

# Books — 'the gift that keeps on giving'

The year I received "Gay's Year On Sunset Island" for Christmas, I think I was 9. I also received that year a doll, a new bicycle, a fuzzy orange sweater and a box of my favorite candy (then and forevermore, chocolate-covered cherries).

I don't know what became of the doll. The bicycle has long since died a rusty death, and the orange sweater and candy didn't last, of course.

But I still have "Gay's Year On Sunset Island." I still pick it up now and then and read it through. And when I do, I still enjoy it. (It must be one of the most obscure works of fiction in the universe. I've never encountered another living soul who even knows what it is.)

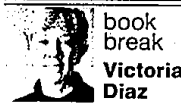
All of which is to say that books really are "the gifts that keep on giving." When I read "Gay's Year On Sunset Island," it not only brings me the pleasure of the moment, it brings back, in a sense, that long-ago Christmas.

So if you're looking for a great holiday gift idea for the kids on your list, why not make it a memorable book? Herein, some of this year's most memorable:

**When I read "Gay's Year On Sunset Island," it not only brings me the pleasure of the moment, it brings back, in a sense, that long-ago Christmas. So if you're looking for a great holiday gift idea for the kids on your list, why not make it a memorable book?**

William Joyce (Harper Collins, \$14.95).

• "A Day With Wilbur Robinson," written and illustrated by



**book break**  
**Victoria Diaz**

William Joyce (Harper Collins, \$14.95).

Wilbur Robinson's house is "the greatest place to visit." From uncles Dmitre and Spike, who hide in fireproofs at the front door, to Aunt Ellie willing away the hours with her smiling, life-sized locomotive, to Grandfather who has lost his false teeth but can't look for them because he's too busy teaching a bunch of frogs how to master jazz music, this is a decidedly unconventional household.

As the narrator-guest rather reluctantly concludes his overnight visit, the whole family gathers on the front lawn, serenading him with

(what else?) "Yes, We Have No Bananas." William Joyce's zany illustrations perfectly complement the book full of crazy surprises. (Ages 4-8).

• "Max Makes a Million," written and illustrated by Mirra Korman (Viking, \$14.95).

Max is a dog. But he's not just your ordinary, everyday kind of dog. Max is a dog who writes poetry.

Even more fanciful, Max makes a million dollars writing poetry (and no, it isn't doggerel).

How he brings off this marvelous feat (through dogged determination?), and the motley crew he hangs out with in the meantime (Bruno, who paints invisible pictures; Marcello, who "wants to build houses that are upside down"; Etta, a trapeze artist, and her tiny husband, Little Socco) make for reading kids of all ages will delight in. "This book is about dreamers, Wishful thinkers, Dreamy blinkers, Crazy nuts." Hooley.

• "Fudge-A-Mania," by Judy Blume (Dutton, \$12.95).

Fudge Hatcher (of "Superfudge" fame) is back. In Blume's latest, the little rascal spends a lively, three-week vacation with his parents, his brother, and his neighbors — the Tubmans — at the seashore in Maine. The inimitable Sheila Tubman ("Otherwise Known As Sheila the Great"), complete here with fuzzy-wuzzy robe and slippers, is a large part of the fun. (Ages 8-12).

• "The High Rise Glorious Skittle Skat Roarious Sky Pie Angel Food Cake," by Nancy Willard. Illustrated by Richard Jesse Watson (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$15.95).

Using her great-grandmother's secret recipe, an adolescent girl gets up in the middle of the night to bake a surprise cake for her mother's birthday. But a rather significant problem arises when three hungry angels, their glittery wings aflutter with pleasure, show up in the kitchen at midnight, ready to eat most of the cake themselves.

Well, it's an angel food cake, isn't it? Willard's enchanting prose blends perfectly with Watson's luscious artwork. This is, indeed, a High-Rise-Glorious-Skittle-Skat-Roarious-Sky-Pie-Angel-Food-Cake kind of book — one of the very best literary treats around this year. (Ages 6 and up).

• "Julius, the Baby of the World," written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow, \$12.95).

Oh, it's all so wonderful, thinks Lilly the white mouse, anticipating the birth of her baby brother, Julius. But when Julius arrives, it turns out not to be so wonderful after all. Lilly feels neglected and unloved. Matters aren't helped any when Lilly's parents refer to their darling newborn as "the baby of the world." All ends happily, though, and Lilly comes out smelling like a rose. (Ages 4 and up)

• "Rachel, Fister's Blister" by Amy MacDonald. Illustrated by Margorie Friceman (Houghton Mifflin, \$13.95).

Disaster strikes in the opening pages of this rhyming tale. Rachel gets a blister "on her little left-hand toe" and all the "experts" — including the rabbi, the maid, the doctor, the nurse, the vicar, the postman, the priest, et al — are called in to effect a cure.

"Vicar Wicker" called for liquor/ (what he meant was lemonade),/ while the maids and ladies bickered,/ and the priest and rabbi prayed." But nothing works until good Queen

Alice ("the smartest, that's for sure") comes up with a simple, but highly effective solution to the peaky problem.

