



POPCORN™

V For Vendetta: And For Vicarious, Too

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER

3 & 1/2 popcorns

Admit it! Big Brother is here and he's encroaching on your Four Freedoms. Oh sure, you'd like to join a revolutionary group and put the world right. But what with work, the gym, picking Sissy up from dance class and driving Putney to soccer practice, you've got enough on your plate. Which is precisely why you'll enjoy the instant retribution offered by director James McTeigue's *V for Vendetta*.

True, the comic-book-derived tale transposed to the screen by the same fellows (the Brothers Wachowski) who brought us *The Matrix* movies may only provide two hours of rebellion. But then, Rome wasn't toppled in a day. It's a start. And a rousing one at that.

Exuberantly subversive, *V for Vendetta* centers around the revolutionary intrigues of its poetically inclined title character (Hugo Weaving). Masked, like so many of fiction's great heroic dissidents before him, he is at once gloriously metaphorical and darkly paradoxical. But then, so was the Lone Ranger.

This is the cutting edge update... the dissident in ambiguous armor. He does some terrible things, but only to very terrible people. That it's properly discomfiting is part of the attraction.

Lest any government currently bamboozling its public thinks this is about them, the political fantasy is set in a not-too-distant dystopian England. As Yogi might opine, it's "1984" all over again. And like the interconnected oppression that subjugated the terrorized citizenry of that Orwellian nightmare, once again I etat and big business have formed an unholy alliance.

Of course no great fight against totalitarianism is complete without a love story. After all, save for Tsar

Nicolas and Tsarina Alexandra and a smattering of others, it's the indignant oppressed in history who live the great romances. Thus is introduced, Evey, excellently played by Natalie Portman. Wrongly accused by the state, the newsroom employee is saved by V. Resultantly a fugitive, she has no recourse but to accompany her champion to his secret hideout. Now it's two against the world.

Evey is our imbedded reporter. For what follows is not only the evolution of their mutual admiration society, but a look into the revolutionary mind. He is a strange bird to be sure.

We learn that the odd, carnival-like mask and accompanying black duds are worn in homage to Guy Fawkes, the Catholic soldier martyred following the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Using that historical event as a symbol for governmental injustice everywhere, V tells Evey of his plan to blow-up Parliament. He is at once righteous and mad.

Pertinent to the film's ongoing discussion—does the end justify the means?—V isn't entirely altruistic in his ambitions. It's also personal. His costume isn't merely ceremonial, but practical as well. Mistreatment at the hands of the evil regime has led to considerable disfigurement. Never unmasked, Hugo Weaving is great in a performance that recalls Claude Rains' monumental turn as "The Invisible Man" (1933).

V for Vendetta gets its provocative points across with a vengeance. And, at only two hours and 12 minutes, it leaves you plenty of time to pick up the dry cleaning, do some food shopping and still get to the Star Chamber for questioning.

V for Vendetta, rated R, is a Warner Bros. release directed by James McTeigue and stars Hugo Weaving, Natalie Portman and Stephen Rea. Running time: 132 minutes.

New Courses Included In Summer Workshop

WESTFIELD – Each year, the Westfield Summer Workshop (WSW) evaluates its course selections to determine which classes have retained their popularity and which new trends can be included in the next season's brochure.

This comprehensive arts program, which begins on Tuesday, June 27 and continues to Friday, July 28, has several new additions in each of its departments. Among the 29 individual course offerings in the Arts and Crafts Department is an exploration of the country's handicrafts in American Crafts, for grades five through eight. Another addition is Art Sampler, for grades one to six, which gives children multiple experiences in several artistic areas. Wood Crafts, for grades one to three, will design various projects with pre-cut wood designs. Returning to the crafts section this summer is Dinosaurs, for grades one to three, which will recreate a prehistoric world in many different mediums.

The Communications Department provides 12 separate courses in its curriculum. New for 2006 is Communications Sampler, for grades six to eight, which explores various facets of written and oral communication. This year the WSW welcomes Gecko Kids, a creative computer studio. With three individual classes for students ranging from grades one to six, Gecko Kids offers the Art of Bookmaking on Computers.

The Department of Dance and Movement, which offers nine classes, has several new additions this season. Broadway Jazz, for students in grades four to six, will have participants dancing to contemporary show tunes, while Irish Dance, for grades two to four, will introduce youngsters to reels, jigs, slip jigs and hornpipes. In Musical Theater Revue, students in grades two to five will learn song and dance routines from classic and modern Broadway shows.

With 13 diverse courses, this year the Kaleidoscope Department combines students' interest and science and mystery as they become part of an investigative team in CSI: Westfield, for grades five to eight. New to the Music Department is Garage Band, for grades six to eight, which will have students playing together in a rock and roll workshop, while Music Sampler, for grades three to eight, gives participants an opportunity to explore playing several musical instruments.

