

# LIFESTYLES

## RAZZMATAZZ: A diverse artist

*Editor's note: Contributing to this Friday's Art Talk is guest columnist Bruce Gay.*

The music business is generally composed of two different camps: those literate few who read, compose and cover all styles, and the rest of us who turn up the volume and get down. Comfortably straddling the fence with a foot in each camp is Rustonite Michael Rasbury.

"I like to play all kinds of music," Rasbury told me. "Versatility makes me more hireable."

Versatility may be an understatement for a man who has composed music for outdoor and indoor theatre, who has released one CD entitled "Blue Jacket" and has another on the way, and who plays keyboard for pop, country, blues and Christian bands.

Enough? He also is hoping to score music for an upcoming PBS movie titled "The Varmint", and a Riverdance production. And oh, yes — in his spare time, Rasbury, Razz to his friends, is on faculty with the School of the Performing Arts at Louisiana Tech. "I teach people to make music with computers," he explained.

The upcoming CD combines dance music and ballads, and features a collaboration with his wife Marci. Razz plays all the parts on his synthesizer. Unlike much synth music which sounds sterile and machine-like, Rasbury's has all the warmth of the instruments he replaces.

"My goal is to make the synthesizer sound realistic. Synths

won't ever replace acoustic music, but the gap is getting narrower," Razz said.

While Michael's orchestral background music has reaped him fame nationally, jamming in local clubs is a relatively new experience for him. "It's good for me," he said. "It exercises new muscles. The theatre is controlled — the blues is totally uncontrolled."

Look for Razz playing blues-rock with Lash La Rue and country with Hank Staples and Thunder Creek. Tonight, he'll be part of a band accompanying Dee Alexander, Tami Alexander and Mary Beth Thiels in a concert at Tech's University Theatre.

He's a welcome addition at the Tuesday Night Blues Jam at Sun-

down West, and will be a regular guest of the world-best band The LightningBugs. Sundays find him playing at Christ Community Church.

I asked him, "Razz, is there anything you want the folks in Ruston to know?"

"Well," he said, "maybe somebody will think it's neat that there's this guy in a little home studio south of Ruston writing music that big names are singing and playing all over the country."

I'm pretty sure he's right.

### Art Talk



By Mary Anne Lewis

### Art Grant Workshop

There will be grant writing workshops in connection with the Decentralized Arts Funding Program at 6:00 p.m. Aug. 12 at the Ford Museum in Homer, 927-9190. The workshop is free to the pub-

lic and will be conducted by Freda Powell, Director of Community Development for the Shreveport Regional Arts Council (SRAC). Grant applications and guidelines will be available at the meeting.

The following types of organizations may apply for art funds: non-profit organizations; local parish or state governmental agencies; public or private school boards; and colleges or universities sponsoring activities intended for community participation. Individuals may also apply using an eligible 501C(3) organization as a fiscal agent to do a community artist project. All applicants must apply in the parish in which the organization is domiciled and incorporated.

The Decentralized Arts Funding Program makes the arts available in all areas of the state by giving people in each parish the opportunity to develop arts programs that meet their local needs. Using the latest census figures for parish populations, the program will allocate approximately fifty cents for each resident of the parish. Applicants compete only against other organizations and individuals within their parish.

The Decentralized Arts Funding Program hopes to stabilize arts organizations while encouraging professional artists to undertake projects that have meaningful community involvement and impact.

Applications will be due in the SRAC office by 4:00 p.m. on September 12. Grant consultation is available by appointment. For more information, contact me at 255-1714, or Freda Powell at 673-6505.

Mary Anne Lewis, executive director of the North Central Louisiana Arts Council, writes the Friday's column, Art Talk.

### Live Music, Coming Up!

- Tonight at Rabb's Brandon Harvy and the Connections, blues.
- Tonight at Sundown West, Howard Shaft (formerly Blue Monday).
- Tonight and tomorrow, 7:30 p.m. at University Theatre on the Louisiana Tech campus—"Our Show" starring Dee Alexander, Tami Alexander and Mary Beth Thiels-rock, folk, musical theatre and jazz.
- Tomorrow at Rabb's, Mushroom Groovy, jazz funk.
- Aug. 14 at Sundown West, Omar and the Howlers.
- Aug. 15 at Rabb's 420 Blues
- Aug. 20 at Rabb's Ho Hum, alternative.
- Aug. 21 at Sundown West, Oman and the Howlers.

Live Music is provided by Mary Anne Lewis as part of Friday's column, Art Talk. To have a performance listed, call 255-1714 by noon Wednesday for the Friday Art Talk.