

PROPOSAL A

FROM PAGE B1

munities, I'm pessimistic how much will come down to culture. I'm also concerned about contributions, grants and ticket sales, how will it affect people who make contributions?

Jennifer Tobin has the same concerns as executive director of the Plymouth Community Arts Council so she's been talking to local officials about distributing the money. The non-profit organization depends on individual and corporate contributions as well as grants from the state to present exhibitions, concerts and classes. If Tobin receives the new money, she has plans to institute outreach programs like "Art Van Gogh" to take art activities to the parks and kids. The van was in the drawing stage long before Proposal K.

"Of course I support it. Why wouldn't I? The money will be used for the arts for the big 17 but it's questionable at the local level," said Tobin. "The fear is when someone reads (in the newspaper) you get a grant from the state they figure you don't need local money. With Proposal K, we're concerned the contributions will dry up as well as grants from Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs."

MORE CONCERNS

Evelyn Orbach shared similar concerns as artistic director of the Jewish Ensemble Theatre, a professional company based in West Bloomfield. Like the Plymouth Community Arts Council, JET survives on individual and corporate contribution as well as MCCA grants to present its theater season and outreach productions that teach children about the end results of bullying, name calling and hate.

"I am thrilled that the proposal to support the arts bolsters the major institutions but I'm concerned the mid-size and small art organizations are only partially included if at all," said Orbach. "It's difficult for mid-size organizations like JET because of the lower level funding available. Proposal K stands little chance of affecting us positively. I urge communities to make sure deserving arts organizations get a piece of that."

Canton Township Supervisor Thomas Yack promises local arts organizations that Proposal K money would go for cultural programming. He said Canton has already invested in recreational and leisure services, having built the Summit on the Park recreation center several years ago.

Yack has a unique perspective on Proposal K. When it was brought up four years ago, he was a member of the Conference of Western Wayne which was asked to make recommendations. It advised Detroit Renaissance and the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, which first proposed a regional tax to support cultural organizations, to reduce the millage from one mill to a half mill and to include local recreation and arts organizations. He makes the point that taxpayers see a lot of countywide millage requests that don't retain funds for local communities.

"I don't know what's going to happen in other communities but cultural arts is where we would put the emphasis. We already do."

For the last five years, Yack has been leading the effort to build a \$10 million, 420-seat performing arts center to house the Spotlight Players, Peter Spurling Dance Company and other groups in addition to offering arts classes and a space for exhibitions including the annual show put on by Canton Project Arts, the township's official culture council. He's looking to open bids in January and begin construction in April on the building tentatively scheduled to open in fall 2004.

LOBBY FOR FUNDS

Yack urges local arts organizations to lobby their local officials and legislators for funding. He'd use the new money not for mortar and bricks but to form a community band and choral group, and youth orchestra and theater, among other arts-related efforts.

"Arts organizations have to organize to influence decision makers in their community to sell them on the benefits for

Orchestra's programming, her first goal as executive director would be to go back to offering six concerts a year. Like the Livonia Symphony, the BSSO had cut back to five programs this season due to a decline in giving.

She'd also like to work with recreation proponents to make it a win-win situation for everyone.

"The doors are open so I'm encouraged," said Lamphere. "Proposal K is letting people know how important arts, parks and kids are for any community. Funding should funnel down to the community because it shows how arts plays a part with communities."

"We'd like to expand our Symphony & Schools project taking music into the classrooms but if we don't receive any money for that there are ways we could work together with recreation. If a new ball field is constructed it would be a wonderful idea to have the orchestra play the *Star Spangled Banner*. It's important that a person be well rounded. I'd like to see outdoor concerts in the park, make music a part of the plan for parks and the kids."

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call Observer & Eccentric arts reporter Linda Ann Chomlin at (734) 953-2545 or send e-mail to lchomlin@eehomecom.net.

DRACULA

FROM PAGE B1

are magic tricks and special effects. We have characters change into other characters before the audience. It's very scary because of the special effects which add that eerie quality to it."

But don't leave the kids at home. King says they'll love watching Dracula's Brides in the ballet-like dream sequences. Tess Goldberg choreographed the dances.

King is going all out to revive the theater program at Oakland Community College since first joining the faculty in 2001. Judging by the 100 actors who turned out for the auditions, she's headed in the right direction. Eventually, King would like to expand the season and theater classes offered.

"It's really a story about the seductive nature of evil," said King. "They've never seen this story portrayed in this creative and very special way. It's like a fairy tale, a fantasy. I wouldn't leave the children at home. They love scary stories. The audience will be mesmerized by Dracula's castle at Carfax off in the distance. It will be vivid and unforgettable. Carfax is attached to the asylum by tunnels."

As for the tunnels, Dracula makes his way to bite the necks of Lucy and Mina. Renfield (played by Sean Nash

"It's such a powerful, romantic and sensual show. ...It's good versus evil."

Kristin Beckett actress, Holly

of Farmington Hills) unwittingly does his master's bidding, letting the vampire into the asylum.

"Renfield's not really insane but gradually goes crazy when he's forced into Dracula's service," said Nash, a student at OCC. "The challenge is Renfield goes absolutely nuts. He's flailing around and I don't want to tear down the set."

"I've had a ball playing the part. I'm not a fan of horror genre but stage horror is better than movie horror any day."

DREAM ROLE

Kristin Beckett has longed to play a role in *Dracula* since she was very young. Mina is a departure from the emotionally intense and twisted characters she usually plays. Beckett started her theater career by performing in several productions at Southfield Lathrup High School. She went on to become an understudy at Purple Rose Theater in Chelsea and studied with Jeff Daniels, star of films such as *101 Dalmatians* and *Dumb and Dumber*.

"It's such a powerful, romantic and sensual show," said Beckett of Holly. "It's good versus evil. My character is the ultimate good. She's pure hearted and learns too late that immortality brings with it the ability to control others. A lot of people are attracted to immortality and what that represents."

Gjon Vata is just trying to create a Dracula who acts as if he's wiser for having lived a thousand years. This is his first production but he isn't scared of doing a good job.

"He's kind of evil," said Vata, a graduate of Walled Lake Western High School who's studying architecture at OCC. "He gets younger as he drinks more blood. He seduces all the young women. The challenge is to deliver lines believably."

Robert Adler's serious about his role of the Old Count when he's in character. Off stage is another matter for the West Bloomfield resident.

"Dracula starts out old and is drinking his way into this group of people," said Adler. "He wants to bite Harker (a real estate agent trying to finalize the sale on a castle for him) all the time. I have these needs."

But at rehearsal time, neither Dracula had their vampire fangs so neither was doing any biting-making both a little less scary than they'll be on opening night.

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