

Artist of the Week



Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

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

She was a quiet kind of gal, with a spark of persistence, intimacy with family, a destructive penchant for the melancholy, and an amazing gift for the written word - even though most of it had to be done under an assumed name.

All around author Charlotte Brontë could be found an imminent sense of mourning. Born in Thornton, Yorkshire, north of England, the daughter of a clergyman and sister of fellow authors Anne and Emily, Brontë was once described as "a little, plain, provincial, sickly-looking old maid," whose adult clothes could have fit a pre-teenaged girl.

After the family moved to Haworth, England, Brontë's mother, and two sisters Maria and Elizabeth died. Left with her literary sisters Anne and Emily (who also died early), and brother Branwell (who later became an alcoholic), Brontë was left in the care of her father and authoritarian religious aunt.

While her childhood environs might have seemed oppressive, the Brontë children escaped to fantasy worlds, they named "Angria" and "Gondal," which included toy soldiers purchased by their father.

Brontë attended Clergy Daughter's School in Lancashire, but transferred to Roe Head, where she became a teacher. She was forced to leave there because she became depressed, separated from her family. While learning French and German in Brussels with her sister, Brontë fell in love with a married man.

The three Brontë sisters tried, unsuccessfully, to open a school of their own, and they published a collection of their poetry, which only sold two copies. Still, determination sprung out of Charlotte's spirit and she decided not to abandon writing, but to pen "Jane Eyre."

"Shirley," and "Villette" followed, as she continued to publish under the alias of Currer Bell, a pseudonym which may come from her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls. Much to the elder Brontë's dismay and hearty disapproval, Charlotte married Nicholls in 1854.

In a life plagued by tragic deaths of other relatives and unsuccessful ventures, Brontë managed to compose volumes filled with classic stories, reflecting a life much like her own.

During her first year of marriage, she caught pneumonia while pregnant and died at the age of 39.

Concrete Cathedral Paintings Challenge Viewer's Perceptions

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — One of the most fascinating things about art is how experience defines perception. This is most evident in an exhibition at

Bellier in Paris, Galerie Brusberg in Berlin, Galerie Tendances in Paris, Galerie Beck in Leipzig, Achim Moeller Fine Art in New York, and Goethe House in Paris.

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"Cathedral III," oil on canvas, 2000, 54" x 50" by Matthias Düwel.

Union County College's Tomasulo Gallery entitled "Cathedrals," where art created pre-911 produces illusions reminiscent of post-9-11. The exhibit is by German native Matthias Düwel.

Indeed Düwel's expressive abstract figurative paintings could be images of Ground Zero in the days immediately after the collapse of the World Trade Center. Strangely enough, the cathedral paintings are based upon a site in Berlin under heavy construction.

As similar as they may seem to the pictures we saw in the newspaper and on television back in September, Düwel has actually been working on this series for over two years, and was booked for this current exhibit well over a year ago.

"It's an eerie coincidence that Mr. Düwel was already dealing with this subject matter. It could never have been predicted that, in light of what happened in September, that his work would have such significance," said Valerie Larko, Director of the Tomasulo Art Gallery.

There does appear to be one difference in what was seen in the media and what is on the walls of Tomasulo Gallery. The pictures of the actual disaster are stark, cold and ugly. The oil on canvas "Cathedral" paintings possess an ethereal beauty. The enormous structures in the paintings let in light and are infused with pink, green and yellow.

Perceptions again. We don't expect pictures of steel and concrete to be beautiful. Especially after September 11. Because of Ground Zero, we, the viewers, must reconcile the beauty in Düwel's art with the images in our brains of something that was not beautiful in the least.

Of the significance of his "Cathedral" series, in the wake of the events of September 11, Düwel said, "Within a terrible landscape, structures loom as remnants in memoriam, the searchers and excavators perform rituals of mourning. We are as them, seeking out meaning within an obliterated terrain."

Düwel, who has been listed as a member of the faculty at Parsons School of Design at the New School University in New York City, has held solo exhibitions at Galerie J.C.



Pen & Ink

By Michelle H. Le Poidevin

The Big 30 And Where Do I Go?

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

There's a chance I'll move to Philadelphia some day, go skydiving, re-explore the practice of yoga, learn how to make a stained glass lamp, go bungee jumping, teach arts and crafts to sick children, visit Sicily and go parasailing over Hawaii. But not today.

If it sounds like I'm putting off to tomorrow what I should do today, it's because I've had 30 years of practice. In fact, most of my relatives never believed they would make it to 30, lest some catastrophic occurrence stop them from reaching the milestone. I still live like Road Runner, waiting for Wylie Coyote to drop the big Acme safe on me, while I'm trotting along the open road. It hasn't happened yet, and probably never will.

Like most people, I had a couple of goals set up for the big 30. Unrealistic, perhaps, but I had them carved in tablets of marble like the 4 Commandments of "Have This Done By 30 or Don't Live to Tell About It."

1- Get married. I had a chance to do that once and because I only knew the guy a few weeks, it seemed like a bad idea. Now, I know it would have been.

2- Have 2 1/2 children. Without doing No. 1, this wouldn't be likely for me and I'm still not sure what the "1/2" stands for.

3- Live in another country. Now, more than ever, I'm proud to be an American and I don't want to live anywhere else.

4- Be successful in a creative job. In no other job have I been allowed to be more spontaneously creative and involved in more challenging tasks than where I am right now.

Pat Croce recently penned a thought-provoking article for my favorite newspaper, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, entitled, "You Only Die Once." He asks the reader to consider the legacy of their lives thus far and to compose their own tribute or obituary, since none of us will ever really get that opportunity.

