



**LUCK BE A LADY...**The Westfield Symphony Orchestra, along with four professional vocalists, collaborated with the Garden State Arts Foundation at the June 1 "The Guys and Dolls of Broadway" musical revue. Singers, from left to right, Thomas Wazelle, September Bigelow, Marcus DeLoach and Rita Harvey perform as Maestro David Wroe conducts.

## WSO Presents 'The Guys And Dolls of Broadway'

By LIZA KATZ  
Specially Written for the Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO), along with four professional vocalists, collaborated with the Garden State Arts Foundation (GSAF) on June 1 to present a brilliant musical revue showcasing Broadway's classic hits.

The performance, dubbed "The Guys and Dolls of Broadway," was free of charge and held at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel. Under the direction of Maestro David Wroe, the orchestra accompanied soprano Rita Harvey, mezzo-soprano September Bigelow, tenor Thomas Wazelle and baritone Marcus DeLoach in what Mr. Wroe called a "charming retrospective" of Broadway's Golden Age.

In spite of occasional lightning and thunder throughout the evening, the arts center was filled to the brim with awestruck fans. The musicians greeted the crowd with a rousing opening of "Wilkommen," from John Kander and Fred Ebb's musical *Cabaret*.

Other outstanding numbers included "You're the Top," from Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*, "Too Darn Hot," from Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* and "Slap That Bass," from George Gershwin's *Crazy for You*.

Mr. Wroe interwove an insightful commentary throughout the performance, providing the audience with background information as well as historical context for the featured songs and composers. The night ended with a stunning encore of "I Got Rhythm," from *Crazy for You*.

According to Mr. Wroe, the WSO has had a "diverse and ongoing" relationship with the GSAF for more than four years. The two groups are collaborating on a community outreach effort to take place next season,

in which the WSO will perform in various New Jersey schools. Mr. Wroe said the goal of this program is to provide underserved communities with "injections of culture."

The WSO has an ongoing residency with the PNC Bank Arts Center, where it frequently demonstrates different styles of music. While most people know the orchestra exclusively for its classical style, "The Guys and Dolls of Broadway" demonstrated that these musicians have broader musical horizons as well.

Mr. Wroe handpicked each song specifically to represent a piece of the classic American songbook; the set included very few, if any, unknown songs. He referred to this performance's four vocal artists as "first-class professionals" and noted their affinity to, as well as considerable experience with, the Broadway stage and its music.

The GSAF is a non-profit organization whose mission is "to make arts accessible to all New Jersey residents," according to Director Mary Ruotolo. "The Guys and Dolls of Broadway" was part of its 2007 Evening Classical Series. The series will continue with additional performances on July 9 and September 29.

The GSAF also offers shows for children and senior citizens and awards scholarships to students who attend colleges and universities in New Jersey. All of its programs are free of charge. For more information about the GSAF, call (732) 442-9200 or visit [gsafoundation.org](http://gsafoundation.org).

The WSO will return to the arts center on September 29 to perform Verdi's *Rigoletto* as an opera in concert. The following day, September 30, it will appear at the Westfield Presbyterian Church.

## Linda King Praises WHS Fine Art Award Recipients

By GEORGIA MIERSWA  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - Westfield High School (WHS) seniors who have shown high achievement in the fine arts over the past four years were recognized May 30 at the Senior Arts Awards Ceremony. Gifted students, whose talents, ranging from graphic design to instrument playing, have made them memorable additions to the arts department, filled the room.

The night began with an introduction from Linda King, supervisor of fine arts, who praised the award recipients and presented the WHS jazz band, which played in a special performance.

The band, including soloists junior Gil Chapman on the piano and senior Matthew Leonard on the trumpet, showcased a brilliant display of artistry that gave the ceremony the perfect atmosphere for the event.

Various directors and teachers, as well as the Parent Teacher Student Organization, recognized more than 20 students with drama, choir, orchestra, band and art awards. Awards of the highest honor, such as the Keith Hertel Memorial Award for Theatre and the Class of '86 Reunion Award for Music, were given to Aaron

Eisenberg and Alexandra Jenkins, respectively.

Madeline Joyce received the Rachel Mather Sullivan Memorial Award and the Jeanette McCullough Memorial Award, and she shared the Madeline Bristol Scholarship with Alexandra Jenkins.

The occasion also marked the first presentation of the Barbara Flynn Memorial Award, given in memory of art teacher Barbara Flynn, who died earlier this year. Three students who excelled in art education, graphic arts and theatre received the award "because of Barbara's love and active participation in each," said her husband, Maureen Hughes, Adam Rubin and Patrina Caruana received the honor.

