

MUSIC

Charles Greenwell leads BBSO in pops concert

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER

When Charles Greenwell steps to the podium tonight to conduct the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra expect an informal lecture before he lifts the baton. Greenwell, who also serves as WQRS music director and program host, has mastered the pre-concert art of providing audiences with entertaining program notes. Typically, he finds interesting tidbits about the composer while setting the historical context and musical significance of the piece.

"It helps to break down barriers between the audience and the stage," said Greenwell, in his familiar well-modulated baritone voice. The informal, laid-back approach has won plaudits from what is commonly considered a highly critical music audience. For his efforts, Greenwell has been credited with dispelling the

notion that classical music is only for stuffy high-brows.

Leading the 70-member BBSO through a pops concert of wide appeal, Greenwell will traverse seven tuneful pieces, including Gliere's "Russian Sailors' Dance," Luigi's "Ballet Egyptian," Richard Rodgers' "Slaughter on 10th Avenue," Chabrier's "Danse Slave," Faure's "Pavane" and Ravel's sensual "Bolero." Greenwell refers to the concert as "Dance Fever" because each piece illustrates various types of dance.

Now in its 23rd season, the BBSO continues to set the performance standard for orchestras throughout the metro area. For the last four years, BBSO has won the Detroit Motor City Music Award for Outstanding Community Orchestra. Last December, its first CD, "Sounds of the Season," a recording of

In Concert

What: "Dance Fever," a pops concert performed by the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Charles Greenwell
When: 7:30 p.m. Sunday, March 16
Where: Temple Beth El, at Telegraph and 14 Mile Road
Tickets: \$16, adults; \$12, students or group of 10 or more
For information, call (810) 645-2276.

holiday classics, hit number one in the classical holiday music category at metro Harmony House stores.

A regular in the Chene Park Summer Music series, BBSO was also the backup orchestra at Pine Knob for the late Henry Mancini, Smokey Robinson,

Yanni and the Moody Blues. BBSO is one of the few community orchestras that pays professional scale wages to musicians and maintains a full-time administrative staff.

Performing in the acoustically appealing cone-shaped environs of Temple Beth El for the last ten years, BBSO has steadily increased the size of its audience. Only one-quarter of the seats for tonight's performance remain. A nonprofit, BBSO generates about 30 percent of its annual revenue from ticket sales. Funds for the remaining budget come from corporate and public grants.

Carla Lamphere, BBSO executive director, cites the long-term camaraderie between music director Felix Basnick and the musicians as the prime reason for the orchestra's sustained high-energy performances. "Musicians come to us with

music they like to play," she said. "We consider what everyone wants to play, then try to blend the concerts to reflect everyone's interest."

On April 7-8, BBSO will hold a young artists' competition. Lamphere noted that whenever the symphony receives state funds it travels to local schools to perform. Last year, BBSO visited Howell Elementary and Birmingham-Covington Intermediate School where they played a range of pieces, from Bach to the theme from "Star Wars."

Ironically, as the audience for classical music has broadened, the attendance at symphonic orchestra concerts continues to dwindle, noted Greenwell. Last year, the San Diego Symphony, heavily in debt, was forced to close. Yet while attendance at concertos may be on the decline, popularity continues to increase for chamber music and opera.



Charles Greenwell

ART BEAT

Art Beat features exhibits, events, seminars and other art scene happenings. Please send press releases, press kits and other information to Frank Provenzano, Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009 or fax (810) 644-1314.

TROY RESIDENT ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Al Ugelow of Troy has been named artist of the month for March by the Troy Public Library. An artist for more than 35 years, Ugelow presents a diverse portfolio of watercolors, pencils and pen and ink. Many of his subjects include landscapes, floral arrangements.

"I try to avoid trends and focus on making art that pleases me," said Ugelow, a retired psychology teacher at Oakland Community College. Ugelow's work will be exhibited through March 31 at the Troy Library, 510 W. Big Beaver, east of I-75 in the Civic Center Complex; (810) 524-3539.

ART IN OAKLAND COUNTY GALLERY

The Art in the Court project, sponsored by the Oakland County Probate Court Citizens Alliance, is calling for entries for an exhibit in the Oakland County Gallery, May 6-28. Artists should submit 35mm, 2" x 2" mounted slides by April 15, and mail to: Office of Arts, Culture & Film, Dept. 409, Executive Office Bld., 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac, 48341.

Selected works from the exhibit will be purchased for the permanent collection at the Oakland County Probate Court.

ORCHARD LAKE ARTIST HONORED
Neil Swaab of Orchard Lake placed second among 250 entries in the Midwest Color '97 competition for colored-pencil artists. The exhibit was sponsored by the southeast Michigan chapter of the Colored Pencil Society of America.

Michigan resident Tina Block of St. John won the top honor. Block's award-winning entry is on display at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association.

RENO WINS ADDY AWARD

Cindy Reno, a Birmingham-based graphic designer and owner of Cynthia Reno Design, won the top honor for her design of Cranbrook's 1995-96 Annual Report. The award is given by the Art Directors of Detroit, an Oakland County non-profit organization that promotes excellence in the communications arts.

Reno shared the award with Gene Meadows, whose photography appeared throughout the annual report. The design, said Reno, was an expression of her personal feelings for the art school.

ARTE GRANTS

The Arts Foundation of Michigan has announced the Creative Artist Grant for funding year 1998. Proposed projects of applicants must begin Oct. 1, 1997 and conclude by Sept. 30, 1998. AFM makes project grants up to \$7,000 available to artists. Application deadline is 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3, 1997. To receive guidelines and application, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Creative Artist Grant, Arts Foundation of Michigan, 645 Griswold St., Ste. 2164, Detroit, 48226, (313) 964-2244.

CREATIVE ARTIST GRANT WORKSHOP

will be held on Tuesday, March 18 at the Washtenaw

contemporary life."

Selected entries will appear in Cranbrook's "Home Work" exhibit, May 31-August 31. No more than 10 slides should be submitted along with an artist statement about how their work relates to the exhibit theme.

Applications must be postmarked by March 28, 1997. To receive an application contact Irene Hofmann, (810) 645-3313

A WOMAN'S VISION

Womencenter at Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge Campus, is calling for entries for the 11th annual art show, "Our Visions: Women in Art." Entries will be accepted in visual art and poetry. Deadline: Tuesday, April 1. Exhibit will take place May 8-30 in the South Theatre Gallery at the OCC Orchard Ridge Campus. Call (810) 471-7602, or write: Womencenter at Oakland Com-

munity College, 27055 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills 48334.

DETROIT FILM THEATRE

Cinematic Arts Council of the Detroit Institute of Arts is hosting an Oscar Night of America party to benefit Detroit Film Theatre, 8 p.m. Monday, March 24 at Intermezzo Restaurant in Harmonie Park, Detroit. Tickets \$100, per person include dinner, open bar. Call (313) 853-0247.

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