

Composer Discusses His Art

By MARGARET R. MORAN

One of the talented people Birmingham is fortunate to have is Harold R. Laudenslager, composer, teacher and violinist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra since 1961.

A Michigan native, he has studied with Paul Hindemith and Artur Honegger, among others, in this country and abroad. His compositions have been heard across the United States, and they have earned high praise from critics.

Valter Poole has selected one of Laudenslager's compositions, "In Memoriam, Elegy for English Horn, Tynpami, and Strings," to be part of the Aug. 8 program in the summer concert series.

RECENTLY a member of the committee negotiating the new Detroit Orchestra contract, Laudenslager emphasized that the main

New Gallery Has Opening Here Tonight

The Raven Gallery will have its grand opening in Birmingham tonight with a reception from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. About 1500 invitations have been sent out, according to gallery owner and director Herb Cohen.

The new gallery is moving to 136 Brownell from its previous location on James Couzens near Outer Drive. Featured at the opening is a "farewell" one-man show of prints and paintings by Robert Broner, who, with his family, will move to New York next month.

DRAMATIC SKETCHES, one-act plays and excerpts from longer plays by Broner's wife, Esther, will also be presented within the next two weeks. Exact dates have not yet been set.

This Friday, Saturday and Sunday, "The Topicals" (a folk-singing group) will entertain. Regular gallery hours will be from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Luncheons will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., a gallery tea hour will be held from 2 to 4:30 p.m., and the gallery will continue to offer an after-theater menu in the evening.

point of the discussions was not wages but recognition of the orchestra as a community asset seeking wider popular interest in music as a live art.

There seems to exist an inferiority complex about music in this area, Laudenslager thinks, but he feels that the image of provinciality is self-imposed.

IT IS HIS great hope that our community in particular can change the situation by efforts comparable to those which have boasted the visual arts in Birmingham. More hearings for live music, greater acceptance of new music would help to keep our musical talent here, and the state

would be much more attractive to other artists, he thinks.

Groups now sponsoring performances of modern works are almost entirely university-affiliated. However, the Detroit Adventure, which recently presented some of Laudenslager's work at the Spring Arts Festival, is a conscientious exchange for contemporary ideas.

MUST CONTEMPORARY music be explained to be enjoyed? Laudenslager was invited to give a lecture-concert last spring at Oakland University; he and a colleague, Clark Eastham, discussed and presented their own music. It was so successful in stimulating enthusiasm that it will be repeated.

ed in December for the Adult Education program.

On the basis of this experience, Laudenslager believes some analysis, even when it can be but superficial, is helpful. This can apply equally to such classic composers as Bach; modern music is not esoteric.

LAUDENSLAGER compared modern harmony with today's architecture: new materials and combinations are an important part of both.

Other aspects of today's music are complicated rhythm, influenced by jazz, and terse melody—a tune which may be present but hard to sing.

There are more points of contact in music than tune, however. Mood, even a few notes may reach the listener with great impact in what Laudenslager calls "intuitive listening."

HE DISCOUNTS the use of shock tactics in music today.

"Tearing down the tonal system was all done between 1910 and 1920; composers today emphasize the positive."

The problem facing any new creation is that if it isn't a copy, it's crazy!

Greater familiarity with modern works brings greater acceptance; and through FM stations, scores for television and movie dramas, the public is gradually becoming more receptive to today's idiom, he thinks. The West Coast is ahead in this respect, he felt.

AS A COMPOSER, Laudenslager does not wholly support the statement of Stravinsky, who in composing on the piano, said, "The fingers are very good discoverers." Ideas may come anytime, and usually there are several pieces going at once.

A composer may write for instruments he himself does not play; the piece then is often more difficult for the performer but offers a fresh sound.

A COMPOSER reveals himself in every piece he writes, and he cannot disguise his identity no matter what style he may affect, Laudenslager noted. In judging the validity of new music, Laudenslager looks for spiritual integrity, a uniqueness in each of a composer's works and among composers.



Photo by Sam Foster

Wishing the Show Well

Gathering around the wishing well to be used in "Finian's Rainbow," three members of the east cross their fingers and wish for a successful run of the musical comedy. From left are Darlene, Denise and Dianne Jacobites, who are rehearsing at Will-O-Way Ap-

prentice Theatre, 775 W. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills. The show opens Friday at 8:40 p.m. for two weekends. The girls are the daughters of the Robert L. Jacobites, 345 Westbourne Court, Birmingham.

FROM THE BOOKCASE

'Thistle' Relates a Prickly Anecdote

CRANBROOK BOASTS A GHOST, by Thistle: The Cranbrook Press, 1963. Bloomfield Hills, 38 pp., \$2.50.

Reviewed by ANDRINA GILMARTIN

This slender volume about an elusive ghost will be a pleasant discovery for those who collect anecdotes about the beautiful and beloved Christ Church Cranbrook.

In the age of faith and great cathedral buildings, churches were erected to the glory of God by dedicated workmen; even the carving that didn't show, the stone cutting up and out of sight was done with exquisite artistry because God could see it.

He would know the quality of the work and if it was the man's best.

CRANBROOK was built in the twentieth century, also to the glory of God, but in an age of industrial dissension, weakened faith and articulated social grievances.

Joe Crabb, a master stone cutter, complained bitterly and steadily as he cut and fit the stones to make the vaulted ceiling of St. Dunstan's chapel.

