

Festival shows arts for everybody

It's true what they say about getting back more than you give. Just ask Laurie Herman, a music therapist teaching students with disabilities at Oakland Technical Center-Southeast in Royal Oak.

For the last eight months she's worked to prepare the singers for a performance at the VSA Arts Festival 12:40 p.m. Friday, May 2, at Livonia Mall.

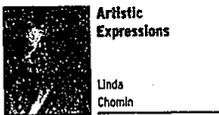
On Friday and Saturday, May 2-3, the Southeast Region Committee of VSA arts of Michigan showcase 200 performers and exhibit works by Michigan artists with mental and physical disabilities.

As a festival volunteer for the last eight years I can speak from the heart. In addition to giving children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to perform, the annual event allows children of all abilities to draw or make projects in time for Mother's Day.

The festival is also a good time to find out what VSA arts is all about. Founded by Jean Kennedy Smith in conjunction with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., VSA sponsors art, music and dance therapy sessions throughout the year in schools ranging from Pontiac to Birmingham, Livonia and Detroit.

Weekly art sessions help children and adults with disabilities express themselves - and have fun. But without the festival students wouldn't be given the opportunity to sing, dance or play chimes in front of an audience.

This year I'll be there helping with art activities and selling T-shirts sporting a violin drawn by Tom Willis, an adult artist from The Art Experience studio in Pontiac. In between all of the volunteers will be clapping and mov-



Artistic Expressions
Linda Chomin

ing to the music of performers such as Herman's students. They're looking forward to presenting *I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing*.

AWESOME JOB

Herman says she has an awesome job which incorporates her love of music. Giving works both ways. In return for helping students express themselves, Herman has the chance to sing, dance and watch her students grow through the arts. You can't ask for more than that from a job.

"These kids can be overlooked," said Herman who has brought students to the festival for the last three years. "They have natural talents and abilities as well as any other student. They love performing. Music gives them greater freedom of expression."

"They're excited about the festival. They've been practicing and learning to take bows. At the end they smile because they know they've done a good job."

Those smiles are what keep myself and the rest of our committee - dance therapist Cindy Babcock of Royal Oak; music therapist Margaret Hull, Birmingham; art therapist Ronda Music, West Bloomfield, Connie Latt, Northville, and our president Jody Stark, Detroit - coming back year after year. Of course we couldn't put on the festival without the Livonia Mall.

They've made us feel welcome and

VSA ARTS FESTIVAL

What: Southeast Region Committee of VSA arts of Michigan presents its annual festival featuring 200 singers, dancers and performers with disabilities, an art exhibit, and hands on activities for children. The festival kicks off Livonia Mall's Celebration of the Arts May 4-7

When: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, May 2, noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 3. See sidebar for May 4-7 performances

Where: Livonia Mall, Seven Mile Road at Middlebell. Call (248) 476-1160 for information.

helped in every way they could for the past three years.

Marketing director Bobbi Gelman and her staff are enthusiastic supporters of the arts. The VSA festival kicks off the mall's fourth annual Celebrate the Arts (May 4-7) spotlighting local talent.

Throughout the year the mall sponsors a variety of performances including plays by Livonia Youth Theatre. In the past they've showcased the work of local artists in the Grassroots Gallery which Gelman hopes to reopen in the near future.

"VSA is an integral part of what we believe - the arts all inclusive," said Gelman. "They're for everybody."

Know of an interesting story? Call Observer & Eccentric arts reporter Linda Ann Chomin at (734) 953-2145 or send e-mail to lchomin@oe.hometoenthr.com.

Celebrate National Music Week

Here's what's happening on the Seas Stage at Livonia Mall, Seven Mile Road at Middlebell during the Community Celebration of National Music Week. For more information, call (248) 476-1160.

