

upcoming things to do

Deadline for the Upcoming Entertainment calendar is three weeks ahead of publication. Send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wyonik, Entertainment Editor, the Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

CHOIR AUDITIONS

The Langford Singers Male Choir and Mixed Choir are accepting applications for their 1991-92 season. The 50-voice choir is planning a two-week concert tour of Great Britain for July 1992. Singers interested in auditioning must have some sight-reading skills, and prepare a solo for the audition. Auditions will be 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 5 and Sept. 12, at North Congregational Church in Southfield. For information call Diane Cragg at 881-5499.

PIKE KNOB

Paul Simon, 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 6, Manhattan Transfer, 8 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 12. Tickets available at The Palace Box Office, and all TicketMaster centers. To charge tickets, call 645-6668.

MEADOWBROOK VILLAGE MALL

Country & Western sing-along noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 7 and Sunday, Sept. 8 featuring guitarist Bruce Grogn. The mall is at the corner of Walton and Adams in Rochester Hills. For information, call 375-9451.

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CHORAL CLINIC

Local baritone, and radio personality, Davis Gloff will present a workshop of singers, conductors, organists, and clergy noon to 3 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 7, at Faith Community Presbyterian Church in Novi. The workshop is free. The church is at 44400 W. 10 Mile, on the north side of the street. For information, call 474-1510.

MUSICAL MEANDER

Downtown Rochester restaurants will feature musical entertainers during the Musical Meander on Friday, Sept. 6, and Saturday, Sept. 7. Four restaurants will offer free musical entertainment — the 4th Street Bistro at 124 W. Fourth Street, Kruse and Muer on Main at 327 Main Street, Mr. B's Bar at 423 Main Street, and the new O'Shea's Tavern at 543 N. Main Street in the River Square Village Mall. For information, call 656-0060.

"LEND ME A TENOR"

Warm up those vocal chords, and hurry over to the Birmingham Theatre, noon to 1 p.m., Friday, Sept. 6. Sing 16 bars of any aria, from any opera, and you'll receive two free tickets to "Lend Me a Tenor." An additional prize to the "star" judged best by opera aficionado Sen. Jack Faxon, will be an invitation to appear in one of Michigan Opera Theatre's 1992 Spring productions. The theater is at 211 S. Woodward in downtown Birmingham.

BESS BONNIER

Bess Bonnier, an improvisational pianist, performs 2-4 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 8, at Somerset Mall, 2801 West Big Beaver Road, Troy, in the Center Court. The concert is open to the public at no charge.

HOBBY SHOW

Mercy Center Coin, Stamp and Baseball Card Show, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 8 at Mercy Sports Center Hall, 28500 11 Mile Road, Gate 4, east of Middlebelt in Farmington Hills.

OPEN AUDITIONS

Village Players will open auditions for "Chicago," the 1920s musical by Fred Ebb and Bob Fosse. Auditions will be Tuesday, Sept. 10, and Thursday, Sept. 12, at 7:30 p.m. at the playhouse, on the corner of Hunter Boulevard and Chestnut Street, south of Maple Road. Candidates must be able to act, sing and dance. For further information as to what songs to prepare, please contact Michael at 543-2633 or Joan at 559-5294.

CHORAL SOCIETY

Measure for Measure, a men's choral society announces open auditions 7-9 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 8 in the choral music room, Alexander Music Building, on the Eastern Michigan University campus. For information, call 655-7471.

BENEFIT

"Dance Thru The Decades," a benefit for both charities 7 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 11, at Industry Nightclub in Pontiac. The event features top DJs spinning the hottest hits through the decade. Tickets are \$25 and available through TicketMaster outlets, or at the door. To charge tickets call 645-6666. For information, call 433-0369. Industry, Pontiac's newest nightclub, is at 15 S. Saginaw.

"CROSSING DELANCEY"

The Jewish Ensemble Theatre's 1991-92 season will open Wednesday, Sept. 11 with "Crossing Delancey," a romantic comedy by Susan Sandler. Tickets are \$8, \$15, \$20. Performances are in the DeRoy Theatre at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 West Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Performances 8 p.m., Sept. 11, 12, and 14, 8:30 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 15, 2 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 12 and Saturday, Sept. 15. For reservations, or information, call 789-2900 or TicketMaster 645-6666.



Capitol Steps, known for poking fun at current events and politicians, comes to the Attic Theatre in Detroit, Sept. 6-7. For tickets, and more information, call 875-8284 or TicketMaster at 645-6668.



Blues guitarist Larry McCray performs Friday, Sept. 6, at Sully's in Dearborn

Blues guitarist is modest and honest

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Not too many people seemed to notice Larry McCray as he nonchalantly strode through the bar at Sully's with guitar case in hand awhile back. In fact, the winter chill that followed him in from the outside drew more attention.

McCray prefers things that way.

People quickly took note, though, when the stranger jumped on stage and began trading a series of searing guitar riffs with English bluesman Kevin Brown, who was headlining on this night at the venerable Dearborn bar. The exchange ended as soon as it began, nonetheless compelling and certainly the highlight in the blues extolled evening.

Frankly, though, McCray has a little problem recalling the moment.

"I'm a non-partisan musician," said McCray, 30, still trying to retrieve the night from his memory bank in a telephone conversation from his manager's office in Chicago. "I believe in musical courtesy."

He asks if Kevin Brown is Australian. Then he remembers Brown plays with no outfit called The Silent Partners and the light bulb clicks.

Many would have feigned as if they remembered, act as if they knew exactly when the collaboration transpired and prattled on about what a great artist Brown is and how they're close friends, ad nauseam. McCray is modest and honest.

Anyone will surmise as such on a few listens to McCray's debut LP, "Ambition," on Charisma's Point Blank label "Ambition." The 12-song offering is a last outpouring of emotion and soul while using a cross-reference of styles from urban blues to R&B to rock'n'roll.

NO DOUBT, McCray was influenced by '70s electric blues of John Hendrix. But he owes a great deal of his style to the masters Albert Collins, Albert King, Freddie King and B.B. King, who transported gritty dirt-road yearnings from the expansive South and brought them to the street lights and traffic noise of the city.

McCray is an urban story. He moved from Arkansas to Saginaw when he was 12 to live with his sister, Clara. She is an exceptional blues guitarist in her own right, fronting Clara McCray and the Rockets for a number of years.

In those early days, Clara McCray, now Clara Walker, helped immerse her younger brother in the proper techniques of the guitar and sent him off on his own to interpret blues music he was raised on.

McCray later performed in an array of rock, soul and Top-40 conglomerates before settling full-time into blues.

While working the afternoon shift on the assembly line at General Motors, McCray went into the 16-track basement studio of Detroit's David Robinson to record his first album "Ambition." He would work on the line until 2 a.m. and then report into the studio at 11 a.m. and record through until he was due for his shift at 4 p.m.

"Ambition" was initially released in Europe, selling a remarkable 400,000 copies. McCray went on a European tour with former Thin Lizzy guitarist Gary Moore. He promptly quit his G.M. job.

Stateside, Charisma signed McCray and released the album here in March. "Ambition" has been met by critical acclaim with sales estimated between 20 to 30,000 copies — still not bad for a debut blues LP. McCray remains rather level-headed about it all.

Larry McCray will perform Friday, Sept. 6, at Sully's, 4753 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Detroit. For information, call 846-5377.

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