

Arts & Entertainment

Invasion of the Nerds Brings Party Atmosphere to Park

By ERIC NIERSTEDT
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — While their getup might need an update, these Nerds do not conjure up thoughts of pocket protectors and "Star Trek" reruns.

formance of covers from three decades of music, playing each one to perfection.

The Nerds themselves, each dressed in checkered shirts and short pants, had just as much fun as the crowd, which had turned into a veritable mosh

ers. The Nerds had no problems going from the grandeur of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" to the dance-funk of Justin Timberlake's "Sexyback" and then to the hard rock of Guns N' Roses' "Sweet Child O' Mine."

This did make the show even more interesting, seeing such classic rock, pop and metal performed by a group of men in horn-rimmed glasses.

There were also some humorous transitions such as "Sweet Child" to Neal Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" (in which the Nerds selected a woman from the crowd to lead the growing mosh pit in song and dance).

The band also went from the title theme from "Footloose" to Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear the Reaper."

The event became a family affair as Spaz's sons Jesse, who played the ever-important cowbell on "Reaper," and Evan, who took over on keyboards for Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" and Metallica's "Enter Sandman," graced the stage.

The biggest addition of the night, however, was a teenage girl named Elena (no relation to any band member). Elena joined the Nerds for Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Proud Mary."

Elena captured the slow groove of the song perfectly before it exploded in to the Tina Turner version. At that point, Elena sang it with just as much passion as Turner did and blowing the socks off the crowd.

Nerds band members ended the show by announcing their 25th anniversary before moving into the perfect song to celebrate such an occasion — Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'," which did not feature Tony Soprano coming on to sing.

More on the Nerds, including CDs, tour dates and band bios can be found on their website the-nerds.com.



The Westfield Leader and The Times Archives August 24, 2008
REVENGE OF THE NERDS...The Nerds played Echo Lake Park last Wednesday, mixing old classics with covers of modern favorites.

On the contrary, The Nerds, New Jersey's legendary party band, might be more synonymous with carefree summer fun and rock 'n' roll.

The band rocked the crowd at Echo Lake Park for almost two hours as part of Union County's Summer Arts Festival.

The Nerds started the show, in perhaps the best way, by playing the "Star Spangled Banner" as the crowd turned to face the flag. From then on, the band turned in a high-energy per-

formance of covers from three decades of music, playing each one to perfection.

Much of the band's interplay came from bassist Spaz (a dead ringer for Weezer frontman Rivers Cuomo) and keyboardist Mongo, who often danced together, including doing a standing run while still playing their instruments ala David Byrne.

Drummer Biff, despite being the quietest member vocally, still managed to make his voice heard on the drums, either pounding or tapping his instrument as needed.

Guitarist Stretch showed both amazing versatility and skill not only playing a variety of riffs perfectly, but also by moving between a range of songs with complete and utter ease.

While song selections spanned multiple decades, themes and perform-



Marylou Morano for The Leader/Times
Maria Tisdall, cheese and specialty food expert at the Shoprite Wines and Spirits of Westfield, led a cheese-centered presentation at Fanwood Memorial Library. See page 15 for story.

Verdict's Reggae Music At Free Concert in the Park

MOUNTAINSIDE — The Union County 2008 Summer Arts Festival concert series comes to a conclusion on Wednesday, August 27, with a performance by the reggae band Verdict, sponsored by The Union County Education Association.

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, led by Chair Angel Estrada, invite the public to attend this free concert, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Avenue end of Echo Lake Park in Mountainside.

Verdict is a lively group from Neptune. The members started playing to-

gether in 1993, specializing in a large selection of international reggae, soca and calypso music. Verdict has delighted audiences from Miami Beach and San Juan to the halls of the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art.

Verdict will wrap up a great summer of outdoor concerts with its personal blend of beach music and popular tunes from down the shore.

Freeholder Estrada urged people to "bring the whole family, pack a picnic basket, bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on, and enjoy the sounds of the islands on a summer night."

The Union County information van will be at the concert site, along with representatives from the Union County Police, the Division of Emergency Management and the Bureau of Environmental Health to answer questions and offer information about programs available to Union County residents.

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, the concert 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 more information, call the Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal at (908) 527-4900 or visit the Union County Web site at ucj.org/parks/summerarts.html.

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Admit One

All Points West Music / Arts Festival 2008
Date: Friday, August 8, to Sunday, August 10

Location: Liberty State Park

Featured Act: Radiohead

'All Points' Bulletin: Music Festival Rocks Second Largest NJ City

By MARTIN SWEENEY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

JERSEY CITY — With the backdrop of a New York City skyline and Lady Liberty, a sellout crowd of 30,000 people crammed into Liberty State Park on Saturday, August 9, for the All Points West Music & Arts Festival.

