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Arts & Entertainment



The Imperial Brass

Imperial Brass to Perform Benefit Concert June 2

WESTFIELD - The Imperial Brass, featuring guest conductor Torgny Hanson will perform a memorial concert for the Margaret Kritsch Anderson Children's Education Fund on Saturday, June 2, at 7:30 p.m. at Redeemer Lutheran Church and School.

The Imperial Brass affords musicians to perform and audiences to enjoy a wide array of challenging literature. The concert will feature both classic and contemporary brass literature including "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" by J.S. Bach, "The Girl I Left Behind Me" by Philip Sparke, and "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy", arranged by Mark Freeh, featuring Mitch Brodsky, Roger Widicus and Doug Schwartz. Additional selections for the evening include, "Twilight Dreams" by Herbert L. Clarke, featuring soloist Mitch Brodsky, "Sinfonietta" by Erik Leidzen, and a work featuring 8 cornets, "Blazon" by Gilbert Vinter.

The band is honored to work with Torgny Hanson, a guest conductor from Sweden. He has worked with several prominent conductors in Sweden and extensively tours as a guest conductor and teacher in Scandinavia, UK, Canada and the United States.

Margaret Kritsch Anderson, loving wife and mother of two, was a Westfield High School graduate, Class of 1995. She joined the National Park Service as a Park Ranger and was stationed at Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington State where she was killed in the line of duty.

The concert is a benefit for the Education Fund for the Margaret Kritsch Anderson Children's Education Fund. Admission is \$20. Tickets are available at the door starting at 6:45 p.m. The concert starts at 7:30 p.m. Redeemer Lutheran Church and School is located at 229 Cowperthwaite Place in Westfield. For more information, visit www.imperialbrass.com.

WF Art Association Exhibit To Include Student Artwork

WESTFIELD - A Spring Exhibition by members of the Westfield Art Association (WAA) will, for the first time in the Association's 90-year history, include 40 artworks by students from the Westfield High School, Edison Intermediate School, and Roosevelt Intermediate School, as selected by the Fine Arts Faculty at those schools. Approximately 100 pieces of artwork will be on display. The WAA looks forward to including Westfield's student artists in all of its future activities.

Three Awards of Excellence, four Awards of Merit, and five Honorable Mentions - each award consisting of a ribbon, certificate, and monetary award - will be presented for the best artworks as judged by acclaimed artist Paul Casale. A second, identical set of 12 awards is available to the student artists.

The exhibition, open to the public and free-of-charge, will be held in the Community Room at the Westfield Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street, Westfield from 1 - 4 p.m. on two consecutive weekends, June 2 and 3 and June 9 and 10. The Community Room is handicapped-accessible.

The Artists' Reception, open to the public and free-of-charge, will be held on Sunday, June 3 from 1 - 4 p.m. Award winners will be announced at the Artist's Reception. All member artists and student artists are encouraged to invite family and friends. Light refreshments will be served.

The Westfield Art Association, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) organization under the Internal Revenue Code. Further information may be obtained by calling Paul Deroo at (908) 337-2535 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., or by e-mail at pwderoo@comcast.net.

Westfield Symphony Orchestra Performs Engaging and Energetic Season Finale

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

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Symphony Orchestra presented the last concert of their current season on May 20 at the Presbyterian Church in Westfield. A repeat of the concert they played Friday in Ridgewood with the Pro Arte Chorale, the program featured a lesser-known Beethoven mass, and two works of vibrant Americana by Aaron Copland.

Sometimes a relatively unknown work by a major composer is unknown because, in truth, it is not very good. But this is not the case with Beethoven's lovely *Mass in C Major*. It is not the Beethoven of the raging passions and demonic energy of common lore - it is a more mellow Beethoven of lovely melodic lines and often surprising gentleness. This is not to say it does not have its dramatic moments - it does. Joyous outbursts and lively fugues are there as well, but overall, it is a much more serene work than, say, his massive *Missa Solemnis* which followed fifteen years later.

The text is the standard Latin mass of the Catholic Church, and was commissioned by Prince Nicholas Esterhazy - long Haydn's patron - to celebrate his wife's name day. The first performance was evidently a shambles, since many of the choir members did not come to the rehearsal and were sight reading the music - badly. When the Prince chastised Beethoven for the performance, he stormed out and held a grudge for the rest of his life. But the mass itself has come to be considered an important and successful work.

Sunday's performance featured the excellent Pro Arte Chorale from Ridgewood. They sang cleanly and crisply, with excellent diction and musical line. In several quiet sections they produced a wonderful, warm sound, almost like a halo around the music, and in others were force-

ful, energetic and rhythmic. They are an outstanding group, and much credit goes to their director, Joshua Greene. My only complaint is that, due to the structure of the church, the chorus had to sing from the balconies, and to see conductor David Wroe, had to face sideways across the room. The sound would have more presence if they could face the audience directly, but there is not really much to be done about it in that space.

They were joined by four soloists, three of whom, soprano Sara Murphy, tenor William Joyner, and bass Young-Bok Kim are seasoned professionals with big voices and lots of experience. They did an excellent job. The fourth soloist, mezzo-soprano Avery Amero, a college undergraduate, was miscast, and completely overpowered by the other soloists. Mezzo-soprano voices tend to get lost in the texture anyway, and it takes a strong singer to carry the part and sing up to the level of the others. We saw her lips move, but unfortunately, no one could hear anything come out. This was the only flaw in an otherwise excellent performance of a work, which deserves to be heard more often.

The second half of the program featured one of the most famous and popular works of American classical music - Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. The music was commissioned by Martha Graham for her famous dance company, and Copland later condensed the score into an orchestral suite. Originally composed for a group of thirteen instruments, Copland subsequently arranged it for full orchestra, which was the version heard here.

When the work was commissioned, Graham had only a basic idea that it would be about an American pioneer couple, so Copland proceeded to work on the piece he just

called "ballet for Martha". It was not until the ballet was in final rehearsals that he enquired as to the title she had given it - *Appalachian Spring*. It was always a source of humor to him that people would gush over how perfectly it evoked spring in the mountains, as he had no idea, while writing it, that was what it would be about!

Nonetheless, it does evoke a uniquely American experience. Copland had in many previous works used American folk music - often that of Appalachia - to fine effect, and it colored his musical style for many years. He wanted to find a truly American voice, and wanted to write music that would resonate with the public (as opposed to the 12-tone serial music being written in the 1940s by many of his colleagues). He succeeded, and his most enduring success was with the Shaker melody, "Simple Gifts". His set of variations on this now-famous tune is the high point of *Appalachian Spring*, and its climax is bound to bring a lump to the throat of most listeners. No surprise that this work won Copland the Pulitzer Prize for composition in 1945.

The orchestra sounded wonderful, cleanly negotiating the many tricky rhythms and meter changes. This may be a populist work, but it

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Correction

Two photos that accompanied the Westfield Community Player's *Don't Dress for Dinner* review in last week's edition of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times* incorrectly identified two actresses. The caption with four actors should have stated that Christine Laydon played the mistress, Suzanne, and the photo of Suzette, the cook, should have identified the actress as Erica Flory.

We regret the error.

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