

Thursday, August 2, 2001

THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY

Guest conductor Peter Oundjian leads the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in "Best of Baroque," featuring DSO concertmaster Emmanuelle Boisvert, 8 p.m. at the Meadow Brook Music Festival. Tickets \$10-\$56, (313) 576-5111 or (248) 645-6666.



Emmanuelle Boisvert

SATURDAY



Local blues musician Robert Jones performs and talks about the origins of this truly American music during Celebration of Emancipation, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Greenfield Village in Dearborn, (313) 271-1620.

SUNDAY



Bill Hildebrandt hosts a benefit performance featuring eight local comedians including JR Remick of Westland, 8 p.m. at Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase. Tickets \$10, call (734) 996-9080.



The St. Andrew's Society of Detroit presents the 152nd Annual Highland Games 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 4 at Greenmead Historical Park, 20501 Newburgh Road (at 8 Mile Road), Livonia. Admission \$10. No charge for children age 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Call (248) 593-5064, or visit www.highlandgames.com

Graceful: Nadanta dancers, Gunjan Malik (front) of Bloomfield Hills, Neha Gupta of Grosse Isle, Jaya Badhwar of Riverview and Rutvee Desai of Troy strike a pose.

Celestial Enlightenment

Nadanta dancers retell the life and teachings of Buddha



BY SHARON DARGAY

STAFF WRITER

The women teasingly drew veils beneath their kohl-rimmed eyes and twirled across the floor in a blur of pastel, spangles and gold. Their layered dresses, all tulie, silky and studded with sequins, shimmered and floated along with each move.

Portraying enchantresses, they posed and stepped gracefully, creating an exotic tableau during a rehearsal in the Southfield Civic Center Pavilion.

Shiksha
What: Nadanta, an Indian dance troupe, performs a full-length dance-drama, *Shiksha*, based on the Four Noble Truths taught by Buddha.
When: 3 and 7 p.m., Saturday; 3 p.m., Sunday; 2 p.m., Sept. 30
Where: Shows this weekend are at Meadow Brook Theatre on the Oakland University College campus, Rochester Hills. The group performs next month at the Michigan Theater, in Ann Arbor.
Tickets: \$17, \$27 and \$47. Call (313) 565-4301.
Four Noble Truths: Life is suffering. Cravings and attachments are the source of suffering. There is a way to overcome suffering. That way is the Eightfold Path: Right understanding, thinking, speech, attitude, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.

In rehearsal: Choreographer and teacher, Chaula Thacker, fine-tunes a part of Nadanta's dance-drama, *Shiksha*.

founder of Nadanta, a Southfield-based Indian dance troupe. "Buddha's philosophy is one thing. How to show it in dance is another. We're doing it all with movement and dance."

Minimal dialogue connects some scenes, although music, dance and costume convey the story line.

"When we do a dance drama, we like to show classical, folk, even creative dances. Some are ritual dances," Thacker said. "We start with a purely classical dance. Toward the end, when we show (Buddha's) eight-fold path, we literally have eight women dancing with eight layers of saris."

A full cast, including Thacker's dance students and Nadanta's more experienced ensemble performers, will present *Shiksha: The Teachings of Buddha* at 3 p.m., Sunday, in Meadow Brook Theatre on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. The ensemble alone will perform two shows, at 3 p.m., and 7:30 p.m., on Saturday. Tickets are \$17, \$27 and \$47, available by calling (313) 565-4301.

Raja Jaikumar, a Farmington Hills resident and a manufacturing engineer for General Motors, plays Buddha. He discovered Nadanta through a friend while searching for a tangible link to his native India.

"I see it as a way to uphold my culture in the little way that I can. If you don't, you'll lose it," he said.

"This is probably the most challenging production ever done because this topic is so widespread. Everyone knows about Buddha, but it's a challenge to present it in a dance way. I've never seen a dance drama based on the teachings of Buddha."

Although the troupe is non-sectarian and secular, a member wrote to the Dalai Lama about the show. The Tibetan spiritual leader sent his blessings.

"We don't support or oppose any religion," Jaikumar noted. "This is purely a cultural or artistic show."

Please see NADANTA, B2



Eye candy: Costuming creates a rainbow of color and texture as dancers step into a folk routine.

ATTRACTION

The New Detroit Science Center
What: Newly remodeled center houses hands-on exhibits, a planetarium, IMAX Dome Theatre, traveling science displays, learning laboratories for demonstrations in life science, electricity and magnetism, mechanics and motion, classrooms, a children's gallery with science-based play activities to help young children develop motor skills, a cafe and gift shop.
Hours: 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturday, and 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday.
Location: 5020 John R., at Warren in Detroit's Cultural Center, (313) 577-8400.
Parking: The Detroit Science Center lot is located at Farnsworth and John R. The fee is \$3.
Admission: \$7 adults; \$4, senior citizens; \$5, children, age 2-17.
Membership: All members are admitted free to permanent exhibit areas and receive free or discounted admission to the IMAX Dome Theatre and Digital Dome Planetarium. Free subscription to newsletter, discounts at gift shop and invitations to members-only events.
Membership levels: Student and senior citizen, \$25; individual, \$45; individual plus guest, \$55; family, \$70; family plus two guests, \$90; premium family plus (everything free), \$150.

'Awesome' Science Center redo draws crowds

BY SHARON DARGAY

STAFF WRITER

Catherine Waller of Rochester Hills didn't plan to buy a new Detroit Science Center membership last week. Neither did Heidi Butcher of Taylor.

"I was here a long time ago and it wasn't that impressive," Butcher recalled. "And then I found out they were refurbishing and figured that once it opened, we'd take a look."

But Butcher couldn't wait. Discovering that Bill Nye, host of a popular television show, *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, would perform at a members' only event in the expanded center, she bought a year-long family membership sight unseen.

Waller, whose two boys also watch Nye's show, did the same.

"He's their hero," Waller explained. She signed up for a membership on the spot at the center's members-only Snook Peck Preview Party, one of several events that brought metro Detroiters into the newly refurbished and expanded facility last week.

"It's been a long time since I've been here," Waller noted, watching her sons spin disks on a turntable in a hands-on exhibit about centrifugal force.

"I used to come here when I was a kid. It doesn't look like anything I remember. It's awesome now."

She and hundreds of others who attended a members' preview last week became re-acquainted with the 25-year-old museum in Detroit's Cultural Center. Teachers from throughout



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLNERSKY

Seeing the light: Nathan Fouratt, 8, Farmington Hills, checks out an electricity display during a members' preview at The New Detroit Science Center in Detroit.

Please see CENTER, B2