

CONVERSATIONS



FRANK PROVENZANO

Carrying on in the aftermath of WQRS

Special Bulletin: To all former WQRS-FM listeners. Beginning today, please observe a moment of outrage at noon. Wherever you're at, take a deep breath, then cry like a baby. I want my classical music station back!

Few radio stations had as many loyal listeners as WQRS. And no one knew that better than former on-air host Paul Russell.

"There's a lot of people who are still in mourning," said the velvet-voiced Russell, whose casual style and piercing wit deflated the rarefied air of classical music purists.

"The saddest thing about losing WQRS is that it was so much fun," he said while he completed his chores at his home in Pleasant Ridge.

These days, Russell is a new papa and hustling free-lance talent.

He's host of WJTB's "The Classical Love Album," and Wagner's "Tristan Und Isolde."

What: Classical Music Appreciation Workshop Series, hosted by Paul Russell, sponsored by Deutsche Grammophon

When: 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22

Where: Borders Books & Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills (248) 737-0110

Program: Discussion of romantic music from Gil Shuman ("Violin Romances"), Terfel, Domingo and Pavarotti ("The Classical Love Album"), and Wagner's "Tristan Und Isolde."

"Back Stage Pass" and roving photographer for several nonprofits.

Ironically, he's busier now than when he had a regular gig.

But his heart — and his place — is behind a mic in a radio booth, orchestrating the preambles and narrative transitions between classical music pieces.

On Sunday, Feb. 22, Russell will host the second monthly "Classical Music Appreciation Workshop" at Borders in Farmington Hills.

For a few hours, it'll seem like old times.

Glimmer of hope

"I've never seen a radio format where the audience was so involved and loyal," said Russell.

Of course, the problem is that loyalty doesn't necessarily translate into ratings. In a transient, trend-of-the-week culture, loyalty is far too long-term to matter.

In the fifth largest radio market, the loss of WQRS is a reminder that the true effect of the Communications Act hasn't fostered diversity in the market.

On the contrary, for anyone who has searched for a new radio dial alternative, there's a stark similarity among the formats.

Who's foolin' who? Homogenized, milk has more variety. And high school locker rooms have more intelligent discussions.

Few other places underscore the clash between commerce and art than in realizing the plight of classical music radio.

"In the best markets, classical music stations only pull 4 percent of the listeners," said Russell. "Classical music is biting the dust."

But there's a glimmer of hope. A new program, "A Touch of Class," on WJTB-FM (90.9) will air classical music 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

WJTB should be applauded for its new program. But eight hours of classical music a week isn't quite the same as a full-time radio format.

As Russell puts it, unless there's some classical music buff with \$30 million in spare change, there are no signs of a replacement for WQRS.

For now, it's enough for former listeners to carry on.

Meanwhile, it might be a good idea to brush up on Canadian politics. The only full-time classical music station in the region emanates from Windsor, CBC-FM (89.9).

After mourning comes acceptance and a bout of nostalgia.

Hmm. There's already plenty of nostalgia on the airwaves. Who knows?



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN

Embodiment: Marshall Fredericks' "Spirit of Detroit" sculpture symbolizes the strength and vitality of the area.

Touched by greatness

Marshall Fredericks' monumental passion for life

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER

The mystery of how Marshall Fredericks transforms amorphous clay into exuberant, monumental sculptures lies in the communication between his critical eye and supple hands.

Romantics and admirers would surely claim divine intervention is at work.

"I don't know about that," said Fredericks. "But I sure could use some now."

An indefatigable will, boundless talent, and a healthy dose of humor might offer a more mundane explanation for his prolific output and international reputation.

Earlier this month, a 90th birthday celebration for Fredericks was held at The Community House in Birmingham.

The overflow crowd included people from all over the country, and as far away as Scandinavia.

The main attraction was an immensely modest, gray haired man who many call the greatest living American artist of monumental figurative sculpture.

Fredericks merely shrugs at the suggestion. "It all seems like a dream," he said. "I wish I could live longer to keep improving."

