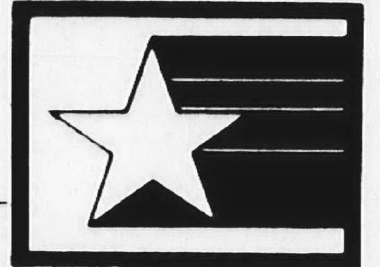


Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



Thursday, April 28, 1988 O&E

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Gala feasting

Rack of lamb is a featured favorite year after year

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

FOR THE LAST 10 years, Michael J. Agius has been preparing rack of lamb for La Gala de Cuisine at Cranbrook Kingswood School in Bloomfield Hills.

"Do people think, 'Is this all Agius can do?'" he said with a smile. Rack of lamb is one of the most popular entrees at Le Gala, and that's why he prepares the same dish every year. "I don't want to disappoint anyone."

Agius, who is executive chef at Sky Chefs at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, is also the chairman representing 20 chefs from the Michigan

Chefs de Cuisine, who take part in the big benefit party each year. Between 20 and 30 more restaurants, caterers or other food-related participants are also invited separately by the Le Gala committee.

This year, close to 50 chefs in all will present appetizers, hot hors d'oeuvres, cold hors d'oeuvres, entrees and desserts at Le Gala. The event will be held 3-7 p.m. Sunday at the Cranbrook Campus Quadrangle.

IF YOU HAVEN'T already got your ticket (at \$125 general, \$150 patron and \$200 benefactor), it's probably too late. Le Gala, with tickets limited to 1,000 persons, is always a sell-out.

Agius said rack of lamb, persille, is what he serves. Persille refers to "the coating we put on it — bread crumbs, spices and fresh chopped parsley." Butchering the lamb is part of the preparation he makes. "It's a lot harder to butcher it than cook it," he said. "I always like to butcher it myself. I don't want any fat. I finish very well. I want it to be chop ready. People eating it can grab the little French bow and eat it like hand food."

The butchering is done on Saturday, the lamb is grilled Sunday. Pre-cooking is at Sky Chefs, with seasoning and finishing at Le Gala. "Final touches, in the oven for 20-25 minutes," are done in Cranbrook's kitchen.

The rack of lamb is taken to the dining area where it is carved and served.

Four other chefs from Chefs de Cuisine also have participated in Le Gala since its inception 10 years ago. They are Milos Cihelka of the Golden Mushroom in Southfield; John Vanderwoude, who owns Cuisine Moderne caterers in Southfield; Leo Korstjens, president of Michigan Chefs de Cuisine, and master pastry baker at St. John's Hospital in Detroit; and Leopold Schaefer of Matus Pastries in Birmingham.

Agius, who now lives in Northville, formerly lived in Livonia for 15 years. An executive chef for the last 25 years, he has worked at private country clubs such as Franklin Hills and Plum Hollow and now is employed by Sky Chefs doing quality control. He develops menus and does presentations for overseas airlines.

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— Michael Agius



Tasting parties a popular way for organizations to raise funds

Mike Agius, who was invited by Cranbrook to bring members of the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine into the very first Le Gala de Cuisine, calls the spectacular outdoor-indoor party, "a very prestigious event. This is the opening of the summer events."

Tasting parties are favorite fundraisers throughout metropolitan Detroit, although not all tasting parties are planned for this purpose.

Cranbrook's event, said Agius, was the inspiration for all the others in

the Detroit area. "Cranbrook is the one that started this trend. Since they've been so successful, any institution trying to raise money is copying the trend," he said.

Only last weekend the Michigan Restaurant Association held its annual Fine Foods Festival at Hart Plaza in Detroit. Other tastings coming up include:

• Taste of West Bloomfield, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, May 15, at Henry Ford Medical Center in West

Bloomfield. For more information, call the West Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce at 626-3636.

• Taste of the Nation, 6-10 p.m. Tuesday, May 17, at the Top of the Pontch and the Ontario Room at the Hotel Pontchartrain in Detroit. For more information, call the Whitney at 832-5700.

• Chef's Fest '88, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday, May 20, at the Community House, Birmingham.

FOR LE GALA, Agius asks each of the chefs to figure portions for 1,000 people — the entire numbers of guests — and then go 200 over. Maybe everybody won't sample everything but, "You have to be ready for it." At the end of the party, committees, students, chefs, assistants and helpers also join in the tasting. "We allow them to sample the goodies," Agius said.

Other members of Chefs de Cuisine in Le Gala this year include Joseph Decker, Awrey Bakery; Gary Crzywacz, Clarkston Cafe; Greg

Upshur, Cousins' Heritage Inn; Glenn Williams, the Detroit Club; Tom McGlone, Hogan's; Dennis Lindinger, the Kingsley Inn; Marcus Haight, the Lark (serving rack of lamb, Genghis Khan); Dan Lowry, Lowry's; Ed Janos, the Money Tree; Mark Sherman, Norman's Elton Street Station; Brian Polcyn, Pike Street Company; Lou DeCillis, Savino's Ice Cream Co.; and Mike Russell, Travis Pointe Country Club.

Agius said there are 15 more members of Chefs de Cuisine waiting to become one of the association's 20

participants at Le Gala

Among other Le Gala participants, not affiliated with Chefs de Cuisine, include the Appe Teaser, Bernardi's, the Bijou, Bonnie's Patisserie, Chez Raphael, Chocolatissimo, the Coffee Beanery, Confetti's, the Double Eagle, Gayle's Chocolates, the Hotel St. Regis, Jacques, Les Autours, MacKinnon's, Merchant of Vino, the Midtown Cafe, Musashi, Periwinkles, Pizza Gourmet, R.I.K.'s, Sebastina's, Sweet Endings of Bloomfield, Treats, and Wong's Eatery.

