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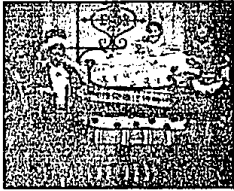
THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



See comedian **Jim Hamm** 9 p.m. at **Joey's Comedy Club** in Livonia. Call (734) 261-0555 for information/reservations.

SATURDAY



Marquis Theatre presents a musical adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Princess and the Magic Pea," 2:30 p.m. at the theater in downtown Northville. Tickets \$7.50. Call (248) 349-8110.

SUNDAY



Alexander Zonjic and Friends perform 1-3:30 p.m. during the 13th annual Garden Party to benefit the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center. Tickets \$150 per person. Call (248) 626-7527, Ext. 3118.



Spiritual sounds: Japanese jazz composer and keyboardist Keiko Matsui, slated to play at 7:15 p.m. Friday, June 2 at V98.7 FM radio's Smooth JazzFest, views music in light of its origins in ritual and ceremony. Smooth jazz, she says, is particularly well-suited to spiritual healing and time for rest and relaxation.

SMOOTH JAZZ

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
SPECIAL EDITOR
nstafford@oe.homecomm.net

Easy listening. Contemporary jazz. Call it what you will. A more melodic, more accessible style of jazz has come into its own in the last decade: smooth jazz. And, since the form, which often includes vocals, is easier for listeners to follow — many music consumers start to feel lost when traditional jazz musicians "stretch it out," or improvise musically — the style continues to gain in popularity. But today's appetite for smooth jazz may stem from deeper cravings: want for relaxation and spiritual healing.

Musical medicine

"Doctors have prescribed contemporary jazz to patients to help them unwind," noted Tom Sleeker, V98.7 FM Smooth Jazz radio program director and co-organizer of the station's 2nd annual Smooth JazzFest, running June 2-4 at the Southfield Civic Center.

While smooth jazz, like, say, aromatherapy or yoga, has always had a soothing quality, the public is just beginning to discover the style has a calming, quieting effect, particularly for those with hectic lives and busy schedules.

One nationally known artist scheduled to play at this year's Smooth JazzFest, Keiko Matsui, couldn't agree more.

A contemporary jazz keyboardist from Japan, Matsui's compositions have an ethereal, bird-like quality. And, her newest album *Whisper from the Mirror* has an otherworldly, new age character reminiscent of film scores. The title also refers to the Japanese Shinto Shrine where a mirror representing a deity or God is traditionally placed.

"Music has been played as ritual and ceremony for a long time, and I believe music has some magical forces," said Matsui, scheduled to take the JazzFest stage at 7:15 p.m. Friday.

While Matsui, one of two female artists slated for JazzFest (local musician Kimmie Horne opens the event on Friday), doesn't categorize her music as new age or spiritual, she said she does seek to bring elements of spirituality to her compositions. "That fans send mail saying her music touches their soul or makes them feel peaceful "means a lot to a musician," she said.

"Nowadays, music is about business, but music is really a prayer to the gods or for people to sing and dance to, and people have been doing this a long, long time. That's the beauty of music," she said.

Matsui will be accompanied by her husband Kazu, who plays the Shakuhachi, a Japanese wood flute.

Living legends

While many of Matsui's compositions have a dreamy quality, there are several other smooth jazz artists scheduled for the event, promising a mix of styles and sounds for those who plan to attend.

Of particular interest is jazz legend George Benson, who began his career in traditional jazz and moved in the direction of smooth jazz in the 1970s.

Describing Benson as one of the pioneers of contemporary jazz, Sleeker called his appearance at this year's JazzFest "an opportunity to see one of the true legends and innovators in smooth jazz music."

Likewise, Detroit's own Earl Klugh, slated to perform at 9:15 p.m. Friday, is known for bringing the acoustic guitar to jazz. Other local musicians who will perform include flutist Alexander Zonjic and guitarist Tim Bowman.

"The audience is going to hear some really great melodic music," Sleeker said. "It's going to be a very nice, relaxing afternoon."



Smooth brass: Horn player Rick Braun takes the Smooth JazzFest stage at 7:45 p.m. Sunday, June 4.

What: V98.7 Smooth JazzFest

Where: The Green at the Southfield Civic Center, Evergreen Road at Civic Center Drive, in Southfield

What: 3-10 p.m. Friday, June 2 and noon-10:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, June 3 and 4

Tickets: Friday show, \$15 in advance and \$20 at the gate; Saturday and Sunday shows, \$25 in advance and \$30 at the gate, available through Ticketmaster or by calling (248) 645-6666



Go targeting this week at the Fine Knob Theatre to Independence Township. Stay and RED Speedwagon perform 7 p.m. Friday, June 2. See the Charles Schultz Band with Hank Williams Jr. (cover) and Left Foot, 7 p.m. Sun. June 4. Call (734) 261-0555 for more info.

COMEDY

Share some laughs with Bill Thomas

BY HELEN WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER
hwygonik@oe.homecomm.net

Funny and accountant don't fit. Let's be honest, when was the last time an accountant made you laugh?

Bill Thomas planned a career in accounting and business. He's still plugged into the corporate world, except now he's making executives laugh instead of balancing their books.

On Friday and Saturday, audiences at Trinity House Theatre in Livonia will probably be wondering why Thomas asked them there. The answer is simple — to enjoy an evening in a smoke-free, alcohol-free setting — sharing a laugh or two, or three.

What: You're probably wondering why I've asked you here...

What: A topical comedy show featuring stand-up and storytelling by comedian Bill Thomas

When: 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, June 2-3

Where: Trinity House Theatre, 38840 W. Six Mile Road, Livonia.

Tickets: \$10, \$8 for Trinity House members, call (734) 464-6302. Visit Thomas online at www.comedianbillthomas.com

His one-man show in the intimate theater that seats about 80 people is a combination of stand-up and storytelling.

"I want to expand what I've been doing," said Thomas. "It's still being worked on. I really like the Trinity House Theatre, it's a small off, off Broadway theater. The moment I saw it I fell in love with it."

He talked to Thomas Malcolm Olson, artistic director for Trinity House, who encouraged him to bring his show to the theater.

Please See COMEDY, E2



Just for fun: Bill Thomas is bringing his one man show to Trinity House Theatre.

JOHN CALLENDER