

Jazz from page C1

performance opportunity. The clinics and jam sessions help educate them.

"We have a handout for kids and encourage them to play and we tell them what things to practice to improve their improvisation skills, also who they should listen to. In jazz, that's probably the most important thing."

Pierson knows the importance of educating musicians at an early age. He taught music in Dearborn Schools for 35 years before retiring and becoming executive director of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association. Co-founder of the jazz studies program at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Pierson directed the band at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland in 1973 and the first Montreux Detroit Jazz

Festival (now the Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival) 22 years ago.

"Every time it's a different set of kids for the improv clinic," said Pierson. "The challenge is you have kids in the audience who've never improvised and those who have. And you never know if there could be a Charlie Parker or Dizzy Gillespie out there who's never improvised so you try to get them to try."

Bill Baxtresser can't forget the first time he soloed in one of the festival's jam sessions four years ago. Baxtresser plays trumpet with the Farmington Harrison High School Jazz Band as well as the Detroit Symphony Civic Orchestra and Civic Jazz Band. Harrison's performance, *Roots*, Monday, Sept. 3 on the Abscure Waterfront Stage, marks the fourth time Baxtresser will perform in the festival.

form in the festival.

"It opened my eyes to many different possibilities to what I'd been doing with improvisation," said Baxtresser who recently returned from a jazz camp in Lake Placid, N.Y. "And every performance you do is an educational experience. It's basically like a professional job. And playing in the festival is the most exposure we're going to receive for the Farmington Harrison Band."

Bittersweet

The group's performance is bittersweet for Mark Phillips. This is his final time directing the Farmington Harrison High School Jazz Band. He takes over as band director at West Bloomfield High School this fall.

"The kids are really excited about it," said Phillips, band director at Harrison for 21 years. "It's kind of special because I won't be back. It's our final farewell. We learned new songs for the festival including Steve Spiegel's *Bar Cues for Malters*. It's a difficult time chart with alternating rhythms. I'm looking forward to having a lot of the kids doing improv solos."

"It's kind of an honor (to be in the jazz festival) because you have to do well at the state jazz festival," Phillips continued. "It's such a big venue and for them to be on stage with so many famous national and international musicians who are a part of it. To play at that festival is something they remember for the rest of their lives."

The Rochester West Middle

School Jazz Band is one of the bands who vied for the honor of performing in the festival by earning high marks at Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association competitions held throughout the school year. Composed of eighth-graders, the 26-piece big band rehearses every day. It is one of two jazz groups Bob Kroll directs at West Middle School.

"A few of the kids had older brothers and sisters who performed at the festival so they had ambitions," said Kroll who grew up in Westland and graduated from Wayne Memorial High School. "The MSBOA process motivates them to perform well. They set a goal and worked towards achieving it. They made a commitment to themselves and the whole group. It pushed them."

It raised the barre of their standards."

A professional saxophonist with Take Five, Kroll believes, like Pierson, that experience and listening to jazz is essential in developing young musicians.

"It's especially important for them to be able to see all those performers," said Kroll who's taught music at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp since 1989. "Unlike 30 years ago, it's tough to see jazz performers, especially at that young an age."

"And it's important for them to perform in the festival. It's about the culture," continued Kroll who's played with The Centurians, Temptations and Four Tops. "It's about being a performing musician."

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community scholarships and organizations like VSA arts, which provides music and arts therapies programs for children and adults with disabilities.

VSA arts of Michigan

"We saw how art helped develop Katie Wise's abstract thinking," said Virginia Debenham Rodgers, arts council vice president. "It just goes to show that art can go a long way to help people with disabilities."

The art fair and council helps Birmingham Groves High School students as well. This year Carly Hoffman, Michael Denon and Robbie Madvin will exhibit their work for free thanks to sponsorship from the Franklin Arts Council.

"I'm excited about the three students from Birmingham Groves High School showing their art," said Kerr. "We started sponsoring a student last year for the 20th anniversary. It's important having the young kids. It's a way for them to get exposure and the opportunity to share their work."

