back to Farmington Township's early days.

So it's fitting the Farmington Hills Historical Commission has posted a historic marker at Buckhorn Corners, once a bustling hamlet at 12 Mile and Inkster Road.

That's where carpenter Timothy Tolman built the township's first frame house in 1828 from timber probably bought from Tibbits Sawmill, a water-powered mill a half mile south along Lee's Creek at today's I-695 and Inkster Road.

Two of Buckhorn Corners' more notable sites were the old Cullenman School, at today's Middlebelt and I-695, and the Utley Burying Ground, a former Indian burying ground on 12 Mile near Middlebelt.

Coleman School educated kids into the mid-20th century.

Peleg Utley gave part of his farmland for the 217-lot cemetery. His mother, Patience, was buried there in 1824. She died from injuries in a fall from a wagon as her family arrived here from New York. Hers was the first death in the new community of Quaker Towne, later named Farmington after Farmington founder Arthur Power's hometown in New York.

From 1906 to 1932, the Mystic Workers, a group of local women, kept up the cemetery, Farmington's oldest. They staged fund-raisers and

recruited volunteers. Later, upkeep fell to the East Cemetery Association, Farmington Township, even the Boy Scouts. Farmington Hills took responsibility when it became a city in 1974.

Buckhorn Corners was named after the unusual locked deer horns adorning a post at 12 Mile and Inkster.

Timothy Tolman and George Brownell shared a shotgun to kill two fighting deer. Friends and neighbors admired the prized antlers so much, they were displayed for all to enjoy. Ruth Roth Mochlin tells us in her 1980 history book, "If Walls Could Talk: Heritage Homes of Farmington."

Bob Sklar is assistant managing editor for special projects.