

SUMMER TIME

Sounds of the DWC Jazz Festival Sweeten Downtown Westfield

By ABIGAIL RYAN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — When walking around downtown Westfield on a Tuesday evening, don't be surprised if you find yourself being serenaded by the cool and calming sounds of jazz. Every Tuesday night, from 7-9, jazz bands set up around the town and show off their talent as part of the summer's weekly "Sweet Sounds of Downtown" Jazz Festival.

This year, 44 bands were selected to play out of 60 or 70 applicants. "Bands come to us, and each year they compete to perform, and a committee judges them," said Sherry Cronin, executive director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation. "We chose the ones we definitely want to see and the ones we maybe want to see."

According to Mrs. Cronin, jazz was chosen as the weekly music entertainment because it is perfect dining music. "It also appeals to many different audiences. Jazz is universal and there are so many types: Contemporary, classic, blues, calypso and even Latin. There is something for everyone," she said.

"The best thing about it is that our customers sit outside, so they enjoy

the music while they eat," said Kate Zemlo, manager of Tinga Taqueria, located on Central Avenue. The restaurant is down the street from one of the main locations of the bands, outside The Bombay Company.

"It definitely helps out business," she said. "Tuesday is a regular weekday, but we have business like a Friday or Saturday."

Sonny Acquaviva, owner of Acquaviva Restaurant on Elm Street, agreed, saying that Tuesday nights "are like a Saturday night." Acquaviva Restaurant offers its own jazz music regularly to entertain its customers, but according to Mr. Acquaviva, the DWC Jazz Night draws more people to his business.

Now in its 11th year, Jazz Night has become much more popular. "We get people who religiously come, following bands that are featured," said David Martone, chairman of the board of directors at the DWC. "The bands are high quality and often well-known. People come out and listen to the jazz while they eat. Others eat at home and then just walk around and have a good time."

The Jazz Festival is designed to promote commerce in downtown

Westfield on summer nights. "We like to get our residents downtown, but we also want to bring people into Westfield and show them our town," said Martone. "Westfield is known as a quaint, colonial downtown community with a great mix of stores. Not only does Jazz Night let people from outside Westfield see that, it also allows people to see us as a culinary town with great places to eat."

Lisa Bertone, owner of Rock'n Joe Coffee-house on Prospect Street, said Jazz Night has been a unique experience for the newly opened restaurant.

"It's been great for us. This is our first year open, we opened in October, and we had never gone through this before. I love it. It's fantastic."

Ms. Bertone said a lot of people come in around 9 p.m. for an after-show coffee.

Local Westfield staple the Jolly Trolley on North Avenue also intercepts a lot of the after-show audience.

In addition to promoting commerce, Jazz Night also helps expose people to music they may not normally listen to. "There is such a great range of people who come down. You see parents with their young kids, teenagers and adults who go downtown and just have fun," said Mr. Martone. "I always laugh

when I see the kids playing various air instruments in front of the bands. It's exposing them to music on many different levels."

Ms. Bertone said she has also enjoyed other downtown events.

"So far, a lot of the events from the town have been positive on our business."

Stop by the "Sweet Sounds of Downtown" and hear the bands, who will be situated on Central Avenue in front of The Bombay Company, the lawn in front of the North Avenue Train Station, the corner of East Broad Street and North Avenue, Elm Street in front of the Baptist Church and at the South Avenue Train Station.

Reporting contributed by Katie Newingham and Jenna Nierstedt



Abby Ryan for The Westfield Leader and The Times JAZZ EXPOSURE... Linda Ipanema of New York sings at the Baptist Church during the "Sweet Sounds Downtown" Jazz Festival on July 10.



Abby Ryan for The Westfield Leader and The Times VERY CHILL... String Bean and the Stalkers entertain at the PNC Bank during the July 10 Jazz Festival. Performances take place on sidewalks and street corners every Tuesday in July and August from 7 to 9 p.m.



