



Get Outta the House

By CAROL F. DAVIS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

The Rat Pack is back. The singular sensation, John "Ol' Blue Eyes" Esposito will perform a dinner show at Mezzogiorno Ristorante Caffè on Sunday, November 11, at 6 p.m. The buffet style dinner is \$49 a person, including tax and gratuities, and you can bring your own bottle of wine to complement the evening. Mr. Esposito's show includes selections from Sinatra, as well as Dean Martin, Jimmy Durante, Perry Como, and more. Mezzogiorno is located at 450 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains. You can reserve in advance, as seating is limited, by calling (908) 889-2200, extension no. 2.

The renowned local Plainfield Symphony performs at the historic Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church on Saturday, November 17, at 8 p.m. The Symphony, in its 82nd year, is led by Music Director Sabin Pautza. This concert will feature four pieces, including the rarely heard "Due Canzoni" by Frescobaldi. Rounding out the evening's program will be Wagner's Overture from "Tannhauser," Grieg's Lyric Suite, Op. 17, and Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 25, with Esther Park on piano. Enjoy the acoustical splendor of this inspiring atmosphere, located at the corner of Watchung Avenue and East Seventh Street in Plainfield. For information, please call the Symphony at (908) 561-5140.

Westfield High School's Drama Department is the first high school in the nation to stage *The Laramie Project*. There will be three performances: Thursday, November 15, at 3:30 p.m.; Friday, November 16, at 8 p.m.; and Saturday, November 17, at 8 p.m., all in the auditorium at 550 Dorian Road in Westfield. I am sure you will recall the brutal murder of homosexual college student Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyo. This docudrama was written about the crime, and the reaction to it by the locals. Much research was conducted, including on-site interviews with those involved. For ticket information, please call (908) 789-4549.

The *Silhouette Lady* will make an appearance on Wednesday, November 21, at the Fanwood Community Center at the railroad station at 8 p.m. Ruth Grabner will demonstrate her historical talent, with its powerful images of busts, full figures, and animals. The art of silhouettes was a must for Presidents before the camera, and its name comes from Etienne de Silhouette, a mid-18th century French Finance Minister who made these cut-out profiles as a hobby. Paper will be supplied, but bring a nice, sharp scissors so that you can participate in the workshop. For more information, please call (908) 322-5438.

If you are looking for something to do tonight, you still have an opportunity to see Kean University's presentation of *Ballet Gran Folklorico de Mexico*. The rich, colorful culture of Mexico is brought to life in this exhibition of music and dance, with the 35-member troupe adorned by native costumes. Take a trip through time, from mysterious ancient rituals through contemporary celebratory dancing. Tickets range from \$8-\$15. Call the box office at (908) 527-2337. Parking is free.



VERDANT LANE...Patricia Brentano of Westfield will present the watercolor "Garden Path" at her solo exhibit at Swain Galleries in Plainfield.

Patricia Brentano Visits 'Familiar Places' in Exhibit

WESTFIELD — Westfield resident Patricia Brentano has painted some of her favorite spots in her solo exhibition from Saturday, November 3, to Thursday, November 28, at Swain Galleries in Plainfield.

Some of Brentano's chosen landscapes include Westfield, Lake Champlain, Vt. and Provincetown, Mass.

"I take a landscape space and make it work by structuring it to be

painterly so that colors, color values and gesture create the scene. It is not literal," stated Ms. Brentano.

The exhibit will be held from Tuesday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m.

Swain Galleries is located at 703 Watchung Avenue, Plainfield.

For more information, please call (908) 756-1707.

POPCORN™ K-Pax

E.T. on Thorazine

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER

2 popcorns
If Iain Softley were a bit more clever in developing the premise of *K-Pax*, we might suspect the director was having a bit of artistic sport with us. But the unfortunate conclusion is that he's actually doing the best he can, and to only minor avail.

You see, Kevin Spacey stars as prot (that's right, not capitalized), who is either really from outer space, as the matter-of-factly contends, or a full-blown lunatic. You'll admit there can be very little middle ground here. Thus, the entire success of the movie depends on how well the filmmaker can keep the guessing game from turning into a tedious gimmick.

