



Sex Pistols perform with Gravity Kills and Stabbing Westward, 8 p.m. at Cobo Arena, Detroit. Tickets, \$22.50 in advance, call (313) 396-7600.

SATURDAY



Sports hero Bobby Rayburn (Wesley Snipes) signs autographs for fans, including Gil Gerard (Robert De Niro, right), and his son Richie in "The Fan" now showing at metro Detroit movie theaters.

SUNDAY



Smart summer fun awaits visitors to Henry Ford and Greenfield Village in Dearborn. Learn about life in the 1880s, (313) 271-1976.



HOT TIX: Disney characters greet and entertain visitors at the new Somerset Collection North, on the corner of Big Beaver Road and Coolidge in Troy. The Disney extravaganza features "Rock Around the Mouse," a 20-minute music and dance show featuring Disney characters and 1950s music, and a variety of other Disney-produced events.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO

KEELY WYGONIK, EDITOR • 313-953-2105

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RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL IS A RIGHT JOLLY GOOD TIME FOR ALL

STORY BY KEELY WYGONIK • STAFF WRITER

Leave your troubles behind, escape to the 16th century at the 17th annual Michigan Renaissance Festival opening Saturday.

We're not jesting: The festival offers something for the whole family. Join King George and Queen Gwendolyn, and the villagers of the Shire of Hollygrove where merrymaking is the rule. Guests are welcomed by peasants, musicians, and hundreds of costumed entertainers performing both on-stage and off throughout the day. The village features over 160 artisans selling pottery, jewelry, weavings, herbs, clothing, and other items reminiscent of the 16th century.

"We never run into anyone who's been in a bad mood," said Jim Probelski of Livonia. "Everyone is having a good time eating, drinking and making merry."

Probelski, a math teacher at Franklin High School in Livonia, and adjunct math professor at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, placed second this year in an Arbor Drugs-sponsored photo contest to capture the essence of the Michigan Renaissance Festival. Probelski's photo, of a child, entered in the professional photo category, was selected from 123 entries.

In addition to teaching, he's on the staff of Midwest Photographic Workshops in Farmington Hills. He does model portfolio work, nature photography, and recently, street scenes.

"I'm always looking, always observing," said Probelski, who attends the festival four or five times during the season. For him, the Renaissance Festival offered an opportunity to do street-type photography in a safe environment. He started taking pictures at the festival about 10 years ago.

"Since then, I've felt comfortable wandering around in other towns," he said. "I went to the Ann Arbor Art Fair to photograph people instead of art. I look for something that catches the eye. I try to pick out single subjects, or small groups. It's an instant of time where you can cap-

turo something — that's art. The fun of photography is catching something no one else sees."

This year's 17th annual festival offers continuous entertainment on 12 themed stages featuring lighthearted drama, comedy, bawdy and classical music, folk and courtly dance. Impromptu performances are presented by troubadours, street theater troupes, puppeteers, magicians, jugglers and musicians along tree-shaded paths.

Test your skill in games popular during the Renaissance period — archery, Jacob's Ladder, Dueling Buckets, and the Maze. Trumpets herald the entrance of armored knights on horseback onto the joust field each day at 12:45, 3:30 and 5:45 p.m. The New Riders of the Golden

Age wear over 90 pounds of armor as they vie for the Queen's favor on the fields of Upson Downs.

There's a new special events pavilion — The Castle, presented by Inglenook Vineyards Wine Company. The Castle will host a variety of special events each weekend, including a wine seminar, storytelling, the Queen's Tea, and the first Tournament of Temptations, where some of metro Detroit's finest chefs will bring their sweetest delights to compete for a king's ransom in gold.

"It's a beautiful castle in the middle of the grounds," said Michelle Barry, festival public relations director. "We'll have special events there including a charity wine tasting. The tasting is cause and effect, and shows how different wines go with different foods."

You're sure to work up an appetite at the festival. In keeping with Renaissance tradition, most festival foods are hand-held. Savor roasted turkey drumstick, corn-on-the-cob, soup-in-a-breadroll or an apple dumpling. Toast the day at the expanded pub area.

Also new this year is Flight of the Raptor, a display of predatory birds. Join Ray Pena and his pets as he shares the history of falconry and bird ecology.



PHOTOS BY JIM PROBELSKI

Renaissance moments: In an instant, photographer Jim Probelski captures expressions, which convey the essence of the Renaissance Festival in a way words cannot.

SCHEDULE

When: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekends, including Labor Day, Aug. 17 to Sept. 29. Where: One mile north of Mount Holly on Dixie Highway between Pontiac and Flint (off of I-75, Exit 106).

Admission: \$12.95 adults, \$5.65 children ages 5-12; children 4 and under, free. Advance tickets, \$11.50 adults, \$5 children, available at Kroger Supermarkets, and participating Total Gasoline Stores, call 1-800-601-4548 for information or to charge tickets, or visit the WEB SITE at <http://members.aol.com/milenfest/>.

