

CONVERSATIONS



FRANK PROVENZANO

Searching for deeper meaning of the classics

William Williams isn't used to all the attention. But he's finding that the attention comes with the territory. From his office in the first-floor labyrinth of his sprawling ranch home in Bloomfield Township, Williams has settled on the Internet frontier.

Amid the solitude of suburbia, there's a raging community of information seekers knocking at his door. An invaluable busyness — that's the bizarre sign of assimilation into the cyberspace community of hackers and purveyors of information.

Two weeks ago, *The New York Times* ran a story about Williams' web site, "Concordances of Great Books." Since then, the hits on the web site keep coming. From about 40 per day before the article to nearly 600.

The most popular requests are Mark Twain, Dickens, Jane Austen and the Bible.

Pleased to oblige

"Concordances," which first appeared last June, offers visitors a quick search of 200 full texts of the classics, from Aeschylus to Shakespeare to Whitman.

Want to know how many occurrences of a word in Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment"? How about the use of "peace" in a Tolstoy novel? Who needs to know? Scholars or anyone searching for a deeper meaning of an author's work by comparing the various contexts in which terms are used.

Williams is pleased to oblige. For Williams, the web site is his no-charge contribution to learning. "I like books and I like to help people."

The revenue, he noted, is one way — out-going. The all-text site for the "graphically impaired" costs Williams \$500 a year.

And plenty of time.

Aid to researchers

For the retired actuary with a Master's Degree in mathematics from the University of Utah who figured corporate pension plans, the way to the Internet was paved in Perl, as in the Perl Language of computer programming.

Williams taught himself the language when he was helping a Mormon scholar in his own search of religious texts.

Then, Williams merely applied the computer program he obtained the full texts of selected classics from the Project Gutenberg and Books on Line electronic libraries. (The books are in the public domain and do not require copyright permission.)

Please see CONVERSATIONS, C2



Searcher, William Williams created a web site for scholars and lovers of the classics.

DOCUMENTING

THE HUMAN CONDITION



"American Gothic"



"Beggar Woman and Child"



"Department Store, Birmingham, AL"



"New England Fisherman"

Realism laid bare in DIA's Gordon Parks photo exhibit

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
STAFF WRITER
fprovenzano@homecomm.net

Two nights before he was scheduled to appear at the opening celebration for his highly anticipated 60-year retrospective, "Half Past Autumn" at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Gordon Parks' tone had grown weary. A bothersome virus had done what the hands of time have seldom accomplished — slow him down.

Because of his lingering cold, Parks noted, he won't be skiing in Vail for the first time in 38 years. And those long jogs through the New York City neighborhoods where he lives near the United Nations building will have to wait until his achilles tendon heals.

Energetic? Insatiably curious? A persistent survivor? You might not know the least of it.

Indelible impressions

At 86, Parks and his six-decades of compelling photography stand as a dynamic testament of the profound social and cultural changes of the 20th century.

Working in the 1940s and 1950s when magazines and still photography not TV — captured "news" and contemporary "history," Parks' work appeared regularly in "Life," which had 8 million subscribers.

His masterfully composed images capture the human face of "separate but equal," the moral imperative of the Civil Rights Movement and the anguish of those who suffer in poverty.

And like the indelible impression of his photos, Parks' charity is legendary. In the early 1960s, he made a short documentary film on a day in the life of an impoverished family living in Rio De Janeiro. A short time later, he arranged for the medical treatment of the youngest family member by flying him to an American hospital.

"I can't turn loose of a story once I get it," said Parks. "I can't forget the people. They're with me long after the photographs have been published."

In his typically modest way, Parks is reluctant to refer to himself as a "condit for history."

The 250 photographs in "Half Past Autumn," however, reveal that the 20th century flowed straight through his lens. Unlike his artistic contemporaries, who pursued Modernism's spirit of invention, or post-modern tendencies of abstractionism and deconstructionism, Parks relied on an age-old sensibility that academics fancifully refer to as "social realism."

In other words, Parks portrays reality without self-indulgence and the various guises of denial, romanticism or ideology. The kind of portrayal that takes a steady hand and an open heart.



Chronicle: The cultural changes of the 20th century run through the lens of Gordon Parks.

