

Musician from page 1D

"I was practicing 10 hours a day at 14 years old," he said. "Anybody willing to focus on any activity will achieve a certain excellence at it. I used to teach students and I'd tell them, 'You have to surrender to the discipline.'"

In 1976, he was a finalist at the Chopin International Piano Competition in Poland. He has performed in the prestigious Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow.

"I was a classical concert pianist. I was living wherever I wanted to live. I was a vagabond musician."

He has lived in Tucson, Ariz., New York City and Hawaii. The last place was a mistake. Hawaii isn't paradise to someone who

doesn't like the ocean. In 1958, he returned to Michigan to play in the Meadow Brook Music Festival.

"I didn't feel like going back to live in Hawaii."

New lifestyle
Then fate took a hand. He met his wife, Suzanne, and decided to overhaul his lifestyle.

"I began to ask myself how can I utilize my musical gifts and live a normal life."

Observing that "The average person doesn't like classical music," he began to explore recording for the popular market. He thought old favorites like "As Time Goes By" and "Rhapsody in Blue" could find a niche in the

adult market. Record companies were underwhelmed by the idea. Undeterred and buoyed by his wife's moral support, Syme went to a friend's recording studio in Tucson and put together "Play It Again, Syme."

He booked himself on radio talk shows to promote his record and generate orders. Interviews soon evolved into a steady series of questions. "How old were you when you started?" "Any advice for young musicians?"

"It's very predictable."

Until one day someone asked him if he could play the theme song to "Leave It to Beaver." For Syme, who spent his boyhood learning those songs, the request seemed tailor-made. It was a simple matter for him to sit down, prop up the phone near the piano and plunk out the notes.

Another caller requested the theme from "The Andy Griffith Show." Then another wanted the Beatles tune "Eight Days a Week." By the end of the show, Syme had a sore neck from balancing the phone and a new way to market his records.

Tuned in

Now, on some days, he's booked on as many as six talk shows across the country. From late

night chats to late afternoon drive time, Syme averages between 16 and 20 shows a week.

"I've become a change-of-pace talk show guest. I've become sort of a breath of fresh air after people get tired of talking about the president's latest decision."

His fifth and most recent collection, "Rock Formations," is a collection of boomer rock favorites. As with all his records, Syme comes up with the titles and the graphics. This one shows him in an Indiana Jones get-up, examining rocks.

Syme has distribution arrangements locally with Harmony House and throughout much of the nation with Music Land. Under the watchful eye of his wife, who is also his business manager, he has acquired a toll-free telephone number for a mail-order business that accepts credit cards.

With this modest success, he's thinking of going back on the road.

"It's a real exciting way to spend the next few years."

Hometown concert

In May his date with the Butler (Pa.) Symphony sold out after he plugged it on local radio. There were 1,300 tickets sold for the



Noteworthy accomplishment: David Syme of West Bloomfield, the Human Jukebox, is well known to radio listeners for his vast knowledge of long-forgotten tunes. He will perform in the area this month.

1,200-seat auditorium. "We feel this was a very good sign."

After wowing them in Butler, he's going after a hometown crowd at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 24, at the Magic Bag in Ferndale. Tickets are available through Ticket Master.

He's still adding to his repertoire. For every caller who wants

to hear some Gerahwin, there seems to be one with a yen to listen to the old Iron Butterfly tune "Ina Gadda Da Vidida."

But you won't find him lining up in a store for sheet music. He's the guy sitting in the corner of the restaurant, listening to the same song over again on the jukebox.

"Two quarters in the jukebox and I know it."

Volunteers help support fest

Seven area businesses and volunteer groups have signed up to work during the Sept. 11-12 Art 'n Apples Festival at Rochester Municipal Park.

Employees or members of Comerica Bank, Crittenton Hospital, First of America Bank, Huntington Bank, Jacobson's, J-T-Town, Rochester Junior Woman's Club and NBD will take gate donations, sell food and T-shirts and work in the children's art station during the two-day art fair.

highlight their group's participation in this community event.

More volunteers are still needed for the event. Call the Paint Creek Center for the Arts at 651-7458, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

Art 'n Apples is one of the oldest and largest art fairs in Michigan, featuring 275 artists, performing artists and musicians, children's art activities and refreshments. Proceeds from this fund-raiser benefit programs of their company or organization T-shirt during the festival to

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<p>It's Livonia - A "Must See" Country charm, 3 bedroom, 2 bath ranch home w/Florida room, over 1,900 sq. ft., on nearly an acre treed lot All at \$134,900. Call Bob & Jerry ERA Agent #M57817 591-0333.</p>	<p>Plymouth - Early American Charm! In the heart of Old Plymouth, this charmer of a home just needs your own decorating to become a handsome beauty! Call for our own showing at ERA Agent Realty #M59530 591-0333.</p>	<p>Brighton Area - Lakewood Living! Pleasant Open Floor Plan! 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 2,510 sq. ft. custom colonial on all sports like w/so' beach - many extras at \$218,000. Call Jim ERA Agent Realty #M60908 591-0333.</p>	<p>Canton - Just Listed! All back 3 bedroom Ranch! 1 1/2 baths, family room w/ fireplace and down to private yard, roomy kitchen, finished basement & more! \$199,900. Call Mike Workman ERA Agent Realty #M61343 591-0333.</p>	<p>Farmington Hills - Golf Course Condo Smashing end unit townhouse. Fabulous 1st floor master suite, white designer kitchen, library, sunset views from private deck. \$199,900. Call ERA Rymal Syms #B12739 851-9770.</p>	<p>Southfield Beautiful 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath colonial, remodeled kitchen, hardwood floors throughout, 2 skylights in family room, finished basement, 2 car attached garage, large deck and private fence. \$26,000. Call ERA Mark-1 #S13448 557-6646.</p>
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<p>Livonia 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, family room w/ custom built brick fireplace! Beautifully updated large kitchen & dining area - over 2,000 sq. ft. \$139,900. Call Cash or Bobbie ERA Agent Realty #M60439 591-0333.</p>	<p>Livonia 1 1/2 private, rolling acres is where you'll find this lovely, contemporary beauty w/4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, fireplace & large family room plus a 2 car attached garage! Call Nellie ERA Agent Realty #M55201 591-0333.</p>	<p>Plymouth 4 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath plus family room Bi-Level. Features new deck of coated kitchen, new carpet throughout, six panel doors, nice neighborhood. \$109,000. Call Mike Workman ERA Agent Realty #M59542 591-0333.</p>	<p>Farmington Hills Attractive 2-story. Traditional w/brk styling, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, gourmet kitchen, appliances included, great room, master suite w/spa, central air, shale roof. \$269,000. Call ERA Rymal Syms #M5246 349-4550.</p>	<p>Southfield Spectacular 4 bedroom colonial, major remodeling includes new baseboards & white kitchen cabinets, vinyl windows, floor tile, newer carpeting, 2 1/2 baths, finished basement, one year ERA Home Warranty. \$124,900. Call ERA Mark-1 #S11868 557-6646.</p>	<p>White Lake Lake area charm. Vinyl siding, 1 1/2 story bungalow w/level, quiet street, finished corner, skylights. 4 bedrooms, partially finished basement. \$109,000. Call ERA Rymal Syms #M35342 478-9130.</p>