Stephanie Musat, who was awarded the Senior Drum Major Award for Marching Band, said of the event, "It was a great honor to be recognized and to see so many of my friends awarded for their talents before they go off to college to pursue their passion in the arts."

Matthew Leonard, who left the ceremony with five different awards in theatre, choir and band, said, "This is unbelievable. I can't believe that four years of playing and performing went by so fast."



Photo courtesy of Tola Murphy-Baron

**PREACHING TO THE CHOIR...**Choral music teacher William Mathews, Georgia Mierswa, Phil Anton, Luke Baran, Chris Chou, Kristen Dilzell and vocal teacher Sharon Reynolds pose during the presentation of choir awards.



## Vic's Picks 'Pinkerton' - Sophomore Smash

By VICTORIA McCABE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

The sophomore slump. Whatever arena we're playing in, it's a common thread. The rookie of the year who suddenly can't swing the bat anymore, the music phenom whose new songs just don't have the same magic as their predecessors.

Of course, the sophomore slump is no certainty, and with 1996's "Pinkerton," Weezer shatters the idea altogether. At the time, no one knew it - weak sales and initially negative reviews plagued the album. But when the guys who brought us "The Sweater Song" and "Buddy Holly" (as in "oh oh and you're Mary Tyler Moore...") came back with this more sophisticated, angst-filled set, they made a compelling bid for a spot among the greatest albums of the 1990s.

"Pinkerton" comes, as most Weezer efforts do, from the odd genius mind of frontman Rivers Cuomo. This album finds him in a low place; tales of loneliness and ironic bad luck have their place in the set, and there's an honesty in his lyrics that make several songs sound like a window into his diary.

But it isn't an album of wallowing. Rivers takes his pain and turns it around, spinning as many rocked-out jams as introspective reflections.

"El Scorcho" just might be the best song Weezer has ever written. With its plodding guitar line, sing-along chorus and tempo changes, it's exciting and silly from beginning to end.

"Across the Sea" is an ode to a fan from Japan. Rivers imagines the girl who sent him the fan letter and wishes for a personal relationship with her - "as if I could live on words and dreams and a million screams, oh how I need a hand in mine to feel." Yes, it's that sophomoric "my band has a thousand fans, but I have no one to call my own" syndrome, but it plays like raw emotion here. "Why are you so far away from me? I need help, and you're

way across the sea," he cries. And you feel for him.

Rivers addresses a personal hardship in "The Good Life." In the period of time preceding "Pinkerton," he had a painful surgery to lengthen his right leg (he was born with that leg shorter than his left one) by two inches, so he wore a special leg brace requiring that he use a cane. "I don't wanna be an old man anymore, it's been a year or two since I was out on the floor shakin' booty... it's time I got back to the good life."

So Weezer fans get the silver lining in Rivers' cloud - when the world isn't his friend, he writes killer music.

There are scattered oblique references to Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" throughout the album. "Pinkerton" takes its title from the name of a Navy lieutenant in the opera, and the album's last song, "Butterfly," a soft reflection full of regret, draws on themes from the opera. Elsewhere, Rivers name-drops "Cio Cio San," the name of the "Butterfly" main character, so music nerds be on the lookout.

If you like your pop-rock sunny, go with "The Green Album" - Weezer's third effort, released four years after their sophomore effort, finds them at their bubbliest. But if you enjoy the thrill of digging into a meatier project, then get started unlocking all the layers of "Pinkerton." There's a lot to find.

"How stupid is it - I can't talk about it, I've got to sing about it and make a record of my heart," Rivers sings in "El Scorcho." Lucky for us.

## Masterwork Chorus Summer Sings Return

AREA - The Masterwork Chorus will sponsor a group of six community Summer Sings on Wednesday evenings, June 27, July 11, 18 and 25 and August 1 and 8 at 7:30 p.m.

The sings will take place at Xavier Center, located at St. Elizabeth's College on Route 124 in Convent Station. All are led by a respected area conductor and accompanied by professional soloists and pianists.

The performances will begin June 27 at Xavier Center with Durufle's Requiem and Brahms' Nanie, led by Mark Shapiro. On Wednesday, July 11, the performance will feature Brahms' German Requiem and Haydn's Te Deum, conducted by James Little.

Mr. Little is organist/choirmaster of the Choral Art Society of New Jersey.

On Wednesday, July 18, Thomas



**HEAR AN ECHO...**A free performance by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra on June 27 at Echo Lake Park will open the Union County Summer Concert Series, as the orchestra will perform compositions by Shostakovich, Strauss, Dvorak and others, plus music from popular motion pictures and patriotic American tunes.

