

Arts & Entertainment

WSO Rebrands Itself as New Jersey Festival Orchestra

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

What's in a name? More than you would think, as the Westfield Symphony Orchestra rebrands itself as the New Jersey Festival Orchestra.

The Westfield Symphony, founded in 1983, has been an outstanding professional orchestra, composed entirely of the highest level of symphonic players from the New York metropolitan region. For 30 years it has garnered praise and glowing critical reviews for its performances of the great masterworks of the repertoire, as well as innovative collaborations with dancers, choruses, and even silent movie accompaniments.

But in trying to reach into a broader geographical area, the name produced confusion. The Plainfield Symphony, the Summit Symphony, and the Livingston Symphony orchestras are all community groups which provide talented amateurs a chance to play in an orchestra. If you did not already know otherwise, it was easy to assume that the Westfield Symphony was another community orchestra like these.

Changing the name to the New Jersey Festival Orchestra makes it clear that this is an outstanding professional orchestra, and thus makes it easier to reach out into other areas of

the state and appeal to patrons beyond the immediate Westfield area.

"Westfield will always be the home and foundation of the New Jersey Festival Orchestra," said Marketing Director Elizabeth Ryan. "We want to be sensitive to the concerns of the many Westfielders who have supported us over the years. But with the present difficult financial environment for orchestras, we either had to move forward and expand, or stand still and die."

But it is not as simple as just printing up new stationery. Market surveys were conducted, questionnaires sent out, supporters interviewed. Legal entities had to be changed—it was a bureaucratic challenge, to say the least. There were initial reservations on the part of some long-time supporters, but when the rationale behind the name change was explained, the vast majority of Westfield Symphony supporters became New Jersey Festival Orchestra supporters.

Additionally, some of the symphony's major funders—the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, to name but two, have been strongly supportive of the move, even to the point of increasing their funding for the orchestra.

The organization and staff will re-

main the same. Maestro David Wroe will remain the conductor, and the offices will remain in Westfield. The orchestra will continue to perform regularly in Westfield, but will be looking for opportunities to expand into other venues and other genres. Already, performances have been scheduled with The Three Irish Tenors (December 6) and Natalie Merchant (March 22) at the Mayo Center in Morristown.

Other highlights of the season include stars from the Metropolitan Opera in conjunction with Opera in Florham in concert performances of Verdi's *Aida*, both in Westfield and the Ridge Performing Arts Center in Basking Ridge (October 12 and 13), and a Halloween Spooktacular featuring symphonic accompaniment to Lon Chaney's *Phantom of the Opera* at the Bickford Theater at the Morris Museum (November 2). The orchestra's family-friendly *Home for the Holidays* program in Westfield will feature seasonal favorites and sing-alongs (December 7), and of course, that always-sold-out New Year's Eve Broadway concert *All That Jazz* is not to be missed.

The season continues with *That Gypsy Spirit*—a lively program of music by Kodaly, Rimsky-Korsakov and Dvorak (February 22 in Westfield, February 23 at the Morristown Museum), and concludes with Gustav Mahler's spectacular *Symphony No. 2*—"The Resurrection" with the acclaimed Harmonium Choral Society and soloists (May 31 in Westfield, June 1 in Basking Ridge).

"Our unique and dynamic season will, we believe, bring classical music to life with an ongoing 'festival' of compelling presentations worthy of our new name," stated Conductor Wroe. "Please be part of our exhilarating musical journey to celebrate the orchestra's upward momentum and graduation to regional acclaim. I, for one, can't wait for the baton to be raised on this new season and new era!"

For tickets or further information, contact the orchestra at (908) 232-9400, or visit www.njfestivalorchestra.org.



NJ FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA...Outstanding collaborations are part of the hallmark of New Jersey Festival Orchestra excellence. Pictured, Cirque du Soleil's Sandy Cameron joins the orchestra for a rousing season finale performance of Tchaikovsky's violin concert last June.



