

## Tillinghast stresses the positive

In the attention-deficit age where the terminally eccentrics get fresh air by opening a window in cyberspace, many are concerned about the lack of cultural literacy.

While scholars and social critics sound the alarm, poet Richard Tillinghast prefers to stress the positive.

"Hey, poetry is perfect because who doesn't have time to read a poem," said Tillinghast of Ann Arbor where he teaches poetry and creative writing at the University of Michigan.

Unfortunately, attention spans are growing shorter: in 60 years, maybe we'll all be talking about whether people can comprehend the meaning of a poetic sentence, or ponder a lyrical phrase.

But Tillinghast isn't worried. He's proven to be a canny poet blessed with a sense of rhythm and a vivid vocabulary.

**WHAT:** "New Jazz & Poetry," featuring Richard Tillinghast and Poignant Pleostomus

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday, June 20

**WHERE:** Borders Books, 34300 Woodward, Birmingham (248) 203-0005



**Musical poet:** Richard Tillinghast blends a minimalist style with world rhythms in his performance poetry.

Beat Poets, and the contemporary rhythm of a world at the brink of a moral abyss, as captured in his recent poem, "The World Is."

Tillinghast writes: "The world is mortality rates, and rape as an instrument of war. The world is a 12-year-old with a Walkman, a can of Coke and an Uzi."

### An individual's voice

While poets have always read their work for public audiences, there's a growing trend toward performances with musical accompaniment.

One of the most popular local poet-performers, M.L. Liebler of Wayne State, merges hip-hop, rock and jazz with his self-described blue-collar poetry.

Tillinghast, Liebler and poets like Billy Collins are reaching nontraditional poetry readers.

"There's a move for poets to attract cross-over audiences," said Tillinghast.

"Most people regard poetry as 'intellectual.' But the poetry I like has an immediacy and vividness, a collaboration between the conscious and the unconscious mind."

In the 1990s economic ascendancy of multinational corporations and worldwide marketing campaigns, there's a striking absence of "individual voices," said Tillinghast.

Homogeneity and corporate-speak is a poet's arch enemy.

In spite of a noisy world of sloganeering, Tillinghast's poetry reveals a quiet strength and refreshingly intimate tone.

Included in his most recent collection is "Summer Rain."

"Summer rain, and the voices of children from another room. Old friends from summers past / we drink old whiskey and talk about ghosts."

The rain ebbs, rattles the summer cottage roof / soaks the perished leaves in wooden gutters, / then gusts and / drowns our fond talk."

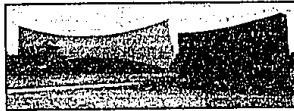
### Sense of place

With an ability to find the poetry in images, sounds and tastes, Tillinghast creates an intimate place where the rushing pace of contemporary living comes to a standstill.

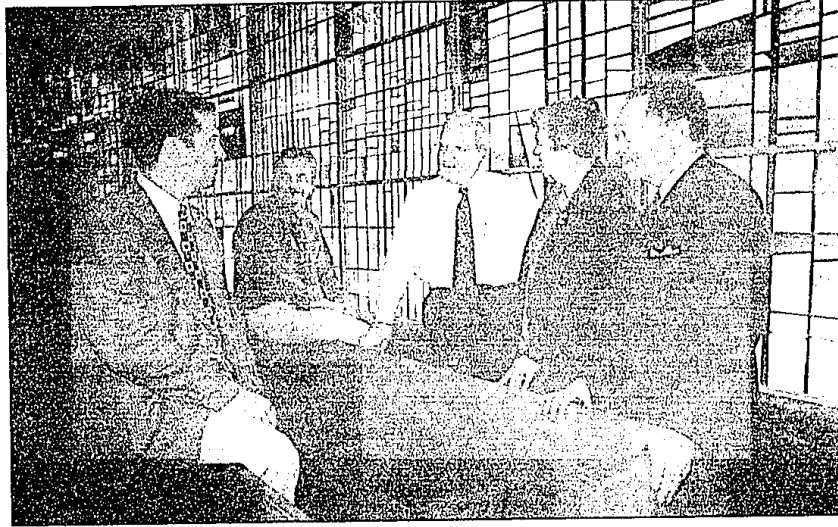
Ironically, his sense of place is derived from his worldly travels and an endless career that takes him from the northeast, to California to the Midwest.

Please see TILLINGHAST, C5

## Signs of promising future for Southfield Centre for the Arts



Regional resource: Southfield Centre for the Arts is on Southfield Road between 10 Mile Road and the Lodge Freeway.



**Multi-perspective:** The Southfield Centre for the Arts recently observed its first anniversary. Stalwart supporters include James Cristiano (left to right), head of the parks and recreation commission; Bill Waterhouse, director of parks and recreation; Bob Block, city administrator; Marlowe Belanger, manger of the cultural arts division; and Lucius Theus, president of the Southfield Federation of Arts.

