

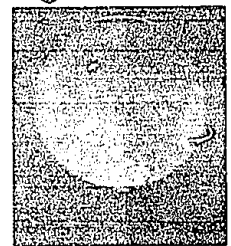
## THE WEEKEND

### FRIDAY

Comedian Bill Barr performs 7:30 p.m. at Heritage Park, in the Canton Recreation complex, 1150 S. Canton Center Road, south of Cherry Hill. Musical comedy impressionist Ron Parker will open the show. No charge; call (734) 397-5110 for information.



### SATURDAY



Elizabeth Lurie of Farmington Hills will sell functional wares and this wall piece at the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair on South and East University and Church streets. The fair, one of three, is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information about the Ann Arbor Art Fairs, call (800) 888-9487 or visit the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau Web site [www.annarbor.org](http://www.annarbor.org)

### SUNDAY



The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, led by David Alan Miller, presents "A Song of Broadway" featuring vocalists Lisa Vroman and Brent Barrett 7:30 p.m., at the Meadow Brook Music Festival on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester Hills. Tickets \$8 to \$50, call (313) 676-5111, (248) 377-0100, or (248) 645-6666.



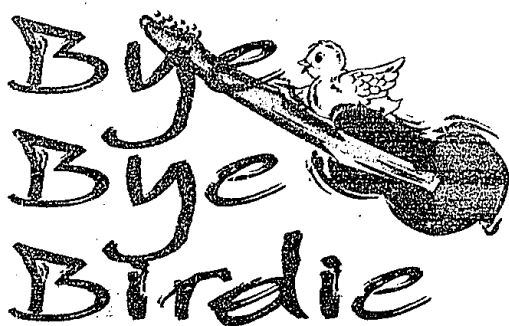
Cool jazz takes center stage at the seventh annual Birmingham Jazz Festival Thursday-Saturday. Free concerts will take place in the heart of downtown Birmingham at Shain Park, south of Maple Road, between Henrietta and Bates streets. Keyboardist Jeff Lorber performs 7 p.m. Saturday. Participating nearby restaurants are also featuring jazz performers. Admission is free. For more information, call (248) 433-FEST. See schedule on page E4.

Musical: Brad Ellison (left to right) portrays Albert Peterson, M. Brian Ogden, Conrad Birdie, and Rebecca Hyke, Kim MacAfee, in Stagecrafters Youth Theatre's production of "Bye Bye Birdie."



PHOTO BY DAVID LEE

## Youth theater rocks with



By SUSAN B. TAUBER  
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What do an Elvis-like rock-n-roll idol, his manager and secretary, an overpowering mother and a bunch of all-American kids in saddle shoes add up to?

The fun, upbeat, family musical, "Bye Bye Birdie," book by Michael Steward, music by Charles Strouse, and lyrics by Lee Adams.

Stagecrafters Youth Theatre is presenting seven performances of this entertaining show beginning 7 p.m. Friday, July 23. All performances are at the historic Baldwin Theater, 416 South Lafayette in Royal Oak.

Additional performances are 7 p.m. Saturday, July 24 and Thursday through Saturday, July 29-31. Sunday matinees are 2 p.m., July 25 and Aug. 1. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for youths 17 and younger. For information call (248) 641-6430.

"We have a group of 36 very talented and energetic kids on stage and that many behind the scenes for this show," said director Deborah Landis-Sigler. "I'm really proud of what they're going to present to the public."

"All of the actual work is being done by the kids," added youth theater chairwoman Margaret (Peg) Pierce (her daughter, Katie, is in the show).

"Besides the actors on stage, the kids are also working behind the scenes on props, production, lights, sound, costumes and more. We feel it's important to give them experience in all

aspects of theater."

"Bye Bye Birdie" also represents the first time Stagecrafters Youth Theatre is doing a full-fledged musical production instead of a more scaled-down children's show.

"This musical is a big undertaking for these kids," Pierce of Royal Oak added. "Because of the size of the show, it's the first time we're having a youth theater production run for two weekends."

Pierce, who seems to always be at the theater working at the sewing machine or putting together costumes from used clothing, has known many of the youths in the show since they were eight years old.

Brad Ellison, 17, is one of these. The Royal Oak resident has acted with youth theater since he was eight. Since he graduated from Kimball High School this year, this is his last youth theater show. He plays Albert, the manager of Birdie, an Elvis-Prezley-like heart-throb who's on his way to join the armed forces.

Ellison is going to Oakland University in the fall, where he'll major in music theater. He's also busy rehearsing for the part of Joseph in Stagecrafters' upcoming production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

Although he's only 13, Justin Noroyan of Farmington Hills has many Stagecrafters productions under his belt.

"I tried out for this play because I thought it would be a fun thing to do this summer," said the Warner Middle School student. He's happy with his role as the younger brother, Randolph, in the MacAfee family.

"I like this role because the character is younger. He's not into the boy-girl thing yet," Noroyan said.

