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"When you sit at this it looks like the instrument panel of a 747," said Carmody. "Share, bass and kettle drum, you get a whole different sound and feeling but that probably was the biggest thrill to ride the organ up the first time I played it."

Dorothy Van Steenkiste, publicity chairman for the gala evening became interested in saving the organ in 1974. She liked the theatre organ and came down to the Redford to learn how to play the organ. A board member of the American Theatre Organ Society of which the Motor City Theatre Organ Society is a chapter, Van Steenkiste directs an annual Young Organists competition and initiated a program to award \$500 and two \$1,000 scholarships annually to students enrolled in organ performance in college's around

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Dorothy Van Steenkiste
publicity chairman

the country. She believes it's important to introduce the organ and historic theater to future generations to insure their preservation. She frequently leads tours of elementary through high school age students from Canada and the U.S. through the theater.

"We want to introduce them to the days of the silent film," said Van Steenkiste. "Some of these children have never seen a silent

film with Laurel and Hardy. It was an occasion when my mother took me to the Fox and to the local theater where they gave you a free dish. The graphics, cut stone work and murals, the theaters don't have that today."

Since the Motor City Theatre Organ Society formed 33 years ago to restore the theater, a new heating and cooling system and computerized lighting system have been installed, and the foyer and murals of costumed Japanese Samurai and Geisha Girls flanking the walls on each side of the seating area renewed to their original elegance. It took volunteers hundreds of hours to recreate the hand-painted stenciling in the grand foyer. Fragments of the original Redford lighting fixtures accent two chandeliers from the lobby of Detroit's Oriental Theater. The gold glass panels, crystal prisms and painted peacocks magnificently recall a time when a night out meant donning finery topped

off with white gloves. (Period costumes offer patrons a glimpse back in time to the period of opulence and frivolity.)

"We purchased the theater originally to keep the organ going," said Van Steenkiste. "It's kind of sad. They bulldozed many of the organs with the theaters. There's only one other original theater in the area with the original organ, the Fox downtown."

Preserving and maintaining the theater has been no easy task especially when it costs \$200 a day to operate. The Society's budget for the theater consists of tickets sales from a bi-weekly music series, theater rentals, fund raisers, grants, and donations. The 70th anniversary celebration will help raise funds Oct. 24 with a Buster Keaton film accompanied by Livonia organists Tony O'Brien and John Lauter. A performance by the Hotel Savarine Society Orchestra brings back the music of the 20s with original instrumentation and arrangements.

"It's going to be fun," said Carmody. "When you arrive you will be transported to 1928. It starts in the parking lot with a display of vintage automobiles by the Buick Car Club," said Carmody. "Inside, we're going to give prizes for people who dress in 1920s style, and then they'll be a silent film starring Buster Keaton."

Colleges present musical productions

Eastern Michigan University Theatre opens its 1998-99 season with the musical "Oliver" at the Quirk Theatre on the Ypsilanti campus.

Performances run 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 22-24 and 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18 and Saturday, Oct. 24. Tickets are \$7 for Thursday performance, \$12 Friday-Saturday, and \$10 for Sunday matinee. There is a \$2 discount for tickets purchased more than 30 minutes in advance. For reservations, call (734) 487-1221.

"Oliver," which opened in London in 1960 and on Broadway in 1963, held the record for the longest-running musical import after nearly 800 performances (until that title was later earned by "Evita"). The musical follows closely the novel's rags to riches tale of the orphan's adventures in the teeming streets of 19th century London. The show is packed with classic characters and familiar songs, including "Food, Glorious Food," "Consider Yourself," and "As Long as He Needs Me."

Also of note:

The Department of Music Theatre and Dance at Oakland University's College of Arts & Sciences begins its season Oct. 28 with "Costi fan tutte, or Beware of Women" a comic opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart sung in English. at OU's Varner Recital Hall on the Rochester campus.

Performances 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 28 through Saturday, Oct. 31 with a 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 1 matinee. Tickets are \$12 general, \$10 seniors, and \$6 for students, call (248) 370-3013 or (248) 645-6666.

The opera explores infidelity, a subject that remains as up to date as it was in 1790. It's a comedy of disguise that involves two young engaged couples and a cynical old man. The older man bets the two younger men that their fiancées will not remain faithful, because, he contends, no women ever do!

The production is a collaboration between Michael Gillespie, the department's associate professor of theater, and John-Paul White, head of Vocal Performance and Gregory Cunningham, instructor of music and conductor of the Pontiac Oakland Symphony.

"Costi is a great comedy as well as a great opera," said Gillespie.

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Daniels from page E1

haven't had my opportunities or who have chosen to stay here," to create meaningful work. He is happy to call the Purple Rose a success.

"It's the culmination of many years of hard work by talented directors, writers, actors and designers," he said.

This past spring Lanford Wilson's "Book of Days" was given its world premiere at the tiny 119-seat Purple Rose.

"For Lanford Wilson to write such a good play for our people... To reach that point in just seven years, when I thought it would take at least 10," Daniels said. "To be able to do that with Midwest writers and the talented people who live here. I'm happy with the artistic success of the theater."

But like other art entrepreneurs, Daniels is aware that keeping the theater going isn't easy.

"I still need to raise half a million a year to keep prices so that people of every income level can come to the theater, theater that's affordable to everyone will always be a problem," he said.

For that reason, Daniels often holds special premieres of his films as fund-raisers for the Purple Rose. Sunday, "Pleasantville" premiered at a benefit at Ann Arbor's historic Michigan Theatre.

In addition to theater, Daniels would like to make movies in Michigan. He is working on screenplays for the Purple Rose's biggest hit, his comedy "Eensam in Da Moonlight" and "Boom Town" and would like to start filming next year.

For Daniels the whole LA

scene can be a trap, but he said, many independent film makers are rallying against the whole coastal attitude.

"Having been in both New York and LA, we're the flyover in the middle. There's a lot of generic white washing of character," he said.

Daniels admits he is envious of what some independent film makers have been doing.

"I want to be doing what Stanley Tucci is doing with 'Big Night' and 'The Impostors.' I look at those guys and I love what they're doing," he said.

And he's sure that he can do everything he wants to do from beautiful Chelsea.

"If I was in LA I couldn't have a theater company," he said.

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