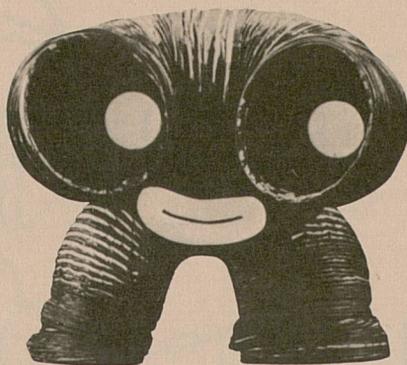


UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

# mummenschanz encore

Wednesday and Thursday, February 20 and 21, 1991  
Power Center for the Performing Arts, at 8:00 p.m.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



*Performed by*  
Barbara Karger      Thomas Prattki  
Peter Locher

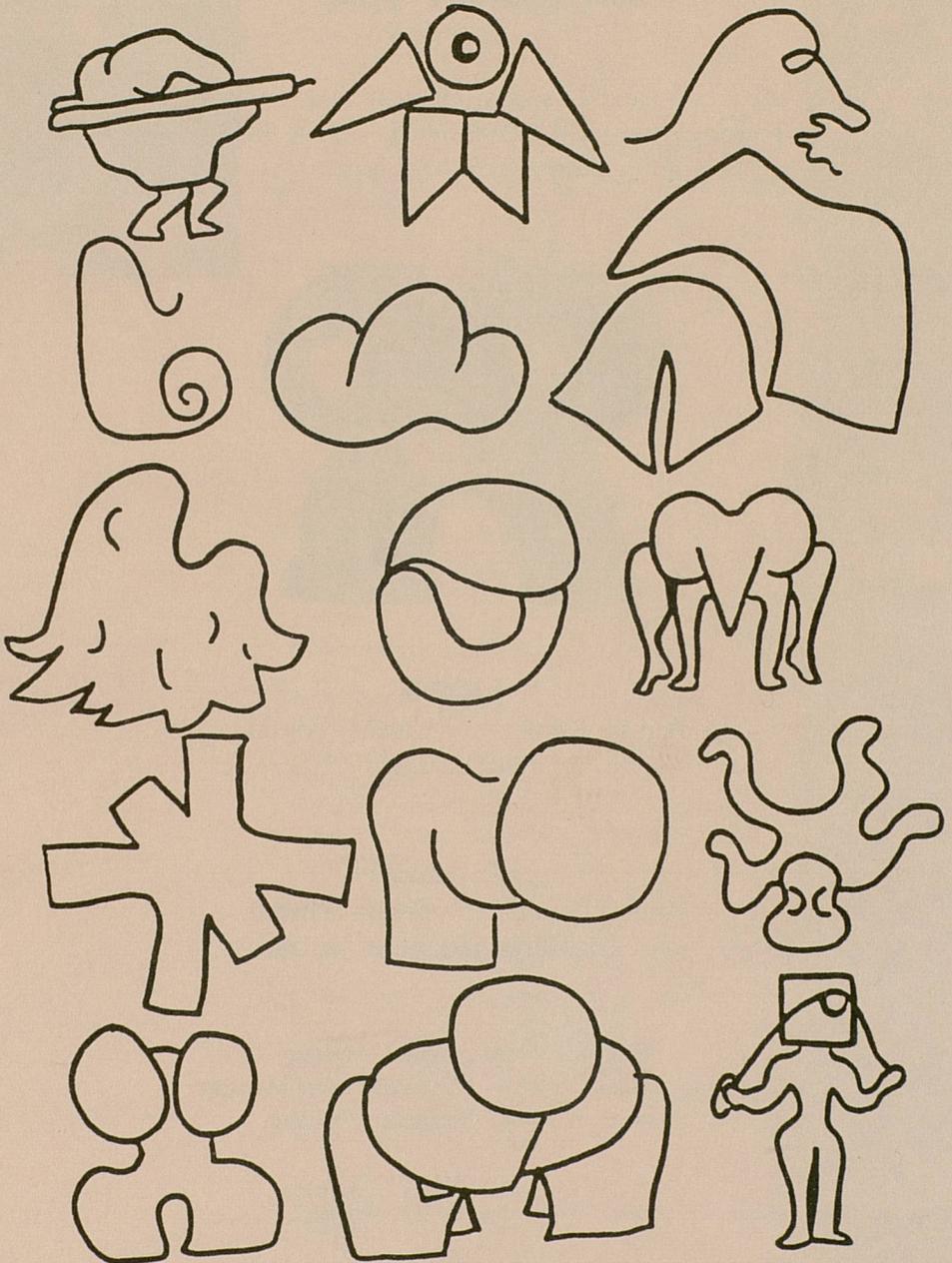
*Originally created by*  
Andres Bossard      Bernie Schurch  
Floriana Frassetto

