

Georgetown's cultural explosion

It was a weekend of art and music

One-man show for Frank Black in retrospective at Gallery Sol



Frank Black, regarded as something of an institution in Georgetown's cultural heritage, is the subject of a new, three-week retrospective at House Sol on Charles Street. The 86-year old painter, a contemporary of the Group of Seven, is

seen here in the studio of his Guelph Street home with a work in progress.

(Herald photo by Paul Dorsey)

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald Editor

Eighteen years after contributing to the first art exhibition at Georgetown's newly-opened Gallery House Sol, artist Frank Black, acknowledged as something of an institution in the community's cultural heritage, has lined the gallery's walls once again for a three-week, one-man retrospective.

Renowned internationally as a contemporary of the Group of Seven and much-respected locally as a dynamic catalyst to the Georgetown art scene, Mr. Black was greeted with a warm round of applause at the opening of his new show in the Charles Street gallery Saturday.

Halton Hills Coun. John McDonald, who formally opened the exhibition with words of admiration and recollections of first meeting the artist more than 20 years ago, spoke for all present when he suggested that Mr. Black's work deserves a special place of honor in the new cultural complex planned for construction on the Georgetown library grounds.

Coun. McDonald told The Herald later that he anticipates virtually unanimous council approval for a move to set aside some space in the new library-theatre-art gallery complex for one or more of Mr. Black's paintings and sketches, as well as several others by other local and deserving artists, including perhaps artisan and former chief librarian Marjorie Nazer.

REVERENT MOOD

A reverent mood touched the large crowd of admirers, former patrons, prospective patrons and comrades-in-art as many of them members of the Palette and Pencil Club, the founding of which was suggested by Mr. Black, as Coun. McDonald recounted the 86-year old painter's devoted career.

"I only started painting because I didn't want to work," Mr. Black laughed, charming gallery visitors with anecdotes as colorful as his oils and watercolors lining the walls.

There was the time in Bermuda, where he spent

much of his boyhood while his English father served as a shipping engineer, when a native woman went to great lengths to preserve Mr. Black's peace of mind while he painted a seascape that included a view of her home.

"That's my house you're painting," the woman proudly told Mr. Black, vowing to use her broom to clear off any pestering youngsters who might bother him. One of those youths, he also recalled, informed the artist he had an uncle in the same profession, but he painted "real-like." The boy demanded ten cents in return for letting Mr. Black paint his home.

Of the House Sol exhibition, which continues until March 6, Mr. Black told visitors, "It's like they say on TV: 'it makes you feel like a somebody'."

Coun. McDonald made it clear, however, that Mr. Black became a "somebody" many years before his first one-man exhibition at House Sol. Giselle Sommer, wife of gallery proprietor John Sommer, explained that Mr. Black's work was among that featured in House Sol's opening show in 1962. Shortly after, she said, he had his first one-man exhibition there.

WOUNDED TWICE

Coun. McDonald's introduction traced Mr. Black's life from his early education in the Bermuda naval academy, through two woundings during World War I (he studied art further while recuperating), to the advertising and design department at McLean's magazine.

Finally committed to a career in art, Mr. Black continued his studies alongside Arthur Lismer and other members of the still to be formed Group of Seven at the

old Ontario College of Art and elsewhere. He carried on combining his love for the sea with his passion for painting, working with two of the world's foremost marine painters, Ernest Grouppe and Stanley Woodward, and saw his works become increasingly popular in Ontario Society of Artists jury shows and later with the prestigious Royal Canadian Academy.

Having settled in Georgetown more than a quarter-century ago, Mr. Black and his wife Lillian, herself an accomplished designer of millinery, were acquainted with other talented artists who, like them, hiked through the rural areas surrounding the community in search of subject matter for their paintings and sketches.

Coun. McDonald noted that Mr. and Mrs. Black still live in the same house on Guelph Street which Lillian fell in love with and bought during a visit from Toronto. The original structure, he added, was built by Georgetown's founder, George Kennedy.

The many oil paintings, watercolors and sketches assembled by Mr. Sommer for the retrospective demonstrate the artist's versatility, spanning nearly 70 years and, almost without exception, exemplifying Mr. Black's own advice to his students to "strive for boldness" in color, composition and texture.

Also on display is one of the large model sailing ships Mr. Black has assembled in keeping with his wave-washed past. Acknowledging that background for its importance to Mr. Black's work, John Sommer quoted John Masfield in his brief catalogue for the show: "Life, like the sea, is full of mystery and hidden currents".



