

Arts & Entertainment

Auditions Set For Summer Program Featuring *Legally Blonde The Musical*

CRANFORD — The Pineda Conservatory's Center Stage Program for talented high school students is holding auditions for its five-week summer program that includes fully staged productions of *Legally Blonde The Musical* and *Just Go To The Movies*.

The Center Stage program runs from June 25 to August 5 (closed July 4-8), Monday through Friday, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Cranford Dramatic Club Theatre.

The training program includes acting, dance, vocal and audition training. The staff includes choreographer Christopher Johnson (*Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Chicago*), actor Dan Macyak (Broadway's *Lion in the Winter*), director Juan Pineda (Broadway's *Miss Saigon*), vocal coach Valerie Pineda (Manhattan School of Music), director and choreographer Fausto Pineda (*King and I, Grease*) and vocal coach Patricia Pineda (VCU).

Enrollment is limited and acceptance is by audition only. Former Pineda Conservatory students have been accepted into some of the nation's leading college theatre programs and conservatories and have

gone on to appear in professional theaters and opera houses around the country.

Auditions are being held on Saturdays March 3, 10, and 17, by appointment only for students entering 9th grade and up. Appointments can be made by calling (908) 731-1377 or by online submission at www.pinedaconservatory.com/Audition-Request.html.

Prepare 16 bars of a musical theatre up-tempo and 16 bars of a musical theatre ballad that show range and acting ability. You may not be asked to sing both. Vocal auditions will be followed by a group movement and dance call. Please bring dance clothing (comfortable clothes and dance shoes/sneakers). We recommend all students dress professional for the audition. You will be given time to change. The audition process will take approximately two hours. If necessary, call-backs will be scheduled on Sunday, March 25. Students selected will be given one week to accept their spots or they will be forfeited to our waiting list.

For more information visit www.pinedaconservatory.com or call (908) 731-1377.



BROADWAY HITS...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Choral Department will present a special Cabaret Night on Wednesday, February 8, at 7:30 p.m. The Select Choir, above, will be one of the many choirs performing.

SPFHS Choral Department Presents a Cabaret Night

SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Choral Department will present a special Cabaret Night on Wednesday, February 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Instead of traditional choral music, the award-winning groups will perform selections from Broadway shows and The Great American Songbook.

Groups that will perform include the Concert Choir (*West Side Story* medley and "Corner of the Sky" from *Pippin*); the Select Choir (a Cole Porter medley), Las Cantadoras

("Can't Help Lovin' That Man" from *Showboat*); the Men's Choir ("Luck Be A Lady") and Sensations; the a cappella group ("Circle of Life" from *The Lion King*).

Additionally, in true cabaret fashion, a number of soloists will perform full songs from a variety of shows, old and new.

The performance will be held in the Manya Ungar auditorium at the high school located at 667 Westfield Road, Scotch Plains. Admission is free, though a small donation is appreciated.

Hedgehog and Feather to Present Workshop on Props

WESTFIELD — Hedgehog and Feather Theatre Company will present The Wacky World of Props winter one-day workshop on Wednesday February 8, from 3:45-4:45 p.m. for children in first through third grade and from 5-6 p.m. for fourth through sixth graders.

What are props? How do they help tell the story in a play? How do they help an actor with his or her character? Why is there a toilet plunger on the stage? These questions and more will be answered at The Wacky World of Props.

Actors make it look easy when they use something on stage but the reality is that they have worked very hard to make it look that way. The workshop will teach young actors how to work with props on stage and also explore some wonderful improv games with props.

Future workshops include Super Sticky Situation on Monday, January 30. Duct tape is said to keep every theatre company "together." Join in on the workshop for an afternoon of adhesive creativity and create props and costume accessories from duct tape. Grades five and up. Prerequisite: must be able to tear duct tape.

Mask Making for Mardi Gras, Monday, February 13. Make marvelous masks just in time for Mardi Gras, learn about the history of masks in theatre and see how masks are used to train actors. Grades 1-3 and grades 4-6.

Puppets, Muppets and More! on Monday, February 27. Be a puppeteer! Explore our vast collection of puppets of all kinds. Our guest puppeteer will share professional puppeteering techniques. Grades 1-3 and grades 4-6.

All workshops are held in the Parish Hall of St. Paul's Church located at 414 East Broad Street. The entrance is located on St. Paul's Street.

For more information visit hedgehogandfeather@yahoo.com.

Choral Art Society Performs Mendelssohn's *Paulus*

By BARBARA THOMSON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Westfield's Choral Art Society presented Mendelssohn's oratorio *Paulus* (St. Paul) at The Presbyterian Church of Westfield on January 21. It was a chance to hear a fine work, which has been overshadowed by Mendelssohn's more famous oratorio, *Elijah*. The two have much in common — both tell dramatic stories from the Bible, both employ large chorus and soloists, lush orchestral accompaniment, and fine choral writing. Bach's influence is seen in Mendelssohn's use of German chorales (hymns) and contrapuntal writing for the choruses, but his lovely, flowing melodies are his own.

The Choral Art Society has been a staple of the Westfield scene for many years — they are celebrating their 50th anniversary season — but, sadly, this was not one of their better endeavors. The opening orchestral overture featured a lot of out-of-tune playing, a problem which did not improve as the evening went on. The upper strings, in particular, had intonation problems and a flimsy sound, and there were tuning problems within the woodwind and brass sections.

The choral sound was better, and the choristers sang with energy and enthusiasm, at times sounding full and heroic, at times mellow, with a nice line.