Todd Mc Nerney, *General Manager*  
Dino "Chico" de Maio, *Production Stage Manager*  
Jonathan Young, *Production Assistant*

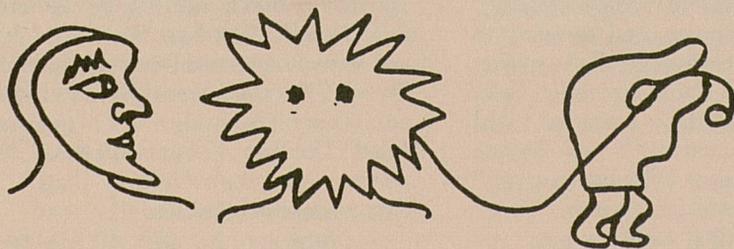
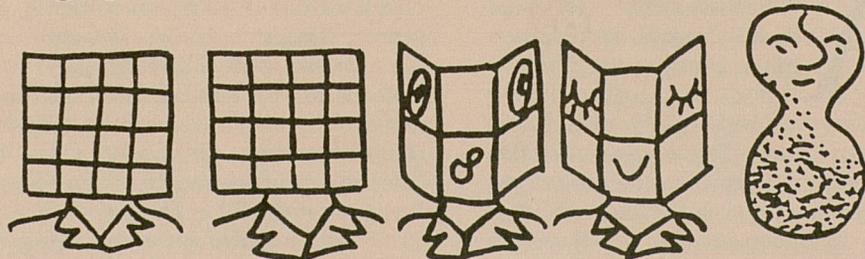
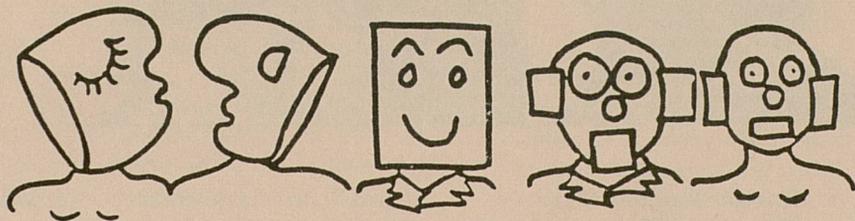
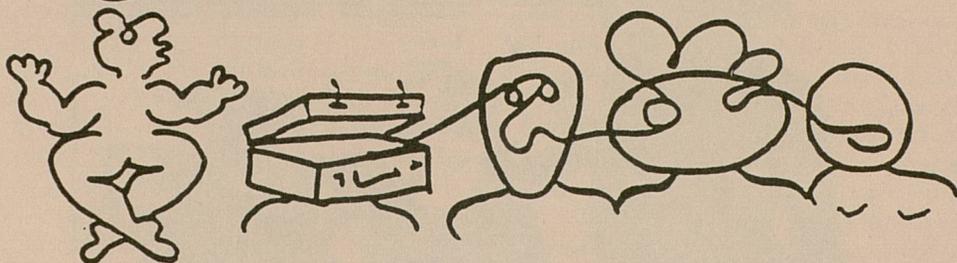
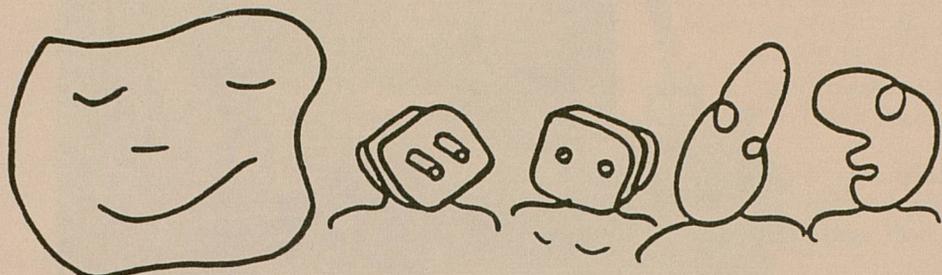
Mummenschanz appears by arrangement with ICM Artists, Ltd., New York City.

