

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

National Instruments

Showtimes

Between University & Walker Blvd.

340-375-2600

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ART BEAT

Art Beat features various happenings in the suburban art world. Send Wayne County arts news to Art Beat, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia MI 48150, or fax them to (734) 591-7279.

ARTS MEETING

Artifacts Art Club meets 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 27 at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Farm Road, east of Farmington Road.

Evangeline Klein will show slides of her trip to Africa.

TASTE, TOAST AND TEACH Wayne RESA will host a food and wine tasting 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 28 at the Detroit Opera House.

Tickets are \$50 and available by calling (248) 646-6666. The "Taste, Toast and Teach" event benefits Wayne RESA's Future Teachers Scholarship Program.

Wayne RESA is a regional educational service agency providing a variety of services to children, families and communities.

AN ARTISTIC DISCOVERY Students in the 13th Congressional District will exhibit their work in "An Artistic Discovery," part of the 20th annual Congressional Art Competition and National Exhibition, Wednesday-Friday, March 28-30 at Belleville High School, 501 West Columbia Avenue.

Hours are 3-8 p.m. Wednesday and 5-8 p.m. Thursday-Friday. U.S. Representative Lynn Rivers will host a reception for the participants, family members, teachers and general public 2-4 p.m. Saturday, March 31 at the high school. The winner of the competition will be announced at that time and all students will be recognized with a Certificate of Congressional Recognition. The winning art work will be sent to Washington, D.C. to be hung in a corridor of the U.S. Capitol for a year.

ART CLASSES Ivan Kendle will teach a figure drawing class beginning 10 a.m. Friday, March 30 at the Plymouth Community Arts Council, 774 North Sheldon at Junction.

Students will draw from a live model. To register, call 418-4278.

BENEFIT CONCERT Classical Bells will present a benefit concert 6:45 p.m. Sunday, April 1 at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, 30800 West Six Mile, east of Merriman, Livonia.

A free will offering will be taken for Habitat for Humanity of Western Wayne County. For more information, call (248) 643-0868.

STUDENT RECITAL Madonna University will hold a student music recital, "Music Primavera," 3 p.m. Sunday, April 1 in Kresge Hall on campus, 36600 Schoolcraft at Levon, Livonia.

Admission is free but donations to the music scholarship fund will be accepted. The recital will include solo and ensemble vocal, piano, flute, clarinet and guitar pieces.

Guests Laurie Parks, pianist Michelle Bies and Susan Knighton, clarinetist Jessica Wilson and guitarist Chris Wilson.

What: American Ballet Theatre presents *The Merry Widow* When: 8 p.m. March 29-31 and 2 p.m. April 1 Where: Detroit Opera House, 1528 Broadway in Detroit Tickets: \$17-75; call the DOH box office at (313) 237-7464 or Ticketmaster at (248) 645-6666

The Merry Widow is one of those ballets that flirts with that fine line, the line between the tradition of classical ballet and the more cheeky side of opera, says Kevin McKenzie, the American Ballet Theatre's artistic director and its former principal dancer.

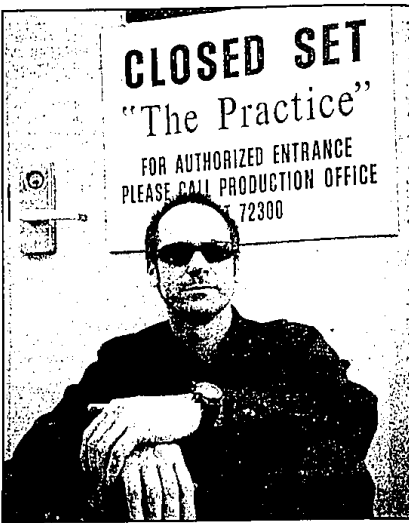
And well it should. The Merry Widow surfaced as an operetta in 1905. Later in the 20th century, Hungarian composer Franz Lehár's libretto was translated into classical dance.

