



OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD...The Bayer Children's Theatre Series will sponsor a performance by The Marionette Players of *The Wizard of Oz* at The Bickford Theatre of the Morris Museum, 6 Normandy Heights Road in Morristown on Friday, April 20, at 4 p.m. or Saturday, April 21, at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The performance is meant for students ages 4-10. Tickets for museum members are \$8.50 and non-member tickets are \$7.75. For tickets, please call (973) 971-3706. The popular children's classic will be staged with elaborately costumed marionettes interacting with live actors and the audience as Dorothy tries to find her way home through the enchanted land of Oz.

The Sound of Music Will Make Hills Come Alive at CDC

CRANFORD - The 2000-2001 season at the Cranford Dramatic Club will continue with the Rodgers

Fame the Musical

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brief rendition of the title song in this version, the musical numbers, for the most part, seemed a bit contrived and "placed" in areas where the creators thought a song should be.

The strategic placing of musical numbers doesn't always work if the book doesn't support the score. In this production, it seemed that some songs were inserted between scenes not for dramatic purposes but to give the cast another chance to prove that they could truly sing and dance. And they can! The cast was terrific. Something just didn't work here.

A lot of the dialogue was sophisticated and some of the songs just didn't have the emotional impact that I'm sure was intended.

This may be due to the character development in the book, which was at times very funny, but not as socially conscious as it seemed to think it was.

There was your basic bad-boy African American (very similar to Leroy in the film, though called Tyrone in this version), your snooty ballerina, your lovable Jewish musician and your wallflower actress. All of these characters, while expertly played by the actors, seemed very stereotypical and one-note. I was a little put off by it, actually. Why does Tyrone have to be the one that gets into trouble? Why does the female drummer have to look so butch? It wasn't necessary to write these characters in this light. It was a bit commonplace.

While it is very clear that this is meant to be an innovative production, the characters are all so similar to those in the film version it is makes one wonder (short of legalities) why they just didn't go ahead and mount a staged version of the film. Several references to the movie are mentioned in this version and it seems totally out of place. If this is not meant to be the film, why bother mentioning it? It only made me miss the film even more.

Again, the entire cast was terrific and bravely worked through the material they were given. Some of the numbers were expertly staged and the thrill of performing spilled out into the audience. Bravo to everyone on that stage.

I know how difficult it is to get a show this like this off the ground. I also know, as a writer, how painful it is to have someone critique your work. It is not my intention to bash the creators of this version of *Fame*. Their hearts were in it and I'm sure they worked incredibly hard. But it does bring to mind the old adage: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Pen & Ink

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before the big marathon.

Drafts Are Okay - Most artists commit themselves to one idea, hoping for perfection the first time around. This is one of the most destructive things for an artist to assume. (And, you know what they say about assuming). In fact, not accepting drafts in any craft goes against the free, creative flow artists are known for. So, in short, crumpled pieces of paper in balls on the floor, reworked canvasses, and replaying the same string of music is not necessarily a bad thing. You are honing your craft.

If All Else Fails - Remember why you became an artist. Recall the landscape that is supposed to be inspiring your watercolor. Think of the emotions conveyed by the person you are writing about. Imagine the joy you will bring to the audience hearing your piece of music for the first time.

The purpose behind your invention is enough to catapult you over the highest Block crowding your imagination. And, more importantly, no rut, no harsh criticism, or lack of confidence is worth giving up your gift of creativity.

& Hammerstein classic, *The Sound of Music*, on Fridays and Saturdays, May 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 and 19. Performances will be held at 8 p.m. A special Sunday matinee on Mother's Day, May 13, will be held at 2 p.m. All tickets are \$15.

Several residents from Westfield, Mountainside, and Fanwood are included in the production. Arlene Wachstein of Mountainside will serve as Assistant Director, Ed Wittel of Westfield is Chairperson of the Sound Committee and Scott Smith of Fanwood will play one of the lead roles, Captain von Trapp.

Ann Weeks of Westfield will portray Mother Abbess, while Madge Wittel of Westfield will play Sister Berthe. Ed Wittel will also take the stage as Admiral von Schreiber. Tara Dejesco of Mountainside will play Louisa and Fanwood residents Nora Weber and Christine Perrotta will perform in the Nuns Chorus.

Classic tunes in the production include "Do-Re-Mi," "Edelweiss," "My Favorite Things," "Climb Every Mountain," and "Sixteen Going on Seventeen."

A special display featuring the oil paintings of Cranford artist Alexander Mambach will be featured in the gallery of the theatre.

The Cranford Dramatic Club is located at 78 Winans Avenue in Cranford. For ticket reservations or further information, please call (908) 276-7611.