## program part one

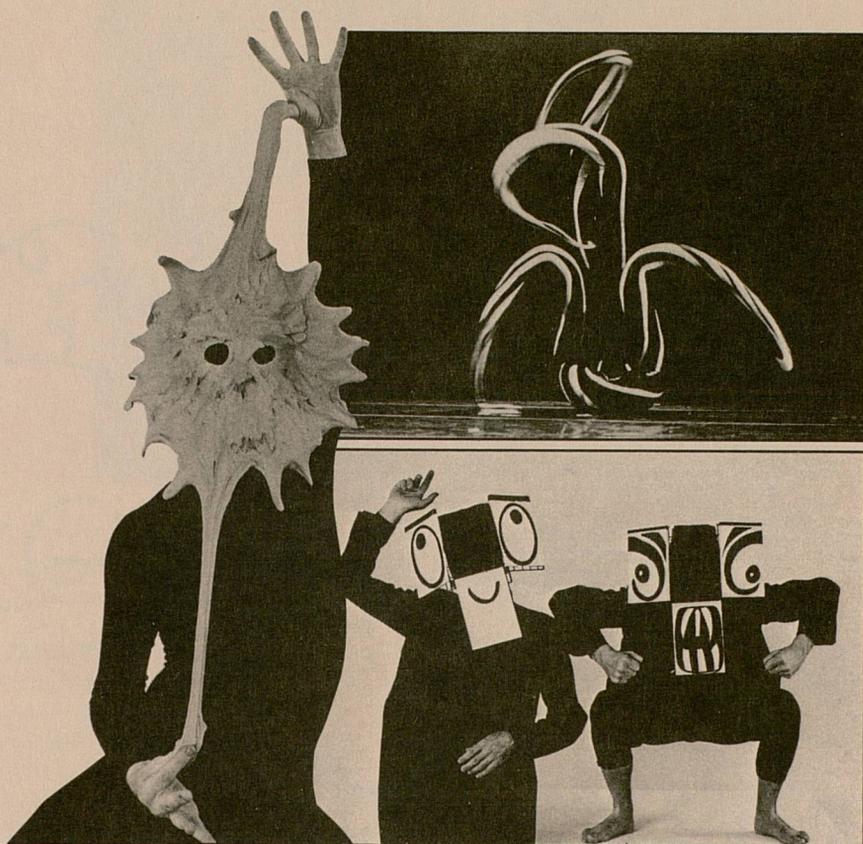
The Mummenschanz presentation has no formal program;  
the pieces performed, however, relate to these drawings.



program part two



## About the Artists



Although the trio known as “Mummenschanz” presented its first program in 1972 as a fringe event at the Avignon Festival, the origins of their performances date back to 1969, when Bernie Schurch and Andres Bossard staged their first show together. Originally, the two Swiss mimes combined spoken dialogue with mask sketches to create fantastic and humorous effects, but upon meeting Floriana Frassetto, another student of mime, and traveling to perform in Paris, they dropped all the spoken items to overcome the language barrier. From that point onward, their programs relied solely upon mime and mask and became appropriately named “Mummenschanz” (meaning “masquerade” or “mummery”).

