

Art work



Artist of the month: Sofia Taj shows her watercolor and oil paintings of flowers and Indian villages through Saturday, June 29, in the Livonia Civic Center Library Fine Arts Gallery, 32777 Five Mile, East of Farmington. For more information, call (734) 466-2536.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open June 14

THE BOURNE IDENTITY

This is the story of a man, salvaged, near death, from the ocean by the crew of an Italian fishing boat. When he recuperates, the man suffers from total amnesia. He is completely without identity or background...but does possess a range of extraordinary talents in fighting, linguistic skills and self-defense that speaks of a dangerous past. He sets out on a desperate search for the identity of the initially rebellious Marletto discover who he really is, and why he is being pursued by assassins. Stars Matt Damon, Franka Potente, Chris Cooper, Clive Owen, Julia Stiles, Adelwale Akinnuyiye-Agabaje, Brian Cox, Judy Parfitt. Directed by Doug Liman. (Universal Pictures)

SCOOBY-DOO

This first-ever live-action adaptation of the beloved and long-running animated series catches up with Scooby-Doo and the Mystery Inc. gang as they meddle their way into a bona fide mystery that leads them into murky and possibly supernatural waters. Stars Freddie Prinze Jr., Sarah Michelle Gellar, Matthew Lillard, Linde Cardellini, Rowan Atkinson. Directed by Raja Gosnell. (Warner Bros.)

Scheduled to open June 21

CHERISH

Zoo Adler is a 20-something love-starved animator who spends countless hours listening to KJCH-Cherish radio, losing herself in a syrupy romantic fantasy of

1970s and 80s pop songs. After a mysterious car accident in which a policeman is hit and killed, Zoe is unfairly charged with the crime. Incarcerated in the electronic bracelet program, Zoe repeatedly tries to escape her apartment. Each attempt brings another visit from her parole officer Daly. Ironically, this relationship allows both of them to grow as they fall in love. Zoe sheds her rose colored glasses and becomes her own superhero after she discovers the real cause of the accident. Featured players include Robin Tunney, Nora Dunn, Jason Priestley, Brad Hunt, Lindsay Brouse, and Liz Phair. Directed by Finn Taylor. (Fine Line) Rated R

WINDTALKERS

Based on historical events, the story tells of a unit of about 450 Navajo radio men who use a derivative of their Native American language to encrypt radio messages in the Pacific Theater during World War II. The code, indecipherable to the Japanese, and the code talkers are credited with turning the tide of several key battles, including Iwo Jima. Featured among the cast are Nicolas (Family Man) Cage, Christian (The Contender) Slater, Mark (You Can Count On Me) Ruffalo and Adam (Mystery, Alaska) Beach. Veteran action director John Woo helms the project, marking his first since completing Mission: Impossible 2 in 2000. (MGM/UA) Rated R

EDE: A success story in dance?

Dance isn't a lucrative business. Times are difficult. The economy is down. Arts organizations are struggling. Doom and gloom. As artistic director of a dance company, I recognize that my art form is usually on the lowest rung of the financial support ladder. So how has Eisenhower Dance Ensemble achieved success despite the odds?



Laurie Eisenhower

EDE, now nearing completion of its eleventh season, has a full schedule of performances and touring, pays its dancers better than any company in the state, has a strong board of directors and administrative staff, and artistically one-ups itself with every performance. The company has traveled throughout the Midwest and to Arizona, Missouri, Virginia, Washington D.C., St. Petersburg Russia, and in 1999 made its New York City debut. The dancers rehearse five days a week and boast a 38-40 week contract.

The company, which started with an annual budget of approximately \$50,000, will have

revenue of nearly \$350,000 this year. How did we achieve this success? I asked our executive director, Maury Okun, what he thought was the key to the company's success. He said it had to do with me having both right-brain and left-brain capabilities. Since I couldn't find my keys this morning maybe I shouldn't comment on this, but organizing and planning is a vital part of what I do as an artistic director. Finding the balance between this and the artistic side is tough. It's one reason that many choreographers free-lance instead of running their own companies.

Maury Okun also attributes our success to EDE's artistic product, which is considered accessible, visual, and even entertaining for the 21st century audience. We pride ourselves on our versatile repertory, which includes works by local and internationally known choreographers. We spend time working with theaters and arts councils in developing programs appropriate to each community we visit.

As a repertory dance company, we strive for exciting and provocative programs; yet, product alone cannot generate success. EDE has a strong board of directors and some additional key supporters. These people

have seen us through good times and bad with their energy, their intelligence and their resources. The administrative staff at EDE is smart and efficient. Our company manager, Anne Bak Marine, does the work that it would take three "normal" people to do.

The director of our EDE Center for Dance, Francesca Pileci, has built our Rochester Hills facility into an important component of our operation. Opened by EDE in 1995, the Center serves as our base for community outreach and education programs. Enrollment has increased steadily, contributing to the operating budget of the company.

Of course, you can't talk about a successful dance company without talking about the dancers. Regional companies often suffer from an ever-changing roster, continually losing good dancers to "brand-name" or big-city companies. The talented dancers of EDE have committed themselves to our company, showing a devotion that goes beyond the dance studio. The artistic growth of the company could not have been achieved without this loyalty.

Success? Someone once told

me that you need at least two of three ingredients to achieve it—talent, hard work and luck. Luck hasn't played too much part in this organization but hard work and talent have. Diligence combined with some excellent business and public relations savvy has helped the company to maximize its limited resources.

As for the future, I'm certainly optimistic. After 11 years, our success has given me confidence in our artistic and administrative abilities. I've learned to stay focused on the positive and keep the big picture in mind. Nevertheless, I think it's important that Eisenhower Dance Ensemble does not rest on its laurels. We must continually search for new ideas, new partnerships and new trends.

Laurie Eisenhower is artistic director of the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble and professor of dance at Oakland University in Rochester. She is one of the guest columnists appearing in a series that introduces Observer & Eccentric readers to the people behind the institutions and organizations in the arts community. On June 20, Eisenhower writes about choosing a dance school.

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