He took no pleasure in his work or his great talent and no joy in the beauty he was helping to create. He believed in bread, not stones, and thought the great sums spent on building a church might better have been given to the poor.

(That a church might be the medium for not only worshipping God but also feeding the poor, physical

ly and spiritually, was a concept beyond Joe's comprehension.)

HE WENT ON laying stone, angrily, and sometimes sloppily.

Artist Loses Oil Painting at Festival Art Exhibition

Missing: one oil painting (in grey tones) of boats.

The work belongs to John Soroka of 1235 Lennox Road, Bloomfield Township, and was lost from the student art exhibition of the Birmingham Arts Festival in one of the tents in Shain Park.

Please report any clues to the owner.

Biblical Coins on Display

Interesting coins of Biblical days will be displayed at the Northwestern Highway - 12 Mile Road office of National Bank of Detroit, beginning today as one of the highlights of a touring exhibition of rare items from the bank's famed money museum.

Leonard Zawacki, manager in charge of the office said the display also includes a representative collection of contemporary coins and paper money of countries throughout the world.

THE EXHIBIT, which in effect is a miniature edition of the big Money Museum at the NBD Main Office in downtown Detroit, will remain at the Northwestern-12 Mile Office through Aug. 13.

It can be viewed during banking hours, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursdays, and until 7:30 p.m. on Fridays.

The exhibits, designed to be of interest to children and adults alike, are dramatically mounted so as to tie them in with the countries (See COINS, 3-D)

His tirades were most irritating to Martin Pike, another stone cutter of very modest talent but far deeper devotion.

Martin recognized Joe's ability and his own limitations, but he did his work believing in a loving, forgiving and understanding God.

The stories of the workmen's bickering were told to the author by Andrew Williams, who heard them with his own ears and who, for over 30 years, was the "beloved and imaginative" verger of Cranbrook Church.

MARTIN PIKE and Joe Crabb (there is symbolism in their names so one assumes they are masks for the real workmen) quarrel, a stone (See ANECDOTE, 3-D)

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

A Critique of Our Departing Critic

We're losing our critic. Curiously enough, there is no jubilation.

Robert Broner, Eccentric art critic, printmaker, painter and teacher, is moving up to the big time in New York and we will miss him.

Broner's reviews of art shows have been in the very best vein of constructive criticism: His columns always exhibit a wide knowledge of art, a crisp way of describing, comparing and evaluating the art works and his own quiet yet strong personal philosophy.

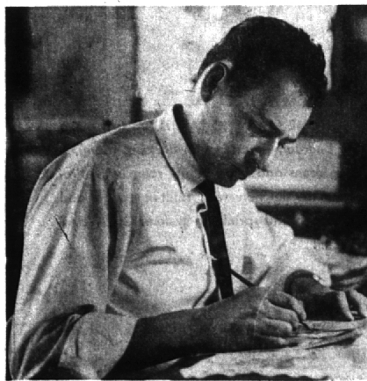
"WRITING ABOUT art is an extension of teaching," Broner states.

"A critic should not presume to tell the artist what to do. That is absurd. The artist should be ahead of the critic and the critic ahead of the public. It is the critic's role to educate public taste."

This Broner does with warmth, intelligence and enthusiasm.

He, accompanied by his talented wife Esther (a creative writer who does those fine theater and book reviews in this paper) and his four children, will be leaving for New York before the fall school term.

ESTHER SAYS that they haven't packed a thing. "Bob spends every night diligently working on the prints for his show which will be featured at the opening of The Raven Gallery in Birmingham." (The new gallery opens tonight.)



ROBERT BRONER AT WORK

Shown will be his unique graphics, etching and texture prints.

Paintings based on some of his graphic discoveries are abstract in subject. Broner says that he consciously avoids any representational reference in his paintings. He wants the viewer to enjoy the textures for their own sake rather than to search for recognizable forms.

"They have no built in idea. You have to bring your own," Bob says smiling.

DELIGHTFULLY WHIMSICAL "chairmen" sculptures are made of rusty muffers, old tail pipes and switch boxes set on various bases.

"I arrange them in a group in my studio," he says, "and they seem like real people."

(See CRITIQUE, 7-A)

Gardening Columnist To Write from Europe

"Down to Earth" will soon sail the Atlantic.

Gardening columnist Alice Burlingame will leave Aug. 8 on a two-month trip to Europe under the auspices of the People-to-People program. She will write her column from abroad.

The People-to-People program has its headquarters in Washington, D. C., is sanctioned by the State Dept., but operated with private funds.

Its purpose is to stimulate the exchange of talent among the professional people (especially those in the fields of science and education) of the U. S. and all other countries of the world.

MRS. BURLINGAME has been invited to make use of her contacts and knowledge in the field of rehabilitation—especially by means of horticulture.

"I will be visiting prisons, schools and hospitals where rehabilitation has become an active program for those who are mentally and physically ill," she said. "The stops will be made in England, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. The study will take two months," she said.

SHR AND MR. Burlingame will sail aboard the SS France. "Mr. Burlingame will pursue his



ALICE W. BURLINGAME

interests, meeting fellow Rotarians and others who share his interest in raising unusual cattle," she said. (Since his retirement about three years ago, he has devoted a large amount of his time to a "hobby" cattle farm near Ann Arbor.)

MRS. BURLINGAME expects to be visiting and writing about the homes and gardens of many former Birmingham-Bloomfield area residents who are now living abroad.

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