

FRIDAY



Judy Tenuta, "Queen of Comedy" performs at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, Ann Arbor, (313) 996-9080.

SATURDAY



Rochelle Rosenthal (left) and Cheryl Williams star in "Social Security," presented by Jewish Ensemble Theatre, (810) 788-2900 or (810) 645-6666.

SUNDAY



Rochester Municipal Park hosts the 19th annual Heritage Festival. Historical re-enactments, pony rides, games, juried art show, (810) 656-4663.



Hot tik: Tom Cruise stars as agent Ethan Hunt in the adventure thriller "Mission: Impossible" now playing at the new Uptown Birmingham Theatre and other metro Detroit movie theaters.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO

KEELY WYGONIK, EDITOR • 313-953-2105

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1996 • PAGE 1 SECTION B

UPTOWN BIRMINGHAM MAKES MISSION POSSIBLE

BY KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER

Had it been a theater production, the new Uptown Birmingham Theatre would have gotten a standing ovation from those attending an opening reception on Monday.

"I think it's going to be a hot ticket!" said D. Larry Sherman, past chairman of the Birmingham Principal Shopping District. "People love to be in Birmingham. The uniqueness of the theater will be the first-time attraction, but the luxury, and the way they're treated will bring people back. If a movie is sold-out you can walk to a restaurant, and then come back for a later show."

"This is really classy," added his wife Jane. "We've lived in Birmingham for 35 years, and remember when it used to be a movie theater."

Opened on Nov. 23, 1927, the Birmingham Theatre continued to play first-run films through the

early 1980s when it closed its doors for 18 years. In 1976, renovations began and the Nederlander Organization signed a lease in 1978 to produce and present professional stage plays and musicals.

On Nov. 20, 1979 the theater opened with "The Gin Game," and continued presenting shows until the last production, "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," on June 12, 1994. A July 30, 1994, Birmingham Jazzfest concert was the last performance at the theater, which remained vacant until August 1995 when it was acquired by the Uptown Theatre Group, LLC.

"It was down to the last minute. I was cleaning floors about an hour before we opened, and ran home to take a shower," said Carole Ilitch Trepeck one of the three venture partners, and the daughter of Mike Ilitch who restored the Fox Theatre. She and her part-

UPTOWN BIRMINGHAM THEATRE

Where: 211 S. Woodward, (just south of Maple Road), downtown Birmingham. Entrances on Woodward Ave. and Penbody Street. For information, call (810) 644-FILM.

Tickets: Adults \$9.50 and \$4.25 for all matinees. Seniors and children under 12, \$4.25.

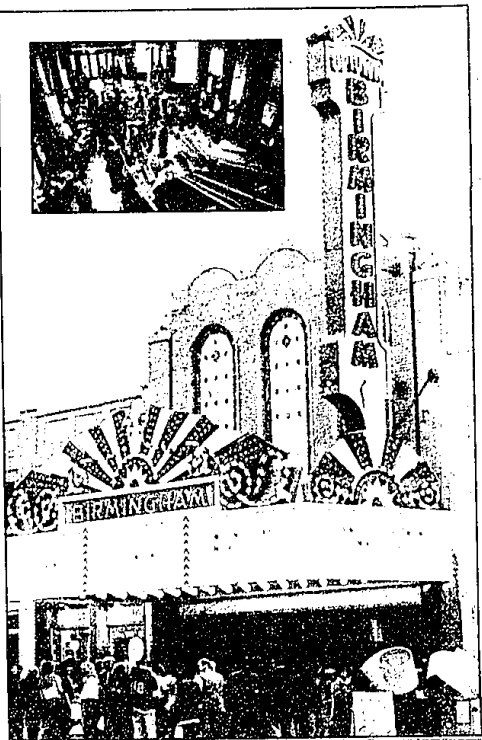
Parking: Pierce Street structure, Penbody Street structure, connected to the theater by a courtyard entrance.

NOW SHOWING

- "Twister"
- "Mission: Impossible"
- "Summer in the Hamptons"
- "Il Postino" ("The Postman")

OPENING FRIDAY

- "Flippin'"
- "Soy Hard"



Grand Marquee: Guests check out the newly renovated and upgraded Birmingham Theatre at a reception on Monday.

METRO-AREA VIPS GIVE NEW THEATER THUMBS UP

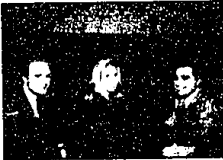
BY JOHN MONAGHAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Just a year or so ago, the Birmingham Theatre seemed destined to make way for a parking lot. On Monday, the Detroit area hoopla gathered to christen the theater on its maiden voyage as a swanky eight-screen movie theater.

A far cry from your suburban multiplex, the Birmingham received rave reviews from a hand-picked group of VIPS who one-upped each other with superlatives.

