

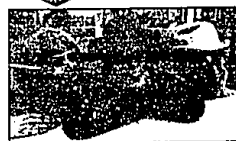
THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



Meet artist Richard Ritter and view his "Suspended Expressions: Visions in Glass" at the Alfred Berkowitz Gallery, University of Michigan-Dearborn. Opening reception 5-8 p.m., discussion with Ritter at 6:30 p.m. Call (313) 593-5400 or (313) 593-5087 for information. Exhibit continues through Sunday, April 30.

SATURDAY



Join Suzie Gouine (left to right), Patrick O'Reilly of Farmington and Jason Smith of Garden City as they sing, dance, romp and play their way through the teachings of the Gospel of Matthew in "Godspell," 8 p.m. at the Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$10-\$13, call (313) 577-2960.

SUNDAY



Estonian conductor Eri Klas conducts the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in a program of two tone-poems "Don Juan" and "Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks," by Richard Strauss, 3 p.m. at Orchestra Hall in Detroit. Tickets \$19-\$50, call (313) 576-5111.



Hot Ticket: The Royal Hanneford Circus, featuring ringmaster Billy Martin, comes to The Palace of Auburn Hills for eight performances, Thursday-Sunday, April 6-9. Tickets \$12, \$8, and \$5. All seats opening night are \$4. Call (248) 645-6666 for show times and ticket information.

TRINITY HOUSE THEATRE

Taking God's silence to task

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Elie Wiesel's only play is one Thomas Malcolm Olson has been wanting to direct for some time. Written by the Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1979, "The Trial of God" opens in a village where nearly all the Jews have been exterminated.

Wiesel speaks from experience in the play, and three actors he's written about the horrors Holocaust victims suffered during World War II. Deported with his family from Transylvania (Romania) at age 15, Wiesel survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald. His mother, father and youngest sister did not. A persistent literary witness to the Holocaust, Wiesel recalls his own struggle with God in the play and several of the books including his memoirs.

"It questions the silence of God when human beings are suffering," said Olson. "Wiesel originally set the play in a village in 1949. We're not doing it in period but more in the French bohemian era of the 1950s because these are timeless questions."

Mark Hammell of Lathrup Village plays Berish, the innkeeper. He and his daughter are the only Jews to survive the brutal raid on Shangorod, a village in Ukraine.

"It's based on a real life event," said Olson. "When Elie was 15 he was a prisoner in Auschwitz when a rabbi took him under his wing. They met everyday to study and then with three other rabbis they put God on trial. Elie was the only witness to this."

In real life, God was found guilty

On Trial: Mark Hammell (Berish) and Guy Snyder (the priest) look for answers from God after nearly all the Jews of a village are exterminated.



Questioning God: Guy Snyder (left back), Mark Hammell, Hannah Riddell, Art Collings (left front), P.W. Henry, and Anessa and Scot Martin put God on trial in the Elie Wiesel play based on a true story.

"The Trial of God"

- **What:** Trinity House Theatre presents the play by Nobel Peace Prize winner, Elie Wiesel.
- **When:** Opens Friday, April 7 and runs weekends to Sunday, April 30 (except for Easter, April 23). Performances 8 p.m., Friday-Saturday and 3 p.m., Sunday.
- **Where:** 30840 W. Six Mile Road, between I-275 and Haggerty, Livonia.
- **Tickets:** \$8-10 Friday-Saturday, \$5 Sunday, call (734) 464-6302.

of crimes against humanity. In the play no verdict is ever reached. Wiesel's own works consistently pose the question, how is it possible not to believe in God after these atrocities?

"You don't have to be religious to enjoy this play," said Olson. "Anyone who's struggled with evil will find resonance with these words. Elie described it as a tragic farce. This is the biggest challenge to find out the humor in these lines and to find out what he means."

Soul searching

Olson's found himself doing a lot of soul searching in the eight weeks since rehearsals began for the play produced by Tim Dunham. More than ever, he believes theater makes a significant contribution in a variety of ways ranging from entertainment to social commentary.

"I'm realizing what an important art this is to be asking these questions," said Olson. "For me personally, the reward is to be participating in the asking of these questions. Trinity House's mission has always been to present brave, truthful and necessary works of art. It's not a play that can be easily dismissed. This is a play that's going to haunt."