Not only is Frank Black a talented artist but he is also a proficient builder of model ships like the one pictured above. (Herald photo)

A Halton Hills Arts Council feature

Evening of music was uplifting, courageous in the joint choral society-symphony concert

By ENID WILLIAMS

Frost-filled air and crunchy snow, began the evening of culture at Holy Cross Church when Georgetown Choral Society elevated the mind and soul as well as alerting our ears to a melodious rendition of Beethoven's work.

Once inside the majestic structure of Holy Cross church a capacity audience filled the edifice. As the crowd multiplied quickly with anticipation of what was to come, the feeling of excitement generated through the mass of music enthusiasts. The eye scanning the church noted the number of young children, youth, as well as adults, in the audience.

Community television had set up for the event, so those who missed the live performance may enjoy the glorious experience on your local television station.

The choral society opened the programme with a choral rendition of Oh Canada which caused pride to swell in all, as we felt the emotion and worth of our country, through the sensitive hills and valleys of Rideout's arrangement of our national anthem.

The choir then sang "The Heavens Resound", with majestic, firm chords, gradually softened by a passage demanding gentle interpretation the choir satisfied, before soaring into a final choral passage with strength and good balance.

The hallelujah chorus from "Christ on the Mount of Olives", boasted an impressive introduction by the orchestra. The soprano section was very precise and musically clear, while the altos entered singing in rich definite tones of assurance. The male voices valiantly tried to create a good balance.

The piece had interesting swells and diminuendos which stimulated us, then quietly soothed us as the choir made individual entries gently but decisively. A robust finish of this piece with "Praise the Lord" left us overwhelmed with the technical musical expertise of the choir.

Egmont Overture Op. 84 featured the Oakville Symphony under the baton of Tony Royle, their conductor. The strings were delicately handled throughout while the woodwinds were somewhat glaring in places. The percussion added the right touch and the clarinets were sterling in performance as the piece progressed. While the piece seemed to lack lustre, the interpretation was mechanically right.

The programme continued on to the Mass in C Major. As the male chorus started the piece with "Kyrie Elteson", we were impressed with the beautiful control, balance and timbre of the male voices. The choir was beautifully disciplined and directed with mean-

ingful dynamics.

The choir continued by singing "Gloria" which they began with accurate attack and convincing musical ability. The hills and valleys in the interpretation as the choral sections made their respective entries, was pleasing to the ear and a credit to Dale Wood.

Soprano soloist, Doreen Wilford, overcame apparent nerves in the opening of her solo work to enthral the audience with her technical expertise. Mezzo-soprano, Carolyn Simmons, sang with control and rich velvet brown tones. She portrayed warmth and soul in her singing and assured us of her musical knowledge. George De Kleer, tenor soloist was accurate in his singing throughout the concert. At times the orchestra overpowered Mr. De Kleer's solo parts but the audience appreciated his sensitive handling of several passages. Baritone soloist, Bill Brush was masterful in his singing and he was a musical delight. His confident performance was impressive.

During the Gloria section, the male voices were rich in tone and very much together. This section of the choir sang with confidence, very strong color, and actually convinced us they were double in numbers. Excellent clarity of tones was heard as the choir aroused excitement while singing the

amen passage with effective dynamics.

The credo section of the mass had a throb from the orchestra and sharing the limelight with the choir, they soared together through "I Believe in One God" which was thrilling. A sharpness in the soprano section marred this portion of the mass only a few measures as the timbre in other sections mellowed this sound and they finished collectively, pleasing the ear. One of the highlights was in the choral entries and sustained passages the lustre of the voices was exciting without the audience fully understanding the Latin words.

The sanctus began with a clear, definite acapella sung with definite entries and balanced sound. The male chorus had impact when they entered singing "Heaven and Earth are Full of the Glory". The full choral worth of choir was exemplified in "Osana in Excelsis" followed by a gentle passage by soloists as they sang "Benedictus qui venit" precisely and technically well. Doreen Wilford and Carolyn

Simmons voices blended well throughout, however, the four voices together did not always blend.

As the "Agnus Dei" began, the choir sang with strength and the bass entry was rich in timbre before the choir took up the challenge of singing "O Lamb of God" with sensitive interpretation. Musically the work of one of the great masters, Beethoven, moved along through "Donn Nobis Pacem" with control, balance, emotion, and after an exciting evening of musical harmony, the choir concluded the C Major Mass in peaceful tranquility.

The Oakville Symphony was a plus in the evening of entertainment as they complemented the Choral Society, particularly during the Mass in C Major.

