

# Beastly from page C1

tance from Stuart Grigg Design in Southfield, the text on the labels is meant to relay as much information as possible in the newest effort by the education department to motivate visitors to learn. For each exhibition, two members of the department work with curators to provide videos, labels, touch screen computers, interactive theater, and the audio tours most recently created for the reopened 20th century galleries. INFORM, a hand-held audio information source, offers visitors the opportunity to select objects about which they want to know more.

"One of the key issues was how to present the material in a way that's interesting," said Czajkowski. "Parents and grandparents are concerned with the children who are distracted and tugging at their arms. Think of the harried mother who wants to have a quality experience with her children. It's designed with kids age 7 to 10 in mind but I have a four-year-old and it's equally engaging."

Czajkowski and the rest of the education department staff and curators, took a workshop with Dr. Charles Seavey, a well-known museum evaluator and consultant two years ago to learn how to create a "layered experience" for visitors, one that

**■ 'The labels wear well. This is hands-on, not just for children but adults and they're learning together.'**

Jennifer Czajkowski  
DIA

expands on the two-dimension visual. Armed with construction paper and markers, they entered the galleries and discovered among other ideas, flip labels. Laminated, low-glare and visually attractive, they have visitors look for the story told on a Greek vessel by asking what the King is doing hiding in a water jar? The decorative imagery features Heracles (from ancient mythology) capturing a wild bear that was destroying the land and frightening the cowardly King Erymanthus.

"The labels wear well. This is hands-on, not just for children but adults and they're learning together," said Czajkowski. "We're trying to make things easier to read with the larger type for grandparents as well as children."

A question about a terra-cotta Hellenistic object from the third to first century B.C. in the bear and pig exhibit case asks which one was used as a toy or rattle?

## Common experience

"We tried to pick works of art that children and adults can relate to their everyday objects, to relate the ancient art to a common experience," said Czajkowski. "Kids know right away, it was probably used as a toy."

"The labels are more user friendly," added Humm. "They ask a question which prompts you to look at an object. Especially for kids, it's like a game or process of discovery. For the Greeks, the sea was very important to their way of life, so water creatures like a turtle and a boy riding a dolphin appear on coins around 500 B.C."

An Egyptian amulet in the shape of a lion, 332-300 B.C., was meant to protect a person from harm and endowed them with the power of the lion, a symbol of strength even today.

"If you understand a little bit about art, you understand where you're coming from, you understand people," said Humm.

assistant curator of ancient and Islamic art. "The ancients saw large cats as symbols of power. We wanted to use these attributes to see if we still do that today. There's not the same sacredness but the car industry selects names like cougar or Mustang to try to establish power or swiftness as an image and sports teams use names like Lions, Tigers, Bears, and Rams. We still do connect animals to popular culture today with Batman, the Ninja Turtles, and Spiderman."

An amulet in the shape of a frog is the ambassador for the exhibit and the curators have named him Pammy, for the Egyptian King Psammetichus the First, during whose reign life centered around the Nile. A horned animal etched on the cheekpiece of a silver Thracian helmet was worn by a chieftain. The work is a preview of the Thracian art objects to be shown in "Ancient Gold: The Wealth of the Thracians, Treasures from the Republic of Bulgaria," scheduled for June 27 to Aug. 29, 1999. Thrace once occupied most of central Europe from the fifth millennium B.C. until it was gradually conquered by the Romans around the fourth century.

# Collaboration from page C1

What a difference three years makes. Not to mention a growing membership at The Arts League, a healthy revenue stream at the Detroit Opera House and rave reviews of "The Harlem Nutcracker" over the last two years.

Perhaps that's why along with dancing sugar plums, there's an electric spirit of collaboration among the three principal presenters of this year's "The Harlem Nutcracker."

## How do we feel?

"Our partnership is like a marriage," said Oliver Ragsdale, president of The Arts League, an organization largely made up of African Americans to promote the arts and African-American culture.

"We have wonderful days, and days when we need to work on the relationship."

On the surface, it seems that the collaboration among UMS, The Arts League and Detroit Opera House is a way to broaden audiences for ballet by appealing to African-Americans.

"Sure, there's the racial part to this," said Ragsdale. "But the bottom line is that we're in the business of making art happen."

UMS' Fischer deflected any criticism from cynics who might claim the main intent of the partnership is to sell tickets.

