



Sarah Habitz, Lascu School of Ballet, Bloomfield Hills, and Kendall Sparks, Miami City Ballet, rehearse a scene from Michigan Opera Theatre's production of "Romeo and Juliet," opening tonight. Call (313) 874-SING.

SATURDAY



Two young musicians create their own original tune in "The Jamming Room," one of the activities at Cranbrook Institute of Science's "What Makes Music?" exhibit. (810) 645-3209.

SUNDAY



The Chenille Sisters will present a Mother's Day concert at the Southfield Pavilion, call (810) 424-9041 to reserve tickets, or (810) 424-9022 for information.



Cellist Yo-Yo Ma joins the Detroit Symphony at Orchestra Hall 8 p.m. Thursday, May 9 and Friday, May 10. Call (313) 833-3700 or (810) 645-6666.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO

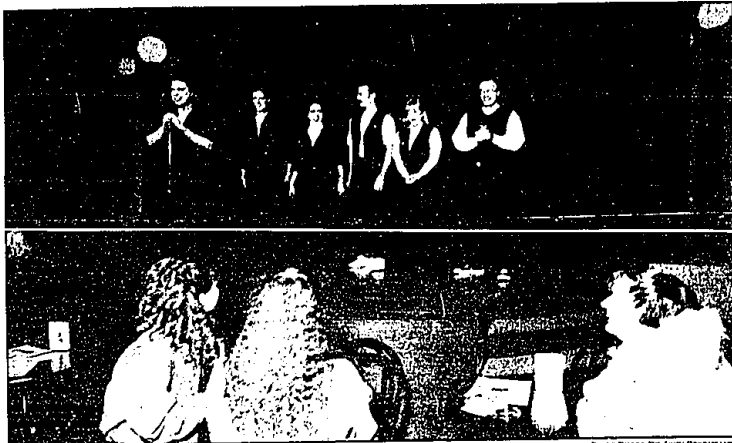
KEELY WYGONIK, EDITOR • 313-953-2105

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1996 • PAGE 1 SECTION B

Just For Laughs comedy club

Where:
65 E. Huron,
downtown
Pontiac in the
Sanctum
nightclub
building.

Tickets:
\$5 for
Wednesdays
and Thursdays
shows; \$10
for Friday and
Saturday
shows. For
more informa-
tion, call
(810) 334-
8412.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN STOKERLAND

Two-for-one club: Just For Laughs comedy club, shown here during a performance by Totally Unrehearsed Theatre, and the adjoining Sanctum nightclub offer one-stop location for entertainment.

Comedians yuck it up 'Just for Laughs'

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Nathan Vestal sees his Sanctum Entertainment Complex in downtown Pontiac as a one-stop location for fun.

High-energy dance music throbs against the stained-glass windows on the main floor of the former First Congregational Church, now known as the Sanctum nightclub. In a back room, fashionable twentysomethings get down in the groove room, which features music from the 1970s and 1980s.

Downstairs in the former gymnasium, comedians yuck it up with patrons at the boldly decorated Just For Laughs comedy club.

The one-two punch of Vestal's building is the advantage that Just For Laughs has over other local comedy clubs, the Rochester resident said.

"One of the original concepts was to cross-pollinate it (the two clubs). So many (comedy) clubs have a terrible habit of putting you out on the streets after a show. We got to send them upstairs to the Sanctum for free and dance and sight see," said the former manager of Piko Street restaurant who also owns Diamonds and Spurs country bar/cocktail hall in Pontiac.

When Vestal opened Just For Laughs six months ago it was his mission to get the club recognized as a first-class theater. He got himself listed in comedy club guides, once hired a professional company to book shows, and

called every single comedian he could think of in a two-week period.

As a result, the club has hosted comedians like A.J. Jamal of "In Living Colour" and "Comic Justice," Mike Saccoccio of VH-1's "Stand Up Spotlight" and A&E's "Evening at the Improv," and Billy Garon of "Caroline's Comedy House" and "Comedy Central."

"I've had great performers. What I've tried to do is get a good blend of different talent." Within the first few months of opening, Vestal wasn't completely satisfied so he tweaked a few things to bring Just For Laughs closer to perfection.

Most noticeably, he replaced the original in-house comedy troupe, Mr. Paulie's Fruit and Vegetable Company, with the Oakland County-based Totally Unrehearsed Theatre.

"We've done things different since the first show, with the introduction of Totally Unrehearsed Theatre. It adds a totally different dimension to the club. The act is totally different every week," Vestal said.

The 3 1/2-year-old group—which Karen Bell-Brege and Darrin Brege of Novi, Kirk Rosey of Troy, Kirk Hanley of Farmington, Dan Snyder of Garden City, and John Fountain of Ann Arbor—hosts the open mic night on Wednesdays. It allows five comedians, including two to three rookies, the chance to come in and practice material before an audience.

"Ultimately I'd like my open

mic night to be the strongest night of the week. It's a real healthy climate for (amateurs). It's not so easy to get on stage," Vestal said.

The improv troupe's repertoire includes a take-off on "Jeopardy" where the audience shouts out answers and the group members have to come up with the questions.