Among the 83 course offerings are two theater productions. Students in grades six to nine can attend the Workshop Theater, which will present *Seussical*, a musical based on the works of Dr. Seuss. There is no audition required for this production. Those in grades nine to 12 may become part of the Showcase Theater and a Cabaret Night. This group will present *Carousel*. Auditions are required for this presentation and may be arranged by calling Valerie Pineda at the NJWA office at (908) 789-9696. Separate dates and times for this afternoon course are listed in the brochure.

Self-contained mini workshops are offered for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children. These hands-on programs give children an experience in music, movement, arts, crafts, drama, Spanish and violin.

Other features of the WSW include an early-morning drop-off at 7:30

a.m. and a full day program in conjunction with the Westfield Y.

Classes for the 2006 WSW are held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. daily (with the exception of the Showcase Theater) at Edison Intermediate School on Rahway Avenue in Westfield.

For information on this program, call the special WSW number at (908) 518-1551, or visit the office at 150-152 East Broad Street in Westfield. Additional information is available on the web at www.njworkshopforthearts.com.

Playwright Douglas Earns Third Prize

CRANFORD – Nine students were honored at The Theater Project's fourth annual Young Playwrights Competition Performance and Awards Ceremony on March 12.

Kate Douglas of Westfield received third prize. Honorable mentions were given to Andrew Koneski and Jonathan Schwartz of Cranford. Prize-winners received savings bonds and saw their work performed by the professional actors of The Theater Project at the ceremony. Six additional writers were presented with honorable mention citations and gift certificates.

The goal of the competition is to encourage the next generation of theater practitioners and audience by honoring their work and bringing it to life.

The winner of last year's competition, Jake Brandman of Westfield, is now a freshman in New York University's playwriting program. Jake was an honored guest at this year's ceremony and addressed the assembly about his experiences.

Information about next year's contest can be obtained on The Theater Project's website, www.TheTheaterProject.com.

See It In Color On: www.goleader.com

SP Resident Sector To Exhibit 'Sectorart'

SCOTCH PLAINS – The Scotch Plains Public Library will host a month-long exhibition entitled "Sectorart," caricatures and cartoons by local resident Rick Sector. The show opened on March 27 and will continue until Friday, April 21. A reception for Mr. Sector will be held today, Thursday, March 30 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the foyer of the lower level of library.

Mr. Sector resides in Scotch Plains and has spent 27 years in the business of art, specializing in caricatures, cartoons, logo design, cover art, posters and holiday cards. His work has been published in teen magazines and newspapers. He has also instructed children's art classes.

Mr. Sector's animal cartoons and caricature art appeals to a wide variety of audiences. The public is invited to view his work during open library hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Friday and Saturday.

The Scotch Plains Library is located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, one block from Park Avenue in the center of town. For further information or directions, call (908) 322-5007.

VACNJ Juried Show Culls Artistic Diversity

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SUMMIT – Over the years the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey's (VACNJ) International Juried Show has come to be widely regarded as one of the most prestigious juried shows in the artistic community and the 2006 show is no exception.

One hundred three artists from 14 countries are represented in this year's show, which is the first to be held in VACNJ's renovated building.

The International Juried Show 2006 was curated, as well as juried, by Patterson Sims, the director of the Montclair Art Museum in Montclair.

"The center and Summit are providing the excellent opportunity for over 100 artists to have their works



Robert Cannon-Swell

exhibited in a truly distinguished setting," he said.

Those artists selected by Mr. Sims to be part of International Juried Show 2006 were culled from an initial 500 applicants who submitted over 1,000 digital files or photos of their work in the hopes that it would be chosen to become a part of the show. Only one piece of art from each chosen artist was selected for exhibition.

This year's International Juried Show is the 20th for VACNJ. As in previous years, the 2006 show offered a diversity of artistic medium. Many of the winning pieces represented nontraditional art forms.

The Best in Show award was presented to Greg Biermann for his video presentation, "Hackensack Motel."

Drew Maillard's ink-and-watercolor depiction of Johnny Cash on a lunchbox, titled "The Man, The Myth,

The Lunchbox," won the Watercolor Award. The Jurgen Thieck Memorial Photography Award went to Deborah Hamon who submitted a digital C-print of a woman and child rushing past a home, entitled "Grandma's House."

One of the most interesting pieces of the show turned out to be "Swell" by Princeton artist Robert Cannon. Showing just how diverse artwork can truly be, "Swell" is a cement structure studded with stones, earth and green plant life. Swell received an Honorable Mention award.

Lourdes Delgado, J.G. Zimmerman and Kim Beckmann received Merit Awards. In addition to Mr. Cannon, Honorable Mentions went to Jennifer Lewis Takahashi, Charlee Swanson, Howard Oransky, Hollie Heller, Corey Escoto and Robert Mahoney.

