

# Bronze Caster Imparts Techniques

By CAROLYN HALL  
Special Writer

What a pleasure to meet Bruno Bearzi. He is a master craftsman, respected by artists for his great skill as a bronze caster and much in demand by officials for his knowledge of ancient metals.

Bearzi travels afar from his native Italy as a consultant both to repair existing bronzes and advise on casting techniques. This past week he has been advising Fred Petrucci, 1410 Bowers, Birmingham, head caster of the Racine Art Foundry in Detroit.

(Petrucci is better known to Birmingham ice skaters as rink guard, instructor and pal at Elton Rink.)

Bearzi has a warm Italian temperament, enthusiastic and charming, but his real intensity and

ability are most apparent when he is at work in the foundry.

HIS PIERCING EYES are set in a lean face framed nobly with a fringe of flowing white hair. His advice is quick and absolute. He emphatically follows every movement of Petrucci's assistants, the general director of fine arts to decide if they want the doors clean.

Over the many years Bearzi has ferreted out secrets obscured by time about the lost wax method of casting used since antiquity. Earlier artists cast their own works and developed individual methods and innovations, Bearzi explains.

Commissioned to restore the Ghilberti bronze doors on the Baptistery in his home town of Florence, Bearzi found them encrusted with 500 years of bronze corrosion, smog, grime and automobile fumes.

Beneath this crust was a fragile layer of gold and under the gilding a layer of corroded bronze.

TO CLEAN THEM seemed impossible.

Finally, by searching old church records and plumbing his own extensive skill, he found a way to clean the doors.

"In Florence all of the town wonders what you are doing," Bearzi relates. "The people do not know if they want the doors to be gold instead of green. Twelve townsmen are commissioned by the general director of fine arts to decide if they want the doors clean.

"This is a bigger problem than cleaning the doors. They argue for a week. Finally they decide I

should clean the doors.

"A thousand problems," Bearzi held a small wax horse in his hands. "This artist has made the model of solid wax. Bronze shrinks as it cools, and we will have loss. We solve this problem by adding an enlarged entry gate (tube) so more bronze can enter as it cools.

"Crazy artists," he mutters fondly.

PETRUCCI AND Bearzi described the lost wax process as they prepared several pieces for casting. First, they make a flexible rubber mold of the figure.

The artist's model can be of various materials. The rubber mold is removed. It is coated with wax inside to form a shell of the figure. (Like a chocolate Easter rabbit.)

This shell is filled with a core of plaster and ground brick so the finished bronze will be hollow.

to the figure. The "gates" are channels for the bronze to enter and the vents channels for the gas and air to escape.

THE PREPARED wax figure is then "invested" or cast in a plaster and ground brick mold. The mold is dried and then heated slowly. The wax melts out leaving a hollow shell space in which to pour the bronze.

After the bronze is cast, the gates and vents are removed and the work is filed and finished. The core is removed also. Different acids are applied for various patinas or finishes. (Instant aging process.)

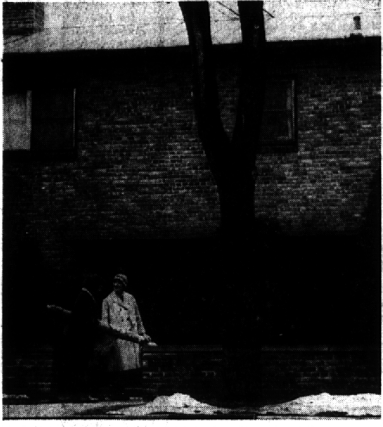
This is a complex process. Until recently nearly all U. S. sculptors sent their works to Italy to be cast. Bearzi has cast for many artists,

Carl Mills and Marshall Fredericks included.

A whimsical series of events changed this. Fredericks had sculptured a lion and a mouse for a shopping center. The mouse, a small appealing bronze, was often stolen. Fredericks found that Petrucci could cast replacement mice locally.

KNOWING THAT Bearzi might retire soon, Fredericks urged the Racine Foundry to set up an art foundry under Bearzi's direction.

Bearzi and his shop foreman came for two months to advise. Fred Petrucci has learned his skill under a master artisan. "He is no longer apprentice," said Bearzi as the two men worked rapidly together preparing still another sculpture for casting.



CRANBROOK ACADEMY of Art student Lucy Ann Warner stops to chat with her weaving instructor's wife, Mrs. Glen Kaufman, in front of faculty residences on Academy Way.

## Photographs Tell Student's Story

By ETHEL SIMMONS  
Arts Editor

Working at Cranbrook is the theme of a picture story, photographed by Bob Osborn of the Birmingham Camera Shop and featuring Lucy Ann Warner, 789 Ruffner, Birmingham.

The story is told in 25 salon prints recently exhibited at the camera shop.

Miss Warner spent two years in residence at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. She received her master of fine arts degree in weaving and textile design from Cranbrook in January. She minored in ceramics and metalworking.

THE 26-YEAR-OLD Miss Warner, who is from Albuquerque, N. M., had a B.A. in English literature and one in art education when she came to Cranbrook two and one-half years ago. She presently is

working on weaving projects in her apartment.

Cranbrook's curriculum, according to Miss Warner, enables you to put forth a concentrated effort in your chosen field of art.

"The important thing is that you work while you're there. But you have a freedom to explore materials and techniques and to develop your own ideas," she says.

