

# Awards from page E1

For a band that didn't win, two of three Brothers Groove members made it to the podium more times than most nominees. Vocalist Chris Codish tied with Butler Twins' Clarence Butler for Outstanding Blues Songwriter and vowed to share his award with his father Bob Codish, also a nominee. Codish and his brother-in-groove, bassist Jim Simonson of Clarkston, accepted awards on behalf of Johnnie Basgitt, who won for Outstanding Blues Recording, Instrumentalist and Group. Both musicians performed on the winning album, "Party My Blues Away."

The reggae wild men in Immunity were all smiles while accepting four awards. Jonathan Pettus, who works in Birmingham, took the Outstanding Reggae Vocalist award from nominated band mates Tom Yarga, Tom Wall and Tony Mitchell. Bassist Bill Koggenhop won for Outstanding Reggae Instrumentalist. His wife, band manager and MCMF member Terri Koggenhop, was proudest when Immunity seized the Outstanding reggae group award, a category Immunity's been nominated for three years running. "It was quite a night," she said.

That night finished off on a hopeful note for 13-year-old Ryan Rischack and Kathleen Coules, 17. Michigan's favorite "Cowboy," Kid Rock, sauntered out with the two representatives of The Rainbow Connection. The organization grants wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses. Kid Rock, who has a long history with The Rainbow Connection, sponsored both of the kids' wishes to go to Disney World. He handed them cowboy hats and both Detroit Music Awards he earned that night. "He's been very kind to this organization," said Patricia Tossmer-Flack,

executive director of the charity and an Oxford resident. "He obviously cares about the kids. We've seen the softer side of him. He's a very gentle person." The Rainbow Connection raised \$4,000 by auctioning off Kid Rock's guitar. The rest of the money raised has not yet been tabulated. For a complete list of DMA 2000 winners, please refer to the Web site at [www.detroitmusicawards.com](http://www.detroitmusicawards.com). For more information on The Rainbow Connection or to donate, call (248) 338-7760.

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# Delivering from page E1

tional family attempt to live together — all under the same roof.

After reading the script for *Squabbles*, Bob Weibel is amazed that the play hasn't been done with any regularity since it premiered in 1982. Written by Marshall Karp, the comedy, which is produced by Mary Lynn Kuna of Plymouth, opens Friday, May 6, at the Water Tower Theatre in Northville.

"It's a nifty script and a funny, funny show," said Weibel of Westland. "The name is apropos. It's about a 30-something couple and a man who moves in with his kids. He lives to argue. He's a retired cab driver and they're trying to figure out what to do with dad when things get worse when his mother moves in after her house burns down. They both think the other one has to go. Then the daughter gets pregnant. One night the lights go out and the next thing you know they're not thinking about getting married but are going to live together."

Even though Weibel stepped in at the last minute to direct, he's not worried about the quality of the production because of the seasoned actors with whom he's working. Weibel, who's been in theater since 1958, sees a lot of plays as a reviewer for the *Observer* newspapers. He believes theater is a living organism that only happens once.

"This is the kind of play that's pure escapism," said Weibel. "They'll have a lot of fun watching this dysfunctional family and the warm glow they get off into the sunset together."

Levine continues to go through the script delivering one funny line after another. He thinks it's the quality of writing that makes *Squabbles* a hit with audiences.

"It's a contrast of characters," said Levine. "Abe and Mildred are different but similar. He's always trying to get her and she's trying to get back at him with plays on words. She says, she had a dream about being in a cab that stops suddenly but there's no jerk. Get it? Because I'm not in the cab."

Levine empathizes with his character who's "a loud mouth, insulting kind of guy but deep down inside he really cares. He's physically comfortable with the production season with *The Fantasticks* in fall.

for Levine to find roles such as Dreyfus or the rabbi he played in *Fiddler on the Roof* with the Village Players of Birmingham.

