

THE WEEKEND



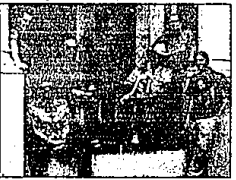
"Illuminata" a comedy/love story about a New York City repertory company and its ambitious, restless playwright, opens today, exclusively at the Maple Art Theatre, 4135 W. Maple, Bloomfield Hills, (248) 855-9090.

FRIDAY



The Actors' Company presents "The Emperor's New Clothes" 2 p.m. at Trinity House Theatre, 38840 W. Six Mile Road, Livonia. Tickets \$10 adults, \$7 children, call (248) 988-7032.

SATURDAY



The Allman Brothers perform with special guest Lucinda Williams and others during a Southern rock festival, 7 p.m. at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Independence Township. Tickets \$34.50 pavilion, \$17.75 lawn. Call (248) 377-0100 or www.palacenet.com



Hot Tip: Take a trip down memory lane during the Woodward Dream Cruise Saturday, Aug. 21. Festivities take place in downtown Birmingham and other communities along Woodward Avenue. For up-to-date event information, call 1-888-4WDC-1963 or visit the Web site www.dreamcruise.org. Events include the Motor City CruiseFest, Michigan State Fair Grounds, 5-11 p.m. Friday, Aug. 20 and 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 21 offers entertainment and classic car displays. Admission is \$9 adults, children 12 and under admitted free, parking \$5. Call (248) 204-6060 for more information.

Renaissance Festival

WHERE ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

FESTIVAL INFORMATION

What's: 20th Annual Michigan Renaissance Festival
When: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekends & Labor Day, through Sunday, Sept. 26
Where: 12600 Dixie Highway, Holly Township
Directions: I-75 Northbound Traffic - Take Exit 106, stay in left lane of exit, travel two blocks, then turn left onto Dixie Highway southbound. Travel two miles south. Festival is on the right.
Schedule of themes:
Tickets: \$13.95 adults, \$11.75 seniors age 60 and older, \$5.95 children (5-12), children age 4 and younger, free. Advance tickets: \$12.50 adult, \$5 children (5-12). For information, call (800) 601-4848, or (248) 634-6552.

Theme Schedule
■ August 21 & 22: "Renaissance Romance," passionate pastimes
■ August 28 & 29: "High Seas Adventure," swashbucklers invade Hollygrove
■ Sept. 4, 5 & 6: "Wonders of the World," an exploration of the mysteries of the East
■ Sept. 11 & 12: "Highland Fling," Celtic games, bag pipes and dance
■ Sept. 18 & 19: "The Emerald Isle," celebration of Irish culture
■ Sept. 25 & 26: "Sweet Endings," a presentation of chocolate delights

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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About a half-an-hour before the King and Queen of Scotland are expected to arrive at the gates of Hollygrove, nearly 200 actors gather around one of the main stages on the site of the 16-acre Renaissance-age village. "Your job is to reach out and touch the hearts of as many people as you can," said Lu Harding-Capots, creative director of the festival, now in its 20th year. "This is your playtime," said Harding-Capots, as she twisted her shoulders, stretched her legs and encouraged the interactive theater company to breath deeply and envision a world far from the grounds of Holly Township and present-day, high-tech reality. "Welcome our guests into your play space."

This gregarious group of thespians hardly needs encouragement. Their reality is obviously descended from the historic land of pleasure and merrymaking of four centuries ago. Just try to pry any of the actors from their roles as peasants, nobility and jesters. Nothing doing.

For the nearly 30,000 people expected each weekend of the festival, the conjured world of Hollygrove is the closest thing to living history. The festival enters its second of a seven-weekend schedule of thematic events, including this weekend's celebration of the romantic pursuits of the Renaissance era, long before there was discount dining, video stores and Hallmark cards.

At Hollygrove, it's common to see visitors walking the grounds tearing away at a drumstick the size of a Brontosaurus bone, sipping a glass of mead, or giving a thumbs up or thumbs down to jousting competitors. "There are no wallflowers here," said Patricia Taylor, festival marketing director. For that matter, there are no walls.

"At some museums, it's 'look, but don't touch,'" she said. "Here, you're an essential part of what's going on."

Since its inception in 1979 as one of the first Renaissance Festivals in the country, the celebration at Hollygrove has been among the top in the nation, according to Taylor, who claimed the Michigan festival is rated alongside those in Shakopee, Minn., and outside of Dallas-Fort

Into role: Valerie Schendel of Clarkston (left) assists Tammie Graves as she prepares to assume the persona of the Baroness Lady Anne of Hartland. Below, a peasant boy, Brandon Villaroto of Commerce, (left), presents a bouquet of flowers to Lady Anne.



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZOLINSKY

Merrymaker puts on a noble act

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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Wearing a crown of baby's breath and a slightly nervous expression, Tammie Graves came to the Renaissance Festival as both a guest and participant.

Graves is a graphic artist for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, whose bouts of "hamming it up" are well known to her colleagues, but perhaps less recognized by the public.

To those from the historic land of merrymaking, she is kin.

What Graves of Hartland lacks in acting experience, she makes up for in sheer desire to one day stand upon the stage and recite William Shakespeare's words.

Shortly after stepping through the Hollygrove gates, Graves expected that her wish to be among the cast who brings the Renaissance to life would land her a role among the peasants.

"I had pictured myself as a wench," said Graves, who prepared for her part in Holly-

grove by watching "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Robin Hood" and memorizing a list of Elizabethan phrases.

Little did Graves know that she had the look of nobility. Whisked away to a second-story wardrobe room at the edge of the Renaissance village, Graves slipped into a whoop skirt and a royal blue, velvet dress embroidered in gold and sequins.

In moments, Graves' dream of

Royal attention: During his visit of Hollygrove, the King of Scotland was enamored with Lady Anne.



Please see MERRYMAKER, E2

SUMMER TRADITION

Michigan State Fair offers 'something for everyone'



Featured performers: The Temptations are just one of the many popular groups performing at this year's fair.

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
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Brad Coombs can barely spare a second to talk about his involvement as entertainment director of the Michigan State Fair.

But when he does, his voice rings with pride. He compares choosing the line-up to putting the pieces of a puzzle together. Taking into consideration which days need to be scheduled, which performers are touring during that time and available to play, and what will ultimately fit into the budget, he's managed to organize a diverse musical line-up for the third year in a row.

"The State Fair is the second largest (in attendance) paid event in the state of Michigan behind the North American International Auto Show," said Coombs. That means he's serving an audience that includes every "age, race and economic sphere in the region." Metro Detroiters are joined by crowds of people from across the state — reaching as far south as

Please see FAIR, E2

Michigan State Fair

When: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 24 through Monday, Sept. 6. The midway is open until midnight on weekends, and 11 p.m. weeknights.

Where: The Michigan State Fairgrounds, are on the southeast corner of Eight Mile Road and Woodward Avenue.

Admission: \$9 adults, \$2 Children under age 11; Children under 2 free. Parking \$5.

More family entertainment: Visitors to the fair can show their ticket stubs at Henry Ford Museum or Greenfield Village for \$2 off adult and \$1 off children's admission. Visitors to Henry Ford Museum or Greenfield Village can use either of those ticket stubs to receive a discount of \$2 off an adult ticket to the Michigan State Fair.

For more information: Call the Michigan State Fairgrounds (313) 365-8250 or visit the Web site www.mda.state.mi.us/statfair

See entertainment line-up inside