Entertainment

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Wriggling out of a straight jacket is no sweat for Matt Jacobson of West Bloomfield, 16-year-old magician who has been performing tricks and illusions since he was a

All wrapped up in doing magic

By Chuck Moss special writer

The house itself is a Hollywood set, with enough white and mirrors to drive the photographer bananas. Inside, the young man stands bound in a straitiqueket, an appropriate position for a 16-year-old. He smiles and begins to wriggle, soon flipping the jacket off, with a warm grin and a toss of his punkstreaked hair. Meet Matt Jacobson, teenage magician, of West Bloomfield. An eight-year show business veteran, Jacobson can saw a girl in three

He will perform at Birming-ham's Community House at 1 p.m. Saturday.

Saturday.

Previously, he has appeared at the Masonic Auditorium, the Michigan State Fair and the Silverdome and has worked his own summer show in Niagara Falls. Jacobson has amassed a fat portfolio of shots with everyone from David Copperfield and Harry Blackstone to Sonny Elliot.

Barry Williams relaxes backstage at the Birmingham Theatre, where he stars as Chuck Baxter, a young man trying to get shead in a hurry, in the Nell Simon-Burt Bacharach musical "Promises, Promises." He is on stars during meat of the on stage during most of the show, singing such hits as "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" and the show's title tune



DAN DEAN/staff photograp

'60s musical Actor has fun playing meaty role

By Ethel Simmons

It was a bone-chilling day in Bir-mingham, but Barry Williams, star of "Promises, Promises," didn't mind having to be away from his home in Malibu, Calif. "I know what it's like there," he said with practi-cality.

home in Malibu, Calit. "I know what it's like there," he said with practi-cality.
Williams was happy to be in Bir-mingham, where he has been on-stage starring in the Birmingham Theatre production of the Broadway nustcal hit "Promises," Fromises' since Dec. 30.

He was looking forward to seeing his parents that weekend. "They'il be coming this weekend to see the show," he said. "It's my dad's 4th anniversary gift to Mom — a five-day trip to Detroit." He laughed good-naturedly.
Williams also was pleased because this was his first day off since the show opened, he said, and after the interview, he was going to play ten-nis at the Franklin Racquet Club with the actor who plays his boss in the show.
Many television viewers know

with the actor who plays his boss in the show.

Many television viewers know Williams from the five years he starred on "The Brady Bunch," play-ing the oldest son, Greg. The show originally aired through 1974.

THE HANDSOME actor has appeared on television in the series "Run for Your Life" with Ben Gazzarra and in "That Girl"and "Gomer

Hich, who also directed "The Brady Bunch."
Williams has only good things to say about the latter show. "It's my favorite TV family." he explained, But he certainly wouldn't classify the part he played as one of his fa-vorites. He prefers "meaty roles." and mentioned this on more than one occasion during the interview when he talked about his background as an

he talked about his background as an actor.

Don't get the idea that Williams is just some Pollyanna. But he admits to being a guy who has a positive outlook on life. He prefers doing comedy on stage and straight dramatic roles in films. He doesn't want to get depressed by a character he portrays, so he keeps the serious suif for his none brief performances, as in movies.

stutt for als more over performances, as in movies.

He finds comedy "more pleasant and lighter and entertaining than heavier drama." He says he's not a method actor but as for his demeanor on stage, he works at keeping his attitude pleasant. "I have a good tinme up there. You can see it," he sail.

Describing the part he plays, of Chuck Baxter in "Promisses, Promises," Williams said, "As an actor the role ts very meaty. I'm never off the stage." The show is set in 1968, the same time the original production was first presented, and Baxter, as young man trying to get ahead in business, is "a pre-Yuppie-Yuppie,"

director, said he wants to create a Valentine to

- Barry Williams

he sald.

he said.

SOME CRITICS have questioned why the show hasn't been updated to the '80s. Williams said it wouldn't work because things have changed so much since the '80s and the slogan of 'Free Love,' he noted. In 'Promises, Fromises' (based on the movie 'The Apartment') 'hie gives the key to his apartment so married guys would enjoy (flings.'' "George Rondo, the director, said he wants to create a Valenthie to the era." Williams said. "Promises, Promises' is at the Birmingham Theatre through Sunday, Jan. 31. Besides enjoying tennis, the athlette Williams said a bowling-league night for the whole cash has been put together.

During the showerset Park apartment complex in Troy. His par Birmingham. (They saw him in "Promises, Promises" Saturday night and carne to see the musical again on Sunday afternoon.)

The versatile actor said that during his carcer he has done "a ton of

different things — episodic TV and several musicals a year, for the last dozen years." On television, he recently appeared as a rock star ou, "Highway to Heaven" and as a riding-stable Casanova on "Murder, She Wrote."

Wrote."
His favorite musical productions include roles in "They're Playing Our Song." "Pippin." "Grease" and "The Robber Bridegroom."

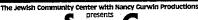
The Robber Bridegroom.

WILLIAMS BECAN his acting carrier as a child. "I studied from the age of 11," he said. "I still study, to study the said of th

An avid sportsman, Williams like-tennis, boating, watersking and, surfing at Malibu, where he has lived for the last II years. "The air" he exclaimed. Another attraction of Malibu is, "It has a small-town feel." Because he wants to give some-thing back, for the success he has on-joyed, Williams participates ha nen-joyed, Williams participates in many-celebrity tennis tournaments and fund-raisers. He has worked on hei-half of the American Cancer Society, Heart Association and United Cere-bral Palsy.







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