

Registration Now Open for NJWA's 'The Fluteketeers'

WESTFIELD - The Fluteketeers, the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts flute ensemble, has begun registration for its fall session. Rehearsals will begin on Saturday, September 13, from 2 until 3 p.m., at the NJWA studios, located at 150-152 East Broad Street in Westfield.

Students must be able to play the following scales: Bb Major, F Major, Eb Major, G Major, D Major and Chromatic. Potential members may be required to meet with the instructor to determine placement in the ensemble.

Participants in the ensemble will develop skills in playing an individual part in a multi-part work, playing in tune both on their instrument and in an ensemble setting and understanding and applying the social dynamics of chamber music.

Among many other skills, they will learn to improve their tone, articulation and technique, as well as to implement ensemble elements like cohesiveness, balance, phrasing, style, dynamics and communication. The class will culminate with a performance on Saturday, December 13, location and time to be announced. The Fluteketeers are directed by

Danielle Partenope Plagge, a graduate of The College of New Jersey with a B.M. in Music Education and of New York University with an M.M. in Flute Performance. Mrs. Plagge holds a New Jersey State Music Teacher certification and a certificate in the Kodaly Method.

Her background includes teaching high school band and elementary school general music classes in Somerset County, as well as performing professionally with a variety of different ensembles. She has worked with beginning, intermediate and advanced flute and instrumental music students, including coaching chamber music ensembles.

To register for The Fluteketeers, visit their website, tinyurl.com/fluteketeers and follow their registration procedure. You may email them at fluteketeers@gmail.com for more information.

The Flute Ensemble is a program of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts, a 501 © 3 non-profit organization. For information on the NJWA, visit their studios at 150-152 East Broad Street, Westfield, phone (908) 789-9696 or visit their web site [atwww.njworkshopforthearts.com](http://www.njworkshopforthearts.com).



LOCAL TALENT...Pictured, left to right, Erica Morreale of Cranford portrays Laurey and Samantha Tropper is Ado Annie in New Jersey Youth Theatre's production of *Oklahoma!*

Students Shine in NJYT's Production of *Oklahoma!*

AREA — The lead roles in the musical *Oklahoma!* are challenging enough for veteran Broadway performers, but several area young people brought down the house in this summer's production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic, staged by the New Jersey Youth Theatre (NJYT), one of the state's longest-running theatre programs.

Many of the *Oklahoma!* performers are alumni of NJYT's Performing Arts School, and they credit the program for their success beyond high school.

Erica Morreale, a graduate of Cranford High School, Class of 2012, was chosen for the role of Laurey, the sweet farm girl played by Shirley Jones in the 1955 movie. Erica won a Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Award in 2009 for her role in the high school's production of *Anything Goes*. She is currently a student at Muhlenberg College, where she is double-majoring in theater and education.

"NJYT prepared me for college because they taught me professionalism and dedication throughout my life and in the arts, and by the time I got to college I had already learned how to be a focused and prepared actor," said Erica.

Samantha Tropper of Scotch Plains played Ado Annie, the girl who "cain't say no" to her suitors. Samantha is a graduate of Union County Academy for the Performing Arts, Class of 2014, where she had several lead roles. She also played Tracy Turnblad in *Hairspray* at Scotch Plains Fanwood High School in 2011. Samantha is attending Rider University this year as a Musical Theater major.

Katy Cockrell, who played the wise and spunky Aunt Eller, is a Fanwood native and 2009 graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, where she played many principal roles and was an officer with the school's Repertory Theatre. Katyl graduated last year from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where she received her BFA in Drama from Playwrights Horizons Theater School.

"The professionalism, focus, and dedication I learned from training with NJYT gave me a big advantage during my conservatory training," said Katy. "And performing in such high-level productions gave me the confidence I needed to begin pursuing a career as a performer."

Zach Love of Cranford played the

amorous cowboy Will Parker, a role he also played in Cranford High School's production of *Oklahoma!* in 2011. Zach, who also played other roles at Cranford High School such as Harry McAfee in *Bye Bye Birdie*, currently attends Muhlenberg College as a music major.

NJYT's production of *Oklahoma!* ran for 18 performances in July and August — nine at the Algonquin Arts Theatre in Manasquan, and nine at the Morris Museum's Bickford Theatre in Morristown. The lavish production played to standing ovations and rave reviews that praised the show's "outstanding vocal performances" and high-energy dance numbers.

