

Get Outta the House

By CAROL F. DAVIS

Opening night for the Cranford Dramatic Club's production of *The Sound of Music* is Friday, May 4, at 8 p.m. For the next three weekends, you can see this classic musical on either Friday or Saturday night, and there is a special Mother's Day matinee. For some of us, it's hard to resist the von Trapp's story, and in this production, Marc Chandler's set happens to be superb. For \$15, it beats the price of a Broadway show, and you just may find yourself humming along to "My Favorite Things." While you are there, don't miss the upstairs gallery, where you can see the oil paintings of local artist Alexander Mambach. The theatre is located at 78 Winans Avenue in Cranford.

A *Century of Songwriters* is a performance that will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 5, at the Westfield Memorial Library. If you enjoy the pop sounds of Jackson Browne or Billy Joel, the guitar music of New Jersey's own Kenny Sacks is for you. Kenny's songs span the decades from Tin Pan Alley to the music of today. The performance is suitable for kids. Hey, it's free! You should probably check out some books anyway, and it will provide you with a break from your Saturday chores.

The Little Opera Company of New Jersey will be in town on Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m., when they bring their production of Donizetti's comic opera, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, to Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains. This story, written in 1832, weaves the tale of a peasant who tries to win love with a potion. Even if you are not an opera lover, you can't go wrong when local resident Jerome Hines, who has spent 41 years at the Met, narrates this romantic sojourn (*The Elixir of Love*). This performance features a chorus of 27 young singers, ages 6 to 18, joining the professional singers. Tickets range from \$30 to \$15, and kids under 12 are admitted free if you keep them quiet.

On Sunday, May 6, at 7 p.m., the public is invited to attend St. Paul's Episcopal Church's Ninth Annual Spring Concert, *Friends of Music*. Renowned soloists and members of the Grammy Award winning New Jersey Symphony Orchestra will join the Parish Choir. Featured in the program will be Schubert's Offertorium in C Major, Mass in E-flat Major, and Tantum Ergo. You don't have to know what any of this means in order to enjoy the soothing yet dramatic sounds of clarinet, soprano, baritone, and tenor solos. Donations will be collected at the door of the church, located at 414 East Broad Street in Westfield.

The First Baptist Church on 170 Elm Street in Westfield will present *The Senior Recital of The Westfield Junior Music Club* on Sunday, May 6, at 3 p.m. This program honors National Music Week, established by former Westfielder Charles Milton Termaine, who died in 1963. Seven very talented young musicians from the area will delight you with the sounds of the flute, piano, violin, and cello, in works by composers like Liszt, Caplet, Bach and Chopin. Be among the first to see the stars of tomorrow in this inspirational program. Light refreshments will be served after the performance.

Editor's Note: The Arts & Entertainment section of The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood is proud to include the wordsmithing of Plainfield resident Carol F. Davis. She will supply readers with a helpful guide of weekend activities in her weekly column, "Get Outta The House."

A&E



LOCAL SINGERS... In preparation for the Mother's Day concert at Morristown's Community Theatre are singers, pictured left to right, Andrew Pidkameny and Richard Barker of Westfield and David Barker of Scotch Plains. The Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra will present an afternoon concert on Sunday, May 13, at 3 p.m. The concert will feature Mozart's Mass in C Minor. For more information, please call The Masterwork Chorus at (908) 455-7008.

Westfield Symphony Orchestra

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as Sergeant John in Broadway's *Miss Saigon* to any stage he graces.

While Susanna, soprano Saito, was somewhat cautious at first, her early duets with Figaro a bit unbalanced - favoring Blevins, her blending, rapport and projection improved much as the evening progressed. Ms. Saito



Timothy Blevins-Incredible performance as Figaro

blossomed over the course of the evening, adding more vitality and vocal dimension.

Concertgoers certainly heard Ms. Saito clearly at her musical highpoint in the final act in her aria "At last comes the moment I can rejoice in my lover's arms." Her voice, which had become quite comfortable with the settings, projected beautifully and melodically throughout the church.

Mezzo-soprano Gattie, who serves as Voice Instructor and Lecturer in Music at Dartmouth College, added generously to the evening as Cherubino. This quick-witted performance was fueled by her character's adolescent lusts. Her beautifully sung aria, "I can't give an explanation" in Act I gave the section its critical boost. She offered a performance of fine timing, both musically and dramatically.

As the flustered womanizer, Mr. Truschel's dramatic and musical portrayal of the Count was initially somewhat less convincing, but also became more familiar with the surroundings by the opening aria of Act III, when asserting, "We've won our case!"

The story's three buffoons - Marcellina, Dr. Bartolo and Don Basilio - provided beautiful dramatic and musical support. Tenor John Easterlin as Basilio, the music master, was particularly outrageous. Possessing a wonderfully rich and strong lyric voice, his foppish mannerisms and dramatic flair deliciously caricatured the 18th century dandy.