## From sky to earth to a cultural mosaic

In his starched white shirt, well-groomed politeness and policy wonk speech, Bob Block appears as the prototypical city administrator of a big-city suburb.

But for a moment, he doesn't sound overly bureaucratic. There's no intricate talk about budgets, impending public projects, or how to address governmental inefficiencies.

He wants to talk about art. Or more accurately, he's interested in interpreting art.

Block, city administrator of Southfield, stands amid the former B'nai David Synagogue on Southfield Road and is quite comfortable discussing the gradation of stained glass that encircles the transformed house of worship inside what is now the Southfield Centre for the Arts.

"It goes from blue to represent the sky to a brown for the earth," said Block, pointing at the mosaic. "The idea is to show the transition - heaven to earth."

Transitions have been plentiful for the Southfield Centre for the Arts in its first year.

What began nearly 20 years ago as an utopian idea based on a formal, community-wide survey (known as the Golden Report) to establish an art center became a reality last June with the grand opening celebration, highlighted by a concert by legendary singers, The Platters, and a parade of spe-

**Southfield Centre for the Arts events**

**Performances**

- "Detroit Tap Festival," Friday-Sunday, June 26-28
- Through Friday, June 26: Artwork created by members of the Southfield Adult Recreation Center age 50 and older.
- Monday, June 29 through Friday, July 24: Precette Beckler, acrylic paintings
- Monday, June 15 through Friday, August 14 - Variety of programs for children 4-17 years old, including computer, sports, theater, art and travel. For a complete listing of classes, exhibits, rental fees and the 1998-99 concert schedule, call (248) 424-9022.



**Virtuoso:** Miriam Fried is recognized among the world's pre-eminent violinists.

## Fried's strings attached to ultimate 'good vibe'

A few weeks before she was scheduled to perform at the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, violinist Miriam Fried was on her way to Finland.

Traveling with her husband meant that she made reservations for three. Naturally, the third seat was booked for her Stradivarius with a Holy Grail history that'd make musical scholars tremble to think of the possibilities.

The violin, according to legend, was once cradled by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, a reluctant violinist who composed a Sonata in B-flat for Violin dedicated to the woman who owned the instrument.

**WHAT:** Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, a program of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Dvorak

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday, June 16-17

**WHERE:** Temple Beth El, 7400 Telegraph, (at 14 Mile Road) Bloomfield Hills

**TICKETS:** \$26, call (248) 362-6174.

"It has a good vibe running through it," said Fried, in a typical understatement.

For this Tuesday and Wednesday concerts at Temple Beth El, Fried is also bringing a familiar vibe. She'll be joined by her husband, violinist Paul

Biss, and her 17-year-old son, pianist Jonathan Biss.

The program features "Sonata in D Major for piano and violin, Op. 12, No. 1" by Beethoven, "Quartet in a minor for strings, Op. 13" by Mendelssohn, "Quartet in E-flat Major for violin, viola, cello and piano" by Dvorak, and "Platinum Spirals" by composer-in-residence Joan Tower.

Fried and the Bisses will be joined by cellist Paul Katz and the St. Lawrence Quartet.

The much-traveled Fried has per-

Please see FRIED, C6

## WEDDING

## A monument to boundless love without any grays

Nearly everything that Terry Lee Dill creates comes in one size - mythic.

His Godzilla-like metal sculptures, some of which have weighed 30 tons, merge raw, masculine power with a delicate and incisive sensibility. His ideas about space and movement invariably offer a place for human connections in a sterile world.

But perhaps his latest and most personal sculptural installation, "The Wedding," comes closest to creating his most enduring work in a career that began in legendary Soho during the

early 1970s and has included a range of impressive commission works around the country.

Ultimately, every work of art is about the artist. And in "The Wedding," Dill not only reveals himself in stark, somber detail, but has brought along a companion, his fiancée, Diane Roch Smith of Commerce Township.

In the darkened Robinson Gallery at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, Dill of Pontiac has created a labyrinth with a most pleasing, G-rated reward. It is the first-ever installation at the BBAC.

Inside the gallery is a rectangular room with two entrances. The room is attached to a large sphere. Inside the room is a wall with a round hole leading into the sphere. Inside the sphere a monitor plays a tape of a somber Dill unabashedly confessing his love for his bride-to-be.

At the base of the monitor is a cassette recorder. On the tape is a recording of Smith matching Dill tit-for-tat.

"We were talking about how to maintain the romance, and this idea of an installation where we're telling each other how much we love each other just sort of happened," said Dill.

The result is a narrative of love that



**Love confessions:** Diane Roch Smith, (left), and sculptor Terry Lee Dill stand in the BBAC's Robinson Gallery. Dill's installation is an endearing testament to the consuming influence of romance.

Please see BOUNDLESS, C6