

Movies that spur debate go up at Detroit Film Theatre

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
 STAFF WRITER

Elliot Wilhelm doesn't put a spin on the mission of Detroit Film Theatre, which has been under his direction for more than 20 years. The theater's goal is unequivocal: show great films. So criteria like urgent storytelling, directorial vision and artistic guide DFT's offerings. "There's no point in trying to chase down certain segments of the market. We don't pander to demographics," said Wilhelm. "We scour the waterfront and cover the globe to get the best films made." Other venues can tango with targeting audiences, says Wilhelm. When it comes right down to it, great films don't always find broad appeal.



Ralph Fiennes plays the schizophrenic Spider, a man released on to the streets of London after a lengthy stay in a mental institution, in David Cronenberg's *Spider*, playing April 4-6 at the Detroit Film Theatre.

divides audiences, which I describe as the good old days when people would argue about movies all night." *Gerry*, which stars Matt Damon and Casey Affleck, is scheduled to run Friday-Sunday, March 14-16, at DFT. One week prior, the venue plans to show Van Sant's first feature film, *Mala Noche*, as well as three short films only available with the director's permission. "It's a look at Gus' early career," says Wilhelm. "I think it's possible that many people are not familiar with the direc-

tor, and that gets into one of the things that we're trying to do here."

JOURNEYS WILD AND OTHERWISE

Expected to be a DFT highlight is the what-a-ride film category is *Interview with an Assassin* with Raymond J. Barry trying to convince an unemployed television reporter that he killed John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1963. The film is scheduled to run Monday, March 3, and comes from first-

time director Neil Burger. The Oscar-nominated documentary *Winged Migration* is another sort of journey, a bird's-eye view of the flight and migration of birds throughout the globe. "It's an example of how technology can get you a view that you've never had before," said Wilhelm of *Winged Migration*, scheduled Friday-Sunday, May 9-11, at DFT. "It's really beautiful. It gives you that feeling that you have when you're dreaming of being in flight." A simpler, but nonetheless suspenseful, journey takes



Raymond J. Barry gives a smoldering performance as a man trying to convince an unemployed television reporter that he assassinated President Kennedy in first-time director Neil Burger's *Interview with the Assassin*, scheduled for March 3 at the Detroit Film Theatre.



Traudl Junge, who was Hitler's private secretary, breaks her silence after 50 years in *Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary*, slated March 28-30 at the Detroit Film Theatre.

place in *Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary*, a humble documentary that records the memories of Traudl Junge, Hitler's private secretary, in a series of interviews. *Blind Spot* is set to run Friday-Sunday, March 28-30, at DFT. "It's a suspense film in a sense," said Wilhelm. "We have a chance early in the film to sit

back and decide if she (Junge) leveling with us ... Then we want to know is she a human being, as we suspect." A highlight in the classics category is a rarely seen, uncut version of John Frankenheimer's 1973 *The Iceman Cometh*, based on Eugene O'Neill's play. Set for Monday, April 7, it stars Fredric March, Robert Ryan, Jeff Bridges and Lee Marvin. The uncut version is more true to O'Neill's work than the one released commercially, said Wilhelm, adding, "I really like to find these things. We're dedicated not to just putting the film up on the screen, but making sure they're the way the director intended them to be." To learn about other scheduled films or obtain Detroit Film Theatre's Winter/Spring 2003 schedule, call (313) 833-3237 or visit www.dia.org/dft. stafford@oe.homecomm.net | (248) 901-2587

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

Fat Tuesday
 Celebrate Mardi Gras at McCormick and Schmick's Seafood Restaurant of Troy, adjacent to the Somerset Collection South (Coolidge Highway and W. Big Beaver Road). A "Cajun Corner" special menu features New Orleans-inspired foods including Creole Jambalaya, Jake's Etouffee and Oyster or Rock Shrimp Po' Boy with Creole Remoulade. Samplings of these items are available on the \$1.95 bar menu along with drink specials. For dessert, try the traditional Mardi Gras King Cakes. On Tuesday, March 4, participate in the crawfish racing or eating contest. Races take place

throughout the evening and the crawfish eating contest will be at 7 p.m. A King or Queen of Mardi Gras will be named, and at the end of the evening. Call the restaurant, (248) 637-6400 or visit the Web site www.msmg.com for details.

Competition
 You won't want to miss the opening reception of the 22nd annual Michigan Fine Arts Competition, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, March 7 at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, 1516 S. Cranbrook. Awards presentation 7 p.m. The exhibit continues through Friday, April 4. Show juror Richard Nonas will

Play ball
 It may or may not feel like spring, but the Detroit Tigers will open their season 1:05 p.m. Monday, March 31 at Comerica Park in Detroit. Are you planning to be at the game? Is going to the Tigers' opening game a family tradition? Share your stories, along with suggestions for places to eat before or after

the game with us for a story about the Tigers and other good sports to run in Arts & Entertainment, Thursday, March 27. Send, fax or e-mail information to Keely Kaleski, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, fax

(248) 644-1314, or e-mail kkaleski@oe.homecomm.net

Taste of spring
 Toast the change in seasons 7:30-10:30 p.m. Saturday, March 29 at the Franklin Village Wine Tasting at the home of Rhonda and Jerry

Byer. Tickets \$40 per person available at the Apple Tea Room Yankee Designs and Market Basket, or call Anna Marie Roediger, (248) 851-9179. Event includes wine tasting, food from Market Basket, valet parking and silent auction.

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