The stage, full with the excellent talent of musicians and vocalists, contained just enough room to accommodate the full cast. In fact, the church proved to be just the perfect intimate setting for this semi-staged production. Acoustics were especially pleasing, highlighting string warmth and bass resonance, which

always works particularly well in this space.

The orchestra provided a solid, steadfast, supportive and highly polished musical canvass for the vocalists.

Clarinet duet sections by Principal William Shadel and his associate player were an orchestral highlight as well as stalwart horn section performance by Principal Anthony Cecere and associate Janet Lantz.

In such a glorious manner did the 2000-2001 subscription season of the WSO draw to a close. The Tour of Notable Homes fundraiser this past weekend will directly benefit the WSO and enable them to move ahead with next year's season.

The 2001-2002 program promises to be one of the best yet. Beautiful and well-chosen works will include Wagner's *Liebestod* and Verdi's opera *Aida*.

Carol Burnett

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was in her early 20s.

A scholarship made it possible for Burnett to attend the University of California in Los Angeles. Before falling in love with acting, she considered majoring in journalism and dabbled in cartooning.

A benefactor, who appreciated a duet Burnett performed in *Annie Get Your Gun*, gave her the funds to go to New York City and pursue the career she longed for, but could not afford. She paid him back in 1959, five years after leaving for the Big Apple.

After stretching her wings with gigs galore, Burnett landed the role as stand-in for Martha Raye on *The Garry Moore Show*. Her next offer came from the Phoenix Theater for a role in a new musical *Once Upon A Mattress*, which eventually made its way to Broadway.

Those who cannot remember as far back as the 60s and 70s will recall Burnett's recurring role as Helen Hunt's mother on "Mad About You." The folks deciding the Emmy's certainly revered her performance, as they granted a sixth Emmy Award to the actress and comedienne.

A mother of four children, Burnett splits her time between Sante Fe and Hawaii. She was married to Dan Saroyan, with whom she acted for a number of years. Her second husband was television producer Joe Hamilton.

Mr. Wojcik's Original Work, 'Akin to Fire' To Debut at Colonial Symphony Concert

By DAVID PALLADINO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Teacher, composer, musician and conductor are all titles which Raymond Wojcik wears with confidence. The nationally-recognized and acclaimed composer will premier his "Akin to Fire" this Saturday night, May 5, at the Morristown Community Theater at 8:30 p.m. with the Colonial Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Wojcik, employed for the last eight years in the Department of Fine Arts at Westfield High School has an impressive resume. He has served as music director and conductor of the Brunswick Symphony, and has recently completed 10 seasons as music director and conductor of the Garden State Philharmonic.

Several orchestras have welcomed Mr. Wojcik as guest conductor, including Hartford Symphony Orchestra, the Amadeus Orchestra, The Plevan Philharmonic (Bulgaria), and numerous other festival orchestras.

Additionally, Mr. Wojcik holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, The University of Denver and has studied at The Julliard School, Tanglewood, The Aspen Music Festival and the Conductors Institute.

Mr. Wojcik started composing in the fifth grade at a Perth Amboy elementary school.

"My first musical instinct was to create," he told *The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood*, "so my school band leader, Mr. James Young suggested that I write it all down."

From that point on, he was musically on fire.

Mr. Wojcik stated, "I absolutely

wanted to live in the musical environments that were being described in the music - these different little worlds."

In fact, one of his first records included the varying musical worlds of Til Eulenspiegel, El Salon Mexico and the Nutcracker Suite.

Always attracted to beautiful melodies, Mr. Wojcik was especially drawn to the Beethoven symphonies as a boy - especially the Fourth and Fifth as recorded by Bruno Walter.

Mr. Wojcik described his latest piece, "Akin to Fire," as "much different artistically than what I've done before."

The work is scored for full orchestra and two percussion/timpani. The composer drew inspiration for the piece from a phrase from the poem "Burnt Norton" by T.S. Eliot which proposes that everything in our lives consists of "remembrances of the past, thoughts and fantasies about the future" - which exist "simultaneously with the present moment in a kind of counterpoint between the conscious and the subconscious."

"Akin to Fire" begins with a single musical thought in the cellos and violas which serve as the melodic and rhythmic motif of the entire work, according to Mr. Wojcik.

"Through restatement, metamorphosis, counterpoint and juxtaposition of this motif, the work journeys through a landscape of emotions and states that encompass longing, searching, anxiety, anger



Raymond Wojcik

playful innocence and transcendence," he revealed.

The contrapuntal nature of "Akin to Fire" can be thus heard as a dialogue or as simultaneous thoughts and conversation moving in and out of linear time.

Mr. Wojcik took the title "Akin to Fire" from the last line of Jeanne Fitzgerald's "Elemental" - a title which embodies the same spirit of transformation and transcendence that he found in the late quartets of Beethoven, from which the composer also drew inspiration.

For tickets to the May 5 concert or other events, please call the Colonial Symphony at (908) 766-7555. A pre-concert lecture will be given at 7:30 p.m.

