

A Report on the 5th Annual Birmingham Arts Festival

Because the Art Festival involved the work of so many members of the community, and the end result of the project was for the enjoyment and benefit of the community at large, the Festival Committee is pleased to make a public report.

FIRST of all, from almost every point of view, the Festival was successful. We made some mistakes, but in the overall picture, these were minor. We believe that next year's committee will profit from these errors and that the Festival will continue to grow in influence and stature as it becomes a more established part of the community's cultural activities.

THE Visual Arts Committee, under the capable chairmanship of Bob McLean, did an excellent job. Over the past five years, the quality of the work exhibited has consistently improved. The examples displayed this year were the best yet. This didn't just happen. It was the result of many things—the feeling on the part of exhibitors that this is a show worthy of their best efforts, a highly competent jury comprised of Abbott Pattison of Chicago, and Clifton McChesney from East Lansing, who selected approximately 165 works from the more than 600 submitted, and the plain hard, conscientious work of a lot of committee members. Betty Kyropolus and Helen Galpin were in charge of the collection, a difficult and detailed job. The exhibition itself, at the Birmingham Art Center, was hung by a committee headed by Carolyn Hall and it should be noted that this job, along with the works themselves, received high praise from major Detroit critics. Merchants in Birmingham cooperated willingly and did an excellent job in their window displays. The tricky job of selecting, delivering and collecting the artwork used in store windows was well handled by the committee under the direction of Florence Kingsepp.

SEVERAL hundred people took advantage of the opportunity to visit the studios of seven local artists, a project organized and handled by a committee headed by Nellie Thom. The studio tours gave these people a new insight into, and a greater appreciation of, the work of these artists.

IDON'T think that those of you who visited the Art Market at the Birmingham Art Center could possibly realize the many hours that went into the selection and displaying of the wide range of material, to say nothing of the time spent manning (or, perhaps I should say womaning) the market while it was in operation. Pen Bender's committee did an outstanding job. From all reports, this year's Art Market was the finest to date. The art demonstrations organized by Betty Conn and Glen Michaels drew consistent crowds, and, we hope, may have convinced some of the spectators they too should try their hand at one of the arts so well demonstrated.

“THE Bloomingham Newcomers” was one of the highlights of the Festival. Under the best conditions, putting on a show of this type is a difficult job. Under the conditions in which the Show Committee worked, the successful production of the “Newcomers” was almost miraculous. At the time the idea was conceived, nothing was available. No show script, no music, no organization and no place to stage the finished production. In the short period of 3½ months, all of these problems and many more were solved. Dean Coffin and Isabel Himelhoch wrote the show and music. Jim Schneider's Show Committee put together an operating group which cast the show, designed and built the sets, made arrangements for rehearsal space, etc., etc., etc., and came out with a highly successful production. We want to thank both the Village Players and St. Dunstan's, without whose active participation this show could not have been produced. Without the knowledge and skill of their members, and the active blessing of their directors, it would not have even been attempted. Our special thanks go to Jim Schneider's Executive Committee, Robin Raymond, Barbara Blau-man, Tom Martin and Warren Hersey, as well as to Director Dean Warner, Producer Nelson Kimball, and to the many other people responsible for this effort.

“THE Bloomingham Newcomers” Ticket Committee, headed by Betsey Bagby, could not have been better—each performance was sold out. Rosemary Drew's Food Committee was always on the job to satisfy the needs of the inner man. And the Moppet Matinee, put together by Joyce Klarr and her committee on very short notice, provided an interesting and entertaining afternoon for the junior set—featuring a performance of the “Children's Auction” and several well done vignettes put on by the Cranbrook Summer Theatre Group. The children enjoyed themselves in spite of the rain.

AS FAR as the promotion of the arts is concerned, the 5th Annual Birmingham Arts Festival was a success. We are also happy to report that it was successful financially as well. While the final accounting is not yet available, it appears that the Festival will make a profit of over \$3,000. This money will be used to further the activities of the Birmingham Art Center, a non-profit cultural facility operated for the benefit of the entire community by the Bloomfield Art Association. I think it is important to note here, that while the profits go to the community, the loss, should one have occurred, would have been borne by the Bloomfield Art Association.

WE ALSO want to take this opportunity to thank the many other volunteers not mentioned, and the local merchants for their help and assistance. All in all, we feel that the Art Festival is another excellent demonstration of the kind of community-wide citizen participation that makes the Birmingham-Bloomfield area such a great place to live.



For the Festival Committee

Colin H. John

General Chairman