Since post-World War II, Fredericks

Marshall Fredericks' Sculptures			
LOCAL SITES:			
■ Spirit of Detroit	■ Flying Wild Goose		
City-County Building, Detroit	Detroit Zoo		
■ Freedom of the Human Spirit	■ Leaping Gazelle		
Shain Park, Birmingham	Belle Isle, Detroit		
■ Siberian Ram	■ Arthur Vandenberg		
Baldwin Public Library, Birmingham	portrait relief, Rockham Memorial Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor		
■ Four sculptures:	■ Two Bears		
• The Thinker	Royal Oak Public Library, Southfield Public Library		
• Torso of a Dancer			
• Mother and Child			
■ Persephone			
Baldwin Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills			
■ Wings of Morning			
Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church, Bloomfield Hills			
■ The Seven Saints and Sinners			
Oakland University			
■ Christ and Children			
St. Hugo of the Hills Catholic Church, Bloomfield Hills			
■ John F. Kennedy			
Mt. Clemens			
	■ Christ on the Cross		
	Indian River Catholic Shrine, Indian River		
	■ Fountain of Eternal Life		
	Cleveland War Memorial		
	■ Great Seal of the United States		
	American Embassy, London, England		
	■ Rainbow Fountain		
	Stockholm, Sweden		

icks along with the late Donald DeLue and the late Paul Manship are considered the most influential figurative sculptors in a western art world obsessed with the abstract sculptures of David Smith, Henry Moore and Isamu Noguchi, among others.

"I've never been interested in popular art," said Fredericks. "There's a temptation to change what you're doing, to be part of a fad. But all you can be is who you are."

"I feel like I'm just breaking the surface," he said. "I've never finished anything that I thought was perfect."

Others beg to differ. In her toast to Fredericks, Cilla Jahn, an art historian who traveled from Sweden for the birthday celebration, borrowed a line often used by Fredericks' mentor, the sculptor Carl Milles, a Rodin protégé.

Jahn had consulted with Fredericks on his massive "Rainbow Fountain" sculpture in Stockholm.

"Never give up," said Jahn, as she lifted her glass in a tribute.

She was preaching to one of the greatest practitioners in the choir.

Eternal air

Those delicate hands that set free

Please see GREATNESS, C2

DANCE

Dancing in the streets begins with learning in the schools



Modern steps: Dance Theatre of Harlem has completed a three-week residency in local schools. The company will perform two programs this week at Music Hall.

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER

In the late 1960s, the political heat wave of protest, violence and terminal misunderstanding inspired Dance Theatre of Harlem Founder Arthur Mitchell to make his own statement.

Leotards in hand, he took to the streets.

Since then, Dance Theatre of Harlem has taken flight well beyond Harlem. Not only performing internationally, but bringing their blend of classical and modern dance to whomever wants to learn about the artform.

To many, the dancers have become cultural diplomats, preaching about social awareness, diversity and artistic excellence.

This past week, the company's dancers capped a three-week residency program at schools throughout metro Detroit. The outreach program, "Dancing Through Barriers," precedes Dance Theatre of Harlem upcoming performances at the Music Hall in downtown Detroit.

In Oakland County, Dance Theatre of Harlem dancers taught the basics of warm-ups, grand-

Dance Theatre of Harlem

When: Two programs to be presented Wednesday-Sunday, Feb. 18-22

Where: Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, 350 Madison Avenue, Detroit; (313) 963-7622

• Program A — Performed 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18; 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19 and 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22: "The Four Temperaments," choreography by George Balanchine; "The Moor's Pavane, Variations on the theme of Othello," choreography by Jose Limon; "Sasanka," choreography by Vincent Scawlat Mensoo.

• Program B — Performed 8 p.m. Friday; 3 p.m. & 8 p.m. Saturday: "Firebird," choreography by John Taras; "Signs and Wonders," choreography by Alonzo King; "Dialogues," choreography by Glen Tetley.

Tickets: Range from \$31.50-\$41.50; (313) 963-2366, or (248) 645-6666

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