Whimsical works

George Landino has been sharing his work with Art on the Green crowds for nearly all of its 21 years. An art teacher for 42

years in Birmingham Public Schools, Landino will bring whimsical, tongue-in-cheek works focusing on everything from cowboys and Indians to animals and sportsmen. One especially close to his heart is of a fisherman. Landino created the wooden sculpture in memory of his father. It features a man asleep in a boat while a whole school of fish swim under his line.

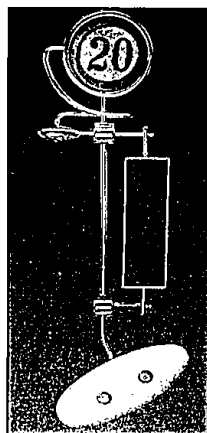
Landino will also bring boxes topped with themes ranging from dancers to cats, dogs and other animals.

"I like Art on the Green because it's a one day show, a rally before kids go back to school," said Landino who will do 11 shows this year including *Only the Best*, a national drawing exhibit Nov. 17-18 at the University of Michigan Truck and Field House in Ann Arbor.

"They really have good artists at Art on the Green," quipped Landino. "It entices to art connoisseurs who want something special."

Custom design

Of course, one of the "good artists" Landino is talking about is Adam Shirley, a former student of his at Birmingham



Hard edge: This contemporary brooch is by Adam Shirley.

Groves High School. In fact, Shirley created his first piece of jewelry in Landino's class. Today, Shirley owns a custom

design studio on old Woodward in Birmingham.

Shirley will only do two shows this year because requests for his wedding and engagement rings keep him busy working 14 hour days. He'll bring a wide array of earrings, bracelets, necklaces, brooches, and rings to Art on the Green.

Precious metals

Shirley describes the gold, silver and platinum pieces as "contemporary, hard edge, industrial designs with matte finishes."

"I haven't done Art on the Green before but I lived just down the road and heard about it," said Shirley who received his bachelor of fine arts degree from Center for Creative Studies.

It's that reputation for offering quality art that keeps the crowds as well as artists coming back year after year.

"Our art show is like being in a candy store," said Kerr. "You can't decide what to buy."

For information about the 57th annual Franklin Labor Day Round-up and parade, call the Franklin Community Association at (248) 865-9382.

Expressions from page C1

Weber, pointing to a portrait of a woman, the colors in the woman's hair and face mirror the marbled paper it's painted on.

"This one was done after squirting paint on paper from a bottle. It's good discipline and develops creativity."

Weber's love of cars can be seen in several of the paintings including *Packard Brass*. The work was featured in the 1999 Michigan Water Color Society exhibition. The gold hardware literally glows on this close-up painting of a headlamp from a 1910 Packard.

Longtime car lover

Weber has a way with cars. And no wonder. He worked as a clay modeler at Ford's Design Center in Dearborn for 20 years.

Trees and sky reflect in the hood of a 3.8 litre Jaguar from the early 1980s. A painting of a late 1950s D type Jaguar was exhibited in the Eye on the Classics Show at the Ford Estate in Grosse Pointe.

But there's more. A Shire colt rests in the fields at Domino's

Farms in Ann Arbor. According to Weber, the muscular beauties were originally developed in England to carry knights and their heavy armor and then later used as draft horses.

Variety of subjects

Weber paints a range of subjects from street musicians in New Orleans to a Ukrainian colliet appearing with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra. They're all here in his lower level studio where he's currently working on a commission featuring 1981 and 1991 Morgans, a handmade British car.

"Over the 19 years I've been doing fine art, I've gotten a lot longer and have more knowledge about working with pigments, how they work physically, how they work with water, will they lay over another color?"

It's apparent by looking at the paintings, Weber's having no trouble mastering the transparent, opaque and staining colors.

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call arts reporter Linda Ann Chomin at (734) 953-2145 or send e-mail to lchomin@ec.homecomm.net

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