

Fame

from page E1

the classroom relates to musical theater. Inspiring students is one of the reasons De Silva, a former history teacher, believes "Fame" is so popular.

He said he always thought the story about New York's High School Performing Arts (now called the Fiorella La Guardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts) was a good idea waiting to be born.

"We're not moon in June out of the blue," he said. "This story

is reality based."

"The dancers are the stars of the show," said Creel. "It's all about dance. They keep the energy up. We're all on stage all the time."

Creel is part of an ensemble cast of 25 people. "Each of us have our own responsibilities," he said. "We're each equally important. We all have the same responsibilities and everyone carries it. If even one person slacks off we all feel it."

For Creel the hardest part is

learning how to keep things fresh and keep his sanity off stage.

After Detroit the play moves to Kansas City. By then, Creel will have done it 200 times.

"I've never done anything 200 times," he said. "I'm signed up until Nov. 17, 1999. I'm living forever, baby."

On tour he's seen some beautiful cities, but with the exception of Toronto, where the group stayed six weeks, he hasn't seen much of them.

When his time for "Fame" is done, he wants to get an apartment in New York City.

The North American tour will continue into 2001.

De Silva said he's happy to let "Rent" be the 1990s and "Fame" the 1980s.

"We've become retro," he said.

"But there aren't many shows that young people can audition for. There are a lot of talented kids, but there's only so much they can do. For many kids in

the show, this is their first job. It's a show they can get into. It's inspiring to so many people. It has a romantic vision that's important."

Roundtable discussion

We want to learn what you think about arts education.

You're invited to "Opening the Book," a roundtable discussion about arts curriculum in our local school districts, in our local school districts, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 18, at the Southfield Centre for the

Arts, 24350 Southfield Road, Southfield.

Panelists will answer questions from the audience, and address their concerns about arts education and curriculum in the school districts. The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers cover. There is no charge to attend.

Call Frank Provenzano, (248) 901-2557, Keely Wygonik (734) 953-2105, or Linda Chomin (734) 953-2145 if you have any questions.

Caregiver

from page E1

begins to play the piano again.

Eric, portrayed by David Wolber, recently featured in JET's production of "Never the Sinner," worries about taking care of his father, finding a proper caregiver and being able to measure up to his father.

JET commissioned original music by composer Allen Shawn

for this production. Shawn's credits include scores for the New York Shakespeare Festival, the La Jolla Playhouse and the Lincoln Center Theatre, and music for the film, "My Dinner With Andre."

In the play the conduct improvises at the piano, and Orbach believed the production had to

have music appropriate to a man of his talent.

"We couldn't just ask someone to plunk a few keys on the piano," said Orbach. "We were very lucky to get Allen. The playwright recommended him. He's done a quality job. So it is quite musical. The music just

gurgles out of him."

Shawn also composed music to introduce the second act and for scene changes.

Strafogl has directed all over the world. His productions of both classical and contemporary operas have been presented at the San Francisco Opera, the

New York City Opera, The Washington Opera at Kennedy Center, the Frankfurt Opera and Stuttgart Opera.

As a librettist he created the text for "Icarus" and "Talking Heads," performed in Austria, Germany, France and Boston. Other writings include dramatic

portraits of classical composers which have been performed by Tom Hulce and Roddy McDowall working with leading American symphony orchestras.

Strafogl was in town for the opening week of rehearsals and will return for opening night on Sunday, May 2.

Julian

from page E1

out in public at a later date," he explained.

One wasn't trying to pit the stepbrothers against each other, he added. She had another mission.

"It was a question of manipulation and how much Yoko was willing to spend as far as his promotion, as opposed to mine and how obviously she could afford that and overabundant my costs by great amounts," Lennon said.

"That's nothing against Sean. I used to baby-sit him. I think he's incredibly talented, but she's already, as far as I'm concerned, manipulated one Lennon too many."

The 36-year-old Lennon told of Ono's disrespect for him and how she puts Sean Lennon on a pedestal.

"She wanted Sean to be seen as the shining, genius Lennon son, and me to be the drunk, old, drugged, useless son, you know?

I wasn't about to play that game. The work speaks for itself."