Other examples of the diversity of the exhibit include Ms. Escoto's "Preventive Maintenance: Problem Solving Sketches," which is a power point presentation, and Ms. Swanson's American Landscape #13, created from broken glass and steel.

Both of these pieces, among many others, demonstrate art at its boldest and most innovative. It is pieces like



these that are thrusting art into the 21st century.

Coming up next at VACNJ is "Among the Trees," which opens with a reception on Friday, April 7, at 6 p.m. This exhibit explores the role of the tree as it has been portrayed in art.

VACNJ is located at 68 Elm Street in Summit. For more information, log on to artscenternj.org or call (908) 273-9121.

Music Studio Students Receive Recognition

WESTFIELD – Dr. Ted Schlosberg, founder and executive director of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Music Studio in Westfield, received notification that the Central Jersey Music Educators Association has recognized two of his middle school students.

Peter Mebane, a sixth grader at Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield, was selected to participate in the Region II Intermediate Orchestra. Ranked number five out of 1 places, Peter is the only sixth grader in the string bass section.

As a fifth grader at Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, Peter was a member of the school orchestra and the All-City Orchestra. Because of his talent, he was awarded the Sally Judd Scholarship by the NJWA, which allowed him to take lessons at The Music Studio.

Peter is presently a member of the RIS orchestra.

A second middle school student taught by Dr. Schlosberg, Leslie Bartsch, was assigned first chair for the Region II Intermediate Band. A French horn player, Leslie is an eighth-grade student at Edison Intermediate School in Westfield. This is the fourth year that Leslie is participating in the CJMEA Region II program.

In addition to playing the past two years in the intermediate level band, during the fifth grade, Leslie's school music director selected her to participate in the Region II Elementary Honors Band. She currently plays

French horn with the EIS symphonic band and plays piano with the school's jazz ensemble.

Leslie is also a four-year member of the NJWA Concert Band.

Of the selection of these students by The Central Jersey Music Educators Association, Dr. Schlosberg remarked, "The outstanding preparations of Peter and Leslie, with the memorization of nine required scales, solo selections and sight reading performance, attest to the ability and determination of these students to succeed."

For more information on the Music Studio, or any NJWA program, visit the office at 150-152 East Broad Street in Westfield, phone (908) 789-9696 or log on to their website at www.njworkshopforthearts.com.



UNDER THE SEA...Geena Gao poses with her artwork titled "Underwater Life" at the New Jersey State Youth Art Month Exhibit at Trenton.

Deerfield School Revue

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Jenna, the trio studies the violin under the Suzuki method with Elzbieta Winnicka at the Suburban Community Music Center in New Providence. According to Tricia Brancatella, her children don't remember a time in their lives when they didn't play the violin, as they have all been studying since the age of three-and-a-half.

Mrs. Brancatella noted practice is a big part of her children's success, quoting Shinichi Suzuki, who said, "you only have to practice on the days that you eat." Vito, the eldest son, made his debut at the variety show at the age of six when he amazed the audience with pieces by Handel, Beethoven and Bach. He now plays with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and will be performing works from Antonio Vivaldi at the show.

His two younger siblings are not far behind and will also be performing Friday evening. Middle child Nicholas offered some good advice for anyone learning to play an instrument. The seven-year-old told the *Leader* and the *Times*, "Just think of having fun when you practice." Out of the mouths of babes.

The show starts at 7 p.m. and tickets are just \$5 at the door. To learn more about the Mountainside Education Foundation, log on to their website found at www.mountainsideschools.net.

WYACT, NJPAC Join Forces For Ragtime

WESTFIELD – The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) Summer Musical Program and the Westfield Young Artists' Cooperative Theatre (WYACT) are joining forces to present *Ragtime, The Musical*, nominated for 12 Tony Awards in 1998.

Auditions for the cast will be held Saturdays, April 1 and 8, with final callbacks on Sunday, April 9 and Saturday, April 15. The show premieres in NJPAC's Victoria Theater on Friday, July 14 and runs through Saturday, July 23. Following its NJPAC engagement, *Ragtime, The Musical* will tour to the Algonquin Arts Theater (AAT) in Manasquan from Friday, July 28 through Sunday, August 6.

Orchestra candidates should call Ilene Greenbaum at (973) 992-5097 for appointment to audition. On Saturday, April 1 there will be a singing open call from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Algonquin Arts Theatre at 173 Main Street in Manasquan.

On Saturday, April 8, there will be a singing open call from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and dancing callbacks beginning at 7 p.m. at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's Lucent Center at 24 Receptor Street.

On Sunday and Saturday Saturday, April 9 and 15, final callbacks will be held at the NJPAC at One Center Street in Newark.

