

# DATEBOOK

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THEATER LISTINGS E2

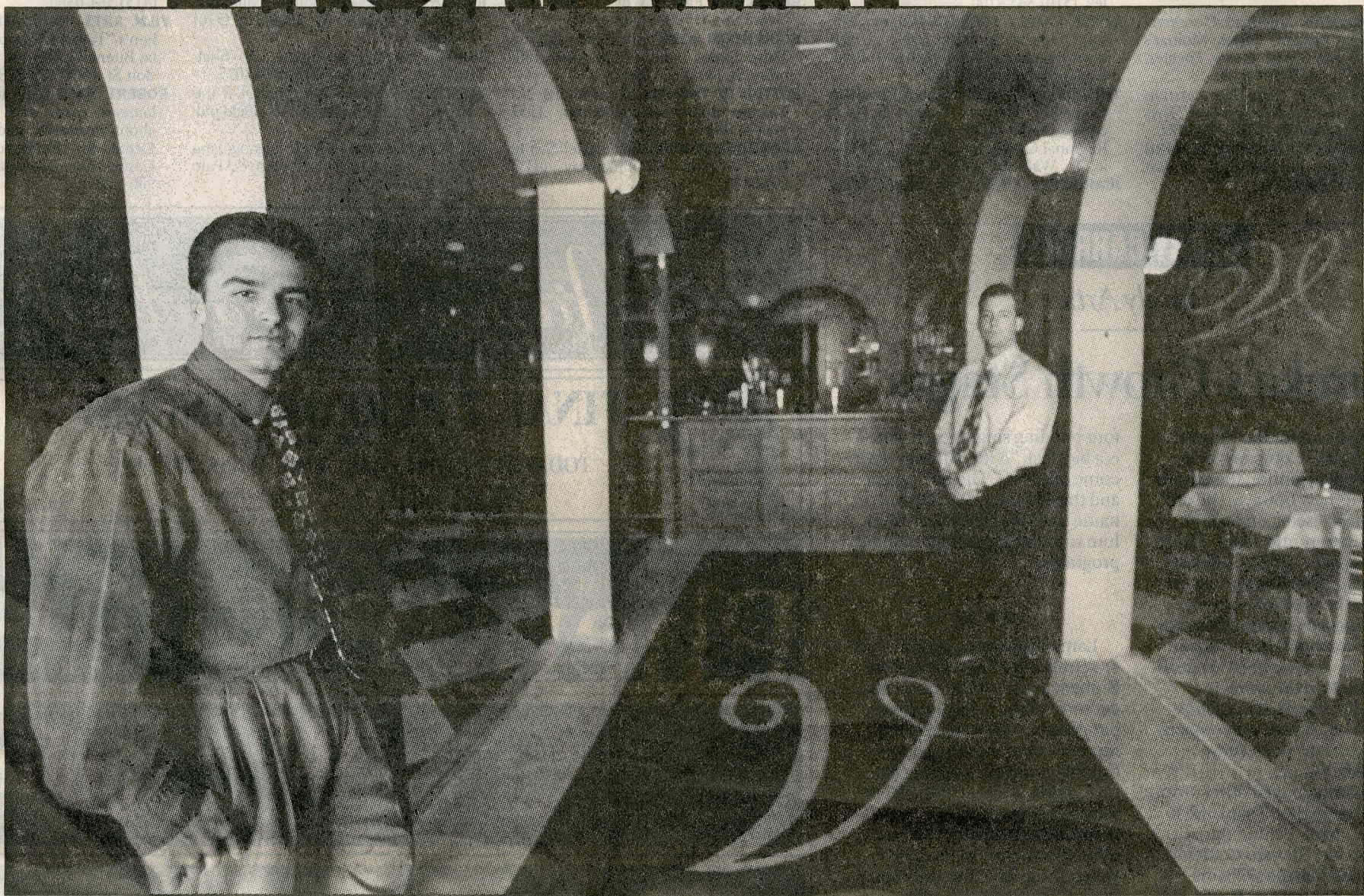
MOVIE LISTINGS E4, E5

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 1998

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## FUNKY, FUNKY BROADWAY



LIZ HAFALIA / The Chronicle

### New club owners hope to make city's strip a destination again

By James Sullivan  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

**M**ax Young's parents remember when Broadway was the place to be in San Francisco.

"My father was a saxophone player around town," Young says. "My brother and I grew up with stories of Chet Baker and Miles Davis playing at the Jazz Workshop."