The evening of music was uplifting, courageous and the choir sang with disciplined training. In the C Major Mass more emphasis on contrasts between the segments would have been appreciated. The seeking, human cry intended in the Kyrie by Beethoven did

not quite happen with this performance and in the Credor and Sanctus fuller swells and "real soul" would have been appropriate. However, when you consider the overall performance, all facets of excellence which made the concert happen, the professionalism of the soloists and the fact the choir were complemented by a pleasing orchestra, we in Halton Hills should be proud of our Choral Society.

Once again Dale Wood chose a programme which stimulated the singers and audience alike, one using courage and determination to bring the choir to such heights of excellence. The fact the choir sang in Latin with apparent ease, presented the C Major work in a professional style. The Georgetown Choral Society has just scored a win in the presence of hundreds who felt the full cultural worth of this recent concert.

The next concert by Georgetown Choral Society is May 10 and 11 and new male chorus members are always encouraged. To become a member of a high standard choir, you may call 877-1638 for information.

OSSTF opposes offer from Halton board

Herald Special

District council and the executive of Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) District 9 are urging members to reject the Halton board of education's final offer when they vote tomorrow (Thursday).

OSSTF executive officer Neil Munro said the board's offer represents a year average increase of only 2.4 per cent rather than the six per cent stated by the board because the offer is not retroactive.

Halton secondary school teachers have been working without a contract since Aug. 31 and the contract will take effect the day it is signed, the board said last week.

Mr. Munro said he has never known any board to reach agreement with its teachers which is not retroactive.

Even if the offer is retroactive it would be well below settlements reached with surrounding boards, he said.

Teachers in Wentworth, Durham, York, and Toronto who are at the maximum experience level earn more than \$30,000 per year while Halton teachers in the same position have been offered

\$29,999.

The provincial average in that category for settlements reached this year is expected to be about \$30,500, he said, and teachers in neighboring Lincoln and Peel have rejected \$31,000 offers from their boards.

Although the board says it will add 15 teachers to the staff total for the secondary panel during the process of lowering the pupil-teacher ratio from 17.7 to 17.48 in the next two years, Mr. Munro said he expects the reverse to occur.

Board figures on projected enrolments indicate that 78 jobs will disappear by 1982 and the federation is mystified to account for the extra teachers.

The teachers are opposed to giving up a retirement gratuity and equate it with the severance pay given to employees retiring from other fields.

When gratuities were introduced in the province more than 20 years ago, teachers waived their annual increment for that year, he said. Therefore the board has no right to claim the teachers didn't pay for this benefit.

Teachers must work for a board for 10 years before they

can qualify for any gratuity payment, he said, and it takes another five years with the board to reach the 50 per cent of final salary maximum allowed in the agreement.

With teachers' mobility it is ridiculous for the board to assume that many, let alone all, of its teachers will qualify for maximum gratuity on retirement, he said.

"We object very strongly to this attempt at contract stripping," he said. "We're trying to improve our benefits, not reduce them. This hasn't even been an issue with other boards."

The teachers feel insulted by the board's offer, he said, and he has little doubt that it will be rejected. Teachers recognize the need to control spending but they won't subsidize the public costs just because grants from the provincial government have been curtailed and boards are short of funds.

If the offer is rejected provincial negotiators hope to be able to go back to the board and seek another settlement without resorting to a strike vote. Mr. Munro could make no guesses on how soon such action would be undertaken.



Concentration is etched on the face of this violinist with the Oakville Symphony, seen performing with the Georgetown Choral Society at Holy Cross Church Sunday. (Herald photo by Paul Dorsey)

About the Hills Society meets

The Esquimaux Historical Society will be holding its annual meeting February 25 at Knox Presbyterian Church. Guest speaker at the meeting will be Lynn Barnard, owner of Pennisworth. Ms. Barnard will be talking about the history of Main Street in Georgetown. Her talk will be accompanied by slides provided by Bruce Harding. The meeting will begin at 8 p.m.

Top donors

At the Red Cross Blood Donor Clinic Feb. 11, Mr. J. Evans recorded his hundredth donation, while Bob Groswood contributed donation number 75. Also contributing his fiftieth donation was B.H. Grummett. Thirty-fifth donation awards went to R.A. Vandyke, K.E. Burgoyne, J. Nichols and Mrs. G.M. Duff. Awards also went to L.C. Ewen, C.E. Peterson, E.J. Jandenhock, G. Eggleton and Mrs. C.R. Hamilton for their twentieth donations. Tenth donation awards went to Mrs. J.M. Sunnucks, Mrs. S.M. Crane, Mrs. M.M. Rea, Mrs. E.A. McCaughy, Mrs. J.M. Worrall, J.W. Draycott, L.A. Knight, G.C. Currie and B.J. Marchment. The clinic was sponsored by the Optimists.