Since its initial engagements, the troupe has performed throughout the world – including South America, Japan, Israel, and the Soviet Union – and regularly toured the

United States, captivating audiences with its unique mixture of acting, mime, dance, puppetry, and magic. In Europe, Mummenschanz has appeared at the Edinburgh and Spoleto Festivals, as well as in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Madrid, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Brussels. In New York City, the trio performed for three years on Broadway at the Bijou Theater.

After a period spent developing new material in Zurich, the original cast returned in 1984 with “The New Show” and continued on to their second Broadway run in 1986. During 1989, the troupe marked its twentieth anniversary, presenting a special program entitled “The Best of Mummenschanz.” It now returns to the United States with “Mummenschanz Encore.”

These concerts mark the group’s third visit to Ann Arbor, after two sold-out performances each in 1987 and 1989.

## The Performers

**Barbara Karger** was born in 1962 in Vienna, Austria. After receiving her education there, she studied mime at the Folkswangschule in Essen, Germany, with Gunther Titt and Bettina Falkenberg. She then began performing and touring with theater and opera companies, and, in 1986, founded with two fellow students her own mime troupe, which has appeared throughout Germany. Barbara has choreographed mime-intermezzos for productions at the Staatstheater in Stuttgart and the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, Switzerland. She joined Mummenschanz in the summer of 1989.

**Peter Locher** was born in 1964 in Mellingen, Switzerland, where he attended school and learned the craft of carpentry. For several years he sang and played various instruments in the Zurich-based band "Uomo Mondo," with which he also built a reputation for the mime numbers he would perform during the intermissions. His success encouraged him to undertake the two-year professional course at the Movement Theater School of Daniel Ilg in Zurich. He went on to study Commedia dell'Arte with Alessandro Marcchetti and stage-clowning with the Brothers Colombaioni in Rome. He spent parts of 1988 acting in a play of the Euro-Studio, touring Germany. Before becoming a member of Mummenschanz in 1989, he worked at staging mime in a number of European festival productions.

**Thomas Prattki**, born in 1960 in Munster, Germany, studied sports and dance at the university there. In Bonn, he went on to specialize in mime and mask-performance, and also to study psychology, with a particular focus on body and dance therapy. He collaborated with Sladek of the Theater Kefka and with the Tanzforum in Cologne, among others. After two years in Paris, he successfully completed the Theater School of Jacques Lecoq. As part of a governmental educational program, he taught theater until he was hired at the Mummenschanz audition in May 1989.

## The Creators

**Andres Bossard** was born in Zurich on August 9, 1944, where he attended primary and secondary school, and then the School of Arts and Crafts. After a year, he discontinued his studies there and founded the

cabaret "Chlupplisack," for which he served as writer and actor. Later, he took an active part in the production of German and Austrian cabarets, for which he also wrote a number of scripts. At age 24, he studied pantomime with Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

At Lecoq's school, he met Bernie Schurch, with whom he created the first program in 1969. In more recent years, he staged a movement chorus for a Baroque opera in Germany and collaborated with Floriana Frassetto as mime consultant in a production of *Faust* in the Greek theatre in Taormina, Sicily.

Mr. Bossard is notably committed to the ability of pantomime and mask-performance to convey more on stage than the spoken word.

**Floriana Frassetto** was born in the United States on December 9, 1950, and grew up in Rome, where she attended school. After studying basic acting techniques at the Theater Academy with Alessandro Fersen, she began intensive study of body movements (dance, pantomime, acrobatics) at the studio of Swiss Roy Bosier, also in Rome. Ms. Frassetto gained her first television and stage experience while touring with Bosier's company. In the search for new modes for expression, she visited a show of Andres Bossard and Bernie Schurch in a Rome theater and soon thereafter joined Mummenschanz. A member of Mummenschanz since 1972, she has created the ensemble's masks and costumes. With Mr. Bossard she designed new costumes and Mummenschanz acts that were part of Siegfried and Roy world tours of 1989.

