

Overnight news & reviews

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Wednesday 3-12-2008 11A

A&E LIVE

theater

Chanhassen Theatres stay put — for now

By Dominic P. Papatola
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Chanhassen Dinner Theatres will remain in its namesake community until at least 2013, under terms of an agreement announced Tuesday.

The 40-year-old theater signed a five-year extension to its lease in its current location, with an option to remain in the building until 2018. The popular theater's lease was set to expire in 2010 and suitors from Burnsville and Bloomington's Mall of America had attempted to lure the theater away from the western suburb.

"The Bloomberg family has a strong interest in keeping the theater in town," said Clayton Johnson, executive vice-president of the Bloomberg Companies, a family business that founded the theater and owns the building and surrounding 12.5 acres of land in downtown Chanhassen. "We fully intend to keep the theater in Chanhassen."

Bloomberg has long wanted to develop the acreage beyond its current, somewhat sleepy mix of shops and parking lots. Johnson said the city is contemplating building a park-and-ride lot with a 500-car ramp on the site. That parking would be available to the theater in the evenings to augment the 350 spaces it has on its current lot.

A larger development, Johnson said, might include housing, a hotel and expanded retail.

But Tommy Scallen, son of the theater owner Thomas K. Scallen and the family's point man on real estate matters, said there's no guarantee the theater will stay where it is in the long term.

The concessions built into the lease extension help, but "We need more seats, we need a greater revenue stream," Scallen said.

Clayton said Bloomberg hoped to improve the three-stage complex, but building a larger theater on the site isn't economically feasible. Scallen, for his part, said the theater remains in conversations with the Mall of America — though expansion plans there have stalled — and other potential developers.

"When I fully understand what's going to happen with the Chanhassen development, I'll have a lot better idea of what we'll do," Scallen said. "Meanwhile," he said, "if someone comes and makes us a great offer, we'll contemplate it."

idol chatter



Amanda Overmyer



Brooke White



Ramiele Malubay



Kristy Lee Cook

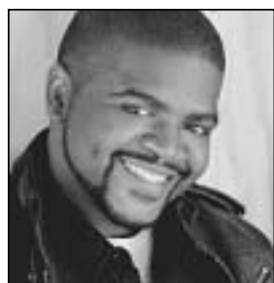


Carly Smithson



Syehsa Mercado

final 12



Chikezie



David Cook



Jason Castro



David Archuleta



Michael Johns



David Hernandez

'Idol' breaks in new set with Beatles tunes

Breaking in a sparkling new stage set, the Top 12 "American Idol" contestants strutted their stuff on Tuesday to the sounds of the Beatles. This week's theme was the Lennon/McCartney songbook and some contestants shined (Chikezie, Carly Smithson, David Cook) and others bombed (Syehsa Mercado, David Hernandez, Kristy Lee Cook, David Archuleta). Tonight (8 p.m. Fox), the "A.I." contender with the lowest amount of votes gets the boot.

Mercado sang "Got to Get You Into My Life." She looked nervous as she turned a fun pop tune into a loungey dud.

Chikezie sang "She's a Woman." He started off with a down-home, old-timey feel — just a fiddle, banjo and tambourine backing him up — and then switched gears moving into a bluesy rock realm. Yes, he's finally earned the right to go by just a single name.

Ramiele Malubay sang "In My Life." Malubay slowed down the sentimental tune showing off her pretty voice, but it was a snooze.

Jason Castro sang "If I Fell." Breaking out the acoustic guitar, Castro's version was sweet, but wimpy.

Smithson sang "Come Together." The Irish native scored big with a strong, flawless vocal performance.

Cook sang "Eleanor Rigby." The former "drink slinger" took a string-heavy tune and turned it into a grungy delight.

Brooke White sang "Let It Be." White played piano as she sang the moving ballad. She sounded great, but she looked awkward when she made eye contact with the camera.

Hernandez sang "I Saw Her Standing There." A fun song, but Hernandez's take was way too cheesy.

Amanda Overmyer sang "You Can't Do That." It was more of the same from the rock'n'roll nurse — gritty vocals and bad hair.

Michael Johns sang "Across the Universe." A lackluster performance from the Aussie hottie.