Please see **BIRDIE**, E3



Family ties: M. Brian Ogden (on bike) portrays Conrad Birdie, who gets involved with the MacAfee family, played by Justin Noroyan (left), Brian Thibault, Shauna Mancini and Rebecca Hyke.

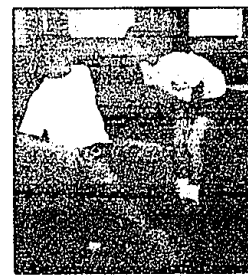
## Young thespians 'act up' at Cranbrook

By KELLY WYGONIK  
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Jessica Gorchow of Troy spent three summers studying acting at the Cranbrook Theatre School, but this year she's working in the costume department.

"It was fun," said Gorchow about the summer program she attended in junior high. "It was a chance to meet kids that were not from my school. I was always interested in theater. You learn a lot through doing scenes from plays and attending classes. In the final week, you present a show. It's the best experience, it's a little stressful, but it prepared me for theater in high school."

Students in Cranbrook Theatre School's junior division, grades three through eight presented the musical "Bye Bye Birdie" July 20-21. On Monday-Tuesday, July 26-27, the senior division, grades nine-12, will present



JOYCE MOREHOUSE

Acting: Michael Williams and Heidi Bennett perform "The Tide that Binds" a short play by John Rutherford.

What: Cranbrook Theatre School, senior division, presents "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder, 6 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, July 26-27.  
Where: Outdoor Greek Theatre, Cranbrook Campus, 400 Long Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.  
Tickets: \$5 at the door. Call (248) 645-1578 for more information.

"Our Town."

The performances are the culmination of the program that began the third week of June. Students in the junior division attend for five weeks, and the senior division six weeks.

"Students come from all over the metro area," said program director Joyce Morehouse of Bloomfield Hills. "Everyone gets a speaking part. Each child has one moment in the sun."

The philosophy is "learning by doing." Students attend classes and practice doing scenes from a variety of plays. They get a lunch break and chance to swim in Lake Jonah on campus, which is real! a pool.

"We believe everyone can use theatrical skills," said Morehouse. "We're not interested in producing stars, but

Please see **THESPIANS**, E3

## SUMMER THEATER

# Shakespeare festival creates intimate outdoor setting

By FRANK PROVENZANO  
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The popular and critical success of Academy Award-winning "Shakespeare in Love," "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and the anticipation of the soon-to-be-released "Titus Andronicus" only validates what Shakespearean actors, scholars and admirers have known: The 16th-century bard from Stratford-upon-Avon with a gift for lush poetry and a turn of a phrase is eternally relevant.

The outdoor setting of this year's Michigan Shakespeare Festival, beginning tonight, and continuing through Sunday, Aug. 8, honors the tradition of the actor to "reach out" past the stage and make drama accessible to anyone willing to listen.

Don't expect slick Hollywood productions. "The joy of Shakespeare is coming to terms with the language," said John Neville-Andrews, artistic director of the festival.

Set and the rolling hills of Ella Sharp Park in Jackson, the festival is hardly along the beaten trail for metro Detroiters. Then again, Stratford, Ontario isn't exactly a spin down I-75.

The five-year-old festival, which expanded from two to three weeks this year, strives for authenticity.

What: Michigan Shakespeare Festival  
When: Thursday, July 22 to Sunday, Aug. 8  
Where: Ella Sharp Park, 3225 Fourth Street, Jackson

Performances: "Hamlet" — 8 p.m. Thursday, July 22, Friday, 30, Sunday, Aug. 1, Thursday, Aug. 5, Saturday, Aug. 7; 2 p.m. Sunday, July 26, Saturday, July 31 and Sunday, Aug. 8.  
"Twelfth Night" — 8 p.m. Friday, July 23, Sunday, July 25, Thursday, July 29, Saturday, July 31, Friday-Saturday, Aug. 6-7; 2 p.m. Saturday, July 24, Sunday, Aug. 1, and Aug. 8.  
Tickets: \$10 and up.  
For information, call (517) 785-5032.

Volunteers for Shakespeare-in-the-Park: West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation needs volunteers for a Shakespeare-in-the-Park presentation of a "Midsummer Night's Dream." The performance is scheduled 8:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 15 at the Drake Sports Park, Drake Road south of Maple Road in West Bloomfield. To volunteer, call (248) 738-2500.

Nine performances of "Hamlet" and "Twelfth Night" will be performed on a wooden stage with minimal props where the only amplification will be the sound of voices bouncing off the back stage wall. "The Shakespeare Festival in Stratford" started in the middle of nowhere with a few tents," said Neville-Andrews, who teaches drama at the University of Michigan, and is searching for local venues where

the plays could be performed after the festival.

"This is the way theater was performed in Shakespeare's time."

The 17-member cast will perform "close to nature," competing with the sounds of birds, planes flying overhead and hoots and hollers from a nearby baseball field. The stage is set at the bottom of a hill where actors look up at an elevated audience. The venue can seat as many as 300.

"We make it an intimate experience for our audi-

Please see **FESTIVAL**, E2