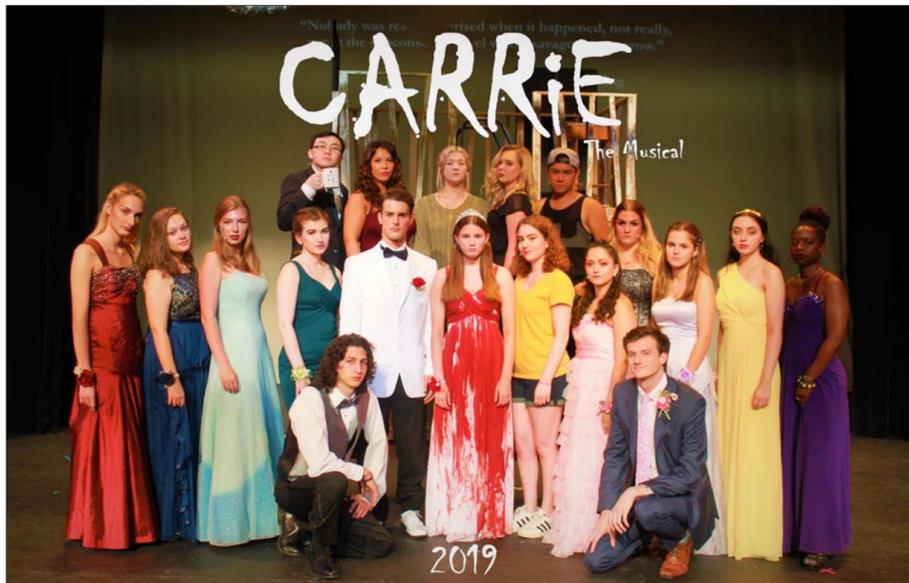


Arts & Entertainment

Carrie at Cranford Dramatic Club: A Bloody Good Show



DON'T BE LAUGHED AT...CDC Theatre presented *Carrie, the Musical* last weekend, August 2 to 4. Mollie DeFilippo as Carrie White and Nicole Cusmano as Carrie's mother, Margaret White, led a cast of mostly college students in CDC's outstanding production based on the Stephen King novel.

By **SUSAN MYRILL DOUGHERTY**
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*

CRANFORD — When Stephen King's shortest novel, "Carrie," hit the stores in 1974, it was one of his first best sellers. It became a blockbuster horror movie in 1976 and in 1988, a musical version was brought to Broadway. It saw 16 previews and only five performances. It was the butt of jokes about Broadway bombs. But other iterations of it have surfaced over the years with updated music by Michael Gore, lyrics by Dean Pitchford and book by Lawrence D. Cohen. Like *Little Shop of Horrors*, it has a cult following and with Cranford Dramatic Club's (CDC) production the weekend of August 2 to 4, it's easy to see why.

The storyline revolves around the teenager Carrie White, the school's perennial misfit who has been bullied and teased by her classmates through-

out her life. She was raised by religious fanatic and single mother, Margaret White (Nicole Cusmano). Carrie, in this production, is Mollie DeFilippo, whose waif-like visage and body type and oversized clothes make her appear as frail as the character. Ms. DeFilippo's versatile voice can illicit both tender pity for and great fear of the character.

The framework of the musical begins with the interrogation of Sue Snell (Lucy Hall), the sole survivor of a catastrophic prom night. She recounts how it all began, with Carrie being shamed by her female classmates when she gets her first menstrual period during the required after-gym class shower. The uneducated girl thinks she's bleeding to death. The girls laugh at her ignorance and throw tampons and pads at the sobbing teen, who is further confused and ashamed when her mother blames

her daughter with the song "And Eve was Weak." Miss Cusmano's voice and acting ability as the mother thrill with her velvety, round, controlled sound. Her theatre/voice training at Rowan University shows.

To add to Carrie's humiliation, well-meaning gym teacher Miss Gardner (the powerhouse belter Alex Karp) makes the girls apologize to Carrie. This angers the ringleader of the bullies, Chris Hargensen (talented Brooke Van Aulen), who vows to get revenge with her boyfriend, Billy, well-played by Kenneth Abes. His swagger and Chris' mean streak combine to seek revenge on prom night.

