

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

Master class features former CAPA student

All Mack had tickets to see "Fosse" long before she knew her former student, Greg Reuter, was one of six principal dancers in the production, which continues through March 19 at the Fisher Theatre. Mack frequently goes to see shows at the Fisher, Gem and Fox to stay on top of her job as director of the Creative and Performing Arts program at Churchill High School in Livonia. But she never would have had the opportunity to coordinate a March 2 master dance class with Reuter if it hadn't been for Mary Murphy.

It was during a November class trip to Chicago to see "Fosse" that the CAPA dance instructor discovered Reuter doing some of the same steps he'd done in the CAPA production of "Sweet Charity."

Still, students weren't expecting Mack to begin the master class by reminiscing about how Reuter looked students in a props cabinet when a substitute teacher was filling in for one of her theater classes in the 1980s. Reuter's come a long way since his days in the CAPA program. This year the program is training 150 Livonia high school students in theater, dance and music.

Sharing experiences

"I think it's wonderful that students who've gone on to success are able to share their experience," said Mack. "For the dancers in CAPA it gives them the chance to dance with professionals and find out what's involved. For theater students, it exposes them to dance and musical theater."

After a brief introduction, a video of the production featuring "Big Spender" and "Mein Herr" was shown. Reuter and cast members Linda Bowen and Jennifer Savelli then led 40 CAPA students through a combination of steps from "Bye, Bye Blackbird." Afterward, during a question and answer session, students had the opportunity to find out what it takes to become a professional performer.

Did Reuter have a degree in theater? Yes, he earned a bachelor of fine arts in musical theater performance at Western Michigan University. Bowen, originally from Maryland, has a degree in dance and choreography. Savelli went straight from high school to performing with a ballet company.

How did they survive while auditioning in New York City? Bowen worked as a waitress on Sixth Avenue before she got a break. Reuter advised students to get a job and save money before leaving Michigan.

Getting the job

How did they get the job dancing in the production that showcases the works of legendary choreographer Bob Fosse? Through open calls. Before

Please see EXPRESSIONS, C2



STAFF PHOTO BY FRANK PROVENZANO
Steppin' out: Greg Reuter shows CAPA students at Churchill High School a few dance steps from the musical "Fosse."

Dance Fest

WSU hosts Great Lakes regional festival

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Linda Simmons is a little nervous, but nonetheless thrilled about the Great Lakes Region American College Dance Festival coming to Wayne State University March 15-18. More than 700 students and faculty members from 16 universities throughout the Midwest and Canada are participating in the event that exposes dancers to the latest techniques and choreography in master classes, lectures and performances. A faculty concert, Michigan Choreographers Concert and Gala Concert cap the festivities.

This is the first time WSU is hosting the event founded in 1973 to support

and affirm the role of dance in higher education.

An honor

"This is an honor for us," said Simmons, the WSU dance professor coordinating the festival. "We're excited about showing off the dance department at Wayne and all the great artists in the area. With our Michigan Choreographers Concert we wanted to showcase Michigan and show them our very best."

Simmons, and the staff of the university's dance department, invited established companies such as Eisenhower Dance Ensemble, Rochester Hills; Peter Sparling Dance Company, Ann Arbor; Detroit Dance Collective and Onyx Dance Company of Detroit to present the best of Michigan dance

on Friday, March 17 at the Detroit Opera House. Ann Arbor based-Bichini Bio Congo Dance Theater will add cultural diversity to the concert with its Congolese-flavored fare.

During the festival, faculty and student dance companies will present two choreographed pieces from each of the schools for judging by Luke Kahlich, dance professor at Temple University in Philadelphia; Gina Gibney, director of the all-female ensemble Gina Gibney Dance in New York; and legendary dance/choreographer Carmen DeLavallade.

The best of the student and faculty choreography will be presented at a Gala Concert on Saturday, March 18 at the Bonstelle Theatre on the WSU campus. Several of these companies will go on to compete in the national festival in Maryland in May.

Wayne State's dance department will perform "Sund People of the" by faculty member Erica Wilson-Perkins, and the student choreographed piece "Her," by Megan Brunke of West Bloomfield.

Preview

On Friday, March 17 the Peter Sparling company will preview the first section of "Possible Dances" which is scheduled to premier June 30 at the Ann Arbor Summer Festival in the Power Center. Set to poems written by Sparling and a score by Paul Epstein, the work features dancers moving to the sounds of nature. Sparling, who spent his teen years in Plymouth, will read the text for this multi-media piece.

"Every poem is a dance in a way," said Sparling, a University of Michigan dance professor who for the last couple of years has been working on his poetry during a summer writers retreat at Cranbrook Educational Park in Bloomfield Hills. "It's through imagery and the flow that a poem comes alive."

Tim Smola, a member of the Peter Sparling Dance Company, is looking forward

Please see DANCE, C3



PHOTO BY DAVID SMITH

Multi-media: Peter Sparling Dance Company previews the first section of "Possible Dances."