Cook sang "8 Days a Week." Her spastic countrified version of the song seemed insincere and corny.

David Archuleta sang "We Can Work It Out." Two weeks ago, he drove fans and the judges wild with John Lennon's "Imagine." This week, he delivered his weakest performance of the season and even forgot some of the words to the song — an "A.I." sin.

— Amy Carlson Gustafson

concert news

Kid Rock returning to the Cities

After packing the Myth to the rafters back in November, rabble-rouser Kid Rock has booked a larger venue for his return trip to the Cities. He'll play the Target Center May 24.



Other new Target Center concerts on the schedule:

- Disney star **Raven-Symone** brings her Pajama Party tour to town June 14. Fans will be encouraged to wear their favorite PJs to the show, which will also feature **B5, Clique Girlz** and **Mitchel Musso** (best known for his role as Oliver Oken on "Hannah Montana").

- The **Cyndi Lauper** gay and lesbian-themed True Colors tour makes its first local stop June 9. Lauper and the **B-52's** will headline, with **Rosie O'Donnell, Tegan & Sara, the Cliks** and host **Carson Kressley** on the bill.

Ticket info soon.

— Ross Raihala

celebs



Albert Lea will rename its theater for native **Marion Ross**, best known for her role as Mrs. Cunningham on TV's "Happy Days."

nielsen ratings

> LAST WEEK'S TOP TV SHOWS

1. "American Idol" (Tuesday), Fox, 28.46 million viewers
2. "American Idol" (Wednesday), Fox, 28.32 million viewers
3. "American Idol" (Thursday), Fox, 26.5 million viewers

tech tryout

Hulu is a lulu: Video site is clean and easy to navigate

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When I wanted to watch my beloved "Firefly" sci-fi series the other day, I didn't bother renting or buying a DVD set.

I just fired up Hulu and watched all 14 episodes for free.

The video site at hulu.com, due to officially debut today with complete episodes from about 250 TV programs (along with a few feature films and other clips), has been a blessing for those testing the entertainment portal since last fall.

This is not the only place to watch shows in streaming-video form. All the top networks offer this on their own Web sites. Hulu-ish destinations such as Comcast's Fancast also are assembling libraries of current and classic TV shows.

But Hulu, founded last year by NBC Universal and News Corp. (owners of the NBC and Fox television networks), is my hands-down favorite

because of its superclean appearance, pristine video quality and brain-dead-easy navigation.

And while Hulu's library is far from comprehensive, it rescued me more than once when I missed a current episode of "Eureka" or "Journeyman." It turned me on to old shows such as "Roswell," as well. And Hulu is the best place to watch the last batch of Super Bowl commercials.

Recent additions include videos from CNET, one of my favorite tech-related Web sites, along with current TV series I watch regularly, including "New Amsterdam," "Lipstick Jungle" and "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles."

Beginning today and over the coming weeks, Hulu says it will add even more stuff. This includes content from the Warner Bros. Television Group, the Lionsgate film studio, the National Basketball Association, the National Hockey League and more. As a geek, I am delighted that "The Incredible Hulk" and "Babylon 5" will be among new offerings.

It is cool how Hulu videos can be clipped and

embedded on other sites (but I've never availed myself of this feature).

Yet Hulu frustrates me in some ways. While I can watch episodes of the current "Battlestar Galactica" series, only a few of these are posted. Another hot Sci Fi Channel series "Stargate Atlantis" is only available in sample-clip form. Little content is in high definition. The ads are annoying (though, I suppose, a necessary evil). And I can forget about watching anything from CBS, among other no-shows.

Fortunately, there's Fancast (fancast.com). The new site has some content overlap with Hulu, along with shows not found on the NBC/Fox portal — including the post-apocalyptic CBS series "Jericho," also available on CBS' own site.

Fancast has other useful features, such as TV listings, a video-search tool for finding clips elsewhere, and details on recent theatrical and DVD releases, among other entertainment-industry offerings. Soon, Fancast will even let



Hulu menu

users control their home video recorders from afar, via any Internet-linked computer (though it's not the first to offer this).

So while I swear allegiance to Hulu, I'll continue to hopscotch all over the Web for the video I want — at least until networks wise up and team up to put their content in one place. I just pray that place happens to have Hulu hipness.

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