'TIL THERE WAS YOU... Westfield residents Connor Davis as Professor Harold Hill and Mia Pafumi as Marian Paroo rehearse a scene from The Music Man. The performance will be presented by C.A.S.T. on July 27-29 at the David Brearley High School auditorium on Monroe Avenue in Kenilworth.

Westfield Teens Take Lead In Kenilworth's Music Man

WESTFIELD — Featuring two Westfield teens, C.A.S.T. (The Community Actors Student Theater of Kenilworth) will present Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* this weekend.

The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. nightly in the auditorium of David Brearley High School, located on Monroe Avenue in Kenilworth.

Patricia Hubinger, one of the founding members of C.A.S.T., explained why *The Music Man* is a significant show for Kenilworth. "With this being the Centennial year for our town, we thought that Meredith Wilson's musical was the perfect choice, since it is set in 1907," she said.

Leading the cast is Christine

Nelson, who plays Mrs. Paroo, a well-meaning mother who tries to get her spinster daughter married. Orion Stubbs portrays her shy son Winthrop, who has a profound lisp.

Connor Davis of Westfield, as the slick Professor Harold Hill, sweeps Marian Paroo (Mia Pafumi of Westfield) off her feet. Zach Infante plays Marcellus, Professor Hill's one time sidekick in con artistry.

The show is filled with famous songs such as "Til There Was You," "Gary, Indiana," "My White Knight," "Seventy-six Trombones" and "Good Night My Someone."

Tickets for the show are \$10 (\$8 for children and senior citizens) and may be purchased at the door.

Mustang Sally to Play Country at Echo Lake Park

MOUNTAINSIDE — The Union County Summer Arts Festival concert series will continue on Wednesday, August 1, featuring Mustang Sally and their blend of country music and southern rock. The free concert begins at 7:30 p.m. in Echo Lake Park.

Mustang Sally is an all-female band based in Nashville, Tenn. These seven women combine traditional roots with diverse backgrounds to produce country music with a contemporary edge.

The Union County information van will be at the concert site, along with representatives from the Union County Clerk's Office, to answer questions and offer information about important services available to Union County residents.

The other free concerts in the Summer Arts Festival series include:

August 8 — Jo Bonanno and the Godsons of Soul;

August 15 — The Sensational Soul Cruisers;

August 22 — The Ed Palermo Big Band with Rob Pappozzi;

August 29 — The Nerds (Jersey Shore party band).

All Summer Arts Festival concerts are held on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Avenue end of Echo Lake Park in Mountainside. Lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets are encouraged. Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que will have a food concession, along with an ice cream and snack vendor, which will be available at approximately 6:30 p.m.

In case of rain, concerts will be held in the air-conditioned auditorium at Cranford High School, on West End Place off Springfield Avenue in Cranford, at 7:30 p.m.

For up-to-date concert/rain information, call the Parks and Recreation hot line at (908) 352-8410 after 3 p.m. on the day of the concert or check the Union County website at ucnj.org after 3 p.m.

For more information about activities in Union County's parks, call the Union County Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities at (908) 527-4900.

there's more at goleader.com

Upcoming Events Around the Towns

- Thursday, July 26, Scotch Plains. Polka Dot, a children's music and clown show, will be held on the Alan Augustine Village Green, 430 Park Avenue, at 7 p.m.
- Friday, July 27, Cranford. From 8 to 11 p.m., sing and dance in Downtown Cranford during a 60s & 70s classic rock show featuring Cranford's own Brother John Brown.
- Friday, July 27 and Saturday, July 28, Convent Station of Morris County. K.T. Productions presents "Suessical the Musical" for two nights at 7 p.m. in The Academy of Saint Elizabeth. For reservations and more information, call 908-996-0662.
- Tuesday, July 31, Garwood. Family Flix of Union County is hosting a 9 p.m. viewing of *The Philadelphia Story* at Unami Park (Field #1).
- Wednesday, August 1, Mountainside/Westfield. Mustang Sally entertains in Echo Lake Park at 7:30 p.m.

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