Jane Annis

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recognized the rare splendor encompassed in the architecture of Westfield's houses of worship.

Renowned Mountainside artist Harry A. Devlin has captured the presence of the Presbyterian Church steeple in one of his lifelike paintings. About two years ago, the producers of NBC's "Ed" told *The Leader and The Times* that they were sold on using Westfield as a location for the comedy-drama the second they saw the steeple of the church.

As a member of the Westfield Art Association, Mrs. Annis will debut "Westfield Steeples" on Saturday, May 12, at the group's art show in downtown Westfield. Over 50 artists will vend their artwork during the day.

When asked what she hopes the audience will experience when viewing the watercolor that day, Mrs. Annis said, "If they are from this area, I hope they feel a connection to the buildings."

She added that when she showed the piece to the minister of her church, he told her, "It's marvelous!"

Mrs. Annis holds a bachelor's degree in art education from Marshall University and studied at the New York School of Interior Design. For 25 years, she operated "Ideas for Interiors."

The technique of watercolors captured the interest of Mrs. Annis after she decided to enroll for a watercolor floral class. She admired the flow of the watercolor and its "spontaneity."

Mrs. Annis produces traditional and spontaneous watercolor paintings as ink drawings with watercolor washes, watercolor monoprints, and collages of painted watercolor paper tom into shapes and pasted to create layered floral paintings.

"People tell me my paintings are happy and make them smile," she said. "This makes me smile."

After Sunday, May 6, prints by Mrs. Annis will be available for sale at The Town Book Store in Westfield.

Ma and Pa Cort Talk Gardening

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actually like to germinate in cooler soil and will thrive when the temperatures rise.

We now have three gardens on our property. What used to be a play area is now a perennial herb garden that gets better every year. We have tarragon, sage, oregano, lemon thyme, summer savory and lavender planted there. Perennials are the best. If you take care of them, they will repay you year after year.

I still have dried oregano and sage from last year. Again, with limited space, herbs, even some perennials, can be planted in a container on your patio.

In the back of our yard, by the pond, is our zucchini and yellow squash garden. We separated these from the rest of the crops as the flowering plants take up a lot of space. Don't bother buying zucchini or squash plants, unless you really need your zucchini fix fast. Both vegetables grow beautifully from seed.

We had about 25 zucchini last year. Imagine what 25 zucchini would cost in a supermarket. The packet of seed was 79 cents.

And last, but not least, is our pride and joy. An area in the back, roughly 70 feet by 10 feet, is where most of our crops are planted. The greens start on the right in the shady area. Arugala, spinach, swiss chard, cinnamon lettuce and a mesclun mix are all planted in

rows of two and are started as seed.

To the left, we planted cucumbers, green beans, three different kinds of pepper plants and three different kinds of tomatoes. Between the tomato plants we planted basil, which, in addition to making great pesto-sauce also acts as a natural bug repellent.

And a first for us this year, asparagus! We are so excited we could just burst.

We know that the asparagus won't mature until next year and sometimes the cucumber plants choke out the beans, but all in all, gardening is such a joy.

We have months of weeding, watering, thinning, mulching, fertilizing and harvesting ahead of us, but we love every minute of it. We spent nearly six hours on Sunday just turning the soil over and I'm sure I will pay a visit to my chiropractor this week, but who cares? Last year, I had so many hot peppers I was thinking of starting my own hot-sauce business.

So, if you haven't already, pay a visit to your local greenhouse. You don't have to spend a lot of money and the rewards will far outweigh the amount of work you will put in.

And, not to worry, my cranky old cat is very happy just watching us from the comfort of the screened-in porch while we work like fools.

Best wishes, and happy gardening!

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Westfield Summer Workshop To Include Pineda and Wells

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Summer Workshop, a division of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts in Westfield, will expand its summer Music Department by welcoming two teachers from The Music Studio. These instructors are voice instructor Valerie Pineda and violin/viola instructor Orlando Wells.

Ms. Pineda will teach the programs, "Be A Star," "Sing-A-Long" and "Workshop Chorus." A New Jersey native, she began her singing career at 16 and studied at The Boston Conservatory and The Manhattan School of Music. She has performed with The Jersey City State Opera Company, The Bronx Opera Company and Opera on Lake Kezar.

In addition to her work with The Music Studio, Ms. Pineda teaches

privately in New York and New Jersey.

Mr. Wells will teach "Orchestra," "Strings," "Fiddlin' Fun" and "Intro to Orchestra." He attended The Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and has been awarded numerous scholarships.

He has performed with The Summit Symphony, The Montclair Chamber Orchestra and The Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea. In addition to his work at The Music Studio, Mr. Wells has taught at Montclair State University Prep and The Newark Academy.

For more information about the Westfield Summer Workshop, please call (908) 518-1551 or visit the NJWA office at 150-152 East Broad Street, Westfield.