

Composer shares the process of creating contemporary music

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

When Felicia Sandler decided to compose a piece of music about the women working in the defense industry during World War II she never dreamed it would change her life. The research she did while writing *Rosie the Riveter* led her to discoveries on a musical and personal level.

Originally written for band, the composition makes its orchestral premiere at the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra's "Urban Voices" concert Saturday, Nov. 16, at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Plymouth. Sandler and composer Harold Farberman will talk about their music during a pre-concert chat. Farberman's Concerto for Cathy is also on the program. Oboist Catherine Gerardi performs the piece she commissioned Farberman to write.

"I had practical and inspirational reasons for writing *Rosie the Riveter*," said Sandler who wrote the orchestral version at the request of Plymouth Symphony Orchestra conductor Nan Washburn. The band version was Sandler's dissertation for the Ph.D. in music composition and theory she earned at the University of Michigan School of Music.

It was at the Ann Arbor Library that Sandler spent a great deal of time researching her topic. At home, she surrounded herself with Norman Rockwell and propaganda posters from the era. Sandler steeped herself in the topic. Viewing Connie Field's 1982 video, *Rosie the Riveter*, and reading Sherie Gluck's 1987 book, *Rosie the Riveter: Revisited: Women, the War & Social Change*, gave Sandler new respect for the women working in the defense industry. She contacted both of them when seeking permission to use quotes from their work in

URBAN VOICES

What: Plymouth Symphony Orchestra presents a concert featuring appearances by composers Harold Farberman and Felicia Sandler

When: 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 16. Pre-concert chat with the composers, conductor Nan Washburn and guest oboist Catherine Gerardi at 7:35 p.m.

Where: Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, 47650 North Territorial, Plymouth

Tickets: \$16, \$14 seniors, \$10 college students, free for students K-12.

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notes for the conductor.

"From a practical standpoint I wanted to use sounds in the percussion section outside the normal, explore metals like anvils, brake drums, tin cans, wash tubs, and pipes," said Sandler who now teaches music theory at the New England Conservatory of Music and resides in Boston.

"But I also wanted to recognize the women of that era who I've admired for some time, women who worked in the public sector who were thrust into it because of World War II but rose to the occasion. Because of that shift in perception about what jobs women could do, I'm able to do the things I'm able to do now."

"They were told men could only do this work. After the war they tried to get women back in the domestic field. Most of the women made money in ways they couldn't before. One woman who in the Depression couldn't get a job did when

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defense came along. They felt they were making money and doing something for their country."

Until the Second World War came along women were primarily relegated to jobs in the domestic sector or didn't work outside the home. When men left to fight the war, the women stayed to make the planes and weapons. Sandler incorporates the clatter of the defense industry into her music in an abstract way. There are no literal riveting sounds but interplay between the instruments that symbolize the noise stirred up by the birthing of a feminist revolution.

A trumpet fanfare opens the piece. A mechanical siren reminds the listener of war. Sandler refers to the music as abstract but accessible with parts where the audience can hum along.

"Researching and working on *Rosie the Riveter* changed my life as a composer," said Sandler. "I learned so much writing this piece. I learned about the instruments I was writing for."

"It's an exciting piece, the feeling that comes up with the sirens. When people hear it, especially people who were there they say it brings memories to their minds or they feel it. There's something very special about that. There's a feeling of greater communication with those folks."



Edgar Degas, *Orchestra Musiciens*, ca. 1870-71. Statens Historiske Galleri, Copenhagen. Courtesy of the Statens Historiske Galleri, Copenhagen.

"This exhilarating exhibition celebrates Edgar Degas as the supreme painter of dancers ... it is a great show and a great subject."

-Vanity Fair

Win tickets for an 'Evening with Andrea Bocelli'

Come on, admit it...you really do love opera, especially when it's sung by the world's most romantic Italian tenor, Andrea Bocelli.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers is offering you a chance to win two tickets to attend the Sunday, Dec. 1, concert of Andrea Bocelli at The Palace of Auburn Hills. And we're not talking just any back row, balcony seats. We want you to hear every thrilling note,

so you'll sit with the VIPs. Just tell us in 50 words or less why you want to hear Bocelli sing. No operatic scores to write, no recordings of you singing Italian love songs in the shower...just 50 words e-mailed, faxed or mailed.

The World Festival Symphony, conducted by Steven Mercurio, will accompany Bocelli, who has achieved unprecedented success in both the classical and pop venues. Maria Luigia Borsi will

be the special guest soprano and Lidia Baich is the solo violinist. The concert begins at 8 p.m. Send your entry to Cathy Young, promotion manager, Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150; phone: (734) 953-2155; fax: (734) 953-2232; e-mail: cyoung@oc.homecomm.net. All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15.

Include your name, address and telephone number.

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Here's your ticket to several regional parks

The Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority begins selling a new \$40 pass on Saturday, Nov. 16, that will permit entry into Oakland County Parks and Huron-Clinton Metroparks.

The Metroparks cover almost 24,000 acres in Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties. Oakland County parks total 6,000 acres.

The new pass is available at Indian Springs, Kensington and Stony Creek Metroparks in Oakland County as well as the Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority office at 13000 High Ridge Drive in Brighton. It's also being sold at five Oakland County parks: Addison Oaks near Oxford, Independence Oaks and Nature Center in Clarkston, Groveland Oaks in Holly, Lyon Oaks in Lyon Township and the recreation section office in Waterford Oaks, Waterford.

The pass is valid at Addison Oaks, Independence Oaks, Groveland Oaks, Lyon Oaks, Orion Oaks, and Rose Oaks in Oakland County. It's also valid at these Metroparks: Stony Creek, Metro Beach, Wolcott Mill, Huron Meadows, Indian Springs, Kensington, Delhi, Dexter-Huron, Hudson Mills, Lake Erie, Lower Huron, Oakwoods and Willow.

For more information about Metroparks, call (800) 47-PARKS or log on to www.metroparks.com on the Internet. The telephone number for Oakland County parks is (888) OCPARKS. Or visit its Web site, www.oc.oakland.mi.us on the Internet.

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