LET THEM EAT CAKE...Fans of TLC Network's "Cake Boss" and "Next Great Baker" line both sides of East Broad Street in Westfield on Sunday morning hoping to catch a glimpse of celebrity baker, Buddy Valastro, at the grand opening of his Westfield bakery, Carlo's Bakery.

'Cake Boss' Stars Draw Big Crowd At WF Bakery Grand Opening

By CHRISTIE STORMS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD—Crowds lined both sides of East Broad Street in Westfield on Sunday morning to catch a glimpse of celebrity baker, Buddy Valastro, from the popular reality television shows "Cake Boss" and "Next Great Baker" airing on TLC Network.

Mr. Valastro was in town to oversee the grand opening of Carlo's Bakery, the third of such establishments his family owns and operates in New Jersey.

Fans of both the star and his baked goods traveled from all parts of New Jersey; from up in East Hanover to down in Bordentown. The DiMattia family even traveled across the globe from Italy, where they said they watch "Cake Boss" regularly.

Some arrived as early as 5 o'clock in the morning. Others brought books for the famous chef to autograph. Ten-year-old Matthew Logue of Cranford had created a personalized "Cake Boss" bracelet he hoped to present to Mr. Valastro. Many were looking forward to sampling the bakery's renowned "lobster tail," a specialty cream-filled pastry.

In an interview with *The Westfield Leader* and *the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, Mr. Valastro said as a long-time New Jersey resident, he has visited Westfield many times and always thought it was a "great family neighborhood," and therefore, "a perfect place for our bakery."

"We were looking for that old-fashioned Main Street I think is kind of lost in America," he said. "We're trying to bring our spin on the old-fashioned bakery to Main Street."

Many of Mr. Valastro's family members who work with him at the main Hoboken location and appear regularly on "Cake Boss," not only accompanied him to the opening, but rolled up their sleeves to bake with him and help serve customers behind the counter Sunday including his wife, Lisa, his four sisters and two brother-in-laws.

"We do things the old-fashioned way

here," said a fan favorite, Mauro Castano, who had been baking all morning and was happy to pause to pose for photos and chat with fans.

He said he believed the turnout for the Westfield grand opening to be bigger than their previous store opening in Ridgewood, and he was moved by how welcomed the town made them feel.

Mr. Valastro said while those family members plan to work in Westfield periodically, the bakery would be managed daily by his cousin, Jay Macklin, who had previously worked with him at the Hoboken store and Jersey City production facility.

The "Cake Boss" himself planned to check-in at least once or twice a week, especially in the beginning. However, he said his visits would most likely be unannounced.

While Mr. Valastro would like Carlo's to be "that local bakery where people come to get their birthday cakes," if someone wanted one of the more intricate and spectacular cakes featured on the show, such as the "Transformer" or "Space Shuttle" that actually "launched" with pyrotechnics and hydraulics, that's possible, too.

"For something like that, you'd just sit down with us and we'd figure it all out. We may have to Skype in to where I am, but at the end of the day, you can order the cake right from Westfield," he said.

He explained the Westfield store is based on their Ridgewood model, although he was able to tweak a few things. It includes the "Cake Bar," where customers can choose cake details and watch bakers and decorators assemble it.

He is so pleased with how the Westfield store came together, he is "excited" to remodel his original Hoboken bakery after Westfield's.

Seventh grader Sofia Lemberg of Westfield was the first paying customer, and said she was thrilled to receive a complimentary Carlo's Bakery t-shirt as a result.

Because many people continued to stand on line outside the bakery for

hours, the staff brought them crumb cake samples to enjoy in the meantime. The bakery also planned to stay open as late as necessary to be sure every customer would be served.

Westfield Mayor Andrew Skibitsky told *The Leader* and *The Times* that while he does not have much time to watch reality television programming, he recently learned a lot about "Cake Boss."

"It sounds like they have an amazing product, and Westfield is an amazing town to have it," he said.

When asked whether he thought possible parking or traffic issues caused by the influx of the bakery's fans might be a problem, Mr. Skibitsky said, "I think it's a good problem to have lots of people coming to our downtown. It's good for the businesses...it's good for everybody."

