

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

## Composer writes music for the masses

Christopher Tew composes classical works in the Romantic tradition with chromatic harmonies for everyone to enjoy.

Listeners tired of contemporary dissonance won't want to miss the Saturday, March 11, concert by the Livonia Symphony Orchestra. Tew's "A Picture Symphony for Strings in D Minor" paints pictures of a warm spring day, yesterday's countryside and a night sky filled with thousands of stars. The composition, dedicated to his wife Laura, is the seventh the orchestra has performed.

"There's been a tendency for 20th century composers not to care what the people would think," said Tew. "I like to write music that is not just artistic but interesting. If the audience can't enjoy it, there's not much use writing it."

A former violist with the Livonia Symphony Orchestra, Tew will arrive several days before the concert to oversee the work that Livonia Symphony conductor Volodymyr Schesniuk will carry to fruition. The orchestra has performed six of Tew's works to date including "Elegy for Strings," "Overture for Hanukkah" and "Prelude and Dance." Tew's Rhapsody on Jewish Folk Melodies was performed last May in Livonia.

"I'm very honored that Volodymyr wants to perform the music," said Tew. "I leave it to his judgment. Music is almost always a collaborative art. I have a sound in my head but everyone adds their bit of art to make it better than any one person could do."



STAFF PHOTO BY DIANE MITCHELL  
In concert: Violinist Leslie English is one of the Livonia Symphony Orchestra members.

Tew misses living in the Livonia area since a job transfer took him to Tennessee where he now plays with the Cadek Community Orchestra in Chattanooga.

"I like coming up to Livonia to see old friends and hear the orchestra perform because they sound so wonderful," said Tew.

## Musical Pictures

In addition to the symphony by Tew, the orchestra will perform "Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity" from "The Planets" by Gustav Holst; "The Moldau" from "My Country" by Bedrich Smetana; "Fingal's Cave (Hebrides Overture)," Felix Mendelssohn; and "Finlandia," Jean Sibelius. Livonia Symphony trumpeters Brian Moon and Ken Robinson will be the featured artists on "Concerto for Two Trumpets" by Vivaldi.

"My idea for the program was to bring people some music that's like a movie—musical pictures," said Schesniuk. "The Vivaldi concerto is played with old-fashioned trumpets with a higher register and is a good experience for the musicians and enjoyable for the audience. I chose Chris Tew's work because his music is not really modern. He's closer to late Romantic style."

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call arts repeditor Linda Ann Chomin at (734) 953-2145 or send e-mail to lchomin@oc.ohio.com.

## "Musical Pictures"

When the Livonia Symphony Orchestra draws pictures using the music of Vivaldi, Smetana, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Holst and Tew:  
When 7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 11.  
Where: Churchill High School Auditorium, 8900 Newburgh, north of Jay, Livonia.  
Tickets: \$15, \$10 students/children. Call (734) 645-8808 or (734) 404-2741.

"This world was never meant for one so beautiful as you."  
VAN GOGH PHOTO AT RIGHT, SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A FELT HAT, 1887, OIL ON PANEL.  
VAN GOGH PHOTO AT LOWER RIGHT, SELF-PORTRAIT, 1887.



THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS  
When: Friday-Sunday, March 12 to June 4. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday-Saturday, and until 10 p.m. Friday-Saturday.  
Where: Detroit Institute of Arts, 6200 Woodward.  
Cost: \$15 admission; \$10 for students, seniors, and children 12 and under. Free for members and those with a Detroit Institute of Arts membership card. For more information visit www.dia.org or call (313) 487-4000.

## MEET VAN GOGH

# FACE TO FACE

AN ARTIST FOR ALL TIMES • AN ARTIST OF THE PEOPLE

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Vincent van Gogh died never knowing the impact his art would continue to have on viewers. His vibrant palette and the emotionalism with which he captured his subjects makes



PORTRAIT OF JOSEPH ROULIN, 1888.

him an artist of the people, an artist for all times. It took van Gogh the first 27 years of his life to realize his one passion, the next 10 to develop his skills as an artist.

From the drawing of a wounded veteran weathered by life to a character study of an old skipper from his "Heads of the People" series, and a vibrant portrait of a young French soldier, the 66 portraits in "Van Gogh: Face to Face," opening March 12 at the Detroit Institute of Arts, lends viewers on a journey that documents those torturous times from the early 1880s until his death from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in Auvers-sur-Oise, north of Paris, in 1890.

