

Artist from page FROM FRONT

chusetts.

Fasanella was born in New York City. His mother made buttonholes in a clothing shop. A sister made jackets. A brother was a presser. An older sister was an activist in a bookkeepers union. His father left the family (consisting of six children) to return to Italy when Fasanella was 14. The youth went to work running errands and later helped his mother publish an anti-fascist newspaper in Italian.

Fasanella became involved with the union movement, spending 16 years as an organizer. He also be-

came interested and involved in painting.

"Frustration was getting the best of me. I had to express what I've been through. I can only express through painting and my fingers."

Fasanella never had an art lesson. "I worked and painted, worked and painted, worked and painted."

"Every time a job was boring I didn't mind it. A boring job gives you time to think."

Following the saying "Paint what you know," Fasanella's art incorporated neighborhood and

city scenes — a clothing shop, a bakery.

"Subconsciously I was taken with this other imagery."

After the artist was discovered by New York magazine in 1972, recognition and shows soon followed. Fasanella's works are in many public and private collections, including Michigan State University, the Flint Public Library, the Museum of American Folk Art and the Milwaukee Museum of Art.

The artist's "Family Supper" landed in the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. This piece is

crowded with images of family life — shelves with food, a trunk, a sewing machine, a painting of a crucifixion with a worker crowned with ice tongs. Fasanella himself is one of the youngsters at the table. The viewer is looking into a home as the city moves on outside — you are where one wall would be.

Fasanella is now working on a painting concerning the end of the Cold War.

"You come to painting in many different ways. I didn't have a formula. I wished I did. Different events affect you differently."

For example, "O.J. Simpson means nothing to me." But FDR, some of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King Jr. "pulled me in."

"Prior to the Roosevelt administration things were very difficult in America."

"The radicals, the CIO unleashed a lot of positive energy. For the first time the worker was recognized as a human being."

"What the worker needs now is culture. Read. Look at art."

"Only through culture you survive."

"Art is the salvation of man. Art sustains life."

"Once you're a thinking person you never stop searching."

Knowledge truly is power.

"Why are kids so happy?" he asked, noting how children are always skipping and jumping. "Every step is a discovery."

Fasanella's wife Eva, also on hand for the opening, was looking up the phone number of the union. He asks for her opinion on his work, and she schedules exhibits.

"We work together as a team." The artist is optimistic.

"Mankind always resolves its problems . . . always going to find a way out."

Metro Area Chamber Groups

■ Detroit Chamber Winds, "Nighnotes Series" at Hagopian World of Rugs, 850 S. Woodward, Birmingham. Doors open 8 p.m. performance begins 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$15 includes recital, and refreshments. Call (810) 362-2622.

Schedule: Trombonist Ava Ordman, Sept. 29; Peter Soave, Nov. 17; "A Madrigal Evening," Jan. 19; Nighnotes Jr., March 29; and American Composers, May 17.

■ Chamber Music Society of Detroit. Concerts at Orchestra Hall except for March 9 concert at Macomb Center for the Performing Arts. Ticket prices \$5-\$49. Call (313) 633-3700.

Schedule: Modern Jazz Quartet, 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 10; Cleveland Quartet, 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 5; Beaux Arts Trio, 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3; Ying Quartet with Elio Eban, clarinet, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 4; Boston Chamber Music Society, 8 p.m. Saturday, March 9; Jon Kimura Parker, piano, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 31; Midori, violin, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 21; Tokyo String Quartet, 8 p.m. Friday, May 17.

■ Chamberworks. Season tickets \$55 or \$11 per concert; senior citizens and students, \$40 season, \$8 per concert. Concerts 8 p.m. Fridays at First United Methodist Church, 320 W. Seventh St., Royal Oak or Belian Art Center, 5980 Rochester Road, Troy. Call (810) 952-5207 for information.

Schedule: "The Birth of the Piano Quartet" Oct. 13; "A Feast of Telemann," Nov. 10; "Music for Flute, Cello and Harpsichord," Dec. 8; (Belian Art Center); "Romantic Music for Clarinet, Viola and Piano," Feb. 9; (Belian Art Center); "Music at the French Court," March 1; "A Bach Family Concert-o," March 29; "A Night in Old Vienna," April 19; "Music from the Age of Elegance," May 17.

■ Lyric Chamber Ensemble. Concerts at Orchestra Hall, The Gem Theatre, the Grosse Pointe War Memorial and Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills. For season brochure and ticket information, call (810) 357-1111.

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