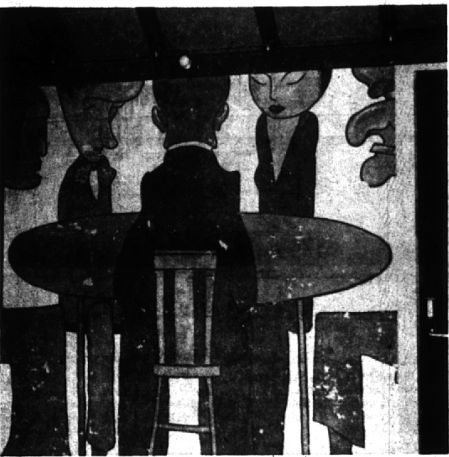
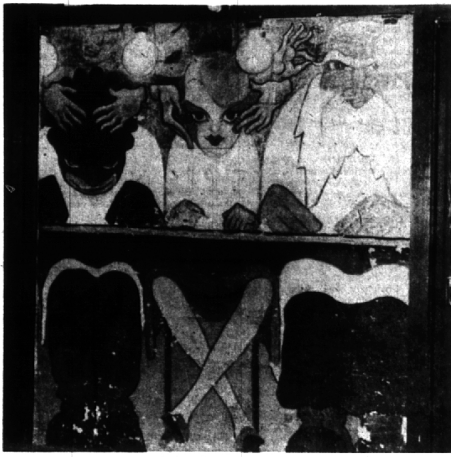


# Birmingham Village Players Celebrate 40th Season



ON THE inside walls of the Birmingham Village Players' Chestnut Street playhouse are murals depicting the "agony" of putting on a play. One of the first steps of the process—and one of the first murals—is "Casting." Close on the heels of casting comes the "blood, toil, sweat and tears" of directing, scene painting and costume-making.



AT LAST comes the night when only make-up can camouflage the jitters (which had their dress rehearsal at dress rehearsal)—and the show must go on, but of course that requires an attentive man at the lights board and a few quick-stepping scene changers. What then? Another three or four or five performances, "another closing of another show" and . . .



THE CYCLE begins again: the reading and choosing of the next play. The murals on the cement block walls were done originally in 1933 by Fred Farrar in chalk and then sprayed. They were later restored and painted with more permanent materials under the supervision of Mrs. Paul Averil. Each member of the Players must serve on three standing committees each year.

## Players Put Spotlight on the Past

By EVELINE OEN  
Arts Editor

Well into their 40th dramatic season this year are the Birmingham Village Players.

Reminiscences ran rampant at a party celebrating the occasion at their playhouse Saturday night and many present members still recall those first days.

Loren Robinson of 365 N. Eton, Birmingham, was the first president. The idea was originally John W. Gadd's. Robinson and others who were, at the time, members of the Detroit Players, added organizational know-how.

"WE HAD a meeting at the old Birmingham Community House along about February. Sixteen became members. We recruited others, and in the late spring of 1923 gave our first production in the old Community House," said Robinson.

"We used houses across the street for dressing rooms and had to run across the street to make our cues," he recalled.

"We played two seasons there and then got the idea that we ought to have our own playhouse, so we put on a performance in the old Baldwin High School to raise money. Mrs. Charles Shain was

ticket chairman, and we raised enough money to buy the land where the playhouse now stands," he continued.

"THEN, IN order to build the playhouse, we got all the players to pledge about \$50 each and borrowed the necessary money," he said.

"Soon the depression hit and we had a struggle, but in 1934 and 1935 or thereabouts, we succeeded in getting the debt covered and burned the mortgage," Robinson said.

ARE THE players loyal? Witness the family of Dyke Dwelley, 631 Southfield, Birmingham. His



mother and father were among the first members. Dwelley and his wife are members and all three of their children (who are too young to be eligible for membership) have filled in when needed in children's parts.

Dwelley said—although he was a boy of eight or 10 at the time—that he could remember the very first performance.

"THE STAGE was simply a roped-off area," he said, "and dishes were used as reflectors for the lights."

Seating was arranged in three sections, he explained. The first consisted of cushions, the second (behind it) of small, low, children's chairs and the third of regular, large-size chairs.

Dwelley recalled that Fred Farrar and Harry Muehlman, both of whom were Players and architects had designed the Chestnut Street playhouse. The builder was Bob Tillotson, also a Player.

"I THINK one could safely claim that there are few private (non-civic) theaters still in existence after 40 years," said Dwelley.

"The only private theater group in this area which is older than I know of is the Detroit Players," he said, "—and they don't have as

much fun as we do because they don't admit women."

