

CONVERSATIONS



FRANK PROVENZANO

Familiar voice returns for MOT's season-opener

The phone rings, and the baritone on the other end announces that he's placing the call for the "diva" seated next to him.

In the background, the shriek of the "diva in waiting" is a clear sign of her embarrassment. Then, the baritone and soprano howl with laughter.

Life with Patrick and Mary Callaghan Lynch of Birmingham is a perpetual performance. A series of stops and starts, like making short trips from one laugh to the next. Or not being able to stop the hiccup.

"Believe me, he's not waiting on me," said Lynch, grabbing the phone from her husband. "I am not a diva."

Maybe not. But this Saturday, she'll certainly sound and look like one.

After a nine-year absence from the operatic stage, Lynch, perhaps best known as the vocal coach for Aretha Franklin, will step on the boards in the Michigan Opera Theatre's "The Barber of Seville."

Rossini's classic is the first of MOT's two-opera fall season. Floating aria in the secondary role of Berta, audiences will hear Lynch's soulfully colored soprano that has landed her leads in "The Pirates of Penzance" and "The Mikado."

"It's the perfect role to get back on stage," said Lynch, who has spent the last several years working in radio and television commercials. And, of course, she quickly points out, "being a mother."

Whenever she talks of family, her expression softens. Music and motherhood are inseparable, an aria that floats through her life.

Twenty years ago, Lynch came out of Marygrove College and performed in the chorus of an early MOT production.

After being cast as a late replacement in "The Barber of Seville," Lynch searched for MOT General Director David DiChiera at a recent rehearsal and gave him a big hug.

"I feel like we've been on a journey together."

With Lynch, there are two genres: an unabashed display of emotion and an effusive display of emotion.

"In many ways, David (DiChiera) has been my mentor."

A woman of feeling? This is opera. Melodrama is for cold fish. Grand spectacle is the norm.

"Before I go on the stage it's always terrifying, but I say a prayer, and then, I just love to perform."

Soulful? Twice a month, she coaches the Queen of Soul to sing arias. And Aretha, who isn't bashful about saying what's on her mind, views Lynch as a colleague.

"I've learned there aren't any small parts, only small players. I looked around at rehearsal, and thought, 'I'm up here in the big leagues.'"

A diva in waiting? You figure it out. Figaro, Figaro, Figaro.

Opening the season with "The Barber of Seville" will be the fifth production of the opera in MOT's history.

"There are only a handful of comic operas in the popular repertoire, and this is one," said DiChiera. "It's an opera that balances a season that has more heavy operas."

The light comedy has plenty of twists and slap-stick like humor in

What: The University Musical Society opens its season with performance artist Laurie Anderson's "Songs and Stories from Moby Dick." When: 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 30-Oct. 2. Where: Power Center for the Performing Arts, 121 Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. Tickets: \$20, \$34, \$24, \$18. Call (734) 764-2538 or (800) 221-1229.

Free educational events: Video screening of Anderson's "Home of the Brave" 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 29, at the Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor.

Master of Arts Interview with Anderson noon Friday, Oct. 1, at the Power Center. Meet the artist post-performance from the stage Friday-Saturday, Oct. 1-2.



For the 90's: The Lyon Opera Ballet will present Mats Ek's "Carmen" Saturday-Sunday, Oct. 16-17 at the Power Center.



Flamenco rhythms: Guitarist Paco Pena mixes the passionate rhythms of southern Spain's flamenco with the delicate, haunting melodies of the South American Andes on Friday, Oct. 8.

Sheets is bubbling with enthusiasm about their shared 120 year history and the fact he's leading the male members of the Choral Union in the second production of the season Sunday, Oct. 3.

The Ann Arbor premier of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13, "Babi Yar," will feature the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and conductor Neeme Järvi, the National Male Choir of Estonia and bass/baritone Sergei Leiferkus, along with the Choral Union under conductor Sheets. The landmark work was set to a poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a Soviet poet who condemned anti-Semitism in Russia and the massacre of 150,000 people, including 80,000 Jews, at Kiev by the Nazis during World War II.

"It's a towering work that has to do with the massacre of tens of thousands at the site called Babi Yar," said Sheets, an instructor and director of the choir at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills. "The emotional range of the piece is extremely broad, portraying in sound the suffering of others in the first movement to the irony of the last movement. It's also a challenge singing in Russian and in union. Everyone singing the same note is difficult but imagine the sound of 135 men and a Russian baritone all singing it together on stage."

University Musical Society president Kenneth C. Fischer said "Babi Yar" is but one of the highlights of the season featuring 81 performances of 60 different productions, and more than 150 educational events. The 121st UMS season features an array of internationally renowned recitalists and orchestras, dance and chamber ensembles, jazz and world music performers, and opera and theatre: from around the world.

"One of the highlights is the return of the Berlin Philharmonic after their 35-year absence," said Fischer. "When you can have them come at all it's a real treat. They rarely tour. We had to plan well in advance. We've been working on the appearance 3-4 years and couldn't

On your doorstep

University Musical Society brings the world of performing arts home

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN • STAFF WRITER
lchomin@oe.homecomm.net

Thomas Sheets could talk for hours about the Choral Union and the University Musical Society, which opens its 1999-2000 season with performance artist Laurie Anderson Sept. 30-Oct. 2.

have done this, to bring this great orchestra to Michigan, without the help of German businessman Wilhelm Kast. It's the most expensive one-night show in UMS history. "I'm also excited about the way we end the season April 22 with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra doing a swing dance tour. What a hot night that's going to be."

