

ARTISTS' EXPRESSIONS



LINDA CHOMIN

Fairs help support struggling Jewish artists

Natalie Lipnik never stops worrying about her sister and 96-first cousins living in Israel. Surrounded by tanks, the residents are caught in the continuing conflict between the Palestinian Authority and Israeli government. It's become a way of life to venture into the streets only when necessary.

Tourists avoid the area as well as some of the people suffering most are the merchants. The threat of Palestinian suicide bombers attacking shops has left a once thriving community of artists desperate to sell their wares.

Realizing the need, the Jewish community here has come up with a plan to help struggling Israeli artists survive by selling their jewelry, tapestries, paintings, papercuts, silver ritual objects, prayer shawls, and microcalligraphy this weekend and next at two art fairs in West Bloomfield.

Temple Israel will also feature embroidered pillows, challah and matzah covers, and tallit bags for prayer shawls made by Jews living in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, during its show Sunday-Monday, April 21-22. The Ethiopian artists are trying to support their families while waiting for permission to leave for Israel to begin new lives. A special patron preview Saturday, April 20 will go to Sisterhood projects that help Jews at home.

Judaic Art & Jewelry Fair

Lipnik chairs the third Judaic Art & Jewelry Fair Sunday, April 28, at the Bais Chabad Torah Center, a synagogue in West Bloomfield.

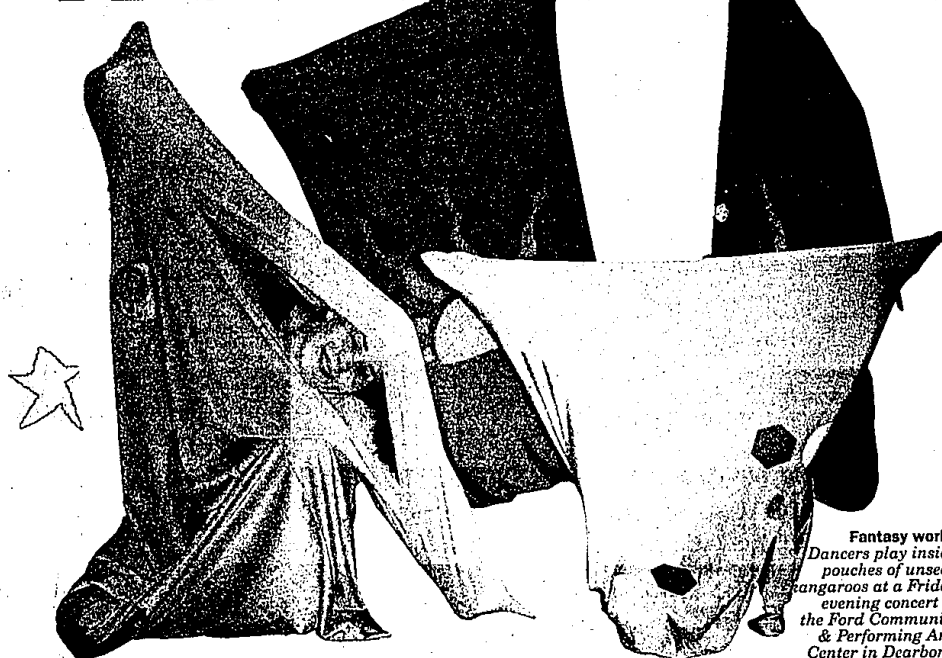


Another world: Dr. Norman Weiss shows photographs of Ethiopian Jews at the Temple Israel Art Fair.



Please see CHOMIN, B2

Animal Antics



Fantasy world: Dancers play inside pouches of unseen kangaroos at a Friday evening concert at the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center in Dearborn.

Detroit Dance Collective awakens the imagination

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER
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Don't look for dancers to hop across the stage in kangaroo costumes for the Detroit Dance Collective premiere of *Carnival of the Animals* Friday, April 26, at the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center in Dearborn.

Choreographer Barbara Selinger wants the audience to use their imagination as dancers imitate elephants, swans and turtles in a 40-minute piece set to Camille Saint Saens music and poetry based on it.

"We'll just have pouches, dancers in big stretch bags, on stage instead of the kangaroos," said Selinger, co-artistic director of Detroit Dance Collective and a Farmington Hills resident. "I'm trying not to be literal with the animals. For the elephants trunks dancers wear big long tubes on their arms with snouts at the end. Dancers use their arms as trunks. I'm taking an essence of what that creature is about."

Selinger first began thinking about choreographing the 14-section piece more than three years ago after a suggestion by Paula Kramer, the other half of DDC's artistic director team. She paints a picture of the production that springs to life on stage.

"I wanted to mount something theatrical, a work for children and families," said Selinger. "The ideas starting spinning to make this a fantasy in modern dance. I'm just trying to throw out as many images of the animals as possible and let individuals think 'yeah, that's what elephants do.'"