DWELLEY RECALLED that among their "spectacular" performances of the past was "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

"It was accompanied each time it was put on by a street parade, and we had some deal whereby a kid could get a free ticket if he brought a bloodhound to chase Little Eva across the ice. We had more mongrels than we knew what to do with."

BOTH ROBINSON and Dwelley felt the Players are a part of the cultural community "in our own little way" and that the group had been influential in the establishment of other private theatrical organizations in nearby areas.

### Named Math Dept. Head at Williams

The husband of a former resident has just been named chairman of the mathematics department of Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.

Dr. Guilford L. Spencer, a member of the Williams faculty since 1957, is married to the former Eleanor Baldwin Fenfield of Birmingham.

## Philatelists Prepare For March Convention

Gathering near the end of March in the Community House for the second convention ever held in Birmingham will be stamp lovers from all over the state of Michigan—and a few from points beyond.

The Birmingham Stamp Club is playing host to the Peninsular State Philatelic Society as they jointly celebrate their 25th anniversary.

Also getting in on the act is Ford Motor Company, which this year is observing its centennial.

IN HONOR of the occasion, the company is having printed approximately 10,000 "cashes" or envelopes bearing the Ford Centennial seal along with the seals of the state philatelic society and the Birmingham Stamp Club. These "cashes" (which are favorite collectors' items) will be available at the convention.

Of primary interest to the collectors here for the convention will be 18 "hour tables" (for the trading of stamps) and a competitive exhibit of stamp collections. Categories have not yet been announced.

DATES and times for the gathering have been set as Mar. 30 from 1 to 10 p.m. and Mar. 31 from 1 to 6 p.m.

The convention will be the second ever held in Birmingham. The first was five years ago when the local stamp club was host to the state philatelic society as they both celebrated their 20th anniversary, according to Clark Stevens, of 1886 Lakeside, Birmingham, a local club member.

President of the Birmingham Stamp Club and assistant general chairman for the coming convention is James M. Goutts, 725 Crescent, Troy. General chairman is Edwin E. Puls, 185 Lincoln, Birmingham.

### B'ham Musicale Features Pianists

"The American Scene" is the theme for Birmingham Musicale's February meeting which will take place next Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the Community House. The program will feature two teams of duo-pianists as well as a vocalist. Duo-pianists Janet Martin and Maude Skinner will perform two classical works to open the program, "Tocatta in G" by Bach and "Tocatta" by Schuman, both arranged by local composer Mark Wessel for two pianos. The Schuman arrangement will be a premiere performance as transcribed by Wessel. Also on the program will be "Ballade for Two Pianos" composed by Wessel.

Ruth Killen, soprano, will sing "When the Wind is Low" by Hageman, "The Doves" by Chantler, "Let us Walk in the White Snow" and two songs by the composer Duke. Adalyn Venman will serve as accompanist. Duo-pianists Eugenia Hutton and Dorothy Roosevelt will play the program with Wolf's "Short'nin' Bread," "Jamaican Rumba" by Benjamin and Porter's "Begin the Beguine."

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC, BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

February 7, 1963

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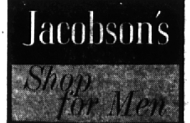


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### 1 Out of Every 100 Students Receives Special Education

One out of every hundred public school children is enrolled in a special education class, according to a report released by Dr. Paul Thams, county director of special education.

A total of 1,845 Oakland County children are in special rooms for the mentally, physically or emotionally handicapped children, Dr. Thams said. Before school is out in June, another 11,250 children will receive attention ranging from diagnostic tests to regular speech correction by special education teachers. The total number of public school children in the county is 182,737.

A staff of 316 special education teachers, speech correctionists, diagnosticians, visiting teachers and consultants work in the 30 school districts of the county to provide extra attention for atypical children.

### Show Opens Sunday at BAC

Sixteen Michigan artists (four from the Birmingham-Bloomfield area) are represented in the exhibition of drawings and graphics which will open Sunday at the Birmingham Art Center, 516 S. Cranbrook Road.

There are drawings by three local sculptors: Marshall Froedrick of Birmingham; Julius Schmidt, head of the sculpture department in the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and Joseph Bulone of Birmingham. Clifford West will have several pen and ink drawings.

OTHERS WHOSE work will be shown are James Walker, Robert 2 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Knappman and John Davies of Flint; Sunday.

CO-CHAIRMEN for the show are Mr. and Mrs. Walter P. Hickey. They are being assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin H. Micon, Dr. and Mrs. Hilbert DeLayter and Mr. and Mrs. Stratton S. Brown. The exhibition will continue through Mar. 3. Gallery hours are shown as James Walker, Robert 2 to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Knappman and John Davies of Flint; Sunday.