

Perseverance, Sacrifice Pay Off for Moonglowers At SP-F High School After They Ace State Finals

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - How did members of the Moonglowers react when they discovered that the acclaimed jazz band would take home the First Place title from the State Finals at Willingboro High School last month?

"We stormed the stage," the musicians told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood* during an interview Tuesday at the place they call home, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS).

Moonglowers members juggle a hectic schedule, some of the students don't leave the high school halls until 7 p.m. after starting the day with 6:45 a.m. rehearsals with their fearless leader, Supervisor of Fine Arts Vincent Turturiello.

The musicians endure a rigorous auditioning process to become part of the prestigious ensemble, according to their teachers. In fact, SP-F Jazz Band Director Durand Thomas and Mr. Turturiello consider the musicians to be "the cream of the crop."

For the students, the feeling is quite mutual.

"He (Mr. Turturiello) puts in more time with us than any other teacher," said one student. "He spends time away from his family to help us," added another.

"He gave me a chance when no one else would, and I didn't know how to read music," opined another. "He's a mentor. He pushes us, but it's all out of love."

With the mutual respect between Mr. Turturiello and his ensemble, how could the Moonglowers possibly lose? Considering the other jazz bands the Moonglowers were

facing at the April competition, the group still had an uphill battle to conquer.

With equally formidable reputations, they had to do musical battle with jazz bands from Edison High School of Edison, Cherokee High School of Marlton, Pennsauken High School of Pennsauken, Willingsboro High School and J.P. Stevens High School of Edison.

While there are few jazz ensembles that compete aggressively in festivals and competitions, Mr. Thomas told *The Leader/The Times*, these five groups have given the Moonglowers a run for their money in the past.

Mr. Turturiello trained his musicians on a repertoire including various styles of jazz. Bright and early each morning and one evening per week, students perfected a swing number by Bill Bailey, a ballad composed by Rich DeRosa of William Paterson University, and a Latin jazz selection called "Jalapeno Dreams" by Denis DiBlasio of Rowan University.

With a killer repertoire and a "go get 'em" attitude, the Moonglowers told *The Leader/The Times* that they went into the competition with the intention to win that first place victory. However, another kind of victory was achieved by Mr. Turturiello, who tries to instill a lesson beyond the Music Room.



GLOWING WITH PRIDE...Members of the Moonglowers jazz ensemble of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and Moonglowers director and Supervisor of Fine Arts Vincent Turturiello stand proudly with their trophies received after capturing the State Finals title. The competition was held on Friday, April 27, at Willingboro High School in Willingboro.

"We're trying to teach them hard work, dedication and commitment," he said. "We're trying to teach them adversity."

Mr. Turturiello pointed to the uniqueness of the Moonglowers, who do not practice with top professionals in Philadelphia like students from the rival schools.

"So, they have that against them," he relented. Pointing to the schools that have an actual staff of paid professionals that come in, he said, "You can't buy a jazz band show.

You actually have to teach it."

For the Moonglowers, "if you have the drive, it makes a big difference," said Mr. Turturiello. What better example of students who have ambition than this ensemble which is composed of the top 10 percent of their class and athletes committed to games and after-school practices -plus- the Moonglowers?

The competition, which lasted past midnight that April evening, included a following of supportive parents, a small band of fellow music students, but few other students seeking to show school spirit.

Good support, Mr. Turturiello noted, is hard to find. While the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education has continued to find a niche in its budget and the Moonglowers have integrated their program into the high school curriculum, it becomes increasingly hard to find the support the group needs.

A sports team which wins a Group 3 state championship would be extolled and recognized.



Pen & Ink

Giving 'B.C.' Strip the Pink Slip Raises Censorship, Anti-Religion Issues

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Originally, I was scheduled to write an editorial about my mother for Mother's Day. Most A&E readers approach my mom at events and tell her that they've "heard so much about her." That makes her blush and brings her great contentment. While she might miss my annual tribute to her, I have a feeling she will consider this editorial the greatest tribute to her motherhood. For,



Johnny Hart, creator of the "B.C." comic strip, has been silenced by *The Star-Ledger*. What ever happened to freedom of speech and freedom of religion?

mom taught me the difference between right and wrong - faith and faithlessness, morals and...well, in this case...questionable judgment.

Last Friday, my editorial per turned to an issue worth fighting for when my mother informed me that *The Star-Ledger* decided to terminate Johnny Hart's "B.C." comic strip because of a cartoon that ran on Easter Sunday depicting a menorah turning into a cross. The phrases "seven trumpets, seven colors in the rainbow, seven candle stands, seven notes in music, seven seals, seven stars, seven feasts, seven vials, seven loaves..." are depicted before Hart points out the seven last words of Jesus Christ.

