

AMMO for reviving America's vital signs

Music is bringing people together across the country and around the world. Benefit concerts and artistic collaborations have sprung up in large numbers to build solidarity, pay tribute, and celebrate the diversity of America since Sept. 11. People are using music to communicate where words don't suffice. This surge of performance activity is helping people connect, grieve, and heal. It is reviving America's vital signs.



Darlene Dreyer

But reviving the American spirit through music is not about saving the world — it's about moving hearts, lifting spirits, and bringing people together. This requires the energy of countless visionaries, leaders, musicians, and volunteers who are breathing life into music on local and regional stages.

In Southeast Michigan, where arts presenters abound, and there's an orchestra serving nearly every city from Ann Arbor to Detroit, resources for creating artistic collaborations are in great demand. As a result of the burgeoning need for resources both monetary and human, a team of arts advocates is coming together to build a professional network for leaders of orchestras and musical organizations in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties.

The doors to this new era of collegial communication opened in the fall of 2000 when Gordon Stump, President of the American Federation of Musicians Detroit Local No. 5, invited orchestra managers and musicians to bring their perspectives to a good-faith bargaining session. Stump called the leaders together to fill the need for a collective agreement that covered union musicians playing in community-based and regional orchestras as orchestras can continue to hire these musicians at an economically viable, fair pay level. Who could have imagined that a labor management negotiation session would open lines of communication? Through Stump's initiative, this experience has increased opportunities for communication between members of the orchestra family.

Shared challenges

After nearly six months of bargaining, consensus building, and sharing perspectives, Warren Symphony Conductor David Daniels concluded that the musical organizations might benefit from a little "commiseration" about the particular circumstances facing Southeast Michigan musical organizations. We are all concerned about seeing our orchestras thrive and we share some of the same challenges. Daniels polled a few of the participants to see who would be interested in seeing the organizations collaborate on an ad-hoc basis and decided to invite a few behind-the-scenes friends to lunch to see if they needed group therapy, too.

So, what do you get when you mix some music leaders, a little lunch, and a few words? AMMO — the Association of Michigan Musical Organizations. The original constituents of AMMO were orchestras, but the group has quickly expanded to include a chorale ensemble and 19th Century brass band. The consortium encourages involvement by conductors, executive directors, musicians, volunteers, board members, and staff. So far, the organizations expressing an interest in participating include the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Dearborn Symphony Orchestra, Dordrecht Saxhorn Band, Fort Street Chorale, Grosse Pointe Symphony, Livonia Symphony Orchestra, Plymouth Symphony Society, Pontiac-Oakland Symphony, and Warren Symphony Orchestra. Doors are open to musical organizations from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Washtenaw counties.

The hope is that the groups will create a channel for communication about the challenges of music-making and orchestra management in Southeast Michigan during quarterly meetings, and a forum for envisioning the future role of the orchestra in local communities. They will share ideas and resources to economize overhead

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Contemporary work: Constance Powell painted this abstract that will be on exhibit at the Festival of the Arts.

Colorful CREATIONS: Festival serves up an array of art

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Festival of the Arts

What: Extravaganza features visual art, music and displays of food
When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday-Saturday, March 8-9, noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 10
Where: Nativity Episcopal Church, 21220 West 14 Mile Road, between Lahser and Cranbrook/Evergreen, Bloomfield Township
Admission: \$9, call (248) 646-4100

Highlights
■ Opening reception to meet the artists 7-10 p.m. Friday, tickets \$10
■ 10:30 a.m. Sunday service featuring gospel music by Al Jacquez and Friends

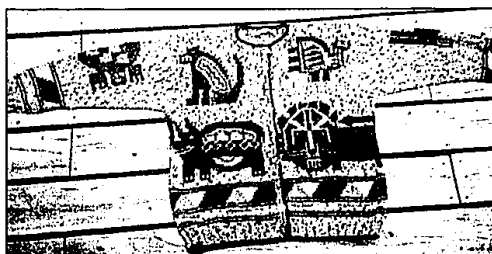
Olympic team.

Visual art, music, food — festival chairperson Deborah Odette thinks the combination is what Pastor Tom Stahl and

parishioners had in mind when they founded the festival. This year's arts extravaganza features 56 artists showing paintings, clay, wood sculpture, photography, jewelry, and fiber Friday-Sunday, March 8-10. Festivities begin 7-10 p.m. Friday with harpist Susan Parce performing at a reception to meet the artists and taste some of the edible art prepared by the church's cooking club under the direction of John Prepelec and the professional chefs. On Sunday, Al Jacquez and Friends will provide a little spiritual food for the soul with a program of gospel music during the 10:30 a.m. service.

"Twenty years ago members of this small parish wanted to celebrate the creative gifts of God with art, music and all manners of art," said Odette, a Troy attorney who previously worked as curator of an art collection in New York City after earning a master's degree in museum practices. "We always had local art talent. Parish members are artists, musicians. The festival fits in with the character of the parish. It's who we are, a small parish where everyone gets involved."

To ensure the quality of visual art, Mary Clark Gage joined the show that transforms the church, parish hall, hallways, and classrooms into



Fiber art: This sweater by Anastasia Stutcher is one of hundreds of works to be featured at Nativity Episcopal Church during a three-day arts extravaganza.

a gallery. Gage has worked as a director/manager for several galleries including Sybris in Royal Oak and Detroit Focus. An upper level room offers affordable art, \$50 and under, not juried by Gage.

Wonderful mix

"The art is excellent quality," said Odette. "It's a wonderful mix of new artists and people we've shown before. We try to do something a little different every year. Blown glass is new, vessels, vases and bottles by Alan Swan. I saw his work in the Birmingham Temple show last fall. The works

are very colorful, organic types of shapes, a bowl that looks like a snail turned upside down."

"I'm really excited about the food component and the sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, Maxine Gardner's mosaics. She breaks up ceramics and grouts them herself. She had a special on HGTV last year."

Joanne Goldberg of West Bloomfield is bringing her beaded evening bags, whimsical dolls and silver jewelry to the festival. Goldberg uses tiny needles to recreate vinyl

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THEATER

Einstein meets Picasso in delightful comedy

BY KEELY KALESKI WYOGNIK
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Steve Martin is one of Amy Lynn Smith's favorite comedians, and she's delighted to be directing *Picasso at the Lapin*, a show he wrote.

"The first time I saw the play I was fascinated by it," said Smith of Birmingham, who is getting ready for opening night, Friday, March 15 at St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook. "It's incredibly funny and makes you think."

Picasso at the Lapin is a comedy about Pablo Picasso and Albert Ein-

stein — two minds that changed 20th century — and what might have happened if they'd met. It takes place in 1904 at Lapin Agile, a famous cabaret bar in Paris.

"There are other people in the bar, and you feel like you're there too," said Smith. You'll meet Freddy the bar owner and his girlfriend, Germaine, who is also a waitress; Suzanne, a woman who stopped in hoping to find Picasso; an art dealer; inventor; and countless others.

Smith's goal is to present a play that is as insightful as it is funny. She

wants the audience to realize everyone can contribute something that's creative and unique.

"Humor helps you understand complex things like the Theory of Relativity," she said. "Steve Martin has given us portrayals of Picasso and Einstein that show their humanness and silliness. I'm fascinated by the photo of Einstein sticking out his tongue. They were real people."

She also wants the audience to see how everyone contributes to the future



At St. Dunstan's: Scott MacDonald plays Picasso and Duncan Mein is Einstein, in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*.

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