Other area students appearing in the cast were Cranford residents Kevin Brodie, Katie Morreale, Niamh O'Donovan, Brenden Scalea and Veronica Walton; Jacqueline Daaleman and Hannah Moloshok of Westfield; Alonzo Hall of Plainfield; Marion Petite of Clark and Marjun Valdez of Garwood.

Registration for New Jersey Youth Theatre's fall performing arts classes will take place from 4 to 8 p.m. on September 10, 11, 17 and 18, at the NJYT studios, 172 W. Westfield Avenue in Roselle Park.

For further information, visit www.njyouththeatre.org.

Asbury Park

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

and other old haunts from the old days are alive and well, and the boardwalk and beach are again full of life. For those who grew up wiling away their younger days playing pinball, a must-see is the Silverball Museum on the boardwalk, which features dozens of pinball machines and arcade games from as far back as the 1950s. Several of the machines I recognized from my high school days as I spent close to a dozen hours playing the machines on a drizzly day last week.

Asbury Park is still far from perfect. Certain areas away from the boardwalk and downtown are still to be avoided. But when one considers how far things have come in just the past six or seven years—since I spotted the first signs of renewal—it's clear the momentum is on the side of further progress as Asbury Park again becomes a true destination spot at the Jersey Shore.



LOCAL PERFORMANCE... "The Fluteketeers," members of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts flute ensemble, recently performed at Flute Choir Day at Drew University in Madison.

Premier Stages to Present *Janice Underwater* at Kean

UNION — Premiere Stages at Kean University will present the winner of its 2014 Play Festival, *Janice Underwater*, by Hillside native Tom Matthew Wolfe from Thursday, September 4, through Sunday, September 21, in Kean University's Zella Fry Theatre. Directed by Jade King Carroll, this delightfully quirky new play tells the story of Janice, who has a sneaking suspicion that she's losing her mind. While waiting for the results of genetic testing that could confirm her fears, Janice struggles to hold it together and pursue her art in the city. With the help of an attractive but troubled super, a devoted brother, and visions of her mentally ill mother, will Janice find her way home?

Selected from over 400 submissions as the winner of Premiere's annual competition for unproduced scripts by area playwrights, *Janice Underwater* received a developmental reading earlier this spring, delighting audiences with its recognizable characters and locales.

"It is always a bonus when we have the opportunity to produce works that capture the flavor of the local community. Tom's play provides the right blend of humor and topicality, while affording audiences a thought-provoking look into the life of a well-meaning but slightly off-kilter heroine," stated John J. Wooten, Premiere Stages' producing artistic director.

Playwright Tom Matthew Wolfe, who was born in Newark and grew up in Hillside, is a founding member of Blue Roses Productions and "Wright On! Playwrights Group. His plays include *Stray Cats*, a Seven Devils finalist; *God's Cigarette* (EST Memberfest); *This Is How We Emerge*, a semifinalist for the 2013 Premiere Stages Play Festival, as well as the renowned O'Neill Theater Center; *Harborside* (Samuel French Festival); and *Facing the Window* (Samuel French Festival); EST Marathon finalist. Director Carroll's credits include: *A Raisin In The Sun* (Juilliard) and *Trouble in Mind* (Two River Theater). Jade is a TCG New Generations Future Leader Award recipient and was presented the Paul Green Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Professional from



Tom Matthew Wolfe

the National Theatre Conference and The Estate of August Wilson.

Janice Underwater features actress Amy Staats in the title role of Janice. A member of the acclaimed Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York, her recent credits at EST include "Waking Up" by Cori Thomas, directed by Tea Alagic, and *Sluts of Sutton Drive* by Josh Conkel, directed by Lila Neugebauer. The cast also includes Broadway veteran Daren Kelly (*Deathtrap*, *Crazy for You*, *South Pacific*); audience favorite Susan Louise O'Connor, last seen at Premiere Stages in *The Good Counselor*, and a Theatre World Award winner for "Blithe Spirit" on Broadway; Ryan Barry, who has appeared on television's "Blue Bloods" and "Unforgettable;" celebrated regional theatre actor Eddie Boroevich, a fellow member of EST; and Daniel Pellicano, who memorably played the troubled teen Jacob in Premiere's critically acclaimed production of *The Beautiful Dark* in 2013.

Janice Underwater runs Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m., with post-show discussions to follow select matinee performances. Tickets are \$30 standard, \$20 for senior citizens and Kean alumni, and \$15 for students and patrons with disabilities. Significant discounts for groups of 10 or more apply. To make reservations or order a season brochure, please call the Kean Stage Box Office at (908) 737-SHOW (7469) or visit [Premiere Stages online at www.kean.edu/premierestages](http://www.kean.edu/premierestages).