"Whether it is on the obituary page or in the hearts and minds of your community, consider how you would be remembered if you left the world today," wrote Croce.

I thought about this for a second, realizing that over the past 30 years, I've meant different things to various people whose paths I've crossed. However, I like to indulge myself in the thought that if I had to create my own homage to me, it would go a little something like this:

"Michelle H. Le Poidevin: "Loved with all of her heart, Pondered with all of her mind, should have gone skydiving."

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
Culinary Quips. It's Always A Party at Feast Catering

By MILLICENT K. BRODY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Presenting: Feast Catering, Lia's Gourmet Food Store, 27 Elm Street, Westfield

Call: (908) 654-0045
Hours: Closed Sundays. Open Monday to Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Open Fridays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Open Saturdays.

Specialties: Specialty sandwiches. Salads and Vegetables. Pasta dishes. Chicken and meat. Fish. Soups. Hors D'oeuvres. Catered cocktail and dinner parties. Catering for special events.

Cost: Dinner for two includes entrees, side dishes and salad, approximately: \$25; Lunch: between \$8 and \$10.

FYI. Major credit cards accepted. Choose a sandwich platter for your office luncheon or party. Choose from any of the 14 specialty sandwiches. Served with fresh fruit, they are cut into thirds, \$89.95. Cocktail party

for 50, combination of food, no beverages or staff, \$35 per person. Other passed hors d'oeuvres, and beverage package are available.

No matter the time of day or

continued. "I seemed to always be around learning things, yet, I was never encouraged to become a chef."

Taking a position with Kevan Viner,



Millicent K. Brody for The Leader/The Times

evening, there is always something to eat at Feast Catering Lias. Foodies entering the shop can leave in a dilemma.

With one-half of the eatery filled with enormous refrigerated cases brimming with all sorts of tasty dishes, there are even more in-your-face platters resting above the counters.

an esteemed British Chef, Bigmore honed his culinary skills at the famous Penny Pots Restaurant in Cornwall. After graduating from college, he headed to the kitchens in the South of France, before preparing meals in the French Alps.

While visiting a cousin in Watchung, Bigmore met his wife-to-be on a blind date. After an exciting courtship, and trip around the world, the young chef returned to America, got his green card and after 18 months of searching for the perfect place to open a business, took over Feast Catering, Lias.

Increasing the entire menu of offerings, the chef proprietor added his own personal touch to the previous owner's recipes. "All of our soups are made with fresh vegetable stock and whenever appropriate, low fat stock," he said. "Our customers love our balsamic marinated and char-grilled chicken. They love our chicken Français, chicken Marsala and lemon chicken. As a matter of fact, all of our chicken dishes are enormously popular."

Bigmore added, "We do not have a large catering menu. I like to discover what my customers want to serve at their parties, and whenever possible, prepare their favorite dishes. I believe a catered party menu should always include a good chicken dish, a cold poached or grilled salmon, a flounder or lemon sole Français, as well as a variety of seasonal vegetables, salads and pastas."

From intimate dinner parties, to large celebrations, to Christenings, graduations and holiday gatherings, the staff at Feast Catering Lia's, is able to cater to your every need.

"We have a steady and loyal clientele," added Bigmore. "Our aim is to expand our catering operation." Everyone is welcome to stop by and discuss their celebration with Stephen. They are even welcome to relax with a cup of coffee and one of his specialty sandwiches or salads.



Millicent K. Brody for The Leader/The Times



Beating or Accepting The Dreaded 30

The Westfield Jaycees present
Marshall Crenshaw
Saturday, April 6, 2002
8 pm
General Admission \$25
Westfield High School Auditorium
Westfield, NJ
Tickets available at:
Ahrre's Coffee Roastery
Jaycee and Sports Team Members
or call 908-233-6591
All proceeds to benefit:
+ WHS Girls Lacrosse & Boys Ice Hockey + Jaycee Scholarships +
+ September 11 Memorial Fund +

E-mail the A&E Editor, Michelle Le Poidevin, at ae@goleader.com

Arbor Concert to Honor Westfield Foundation

WESTFIELD — On Sunday, April 21, Arbor Chamber Music will honor the Westfield Foundation with an Ovation Award, which is given annually to an organization demonstrating on-going commitment and support to the arts.

The Foundation has helped make the Arbor's educational outreach and concert series possible. The Mentoring Program, in which Arbor musicians work closely with talented instrumental students at Westfield High School, is also aided by the support of the Foundation.

Students have had the opportunity to be exposed to and work with the St. Lawrence String Quartet, Brentano String Quartet, Zephyros Wind Quartet, Classical and Klezmer clarinetist David Krakauer, violinists Lucy Stoltzman and Maria Bachmann, as well as guitarist Christopher Kenniff.

This year, the Foundation is funding the Arbor's production of "L'Histoire du Soldat" at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield on Sunday, April 21, and at Westfield High School on Monday, April 22. The Award ceremony will be held one half-hour before the April 21 concert at 3:30 p.m.

For more information, please call (908) 232-1116.



CLEVER QUILTERS...Paula Pearl of Fanwood and her daughter, Ali Pearl, display a wall hanging crafted by children during an after-school program in Fanwood. This piece, as well as many others, will be exhibited during the annual quilt show, "Sharing the Quilts," sponsored by The Harvest Quilters of Central New Jersey, on Saturday, April 27, at the United Methodist Church, 1441 Springfield Avenue, New Providence, from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.