While it's potentially the sort of dreamy, sci-fi fantasy that you so want to like, the filmic alchemy necessary to making the totally improbable seem magically conceivable is sadly lacking.

Therefore *K-Pax* bogs down into some rather conventional old saws, some of them reminiscent of the rather unsophisticated grade B, invader from space stuff that Hollywood pumped out in the early 1950s.

Arriving from apparently nowhere and wandering in New York's Penn Station, prot attracts the authorities when he tries to aid a mugging victim. That was the first strike against him. When he tells the local gendarmes all about the planet K-Pax that he's from, his fate is sealed. It's off to Bellevue's psychiatric ward.

However, his case is so unusual, his spiel so convincing, that the charity docs implore the counsel of prestigious high-priced shrink, Dr. Mark Powell, portrayed by Jeff Bridges.

And so the stage is set: Two worthy adversaries from presumably different worlds, poised to lock horns in what hopefully will be an enlightening experience for all those concerned. Hey, maybe they'll even become friends and solve some eternal mysteries along the way. The smart money says don't expect glorious epiphanies and complete enlightenment in all three acts.

Fact is, it's mostly hit and miss, with only a few redeeming moments along the way.

Dr. Powell initially tries a conservative approach (later, the room darkened, there'll be near mystical sessions of regression therapy). But getting prot to abandon his highly convincing delusions, if that's indeed the case, is no easy task.

Sure of both his identity and mission, he's actually rather glib and more than a bit condescending. But he's quite excited and taking copious notes. He's never been to a 2-KB planet before. What's that, you ask? Why, it's a civilization at "such an early stage of evolution." The nerve!

To complicate matters, the K-Paxian has been launching his own highly persuasive public relations campaign. Part Randall P. McMurphy from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), part Deepak Chopra, the intergalactic Hippy is fast becoming a hero among the other psychiatric patients on his floor.

He romantically regales his Earthling chums with tales of a noble and infinitely civilized K-Pax. And the fact that he has ministered to his new pals, with proven success, an alternative therapy based on the body's ability to heal itself, is not lost on Dr. Powell.

But the coup de grace is the essay contest he launches. Prot is allowed to take one person home with him. Therefore, the lucky winner will get to share the beam of light that will transport

them back to K-Pax when prot departs as planned on July 27 at exactly 5:51 a.m. Expect the typical prot watch/countdown scene as the witching hour approaches.

Add to all this fantasy and conjecture a subtext and a twist. First the subtext. And a trite letdown it is. Though now wed to his trophy wife (Mary McCormack), the eminent psychiatrist hasn't been paying much attention to anything outside of his work.

Among the casualties is a relationship gone fallow with the college-age son from his first marriage. The lad is conspicuous by his absence at a Fourth of July picnic. Dr. Powell invites prot to attend as part of his therapy.

So of course it winds up that prot is the one doing the healing as he sets about to mend the bridge between estranged father and son. This all follows an age-old Hollywood plot tradition that says only objective outsiders like aliens and bullies (i.e.—Clifton Webb's Mr. Belvedere in *Sitting Pretty*, 1948) can correct the foibles of us clueless mortals.

Then there's the twist. It's all fettered and bound in the neo-Freudian mysteries that have long dominated the bulk of our film dramas dealing in things psychological. We learn that several years ago, way out in New Mexico, something very bad happened to someone who may or may not actually be prot.

He was presumed dead, though the body was never found. Sound murky? It is.

As the film approaches its conclusion and the moment of truth must be faced, Softley's treatment of Charles Leavitt's screenplay (adapted from the novel by Gene Brewer) disappoints. It can no longer straddle the fence between reality and fantasy. Time has run out. Unable to dazzle us with a brilliant finish, the director instead tries to baffle us with, well, just so much more ambiguity. Which leads us to wonder, if prot is so smart, how come he couldn't suggest a better ending for *K-Pax*?

"K-Pax," rated PG-13, is a Universal Pictures release directed by Iain Softley and stars Kevin Spacey, Jeff Bridges and Mary McCormack. Running time: 120 minutes.

Performance Set By Salamone Jazz Trio

WESTFIELD — The Salamone Jazz Trio will appear on Friday, November 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 1 East Broad Street, Westfield.