In each of the seven cartoon extinguiques as Jesus' words such as "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" are penned above. The strip ends with the menorah-turned-cross beside the burial place of Jesus. "Do this in re-

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David Palladino's Music Corner

Pianist Christopher Johnson Hosted by Plainfield Symphony

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

PLAINFIELD - The Plainfield Symphony Orchestra, under the musical direction of Sabin Pautza, offered a concert of well-loved music this past Saturday night at the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church in Plainfield.

Repertoire included the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 with pianist and artist in residence Christopher Johnson, as well as the Mussorgsky/Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition.

Tim Espar, Executive Director of the Plainfield Symphony, stated that the amateur orchestra is "determined to maintain a high standard of excellence at affordable prices so all can know the joy of music. In this age of pop culture, techno-everything, it's more important than ever to preserve the centuries-old tradition of live performance of the classics in a space of beauty and inspiration."



Christopher Johnson

Mr. Espar could not have spoken words of greater truth. Mostly drawing from the musical talent pool of the surrounding suburbs, these dedicated musicians of the Plainfield Symphony, in their 81st season, offered a solid rendition of these two great master works.

When an individual or a group strives for excellence, they must subject themselves to the highest standards. The Plainfield Symphony offered all that they could on Saturday night, and these noble efforts are deserving of the highest praise. Much of this review is intended for the musicians.

The true lover of the sport can enjoy watching minor league baseball as well as they can enjoy major league playing - the varying levels of competence are assumed. But the measuring stick for passion remains the same, as noted by Beethoven, "wrong notes were of little consequence, but to play without passion was inexcusable."

Saturday night saw no lack of passion. The Plainfield Symphony can be good enough to be judged by the highest standards.

The well-known initial attack by the French horns of the famous Tchaikovsky Piano 1 saw outstanding performance by the French horn section. Horn playing in fact

was consistently excellent throughout both pieces, especially from that of the Principal Hornist Richard Goodman.

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Meet Four Different Faces in the Spotlight That Define Qualities of Motherhood

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
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"Someday, you'll understand when you're a mother!"

How many times have we heard that expression, either bellowed in frustration or almost whispered in disappointment? The job certainly can't be an easy one, but how much harder for mothers living un-

dren and relations — through times of tragedy and victory. She outlived her sons John and Robert Kennedy, who were assassinated, Joseph, Jr. who was killed during World War II and, Kathleen, who died in a plane



Rose Kennedy mothering her children

crash. Her strength and selfless philanthropic acts were recognized by the Vatican in 1951 when Kennedy was given the title of "Papal Countess" for "exemplary motherhood and many charitable works."

Before dying of complications from pneumonia at 104, Rose Kennedy survived the infamous Chappaquiddick scandal which rocked the Kennedy brood. Although she never lived to see the death of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and the untimely demise of grandson John F. Kennedy, Jr., we can only imagine that her stalwart, motherly spirit encouraged the Kennedy family in walking tall and moving on with life.

Rose Kennedy fulfilled one definition of motherhood - strength - for her family as a matriarch and

an example of benevolence toward those in need. While she was never a mother in the



Mother Teresa mothering the world

biological sense, Mother Teresa of Calcutta mothered the world by working in the slums, disaster areas of the world, and reaching out to lepers. Her "daughters" were comprised of the Missionaries of Charity in 1950, a sisterhood which carries on Mother Teresa's noble works even after her death in 1997.

After receiving the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1979, Mother Teresa said, "I choose the poverty

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Artist of the Week



Faye Dunaway portrayed Joan Crawford in "Mommy Dearest"

Faye Dunaway (1941-)

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN
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"No more wire hangers!" Faye Dunaway's portrayal of the arch eyed-browed meanie of mothers Joan Crawford in *Mommy Dearest* was unmistakably legendary. While she screeched at her adopted daughter Christina about the evil of using wire hangers for her nice dresses, kids around the country never looked at cleaning their rooms the same. Let their mothers (dear as they are) might come into their room in the middle of the night with cold cream on their faces, ready to attack.

Dorothy Faye Dunaway is the complete name of the Bascom, Fla. native who studied at Florida State University. At Boston University, she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in 1962.

Always appreciated for her riveting emotional performances, Dunaway first captured media attention for her performance as Bonnie opposite Warren Beatty in *Bonnie and Clyde*. Success followed soon after in Roman Polanski's *Chinatown*. Both portrayals earned Dunaway Academy Award nominations for Best Actress.

While many consider her depiction of Joan Crawford uncanny, with its eerily familiar mannerisms and similar facial features, Dunaway never lets a performance lose momentum. She throws herself into each scene with a blend of carefree abandon and serious professionalism.

Dunaway's action against Andrew Lloyd Webber was almost Crawfordesque when he dropped the ax on her participation in *Sunset Boulevard*. Webber claimed that Dunaway's vocal performance was not up to par and she responded with a lawsuit for \$6 million.

Although she lost the court battle which called her vocal ability into question, no one can doubt her perfect pitch during the "wire hangers" tantrum.

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