Seven-year itch

"Photograph Smile," released in the United States Feb. 23, marks Lennon's return to the music industry after taking seven years off to regroup after his last album, 1991's "Into the Sun." Lennon said he felt disenchanted with the industry after the single "Saltwater," which was in the top 10 worldwide, barely made a splash in the United States.

"In America, zilch. There's only one reason for that. The record company withdrew support."

Lennon said he felt disenchanted with the industry after the single "Saltwater," which was in the top 10 worldwide, barely made a splash in the United States.

"So I said, 'Enough.' I called it quits and it took me approximately five years to be released from the contracts, not only from

the record company but management as well."

He spent the time reflecting on life and trying "to figure out who in the hell I was outside of the music industry and to figure out what I wanted in life."

Lennon rediscovered his love of painting, photography, "the written word," sailing and cooking. Soon, the songwriting nipped at him.

"I just started writing again a couple years ago because I love to write music. It's as simple as that. I was actually writing to challenge myself to see how good a songwriter I could be and to prove my own sort of self worth as a songwriter."

After coming up with 20 or 30 song ideas, he ran into producer Bob Rose who persuaded Lennon to return to the studio — no pressure, just to lay down a few tracks.

"We were only supposed to be

there three or four days. By the end of the first week we had 11 tracks recorded."

Lennon and Rose, who had worked with Roy Orbison, concentrated on "Photograph Smile" for a year, producing enough material for three albums. The duo utilized vintage equipment to give the 14-track album a warm feel.

"The ideas that I took with Bob Rose were all about doing this natural, honest, as raw an album as possible using the natural ambience of the room. I just wanted to use great-sounding instruments that were not samples, that were not keyboards."

When they wrapped up "Photograph Smile," Lennon's next hurdle was releasing the album which he had financed himself. He was skittish about returning to the major-label fold so he weighed his options.

"The last decision I had to make was, 'Do I want to sign to a

major label and sell my soul to the devil for another five to 10 years?'"

Instead, Lennon took the reins. He started his own label, Music From Another Room, distributed by Fuel 2000/Universal. Lennon is planning a world tour for this summer.

Lennon legacy

"Photograph Smile," dedicated to his late stepfather, Robert Bassenini, is, at times, painfully autobiographical. In the acoustic-based ballad "Good to be Lonely," Lennon sings "And it's good to be lonely sometimes/It's better than nothing at all/It's good to be lonely sometimes/at least I'm prepared for the fall."

"Manipulation is the subject of 'Crucified.' I'm just one that sees the world with open eyes/the countless lies, the truth denied/whichever way the wind blows/we're crucified."

On his earlier works, including

1984's "Valotte" which spawned the hit "Too Late for Good-byes," Lennon eschewed his father's musical influence. That has changed with the critically acclaimed "Photograph Smile."

"Day After Day," with its soaring instrumentation, and "I Don't Wanna Know" are replete with Beatles/John Lennon influences. On the closing track, "Way to Your Heart," he references "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds."

If there was anyone who should have those influences, he said, it's him. Lennon, donning a T-shirt that read "Lennon and proud of it," made his point clearly during a Feb. 17 appearance on the "Late Show with David Letterman."

"I thought that was the perfect opportunity to wear that T-shirt. A friend made it up for me a couple of years ago and I've never worn it, but I thought this is the time to wear it. Finally."

'American Enterprise' closes Hilberry season

The Hilberry, Wayne State University's graduate theater company, presents Jeffrey Sweet's historical drama, "American Enterprise," in rotating repertory through May 15. Performances are 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, with selected Wednesday and Saturday 2 p.m. matinees. The Hilberry Theatre is at 4743 Cass, at Hancock, on the campus of Wayne State University in Detroit. For more information or to order tickets by phone, call (313) 67-2972.

BY SUS SUCHYTA
SPECIAL WRITER

The Detroit premiere of "American Enterprise" paints a brilliant picture of the challenging and complex contradictions of capitalism and philanthropy by taking a historic and colorful ride with George Pullman, the man made rich by the railway car that bears his name.

Pullman, a self-made man with an equally strong ego and a myopic point of view, created his own version of a Utopian

town for the workers at his Pullman car factory. In an era of slums and sweatshops, his ideal town was met with suspicion by the rich and an early rush of euphoria by the workers.