As Sue, Ms. Hall evokes pathos in her poignant rendition of "Once You See." She asks her boyfriend, Tommy (Jack Pacetti), to take Carrie to prom and he reluctantly acquiesces. Mr. Pacetti exudes the essence of a perfect Prince Charming in voice and

Double Duty: Richard Bodmer Is Running For Local Office, Also Is A Stunt Double

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader and The Times*

WESTFIELD — Local business owner and aspiring local politician Richard Bodmer has an amped-up-side job that seems only would be written for the screen. Who would have guessed a stunt double would be running for local office? Mr. Bodmer has doubled for actors such as Oliver Platt for the movie *The Oranges* and had gigs for movies such as *The Bourne Ultimatum*, *My Soul to Take*, and *Indiana Jones*. He is currently doubling for Cameron Britton in the new season of the Netflix series "Manhunt".

His pursuits in football in college, the U.S. Navy and the National Football League (Philadelphia Eagles, Miami Dolphins), and racing cars for NASCAR led him to his sideline career as a stunt double. A local business owner and friend introduced him to the field of on-set stunts by connecting him with a friend in the business. Now he's caught the stunt-buzz and is itching for his next gig. "It's just fun," Mr. Bodmer said.

Mr. Bodmer is running for Westfield Town Council Ward 2 on the Republican ticket in the November election. His reason for running is to turn-



DOUBLE DUTY...Richard Bodmer, pictured second from left, is a stunt double for Cameron Britton, pictured far left, in the Netflix series "Manhunt," which also stars Jay O. Sanders, pictured far right, who is standing with his stunt double.



DRIVE TIME...Richard Bodmer signs autographs for young fans of NASCAR.

around the downtown. "I live in a town I have been in since 1970, and in the last couple years we now have 21 vacant store fronts...It's a beautiful downtown and we are getting our backsides handed to us." Neighboring downtowns, such as in Cranford, Garwood, Scotch Plains and Fanwood, he said are flourishing or in the midst of a revitalization, while Westfield is facing vacancies.

The way I look at it you have three spokes to the wheel—the value of your home, the downtown area and the school systems that equate to the total value of your property. Right now, one

of those spokes is not doing what it is supposed to do and that is the downtown area. It is just horrible. He said, "It devalues my home by a third."

Mr. Bodmer is owner and president of RxMyID LLC, an identity protection firm focused on personal identity restoration.

When asked how to fill the empty stores downtown, he said, "There are some smart businesses that can come back into the town." He also said some brick and mortar businesses can compete in the online marketplace. "We need to excite these people to come back to Westfield."

~continued~ Carrie at CDC: A Bloody Good Show

stature, so it's believable that Carrie trusts him. Throughout the process of getting ready for prom, Carrie starts to realize her telekinetic powers. The more confident she becomes, the less afraid she is of her controlling mother and her bullying classmates. The final scene is just climatic enough without becoming campy.

Most of the cast members in this outstanding production are college students, many theatre or drama majors. Director Sean Eugene has assembled an incredible team of actors conducted by Musical Director Jack Bender. Mention must be made of noteworthy performances by

Amanda Malone, Jazmynn Perez, Patrick McLaughlin, Nicky Lazos, and Dance Captain Sabrina Garland-Sash. Raven Dunbar's appropriate choreography shows a range of abilities.

The smart use of projections (designed by Sean Lough) on the onstage scrim works beautifully. In the last years, this technique has become widely accepted on Broadway and is especially advantageous to local/regional theatres in replacing expensive drops. The sparse set (Ed Whitman) works nicely with a single two-story giant set piece that revolves to house various scene areas. Reflecting that

same tone of the show, somber costumes (Elizabeth Howard) are especially appropriate in the final scene.

Jack Bender's musical direction is tight. The rock beat supplied by six musicians fills the small theatre. A few opening night snafus with microphone/band balance creep in at times, but by Act II, the seesaw is level perfect.

Director Sean Eugene Lough consistently knows how to cast roles. Kudos to him for finding the area's best and brightest talent for this fascinatingly dark show that showcases the talents of standouts galore. This is truly a show "we'll never forget."



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