Spiritual migration

Parks' frequent subjects are artists, performers, fashion models, social activists, celebrities, coal miners, oil rig operators and those who deal with the most fundamental day-to-day issues of survival — finding shelter and nourishment. His most recent work utilizes computer wizardry and seems characteristically devoid of emotion.

To grasp Parks' contribution, it's essential to consider his work as a historical chronicle.

Photos of Muhammad Ali, Langston Hughes, Marian Anderson, black fighter pilots and people of the sophisticated upper class are intriguing portraits.

Please see CONDITION, C2

WHAT: Leslie Dunner conducts the Detroit Symphony Orchestra with tenor James H. Moore and the Brazeal Dendard Chorus directed by Brazeal Dendard.

• Johnson/Carter "UR Every Voice and Sing"
• Kodaly "Dances of Galanta"
• Hallmark Symphony No. 2 (World Premiere)

• Hallmark "I Will Lift Mine Eyes"
• Tchaikovsky Capriccio Italien
WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12; 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13

WHERE: Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward, Ave., Detroit

TICKETS: Call (313) 576-5111.

Composer draws on world sound

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER
hgallagher@homecomm.net

Leslie Dunner, resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, will end his 11-year tenure with the orchestra by conducting the world premiere of Adolphus Hallmark's Second Symphony, a work that he requested.

"He had just walked off the stage from conducting the Detroit Symphony in my First Symphony and said, 'When are you going to write a premiere for me,' and I said, 'How about my Second Symphony,'" Hallmark said in a phone interview from his home in Virginia.

That was in 1991. Dunner, who is in his first year as musical director of the Annapolis Symphony, called Hallmark about a year and a half ago to tell him that the DSO would commission the work that Hallmark had begun to compose in 1995.

Hallmark, who has a doctorate in music from Michigan State University, will be attending the premiere Friday and Saturday at Orchestra Hall. He will also be speaking to school groups throughout the week including a visit at 9 a.m. Tuesday to West Bloomfield High School and 4 p.m. Wednesday to Oakland University.

Hallmark has been acclaimed for his wide ranging musical compositions which include choral, chamber, dance and solo pieces.

The Second Symphony is a large 20-minute composition. The score calls for three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drums, bass drum, crash cymbals, suspended cymbals, tom-toms, African slit drum, xylophone, marimba, large tam-tam, bongos and strings. And though the work is primarily abstract music, there is an element of program music in the second movement, based on a trip

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Adolphus Hallmark

EXHIBIT

Artists trade tips on collecting

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER
lchomin@homecomm.net

Doug Semivan has an advantage when it comes to collecting art. A printmaker and associate art professor at Madonna University in Livonia, Semivan built his collection by trading work with teachers and students at Olivet College and Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills. He continues to acquire work from professional artists and his students at Madonna University where he chairs the art department. Semivan says anyone who has an interest can and should collect art that brings them joy. Many of the prints,

photos and drawings from Semivan's collection, now on exhibit at Madonna University, do just that.

"Collecting is not a daunting task," said Semivan, a Royal Oak artist represented by the Lemberg Gallery in Birmingham. "First, identify an area of interest. It's important to have a passion and to acquire things that delight you. If you follow your fascinations, you have more fun."

Semivan started trading his works while studying for a bachelor of fine art degree at Olivet College then continued through graduate studies in lithography at Cranbrook Academy of Art. At Olivet, Semivan's and other students'



fascination with the art went to the extreme of placing prints between sheets of Plexiglas then screwing the assemblage to their car doors.

"They're like a time capsule, said Semivan. "When you look at them again they remind you of a time in your life. Art can mark milestones in your life."

Prints are an inexpensive route to

Art of multiples: This woodcut is by Donald Rowe, a professor at Olivet College.

WHAT: An exhibition of art department chairman Doug Semivan's collection.

WHEN: Through Thursday, Feb. 18. For hours, call (734) 432-5737.

WHERE: Madonna University, 36600 Schoolcraft, at Levan, Livonia.

collecting because it's an art of multiples. Hand-pulled etchings begin around \$35 if purchased at an art fair but prices for the original art go up into the thousands of dollars.

The show's etchings, lithographs, wood engravings, woodblocks, and a Goya aquatint printed after the artist's death by the Spanish government

Please see COLLECTING, C2