Mr. Skibitsky, town council members, as well as members of the Downtown Westfield Corporation and Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce joined Mr. Valastro outside for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"This is probably one of the prettiest—if not the prettiest—downtowns in New Jersey," Mr. Valastro told the cheering crowd. "So it was a 'no-brainer' to come here and be in the community. And that's what we want to be. We want to be part of the family here."

While the grand opening was not filmed by TLC on Sunday, Chief Brand Officer Adam Bourcier said the Westfield locale could likely be featured on future episodes of "Cake Boss" when it resumes filming and production later this year.

Westfield is now home to two premium bakeries—Carlo's Bakery and less than a block away, Bovella's Pastry Shoppe, a long-time hometown staple.



Gene Jannotti

Jannotti Elected to World Country, Line DanceSport Federation

GARWOOD—Gene Jannotti of Garwood was elected as First Vice President of the World Country and Line DanceSport Federation (WCLDSF). Mr. Jannotti is the founder and President of the US Country and Line DanceSport Federation, a non-profit 501c3 corporation established to permit country dancers to compete at the World DanceSport Games (WSDG).

The WSDG inaugural games will take place in Kaohsiung, Taiwan from September 15-21. Mr. Jannotti will be coaching a team of two U.S. dancers who will compete against dancers from seven other countries for gold, silver and bronze medals. These games are under the umbrella of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) following the format of the Olympic Games and will be televised throughout Asia with an expected 20,000 daily spectators.

Jeff Bartholomew, president of WCLDS, stated that he very much welcomed Gene to the world organization bringing his many years of dance experience combined with his corporate background to this important position.

Westfield Historical Society To Host Apple Fest

WESTFIELD—The Westfield Historical Society (WHS) will host its fifth annual Apple Fest fundraiser on Saturday, October 5, from 12 to 4 p.m. on the lawn of the historic Reeve House, located at 314 Mountain Avenue in Westfield. The rain date is Sunday, October 6, also from 12 to 4 p.m.

Visitors to Apple Fest will have an opportunity to participate in docent tours of the Reeve House and grounds, adult and children's games, pumpkin painting, face painting, tin piercing, barbershop music, children's art contest, mum and homemade food sales and much more.

One featured event is the spectacular apple pie contest. After the judging by local chefs, the pies and pie slices will be for sale. The public is invited to participate in this community contest. There are new pie categories this year including one for children and one for men.

Members of the Daughters of the American Revolution will again be helping the effort by making pies for the sale. Contact the office for information on how to submit a pie. This year, the Apple Cafe will be unveiled, a 1910 themed cafe, where you can sit, have lunch and watch the activities. Quiche and seasonal salad will be featured along with hot dogs for the kids. Grandma Ginny's antiques and collectibles sale will be held in conjunction with Apple Fest.

The Westfield Historical Society is a non profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing Westfield's rich heritage for future generations.

The newly renovated Reeve House serves as the organization's headquarters, museum, and history and cultural center. Proceeds from the event will be used to support these efforts and community outreach programs. Membership in the WHS is open to all and a membership table will be open all day for those who would like more information on activities or would like to join.

For further information, call the Westfield Historical Society's office at (908) 654-1794 or visit www.westfieldhistoricalsociety.org and look for the link for Apple Fest information.

Deutscher Club to Host German Day

CLARK—The Deutscher Club of Clark will host Deutscher Tag (German Day) on Sunday, September 22, from 12 noon to 6 p.m.

Admission \$5 per person, children under 12 free. The event will feature food, fun and family entertainment with music by the Philadelphia German Brass Band.

The event is outdoors and will be held rain or shine. Tables, parking and children's activities will be available.

German and American food and beverages will be sold. No outside food or beverages permitted. No skates, skateboards, bicycles or glass containers or dogs are allowed.

For more information, call (732) 574-8600 or visit www.deutscherclub.usa.

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