Co-organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum of Fine Arts Boston and Philadelphia Museum of Art, the exhibition paints a picture of the man, who in his adult years, surrounded himself with the working class and down-trodden to paint the people society forgot. A rebel of sorts, van Gogh never quite fit in with society. Battling to find his place, the tall red-haired misfit sympathized with the coal miners aking out the barest existence in the Borinage region of Belgium and the long-forgotten pen-

sioners at the Dutch Reformed Old People's Home in The Hague. In his portraits, he captures their sadness, melancholy and weariness.

"Van Gogh by representing them he's representing himself," said George Keyes, who initiated the exhibition after Mr. and Mrs. Walter Buhl Ford II donated a portrait of Joseph Roulin to the museum in 1992. "Many people can identify with van Gogh because he had such a great hardship—that he could overcome this. There's a tremendous mythology about this artist. He was a member of a well-known family, a reader of 19th century literature from Zola to Balzac. He identified with the characters in the novels. He had a photographic memory, all qualities in his art."

The rapidly worked canvases and drawings illustrate the intense manner in which van Gogh worked. His energy and emotion can be seen in the deft brush and pencil strokes. Van Gogh had an affection for his subjects and strove to capture their souls. He never copied from nature but instilled a spirit.

"We need to stress he has this strong sense of evangelical zeal when he was work-



HEAD OF A PEASANT WOMAN WITH WHITE CAP, 1885.

ing with the people in the coal mining region," Keyes said. "He was a very empathetic artist who identifies with the subject. So far as the portraits versus character studies, we need to focus on the artist's unique interest in these personalities, these walls of society."

## Dedicated

Van Gogh had a history of copying masters such as Rembrandt throughout his career. Obsessed with becoming an accomplished draughtsman even before a painter, he refused to sketch or paint from casts. On the other hand, models were financially difficult to come by for van Gogh, who would either give up money set aside for food or trade the finished portrait for a sitting. When models were unavailable, he copied masters such as Millet or did self-portraits.

"In St. Remy he didn't have access to the outer world so Theo this brother and an art dealer in Paris) sent him copies of Millet who focused on the same type of subject matter—peasants," said Keyes. "Van Gogh has a way with characters. They seem to have an inner life, a spirit of their own."

"Van Gogh was one of the great pioneers of modernism. He liberated color from a descriptive agent and an art that strove for realism. Color became for him the primary agent for expression. He was a classic artist of the



BEARDESS FISHERMAN SEEN IN FACE, 1883.



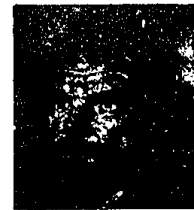
HEAD OF A PEASANT WITH CAP, 1885.



THE ZOUAVE, 1888, OIL ON CANVAS



ITALIAN WOMAN OR L'ITALIENNE, (AGNOSTINA SEGATORIO, 1888, OIL ON CANVAS



HEAD OF MAN, 1887, OIL ON CANVAS

## IMPACT

## Record crowds, international prestige expected with portrait exhibit



Gatekeepers: George Keyes, curator of European Paintings (left), and Graham Beal, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, stand at the entrance to the most anticipated exhibit in the museum's history, "Van Gogh: Face to Face."

BY FRANK PROVENZANO  
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The swirling anticipation is hardly coincidental as the Detroit Institute of Arts prepares to host a 15-week evangelical revival starring Vincent van Gogh.

The minister of intense color, coarse brushstrokes and hauntingly empathetic renderings of common people is in the building. In the spirit of his superstar status, expect images of van Gogh on T-shirts, posters, hats and other memorabilia.

After all, this is the retro 2000s. History is to be merged and purged as needed. Hype? That's a mere prerequisite.

Doors to Van Gogh: Face to Face open next Sunday, during a month when terminal gray Michigan weather has been known to induce bouts of

ear-cutting anguish and a longing for the expressive color of spring.

By any popular or critical standard, a van Gogh exhibit is an immediate, large-scale draw. It is also a stunning display of some of the most valuable art in the world. Depending on the piece, an original painting by van Gogh can attract between \$50-\$70 million.

After Rembrandt, no other Dutch painter's name comes next. Yet because of his dramatic, tortured life, distinctive style and prolific output, the late 19th-century artist's greatest influence might not only be on Expressionism and as a patron saint of tortured artists.

Perhaps more than any other artist, van Gogh represents the 20th-century's preoccupation with the psychology and personal life of artists.

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