

After two delays, ArtsCenter finally opens its doors

By **JOANNE GORDON**
Arts/Features Editor

ArtsCenter officially opened last week with its first performance of Monday Night Live! in the new building at 300-G East Main St. in Carrboro — even though construction has not been completed.

"We've had good attendance at Monday Night Live! and the plays. . . . During Monday Night Live! we had a full house and standing room only," ArtsCenter Communications Coordinator Bett Wilson said. "It feels wonderful to be in the new facility rather than being scattered all over the community."

The opening came after two construction delays. Originally the ArtsCenter planned on opening with the July 6 Monday Night Live!, but because ArtsCenter

wanted to "get a little further along with construction" the opening was postponed until the NCNB Traveling Art Exhibition on July 12. The second delay came because the ArtsCenter lacked an occupancy permit and a full-time staff member to watch the artwork.

Last week, the Carrboro Planning Department granted a special occupancy permit, allowing the center to continue construction during the day and present events at night, Wilson said.

The public can view six works of the NCNB exhibition, which features paintings by North Carolina artists, in the lobby of ArtsCenter before and after events and during performance intermissions.

Although the play has been presented, construction has not been completed. The 350-seat Earl

Wynn Theater will be furnished temporarily with the stage, sound system, lighting and seating from the former site Carr Mill Mall, until the center can afford to replace them with better equipment, Wilson said.

The center is involved in a campaign to raise \$150,000 by Aug. 31 to meet a \$75,000 challenge grant by an anonymous donor. The donor agreed to extend the original June 30 deadline, and the ArtsCenter is within \$25,000 from reaching the goal. The donor issued the challenge as a way of giving the community a chance to get involved. "He/She has been keeping an eye on us, and is on our side. He/She figured if extended, the deadline will give

us more time to raise funds," Wilson said.

The ArtsCenter will present "The Foreigner" July 23-25, the first Sunday Jazz Series concert on July 26, an evening of gospel entertainment with Monday Night Live! on July 27 and "Retreat" July 29 through August 1.

The Sunday Jazz Series will host the Giovanni Tomasso Quintet and Lingomania as part of the Triangle area Umbria Jazz Festival at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for the public and \$4 for Friends of the ArtsCenter.

The Italian performers feature post-bop jazz from blues-inflected hard-bop to the complex structures of late 1960s jazz. Bassist Tomasso leads the quintet, which

includes saxophonist Massimo Urbani, pianist Danilo Rea, drummer Roberto Gatto and trumpeter Flayio Boltro. Tomasso was selected best jazz musician in 1986 by The National Radio and Television Rai, and his latest album, "Via G.T.," was voted one of the top three albums of the year by "Music Jazz" magazine.

"Retreat," a new play by North Carolina playwright Phil Hines, will be presented by the New Theater Company. "Retreat" is a quietly humorous yet poignant family drama set in a small North Carolina piedmont town. Tickets are \$8 for the public and \$7 for Friends of the ArtsCenter. For more information on events and tickets, call 929-2896.

Flaming Lips melt their audiences

By **JAMES BURRUS**
Staff Writer

Ever eaten potato chips when you had chapped lips?

Apparently three guys from Oklahoma have and they still

haven't recovered. Nor have their audiences.

The thrash sound of Flaming Lips is built to knock over all who kiss it. How can anyone resist smooching a band that sings songs

called "Charles Manson Blues" and "Jesus Shootin' Heroin?" College radio listeners sure can't — evident by their success on the independent charts.

Wayne Coyne, lead singer, has said the band's sound ranges somewhere between the space of The Butthole Surfers and The Who, except they are not Sonic Youth.

Flaming Lips' songs have been called "depresso blues dirt rocking," "an unlikely blend of acoustic and Sabbath-like guitar drones," and "psycho-delic punk."

They've been compared to The Who, Led Zeppelin, The Doors, Pink Floyd, Camper Van Beethoven, Jesus and Mary Chain, and The Exploding White Mice.

Live, the Flaming Lips put on a loud, uninhibited, carefree free-for-all. Pass the dip — these guys will be at Cat's Cradle on Wednesday. Call 967-9053 for ticket information.

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