

Chomin

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from O'Hare dance schools in Birmingham and Westland performed jigs and reels in colorful costumes at the Hellenic Cultural Center. A couple of my co-workers and I sat on the edge of the dance floor just so we could watch them up close. It amazed us how high they could kick.

"I always like to watch the girls dance," said Ann Ross of Bloomfield Hills. "It's a big holiday for us."

According to Paddy O'Brien, leader of Chulrua, one of the groups performing at the Irish Fest in Westland, there isn't a hoopoe over St. Patrick's Day in Ireland. Chulrua, named after the favorite wolfhound of Finn McCool, an ancient mythological Irish warrior, plays upbeat traditional Irish music.

"St. Patrick's Day is low profile, a Holy Day of obligation for Irish Catholics," said O'Brien, who grew up in County Offaly in the midlands of Ireland. "You wear the shamrock. In the old days we had hand-painted, small feasts held in the fields with a pipe band and sporting event, lots of horse racing, Irish dancing, and a big parade in Dublin. Now there

Irish Celebrations

Motor City Brass Band with fiddler Kelly Garver, Nioto, piper Tyler Duncan, and Celtic Renaissance 3 p.m. Sunday, March 17, at the Southfield Center for the Arts, 28000 Evergreen. \$10, \$8 seniors/students, \$25 family. (248) 788-6618 or (248) 424-9022

Chulrua, ballads by Eddie McGlinchey and Mick Gavin, The McNeills play the music of Cape Breton, and dancers from O'Hare School of Dance 2 p.m. till 7 Sunday, March 17, at the Hellenic Cultural Center, 36376 Joy, east of Newburgh, Westland. \$10, kids free. (313) 537-3489

are smaller parties throughout the country with floats, and bands on floats. Here there's an emphasis on everything being green. There that would be nonsense. There was a lot of poverty in Ireland.

"I started playing button accor-

dion at age 11, harmonica at age 9. Uncle Mark played melodeon; my mother and father were singers. Other than that there was no music growing up in the 1950s. Ireland was very poor. There was no money to buy musical instruments."

Mick Gavin knew O'Brien before he moved to the U.S. in 1969 in search of a better life. It was in the old country, O'Brien learned dance music and songs like Foggy Dew which he found on Chulrua's first CD *Barefoot on the Altar*. Their second, *Down the Back Lane* is tentatively scheduled for release this summer.

"Paddy plays the old style. Paddy has 4,000 tunes in his head. He's known for his recollection of tunes and their place of origin," said Gavin, a Redford fiddler who'll once again perform with his sons Sean (flute) and Michael (fiddle). Gavin founded the Irish Fest featuring dozens of pipers, fiddlers and musicians. On St. Patrick's Day he'll be picking up shamrocks before heading to church and then to the Hellenic Cultural Center where Irish isn't the only music you'll hear. The



Step dancers: Brigid Wilson (left), Jemma Flood and Colleen Ross kick up their heels at the Hellenic Cultural Center on St. Patrick's Day.

McNeills will be back in their kilts to play the music of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia where many Scots settled.

"This will be the most music accomplished day," said Gavin. "We've never had four major groups and a local singer, Eddie McGlinchey of Canton singing ballads. I can guarantee the music will be the best ever."

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call Observer & Eccentric arts reporter Linda Ann Chomin at (734) 953-2145 or send e-mail to lchomin@oe.hometown.net

Women

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ther by way of a husband or son, but as the daughter of Henry VIII. Elizabeth used imagery to portray herself as the ruler of England. A Royal Charter from 1671 bears Elizabeth iconography in the upper left corner. In a case to the left is a small agate cameo of Elizabeth from a ring or brooch. Elizabeth frequently gave images of herself to her noblemen.

"The Virgin Mary was a popular subject in paintings under the Catholic Church. Under Protestant rule, Elizabeth became the Virgin."

