

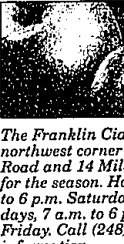
THE WEEKEND

**FRIDAY**




Karen Nixon Lane leads the Farmington Area Philharmonic in a concert featuring violinist Nigel Kennedy 8 p.m. at Fuerst Auditorium, Novi High School. Tickets \$16-\$40, available at Ticketmaster outlets and the Farmington Area Philharmonic, (248) 478-2075.

**SATURDAY**



The Franklin Cider Mill, on the northwest corner of Franklin Road and 14 Mile Road opens for the season. Hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Call (248) 626-8261 for information.

**SUNDAY**



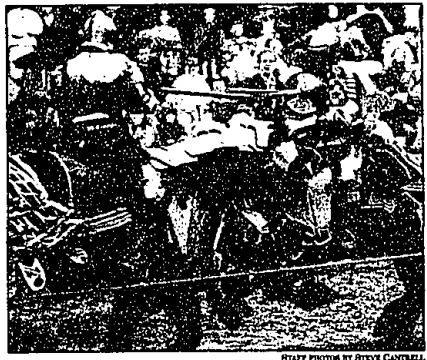
Steve Bills is appearing with Joel Zimmer at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Show time 7:30 p.m., call (248) 542-9900.



**Hot tip:** Roomful of Blues performs 9:30 p.m. Saturday at the Ford Detroit Montreux Jazz Festival. The Labor Day weekend jazz festival, at Detroit's Hart Plaza, features a dozen national headliners, more than 40 Detroit and Michigan artists, and almost two dozen high school and college bands.



Just jousting: (Right) Full-contact armored jousting is just one of the many activities at the Michigan Renaissance Festival. Cheer for your favorite challenger on the Field of Upon Downs. (Above) Storyteller Salvatore Palombo Jr. entertains at the Michigan Renaissance Festival.



STAFF PHOTO BY STEVE CANTRELL

FESTIVAL REDEFINES '90S  
**'interactive experience'**

**BY FRANK PROVENZANO**  
STAFF WRITER

Thankfully, the Michigan Renaissance Festival's latest reincarnation doesn't include cute and fashionably hip animated figures looking as if they've stepped from Disney's back lot. Nor is there an obsessive reliance on technologically induced illusions to conjure a 16th-century village.

At the heart of the charming annual festival "where pleasure reigns and merrymaking rules" is a much-welcomed reliance on perhaps the greatest invention of all—flesh-and-bones personality.

With a cadre of thespians amid a turreted setting of strolling musicians, high-court kings, queens and jesters, the Michigan Renaissance Festival redefines the 1990s "interactive experience."

Grab an over-sized turkey leg, sip a Dragon's Breath Ale and step along in the village of Hollygrove, a transformed rolling plot of land near Holly, just south of Flint.

In spirit and architecture, Hollygrove resembles a Renaissance village, including about 160 shops, authentic cuisine, games, rides along with dramatic, musical and comedy performances from some of the area's best ad libbers.

Games like throwing a wet sponge at a target tied to a bucket filled with water hung over the head of an opponent captures the simple charm that may even break through a child's most intense video-game trance. Other games include archery and a life-size maze.

Full-contact armored jousting will please current-day Big-Time Wrestling and gridiron connoisseurs. And hand-crafted wares should satiate the cravings of weekend shoppers.

Meanwhile, for those with an appetite for culinary diversity, the Renaissance-style cuisine of soup-in-a-bread bowl, scotch eggs and jumbo turkey eggs reveals that tasty fast-food isn't a 20th-century invention.

**An imaginative leap**

While the games, shops and food certainly offer a taste of the time, it's the improv performances of the Renaissance Age characters that distinguishes the festival each year.