POPCORN

"The Giver"

Once More into the Apocalypse

3 popcorns

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Film Critic

The good thing about the apocalypse, if you happen to survive it, is that the society that then evolves is so nice and orderly...everything in its place, y'know. No anger, competition, hunger, strife or pestilence. Boy, they sure learned their lesson. And gee, all the architecture is so neo-Guggenheim museum. The bad thing is, it's a stultifying bore. Which is why Brenton Thwaites's Jonas, the stary-eyed protagonist in director Phillip Noyce's adaptation of Lois Lowry's best seller, figures there has to be a better way.

You've seen this ad nauseam in literature and film...the utter impossibility of us humans finding some middle ground between the organized chaos and willy-nilly silliness we call government and the restrictive Orwellian destiny sci-fi futurists inevitably predict for us. Nonetheless, in order to form a more perfect union, to coin a phrase, it is necessary to inform each succeeding generation of the political quagmire they'll be wrestling with...to warn them of the fascism that hides in easy fixes. Miss Lowry's book does its civic duty.

Happily, thanks to the author's injection of present-minded sensibilities eagerly lapped up by the kids it was ostensibly written for, director Noyce is able to fashion some new wrinkles into the cautionary tale. Solid acting, especially from Jeff Bridges in the title role and Brenton Thwaites as his prodigy, plus an energetic pace and superb production standards make for an engaging, high-minded experience. Ne'er-do-wells aside, it is among humanity's finer instincts to hope that our prospective heirs will get it right.

On first blush, as we are introduced to the troika of pals at the center of the saga, it looks like things for these denizens of many years hence are going quite swimmingly. On the evening of the Ceremony of Twelve, when they will be assigned their occupations for life, Jonas, Fiona (Odeya Rush) and Asher (Cameron Monaghan) champ at the bit with anticipation. Yet slowly but surely, hints of uncertainty, albeit so subtly woven, give us pause...alerting that these young cohorts are perhaps not completely lost to conformity.

But what happens if you don't toe the company line...if you aren't completely accepting of the prescribed Sameness? We fear we'll find that out after the already questioning Jonas receives his assignment...surely a major honor. No sundry vocation for this bright lad, no siree. He will study to be the next Receiver of Memory, a human repository of all the utopian

community's memory and heritage, tutored by Jeff Bridges's noble sage. Now his thoughts wander even further beyond the pale of obedience.

The chemistry is ennobling, this wise Socrates allowed to live outside the confines and strictures of the "perfect" community with Jonas's Plato learning at his knee. Of course the process is fraught with pitfalls and flaws in theory, which makes us wonder what the Elders, currently led by Meryl Streep, had in mind when they fashioned the ambiguous process. In a true dictatorship, obedience to even the slightest hint of enlightenment, or to show concern for a supposedly failed and decadent past, would surely be verboten.

The lessons are at once beautiful, harsh, epiphanic and, in proper science fiction style, full of metaphors about our current civilization. It is an ideal, a paean to education...a great teacher and his formidable, eager student anxious to bite the apple. Combining good old fashioned instruction with a telepathic/download thing *The Giver* does by grasping Jonas's forearms and thinking real, real hard, the kaleidoscopic array of human emotion and experience is near overwhelming.

Expectedly, as he learns about these previously hidden wonders that have been snatched from his psyche courtesy of the culture's compulsory drug program, Jonas can't help but want to impart the revelations to his best friends. But that's a no-no, and soon his behavior begins to try the patience of Miss Streep's autocrat. Compounding the problem, it seems *The Giver's* last attempt at transferring his knowledge also proved a source of consternation for those powers that be, as well as a personal tragedy. The plot thickens.

Shades of George Lucas's "THX 1138" (1971) and a host of other such parables, it is a recurring theme that goes as far back as when Pharaoh had misgivings about his brief moment of tolerance. Nope, the despot decides, it's not going to work. After them!

The story switches gears with a vengeance, the philosophical and prophetic stuff culminating in a traditional rampage of derring-do. However, the film rises above its derivativeness courtesy of some fine special effects, a panoply of the neatly imagined era's rather nifty furnishings, and a surprise twist or two. And so "The Giver" bequeaths viewers with an exciting and thought provoking sojourn to the latest Brave New World.

"The Giver," rated PG-13, is a Weinstein Company release directed by Phillip Noyce and stars Jeff Bridges, Brenton Thwaites and Odeya Rush. Running time: 94 minutes



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