

## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA ANN CHOMIN

## DSO honors African American contributions

Thomas Wilkins applauds the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for having the foresight to recognize contributions of African Americans to classical music long before he came on board as resident conductor. He believes that for more than 20 years the Classical Roots concerts have not only introduced audiences to composers and musicians of African American descent, but also revered them as role models for the next generation.

On Saturday-Sunday, March 2-3, the tradition continues with a program featuring compositions ranging from Undine Smith Moore's *Scenes in the Life of a Martyr* to George Walker's *Lyric for Strings*. Guest soloist is

### Classical Roots Concerts

What: Detroit Symphony Orchestra celebrates contributions of African Americans to classical music.  
When: 8:30 p.m. Saturday, March 2, and 3 p.m. Sunday, March 3.  
Where: Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Tickets: \$20-\$54. Call (313) 576-5111.  
Gala: Begins 5:30 p.m. Saturday with a cocktail reception, dinner and concert followed by afterglow. Tickets \$175. Call (313) 576-5119.

16-year-old violinist Melissa White, winner of the Junior Division of the 2001 Tazewell-Sphinx Competition for young black and Latino string players. The finals take place at Orchestra Hall each February.

Wilkins didn't hear a lot of music by African American composers while growing up. Life will be different for his twin daughters Nicole and Erica. Wilkins plays all styles of music for the 9-year-olds

because he wants them "to understand the merits and characteristics of music in any genre, to know what makes good music."

"The Classical Roots concerts demonstrate to young African Americans that this is something we participate in."

Please see CHOMIN, B2



Thomas Wilkins, conductor



## Michigan Fine Arts juror slices through the competition

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Viewers of this year's Michigan Fine Arts Competition probably will walk away shocked but that's exactly what juror Nick Cave had in mind when he selected work for the exhibition opening Friday, March 8, at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center. Traditionally, shows of this type focus on two-dimensional media such as photographs, prints, and paintings — florals, landscape, portraits, genre scenes, and abstracts.

The 21st annual competition/exhibition spotlights art meant to prod the mind or, as Cave puts it in his juror statement, "send electrical charges to the fingertips." Installations and assemblage abound. There are works to hang over the sofa, but not as many as in past years.

Arts center executive director Janet Torno attributes the change to Cave, who earned a master of fine arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills. In addition to teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Cave creates visual and performance art. As in years past, Torno chose a juror for the competition in collaboration with a local gallery. Cave will be in town to open an exhibition of his art, *Objects of Desire/Party Favors*, at Sybaris Gallery in Royal Oak 5-7 p.m. Saturday, March 9. But first he will perform in one of his "sound suits" Thursday, March 7, at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center. Cave bases much of the work, a form of political and social commentary, on his feelings about being a black male in America.

"Nick Cave is a really unique artist," said Torno. "His sound suits are made from afghans attached with noisemakers and activated with movement."

Cave selected 70 pieces from 332 entries submitted for the annual competition which was originally coordinated by the Detroit Institute of Arts. Prizes totaling more than \$9,000 will be awarded after judging by Cave 6:30 p.m. Friday, March 8.

"The show is fantastic, very cutting edge," said Torno. "I read Nick Cave's remarks and he was looking for things to make your spine tingle. He had a vision in mind that he was looking for."

There are lots of installations, pieces, inspiration pieces. I like the flavor of the show.

"Many people ask is there Detroit art. I don't really see a Detroit aesthetic. It's a universal thing now. Because of electronic media, they see what's going on in the world and create from this broader view."

Inspired by loss

For Brian Nelson it was personal loss, the illness and death of his grandfather, which initially inspired his work of welded steel. Industrial in nature, the tables on wheels reference movement and evolved from an original work created after a walker used by his grandfather. Nelson places an inverted drain in the center of each as a way to symbolize the need for a breath of

fresh air in society.

His newest work grew out of the birth of son his Cole 21-months ago and the terrorist attacks on America on Sept. 11. Nelson conveys his *Tears for Emily and Cole* in a work of stainless steel and carved salt. Emily refers to Emily Dickinson and a poem she wrote about death. The work was originally conceived for a February faculty exhibit in Ford Gallery at Eastern Michigan University where Nelson is director of the sculpture program.

