

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

## Bands battle to keep love of jazz alive

Jonathan Napper and all the musicians and promoters connected to the Battle of the Bands agree — if you want to learn about jazz be at Clarenceville High School in Livonia Sunday, May 6 — or be square.

A fund-raiser for the Michigan Jazz Festival (Sunday, July 15, at Schoolcraft College in Livonia), the Battle will pit veteran Detroit jazz musicians Larry Nazer, Johnny Trudell, George Benson and Tom Saunders and their bands against each other in a real blow-out.

Napper will open the program with the newly formed Clarenceville High School Jazz Band at 2:30 p.m. The 14-member group officially began rehearsals Jan. 22 and already has played at the Celebrate the Arts Festival at Livonia Mall.

That's quite an accomplishment for these young musicians in grades 9-12. "I'm trying to expose them to everything from Latin to swing so they can get a taste of what the whole spectrum of jazz is about," said Napper, Clarenceville High's band director. Napper developed his love for jazz while playing in

**Battle of the Bands**  
What: The bands of Larry Nazer, Johnny Trudell and George Benson, and Tom Saunders demonstrate the versatility of jazz during a concert featuring different styles.  
When: 3 p.m. Sunday, May 6; Clarenceville High School Jazz Band performs at 2:30 p.m.  
Where: Clarenceville High School, 20155 Middlebelt, south of Eight Mile, Livonia.  
Tickets: \$15, call (734) 474-2720 or (248) 459-2454.  
Proceeds go to support the Michigan Jazz Festival Sunday, July 15 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia.



**Dixieland beat:** Tom Saunders brings his Detroit Jazz All Stars to Clarenceville High School for a Battle of the Bands.

the band at Western Michigan University.

"It's a good outlet for my students to hear good live music. Detroit has such a rich history of jazz. There's nothing like hearing music live. Seeing it performed is just as important. Jazz is part of our culture and a true American art form."

"It's history of jazz in the making," adds Midge Ellis, who serves on the Michigan Jazz Festival committee coordinating the battle. "For people who saw Ken Burns' series on jazz on PBS, this is a good example of what jazz is. There are different styles and they play the same tune and then all three jam together. I defy any other kind of music to do that."

"Last year, everybody said it was so much fun. The reason I love it is because it's a good education in jazz and the different styles."

Tom Saunders' Dixieland sounds will surely have the audience dancing at the sides. Most of the members of the Detroit Jazz All Stars — Al Winters, trombone, Commerce Township; Chuck Shermert, piano, St. Claire Shores; Bob Pinterich, drums, Dearborn; Paul Keller, bass, Ypsilanti; and Jim Wyse, clarinet/sax, Livonia — have played with Saunders for years.

"It's happy music," said Saunders.

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**Very special performer:** Emma Dale-Hench (right) and Anne Goodwin rehearse "Don't Cry for Me Argentina," the song Dale-Hench will sing at the VSA Arts Festival.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@oe.homecomm.net

Emma Dale-Hench lights up the minute Anne Goodwin begins playing "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" on the piano. The 17-year-old Franklin High School student is one of more than 160 reasons Southeast Region Committee members like Margaret Hull work each year to put on the VSA arts of Michigan Festival at Wonderland Mall in Livonia. Dale-Hench is one of the vocalists showcased at the annual event that features the musical, dance and theatrical talents of children and adults with disabilities.

Hull, a Birmingham music therapist, will bring 90 of her special education students from Pontiac Schools to the festival Friday-Saturday, May 4-5 in the Food Court. Come have lunch and watch as children and adults show-off skills honed in arts therapy classes throughout the school year. On Friday, May 4, Hull's choir from Pontiac Northern High and Washington and Madison Middle schools perform a 40-minute set of pop, rock, rhythm and blues at 10:45 a.m. Her Kennedy Sisters vocal group from the Kennedy Center follow with Shania Twain's "You're Still the One." Still later The Young Beats from W.H.R.C. Elementary and The Rhythmettes from Harrington Elementary do Beatles tunes. Then at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 5, Hull's pride and joy, the Boyz II Boyz duo from Pontiac Northern and Madison take to the stage to perform Backstreet Boys and Motown hits.

In addition to Hull's groups the festival spotlights vocal and dance from Oakland Schools' artistic program, drumming and dance from Poe Developmental in Detroit, and chimes by the Schoolcraft Players of Redford and Arbor House, Dearborn Heights. Hands-on art activities and a touring art exhibit round out the activities. Sales of t-shirts, featuring a giraffe drawn by Kennedy Center student Denka Thomas, will help fund the committee's grant program and festival.

"The excitement just abounds. The festival is something the students look forward to," said Hull, a music therapist with Pontiac Schools since 1989. "Music in general feeds your soul. It relates to something inside you. It makes you feel good. You want to participate with the group. We stress the process, the experience of learning how to perform in a group, how to pronounce the words more clearly."