"We're building something new," he said. "We constantly ask each other, 'How do we feel?' We do not want to use a Black organization to build our audiences, to look good to a foundation, and then leave."

Many foundations mandate for arts groups to seek partnerships with other arts organizations and offer a community education element in their programs.

The apparent success of the unprecedented collaboration is why the premiere of "The Harlem Nutcracker" at the Detroit Opera House will be watched by more than just live audiences.

## Building bridges

"There are a lot of foundations looking at this project," said David DiChiro, managing director of the Michigan Opera Theater, which produces operas and dance concerts at the downtown Detroit Opera House.

"This collaboration is a way to build bridges," he said. "When we bring in a cross-section of the metro Detroit population, then we know we're fulfilling our mission."

And what's more, the collaboration also fills the prescription for arts groups set forth by the National Endowment for the Arts in "American Canvases," a 1997 report which suggested ways to further build American culture.

The partnership behind the production of "The Harlem Nutcracker," noted UMS' Fischer, also extends beyond the stage.

"One of the brilliant features of Donald Byrd's work is that it involves local communities," he said.

As part of the appeal of bringing "The Harlem Nutcracker" to town, Byrd has arranged for about 30 local dancers to participate on stage, and for local choirs to perform in the lobby before, during intermission and after the performance.

Said Ragsdale: "Along with The Rockettes, 'A Christmas Carol,' and 'The Nutcracker,' we see 'The Harlem Nutcracker' as another holiday ritual."

The timing couldn't be better.

# Judy Collins to perform in Southfield

Judy Collins will perform a holiday concert at the Southfield Centre for the Arts, 24300 Southfield Road, 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 8. Tickets are \$30 and \$35 per person, and available by cash or check at Southfield City Hall, 26000 Evergreen Road, at the main reception desk, 8 a.m.

to 5 p.m. weekdays, or at the Parks & Recreation Building, 26000 Evergreen Road 5-7 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets are also available at all Ticketmaster ticket centers, or call (248) 645-6666.

The Golden Mushroom is offering a special pre-concert

dinner at 6 p.m. before the Judy Collins concert. The dinner is \$25 per person and begins with delicious chicken smoked chicken breast on mixed field greens, red wine vinaigrette, crumbled blue cheese and avocado.

Diners can choose between two main courses - smoke-roasted beef tenderloin with roasted garlic whipped potatoes, grilled vegetables and wild mushroom pateaux, or broiled Atlantic salmon on lemon risotto with artichokes and tomatoes.

Dessert will be chocolate French flourless torte with strawberry sauce and mint cream. Call the Golden Mush-

room (248) 559-4230 for dinner reservations.

In this concert, Collins will share her joy of the holiday season. Her concerts are well-known for creating a warm, enjoyable evening filled with traditional and new songs for Hanukkah and Christmas. She will be accompanied by the Southfield-Lathrup Madrigal Singers, under the direction of Robert A. Martin.

Her recordings of "Both Sides Now," "Amazing Grace," and "Send in the Clowns," stand as classics for all time. Her 24 albums have sold millions of copies and have been certified gold and platinum.

# Conversations from page C1

advice he's offered to his students.

"Whatever your subject, it has

to be an authentic expression in your art."

In a long career of "authentic expressions," Wilbert looks back at a rather humble explanation for his success.

"I've been lucky, truly fortunate," he said. "I've had a regular job, had some of the best galleries representing me, and I've gotten just enough attention to make it all work."

Time to lean back. Fold his hands. Think about his upcoming lecture.

"I'm going to talk about my work. I have hundreds of slides."

And as many aphorism about the artist's life.

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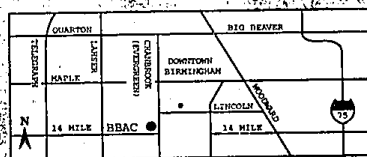
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Since its holiday debut when *The Harlem Nutcracker* mixes to the glorious strains of Duke Ellington's *Music for a Special Season*, this holiday masterpiece has become a must-see for the holiday season. This year, the production returns to the Detroit Opera House with a new twist. The production is being presented by the Detroit Opera House, featuring the Detroit Opera House Orchestra and the Detroit Opera House Chorus. The production is being presented by the Detroit Opera House, featuring the Detroit Opera House Orchestra and the Detroit Opera House Chorus. The production is being presented by the Detroit Opera House, featuring the Detroit Opera House Orchestra and the Detroit Opera House Chorus.

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