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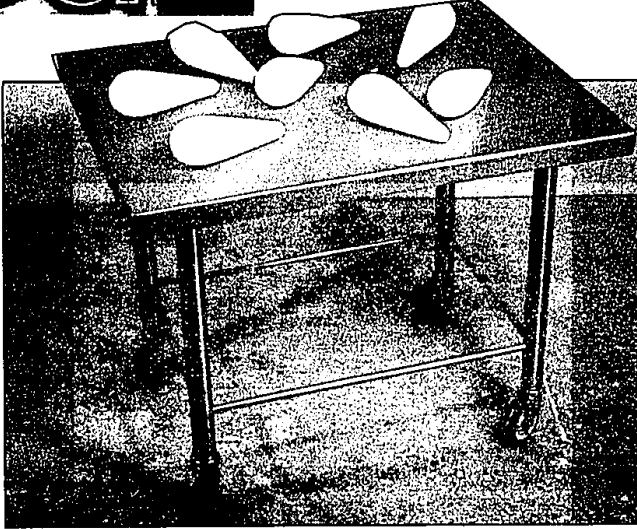
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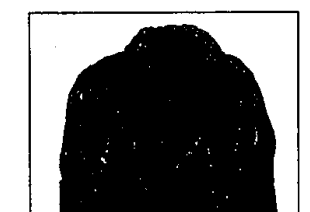
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Tears for Cole: Brian Nelson created this welded stainless steel work after the birth of his son and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

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Mosaic series: Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan sculpted this 24- by 41-inch leather coat from clay.



The observer: Helene Lubin painted this oil after observing an observer of a Paris street scene.

son. "That's where the tear aspects came from. I was trying to find some place to put the grief. They're dramatically large size tears. Our culture is grieving — changing. The attacks eliminated the simplicity of freedom that my son will have. Things are going to be much more difficult for him than for me."

### Pop culture

Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan takes a lighter look at popular American culture. The Farmington Hills clay artist created a life-size leather coat for the Michigan Fine Arts Competition. From her Mosaic series, the work is like "a puzzle, carved out of a solid piece of clay, hollowed out and cut into pieces, fired separately then assembled and meant to be hung on the wall." Another work features a pair of hiking boots.

Rosenbloom Kaplan currently has work in a group show at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. She earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Michigan.

"Our clothes reflect our culture," said Rosenbloom Kaplan. "It was inspired by a long leather coat my daughter bought. I often look in my own

Please see COMPETITION, B2

## FAMILY FUN



Here they come to save the day: See Buzz, Woody and Andy panic when they learn Andy's mom is having a yard sale in *Disney On Ice Toy Story 2*.

www.observandecentric.com

## Two very different ice shows glide into Michigan

BY LANA MINI  
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It's 8:45 a.m. in Los Angeles and two-time Swiss National figure skating champ Lucinda Ruh has already made a slew of phone calls and scheduled meetings to discuss her plans to set the Guinness Book of World Records for fast spins — more than 270 revolutions per minute.

While planning that Ruh, known as

the *Queen of Spin*, is on tour with other World and Olympic figure skating champions in *Target Stars on Ice*. The figure skating show is in its 16th year and coming to The Palace of Auburn Hills on Saturday, March 2. It's an ideal show for figure skating enthusiasts, Ruh said.

"It's not a typical ice show," Ruh said. "This is fully choreographed with detailed costumes and very colorful lighting. It's fun — we aren't in com-

petition and we can just be ourselves."

Ruh is skating with a prestigious line-up that includes Katarina Witt, Anjelika Krylova, Oleg Ovsianikov, Tara Lipinski, Kristi Yamaguchi, Steven Cousins, Jenni Meno, Todd Sand and Kurt Browning.

### Toy Story

For kids too young to appreciate

Please see ICE, B2



Energetic: Olympic gold medalist Tara Lipinski will perform at *Target Stars on Ice* on Saturday March 2 at The Palace of Auburn Hills.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BARRY MITTAN

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