Friceman's lively, candy-colored illustrations top off this riotous romp perfectly.

Mark your calendar: As part of the University of Michigan Visiting Writers Series, award-winning poet Alice Fulton will read from her latest work, "Powers of Congress," at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Rackham Amphitheatre, Ann Arbor.

Call 764-6206 for information. Admission is free.



Wayne State arts professor Dennis Tini will take part in the Livonia Symphony's All-Russian music concert.

## Concert to offer All-Russian fare

The Livonia Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Chorus of Wayne State University will join to present an evening of all-Russian music Saturday, Nov. 17.

Dennis Tini of Wayne State University's School of Fine and Performing Arts will lead the 40-member vocal ensemble and orchestra in a reading of Stravinsky's "Symphony of Psalms." The "Polovtsian Dances" from "Prince Igor" by Alexander Borodin will be sung under the baton of LSO conductor Francesco DiBlasi.

Concert time is 8 p.m. in Livonia's Churchill High School, Joy and Newburgh. For tickets, call the symphony hot line at 422-8000. Admission is \$9 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens.

DiBlasi will offer orchestral programming of "Overture to Russian and Ludmila" by Glinka, excerpts from "Scheherazade" by Rimsky-Korsakov and Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet."

Tini, who holds a bachelor and master's degree from WSU in music, said he first performed the Stravinsky with the Robert Shaw Choral at Meadow Brook in 1965. "I was greatly taken by the ritu-

alistic character of the piece, its intense setting and texts chosen to elicit Stravinsky's reaffirmation of faith."

WSU slingers have not performed the "Polovtsian Dances" in more than 20 years.

THE SYMPHONIC CHORUS is comprised of students from the Concert Choral, Choral Union, Men's Glee Club and Women's Chorus. In addition to Tini, they are reared by Janice Fulbright and Deborah Smith.

Tini, a Farmington Hills resident, grew up in the Detroit area and is a co-founder of the Jazz Studies Program at WSU. He studied with Robert Shaw, Sixteen Ehrling, Malcolm Johns, Howard Swan and Charles Hirt.

President-elect of the 7,500-member International Association of Jazz Educators, he has conducted for Hollywood movies and national corporate musical productions and composed for documentaries and commercials.

He has appeared with his own quartet, the Detroit Symphony, Brazael Denard Chorale, Buddy Rich, J.C. Heard and Don Ellis.

## Musica Viva! to jazz it up

Musica Viva! Concerts 1990-91. The second concert of the season, "The Best of Jazz," at 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 16 at the Smith Theatre, Farmington Hills.

After a sold-out performance of the opening concert of "Flamenco" during October, Musica Viva! presents the theme of jazz, featuring the group Keiko and Friends with special guest artist, Detroit's Marcus Belgrave, trumpet.

Keiko and Friends consists of Japanese-born Keiko McNamara, pianist, and Detroit's talents of Harvey Thompson, vocalist, Greg Cooke, bass, and Lawrence Williams, drums.

The program includes works by Duke Ellington, Thelonius Monk, Gershwin and original compositions by McNamara and Belgrave.

IN ADDITION, there will be a choreographed performance of jazz, theater and dance integrated in the epic suite "Hot Set," (peace and love) composed by McNamara and performed by the musicians with African and Japanese dancers and drummers.

Tickets are \$15 for general audience, \$10 for students and seniors. Reservations are suggested.

For more information, call the Smith Theatre hotlines: 471-7700 or 471-0956.

The Smith Theatre is on the Orchard Campus of Oakland Community College, 1-596 and Orchard Lake Road.



Vocalist Harvey Thompson (left) and Keiko McNamara, pianist, will take part in "The Best of Jazz."



Trumpeter Marcus Belgrave is special guest artist for "The Best of Jazz."

## Youth concert on Sunday

The Metropolitan Youth Symphony will begin its ninth season with a concert at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 18 at Livonia Churchill High School, Newburgh Road, north of Joy Road.

The 250 young musicians range from the fifth through 12th grades and live in 40 different communities in the tri-county area. They play the three orchestras led by prominent music educators.

Alan McNair conducts the award-winning symphony orchestra as well as being concertmaster of the Rochester Symphony and director of the Troy High School Orchestra.

Richard Pilippo, new conductor of the concert orchestra, is a well-known cellist as well as teacher and conductor at Wayne State University.

Jackqueline Coleman, conductor of the string orchestra, is director of the middle school music program at Detroit Country Day School as well as conductor of the concert orchestra at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.

THE CLASSICAL concert will include "Pines of Rome" by Respighi and "Night on Bald Mountain" by

Moussorgsky as well as other pieces played from the original scores by the symphony and concert orchestras.

The young members of the string orchestra will play selections from "The Four Seasons" by Vivaldi/Leidig, "Poet and Peasant Overture"

by von Suppe/McLeod, "Turkish March" by Mozart/McLeod as well as others.

Tickets for the concert will be available at the door. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for students. Call 644-9105 or 375-0206 for information.

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