WYACT and NJPAC are seeking



FOR A DREAM...Candace Wicke, Westfield resident and Conductor in Residence at Carnegie Hall, conducts Fauré's Requiem on March 13, with the New England Symphonic Ensemble. Above, Ms. Wicke receives a rousing ovation. Also pictured are soloists Esther Hardenbergh, soprano, and Jose Andrade, baritone.

WF Residents Take Part In Ensemble At Carnegie Hall

By SUSAN COOK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD – Westfield resident Candace Wicke conducted Fauré's Requiem with the New England Symphonic Ensemble at Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium in New York City on March 13.

Ms. Wicke is conductor-in-residence for MidAmerica Productions, the largest independent producer of classical concerts for Carnegie Hall. She has received national and international acclaim as a conductor at such prestigious venues as Notre Dame Cathedral, and is a frequent judge at national and international competitions.

Ms. Wicke conducted the United States representative wind ensemble at the Taipei Presidential Inauguration. She is also intimately involved in helping artists debut their work. In 2002, Ms. Wicke

Sixth Grader Among Art Show Finalists

WESTFIELD – Geena Gao, a sixth grader in Helen Mastrangelo's art class at Edison Intermediate School of Westfield, had her artwork selected to represent Union County at the Art Educators of New Jersey's 2006 State Youth Art Month Exhibit.

About 100 entries were received in the Union County, and only six were selected by the Union County Youth Art Month Committee to be on display in Trenton for the state show. Geena's work titled "Underwater Life" was among the chosen six. The 2006 NJ State Youth Art Month exhibit was held in the Trenton State House Annex Tunnel and Goldfinch Square from March 13 through 17. Geena was at the award ceremony at the State Capitol Complex on March 15.

Geena graduated from McKinley Elementary School and her art teacher at McKinley was Alison Hooper. Geena's artwork was regularly selected for exhibitions at Westfield Public Schools Elm Street Gallery, Downtown Westfield and selected for McKinley School Permanent Art Display. Geena has also attended Westfield Art Lab and NJWA Westfield Summer Workshops.

NJWA Concert Slated For April 2

WESTFIELD – The New Jersey Workshop For The Arts (NJWA) Concert Band will be featured at the Green Lane YM-YWHA, located on 501 Green Lane, Union, on Sunday, April 2. The two-hour concert begins at 2 p.m. and will feature all new selections and popular music, dance music, marches, concert suites and show tunes. Tickets are \$7 and \$5 for senior citizens.

Besides American music, a Russian and Czech repertoire will be highlighted for this upcoming concert. Featured Czech marches will be "Music, Music" by Frantcek Kmoch and "Castaldo" by Rudolf Novacek. Russian selections will be from the pens of Agapkin, and Gretchinoff reflecting a special Slavic timbre.

The program will also feature "Turning Point" by Philip Teperov, a former member of the USSR Defense Ministry Band. This composition is dedicated to the NJWA Concert Band and its director.

Rehearsals are held on Saturdays at the Westfield Y, 220 Clark Street, from noon to 1:30 p.m. For tickets and additional information about the April 2nd Union concert, e-mail the band at njwband@att.net or call (908) 964-1793.

Get Outta' The House

By CAROL F. DAVIS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Now in its eighth season, *Jazz Series 2006* will present jazz great Sarah Partridge at the Arts Guild of Rahway on Friday, April 7, at 8 p.m. Tickets range from \$12 to \$16, and are available by calling (732) 381-7511, or logging onto: www.rahwayartsguild.org. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. You can warm up with one of her two CD's, "I'll Be Easy To Find" or "Blame It On My Youth."

If you are a Tchaikovsky fan, today is the final performance of *Mazepa* at the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. Called "Thoroughly compelling" by the *New York Times*, it tells the story of the enigmatic Cossack leader who plots the demise of his lover's father. Call (212) 362-6000 for tickets, ranging from \$26 to \$80 (orchestra), or log onto: <http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/home.aspx>. Hear a sound clip at: http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/season/audio_pop.aspx?id=131.

Just in time for the holidays, discover the secret to making your own at the JCC's *Matazah Bakery Classes*. Sign up for a session on Sunday, April 2, on the hour between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. It's only \$4 for members and \$6 for the general public. For more info, call (908) 889-8800, ext. 235, or e-mail: jbxater@jccnj.org.

Saturday, April 1, is *Trail Maintenance Day* at the Trailside Nature and Science Center. Pack up a lunch, bring the family, and help repair the hiking trails just in time for the spring rush. Pre-registration is required. Call (908) 789-3670. Plan to be there between 9:30 a.m. and noon.

It's *Ladies Night Out* at Terrill Middle School on Tuesday, April 4. Stop by between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. and find out at least 12 ways to relieve stress, feel better and beat the winter blahs. There will be demonstrations of massages, exercise, nutrition, meditation and much more. It's free of charge, and there will be refreshments. For more information, call (908) 232-0724.