Great Lakes Region American College Dance Festival

Faculty concert 8 p.m., Thursday, March 16, at Bonstelle Theatre, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit
Michigan Choreographers Concert 8 p.m., Friday, March 17, at Detroit Opera House, 350 Madison Ave.
Festival Gala Concert, 8 p.m., Saturday, March 18, at Bonstelle Theatre
Tickets: \$15-\$20 for individual concerts, \$40 for all 3 concerts. Call (313) 577-4275.



PHOTO BY TOM KEARNEY

Passing Through: The Detroit Dance Collective performs a work by Barbara Selinger.

CONCERT

Jazz musicians ready to wail and do battle

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Midge Ellis remembers a time in the '40s and '50s when jazz greats such as Gene Krupa, Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald traveled all over the world just to play in a Battle of the Bands. Perched on a revolving stage that individually showcased each group, the bands would lay down licks, one as hot as the next.

On Sunday, March 19, Ellis is sounding the battle cry as a fund-raiser for the Michigan Jazz Festival at Schoolcraft College. Larry Nozoro, Matt

What: Larry Nozoro, Matt Michaels with Johnny Trudell, and Tom Saunders Detroit Jazz All Stars go horn to horn in a "Battle of the Bands."

When: 3 p.m., Sunday, March 19
Where: Clarenceville High School, Auditorium, 20155 Middlebelt, south of Eight Mile Road, Livonia.
Tickets: \$15, call (248) 474-2720 or (734) 459-2454. Proceeds go to the Michigan Jazz Festival (Sunday, July 16 at Schoolcraft College) and the Clarenceville Schools Alumni & Friends Foundation.

Michaels with Johnny Trudell, and Tom Saunders' Detroit Jazz All Stars will go horn to horn playing everything from be-bop to swing and Dixieland in a Battle of the Bands at Clarenceville High School in Livonia.

Ed Lowe, WDET Jazz DJ and newly-named programming director for the Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival, will emcee the battle.

"We're trying to bring that idea back," said Ellis of Livonia. "It was just the most fun. They would take turns wailing. It's a lesson in improvisation, and that's the mission of the Michigan Jazz Festival - to educate."

Matt Michaels remembers those days too. He and his trio with guest trumpeter Johnny Trudell will play jazz in the swing style. The trio, with various guest artists, can be heard every Wednesday night at Ron's Fireside Inn in Garden City.

"We're offering a choice of what they like," said Michaels, a Southfield resident and instructor at Wayne State University. "Guy Lombardo, Harry James, they would engage in these. There'll be three different styles. Tom

Saunders has quite a large following for Dixieland."

Saunders began playing coronet 54 years ago. For more than 20 years the jazz veteran's Surfside Six band was a staple in clubs around the Detroit area. It was during this time, Saunders met the legendary Wild Bill Davison, the musician who most influenced his style. Saunders went on to tour Germany, Switzerland, Ireland and England with Davison. He returns to Germany for a week of performances this summer after touring Switzerland for three weeks as leader of the Wild Bill Davison Legacy band.

But before he leaves, Saunders and Detroit Jazz All Stars Al Winters, trombone; Bob Pinterich, drums; Bill Meyer, piano; Don Bayberry, bass, and clarinetist Jim Wyse of Livonia will battle it out with Michaels and Nozoro.

"We all know each other so it'll be fun," said Saunders. "Each band will play mini-set and then their version of one specific song. I got hooked on Dixieland as a little kid. My brother played it. It was in the house all the time. I like it because it's happy music."

Festival debuts avant-garde productions

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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Nearly everything about the Ann Arbor Film Festival is avant-garde — from the defiant sensibilities of the films to the actual location of the screening room, where an annual media preview of the entries is held. Clearly, Ann Arbor isn't Sundance. Festival organizers loathe the notions of commercial popularity or mainstream



Film spectrum: Over six nights, 114 experimental films will be shown at the Michigan Theater. Shown above is a scene from "The Bottomless Cup."

acceptance. The intent is to prod, provoke and challenge.

Experimental isn't just a concept used by filmmakers. It's the operating philosophy followed by festival director Vicky Honeyman, who graduated in film studies from the University of Michigan in the late 1960s, and maintains the fervent idealism of the counter culture.

By day, Honeyman is a hair stylist. Every other waking moment she gives shape and style to the longest running experimental film competition in the country, hold this Tuesday through Sunday at the Michigan Theater in downtown Ann Arbor.

Against the current

Last year's preview venue was in the back room of Honeyman's hair salon a few blocks east of Main Street, which, by any standard, is a bit cramped.

Certainly, there's been an in-your-face hipness to previewing films in a room where you can also get your roots retouched and a few inches taken off the sides.

This year's preview was held next

Please see FILM, C2



Hot jazz: Tom Saunders and his Detroit Jazz All Stars put their Dixieland music on the line in a "Battle of the Bands."