Steve Sirianni's 92-year-old grandmother also recalls a lively period on Broadway. "She remembers when (443 Broadway) was Garibaldi Center, with boxing upstairs and a club downstairs."

Young and Sirianni, both in their early 30s, are doing their part to make the neon-splashed North Beach drag once again San Francisco's liveliest enclave after dark. Two years ago brothers Max and Sam Young opened the Hi-Ball Lounge on the site of the former Jazz Workshop, quickly establishing their cozy room as the jewel of the West Coast swing revival.

Just a few doors down, Sirianni and his partner, Matt Corvi, will throw a grand opening party on Friday at the Velvet Lounge, the restaurant and live-music theater they opened a few months ago in the building that has housed such rambunctious nightspots as Garibaldi Center and the legendary punk haven Mabuhay Gardens over the years.

It's been 20 years since Broadway was a happening nightlife destination; its problems only worsened in the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake,

which collapsed the Interstate 280 off-ramp leading into North Beach. The area had degenerated into a string of seedy sex parlors that alarmed unsuspecting tourists who rounded the corner from Columbus Avenue. Though many of the strip joints remain, the avenue is enjoying a renaissance.

Last Friday at midnight, for instance, Enrico's — the venerable sidewalk cafe opened 30 years ago by North Beach figure Enrico Banducci — held court as the grande dame of the neighborhood. Across the street, a disc jockey at the newly renovated Mambo Room spun a seductive Soul II Soul track. Outside the Hi-Ball, those waiting in line to see Wally's Swing World were treated to finger-poppin' snatches of "Kansas City" each time someone opened the door. Around the corner on Kearny, a battery of rock guitars blared from the Cocodrie.

In marked contrast to the recent controversy over foot traffic and amplified music on SoMa's 11th Street, Broadway is accustomed to the bustle,

Steve Sirianni (left) and Matt Corvi in their new Velvet Lounge on Broadway, which will have its grand opening Friday.

#### BROADWAY CLUBS

■ **VELVET LOUNGE:** The club at 443 Broadway celebrates its official grand opening starting at 7 p.m. Friday. Storm and Her Dirty Mouth perform. (415) 788-0228.

■ **CLUB COCODRIE:** 1024 Kearny St., (415) 986-6678.

■ **HI-BALL LOUNGE:** 473 Broadway, (415) 397-9464.

■ **MAMBO ROOM:** 493 Broadway, (415) 434-3675.

■ **THE BLUE BAR AT THE BLACK CAT:** 501 Broadway, (415) 981-2233. Opens next month.

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## KQED Offers Preview of New Digital TV Signals



SALE THIS

# Broadway's Bustle, Noise Nothing New

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says Sirianni. "This is a business area, so there's not too much (else) going on here at night. And the apartments nearby, a lot of those people have lived in them for years, so they're more used to the noise."

By day, this three-block stretch of Broadway bangs and buzzes with new construction. "We just took over the place next door," says Young, "so we're expanding in that direction. We're putting a Polynesian tiki bar in there, so you'll get two bars for the price of one."

This youthful impresario knows his history. "We're calling it the Bamboo Hut, which is what that location was called in 1944-45."

Also opening soon in the neighborhood are the Black Cat, a restaurant and jazz club backed by Rose Pistola's Reed Hearon, and the Chi Chi Ultra Lounge, an "acid jazz" nightclub on the former site of Ann's 440, where Johnny Mathis and Lenny Bruce were discovered.

Meanwhile, the Stone, the '80s rock club that has sat vacant for several years across from the current

Velvet Lounge, has been the subject of much speculation.

"The rumor was that Madonna was taking it over," says Sirianni. "But it was just a rumor."

Discussion of the Broadway strip clubs draws carefully chosen words from the new breed of owners. Though they're diplomatic, it's clear they'd be happy to see their more salacious neighbors move on.