However, the paternalistic dictatorship of his town began to crumble when Pullman slashed wages during an economic depression without lowering the rent workers paid for company-owned housing. Pullman had lowered wages to keep the company open during the depression by selling Pullman cars at a loss. However, after rents were deducted, workers had very little left to live on.

Quoting capitalism and free enterprise the way a preacher quotes Scripture, Pullman's ego and stubbornness prevented him from agreeing to any compromise that might have eased his workers' plight. The anger and desperation of the workers triggered the infamous railway strike that led to the formation of the American Railway Union.

The historical reality of the story is reinforced by a fascinating montage of historical photos projected above the stage onto different screens. Sepia images of George Pullman, his town, the workers are paired with poignant images of Chicago fires and starving children, lending a startling realism to the story.

Aaron Lake endows the larger-than-life role of George Pullman with a strong mix of confidence and angry stubbornness. He helps synthesize Pullman's benevolent idealism and his staunch, unbending worship of capitalism. Lake also captures the vulnerability of Pullman, who was emotionally unprepared for the labor violence that erupted or the government's pronouncement of the moral unsoundness of his choices.

Mike Schraeder as J. Patrick Hopkins is delightfully fresh faced and boyish as Pullman's protégé. Schraeder takes Hopkins from a naïve youth to a shrewd politician and business-

man — and Pullman's bitter rival.

Sara Wolf creates a strong yet likable persona for Jennie Curtis, one of the worker representatives, by using a scannet's simple stories to capture the poignancy of the workers' struggles.

Lucas Caleb Rooney as union organizer Eugene V. Debs exhorts the workers into a united front with a passion and strength of purpose that reverberates off the house. Rooney's strong stage presence creates an image for Debs that allowed him to believably and powerfully confront the iron will of George Pullman.

In a break from typical Hilberry tradition, the theater company delivers much of the play's emotion with voices raised in song. While the show is not billed as a musical, the songs it presents — strong, folk-like ballads — capture the mood of the play and create an emotional union rallying cry. And while the talented Hilberry ensemble was not chosen for their musical prowess, the actors held their own vocally and created a likable chorus.

D & D Promotions

MOTHER'S DAY CRAFT & ART SHOW

CLARKSTON'S NEW HIGH SCHOOL

On Flemmings Lake Rd., off Clarkston Rd., between M-15 & Sashabaw

Saturday, May 1st 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Gift Certificates Drawings every 30 minutes

1,000's of Juried Handcrafted Items

200 EXHIBITORS \$2.00 Admission - under 12 FREE

COME JOIN THE FUN!

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 3, _____ Clintonwood Park, Clarkston

July 23/24, _____ Westford Civic Center

July 31, _____ Grand Blanc High School

For more information please call (248) 627-3363

The Rocky Horror Show

Book, music and lyrics by Richard O'Brien

April 14 through May 9

The Queen of Rock'n'Roll Musicals!

ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S PROFESSIONAL THEATRE COMPANY

MEADOW BROOK THEATRE

Made possible with the support of

For Tickets Call Meadow Brook Box Office (248) 377-3300

Ticketmaster (248) 645-6666

Hudson's & Harrovy House

The perfect site for a summer getaway!

www.visitgrandrapids.org

Add our Website to your list of favorites. We're your instant connection to *The Summer of the Century* in Grand Rapids, with activities and exhibits that include everything from Dutch Masters to Daddy Longlegs. From James Dean's motorcycle to a lunar landing module. Fantastic family getaways! They're at your fingertips! Check out "the other side of Michigan" today.

Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention and Visitors Bureau
1.877.VISIT GR (1.877.847.4847)
www.visitgrandrapids.org

GRAND RAPIDS

DETROIT FILM THEATRE

April 30, Friday 7-9

THE MIRROR

A truly unusual story told in this way. Two different views.

FRI. 7PM & 9PM SAT. 7PM & 9PM SUN. 4PM & 7PM

Monday May 3

THE 37TH ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL TOUR

CRUISE ONE SHOW ONLY 7-9

the detroit institute of arts

Specialty and example of the best of our city

313.833.2323