

Thursday, May 16, 2002



HEIDI HEPLER

Duo finds their voice in New York City

It is a dark, crisp spring night as I lean out the window and onto the rusty, weathered fire escape. Our American flag, attached to the railing with twine and duck tape, sways gently on a passing breeze. Our 80-year-old apartment building is in the New York City borough of Queens. We can lean out of our windows onto the fire escape and see the busy New York city skyline. The exquisite profile of the Empire State Building glows in the distance with red, white and blue lights as it has since Sept. 11.

The Twin Towers, once in our daily view, would illumine the horizon during certain sunsets that painted the evening sky pink, red and orange. The setting sun reflected off the majestic twins creating a glorious rainbow "color-show." Our mild winter was a gift for recovery and clean-up crews at Ground Zero.

Growing up in Livonia, I enjoyed snowball fights, wonderful summer days and our glorious

Heidi Hepler & Michele Ramo
What: In Concert at Kerrytown Concert House, 415 Forth Ave., Ann Arbor
When: 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, May 17-18
Tickets: Rows 1-2, \$25; rows 3-5, \$15 rows 3-5; general seating, \$10, students \$5. Call (734) 769-2599 to reserve tickets and pick-up at the door. No credit cards. Visit www.kerrytown.com/concert for more information.
■ **New albums available in June**
Felicitia - voice-guitar duo of original songs
Full Moon Above New York City - features Ramo on violin with piano, bass and drums
Web site: www.RamoMusic.com (under construction)
E-mail: HeidiRamo@aol.com. For booking information, call (212) 539-3873

house for more information. Who would have guessed our paths were to cross in Detroit. We began working together in 1994, and were married the same year. After enjoying a busy musical life in the Detroit area, and with numerous overseas tours under our belt, we relocated to New York City in the fall of 1999.

We have been on a busy ride - performing, writing, recording, touring, and schlepping gig stuff on subway trains. The experience has tested our physical and mental endurance, satisfied desires and fueled creativity. Life has a way of putting you where you need to be at a certain time, a way of gathering people and like minds together to help one another along the way, giving you signs that your hard work and determination are paying off.

Please see DUO, B2



In New York: Former Livonia resident Heidi Hepler-Ramo and her husband, Michele "Mick" Ramo make music.

A scary family affair



Special effects: Angela Ransdell (back) of Highland and John Anton (front) of Novi, watch as Rochelle Kneisley of Livonia applies "blood" to clothing.

Local couple balances family life and filmmaking

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

Movie making has become a way of life for a local couple with three young boys who don't seem to let Hollywood parties and celebrity awe affect their modest lifestyles.

Todd and Tommy Brunswick live in a Canton townhouse raising their 2, 4- and 6-year-old sons and seem like the average suburban couple until they talk about their jobs, producing, writing and

filming horror and psychological thriller movies pushing them into the L.A. spotlight rubbing shoulders with television and movie stars.

Their second film, *Lurking Terror*, will have its world premiere at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., Thursday, May 23 in the Maple Art Theatre in Bloomfield Hills. Reminiscent of the old days when double features were the norm, after the 10 p.m. showing the theater will run another Brunswick movie, *Biker Zombies*.

Todd, 32, and Tommy, 31, were thrust into the film making business after Tommy's business selling educational books for Dorling Kindersley Family Learning came to an end. The company was purchased and home sales were eliminated.

Right around the same time, Todd found himself out of work following a vacation from his job as media director at a Livonia family-run business. He planned to take time off to start writing a movie and it turned out his department had been axed.

"That threw us full-time into filmmaking," explained Tommy, short for Thomasita. "It was a sink or swim kind of thing."

Before they formed Crossbow 5, the couple came to the job with years of experience working on the commercial end of filmmaking - mostly creating commercials and industry and corporate videos.

"We always wanted to make our own movie," explained Todd.

Their first attempt, *Biker Zombies*, was released April 30 and is available for sale on the Dead Alive Productions label or by going to the Internet site, www.amazon.com.