In between the opening program spotlighting Anderson's new work co-commissioned by UMS, "Songs and Stories from Moby Dick," and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra encouraging dancers to take to the floor at the Eastern Michigan University Convocation Center, the University Musical Society has planned a season that also includes Ballet Folklorico de Mexico, drummers of West Africa, and orchestras from all over the world including the Czech Philharmonic, the Gothenburg Symphony from Sweden, and the Russian National Orchestra.

"I'm also excited about Ruben Gonzalez and Ibrahim Please see UMS, C2

Laurie Anderson offers whale of a tale

BY ALICE ROBIN STAFF WRITER
arobin@oe.homecomm.net

There are high-performance athletes, high-performance stereotypes and high-performance gasoline. Then there's Laurie Anderson, a high-performance performance artist.

Anderson, a spiked-hair pioneer of multi-media spectacles, opens the University Musical Society's 121st season with three performances of her latest work, "Songs and Stories from Moby Dick" beginning Thursday, Sept. 30, at the Power Center in Ann Arbor.

Her latest venture into the world of experimental music scores and theatrical novelty was inspired by her involvement in a program to promote



Laurie Anderson Please see ANDERSON, C2

Exploring the boundaries of art, artifice and cinema

BY FRANK PROVENZANO STAFF WRITER
fprovenzano@oe.homecomm.net

Like her white-chalk drawings on the large-scale metallic blackboard that line the walls of the Cranbrook Art Museum, Tacita Dean's images and ideas are seemingly etched in an easily removable dust.

Yet that's not meant to imply that her ideas are likewise fleeting. On the contrary, in a perhaps overly subtle manner, Dean's pseudo-documentary film about cinematic sound effects, a series of chalk

drawings, and two short films inspired by a yachtman lost at sea are examples of the post-modern art experience. For observing and pondering Dean's exhibits - "Foley Artists" and "Disappearance at Sea" - means to become acutely aware of what lies beyond the making and viewing of today's most accessible and popular medium.

The "art" in Dean's work is more about the connection of ideas, than any objective aesthetic standard. Dean is more concerned to evoke an intellectual "ah ha," rather than stimulating a

visceral reaction or demonstrating any technical drawing or filmmaking virtuosity.

In her exhibit, "Foley Artists," created in 1996, Dean documents the craft of two people who provide the sound effects for film. The visual sound recording reveals the tricks of the trade as Foley artists approximate footsteps on wet pavement, rain on an umbrella and the sound of a kiss. A nearby dubbing cue chart diagrams the chronology of sound effects.

"Without analysis and in an unmediated way, she shows us the way sound is made for film," said Irene Hofmann, curator of exhibits at Cranbrook Art Museum.

"It's shows us the artifice of cinema."

In an adjacent gallery, Dean's more recent work, "Disappearance at Sea," created in 1997, explores the relationship between the artist's notions of the sea and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

travels, and the story of Donald Crowhurst, whose journey to win the first non-stop, single-handed, round-

Please see BOUNDARIES, C2

ART IN THE COMMUNITY

Beaumont's art display leaves healing impression

BY ALICE ROBIN STAFF WRITER
arobin@oe.homecomm.net

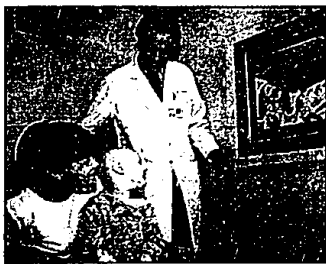
For 13-year-old Andrew Segal of Orchard Lake, William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak would not have been his choice of a place to spend a Saturday evening. But when a persistent and gnawing pain in his elbow wouldn't go away, his parents took him to the emergency room.

Concerned, his physicians ordered more tests, and admitted him to the pediatric unit. That's where he and his parents were met with a pleasant swath of color.

"I thought it was unusual to have original works of art in the rooms," said Jill Segal, Andrew's mother, who worked at Park West Gallery in Southfield for 13 years and is just a master's thesis shy of an art history degree.

Andrew and his mom encountered Walled Lake artist Donna Vogelheim's "Just Do It," a cheerful watercolor bursting with vibrant hues. It's one of seven works purchased from the artist for the pediatric unit.

"I thought it was really colorful," said Andrew, sitting in one of the youth lounges in his green soccer T-



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLNERSKY

shirt and a portable IV pole at his side.

Worth a smile: Three-year-old Kyle Johnston, his mother, Joanne, of Commerce Township and pediatrician Dr. Jeffrey Maisels make a game of counting kitties in "Oh Baby, It's Cold Outside," a pastel by Nancy Coffett.

shirt and a portable IV pole at his side.

An optimistic outlook

Creating a stimulating yet tranquil atmosphere for children is what the Beaumont pediatric staff was trying to accomplish.

With money left over from the renovation of the fourth floor wing, Nurse Manager Ellen Smezer and Recreational Therapist Kathleen Grobbel met with Dr. Jeffrey Maisels, chief of pediatrics and a member of the hospital's art advisory committee, to decide what to put in the rooms.

Their quest started at the Elizabeth Stone Gallery in Birmingham, known for its fanciful children's book illustrations. And the owner, a former school librarian, was all too happy to oblige.

"I believe that children identify with art created for them," said Stone. "They can identify with the characters from 'Max' (a very popular red bunny), 'Curious George' (the legendary mischievous monkey) and 'Goodnight Moon.'"

Along with "Max" and "The Cat in the Hat," Stone turned the trio on to Troy artist Soon Jung Hwang, who creates elaborate woven-paper images, and Michigan artist Joel Tania, whose whimsical works

Please see BEAUMONT, C2