Detroit Dance Collective

What: 22nd annual spring dance concert features new pieces including *Carnival of the Animals* set to the music of Camille Saint Saens

When: 8 p.m. Friday, April 26

Where: Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Avenue at Greenfield, Dearborn

Tickets: \$18, \$12 seniors/students. Call (313) 943-2354

"*Aquarium* will be done behind a screen by dancers with props that look like a 9-foot high jellyfish. They will move so they'll be part of a projection. It's a very stimulating performance. The music is very imaginative. It's a joke. Saint Saens wrote this as a humorous piece. You can really hear the sounds of the animals he chose to represent. It starts out with *The March of the Lion*, five dancers in one huge cape. A swan section features plastic swans on derby hats that look surreal, like right out of a Magritte painting. They look like they're floating."

Selinger credits designer Bernadine Vida for creating the costumes and props with a whimsical touch. For more than 25 years, the Redford resident has sewed up clients ranging from the Detroit Repertory Theatre to *All Night Strut* at the Gem Theatre.

"Bernadine's work is always imaginative," said Selinger. "I like the use of colors. They're always vibrant with appliques. She's very versatile."

Selinger and Vida first discussed the costumes for *Carnival of the Animals* several months ago when the Redford resident was working as a costumer for Eminem's new movie *8 Mile*.

"They're all based on Elizabethan costumes from the 16th century," said Vida who will show the costumes and her photography at the Searab Club in Detroit in

June. "I dyed all the fabric in bright primary colors and hot tropicals and used appliques of stars, swirls and diamonds for the circus motif."

"Initially I talk with Barbara about her ideas and sometimes we design our work to what each other is doing. I'm excited that it's going to entertain a lot of people."

Selinger thinks the dancers will have as much fun as the audience during the program which also includes *Synergy*, Kramer's mysterious unfinished piece. Inspired by David Barr's sculpture, the multi-media production features photographs Tom Kramer took of the contemporary work.

Besides members of her own company Selinger's invited dancers from the Ford Center and Wayne State University to participate in Detroit Dance Collective's 22nd annual Spring Concert.

"Over the years we've used bags to define sculpture in space but for the first time in *Carnival of the Animals* there's an opening on the front for dancers to peek out," said Selinger who teaches choreography and modern dance technique at Wayne State. "We're also doing the first phase of Paula's *Synergy* which is funded by a Creative Artists grant from Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, and will be completed in September. It's based on design and shape of the sculpture and what it expresses."

"Another piece, *Karangan*, which means to create, premiered in December at Wayne State. Based on Balinese themes to music by Colin McPhee, it's multi-media with video that reflects the images you might see in that part of the world. I've animated fabric on computer so it moves like the dancers. It's quite a visual concert."



OPERA

Michigan Opera Theatre brings 'Otello' to life

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Mario Corradi spent hour upon hour preparing the chorus and principals for the Michigan Opera Theatre premiere of Giuseppe Verdi's tragic tale of *Otello*.

Singing a storm and exchanges between dueling swordsmen all in the first act takes talent and experience, Corradi learned from the best. For five years he assisted Jean-Pierre Ponnelle before directing his first opera in 1982. Staging everything from *Don Giovanni* to *Falstaff* in Europe since then gave Corradi an appreciation for the MOT chorus with whom he

Otello

What: Michigan Opera Theatre presents Verdi's masterpiece adapted from Shakespeare's tragedy *Otello*

When: Saturday, April 20 to Sunday, April 21

Where: Detroit Opera House, 1525 Broadway

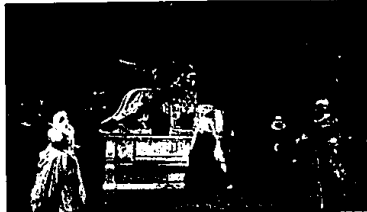
Tickets: Call (313) 237-SING or online at www.MichiganOpera.org

worked on eight previous occasions. Adapted from Shakespeare's play about the villainous Iago and his attempts to plant adulterous rumors about the innocent Desdemona in

the mind of Otello, the opera offers an opportunity to present a theatrical spectacle with 70-chorus members. In the second week of rehearsals with 100 people on stage, Corradi finally felt Verdi's greatest lyric tragedy about the ill-fated Governor of Cyprus "coming together."

Otello opens Saturday, April 20 at the Detroit Opera House with baritone Mark Delavan as the scheming Iago. Russian tenor Vladimir Galouzine and soprano Giuseppina Fiunti alternate with Eduardo Villa and Isabella Sacco as the Moor of Venice and Desdemona. Steven Mercurio returns as conductor after numerous

Please see *Otello*, B2



Dramatic fare: Michigan Opera Theatre borrows lavish sets and costumes from the Baltimore Opera Company for its premiere of Verdi's masterpiece.