Highlights:
• A Child's Fairy Tale, Aug. 17-18 — Join Fizzle the Dragon as he celebrates his birthday with a children's costume parade.
• Renaissance Romance, Aug. 24-25 — Witness the splendor of the "Wedding of the Century," where 82 couples will be united on the fields of Upson Downs. See Their Majesties King George & Queen Gwendolyn renew their marriage vows.
• Her Majesty's Games, Aug. 31, Sept. 1-2 — The games of the 16th century Olympics are sure to amuse all.
• Music and Dance, Sept. 7-8 — Sing, dance and be merry during this celebration of song and dance. Sing for your supper at Royal Court, or enjoy the melodic minstrels of Hollygrove as they perform

for His Majesty.
• Highland Fling, Sept. 14-15 — Enjoy the pipes and plaids of the Red Thistle Pipe Band, or kick up your heels with the Highland Dancers during Hollygrove's annual celebration of the Highlands.
• Feast of Folly, Sept. 21-22 — Join in the frenzy of this merry weekend by partaking in a charity wine tasting 4:30 and 6 p.m. to benefit the Harman Cancer Institute, tickets \$15 per person. Combination festival/wine tasting tickets available for \$22.75 per person.
• Sweet Endings, Sept. 28-29 — Parting is such sweet sorrow, but not during this sweet ending. Watch party chefs display their treats for all to sample at the Tournament of Temptations.



MOVIES

Altman comes home again in 'Kansas City'

BY JOHN MONAGHAN

Jazz music and filmmaker Robert Altman have long gone hand in hand. From his early successes in the 1970s, through his years spent in Ann Arbor in the 1980s, to "Kansas City," which opens this weekend, improvisation has always been key to his work.

"This movie is like jazz," Altman said. "The story we have is three minutes long, like the lyrics of a song, then we give it to the actors and, like jazz musicians, they start playing on it for 20 or 30 minutes and everybody does their own little riff." The movie returns Altman to the city he called home in the 1930s. "I spent the first 18 years of my life there," he recalled. "I spent a lot of time in those black jazz clubs from the time I was 15 on. I probably heard Coleman Hawkins and all of these guys playing, but I didn't know their names."

Hot jazz sessions at K.C.'s Hey Hey Club are interspersed through the story of Blondie, the secretary played by Jennifer Jason Leigh, who kidnaps a senator's wife (Miranda Richardson). She wants her boyfriend to be released from the clutches of Seidman, Hey Hey owner and a notorious black gangster. Filming in Kansas City proved surprisingly easy.

"It's the kind of city where they didn't tear things down and rebuild it," Altman said. "It just keeps

moving southwest. We replaced some street lights and a couple of fences, and tried to get the cars off the street, but otherwise it was all there."

"Kansas City" has been anxiously awaited by jazz and film fans alike. Altman's last movie, the over-hyped fashion epic "Pret a Porter," was a disaster. The studios were reportedly worried about this project as well, postponing its release from early spring to late summer. One concern was that the "cutting contest," a six-minute music competition in the middle of the film, would slow the action down. Preview audiences have loved it.

Altman says the jazz sequences have been compiled into their own 50-minute video called "Jazz '84," which will bow on PBS this fall. Altman recreated the legendary sessions which attracted Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Count Basie, and even Charlie Parker, seen here as a teenage kid with a saxophone. "We wanted the best players around today," he said. "We mixed groups. Most of them never played together and most won't play together again. We wanted that sense of jamming." A sort of dream team of the jazz world, the Hey Hey ensemble included, among others, sax players Joshua Redmond and James Carter, guitarist Mark Whitfield, and bassist Christian McBride.

According to Altman, "30 or 40 years from now

these will be the real lions of jazz." Altman has enjoyed a love-hate relationship with filmmakers and critics ever since the 1970s, when he made such seminal American movies as "M.A.S.H.," "Nashville," and "McCabe and Mrs. Miller." Those three films alone would leave him stand as one of America's great directors. As the old saying goes, you're only as successful as your last picture.

In the 1980s, his creative batteries and studio clout apparently running low, he came to Ann Arbor to work with the theater and film departments at the University of Michigan. He helped stage an opera, even shot a movie there, a one-man show called "Secret Honor" about the last days in office of President Richard Nixon. Then came "The Player" in 1992 and "Short Cuts," a year later, movies that again made him an international success. Altman treats his professional ups and downs with characteristic candor.

"Hollywood is a bunch of accountants that follow whatever sells," he scoffed. "... You know this 'Multiplicity' picture? This is what they want to get to: when they can invent someone and don't need to pay anybody. When they can just clone the whole thing. If I ever made a picture and everyone said, 'this is great,' then I'd really be in trouble."

• See movie review inside



Directing: Director Robert Altman on the set of "Kansas City."