"Party Quirks" is another of the group's popular games. Audience members yell quirks to the host of an imaginary party. Each member of the group has to act out that particular quirk. It's up to the host to guess which one each member is doing.

"That's why people keep coming back. Our show is 90 percent sketch comedy and 10 percent improv," Bell-Brege said.

Totally Unrehearsed Theatre, which got its start and still performs on Tuesdays at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak, is enjoying its time at Just for Laughs.

"We love Nathan's club but it's hard because Pontiac is not established (as an entertainment center yet). It's a big secret. It has great art galleries and coffee shops," said Karen Bell-Brege, who founded the troupe with Gilda Hauser.

Vestal explained that Pontiac's reputation may be keeping people from exploring the city.

"People don't realize how safe Pontiac is. There's very little vandalism. People barely get confronted anymore. The City of Pontiac has done backflips to make sure everybody feels safe."



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HARLEY

Improv class: Comedy improvisation students Ken Ebaugh of Troy (left), Randy Hippler of Warren, Megan Sallant of Dearborn and Sal Rubino of St. Clair Shores play out a scene during a Saturday class at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle.

Improv troupe 'Totally Unrehearsed'

BY MATT JACHMAN
STAFF WRITER

On Saturdays, people from all over the Detroit area gather in downtown Royal Oak for what they call a stress-reliever, a cheap form of therapy.

They shout, laugh and run, play tag and roll around onstage, pretend like they're appliances, psychics or infants, and otherwise make fools of themselves.

Some hope to hit the big time. "I love it. It's a great rush," said Greg Buchzeiger of his Saturday improvisation classes at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle. Buchzeiger, of Farmington Hills, wants to continue in improv professionally.

Others are there for the fun. "I'm not looking to make a career out of this, but who knows? Anything could happen," said Thomas Reinke of Westland.

Buchzeiger, Reinke and about a dozen others were in an intermediate improv class that recently met on a sunny Saturday morning. Improv at the Comedy Castle is taught by Karen Bell-Brege and Gilda Hauser of Totally

See IMPROV, 2B

STUDENT EXHIBITION

CCS show offers glimpse of future

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

As a child Peter Boruta made boats like little boys. Today, the Rochester Hills resident has his eye on a future in product design. The graduating senior's 1/8th scale model of a personal watercraft is one of 2,500 works displayed in the 1996 Center for Creative Studies College of Art and Design Student Exhibition opening May 10.

If you're curious about what cars will look like 10 years from now, or the furniture and art in your home? Visit the CCS Student Exhibition to view the visions of tomorrow's artists and designers.

The show represents CCS' departments of fine arts, photography, crafts, graphic communication and industrial design. Along with paintings, decorative and functional objects, jewelry, furniture, graphics, advertising, and transportation and industrial design, highlights include

proposals and models for this summer's Art on the Move Sculpture installation project, demonstrations of computer-aided design, conceptual apparel such as sculpted shoes and dresses made from paper, concept car designs and clay models, and futuristic boat and personal watercraft designs. Many of the CCS seniors, who are required to show their work in the exhibit to graduate, are from the Observer & Eccentric area.

An opening reception 6-9 p.m. Friday gives the public an opportunity to not only see into the future but the first chance to buy works sure to rise in value over the years. More than 3,000 people attended last year's opening purchasing \$56,000 worth of art.

"The student exhibition is a great opportunity to see the work of some terrific artists before they become famous," said Dave Locke, CCS spokesman. "If people come down here to see what we offer, they will be pleasantly surprised. The show

has something for everyone's artistic taste."

Boruta, 21 of Rochester Hills, is already designing new products for John Deere tractors and AT&T at his part time job at Jeffrey Dryden Associates in Troy. While attending CCS he learned product design begins with an ideation stage. Sketching the wildest concepts in his imagination, Boruta reworks his ideas until a realistic model is realized.

"The fun part of school is knowing you get to do this for real once you graduate," said Boruta. "What we do will affect every day life. My dream is to design an actual piece that will be put into production and seeing it on the shelf one day."

Chang-Ho Kim has a similar dream. A senior in the industrial design department, he plans after graduation to return to his South Korean homeland to work in transportation design. He'll have his

See CCS, 2B

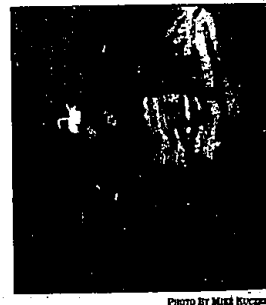


PHOTO BY MIKE KUCERA

Power of Perception: Katherine Naini combines black and white photography with polaroid transfers and hand coloring in this work from her "Face Value" series.

What: A display of more than 2,500 works by students of the Center for Creative Studies College of Art and Design.

Where: 201 East Kirby, across the street from the Detroit Institute of Arts.

When: May 11-26. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

• An opening reception 6-9 p.m. Friday, May 10 offers the opportunity to view and purchase work before the show opens to the public.

Cost: Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Patron tickets for a reception preceding the opening 5-8 p.m. May 10, are \$200. Proceeds after defraying costs of receptions go to scholarships and CCS' general operating expenses. Call (313) 872-9463 or 872-3118, ext. 282.