Dangerous women

Chastity is thrown out the window in section three - Seductresses and Other Dangerous Women. Jan Gossaert delivers a mixed or negative message about women in his drawing of Adam and Eve. The Apocrypha story about Judith portrays women as good because she saved her people by killing Holofernes. The New Testament's Salome is seen as evil because she used her feminine wiles to obtain the head of John the Baptist. Lucretia is a

heroine involved in founding the Roman Republic. She redeemed her honor by killing herself. Her family was so distraught they ended up driving the Etruscans out of Rome.

Works from the Uffizi Gallery, the British Museum, Bibliotheque Nationale and Musée du Louvre, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and private collections, tell the story of heroines, warriors and goddesses through the final galleries.

Simon Vouet keeps visitors guessing about who Venus is really looking at as she gazes into the mirror. From a certain point, it appears as if she's looking at the viewer. Not to be missed is the stunning painting of Joan of Arc attributed to Peter Paul Rubens.

"It's a look back at an earlier era when women were breaking gender barriers," said Dixon. Today women are distinguishing themselves in politics, business, the arts and sports but there's still a glass ceiling. Women still have a long way to go."

Families

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their own.

"Kristen is the one who got us all started because she wanted to be an orphan in *Annie* so I decided if she was going to do it, I'd try it. We both got parts. That was four years ago and since then Kristen and Katie and I took parts in a variety of plays and my husband got tired of sitting at home alone."

Who wouldn't get involved when there's a chance to sing such great Rodgers and Hammerstein songs as *The Sound of Music* and these are a few of *My Favorite Things*. Dittus warns however that it's a lot of work.

"Community theater is a big commitment," she said. "You have to have a real love for it. Some nights you're at rehearsal three hours but waiting around most of the time until it's your turn. Last night we were there until 11 p.m."

Katie doesn't seem to mind. The 12-year-old East Middle School student plays a student nun and the goat in the *Goat Herder Dance*.

"It's fun but challenging to

Bloomfield Players

What: Present the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical, *The Sound of Music*

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, March 15-16, and 2 p.m. Sunday, March 17

Where: Andover High School, 4200 Andover Road at Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills

Tickets: \$12, call (248) 433-0886

learn how to sing Latin for the student nun," said Katie who receives plenty of help from music director Bruce Snyder, choir teacher at Andover High School. "My favorite part is the Goat Herder scene. I'm supposed to be a goat puppet. It's fun to do because I'm supposed to be an animal but I'm not really an animal. I have to do these really jerky movements."

Bloomfield Players encourages families to become part of its community theater whether it's behind the scenes, or on-stage

playing the part of a goat. Several make up the 70-member cast including Kay-Elle Murphy and Michelle Diane of Bloomfield Hills, the Chuck Miller family from West Bloomfield, and producer Doug Duchek and his daughter Kydian from Pontiac.

Jennifer LoPatin plays Sister Bertha, the mean nun in the story about the Von Trapp family living in war-torn Austria. Daughter Sarah was double cast along with Lyndsey Anders as Liesel, the oldest daughter.

Like Jane Dittus, LoPatin became involved after her daughters joined the group 10 years ago. Sarah, 18, is a senior at Andover High School where she sings and plays handbells with the Jills.

"My favorite part is watching my daughter," said LoPatin. "For a young girl it's an ideal part. I enjoy watching her sing *I Am 16 Going on 17*. It's the last thing we'll do together before she goes away to college."

That will still leave three out of the original five family members in Bloomfield Players. Husband Mark was in *Crazy for You*. Daughter Hanna, now a 20-year old student at the University of Michigan played a number of roles.

"Basically we're all hams in a kosher sort of way," said LoPatin. "The girls really like to sing. Director Tom Logan makes it fun. It's a wholesome fun way to be with your family."

"The arts are really important to us. Our son Jonathan is a freshman and we told him he couldn't be on the football team again next season if he didn't sing in the choir. We're big Broadway fans. We went to see *The Producers* in New York last month."

Sarah's going to miss performing in productions with her family after she follows sister Hanna to the University of Michigan. She's been acting since age 8. Even though she plans to become

a social worker, Sarah hopes to participate in plays on the Ann Arbor campus.

"It's nice to have someone to

share that with when it gets close to the final rehearsal and stress builds. Having my family there makes it more fun."

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