Hammell finds himself examining his own beliefs as does his character, Berish, a man without answers after indicting God for his silence in the face of evil.

"It's been a test of Berish's will," said Hammell, a big, burly man who began acting in 1976. "The play doesn't answer any questions but inspires a lot of thought."

P.W. Henry, a Westland resident, plays one of the wandering minstrels who come to town hoping to perform a Purim play. Instead, Berish challenges them to put God on trial. The innkeeper is all too willing to serve as prosecutor but first they must find a defense attorney. That's when Sam, a mysterious stranger, arrives in town.

"We want to perform and get free drinks and food when sudden-

Please see SILENCE, E2

Wiggles give kids the giggles

BY KIMBERLY A. MORTSON
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Barney will have a quartet of special guests wriggling, squiggling, and wagging their way onto the stage of his Musical Castle as the Australian children's group "The Wiggles," comes to Detroit, Thursday-Sunday, April 6-9.

During the April 2000 tour of "Barney's Musical Castle," The Wiggles will perform during intermission at all of the Barney shows at Cobo Arena. The Wiggles will also appear locally at FAO Schwarz in Troy on April 6, at Noodle Kidoodle in Northville on April 7, and Noodle Kidoodle in Rochester Hills on April 8. There is no charge for these performances.

Group

The Wiggles are the most successful children's entertainment group in the history of Australia, performing more than 500 shows a year to sold-out crowds. The group of four Australians and four whimsical, costumed characters combines lives action with audience participation for a giggling good time!

The Wiggles have captured the attention and hearts of children of all ages as they sing and dance to such favorites as "Wake Up Jeff," "Romp Bomp A Stomp," "Can You Point Your Fingers and Do the Twist?" and "D.O.R.O.T.H.Y. (My Favorite Dinosaur)."

The sing-a-longs are performed by Anthony Field, Murray Cook, Greg Page and Jeff Fatt, four men from the Sydney area who are accompanied by costumed characters Dorothy the Dinosaur™, Wags the Dog™, Henry the Octopus™, and Captain Featherword™.

Formed in 1991 by three "mates," Field, Cook and Page, who were studying Early Childhood Education at Macquarie University in Sydney, the group became a foursome after Fatt joined following graduation.

Please see WIGGLES, E2

What: Barney's Musical Castle and The Wiggles will appear at Cobo Arena in Detroit

When: 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., Thursday, April 6; 7 p.m., Friday, April 7; 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Saturday, April 8; 1:30 p.m. and 5 p.m., Sunday, April 9.

Tickets: \$9-25, available at all Ticketmaster outlets, or call (248) 645-6666.

Free public appearances by The Wiggles include: FAO Schwarz at noon Thursday, April 6 (2800 West Big Beaver Road, Troy); 3:30 p.m., Friday, April 7 at Noodle Kidoodle (17783 Haggerty Road, Northville); and 5 p.m., Saturday, April 8 at Noodle Kidoodle (1336 S. Rochester Road, Rochester Hills).



Meet the Wiggles: Australian performers Anthony Field, Murray Cook, Greg Page and Jeff Fatt.

BENEFIT

A PERFECT MATCH: Old rocker pitches in to help new cause

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
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Rock 'n' roll star Marshall Crenshaw grew up in Berkeley within walking distance from the old Berkeley Theatre, a landmark that's still selling candy and soft drinks but no longer showing movies.

Or making popcorn, for that matter. The Berkeley name remains on the marquee for city recognition but the building is now a drug store.

"It's disgusting," said Crenshaw, interviewed over the phone from his home in Brooklyn, N.Y. "It was a real nice theater with a natural echo and comfortable. They used to have two drug stores a



half mile apart (on 12 Mile Road). Now there's one right in the middle." It's no wonder Crenshaw has a great appreciation for historic sites that remain as they were intended, like the Royal Oak Theatre — his next stop in hopes that others can go on.

Crenshaw's band is the headliner of a second-annual benefit concert for the Stewart Francke Leukemia Foundation, on Thursday, April 13, sponsored by General Motors Corp. and aided by the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Crenshaw, who counts "Television Light," "Some-



diagnosed with Leukemia in June 1998. He received a successful stem cell bone marrow transplant from his sister, Kit Reece, months later.

Francke started the foundation to raise money for research and awareness on the importance of bone marrow donors, especially among African

Please see CANCER, E3