## NJSO Free Performance Opens Concert Series

MOUNTAINSIDE - The Union County Summer Arts Festival concert series begins Wednesday, June 27, with a performance by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), conducted by Jeffrey Grogan.

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, led by Chairwoman Bette Jane Kowalski, invited the public to attend this free concert that begins at 7:30 p.m. in Echo Lake Park.

The performance by the NJSO will include classical compositions by Shostakovich, Strauss, Dvorak and others, plus music from popular motion pictures and patriotic American tunes.

This show is part of the orchestra's annual outdoor Summer Parks Tour sponsored by Pfizer, PSE&G and the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey. Ms. Kowalski urged attendees to "bring the entire family, pack a picnic basket, bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on and enjoy an evening in Echo Lake Park along with a superb musical presentation."

The Union County information van will be at the concert site, along with representatives from the Bureau of Mosquito Control, to answer questions and offer information about interesting programs available to Union County residents.

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

- July 11 - Verdict (reggae and soca);
- July 18 - Joe Arminio and The Family (big band variety show);
- July 25 - De Sol (Latin);
- August 1 - Mustang Sally (country);
- August 8 - Jo Bonanno and the Godsons of Soul;
- August 15 - The Sensational Soul Cruisers;
- August 22 - The Ed Palermo Big

## Born Yesterday Auditions Begin on Sunday, June 24

WESTFIELD - Director Jon Heron of Westfield Community Players (WCP) is holding open auditions for the Garson Kanin comedy *Born Yesterday* on Sunday, June 24, at 1 p.m. and Monday, June 25, at 7 p.m. in the WCP theater at 1000 North Avenue West.

Callbacks, if needed, will be on Thursday, June 28, at 7 p.m. in the theater. Rehearsals start in late August and the show opens October 8 for three weekends.

With unforgettable characters, this comedy of corruption in Washington is just as true today as when it premiered in 1946. Readings from the script will be available, and those interested may e-mail

band with Rob Pappozzi; August 29 - The Nerds (Jersey Shore party band).

All Summer Arts Festival concerts are held on Wednesdays (except for July 4) 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 at 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/train information call the Parks and Recreation hotline at (908) 352-8410 after 3 p.m. on the day of the concert.

For more information, call the Union County Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities at (908) 527-4900 or visit [ucnj.org/parks/summerarts07.pdf](http://ucnj.org/parks/summerarts07.pdf).

## Movie Filmed in WF Makes its Debut

WESTFIELD - First-time director Rob Greenberg's *Saturday Morning* will make its debut on Thursday, June 28, at the Tribeca Grand Hotel.

In November 2004, Mr. Greenberg captured scenes for his movie on Quimby and Elm Streets in Westfield.

*Saturday Morning*, a fantasy comedy about a utopian world that takes place Saturday mornings between 6 and 8 a.m., stars Joey Piscopo (son of Joe) in his feature debut. Other members of the cast include George Wendt (of "Cheers" fame), Louis Mandylor (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*) and Beth Ostrosky (Howard Stern's fiancée).

[bornyesterdayaudition@yahoo.com](mailto:bornyesterdayaudition@yahoo.com) if any questions arise.

Cast requirements are as follows: Harry Brock - (35-55) Smart as a fox with blunt charm, a junkman who's out to conquer the world, and just may succeed.

Billie Dawn - (25-40) An ex-chorus girl, Harry's girlfriend. She's the Cinderella of the play, who discovers that there's more to life than a mink coat.

Ed Devery - (40-65) Harry's lawyer. Once a "young man destined for greatness," now washed up on the shores of a bottle of scotch.

Paul Verrall - (25-35) A reporter, too smart for his own good. Personable, alert, energetic, tends to take everything too seriously.

Eddie - any age. Harry's cousin, and his servant. A real character.

Senator Norval Hedges - (45-65) Totally corrupted by Washington, worried, pale and worn. Like many men in Washington, he may look like a great man but clearly is not.

Mrs. Hedges - (40-60) Married to a failure, she tries too hard to keep up pretenses.

Two actors and one actress to portray a variety of fun characters.

For more information, call (908) 232-9568.

## POPCORN Ocean's Thirteen: Count it Out



One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER  
2 popcorns

Only in that it is flush with star power and possesses the flimsiest of plots, *Ocean's Thirteen* reminds of those patriotic efforts that did service during WWII, films like *Stage Door Canteen* (1943), *Hollywood Canteen* (1944) and *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1943).

Practically every studio had its version. The story didn't much matter. 'Twas the glitter that audiences were after. The intention was to raise morale both here and abroad.