**Bernie Schurch** was born on August 3, 1944 in Berne, where he completed his schooling and a commercial apprenticeship. He later studied acting at the Berne Stage Studio and at the same time wrote scripts for cabarets and acted in theaters in Switzerland and Germany. At Jacques Lecoq's school in Paris he studied movement and soon acted with Lecoq's theater group. There he met Andres Bossard, and in 1969 they gave their first show together under the name "Verlor and Vorher," which later became "Games of Masks and Fools." After several more changes, the show became Mummenschanz in 1972, a totally new form of expression for the theater. With Ms. Frassetto and Mr. Bossard, Bernie Schurch worked on an adaptation of four Mummenschanz acts for the Swiss National Circus Knie.



In 1969, Bernie Schurch and Andres Bossard staged their first show. Their earliest venues were usually tiny student theaters, in which most of the audience had to stand up in order to see them from top to toe. As a result, the performers decided to alternate their mask sketches with spoken clownesque sketches in the vein of an absurdist, Beckett-like dialogue. Floriana Frassetto had first seen the two Swiss mimes in a garage theatre in Rome's Trastevere not far from the school of Roy Bosier, where she was a mime student at the time. After a night-long discussion, she followed the show to the cafe theatre *La vieille grille* in Paris, where she did lighting for them. Because of language problems, the spoken items were replaced by mask skits. Floriana insisted on purchasing a sewing machine, and she then stitched the first foam rubber monsters together. The fringe program of the 1972 Avignon Festival saw the creation of their first show as a trio. It contained no more spoken items and became known by the new name of "Mummenschanz."

Floriana sat in the improvised box office, and as soon as the audience had filled the dusty gymnasium on the outskirts of this French town, she closed both her till and the entrance door, walked up the aisle to the stage where she took off the shawl that had been draped around her black tights, and the performance began. From the adjacent school kitchen that served as a changing room, the "Mums" had to crawl on stage through the

upper part of a narrow door that was half obstructed by the huge rostrum on which they performed.

The trio's first appearance in the United States — at the Arts College in Rochester, New York — offered them the wonders of a well-equipped professional stage. Their movements finally were able to reach out into space; they developed and re-designed the lighting plot, and the show grew simultaneously with the audiences and their spontaneous reactions.

*New York Times* dance critic Anna Kisselgoff discovered Mummenschanz at Alice Tully Hall, and her favorable review led to a series of coast-to-coast tours. The media called it a new form of theatre: a mixture of acting, mime, dance, puppetry, and magic. The Muppet show, in which Mummenschanz appeared, took the trio back to Europe. It then performed at the Edinburgh Festival, in Spoleto, at the Theatre de la Ville in Paris, at Rome's Eliseo, at the na Zabradli in Prague, then in Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Brussels, at the Young Vic in London, and eventually for three years at the Bijou Theatre on Broadway.

After a decade on the road — South America, Japan, Israel, and the U.S.S.R. — the wordless entertainment seemed to have no boundaries. But artists would not be what they are if they were not possessed by the constant urge to change the pattern and start from scratch again. Thus, in 1980, Bernie, Floriana, and Andres trained a threesome of

young mimes who were then able to carry the magical silence of Mummenschanz around the world.

Mummenschanz now had the leisure to experiment on new material in the hall of an unused factory in their home town of Zurich. In 1984, "The New Show" brought proof that Mummenschanz had more to offer than a few stage gimmicks, that people return to listen to messages so strangely and strikingly enhanced by a wiggle, a hug, or an accentuated little jump of that flabby lump of patchworked eiderdowns called the "blob."

The unusual moves of shapes that are previously unheard-of stimulate the curiosity and enhance the observation of subtleties in adults and children alike. A universal language is spoken by the "Mums," a communication that can reach the deeper layers of the human being. The Mummenschanz performers and most of their audiences perceive the show as a counterweight to the superficial world of unquestioned efficiency in which we live. Clive Barnes stated in his review: "When you leave the theater, you may find that the finer points of Mummenschanz's performances have only just begun to register. Little Japanese paper flowers of suggestion have been tossed into the water, and they open long after the curtain has fallen."

