

# Concert may rival circus for color, scope

By CORINNE ABATT

FARMINGTON HILLS—Somewhere between getting a circus ready for Madison Square Garden and the local choir ready for Sunday morning church are the preparations for the Max Davey concert Friday, April 11. The event with guests artists Roger Williams and Mike Whorf takes place at Masonic Temple in Detroit with the theme "Saturday Night at the Movies."

In scope, number of seats, timing, precision and color, it may rival the circus, but in closeness and neighborly attitudes, it's more like the local choir.

Set designer Gary Papierski of Westland, and a crew are busy building elaborate sets for the new production in the basement of the Daveys' Farmington Hills home.

Mrs. Martha Eichinger, neighbor and ticket chairman, drops in for coffee and a quick report that ticket sales are going well.

DAVEY, A BIG MAN with neon blue eyes, moves from the phone to the kitchen and back again, reporting details to his pretty blonde wife, Mar-

*'We have grown slowly, and that's good'*

—Max Davey

garet, who talks enthusiastically about this new program, written and narrated by Whorf.

Davey had expected his friend, Jerome Hines, internationally known opera bass singer, to stop by on his way to Minneapolis.

"Davey tells his wife, 'There's a foot and a half of snow in Minneapolis. They may have to change the date.'"

She is disappointed, saying it was Hines who once told her husband, "You don't even know how good you are" and spoke to the Harve Agency of New York about the Max Davey Singers.

Set designer Papierski's wife, Carolyn, choreographed the new show, and Margaret and Max Davey smile as they discuss the elaborate preparations, recalling the days when it was simpler, but no less fun and work.

FOR A BRIEF TIME, which he'd just as soon forget, Davey taught school. Later he moved into automotive design with his own firm, Davey Design.

But along the way he began working with church choirs, finally forming his own group which now numbers 78, counting singers and studio musicians. Besides giving a number of major concerts in Ford and Masonic auditoriums, they perform regularly in churches, before conventions and business groups.

The repertoire consists of five shows, ranging from a hymn program through "America I Hear You Singing."

Only recently has Davey drawn a salary from the non-profit corporation which regularly donates a portion of its proceeds to charity.

The singers, ages 18-40 are not paid. Even so, Davey describes costs to put on the programs as "astronomical." Their expenses are part of the budget, along with concert hall fees, union stagehand costs, the costs of a dozen or more arrangers around the country who put the music together, scenery and all the expenses that go with getting the show on the road.

LARGE OR SMALL, the preparations still have a family flavor about them.

Both Davey and his wife believe the Davey-Whorf combination is a marriage of talents and they call it that.

Whorf has been heard to remark "Max conducts like I write."

Davey says he can tell what his nar-

ator is going to do or say almost before he does it.

"WE HAVE GROWN slowly and that's good."

This is slow enough for Mrs. Eichinger to develop a good system for selling tickets based on one-to-one phone contact with her callers. And it is slow enough for Davey to know what

kind of programs keep his audience coming back.

"Our audiences are so sophisticated, we have to come up with quality stuff."



MAX DAVEY



MARGARET DAVEY

## M. Belanger to plan county Bicentennial

Marlow Belanger, president of the Farmington Hills Arts Council, has been appointed to serve on the Oakland County Bicentennial Commission.

Mrs. Belanger is one of 16 chosen to oversee the county's celebration of the country's 200th year, in 1976. The commission was announced

this week by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. Belanger is listed this year in "Who's Who in Michigan" and the bicentennial edition of "Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans."

She is best known in the Farmington area for her promotion of the performing and exhibiting arts through the local arts council.

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