The three-day festival ran from Friday to Sunday and featured headliners Radiohead (Friday and Saturday) and Jack Johnson (Sunday).

With performances beginning at noon and lasting until 10:30 p.m., there was no shortage of entertainment at the festival. Ticket sales were above 20,000 all three days of the festival, with Saturday being the most popular ticket.

Experimental pop group Animal Collective took the stage on Saturday afternoon around 5 p.m. The performance drew mixed reviews from the crowd, pleasing loyal fans while annoying a few unsuspecting festival go-ers with exceedingly loud and repetitive electronic clangs and strange vocal yelps.

Southern rockers Kings of Leon followed, unveiling the first single from their upcoming album and providing the audience with some over-

due, straightforward rock and roll. "I just want to say what an honor it is to be playing back in America, but also what an honor it is to be playing before Radiohead," said Caleb Followill, lead singer and frontman for the Kings.

The Roots, a hip-hop group from Philadelphia, performed right after the Kings on a different stage. The band played a riveting set, including a tribute to the late Bernie Mac, against a gorgeous setting sun. Unfortunately, the Roots' set was overshadowed by the approaching arrival of Radiohead's performance; in other terms, the Roots played on the wrong stage at the wrong time.

British rock group Radiohead drew the largest crowd of the day by far.

All Points West marked the band's second trip to Liberty State Park; the band played there seven years earlier (August 2001), and many whom attended the earlier event, including *The Westfield Leader/Times* Arts and Entertainment Editor Michael Pollack and freelancer Christina Hinke, reminisced about seeing arguably the world's best band amidst a background that included the Twin Towers.

While the view is still spectacular,

the skyline is minus two essential structures.

Radiohead played a two-hour-plus set, including two encores. Its set list featured selections from its latest album, "In Rainbows," as well as songs from earlier LPs.

Radiohead's performance was coupled with an astounding solar-powered, multi-colored light show, which added to the visual appeal of the show. Some remarked that the light show was so impressive that the band's performance was even more enjoyable from a distance.

Frontman Thom Yorke walked onto the stage visibly excited for the band's set. He danced and hopped his way around the stage for a few upbeat, opening numbers like "Reckoner" and "15 Step," then collected himself for stripped-down songs like "All I Need" and "Nude."

Older fans cheered for classics such as "The Bends," "Fake Plastic Trees" and "Planet Telex," while newer fans gushed at the "In Rainbows" works.

The band remained chipper throughout — even when Yorke offered a false start on "Videotape" and had to cut it short.

"I meant to do that," Yorke laughed. Later, he dedicated "Bangers and Mash," a new song not available on the "In Rainbows" download, to "bad people from back home." Yorke proceeded to dedicate "Airbag" to the garage rockers.

Yorke also confessed that if his band resembled anything close to Kings of Leon in looks, "we'd be famous."

The night ended with a raucous and spastic "Idiotique," a quirky dance-enthusiasm romp that blipped and beeped to the twinkling light show.

Although some festival go-ers complained of long delays and longer lines for public transportation, as well as strict alcohol regulations, the performances did not disappoint in the slightest. A quality musical lineup that's a mere hop, skip and a jump away from the NY/Metropolitan area does not come around very often, but hopefully, this one will be back in a year from now.

AREA ARTISTS INVITED TO EXHIBIT

Paid Bulletin Board

WESTFIELD - The "Autumnal Exhibition 2008" of the Westfield Art Association will be held from October 19 - 26 at the Westfield Community Room, 425 East Broad Street, Westfield, NJ. Sponsored by the Westfield Art Association, the organization extends an invitation to area artists to join the membership and exhibit their fine art painting, sculpture, printmaking, and photography.

This exhibition, with up to \$2000 in prizes and special awards, will be judged by Harry I. Naar, Professor of Fine Arts and Director of the Rider University Art Gallery. Professor Naar received his BFA from Philadelphia College of Art (University of The Arts) and his MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Indiana University, Bloomington. He has also studied in Paris, France, meeting with the renowned French painter Jean Helion. The Artists' Reception, to which the public is invited, will be held on Sunday, October 19 from 1:00 - 4:00 PM. Refreshments will be served. The exhibition is also open to the public from 1:00 - 4:00 PM on October 21, 22, 25 and 26. Admission is always free of charge and is handicapped-accessible.

Acceptance of artists' Entry Application Forms for pre-registration closes at 5:00 PM on Friday, October 3, 2008. For a Prospectus and Membership Application, non-member artists may contact the Westfield Art Association, P.O. Box 874, Westfield, NJ 07090; pwderoo@comcast.net; 908-337-2535.