The trio is spearheaded by pianist Paul Salamone of Westfield, who grew up in Scotch Plains. He has performed extensively in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia areas, Indianapolis, Berlin and Heidelberg, Germany, and at the Forest City Jazz Festival in Ontario, Canada.

Mr. Salamone and his jazz quartet recently recorded their debut CD entitled, "Quickstep." He will be joined by drummer Ron Glick and bassist Stever Varner.

This performance is free and open to the public. No tickets are required. Donations will be accepted to offset concert expenses.

For more information, please call (908) 233-4211 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parking is ample in the church lot off of Ferris Place.

ON THE BEAT

Offer Can't Be Refused In Godfather DVD Trilogy

By ANDY GOLDENBERG
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Christmas came early this year when I received a review copy of *The Godfather* DVD trilogy (Paramount Home Video).

Viewed by many as perhaps the greatest cinematographic achievements of the 20th century, Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece comes to DVD in the wide-screen format with a 5.1 surround soundtrack to boot.

While many of our readers are already familiar with the films, I must stress how gorgeous the digital transfer comes across on the DVD. I must also

point out some great new features in this collection.

Not only does the box set include *Godfathers 1, 2 & 3*, but it also comes complete with a separate bonus DVD ripe with interviews, documentaries, theatrical trailers and even the 1974 Academy Award acceptance speeches.

Paramount Home Video has gone above and beyond the call of duty with their care in re-mastering the soundtrack and utilization of the original film stock. If only every classic DVD was treated with this much attention and care.

Five Unique Pieces to Be Presented By Musical Club for Scholarships

WESTFIELD — The biannual scholarship concert of the Musical Club of Westfield, entitled "Linking the Unlikely," will be presented on November 18, at 3 p.m. in the First Baptist Church on Elm Street in Westfield.

The creator of the concert is Drude Sparre Roessler, whose goal was to provide a cross section of instruments and voices, students and professionals, and styles and time periods to attract as diverse and audience as possible.

More than 24 musicians from many local towns will perform the five unique ensemble pieces, each of which is linked to the following piece by one common instrument.

The program will begin with the Brahms Four Songs for women's chorus, harp, and two French horns, conducted by Mrs. Roessler. The harp provides the link to the following piece, Cantos del Tucuman for soprano, harp, flute, violin and percussion by Alberto Ginastera, featuring Elsa Gail Hahn, soprano, of Westfield.

The violin carries over to the third piece, Concertino a Cinque for trumpet, violin, viola, bass, and piano, by Albrechtsberger.

The fourth piece on the program, Four Hymns for tenor, viola, and organ by R. Vaughan Williams, is connected to the previous piece by the viola. The performance will feature Kerry Stubbs, tenor, of Cranford.

The organ provides the link to the fifth and final piece, a Sonata for six trumpets, organ, tympani and continuo by Von Biber. It features Wayne Trager of Edison on trumpet and F. Allen Artz of Elizabeth on the organ.

Mrs. Roessler is a vocal music teacher in Westfield Public Schools, and sings professionally at Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church in Plainfield. She was selected to participate in nine of the Robert Shaw Professional Training Workshops at Carnegie Hall, and she brings her vast experience to her choral conducting.

Miss Hahn is also a Westfield Public School vocal music teacher. As a singer, she often solos for the Musical Club and for local choirs. She is the director of two children's choirs at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford.

Tickets are \$10, and may be obtained at the door, or from any member of the Musical Club of Westfield. All proceeds will support 10 scholarships for local students majoring in music.



Drude Sparre Roessler



Elsa Gail Hahn



MOVING PICTURE...Andy Garcia and Sofia Coppola in one of the best scenes from *Godfather 3*.

Also recently released by Paramount is Woody Allen's *Play It Again Sam*. I believe this is his greatest slapstick comedy. Paramount also sent *The Shootist*, starring John Wayne and *The Hunter*, the final film in Steve McQueen's career.

On the educational side, after finishing the wonderful Lewis & Clark book by Stephen Ambrose, I was very excited to see that Warner Bros. Home Video has just released the Ken Burns PBS documentary, *Lewis & Clark, The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*.

Besides citing actual passages from Lewis' diary, there are bonus features including Charlie Rose interviews with Burns, Dayton Duncan as well as Stephen Ambrose. I hope Warner Bros. releases more PBS programs such as this one.