Producer's companies are ever-expanding

By Cathie Breidenbach
special writer

MICHAEL KLIER has his fingers in a lot of theatrical pies. Theatre Arts Productions, the company he started 10 years ago, has evolved into a demanding, multi-faceted entertainment business with more than 100 people on its payroll.

Klier learned the craft of theater as a performer, but he seldom goes on stage nowadays. "I do most of the directing for productions myself except when we've got more work than I can handle," he says.

He started working in University of Detroit summer stock during high school and continued performing while earning a bachelor of arts in theater from the University of Detroit and a master of arts from Michigan State University. With his theater company's escalating number of ongoing projects, Klier notes that more and more often he needs other professionals to help direct productions.

Theatre Arts Productions, called TAP for short, performs cabaret-style musical revues on a regular ba-

sis at the Novi Hilton, Holiday Inns in Windsor and Livonia, and the Holly Hotel, as well as at the Premier Center in Sterling Heights. It also custom designs shows for businesses and private parties and presents national educational programs in the schools in five southeast Michigan counties.

"THIS YEAR we'll do 300 performances of shows on child abuse and handicapped people in the public schools," Klier says. "It's an important side of what we do and we hope to expand it further."

Four TAP acting companies perform in schools during the day through an arrangement with Oakland, St. Clair, Wayne, Macomb and Outer Wayne County school districts. "The Bubbylonian Encounter," a national show about the sense of touch and its abuse, was written for K through sixth grade audiences by Gene Mackey of Kansas City. Whenever "The Bubbylonian Encounter" goes on before a young audience, a facilitator from a social service agency such as the Haven introduces the show and fields questions afterwards in the classroom.



'I'd guess that 15-17 percent of those on the payroll this year work exclusively in the performing arts. Three years ago it was only 3-5 percent.'

— Michael Klier

Another show called "Kids on the Block," uses life-sized puppets to act the parts of handicapped people. The show aims to teach children how to understand and communicate with

the handicapped. A third educational show, "Who Says I Can't," addresses alcohol abuse and is targeted at middle and secondary school-age students.

Because people go out to be entertained primarily on weekends, many of TAP's professional entertainers work regular jobs during the week and perform only Fridays-Sundays. One of Klier's objectives for TAP is to set in motion enough projects during the day and during the week to enable his entertainers to work full time at what they love best — the performing arts.

He's gradually making progress. "I'd guess that 15-17 percent of those on payroll this year work exclusively in the performing arts. Three years ago it was only 3-5 percent."

KLIER SAYS TAP specializes in light entertainment, and when putting together a show, the company follows a loose formula that "has always worked with audiences." Cabaret shows — "any grouping of songs based loosely on a theme," musical

revues and impersonator evenings compose the mainstay of TAP shows.

The touring production "Babes on Broadway" features Broadway songs and impersonations of the women who made them famous. "A currently running show, 'An Evening with Oscar,' pays tribute to Oscar-winning songs. The nostalgic 'Motown Review' recreates the Detroit sound of the '60s. TAP is currently developing 'Broadway Stage Fright,' a new show which ties the cabaret format to a mystery theme and is scheduled to open at the Novi Hilton in the fall.

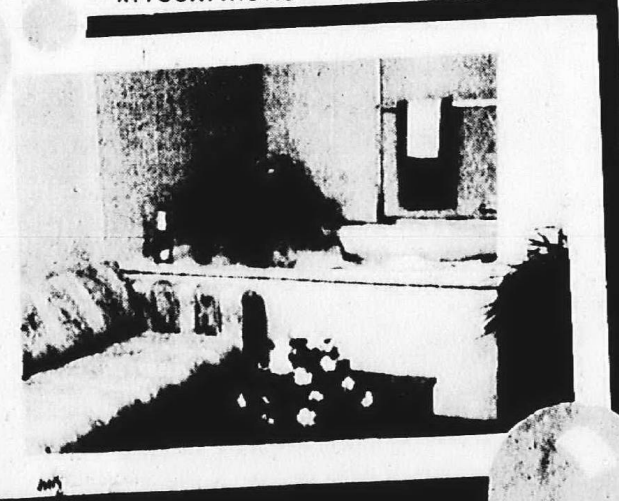
Klier outlines TAP's success formula: "We sing and we dance if the stage is large enough, and we always try to get the audience involved with

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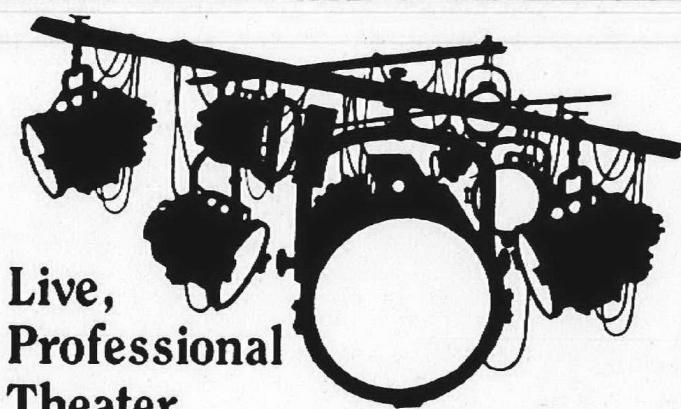
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