

# BBAA from page C1

whether it's incorporating live crickets in a mixed media figure left untitled, or installing labels focused on human eyes in "Invasion." Each piece offers an artist's personal glimpse of Byrum, the artist, as she asks - "what occupies me?"

"A lot of my work involves voyeurism. Who's looking at who?" said the Korean born Byrum. "Some of the pieces are more aggressive. With the artwork, the work is invading an exhibition. With the untitled work, the

figure is translucent so you can see the crickets on the inside. It's sort of grotesque."

Traditionally, the BBAA partners with a gallery to produce the Michigan Fine Arts Competition. An exhibition of John Walker's paintings at the Hill Gallery will coincide with the BBAA show. Walker will lecture about his choices during a March 21 reception to open the Michigan Fine Arts Competition show continuing through April 19 at the BBAA.

"Coming from a university museum background (as assistant director of administration at the University of Michigan Museum of Art in Ann Arbor), what's important to me about all these shows is the education components not only for the artists but the patrons," said Torno who took the position of BBAA executive director last June. "In the past, the preview had been private. That's why we chose to have a public lecture where John will discuss the

selection process for the competition. His choices show he's trying to challenge people and make them think."

The BBAA, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this fall, began as a small, local art school with a mission of encouraging the maximum human potential through an interest in the fine arts. Over the years, it's evolved into a community based regional arts center serving Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Washtenaw counties. Due to its continued

growth, the BBAA is adding six new studios to be completed in fall 1997.

Other local artists included in the Michigan Fine Arts Competition are Craig Anz and Deborah Friedman of West Bloomfield; Lisa Galperin Farmington Hills; Peter Crow Gilleran, Kathryn Schoepflin and Beth Bonney, Birmingham; Rose Farber, Tanya Hastings, Ron Young Koo Lee, Christine McCauley, Sukhee Woo, Andre Yi, and Barbara Nigro, Bloomfield Hills; Marcia

Tournay and J.R. Wagoner, Troy; William Bostick, Bingham Farms; Sophia Rivkin, Southfield; Shirley Parish, Lathrup Village, and Dolphine Miller of Clarkston. Formerly of Birmingham, Miller creates a vibrant splash of color in an abstract painting titled "In the Beginning." She recently won the Purchase Award in the Helen DeLo Competition at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

# Big Band from page C1

Ensemble and teaches at Wayne State. "We all realize that big bands are an important part of the jazz tradition."

Other local members of Detroit Winds include John Baldori on trumpet, from Plymouth; Jim Wyse on tenor sax from Livonia; and Casper Costantini on baritone sax, from Troy. Wyse also plays in the well-known Dixieland band, the Tom Saunders Group, while Costantini has worked with all of the other big bands in the area.

From Benny Goodman to Duke

Ellington, big bands are known to swing out of a regular rhythm to improvise on a theme or add variations to a melody. The exploratory nature of jazz has been the backbone of its appeal. Many of today's big bands draw on the legacy of deceased jazz legends. Popular traveling bands include the Ellington Band, conducted by Mercer Ellington, the Woody Herman Band and the Glenn Miller Band.

For its Friday concert, Detroit Winds will perform standards

such as "Old Folks," John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" and Thelonious Monk's "Straight, No Chaser." All compositions were arranged by Hamid David, formerly a teacher in the Farmington School's bilingual department. David, who also plays stand-up bass in the Bass Bonnier Trio, founded the big band.

After their debut at "Jazz: A Very Special Art," David said the Detroit Winds plan to play around the area and at jazz festivals. An appearance at the

Detroit-Montreux Jazz Festival is probably on the near horizon, he said.

Several times a year, Very Special Arts Michigan holds fund raisers to augment corporate, state and federal funding. "Jazz: A Very Special Art" could prove to be one of its largest fund raisers.

Very Special Art Michigan provides small grants to local districts throughout the state. In turn, community organizations initiate projects specific to a region. In early May, the south-

east regional districts will hold a festival of arts featuring handicapped performers and artists at Wonderland Mall in Livonia.

"People see that the arts touch the lives of handicapped children and adults in a way that traditional curriculums do not," said Lora Frankel, executive director of Very Special Arts. "People with disabilities learn by doing, expressing and relating to each other."

Bonnier, a longtime Very Special Arts supporter and former

board member, played with Very Special Arts Worldwide in a 1984 tour of Belgium. Her lyrical, playful interpretations of Porter and Gershwin have been a regular sound on the local jazz scene for the last 40 years. As a blind piano player, Bonnier knows first hand about how the arts can help the handicapped find their natural expressive voice.

She didn't hesitate to headline the benefit concert. "When you feel something in your bones you do it," said Bonnier.

# Conversations from page C1

paintings, drawings, sculptures and pottery of students from 14 local schools. Nearly four-fifths of her 1,200-square-foot gallery exhibited art that was neither for sale, nor likely to attract buyers.

On the surface, it might seem like more galleries should provide similar access to community

artists. The reality, however, is that art galleries subsist because of their business savvy and market realities, rather than their aesthetic choices. Stone's decision was neither easy nor sound economics. Regardless, she knew it was the right thing to do.

"I figure that this is a way to make a few friends," she said,

noting that more than 250 people crowded into the gallery for the opening reception.

A few days before the student exhibit closed, Stone stopped to point to a few of her favorite pieces: a hulking brown bear sculpture and a white eye painting. For visitors to the gallery, Stone pointed out, all that mattered was the child's art.

And for one Birmingham family, that was truly amazing.

Currently, the Elizabeth Stone Gallery is selling a commemorative poster based on the children's book, "My Best Shoes" written by Marilee Robin Burton and illustrated by James E. Ransome. In mid May, the gallery will exhibit Ransome's work during his artist-in-residency in the Bloomfield Hills School District. Elizabeth Stone Gallery is at 536 N. Woodward, Birmingham. For information, call (810) 647-

7040. Email: Elizabeth@ESGallery.com; <http://www.ESGallery.com>

Do you have stories about your arts group, an artist or any art-related issues? Please contact Frank Froese, (810) 501-2557. Or write to him at the Birmingham Eccentric Newspaper, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009. Frank covers arts for communities in the Eccentric coverage area.

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Tickets are \$8 and available at the door, or in advance from the Bloomfield Hills Schools recreation and community services division office, 4174 Dublin Drive in Bloomfield Hills. For more information (810) 433-0885.

Born in 1879, in what is now Oklahoma, Rogers was a cowboy who joined wild west shows and who trick roping act to vaudeville where his sage humor

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and observations on American life won the hearts of audiences everywhere. He became the star of Ziegfeld Follies on Broadway and made 71 movies. He also wrote syndicated newspaper columns, six books and was the nation's first radio commentator. He was a popular speaker and was even nominated for president.

Rogers performed for presidents and kings around the world but always showed respect for each person, no matter their station in life. He was proud of his American Indian ancestry. His shrewd insights to the political issues of the day helped people to laugh at their problems and see what was really important in life. When he died in an airplane crash in Alaska in 1935, the nation mourned at the loss of the living legend.

"Will Rogers Follies" premiered in 1989 on Broadway and features music by Cy Coleman and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green enriched the show, first directed and choreographed by Tommy Tune.

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