

Arts & Entertainment

GALLERIES ■ THEATER ■ DANCE ■ DINING

Message

Donations needed to produce play on mental illness. B3

Hot tickets

Hip harpist

The Plymouth Community Arts Council's fall series of performances ends Friday, Nov. 22, with Christa Grix, a Northville musician with an international classical and jazz following. Grix and her jazz trio perform 8 p.m. Friday at the Plymouth



Community Arts Council, 777 N. Sheldon, Plymouth. Grix has performed with artists ranging from Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Tickets are \$25, available from the council at (734) 416-4278.

Concert variety

Here's your chance to see three concerts over the next few days for a mere \$15. The University Chorus and Oakland Chorale will perform at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 22-23, at Varner Recital Hall on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. General admission tickets are \$10 and students pay \$5. At 7 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 24, the Piano and Chamber Ensembles will perform a free concert in Varner Recital Hall. Round out a musical weekend with the Jazz Band performance at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26, in Varner Recital Hall. The admission's only \$5. Need advance tickets? Call the box office at (248) 370-3012.

CD launch

Singer-songwriter Liz Larin will release her newest CD, *The Story of O-Miz*, at a performance and launch party, at 8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24, at the Magic Bag, 22920



Woodward, Ferndale. The Story of O-Miz marks Larin's fourth CD. Tickets are \$7.



The Cincinnati Ballet brings adult-size mice to the Detroit Opera House Dec. 5-15, as part of the Michigan Opera Theatre Dance Series.

Visions of Sugar Plums dance in the heads of mice

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

Mary Geiger admits that being a mouse is not the most glamorous role in *The Nutcracker* Ballet but one that dancers need to fulfill if they have hopes of one day playing Clara, the little girl whisked away to a make believe world in Tchaikovsky's classic holiday tale.

Geiger's Michigan Classic Ballet Company is one of several dance troupes in the area putting on productions based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's story of a Nutcracker doll that springs to life on Christmas Eve. The Bloomfield Hills company dances the European version featuring Mother Humour. Geiger learned of the character while dancing professionally in Switzerland, Belgium and Holland for 10 years.

Geiger left the U.S. at age 19 to study at the Stuttgart School of Ballet and then danced in and produced dozens of Nutcrackers. She says the beloved tale has become part of American tradition along with putting up a tree. Although she includes the stilted maternal character in Michigan Classic Ballet Company productions, Geiger does not follow the European tradition of using big rats to assist the Mouse King in battling the Nutcracker Prince.

"We make our mice look adorable," said Geiger whose production comes to Mercy High School in Farmington Hills Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 14-15. "In Europe, the mice are rats or older people and I thought it was spooky. We have little mice 6- to 9-years old who take primary ballet. I tell them you

PLEASE SEE NUTCRACKER, B6

THE NUTCRACKER BALLET

■ Cincinnati Ballet presented as part of the Michigan Opera Theatre Dance Series, Dec. 5-15, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5 and 12, 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Dec. 6-7 and 13-14, 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 and 15, and 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway. Tickets \$14-\$65, call (313) 237-7464.

■ Detroit Ballet 7 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Dec. 13-14, at the Historical Players Playhouse, 2933 E. Jefferson, Detroit. Tickets \$20, \$12 children under age 10, (248) 474-3174

■ Livonia Civic Ballet 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, at Clarenceville High School, 20155 Middlebelt, Livonia. Tickets \$14, \$11 seniors and students, \$9 ages 5-9, children under age 4 free, (734) 427-9103

■ Livonia Symphony Orchestra joins with Dearborn Ballet Theatre 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, at Churchill High School, 8900

Newburgh, north of Joy, Livonia. Tickets \$16, \$10 students, (734) 425-4855. For more information on the performance 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 29, and 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 30, at Ford Community and Performing Arts Center in Dearborn, call (313) 943-2354. Tickets are \$15-\$20.