Sunday, May 11
Mother's Day - no performances

Monday, May 12
2 p.m. C.J. Nodus, medley of Broadway favorites

Tuesday, May 13
12:30 p.m. Gary Cooper, saxophone
5 p.m. Marjorie Van Hoy, composer and pianist

Monday, May 5
1:30 p.m. Senior Gospel Choir from Joseph Walker-William Recreation Center in Detroit
2:30 p.m. The Strutters Senior Dance Group from the rec center

Tuesday, May 6
12:30 p.m. Gary Cooper, saxophone
5 p.m. Marjorie Van Hoy, composer and pianist

Wednesday, May 7
11:30 a.m. *The Three Shades of Gold*, jazz trio
5 p.m. Vocals, flute and piano by Susie, Anemarie and Peter Hensoldt
7 p.m. Silver Strings, dulcimer ensemble

Thursday, May 8
2 p.m. *Ala Mode*, barbershop quartet

Friday, May 9
Noon C.J. Nodus, medley of Broadway favorites

Saturday, May 10
4 p.m. Arbor Opera Theatre
6 p.m. Mike Dunn, banjo

Wednesday, May 14
11:30 a.m. Ladywood High School Orchestra
2 p.m. C.J. Nodus, medley of Broadway favorites
6 p.m. Detroit Fine and Performing Arts Middle School Band & Orchestra

Thursday, May 15
11 a.m. Birmingham Musicales String Ensemble
11:45 a.m. Ladywood High School Chorus
2 p.m. Clarenceville Middle School Show Choir
7 p.m. Renaissance Barbershop Quartet

Friday, May 16
11:30 a.m. *The Three Shades of Gold*
1 p.m. Clarenceville High School Choraliers
4 p.m. Maria DiCinco and students, piano
6 p.m. Connie Randall and Friends, piano and vocals

Saturday, May 17
3 p.m. Arbor Opera Theatre
6 p.m. Mike Dunn, banjo

Merling Trio spotlights new jazz work

The Merling Trio returns to the Vivace Series 8 p.m. Saturday, May 3, at Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills.

They'll perform an eclectic program that includes Joseph Haydn's *Piano Trio in C minor*, Argentinean composer Astor Piazzolla's *De Las Cuatro Estaciones Portenas*, and a newly commissioned jazz work by American composer Frank Proto.

The trio is composed of Bruce Uchimura, cello; Susan

Uchimura, piano, and Renata Kniffle, violin. Jazz bassist Tom Kniffle joins them for the Proto work.

Formed in 1988, the Merling Trio have performed throughout the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and Asia. The trio members are in residence at Western Michigan University, and are on the faculty at Encore School for Strings and the Lanout Festival in Poland.

The concert will be followed by an afterglow with an opportunity to meet the performers.

VIVACE SERIES

What: Presents the Merling Trio in the final concert of the season

When: 8 p.m. Saturday, May 3

Where: Birmingham Temple, 2861 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills

Tickets: \$18, \$15 seniors and students. Call (248) 788-9338 or (248) 661-1348

Mother's Day Brunch

AT THE TOWNSEND HOTEL
11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

- ◆ Omelet and Waffle Station Available to Order
- ◆ House Specialty Seasonal Display
- ◆ Jumbo Shrimp
- ◆ Assorted Hummus & Pitas
- ◆ Chilled Salad Stations
- ◆ Caviar Station
- ◆ Children's Buffet
- ◆ Hot Station
- ◆ Eggs Benedict
- ◆ Bacon, Sausage Links
- ◆ Pan Seared Chicken Breast
- ◆ Herb Crusted Salmon
- ◆ Fresh Seasonal Vegetables
- ◆ Pasta Station & Seafood Station
- ◆ Breakfast Breads & Dessert Station

ADULTS...\$22
CHILDREN 6-12...\$20
Complimentary Mimosas

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For Reservations

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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY
8TH ANNUAL FORD HONORS PROGRAM

Honoring Christopher Parkening

Saturday, May 3, 6 P.M.

Rackham Auditorium & Power Center • Ann Arbor

Christopher Parkening performs an abbreviated recital of guitar masterworks from the 20th century, followed by a UMS tribute to his career, with video footage, interviews, and special guests. Baritone Jubilant Sykes, who has performed recital programs with Christopher Parkening focused on South American composers, will also be featured.

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a MOMENT of respite

The key ingredients to quality end-of-life care.

We couldn't do it without you

During National Hospice Week, April 27 - May 3, we at Hospice of Michigan salute our more than 1,000 volunteers.

Volunteers do many jobs at Hospice of Michigan. They are an important part of the hospice care team providing a special kind of caring and compassion to their patients. Some come to Hospice of Michigan for the first time.

HOSPICE OF MICHIGAN