Lately, the mask-players have been straying away from the main shows. They have worked as part of a large-scale, open-air production of *Faust* in the Greek Theatre of Taormina in Sicily; with a movement-chorus that linked the arias of a rediscovered Baroque opera in Germany; in the making of an MTV video-clip with a Swiss rock group; and, most successfully, in training two former Mummenschanz members to be the main attraction of the 1988 tour of the Swiss National Circus Knie.

Last season the group celebrated its 20th anniversary with the successful program, "The Best of Mummenschanz." This program continues to tour the world. As always, the trio uses its experience to find an artistic form that is both familiar to their accustomed audiences and intriguing to those who see them for the first time. Well-known material should feel new, and new moves should appear familiar. The juxtaposition of the sketches will surprise, and unexpected turns are granted in a voyage that reflects the past and flashes out into the future.



### *Managerial and Production*

**Todd McNerney**, General Manager, first met Mummenschanz at St. John's University-Minnesota, where he received his B.A. in Theatre Arts. He later went on to graduate with an M.F.A. in Acting from the University of Iowa. While at Iowa, in addition to pursuing acting studies, he maintained his interest in all aspects of the theatre, including directing, design, and set construction. His performances at the University of Iowa included the roles of Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* and Konstantin in *The Seagull*. Todd has worked in the Des Moines Metro Opera, as well as for many touring shows and as an in-house technician at the Benedicta Arts Center, College of St. Benedict. Most recently, he performed with Shakespeare Santa Cruz in Santa Cruz, California.

**Dino "Chico" de Maio**, Production Stage Manager, was born in Livorno, Italy. His first association with Mummenschanz began in Europe, during the 1981-82 winter season, and since then, "Chico" has worked with the company throughout the United States, Japan, Australia, and South America, as well as in Europe. In 1986, he was stage manager for the company on Broadway at the Helen Hays Theatre. An actor and a musician, "Chico" has worked in the Italian film industry and still performs as a percussionist in several musical ensembles.

**Jonathan Young**, Production Assistant, was born in 1961 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He received his M.F.A. in Scenic Design and Technology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He previously graduated with a B.A. in Technical Theatre from St. John's University-Minnesota, where he first met Mummenschanz in 1984. Before joining the company in January 1990, Jonathan had begun his post-graduate career in San Francisco. In affiliation with I.A.T.S.E. Local 16, he worked as stage carpenter for the San Francisco Opera and as carpenter and assistant painter for the American Conservatory Theatre. He has also worked for Lucasfilm/Industrial Light and Magic as carpenter and painter.

# Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig

**Kurt Masur, conductor**

**May 1-4, 1991**

**8:00 p.m. Hill Auditorium**

*Midori, violinist*

*Christian Funke, violinist*

*Jürnjakob Timm, cellist*

*Elisabeth Leonskaja, pianist*

*Claudine Carlson, mezzo-soprano*

**The Festival Chorus**

**Thomas Hilbish, director**

## Programs

### Wednesday, May 1

Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D minor (Midori)

Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 3, "Scottish"

### Thursday, May 2

Brahms: "Double" Concerto in A minor for Violin,  
Cello, and Orchestra (Funke/Timm)

Brahms: Symphony No. 2 in D major

### Friday, May 3

Prokofiev: Excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*

Henze: *Seven Love Songs* for Cello and Orchestra  
(Timm)

Strauss: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*

### Saturday, May 4

Glinka: *Ruslan and Ludmila* Overture

Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 2 in G major  
(Leonskaja)

Prokofiev: *Alexander Nevsky*, cantata for  
Mezzo-soprano, Mixed Chorus, and Orchestra  
(Carlson)

*programs subject to change*

## Series Prices—All Four Concerts

**Block A \$130      Block C \$90**

**Block B \$105      Block D \$65**

Tickets to individual concerts  
on sale **March 1, 1991**



**Music Happens Here**

**313.764.2538**

Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**University Musical Society**

of The University of Michigan

Burton Memorial Tower

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1270

May Festival

