

## THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



The City of Southfield presents a Celebration Concert featuring Lou Rawls, 8 p.m. at Southfield Centre for the Arts, 24350 Southfield Road. Tickets \$30 and \$35, call (248) 645-6666, or (248) 354-4854.

SATURDAY

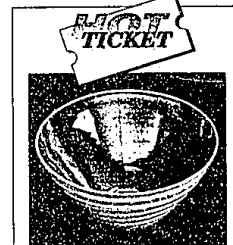


Tony O'Brien presents a Spring Concert with Lance Luce 8 p.m. at the Redford Theatre, 17360 Lahser Road. They will perform solos and duets, from Broadway show tunes to classics, at the Redford's theater pipe organ. Tickets \$8, call (313) 534-1954 or (313) 537-2560.

SUNDAY



Parker Plaque (left to right), Terry Heck and Adam Rockkind in "Lost in Yonkers" 2 p.m. at Meadow Brook Theatre, on the campus of Oakland University. Tickets \$22, call (248) 377-3300.



Hot Tix: Birmingham Fine Art Festival 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday in Shrin Ford, and adjacent streets in downtown Birmingham features fine entertainment, and works by 300 artists from the U.S. and Canada including Richard Cohen who created this iridescent blue-lined bowl with golden yellow and white stripes. For more information, call (248) 644-0866.



Comedic opera: Ana Maria Martinez as Adina in "The Elixir of Love" at Michigan Opera Theatre. She is sharing this role with Janet Williams of Detroit.

Opera, a barrel full of laughs? Well, that's not the first thing that comes to mind. Especially if you've seen any of the evocative Romantic operas that make you want to enroll in grief counseling and wail like a baby. But for the operatic light of heart, the Michigan Opera Theatre is offering a magic potion of its own, Donizetti's "The Elixir of Love," which premieres Saturday.

The opera is among the most popular comic operas, and comes as the second of MOT's three-opera spring season. Once again, the familiar angelic soprano Janet Williams since the lead female role. Williams, perhaps the most famous operatic star from Detroit, is currently with the Berlin Opera.

Along with Mozart, Donizetti has written several of the most performed comic operas in the repertoire. In addition to "The Elixir of Love," he composed "The Daughter of the Regiment," and "Don Pasquale." "The characters are accessible and very contemporary," said David DiChiera, managing director of MOT. "Audiences are sympathetic (with the characters) throughout this opera."

Following MOT's critically acclaimed "Manon," and preceding the great American opera "Porgy and Bess" in their spring season, Donizetti's comedic opera offers the levity of one of today's all-comers with some of the most recognizable operatic music.

"The Elixir of Love" is a classic comedic tale of misperception and rooting for the underdog. The story is based on the travails of a peasant named Nemorino, one of opera's most

What: "The Elixir of Love" by Gaetano Donizetti presented by the Michigan Opera Theatre  
When: 8 p.m. Saturday, May 9; Wednesday, May 13; Friday & Saturday, May 15-16; 2 p.m. Sundays, May 10 & 17  
Where: Detroit Opera House, (at the corner of Madison Avenue and Broadway, one block east of Woodward Avenue), Detroit  
Tickets: \$18-\$95, call (313) 874-7404, or (248) 645-6666.

beloved characters. The nerdy Nemorino and his rival, a virile soldier named Belcore, are hardly matched. The town folk deride Nemorino's chances of winning the heart of the vivacious Adina, the flirtatious treasure of the village.

What's needed, of course, is a magic potion. Preferably, an inexpensive panacea. With Seinfeld-like timing, enter a quack doctor named Dulcamara.

The rambling doc persuades Nemorino that imbibing a flask of cheap Bordeaux can work wonders. Even improve his chances of winning Adina's heart.

The real elixir, however, is clearly in the music and the vocal diversity required to wring the lessons of love from the humorous plot.

Two of opera's greatest tenors — Enrico Caruso and Luciano Pavarotti — have made the lead

tenor's role among their signature performances. After his 1904 debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera, Caruso's fame skyrocketed. Ironically, 16 years later after performing the role he suffered a throat hemorrhage and died shortly after.

For both Caruso and Pavarotti, the emotional breadth and subtlety of the romantic "Una furtiva lagrima" ("A Furtive Tear") in the second act has demonstrated their eminence as opera's royalty.