Today, the ABT, which is in its 61st season, performs the work as part of its repertoire. The company is slated to present the three-act ballet March 29-April 1 at its Midwest home, the Detroit Opera House. The performance is part of the 2000-2001 DaimlerChrysler Dance Series.

"We felt it was long overdue that ABT represent something more theatrical," said McKenzie, of bringing the ballet into the repertoire.

Set in a small Balkan state under the 18th century Austro-Hungarian Empire, the plot revolves around widow Hanna Glawari and her wealth.

Fearing he will marry a foreigner, a state ambassador and



Acting Workshop: Gordon Michaels, personal acting coach for Dylan McDermott on "The Practice," will give an acting workshop Friday-Sunday in Northville.

are among the students performing.

CALL FOR ARTISTS Canton Township is looking for artists for its 10th annual Fine Art and Fine Craft Show Saturday-Sunday, June 23-24 at the Liberty Fest in Heritage Park.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Deadline for application is April 16. For more information, call (734) 463-3710.

ACTING WORKSHOP Gordon Michaels, personal acting coach for Dylan McDermott on "The Practice," will give a workshop Friday-Sunday, March 30 to April 1 in Northville.

The fee is \$250. For more information, call (734) 261-6354 or (310) 727-2838.

Michaels, a graduate of John Glenn High School in Westland, has been in the entertainment industry for more than 20 years. He's appeared on Broadway, in films and on television. Film credits include "The Last Word," "Air Force One," "Leaving Las Vegas" and the soon to be released "Texas Rangers."

Michaels will cover a variety of topics in the workshop including cold reading and on-camera techniques, how to get an agent, improvisation, New York versus L.A. markets, scene study, the actors resume, career consultation, and monologue coaching.

SCULPTORS WANTED The Livonia Arts Commission is seeking sculptors interested in producing a commissioned sculpture for the city of Livonia. The

work will be the third piece for a developing sculpture garden located behind city hall.

Sculptors should send a letter to the arts commission by March 31 stating their interest in the project. Include photos or slides of previous work. Write the Livonia Arts Commission at 33000 Civic Center Drive, Livonia MI 48154. For information, call the city's community resources department at (734) 466-2536.

MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS An exciting music scholarship opportunity, designed and conducted by two mid-Michigan music educators, awaits 40 young male singers on May 18-20 on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing. "A Cappella Blast" will offer young men, ages 14-18, the chance to sing a cappella music using the Barbershop style in an ensemble setting. Clinics will help young singers to broaden their skills and musical experience.

The Young Men in Harmony program of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America (SPESBASQA) has received generous grants from the Harmony Foundation and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, making of only \$25 per participant.

Registration deadline is Wednesday, April 18. For a form or more information, call Bob Wolf at (313) 421-1652 or visit the Web site: www.harmonymc.com/pioneer/pjio.htm. There are limited places in the chorus.

Ballet merges elegant dance with fun

By NICOLE STAFFORD Staff Writer nstafford@home.com

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And well it should. The Merry Widow surfaced as an operetta in 1905. Later in the 20th century, Hungarian composer Franz Lehár's libretto was translated into classical dance.

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McKenzie equates breaking down the choreography to actors working the lines. "A line can be read in a million different ways. The challenge in this choreography is in the interpretation."

Theatrical ballets have strong audience appeal. "You go with the characters, you have fun with them and get involved in the ridiculous situations that they are in," said McKenzie.

In 1975 choreographer Ronald Hynd staged the ballet as a showcase for Dame Margot Fonteyn. The Australian Ballet in Melbourne, the National Ballet of Canada, Vienna State Ballet and La Scala Ballet in Milan are the only other dance companies that have performed the work.

The Merry Widow offers audiences a sensory experience, too. Sets by Desmond Heeley capture the opulence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And operetta standards in the score sound pleasantly familiar.

While the men don tuxedos, the women join them in lavish gowns to glide across a ballroom floor. The two major pas de deux, said McKenzie, "are superior examples of sweeping her off her feet."

Along with romance, there's a happy ending.

One-Act

Warm & Tender

313-425-7700

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