

THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



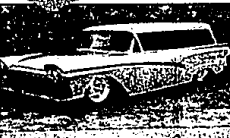
Crystal Nix and Thomas Petiet star in *The Comic Opera Guild's production of John Phillip Sousa's "El Capitan,"* 8 p.m. at the *Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, Ann Arbor.* Tickets \$17, seniors \$15, students & children, \$7, (734) 763-8587.

SATURDAY



Jerzy Semkow conducts the *Detroit Symphony Orchestra* in a concert featuring *Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, "Eroica,"* 8:30 p.m. at *Orchestra Hall in Detroit.* Tickets \$15 to \$52, available at the box office, or call (313) 576-5111.

SUNDAY



The *"Intruder"* will be among the fabulous custom cars on display at the *2001 Detroit Autorama at the Cobo Center in Detroit.* Show hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission \$12.50 adults, \$5 children under age 12. For information, call (248) 650-5560.



Danyelle Bosardet (Belle) and Grant Norman (Beast) in a scene from the *Third National Touring Company of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast,"* playing through Sunday, March 4 at the *Metropolitan Theatre in Detroit.* Tickets \$18-\$22. Performance times 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Call (313) 576-5111.



Bell ringers: Kay French (bottom, left to right), Darcie West, Becky Rowan, Julie Sigler, Sue Trisch, Penny Kindraka, Corrine Kert, Donna Calhoun, Darlene Ebersole (director), Margie Moore, Barbara Erickson, Millie Everson, and Judi Rachwitz, enjoy playing handbells with *Classical Bells.*

The Belles Are Ringing

Top handbell choirs ring joyfully together

By KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER
kwygonik@oe.hometownnews.net

Heavenly, in a word, describes the music created by Classical Bells. Add four of the top handbell choirs in the country, and the resulting sound is five times as joyful.

On Saturday, Classical Bells is hosting the Tenth Annual Tri-State Bronze Invitational Handbell Concert at Highland Park Baptist Church in Southfield. The event will feature Classical Bells and four other handbell choirs from Michigan and Ohio, performing as a massed ensemble under the direction of Margaret Tucker of Houston. The combined group will be ringing more than 300 handbells. Each of the four choirs will present one selection of its own choosing.

"It's a scream, just an action-packed day," said Darlene Ebersole of Canton, who directs the 15-member ensemble of bell ringers. "They're the cream of the crop. We call it the 'Bronze' level, because the bells are made of bronze."

The groups will meet 12:45 p.m. Saturday for an intense rehearsal that ends with a dinner break at 5:45 p.m. Then they will regroup for the concert at 7 p.m.

Guest conductor

Tucker, who composes handbell music and directs choirs all over

the world, was booked two years in advance for this concert. Two of her original works — *Barcarolle*, a Venetian boat song, and *Northern Lights*, a Native American melody — are on the program.

Northern Lights, from the Indian word "Lacqui-parlo," was a melody sung by natives to mourn the loss of their fallen warriors in battle. "Many and great, O God, are thy things — making of earth and sky," "You'll hear the best of tom-toms and other percussion instruments as the work unfolds. Tucker is from South Dakota, and some of her music is influenced by the Native Americans who live there."

"We love Margaret's music; it will be great to work with her, to see her shape and mold together the music," said Ebersole. "Everyone's got their own idea of how the music should sound, a slightly different slant. But we've got to be flexible and do what she says ... and be prepared to spin on a dime."

Each group will come prepared, having practiced the music on the program, which also includes *America the Beautiful*, *Capriccio*, *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, *Ose Shalom* and

Uncommon Adoration.

Several of the works feature solo instruments. Ebersole describes *Ose Shalom* as being a "wonderful Hebrew number, with a clarinet solo."

"Every piece has something special." Classical Bells will perform *Chattanooga Choo-Choo*, complete with train whistle and choreography.