Todd wrote the film in three days and it took only nine months from conception to the sale of the movie.

More importantly, it marked the beginning of their lifetime goal to be filmmakers.

"Even when we started dating (in June 1994) we said we were going to make a movie," said Tommy adding that they both graduated from Livonia's Churchill High School.

They now have three films, *Biker Zombies*, *Lurking Terror* and *Dumping Ground* slated for the Cannes Film Market, which runs in conjunction with the Cannes Film Festival. The movies will be made available for distribution worldwide at the market.

Todd and Tommy won't fly to Paris for the event, but their agents are there through May 26. The Brunswicks have their own special engagement to attend, May 23 with the local release of *Lurking Terror*, a horrific story about a young woman named Betty (played by Angela Ransdell) who has a multitude of personal troubles, including a slim escape from police after she and her boyfriend held-up a party store.

She tries to hide in a backwater farming community where the townsfolk are prisoners of an evil curse that dates back to 1805. On dark nights, when the fog rises from the forest, a creature known as the Evil appears with an insatiable bloodlust.

Over the last 200 years, residents have figured out a gruesome means of satisfying the Evil. The young heroine is forced to battle her captors and escape the Evil.

"Tommy and I grew up with the drive-ins in the late 70s and early 80s and this is an ode to the drive-in movies," explained Todd who wrote the script and directed the filming.

"It is a movie that you go into thinking it's a creature movie and you realize the people are the creatures," he said.

Tommy credits her dad, Dr. Rudy Hatfield, a clinical psychologist, for nurturing her love for movies when she was a child.

"My favorite thing growing up was going to movies," Tommy said. "If my mom was working nights, my dad would take me and my little brother to the drive-in."

Years later, Hatfield is realizing his dream of acting with bit parts in his daughter's movies. He

■ 'It is a movie that you go into thinking it's a creature movie and you realize the people are the creatures.'

Todd Brunswick
—director, 'Lurking Terror'



Scary: Cassidy Harlo poses for a publicity poster shot for *Lurking Terror*, a locally-produced film.

Please see FAMILY, B2

Landis colors her world with jazz and Brazilian beats

BY CINDY COOK
SPECIAL WRITER

The name Sheila Landis probably rings a bell. That's because Landis is one of the most lauded performers in Michigan. She's won award after award from area organizations, and has played venues from Snuggly to St. Ignace.

The jazz vocalist has been heard at the Montreaux Detroit Jazz Festival, the Michigan Tastefest, and the Birmingham Jazz Fest, among many others. Landis is featured on releases in Japan and the UK, and has just celebrated the twentieth anniversary of her record label, appropriately entitled SheLan Records.

And she has a day job. Landis is also a medical transcriptionist at St. Joseph Mercy in Pontiac, at

Woodward Avenue and Square Lake Road (on an extended part-time basis, she adds), a job she has held for 13 years.

It's music that's at the core of Landis' existence though. She and musical partner Rick Matle, their guitarist and producer, are very involved in performing and recording, as well as being fierce Detroiters.

Even a place like New York (which Landis has only visited twice) couldn't pull them away from their home turf ("So hyper you just get tired," as Landis puts it). Landis and Matle prefer doing what they do in their own backyard to anywhere else.

These days, the duo is down to a Latin beat, with Brazilian music taking center stage. The recently issued CD, *Colors of Brazil*, full of bossa



Sheila Landis

Musicians reach out

The Musicians Outreach of Michigan (MOM) officially began conducting musical visits to cancer centers, including Karmanos Cancer Institute and the University of Michigan, this month.

The visitation program operates under the sponsorship of the National Bone Marrow Transplant Link, MOM, and the Karmanos and University of Michigan Patient Services.

MOM says that the responses they've received from musicians so far has been very good. They planned to start with 15-20 regional artists and expand from there, having them

Please see LANDIS, B2

Please see MUSICIANS, B3