Sequencing into comedy, *HBO Home Video* has just released the second volume of the *Best of the Chris Rock Show*. Be sure to check out the taxicab confessions segment at the end. They are hilarious!

New Line Home Entertainment continues with its stellar DVD releases as the highly under-rated *Blow*, starring Johnny Depp and Penelope Cruz, which examines the cocaine trade of the 70s and 80s. *New Line* also sent another John Waters' two-pack, *Polyester* and *Desperate Living*.

Universal Home Video continues to crank out the great titles with greater wide-screen Alford Hitchcock including my favorite, *Rope*, as well as *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *Rear Window*.

In addition to those great DVDs, Universal released the original 1961 and 1991 remake of *Cape Fear*, as well as Clint Eastwood's 1971 psych-thriller, *Play Misty For Me*, his directorial debut.

Of all of these great films, my favorite from *Universal* has to be *An American Werewolf in London*. Perhaps this makes some kind of sense as Halloween was just last week, but the picture and re-mastered sound are out of this world. This is the perfect time to pick this one up.

The audio equivalent of the *Godfather* box set arrived last week, courtesy of our friends at *Rhino Records*. *The Grateful Dead-The Golden Road, (1965-1973)* consists of 12 CDs capturing all 11 albums which the band recorded for Warner Brothers (arguably their most adventurous period).

Also included was a disc of mid-60s demos and studio recordings that the band recorded before they were even called the Grateful Dead.

The booklet is extremely well done as is the re-mastered sound which was encoded with HDCD technology, giving the music extra depth, as well as a richness in tone hitherto unknown to previous Dead recordings.

For all you Deadheads out there who believe that the only way to experience the band was live, look no further than this cultural/audio masterpiece for a reassessment.

Rhino continues to outdo itself with box set packaging. As if that is not enough, *Rhino* spoils us further with the beginning of its *Elvis Costello* re-issue campaign featuring re-mastered versions of *My Aim Is True*, *Spike* and *All This Useless Beauty*.

Each disc has been sonically improved and comes with a second CD of demos and outtakes from the album's time period. More great reissues are planned in the coming months, so stay tuned.



SNEAK PEEK...Parents and teachers who recently attended the Washington Elementary School Pot Luck Supper in Westfield were treated to a sneak preview of this year's musical production of *How We Totter*, which was penned by parents Jackie Costello, Dave Shulman and Maryann Waxtel. Performances for this fundraising concert will be held on Friday and Saturday, February 1 and 2 at Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield.

Art Auction and Wine Tasting Fundraiser on Tap at St. Agnes

CLARK — St. Agnes Parish in Clark is sponsoring an Art Exhibition, Auction and Wine Tasting event on Friday, November 9.

Doors will open for preview at 7 p.m. and the auction will begin at 8:30 p.m. A percentage of the proceeds will go to a relief fund to aid the families of the victims from the World Trade Center.

Marlin Art, Inc. presents all art, featuring Limited Edition Prints from the Barnes Foundation. Many selections and pieces will be made available, featuring art in all media and price ranges.

Pieces in contemporary, impressionism, Americana, primitive, seascapes,

southwestern, African-American, wildlife, sports or Christian art will be available.

Art prices begin at \$35. All major credit cards are accepted.

Peterson's Wines Unlimited of Westfield will host the wine tasting. Attendees will be able to taste many different wines from around the world.

St. Agnes is located at 342 Madison Hill Road in Clark. Refreshments will be served. A door prize will be available. Tickets may be reserved by calling St. Agnes at (732) 388-7853 or through Peterson's Wines in Westfield at (908) 232-5341. Tickets are \$30 per person or \$50 per couple.

Come sing with us!

Oratorio Singers of Westfield
Trent Johnson, Director

Requiem
Gabriel Fauré Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Join us for a workshop rehearsal
Saturday, November 17 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Regular Monday Rehearsals begin January 7, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Concert is Sunday, March 10, 2002 at 3 p.m.

First United Methodist Church, One East Broad Street, Westfield
Call Trent Johnson at (908) 233-4211 for information or come to a rehearsal!

This arts program is made possible in part by a grant from the United County Board of Chosen Freeholders.