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Taylor tradition, and more traditional music. Weavermania will reproduce a set of The Weavers, even duplicate what's said between songs.

While the music of The Weavers remains popular today, folk music is changing thanks to computers and a variety of media which are making the world a smaller place.

"Communication is instant now so we're hearing a lot of music we wouldn't have heard 20 years ago," said Siglin. "There's lots of crossover Irish and African — Zydeco, a black tradition and Cajun, a white tradition."

Early years

"In the early years for The Ark it was grassroots and traditional folk music but it always had roots in tradition. We just keep expanding to encompass more styles. Since The Ark moved in 1984 we've featured more bluegrass and country. We then moved again in 1996 and expanded to blues bands and just about anything but rock."

Over the years the festival, much like The Ark, has spot-

lighted Arlo Guthrie, Donovan, John Prine, Bonnie Raitt, Chet Atkins, Leon Redbone, and Ly Lovett all for one purpose — to sustain the year-round programming at The Ark.

Festival roots

Initially the festival began with a show held at the Power Center for the Performing Arts but soon outgrew the venue. From there it was moved to the Michigan Theater and then to its present location at Hill Auditorium. Downstaged to one show, the festival usually sells out all 4,000 seats.

"I think folk music has just gotten better over the years," said Linda Siglin, a volunteer for The Ark. "Musicians have learned from their predecessors. They listen to more world music, the Celtic sound and have broadened out. Folk music is evolving. I don't know if it should be called folk music anymore but acoustic music."

"I don't care what they call it," said Yarrow. "It's music written from the heart. Folk music still sustains us. It speaks to the best in us."

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these kids," said Kirk Kasperowicz, a Redford police officer. "And we enjoy the productions because it's a way to do something together as an activity."

Families and theater

Families and theater just seem to go together. Just ask Maggie Keenan-Bolger who plays Dorothy. She's been on the stage since age 7. She's now 17 and has already performed in the *Wizard of Oz* on Broadway. That was in 1998 when her brother Andrew was doing *Beauty and the Beast* at the same time in New York.

Keenan-Bolger initially became interested in theater

after older sister Celia took the lead. Since then, Keenan-Bolger's appeared in *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester and in *Turandot* with the Michigan Opera Theatre. She's also done *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the Hillberry Theatre.

"I like the *Wizard of Oz* because it's generally a feel good show," said Keenan-Bolger, a Detroit resident traveling down the yellow brick road with Garretha, the Lion, Darren Pierson (Scarecrow), and Jody Florkowski (Tin Man), all of Redford. Several Redford residents are in the musical including Margaret Winowiecki, who plays Uncle Henry and the Emerald City

Guard, and Alex Mich who's Professor Marvel, and the *Wizard of Oz*. "It gives you a feeling in your heart that you enjoy and it has a decent moral. It's fun to do and watch."

Sarah Wiercioch loves the *Wizard of Oz* as much as the rest of the cast putting on the 2 1/2-hour Broadway version. And like the others Wiercioch, a 12-year-old honor roll student at Our Lady of Good Counsel School, has appeared in numerous productions at the Marquis Theatre in Northville and the Detroit Opera House, and in commercials for Mel Farr, the auto dealer. She also had a part in *Showboat* when it was in Detroit with Tom Bosley. In the *Wizard of Oz*,

Wiercioch plays a Lullaby Girl, Jitterbug, one of the Emerald City's townspeople, and a singing tree.

Hardest part

"The hardest part was learning to do a cartwheel in a skirt when I'm one of the townspeople but the best part is the jitterbug dance," said Wiercioch. "It's the most fun."

That's what mother Susan thinks makes the 7-hour rehearsals on Saturdays and Sundays worthwhile.

"I like it because they're all normal kids, all young kids who want to have fun," said Susan Wiercioch.

Cast sparkles in 'The Glass Menagerie'

The Theatre Guild of Livonia Redford presents Tennessee Williams' classic "The Glass Menagerie" weekends through Sunday, Jan. 28. Performances 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Jan. 26-27, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 29, at the theater, 15138 Beech Daly Road, (1 block south of Five Mile

Road), Redford. Tickets \$12, \$10 seniors/students, call (313) 631-0554.

By PAMELA JOY MCGOWAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Two questions came to mind during the opening scenes of *The Glass Menagerie* stunningly performed by The Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford.

First, is that impeccable Southern accent real? And second, is that an *Observer* newspaper?

Well, the first question and its answer eluded me shortly thereafter because it just seemed so natural that Amanda Wingfield (Jane Bloom-Johnson), in all her neuroses, would speak as though she were a young Southern belle.

I soon forgot to even think about it. And, yes, director Heidi Kelley did confirm that one of the props was in fact our beloved *Observer* newspaper.

The play is narrated by Tom (Lance Abke of Plymouth), Amanda's adult son, based on the memories of his mother, his sister Laura (Diane Aretz of Plymouth), and Jim (John Hicks of Livonia), a gentleman caller that interrupted the cycle of dysfunction in the Wingfield home.

Jane Bloom-Johnson shines as Amanda. Her range of emotions and her stage presence brings to life the lonely, self-obsessed woman teetering on the edge of insanity. Lance Abke performs wonderfully as the frustrated Tom, torn between his responsibility and love for his sister, and the need to escape from his possessive mother.

Diane Aretz also does a good job portraying the fragile Laura. John Hicks, who doesn't make an appearance in the play as Jim until the second act, performed well as the gentleman caller.

Heidi Kelley has done an excellent job putting together her vision of this famous play for us to enjoy.

Pamela Joy McGowan is a Livonia resident who writes about community theater for the *Observer* Newspapers.

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