The Tri-State Bronze Invitational was inspired by Vic Kostenko, director of the Ohio Kettering Advent Ringers, who thought it would be a fun idea. For the past

10 years, the invitation has brought together some of the best handbell ensembles from Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. Participation is by invitation only. Classical Bells was invited to audition for the Invitational four years ago, and has participated ever since.

First appearance

This is the Tri-State Bronze Invitational's first appearance in Michigan after nine years in Indiana and Ohio. The groups performing on Saturday — Kettering Advent Ringers, Carillon Choir, The Kalamazoo Ringers,

and Renaissance Ringers — gathered in July at the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers National Director's Seminar in Dayton. They received a standing ovation after performing together.

"We have thoroughly enjoyed being part of this event and are thrilled to bring it to Michigan for the first time," said Ebersole. "We get to share secrets and tips. It's a chance to get together and catch up on what other groups are doing."

Ebersole has been a member of Classical Bells since 1984. "We're like a family. We've played with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and at the Detroit Opera House. You don't get those opportunities as a soloist. I think it's a chance to express myself as a musician. Most of the group members are singers, and play another instrument. It's a talented group of people to make music with."

Group president, Millie Everson of Livonia, a retired voice teacher, agrees.

"It's very challenging musically. It's a dedicated group that works very hard. It's fun to be performing with such a quality group. The Bronze level is the highest level."

She's also looking forward to Saturday's concert. "It's not often that you get to see groups of this caliber playing together at the same time. And it's fun to see what the other groups are doing."

What: The Tri-State Bronze Invitational concert, an annual event showcasing five advanced level handbell choirs en masse, and separately
When: 7 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 24
Where: Highland Park Baptist Church, 28600 Lenox, north of I-696, south of 12 Mile Road, Southfield.
Admission: \$5 suggested donation, for more information, call (734) 425-7851, or visit www.classicbells.com

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

Join your favorite Disney characters for a swinging jungle adventure

By KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER
kwygonik@oe.hometownnews.net

It takes nature roughly a million years to build a jungle, but Calum Pearson, company manager for *Disney's Jungle Adventures on Ice*, gives his guys about 10 hours.

The multi-media, ice skating extravaganza, opening Wednesday, Feb. 28, at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, invites audiences into the jungle with their Disney friends from *The Jungle Book*, *Tarzan* and *The Lion King*.

From the moment you walk into the arena, until the grand finale, you'll be in a world of lush foliage and leafy green jungle vines. A 38-foot, 15,000-pound "tree of life" sets the stage for adventure.

"A mist rolls across the seats and into the seats," said Pearson. "It's a nice, warm atmosphere. Jungle

guides welcome you to the show. We really make the jungle come to life. Every object comes to life, it's quite amazing, everything is three dimensional. Lighting is an integral part."

Amazing feats

The cast of award-winning skaters perform some amazing feats including an acrobatic Spanish web routine.

Tarzan, (Jamie Loper), and Jane, (Natasha Kuchiki) climb a rope 35-foot rope suspended from atop the arena with no safety equipment. Tarzan invites Jane to join him in exploring his world high above the jungle floor. "It's never been done before," said Pearson. The routine premiered as part of the Moscow Circus in the 1960s with one acrobat performing stunts individually above the crowd. Alla

Youkina, a veteran aerialist and choreographer, who began skating at the age of 4, worked with Loper and Kuchiki to master the routine.

"The skaters must learn to breathe together," she said. "Decisions must be made in a split-second without a moment to spare."

Linking the three Disney stories are the jungle, and simple universal themes — we have to grow and learn from our friends and family.

"We joined a talent pool that stretches across the entertainment field," said Pearson.

You'll hear some of your favorite tunes during the show, including Academy Award-winning songs like *You'll Be in My Heart*, *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*, and a re-mastered *Jungle Book* score that inspires numbers like *I Wanna Be Like You* and *The Bare Necessities*.

Creative team

The show's creative team includes choreography by Barry Lether, Please see DISNEY, B2



Adventure: Join Tarzan and Jane as they swing through the jungle in "Disney's Jungle Adventures on Ice."