READY FOR REHEARSAL.The Performing Art Studio's musical theatre students rehearse their song, "I Got No Strings." Pictured, left to right, are: Amanda Curcie of Scotch Plains and Elizabeth Smith and Mariel Materek, both of Westfield.

Performing Arts Studio in SP Announces Summer Camp Plans

SCOTCH PLAINS - Director of The Performing Arts Studio in Scotch Plains, Robin Gerson Wong, has announced that The Performing Arts Workshop and The Creative Arts Workshop will be offered in four-week or two-week sessions during the summer.

The four-week session will begin on Monday, July 2, and end on Friday, July 27. The two-week session will begin on Monday, July 30, and end on Friday, August 10. There will be a performance/demonstration for family and friends at the end of each session. Classes are held Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In the Performing Arts Workshop, children are introduced to

HOW TO REACH A&E

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A&E

WSO to Offer Arias, Classic Pieces Of *The Marriage of Figaro*

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO) will present Mozart's charming and witty opera buffa *The Marriage of Figaro* (in concert) on Saturday, April 28, at 8 p.m. at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

Conducted by Music Director David Wroe, the performance will feature all of the arias and ensemble pieces sung in Italian with a running narrative in English.

Lorenzo da Ponte based the libretto on Beaumarchais' satiric comedy of manners *Le Mariage de Figaro, ou la Folle journée*. The world premiere was held at the

Burgtheater in Vienna on May 1, 1786.

The cast for the performance in Westfield will include Timothy Blevins as Figaro, Pamela Kuhn as the Countess Almaviva, Timothy Truschel as Count Almaviva, Kyoko Saito as Susanna and Erma Gatti as Cherubino.

Tickets may be purchased directly from the WSO at (908) 232-9400, the Union County Arts Center Box Office at (732) 499-0441, or at one of the following WSO ticket outlets: Martin Jewelers of Cranford, Beautiful Things in Scotch Plains, Lancaster, Ltd. and the Town Book Store, both of Westfield, and Bayberry Card & Gift in Mountainside.

The following restaurants offer a 10 percent discount on pre-concert dinners at a 5-5:30 p.m. seating: Chez Catherine, Elm Street Café, Galatas, Kotobuki and Northside Trattoria, all of Westfield. Patrons must show their tickets to qualify for discount. Reservations are highly recommended.

David E. Kelley

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was not without its rewards - he took the Emmy home for three consecutive years as Executive Producer of the law show.

While "Picket Fences" and "Chicago Hope" have been acclaimed products, soft-spoken Kelley has truly thrived in the arena of law-related programs. Both "The Practice" and "Ally McBeal" are based on Boston law firms, but offer different perspectives on the occupation. "Ally" gives us some playful, neurotic lawyers searching for ethics and "The Practice" seeks ethics with a more serious slate of characters.

Though Kelley is not comfortable being left-handed because he feels writing longhand becomes tedious, his imagination and passion for the craft are certainly well worth the effort.

During one awards program, while Kelley was scooping up awards, the presenter joked about the amazing proficiency of the man who once led Princeton's ice hockey team to victory. How he juggles his time between fatherhood, a solid marriage, and a bounty of hit shows makes Kelley seem almost omnipotent.

Galeria West, Teatro Si Plan Tango Downtown Performance

WESTFIELD - As part of their continuing cultural celebration series, Galeria West in downtown Westfield and Teatro Si will present Tango Downtown on Thursday, April 26, at 7:30 p.m.

This evening's performance will transport the audience to Buenos Aires through the romantic sounds of authentic Argentine music and song.

The program will feature a performance by Maestro Raul Juarera, musical director of the

acclaimed tango group New York Buenos Aires Connection.

The evening will also feature the tango interpretations of singer Marga Mitchell.

This concert will be performed at Galeria West, 121 Central Avenue in Westfield. Seating is limited. Please reserve seating early. There is no charge for admission and refreshments will be served.

For more information and reservations, please call Teatro Si at (908) 301-9496.

Little Opera Company to Bring Big Talent to Scotch Plains

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Little Opera Company of New Jersey will perform Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* (*The Elixir of Love*) on Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m. at Union Catholic High School's auditorium in Scotch Plains.

Other Performance dates are Saturday, May 5, at 8:30 p.m. at The Maurice Levin Theater, Jewish Community Center Metro in West Orange; Saturday, May 12, at 8 p.m., at The Armstrong Auditorium, Blair Academy in Blairstown; and Sunday, May 13, at 2 p.m. at Boonton High School in Boonton.

The opera will be conducted by Robert Butts, who recently re-

turned from a concert tour in Romania. A special guest narrator will narrate in English, while the opera is sung in Italian.