The work features four soloists, who were of mixed quality. The two men, tenor David Kellet and baritone Andrew Martens, did an excellent job. Both have big, rich voices and delivered their solos with drama and musicality. Soprano Ellen Goff Entriaken had the bulk of the solo singing, as Mendelssohn assigns her most of the recitatives, which propel the story line forward. She is a seasoned performer and sang her part with style and authority, but her voice has a substantial wobble and lacks point in the middle register. She and mezzo-soprano Angelika Nair (who has very little to do in this work) were both overshadowed in volume by the male soloists, and the solo quartet singing lacked balance and cohesion, sounding more like four independent singers than one quartet.

Unfortunately, the performance was marred by no less than four occasions where things came so unstuck that they had to stop and start the movement over. Whether this is the fault of conductor James Little or the performers is debatable, but it was certainly jarring to the audience.

So the evening was a mixed bag. It was a pleasure to hear this often overlooked oratorio, but disappointing that the performers did not live up to their potential. Choral Art has had many excellent concerts over the years, and we can hope that they will return to better form next time.

Civil War 150th Anniversary Exhibit at UC Courthouse

ELIZABETH — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Union County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee announce the opening of an exhibit to commemorate Union County's role in the Civil War of 1861-65. The exhibit is scheduled to open on Thursday, February 9, at 2 p.m. in the Union County Courthouse, 2 Broad Street in historic midtown Elizabeth.

"This exhibit of Civil War artifacts and photographs will focus on the unique contributions of Union County citizens to the war effort," said Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi, chairman of the Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee. "We'll place special emphasis on the experiences of Union County residents in the areas of the home front, the military, and the economic and political life of the County."

Speakers at the opening event will include Karen Cassidy, Assignment Judge, Superior Court New Jersey; Union County Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella; the Rev. Robert Higgs, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth; and Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi. There will be entertainment and refreshments. The public is invited to the opening of the exhibit, but you are asked to call Ms. Rajoppi's office at (908) 527-4787 to reserve a seat.

The Civil War commemorative exhibit will be on display until 2015 and the displays will change from time to time. Anyone wishing to loan historical artifacts from the Civil War era for the exhibit can contact committee member Katherine Craig at (908) 282-7617. All objects will be secured, locked and acknowledged.

WF Restaurant Week to Run February 19 – March 4

WESTFIELD — Westfield Restaurant Week will begin on Sunday, February 19, and will run through Sunday, March 4. The event has been expanded to run for two weeks excluding Fridays and Saturdays.

Restaurant Week specials will include a two-course lunch for \$10 and a two-course dinner \$20. Certain restaurants will offer a three-course dinner for \$30. The price does not include tax, gratuity or beverages.

Participating restaurants include 16 Prospect Wine Bar and Bistro, Acquaviva delle fonti, Ana Beall's Tea Room, Boulevard Bistro,

Cosimos, Gabi's Sushi and Noodle, Isabella's American Bistro, Jeffrey's of Westfield, Limani Seafood Grill, Mojave Grill, Turning Point, Theresa's, Splash of Thai, Xocolatz and Wild Greens.

CoolVines, The Liquor Basket and Westfield Wine and Liquor will offer a 10 percent discount.

Bovella's Pastry Shoppe will offer buy one get one free cupcakes. Swirl Whirl will offer a free 6-ounce yogurt with the purchase of the same. Yapple Yogurt will offer a second item of equal or lesser size for free with a purchase.

Newark Public Library Celebrates Black Theatre During Black History Month

NEWARK — The Newark Public Library will present a two-month series of events and exhibitions exploring the world of black theatre from Newark's groundbreaking companies of the 1960s to Broadway stars like Ethel Waters and Lena Horne.

New Jersey theatrical giant Paul Robeson will be celebrated, along with lesser known figures including Hollywood actor Lorenzo Tucker, who was known as the "black Valentino."

The series is part of the Library's 2012 Black History Month celebration, "We Wear the Mask: Black Theatre in Newark and Near, From 1700s to 2012,"

which ends Saturday, March 24. The library exhibit, curated by Sandra L. West, includes artifacts such as a photo of Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong in the all-star black jazz opera *Swingin' The Dream*, a version of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. There is also a 1959 Playbill from the original production of *Raisin in the Sun*. Black theatre in Newark has a rich and often overlooked history that

stretches back to the 18th-century, including a vital community theatre scene in the 1970s and 1980s. On Broadway, black actors and actresses battled segregation and racist stereotypes to win acclaim on stage.

The series kicks off with a Wednesday, February



Lena Horne



Ethel Waters

his 1930s play *Black Nativity* in Newark. "Langston, We Love you Madly!" will feature a talk by historian Dr. Wendell Holbrook, Associate Professor in the Department of African American Affairs, Rutgers University — Newark, and a performance by the Adelaide Drummers from the Dr. Adelaide Sanford Charter School in Newark. Clarence Ali, founder, Theatre of Universal Images will

speak about Theatre in Newark and David Mills, a Hughes scholar/interpreter, will discuss, *The Art of Langston*. Cynthia "Lady Rose" Roberson will sing the Negro National Anthem.

The free event will be held at Centennial Hall from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Main Library at 5 Washington Street.

Funding for the Library's Black History Month activities and exhibits has been provided by a generous grant from the PNC Foundation.

All programs are free and open to the public. Guided tours of the exhibit will be offered on Tuesday, February 7, Wednesday, February 22, and Thursday, March 8, at 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.

For more information or to arrange a tour of the exhibit, please call (973) 733-5411. In case of inclement weather, please call (973) 733-7800 (Main Library), (973) 733-7751 (Weequahic Branch) or (973) 733-7736 (Springfield Branch) to determine whether the library is open.



Pineda Conservatory's 2011 production of *Crazy for You*.

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