*Ocean's Thirteen* hardly aspires to anything so noble. Save for providing a lot of wholesome bling and assuring that its producers will laugh all the way to the bank, the purpose of this third variation on the iconic, Rat Pack-starring film remains elusive. For all its shiny machinations and profligate talk of the big bucks, dramatically it pans out to just so much fool's gold.

OK, full disclosure: I'm truly over the sacrilege committed by the 2001 remake and its heretical, 2004 follow up. Admittedly, there's no harm in a new generation identifying its idols and strutting their stuff to a different beat. Really. It's simply too bad director Steven Soderbergh couldn't cater that celebration in a more creative, inclusive way. Some good writing might have helped.

Besides, these guys aren't that cool. Yeah, they're cute and practically all good-looking. But they are to the originals what Menuido is to The Rolling Stones. It's hard to look at any of them without imagining their moms hauling them off to dance lessons in the family station wagon.

But, after all, this is the movies. So, sociological comparisons notwithstanding, here's the new gang, once more into the breach. It can't be done, but they're going to try anyway...break the bank in Vegas, or so to speak.

And lest you believe that they're just a bunch of mercenary bandits, take heed. For it is a matter of honor that hastens the big fix they're about to fashion this go-round.

Elliott Gould's Reuben Tishkoff, mentor and high roller emeritus of the band, is cheated at film's outset. He made the mistake of trusting Al Pacino's Willie Bank, a fellow player who prefers gamesmanship to fair play. The loss of his entire holdings has rendered him catatonic. The boys swear revenge.

Which means getting the mountebank where it hurts...in the ego, as well as the pocket. Willie is opening a brand new hotel and casino. Danny (George Clooney) and crew intend to rain on his parade.

A multi-pronged mission is planned, which just so happens to utilize the various specialties repre-

sented by each of the 13. This again includes Matt Damon (as Linus), Brad Pitt (Rusty), Don Cheadle (Basher), Bernie Mac (Frank), Carl Reiner (Saul), etc., etc., etc.

Problem one, their highly intricate scheme is tedious with minutiae. The screenplay is essentially comprised of anticipating the domino effect of numerous Rube Goldberg-type scenarios set in motion. Trying to read the directions on how to assemble a new barbecue grill might be more exciting.

Critical bugaboo two, the gibbous quotient, the dialogue of outsmarting and craftiness, grows tiresome and unbecoming. If I want artifice and false bravado, I might as well attend a convention of used car salesmen. At least there might be a good smorgasbord.

Investive three concerns the side business, the extra fluff stuff provided by the newcomers. David Paymer as a critic for a magazine Willie Bank's been wooing is wasted in a haplessly relentless string of sabotages meant to skew his review.

Likewise, the uniquely exotic Ellen Barkin is miscast as Abigail Sponder, wily Willie's right-hand woman to whom Linus plays Mata Hari in quest of diamonds central to the scheme. She's too good an actress to do ditsy and too classy looking to be compromised. Is a sitcom next?

But the biggest flaw of all is director Steven Soderbergh's failure to create even the slightest suspension of disbelief. Granted, this is ultimately a fantasy, a pipe dream for the multiplex crowd. It's a vicarious escapade whereby audience members are invited into the high-stakes world of these imaginary friends for the faux thrill of a lifetime.

That's a tall order. Much too steep for an overly synthetic, formalized gambit with its tongue so stuck in its cheek that it's hard-put to say anything of particular novelty.

Then again, there's something to be said for a script that has enough chutzpah to practically re-start the Mexican Revolution in order to get some loaded dice made. Not to mention using the same sort of rig that carved the Chunnel to simulate an earthquake meant to disarm the casino's security system.

There's a nutty sense of overkill. Thus, while certainly a long shot for discriminating tastes, *Ocean's Thirteen* may prove a lucky roll for fans of the lavishly far-fetched.

*Ocean's Thirteen*, rated PG-13, is a Warner Bros. release directed by Steven Soderbergh and stars George Clooney, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt. Running time: 122 minutes



Victoria McCabe for The Leader/Times

**LIGHTS, CAMERA...**A film-crew member prepares the lighting for a commercial shoot inside Bovella's Pastry Shoppe on Prospect and East Broad Streets on Tuesday morning. The crew, from Transistor Studios New York production company, also shot scenes for the commercial for the Cranium board game at a Kimball Ave. residence.

## Christ Church Plays Host to Virtuoso Duo

SUMMIT - On July 12, the Summit Music Festival presents the Chatham-Wood duo, a virtuoso violin and piano duo, at 8 p.m. The event will take place at Christ Church, located at 561 Springfield Avenue in Summit. Admission is \$10.

For more information about the concerts, visit [summitmusicfestivalnj.com](http://summitmusicfestivalnj.com).

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