The actors are chosen based on

- **What:** 16th Annual Michigan Renaissance Festival
- **When:** 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekends and Labor Day, Aug. 30-Sept. 28
- **Where:** Entrance on Dixie Highway, one mile north of Mount Holly (between Pontiac and Flint), 175 Northbound: Take Exit 106 (Grand Blanc), go two blocks, turn left onto Dixie Highway southbound, travel two miles south; entrance on the right (west)
- **Tickets:** At the gate — \$12.95, adults; \$5.95, children ages 5-12; in advance — \$13.50, adults; \$5, children ages 5-12. Children under age 4 admitted free. Available at Kroger Supermarkets and participating BP Gas Stations.
- **Information:** Call (800) 601-4848; WEB SITE: <http://members.aol.com/Renfestival>
- **Weekend Themes:**
  - Aug. 30-Sept. 1 — Follow the Silk Road
  - Sept. 6-7 — High Seas Adventure
  - Sept. 13-14 — Highland Fling
  - Sept. 20-21 — Harvest Huzzah
  - Sept. 27-28 — Sweet Endings

Fool, List can be found bathing in mud, using a hair pick to pick his nose or trying to sell garbage to those who cross his path.

"My father came to town to sell his wares and didn't do so well," said the Town Fool. "So, he left me here instead. I'm the Forrest Gump of the Renaissance."

An apple dangles from the top of his head attached to a wire band that runs around his head. "It's all just one long stand-up routine," said List, who appeared last year in Oakland University's "All in the Timing."

It doesn't take List very long to get into character. "As soon as I put the apple on my head, I'm there."

**Jewel in the mist**

In a Renaissance world without mass media, news traveled the old fashioned way: through the town's gossips. Forget about libel laws or slander in Hollywood.

Melissa Walsh of Southfield is one of the gossiping Sisters Wolf. The three sisters who've been together at the festival for the last four years create rumors or "just embellish," said Walsh, a medical student at the University of Michigan.

The Sisters Wolf want only walk up to men and ask if they're "encumbered," or in other words, "attached to a woman." If so, they're not beyond snorting at the women who accompany the men.

But it's hardly bawdy or distasteful. Quite the contrary, there's a conviviality that's contagious.

"We've learned that it's all about people skills," said Jennifer Smith, a drama student at Oakland University, one of the Wolf sisters. Smith of Auburn Hills also works with handicapped people.

"Interacting with people here is a training for dealing with all types of people in life," she said.

Walsh recalled seeing an elderly person who watched the proceedings from afar. She found some time to spend one-on-one. "It's rare during life (outside of Hollygrove) to spend 15 minutes with someone who you might not know and who really needs company," she said.

And it's equally rare in today's high-tech amusement world to find the warmth of the human spirit sparkle like a jewel in a primal mist.

**Jazz/Blues Fest**  
aims to educate and entertain

**BY CHRISTINA FUOCO**  
STAFF WRITER

The mission of the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival — held this year Thursday-Sunday, Sept. 4-7, throughout Ann Arbor — is to support the music and educate the audience about it.

For its 25th anniversary, festival organizers are taking it a step further with enhanced opportunities for fans to meet with the artists and learn about the history of blues and jazz, and for children to be exposed to art.

The festival will kick off Thursday, Sept. 4, with the presentation of three movies at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor.

The program begins at 6:30 p.m. with "A Life Well Spent," a 44-minute film biography of Mance Lipscomb, and "The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins," a 31-minute film about the Texas blues legend, both of which are by filmmaker Les Blank.

"Jazz on a Summer's Day" is a full-length film shot during the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, will be shown at 7 p.m. It features Louis Armstrong, Mahalia Jackson, Chuck Berry, Dinah Washington, Thelouise Monk, Gerry Mulligan, Jimmy Giuffrè, Anita O'Day, Jack Teagarden, Chico Hamilton, Sonny Stitt, George Shearing, and Big Mable.

Reminiscent to the H.O.R.D.E. Festival's workshop stage, the "meet the artist" segment of the festival will allow fans to converse with artists like Melvick Martin and Wood, Miss Lavelle White, Marcia Ball, and Honeyboy Edwards in a wooden shelter at the back of Gallup Park on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 6-7. Like the movie series, the artist meet-and-greets were not a heavily promoted piece of the festival last year, Brown said.