Over the years, the types of roles Levine is able to play have changed. In fact his busy life as drama director at several metro Detroit high schools in the '60s and '70s and his current position as principal of the Academy of Westland, has left little time for acting during the last 30 years. He returned to the stage last season in the guild's *Wait Until Dark*. "You have to have a sense of humor," jokes Levine, a short, graying man on the rotund side. "No longer could I play the handsome, 6-2 here."

Robert Purcell is Jerry Sloan, the son frequently in the middle of the rows between his father-in-law and mother, Mildred Sloan, played by Dorothy Dunne of Livonia. Nicole Ludwig plays his wife, Kari Kuna and Sara Ellsworth have spent the last six weeks constructing the set and perfecting the lighting. Nancy Adams is responsible for costuming the actors in clothing from the 1950s. "In the play he's a commercial jingle writer who took in her father who had a heart attack, then his mom moves in," said Purcell, a Canton resident, "and all heck breaks loose when the lights go out."

"That's who Jim Christiansen takes over as Hector Lopez, the Puerto Rican handyman who can never correctly pronounce Dreyfus' name.

"My challenge has to be consistent with the accent and to remember to mispronounce Dreyfus," said Christiansen of Livonia. "There's a running gag but if I forget and pronounce it right, it blows the gag."

Delores Pearson, who plays Mrs. Fisher, is looking forward to her role as the nanny.

"It's wonderful to get to be so bossy," said Pearson of Canton. "She thinks nobody should touch the baby but she's just a fun character." Becoming a member of the guild has made Pearson's recent move to Michigan easier. She'd been experiencing a sense of isolation. Back in Pennsylvania, Pearson hosted her own syndicated TV program on crafts and cooking.

"It's a marvelous way to meet new people and that's what community is all about in community theater."

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# Interaction from page E1

"It's kind of hard to explain the production," said Belcher, vice president of The Theatre Guild's board of directors. "It's an interactive evening. There's some people planted in the audience. You'll never know what's the show and what's not."

Dobbie Tedrick of Farmington Hills wrote the cabaret-style production with help from Tim Jeffrey. The comedy opens on the final rehearsal for a cabaret show that's gone awry. Tedrick, who also directs the *New and IMPROVED Comedy*, is an old hand when it comes to theater. She's the music director and plays the part of Celeste Romano in *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* at the Baci Theatre in Pontiac. "We're blurring the lines," said Tedrick. "It's like *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* which mimics incidents you might encounter if you were attending a wedding. There's improvised bits going on even during intermission. Always like to do a skeletonally improvised show with actors making up their lines as they go along."

Chip Duford, a cast member along with Tedrick in *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, plays the emcee. Stacie Guerrero is one of the younger actors in the production. A Canton resident, Guerrero recently played the lead role in the Plymouth Theatre Guild's production of *Oliver!* During the 1998-99 season at Meadow Brook Theatre, she won the Peo-

ple's Choice award for Best Supporting Actress as Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. Gary Blumer, a musician who toured with Martha Reeves, plays piano in *Cabaret Calypsa*.

"We're working with a lot of professional performers who come from such venues as Second City, the Michigan Opera Theatre and Meadow Brook," said Belcher. "It's going to be a fun evening and ticket sales go to support our 2000-2001 season. The nearly \$10,000 spent last year in renovations dried up the budget."

"We're coming out of a one-show season which didn't make enough to keep the theater alive, so we're shirking our reliance from contributing to a board of directors. It's a different approach for community theater but one we hope will work. We'll still have members who want to act in plays but it will be run like a business."

In addition to restructuring the way The Theatre Guild is operated, Belcher and the rest of the board plan to renovate the exterior of the building. Many people, said Belcher, don't even know the theater is there. But the group has come a long way since December when its very existence was in doubt. Today, thanks to the help of members interested in carrying on the nearly 60-year tradition, The Theatre Guild of Livonia Redford is making plans to open a five-production season with *The Fantasticks* in fall.

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