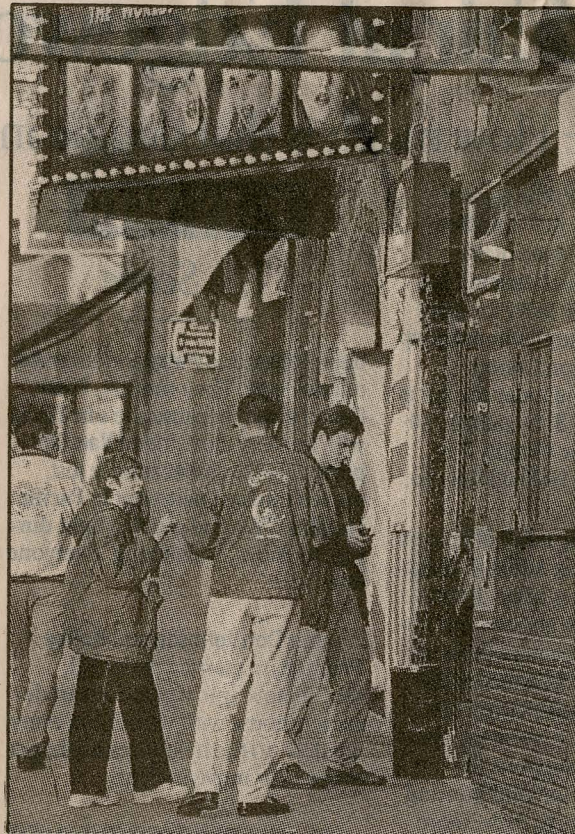
"Times Square went through its shady period, too," says Sirianni, "and it definitely had a resurgence."

Though some of the nude theaters have upgraded their appearance, they've also been catering to younger men, Young says. "Maybe they're spending more money on decor, but they're becoming a little more graphic, too."

Considering the recent squabbles over 11th Street, Young expresses concern about the future of the city's nightlife.

"We're not getting any help or breaks from the city. They're not enforcing the strip-club rules. Luckily the mayor actually stops by and hangs out (at the retro-style Hi-Ball) semi-regularly. Thank God Willie likes wearing a hat."

With a little luck, Young thinks, Broadway could eventually regain



ERIC LUSE / The Chronicle

Randie Brotman of Chicago, Franz C. Alderfer of New Jersey and Tomas Bachman of Palo Alto (from left) lined up outside the Hi-Ball Lounge next door to the Casbah, a strip club. Brotman and Alderfer had a day off from their roles in "Show Boat."

its place as San Francisco's pre-eminent nightclub district.

"This really could be the showcase it once was. There are great sto-

ries — the Matador, the hungry i, Blossom Dearie, Ike and Tina Turner. It would be wonderful for that to come back."

## PBS Road Show Offers Look at Future TV Technology

► **DIGITAL**  
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KQED plans to be ready for the switch as part of the PBS network.

On one side of the truck, visitors sat in a Disneylike Living Room of Tomorrow equipped with television sets. One giant screen showed a variety of programs. Visitors will be able to see a four-hour

foreign-language versions and quadraphonic sound. Or they may be able to interact with the programming so a local news show, for example, can register viewer opinion on a controversial issue. Other interactive possibilities range from Web TV-style transactions to a community learning center that will allow students to interact with university education.

er. "Understand that this is a 19.39-megabit-per-second pipe to everybody's home," said Jud French of DTV Express as he waved toward a wall of screens. "That's more than 500 times as fast as the modem you currently use to connect your computer to phone links."

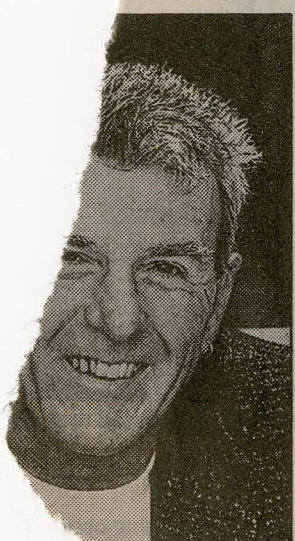
ally several times during the day.

It could also mean that KQED will use at least one of the signals to make money by carrying data in any form, ranging from stock quotes to news services.

And instead of rattling the door to raise money every few years, it could offer a steady stream of revenue.

### Stations Will Decide

How all the new digital capacity will be used remains to be seen. Stations will decide.



will read his part