The theater opened to the public Wednesday with the premiere of "Mission: Impossible."

"It's the most comfortable theater we've ever been in," said Tom McGraw of Birmingham who tested the seats with wife Maria. And he may be right, even in the '90s, which



Partners: Bill Herting (left to right) Carole Ilitch Trepeck and David Trepeck.

have been a renaissance of sorts for user-friendly movie viewing.

The Star Theatres paved the way with comfortable seating and a sunny atrium lobby, followed by the

classy bookings and gourmet concessions at Royal Oak's Main.

Squint real hard and the spacious Birmingham lobby looks something like downtown's Fox, with a center staircase and escalators separating the second floor from the first. Both levels are lined with auditoriums ranging in size from 65 to 430 seats. Some even offer love seats.

The opening night gala attracted celebrities like Elmore Leonard, "sexy specs promoter" Dr. Richard Golden, various Red Wings, and, of course, the Ilitches, who are financial partners in the enterprise. Also spotted in the crowd were faux versions of Marilyn Monroe, Jack Nicholson, and Sharon Stone.

The mix of old and new extends to the decor, including a replica of the theater's original 1927 marquis and

framed movie posters for coming attractions and vintage favorites.

The opening-night gala included screenings of both the 1954 and 1995 versions of "Sabrina" along with "An Affair to Remember" (1957) and its recent remake "Love Affair."

Though this weekend's big ticket will undoubtedly be "Mission: Impossible," the theater will try to devote at least one screen to art films. Last year's Oscar-nominated "Il Postino" ("The Postman") and the new Henry Jaglom film, "Last Summer in the Hamptons," are currently on screen.

According to Dallas-based partner and booker Bill Herting, the Birmingham will be watching the art market closely. They have an

See VIPS, 2B

EXHIBITION

Basketry show collects creativity

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

The Sybaris Gallery in Royal Oak continues to present an exciting exhibit of contemporary baskets in its Basketry Invitational.

This year's display, the seventh annual, features imaginative pieces by 32 artists from the United States and Japan. The show continues through June 1 at 202 E. Third (call (810) 644-3386).

You probably think of a basket as a container, something in which to hold or carry objects. The works in the Sybaris show take such imagery and turn it inside out, sideways and upside down. They are free, rather than functional, forms that explore and experiment. Handles and even openings aren't the norm among these innovative pieces. The featured materials include the traditional and non-traditional, such as leaves, reeds, colored ink, film, stones and rice paper.

These baskets take a variety of shapes. Norio Hatakeyama presents an open woven form of black and white stripes that turns geometry into poetry. A work by Dorothy Gill Barnes with a pull-out "drawer" was made from a process that involves making slashes into tree bark. The piece has a look that is leathery while it resembles petrified wood.

Center of Creative Studios graduate Charissa Brook fashions pieces a symmetric wall hanging and a free-standing form that suggests a broken pod - that feature a boat shape. Baskets balance on each other in a stack by John Garrett that includes such media as newspapers and stamps.

A cluster of female forms, softly lit, merge into a cone-like shape by Mika Watanabe. Using glass beads, Wendy Ellsworth makes shimmering pieces that resemble coral. The works by Gary Tronham are like long

sheaths.

Hisako Sekijima's nest-like work was made by twigs and bark. Her unusual techniques include forming a solid basket and then cutting it open.

Linda Kelly's tall, black forms are like sentinels. More open is a framework cube by Pat Hickman. A large, gold leaf piece by Kiyomi Iwata looks like a loosely wrapped package.

Openings of some works are vortexes that pull the vision inward. One of these, by Christine Joy, shows a swirl of colorful willows. A cube by Noriko Takamiya bears intriguing openings.

Any basic basket form disappears altogether in some pieces. One by John McQueen features a framework of sticks over color photos; the tree branches and sky in the photos spell out something - you may have to step back to see it. Carol Eckert presents little figures and animals in an arrangement suggesting a

mystical trophy. Works by Kathleen Bortio Crombie resemble giant whisks.

The surfaces alone are often fascinating - such as the tightly woven surface of a work by Karyl Sison. A vessel by Judy Milford features small photos, tiny three-dimensional figures that can be lifted out of little pockets, and a design of leaves under a twig pattern. Leni Danberg incorporates written messages in her vibrant items. Katharine Westphal uses toys and Joanna Lindly uses photos and postcards to make statements.

Susan Colquitt makes objects out of sippers. Curly wool seems to be sprouting out of a work by Kazuo Honma. Norman Sherfield's bright pieces have a primitive yet sophisticated look.

Jappie King Black presents pieces that are more like plates than the traditional basket. Nancy Koenigsberg makes copper wire appear fluid.



Happy New Year:

Joanna Lindly uses photos and postcards to make statements. This one refers to the Chinese New Year celebration commemorating the Year of the Pig.