Hull's dedication to her students is one of the reasons she was named VSA arts of Michigan Teacher of the Year. She will receive the award at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival at Western

### A Celebration of Arts Ability

What: The Southeast Region Committee of VSA arts of Michigan showcases the musical, dance and theatrical talents of more than 160 children and adults with disabilities at a free festival featuring performances, hands-on art activities and a visual art exhibit. For more information, call Connie Loft at FAR Conservatory in Birmingham (248) 646-3347.  
When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, May 4 and noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 5.  
Where: Wonderland Mall, 23859 Plymouth Road at Middlebelt, Livonia.

Michigan University Friday, May 11. VSA arts of Michigan is an affiliate of VSA arts (formerly known as Very Special Arts) which was founded by Jean Kennedy Smith in conjunction with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Since 1974, VSA arts has provided programs in music, dance, drama and the visual arts to enrich the lives of people with disabilities.

"I was totally in disbelief when they told me about the award," said Hull. "It makes you realize that you're doing the right thing and that you're respected by colleagues."

Lora Frankel took a few minutes from her busy day as executive director of VSA arts of Michigan to talk about Hull's accomplishments. Frankel is currently in the midst of renovation work on the headquarters shared with Detroit Dance Collective downtown. Last year's move from Southfield will enable VSA arts of Michigan to offer classes in clay, and eventually dance.

"We look for someone who's an excellent teacher in the arts and makes great contributions to the arts for children with disabilities and to VSA," said Frankel. "Margaret has done a wonderful job as co-coordinator of the Southeast festival for many years and made wonderful contributions to children in music education in Pontiac."

Cindy Babcock worked with Hull on the Southeast Region Committee and on the festival for more than 10 years. She noted Hull's never missed a vote to award grants for arts therapy programs in the region. Among this year's recipients were Neil Reid High School in Clinton Township, Greenfield Elementary in Beverly Hills and Camp Phoenix, a hospice program for children through the Henry Ford Health System.

"What we do is so important to making arts essential to people with disabilities," said Babcock, president of VSA arts of Michigan. A registered dance/movement therapist, Babcock's students at Keller Middle School in Royal Oak will perform 10:15 a.m. Friday. "The festival is so special, so unique. It's the only festival in the state located in a mall and exposes the public to what our students can do."

## A Very Special Festival

### Performers celebrate arts abilities



Margaret Hull

Emma Dale-Hench is excited and a little nervous about singing at the festival because she won't know many faces in the crowd. But that's one of the reasons for putting on the festival. Other than performing with the 70-member Franklin High School Choir, Dale-Hench has few opportunities to showcase her talents in public. Dale-Hench's learning disabilities and muscular dystrophy leave her unable to participate in activities like her peers do. Her love of singing and studies of opera history are two things which can bring a smile to her face.

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**Boyz II Boyz:** Margaret Hull works with Brandon Walker (left) and Marlon Smith on the Motown hit "Working My Way Back to You."

STAFF PHOTO BY JIM JACOBSE

### PUBLIC ART

## Mosaic tells colorful story of school days, team work

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER  
lchomin@oe.homecomm.net

Students will enjoy the glass mosaic at North Farmington High School for many years to come thanks to graduating senior Ilse Kaplan.

Public art defines and documents a culture. Decades from now the large-scale work will continue to provide pleasure for the viewer while telling a story about what went before. Kaplan's story recounts her school days and begins by depicting a basketball player, musical notes, theater masks, a stack of books, and art palette, and ends with the words "No other road, no other way, no day but today" from the musical Rent.

But there's no need to worry about time running out for the mosaic, the 85,000 glass tiles filling the 9-by-17 foot wall will permanently color the lobby.

"It's something I can leave behind for the school," said Kaplan, who plans to attend the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in fall.

Arbor in fall.

Even though it was Kaplan who proposed the idea in March, it took 100 students to create the mosaic over four days. The completed work will be unveiled to the public during an open house Saturday, May 5.

"I did preliminary sketches and then to scale," said Kaplan. "It took two weeks to get the mosaic colored in on 4-by-8-foot panels of wood. We went to a glass supply store in Lansing to buy glass in sheets which were then cut into strips, which was then chipped by students into small squares."

### Team work

Hope Palmer was responsible for encouraging students to help with the project. She couldn't be happier with the results. The school now has a stunning piece of public art and Kaplan became a winner in more ways than one. After visiting Lansing to purchase glass, Kaplan created a smaller mosaic featuring a female figure. The work won first place in the youth division of the Detroit Glass Art Competition currently on exhibit in Lansing.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BARBER

**School spirit:** Tom Szmecanyi (left), Karen Feder, Ilse Kaplan, Gail Rosenbloom-Kaplan, Hope Palmer and 100 North Farmington High School students created this mosaic for the lobby.

"Ilse is doing independent study where you follow your dreams and different avenues and came up with the idea for the mosaic," said Palmer, art department

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