The comic opera in two acts, is a story about a love-struck farm boy, Nemurino, who falls in love with a farm owner, named Adina, who cannot decide between the true love of a simple farmer, Nemorino, or the gallant overtures of the handsome Sergeant Belcore. The well-known aria, "Una Furtiva Lagrima," sung by Nemorino in the second act will be performed.

The cast of professionals include baritone Dominic Inferrera as Belcore. He has performed with The New Jersey Opera Festival and The New York City Opera. Tenor Dennis Delgado, who recently performed with the Nashville Opera, will play Nemorino.

participate in the opera, were taught basic Italian, musicianship, and acting skills. The youngsters were given the opportunity to work side by side with professionals at no cost.

The young chorus and orchestra members are selected based on talent. They are rehearsed and trained by professionals in the field of opera. By the dates of the performance, the chorus will have rehearsed 19 times, for a total of 46 hours that began in February.

Tickets for all performances are \$30 for adults, \$23 for senior citizens, \$15 for students with identification, and children under 12 will be admitted for free.

For more information, please call (800) 831-6215.

Westfield Author To Discuss Novel, 'Sincerely Yours'

WESTFIELD - Westfield author Gertrude Wood will discuss her novel, "Sincerely Yours," at a book signing at Barnes & Noble, Route No. 22 in Springfield on Tuesday, April 24, at 7:30 p.m.

Mrs. Wood, a Westfield resident for over 35 years, was recently honored by *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* as "Best Writer" in the four-town area of Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside.

"Sincerely Yours" is a human interest story that describes the astonished reactions of 10 couples who receive a letter from an old friend, asking for an immediate \$1,000 loan. As the story unfolds, this unusual request changes some of the couples' lives forever.



Cheri Rogowsky for The Westfield Leader and The Times
New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra

NJIO to Perform Spring Concert, 'Close Encounters of the Musical Kind'

CRANFORD - The New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra of Cranford (NJIO), conducted by Lorraine Marks, will perform a program at Cranford High School on Sunday, April 22, at 2:30 p.m.

The concert will feature pianist Allison Brewster Franzetti and violinist John Blake. A pre-concert lecture and "meet the musicians and their instruments" program

will be offered for children and adults.

Ms. Franzetti has appeared in various concert halls in the United States. She has recorded in Europe as well.

Mr. Blake, a renowned jazz violinist, will make his second appearance with the NJIO.

Admission is \$3 in advance, \$4 at the door, and \$2 for students and senior citizens.

The program is a mixture of music that will appeal to a wide variety of audience members of all ages.

For more information about the NJIO, please call (908) 709-0084 or visit <http://www.bobdevlin.com/njio.html> or e-mail NJIOrch@aol.com.

Funding has been made possible through a grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Department of State, and administered through the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, and also in part by Cranford Public Schools, and the Rotary Club of Cranford.

NJSO Concert

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New York, Seattle, Houston, New Orleans among others. His trademark fluid gestures and crystal clear baton enunciation are a sight to behold. The NJSO responded beautifully to him - as they have for very few others.

Maestro Wong soared with the Italian repertoire of the evening. We have been accustomed to hearing Puccini's version of Turandot. Who could not hear at least Nessun Dorma in performance two or three times a year? Ferruccio Busoni, penned an orchestral version in 1905 that contain movements which could easily give the best of Puccini a run for its concert fare.

Busoni worked and played with melodies and themes in a way that only Italians can - producing powerful, memorable and eternal music. Excellent attacks from the brass section and a particularly nice showing from French horn section, who performed like the Valkyries they are. The funeral march movement highlighted a ppp opening that projected in silky pure clarity.

The finale contained a most interesting blend of now distinctive sounds. One could hear almost future-like Rimsky-Korsakov and Straussian elements, along with techniques which would soon be immortalized in the Pines of Rome and The Planets.

Thus, a fascinating concert on several levels - ancient Chinese instruments, exciting and well performed not so often heard repertoire. The great highlight of the evening however, was Maestro Wong, who exhibited grace, finesse and confidence. I have never heard the orchestra perform better.

This concert displayed the immense possibilities of the orchestra. Under a capable baton, and with interesting and sensible programming, the NJSO can and will be able to take her place amongst the greatest orchestras of the nation.

Cranford Seeks Artists For May 6 Street Fair

CRANFORD - The Cranford Arts & Crafts Festival, which is scheduled for Sunday, May 6, will include an area for artists to display their original work.

"Art on Alden Street" will feature artists, non-commercial photographers and sculptors. This area is directly adjacent to North Union Street at the street fair.

Selling and display space will be offered at a reduced price to artists selling their own work.

For more information, please call the Cranford Chamber of Commerce at (908) 272-6114 or the event's promoter, The Advertising Alliance, at (908) 995-2246.