■ Michigan Classic Ballet, 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, at Mercy High School, 29300 W. 11 Mile, Farmington Hills. Tickets \$18, \$14 seniors and children, (248) 334-6964

■ Plymouth-Canton Ballet, 11 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, at Plymouth Salem High School Auditorium, 46181 Joy at Canton Center Road. Tickets \$18, \$10 students K-12, \$5 Sugar Plum Tea, (734) 451-2112

■ Rose Marie Floyd Contemporary Civic Ballet, 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, in the Scottish Rite Cathedral at Masonic Temple, 500 Temple. \$5, (248) 641-9063 or (248) 546-7484

Artistic Expressions

Linda Chomin

Imagination meets life in Van Allsburg's latest book

Chris Van Allsburg put his heart and soul - and a little bit of himself - into his newest children's book. Readers only have to look between the lines to see daughters Sophia, 11, and Anna, 7, in *Zathura*, a space adventure released in late October by Houghton Mifflin. The two-time Caldecott Medal winner signs copies of the book Saturday, Nov. 30, at the Book Beat in Oak Park, and Tuesday, Nov. 26, at Borders Books, Ann Arbor.

Zathura takes over where *Jumanji* left off when it was published in 1981. Robin Williams played the lead role in the film version of Van Allsburg's book about a board game that unleashed monkeys, a rhinoceros and a lion in the home of the two young Budwing brothers, Danny and Walter. In *Zathura*, Van Allsburg brings back the boys to discover a new game where meteor showers, a defective robot, and lizardlike Zergon wreak havoc in a living room much like the one in Van Allsburg's *Providence*, R.L. home.

"I wanted to show the game had an impact. I wanted to influence their characters but not to traumatize them. 'That's too obvious,'" said Van Allsburg. "I have daughters who love each other and going at each other. The 11-year-old finds the younger one annoying but loves her sister. I don't like writing things that provide a lesson. This provides a model. I don't want them to think about it directly. I want them to think about outer space."

Daughter Anna is one of

PLEASE SEE VAN ALLSBURG, B6



PHOTO BY PETER GOLDBERG

Children's book author Chris Van Allsburg used daughters Sophia, 11, and Anna, 7, as inspiration for his new book, *Zathura*.

CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG

What: Signs his newest book *Zathura*, a space adventure
■ 12:30-2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 30, at Book Beat, 26010 Greenfield at 10 1/2 Mile, Oak Park. Call (248) 968-1190
■ 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 26, at Borders Books, 3527 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor. Call (734) 677-6948

Sushi House dishes up Japanese fare in Farmington

BY LINDA SPARSHAM
CORRESPONDENT

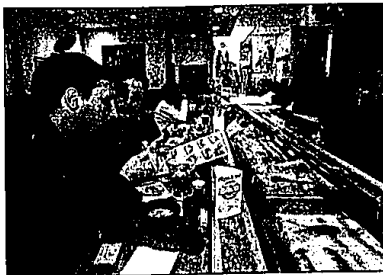
Sushi House, a recently opened Japanese restaurant at the corner of Farmington Road and Nine Mile in Farmington, is quickly becoming a favorite among area diners.

"I've tasted a lot of Japanese, but this is some of the best," said one patron, who eats there at least twice a week.

Owners Simon and Mimi Yi, a husband and wife team who have been in the area only six months, operate the restaurant along with Simon's cousin, Hwangil Im, who has more than 27 years experience as a chef. Simon learned the art of making sushi from Im when they worked together in California.

From unique creations - like the Michigan Roll, made with crab, cucumber, unagi (fresh water eel) and avocado - to traditional dishes like Japanese Udon (thick wheat noodles in broth), Sushi House accommodates.

Even before entering the dining area, patrons pass through a window-paneled entry that seems to transport them to the Far East, as



BILL BRESLER | OBSERVER

PLEASE SEE SUSHI HOUSE, B6

Adam and Maria Galor of West Bloomfield try a broiled mussel appetizer.

Ballet Shoes or Wing Tips?



Makes no difference as long as you take time to put your feet up, get comfortable and spend some time with us.