AN ART STUDENT'S thesis for a degree consists of a written part and also a photographic record, which is where the camera shop's Bob Osborn comes into students' lives.

Says Miss Warner, "Bob has an appreciation of the artist's feeling for a perfect representation."

Degree candidates must set up an exhibition of their work in the Cranbrook Academy of Art Gallery, and this is reviewed by the faculty.

## Oakland Class Will Attend Opera 'Lucia'

The Division of Continuing Education at Oakland University had only 10 tickets left to the Metropolitan Opera performance of Lucia.

These are the last 10 of a block reserved for adult students of the course on Operas of the Metropolitan which starts Tuesday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m.

The six-week, non-credit course will include a study of all seven operas to be performed by the Metropolitan Opera Company during its Detroit season. Discussion led by Dr. Laslo Hetenyi of Oakland University will center around historical and performance features of the operas.

HE PLANS to illustrate the lecture-discussion sessions copiously with recordings of the operas.

"Beginners who have never been to an opera are as welcome in this class as those who have gone to many," according to Hetenyi.

## ELEMENTARIES PARTICIPATE 'Great Books' Pilot Project Planned for B'ham Schools

The Birmingham Junior Great Books Council announced the formation of pilot programs in several Birmingham elementary schools for next fall at a meeting Tuesday in Fernside's Washington School.

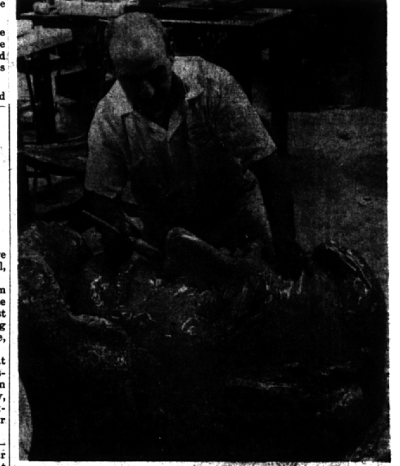
Meadow Lake, Walnut Lake, Beverly, Bloomfield Village, Greenfield, Westchester and Valley Wood Schools, the "feeder" elementaries for Berkshire Junior High School, are the new participating schools. Franklin Elementary, Berkshire Junior High and Groves High School will continue with the advanced Junius Books Program, already in operation.

THE PURPOSE of this extracurricular program is to familiarize students with the "great ideas" which have influenced man through the centuries and, in the process, strengthen their reading, communicating and listening skills.

Among those attending the meeting were Mrs. Richard Eubank, 5745 Raven Road, Birmingham, chairman of the Birmingham Junior Great Books Council, and the Steering Committee of the council: Mrs. Sidney Borden, 1889 Bedford; Mrs. Lee Fisher, 19965 Sunnyslope; Mrs. Mark Jung, 1158 Hill



BRUNO BEARZI



FRED PETRUCCI WORKS ON HEAD OF LINCOLN.



AN OPPORTUNITY to work with basic processes is included in the Cranbrook Academy of Art curriculum. Students majoring in weaving may find this means spinning their own yarn. Or, above, dying yarn, rather than using the more conventional, pre-dyed colors. Upper right, at the spool rack, she selects combination of yarns to put into a flossa rug. For weaving rugs, many thicknesses of yarn are used together. Right, Miss Warner gets help in one of her minor subjects, metalworking, from a major student, Chunghi Choo of Korea. Many foreign students attend Cranbrook which is internationally recognized. Hammers on wall backdrop the girls, in the metal shop, as they discuss soldering of two vessels.



## McChesney Show Begins 3rd Week At Little Gallery

An exhibition of recent paintings and drawings by Clifton McChesney, assistant professor of art at Michigan State University, goes into its third week at Little Gallery.

The paintings represent the last two years of work by this abstract, expressionist. A change from his previous work is seen in more use of color.

McChesney formerly used browns, sepia, greys—almost totally earth tones—but now is using a broader palette.

THE LARGEST canvas in the show, "Migrant II," represents a jet flight he made over the continent. Some of his newer works are done in lacquer pigment.

McChesney is also versatile and capable with drawing techniques, and drawings with ink, pencil and wash are included in the show.

This is the artist's third exhibition at Little Gallery. He was part of a three-man show of master degree students from Cranbrook in 1959 and exhibited his work there next in 1962.

## Guid Reschedules Date of Concert by Laredo and Meckler

The Cranbrook Music Guild, Inc. has announced that the concert by Laredo and Meckler has been rescheduled for Tuesday, March 24, at 8:30 p.m. at Kingswood Auditorium.

The original concert date was Tuesday, March 17. Laredo and Meckler are a husband and wife team who play violin and piano, respectively. Tickets are on sale at the door, at Grinnell's in Birmingham, or from the Cranbrook Music Guild, Bloomfield Hills.

## B'ham Arts Festival Bows Out for '64

The Birmingham Arts Festival, which has been presented annually for the last six years, will not be held this year. The next festival is scheduled for 1965.

According to Elliot Robinson, president of the Bloomfield Art Association, "Consideration is being given to holding the Birmingham Arts Festival biennially with smaller-scale events on the alternate years.

"This year the event will be coordinated with the Birmingham centennial celebration. The next full-scale Arts Festival will be held in the late spring of 1966."

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