"It began last year, but we've really developed it this year," said Shary Brown, a member of the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival's board of directors. "The audience can come and listen to the artists talk in a much more intimate setting about the influences on their music, their lives and their back-



The Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival's 25th anniversary celebration takes place throughout Ann Arbor Thursday, Sept. 4-Sunday, Sept. 7. The following performances are scheduled:

- **Buddy Guy** with special guests Johnnie Bassett and the Blues Insurgents 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 5, at the Michigan Theater, 603 Liberty St. Half block west of State Street near the University of Michigan central campus, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$25 reserved, and \$40 gold circle.
  - **Kurt Elling** with The Lawrence Hobgood Trio, 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. Friday, Sept. 5-Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Blue Note, 207 S. Ashley (one block west of Main Street between Liberty and Washington streets), Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$15 in advance.
  - **Wood, Don Byron Quartet, Big Jack Johnson and the Blues Insurgents, Miss Lavelle White, Honeyboy, and Lady Rains** and the 8 Band, Saturday, Sept. 6, at Gallup Park, Gates open at 11 a.m.
  - **Marcia Ball, Beau Jacques and the Zydeco High Rollers, Honeyboy Edwards, Paul Keller Sextet, Transmission, and Community High School 200 Jazz Ensemble**, Sunday, Sept. 7, at Gallup Park near Huron High School. Gates open at 11 a.m.
- For the Gallup Park performances, tickets are \$14 for a one-day pass or \$25 for a two-day pass in advance. \$17 and \$30 respectively the day of the show. Students may purchase tickets for \$12 for a one-day pass or \$20 for a two-day pass in advance, or \$14 and \$25 respectively the day of the show. All Passes which include the Buddy Guy show, the Kurt Elling show, and a two-day pass to Gallup Park is \$65, or \$75 to include the Michigan Theater gold circle seats.
- Tickets are available at Ticketmaster outlets, Schoolies Records and P's Used Records and CDs, both in Ann Arbor. The blues and jazz film "A Life Well Spent" and "The Blues According to Lightnin' Hopkins" will be on-screen at the Michigan Theater at 5:30 p.m. and "Jazz on a Summer's Day" at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 4. Tickets are \$6.50 at the door.
- For more information, call (313) 99-MUSIC (248) 645-6000, or (313) 747-9844, or visit the website, <http://www.99music.com>.

THE VIEW

**Falsettos**

- **What:** Jewish Ensemble Theatre's first musical production.
- **Where:** Aaron De Roy Theatre, Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple, West Bloomfield.
- **When:** Sept. 3 to Oct. 5. Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday performances at 7:30 p.m. Saturday performances at 8 p.m. Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. No performances Oct. 1 and 2.
- **Cost:** \$13-\$23.
- **Call:** (248) 768-2900.

**JET goes musical with 'Falsettos'**

**BY HUGH GALLAGHER**  
STAFF WRITER

Marvin, the central character in "Falsettos," wants it all — his wife, his family and his male lover — because Marvin believes in "a tight knit family... a group that harmonizes."

The opening production in the Jewish Ensemble Theatre's new season is an unusual musical look at "family values." William Finn began his "Marvin Trilogy" in 1979 with a one-act chamber musical, "In Trousers." This was followed by "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland." In 1992, Finn collaborated with James Lapine (who had collaborated with Stephen Sondheim) to merge the three plays into one musical, "Falsettos," which won rave reviews and a Tony Award

for Best Score on Broadway.

"The basic theme he deals with is the extended family, family values, what family values are," said Nicholas Colaninno, director of the JET production. "Marvin says I want a family. Finn sees Marvin as a little mixed up but well meaning."

Marvin (played by John Sartor) is in his 30s, married and has a son about to have his bar mitzvah when he realizes that he's gay and leaves his family for his male lover, Whizzer (Brian Schulz). Marvin's ex-wife marries his psychiatrist and Marvin's lover develops AIDS.



STAFF PHOTO BY COLLEEN ROGERS

**Family situation:** Rehearsing a scene from the musical "Falsettos" are, left to right, Nicholas Colaninno, Jeff Nahan, Milicia Govich, John Sartor and Brian Schulz.

Please see FALSETTOS, E3