Quite likely, those won't be tears of tragedy rolling down audience's faces. Donizetti's playful opera proves that you can get the same response by appealing to a good laugh. It's simply called "tears of joy."

## MUSIC

### Classical pianist tickled to play crowd pleasers

BY HUGH GALLAGHER  
STAFF WRITER

Pianist Garrick Ohlsson will be playing favorites Saturday night when he gives a brief recital as part of his special evening at the University of Michigan.

The University Musical Society has named Ohlsson the 1998 UMS Distinguished Artist in recognition of his long association with the UMS series, and especially his recent two year series of recitals covering the complete solo piano works of Frederic Chopin.

Ohlsson will perform in concert at Hill Auditorium and then be feted with a gala dinner and dance at the Michigan League.

Ohlsson has chosen crowd pleasers for his hour-long recital — Gershwin's preludes, Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata and three pieces by Chopin. "It's Gershwin's year (his centennial) and I love playing his preludes. I don't play them very often, in fact the last time was in 1990 at the White House. They wanted something American. It's different, most people don't associate me with that music, and I love it."

Ohlsson said the idea was to play really great music that was also popular.

"The Chopin was inevitable. He's one of the great all-time composers, but also universally loved," Ohlsson said.

Ohlsson's association with Chopin is long and honorable. He gained musical fame in 1970 when he won the prestigious Chopin Competition in Warsaw. Ohlsson, 50, began playing piano when he was 8 and entered Juilliard at 13. Following school he entered and won several competitions before the Chopin.

During the 1995-96 concert seasons Ohlsson won unanimous critical acclaim and soldout audiences for his Chopin cycle, which he performed in Ann Arbor, New York City, Purchase, N.Y., (main campus of the State University of New York) and Toronto.

"When I was looking around to do the Chopin cycle, I first looked on to New York for many obvious reasons, but I wanted the experience of doing it more than once, it's like your best suit that you want to wear more than once," Ohlsson said.

The UMS series, which he first played in 1971 and played again this year as part of a tribute to Schubert, had an opening.

He said doing the complete Chopin gave him a chance to get the composer into his blood stream.

"It's the difference between going to a museum and seeing one Monet, one

Please see PIANIST, E2

#### Garrick Ohlsson Recital and Tribute

What: Acclaimed pianist Garrick Ohlsson honored as UMS Distinguished Artist of the Year. Performs works by Gershwin, Beethoven and Chopin.

When: 6 p.m. Saturday, May 9  
Where: Hill Auditorium, University of Michigan central campus, Ann Arbor  
Tickets: \$15-\$45, special \$100 and \$150 tickets. Gala package tickets \$300. \$1,000 includes concert, dinner and dancing (at the Michigan League). Call UMS box office, (734) 764-2538 or (800) 221-1229.

## FAMILY/FUN

### Musical brings Rugrats to life at the Fox

"Rugrats - A Live Adventure"  
Where: Friday, May 8 through Sunday, May 17. Fifteen performances: 7 p.m. Friday, May 8 and May 15, 7 p.m. Thursday, May 14; noon, 3:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, May 9 and May 16; 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Sunday, May 10 and May 17.  
Where: The Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.  
Tickets: \$12-\$29, \$30-\$50 and \$25, available at the box office. Ticketmaster locations, or call (248) 433-1515.

On TV the Rugrats seen by millions of kids everyday on Nickelodeon can do anything. But bringing Angelica, Tommy, Phil, Chuckie, Lil, and Susie to life on stage for "A Live Adventure," coming to the Fox Theatre May 8-17 was a challenge.

For many children, the show will be their first introduction to the theater.

"Our live show stays true to what kids love about Rugrats — adventure — this time they turn a typical rainy afternoon into a wild ride of the imagination," said Jonathan Hochwald, executive producer.

The live show presented by Nickelodeon and PACE Variety Entertainment, Inc., features the talent behind the original Rugrat voices, including E.G. Daily as Tommy Pickles, Christine Cavanaugh as Chuckie Finster, Kath Soucie as Phil & Lil DeVille, and Cheryl Chase as Angelica Pickles.

With backgrounds ranging from rock-and-roll to Broadway stage, TV and movies, a team of professionals worked to make the Rugrats bigger than life.

Please see RUGRATS, E2



On Stage: Angelica Pickles and her pats come to life in "Rugrats - A Live Adventure."