

ARTS ENTERTAINMENT



Get Outta The House

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

On Friday night, April 26, at 7 p.m., the Rutgers Film Co-op/ New Jersey Media Arts Center will feature a showing of John Cassavetes's 1980 classic film, *Gloria*. The 121-minute film stars Gena Rowlands in the lead role as the ex-mob mistress who gives her all to save the life of a little boy whose family has been wiped out by hitmen. You may have seen the remake with Sharon Stone. Or you may have seen "The Sopranos." It's \$5 to get in, and will be screened at Scott Hall No. 123 (Near the corner of College Avenue and Hamilton Street), College Avenue Campus. They sometimes make last-minute changes, so call (732) 932-8482 before heading out.

World-renowned jazz musician Kenny Garrett is back, performing on Sunday evening, April 28, at the fourth annual *Jazz Concert for the Interfaith Council for the Homeless of Union County*. The performance will take place at the Union County Arts Center in Rahway, where alto saxophonist Garrett will include selections from his newly-released CD, "Happy People," in the program. Garrett has played with legends Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw, and has received worldwide recognition, including a Grammy nomination. The concert begins at 6 p.m., and tickets are \$35.

If that didn't do it for you, the one and only Ray Charles will be at the Arts Center on Thursday, May 2, at 8 p.m. There is no hope needed here. He is truly a marvel to be enjoyed live at any cost. There are still tickets available in the form of performance at \$35 and \$55. You can order them online at <http://www.uccac.org/OrderTix.html>. I don't know about you, but this guy can sing for me anytime. Count me in.

Did you know that Westfield has a Glee Club? You can see them perform either Saturday, April 27, at 8 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, Westfield, or on Sunday April 28, at 4 p.m. at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Berkeley Heights. Each performance features appearances by special artists, and the program will include sections in patriotic, musical theater, spiritual, and classic rock and roll styles. For additional information, please call Dale Juntilla at (908) 232-0673.

If you want to strut your stuff onstage, auditions for Middlesex County's *Plays-In-The-Park*, the historic summer musical theater, will take place on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, May 3-5, at Stephen J. Capecatro Theater (formerly the Roosevelt Park Amphitheater), in Edison. The three plays this season will be *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Crazy For You*, and *Titanic*. These are open calls for adults, 18 and over. They will provide a pianist, you provide your best 16 bars of an up tempo song, and sheet music in the proper key.

Junior Musical Club Elects New Officers for Season

WESTFIELD - The Junior Musical Club of Westfield voted in its new officers for the 2002-2003 season on April 7.

The new officers include: Jason Tammam as President, Diane Park as Vice President of Auditions, Emily Chen as Vice President of Programs, Kelly Yang as Vice President of Publicity, Dorothy Chou as Secretary, Thomas Killian as Treasurer, and Henry Namkung as Director of Hospitality.

The group will host its Senior Recital on Sunday, April 28, at 3 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street, Westfield. Attendance is free.

Chansonettes Group to Offer Musical Programs in May

WESTFIELD - The Chansonettes of Westfield, a women's choral group, will perform "This Land Is Your Land," a program filled with patriotic songs, celebrating the country's greatness, throughout the area.

Performances will begin on Thursday, May 2, at The Chelsea in Fanwood, Thursday, May 9, at Independent Village in Basking Ridge, Wednesday, May 15, at Independent Village Fellowship in Basking Ridge, Thursday, May 16, at Runnells Hospital, and Tuesday, May 21, at The Chelsea in Warren.

Tunes such as "New York, New York," "Jambalaya," "Oklahoma," and "God Bless America" will be included in the Chansonettes' program. To book a performance for the future, please call Jackie Costello at (908) 789-5819. For more information regarding the group, please call Ginny Bucci at (908) 232-1750. The Chansonettes are under the direction of Jean Schork and accompanied by Mary Ellen Freda.



STILL LIFE IN OIL...Original oil paintings by Cathy Schaefer will be displayed at the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts (NJCA), 68 Elm Street, Summit, from Friday, May 10, to Friday, June 7, at the Members Gallery. An artist's reception will be held on Sunday, May 19, from 2 to 5 p.m. For more information, please call NJCA at (908) 273-9121.



POPCORN™ Y Tu Mama Tambien: You'll Remember This Momma

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
3 1/2 popcorns

What do you know about being male, teen-aged, Mexican and bourgeois? Well, unless you fit all four adjectives, chances are you'll know a lot more after seeing director Alfonso Cuarón's *Y Tu Mama Tambien*.

To us Gringos in the audience, that's "And Your Mother Also." But any way you say it, this import that's been knocking around the art house circuit since winning mucho international film festival awards last year is a must see...and read.

The version you'll most likely be taking in is Spanish with English subtitles. Don't count on an English-dubbed version for the subtitle-challenged unless the movie gains real big steam on these shores.

Of course, if you want to see it in Spanish with Finnish subtitles, a call to either your travel agent or directly to Finnair would be in order. Probably nice and cool over there this time of year. And either before the show or perhaps as an après-theater repast, you could stop in to any number of fine restaurants and get some of that dried fish. It's cod isn't it?

Then, if you're not in a hurry to get back here, you could take a side trip to see the fjords. Or are they just in Norway? No matter...anything that starts with the letters fj is worth a look-see. Hey, you only live once. And whether they know it or not, that's precisely what motivates Tenoch and Julio.

They're the two soon-to-be college students at the center of Cuarón's politically savvy, sociologically astute variation on the coming of age saga.

Be warned, ye who are squeamish when it comes to sexual situations in the cinema, or anywhere else for that matter. The movie opens with a rather explicit bedroom scene as one of the boys bids his girlfriend adios, in a manner of speaking. She and the other fellow 's gal, who also happen to be pals, are off to Italy for the summer where, they swear, they will not cheat on their beaus. And in turn, highborn Tenoch Turbide (Diego Luna) and middle-class Julio Zapata (Gael Garcia Bernal) vow likewise.

It's a funny thing. From what we learn of Julio and Tenoch via dialogue and some splendidly dry narration that doesn't change an octave whether discussing a character's shoe size or describing a natural disaster, they are basically good kids.

Granted, they are a little sexually obsessed. Nay, scratch that: They are very sexually obsessed. Well, actually, you could say the boys have the sexual morals of alley cats.

Still, while we surmise that Julio and Tenoch will transgress during this summer of newfound freedom, something in us is convinced that they probably issued the pledges of fidelity with all their hearts.

Not too far in the recesses of their psyches, albeit stashed somewhere behind their steaming ids and enflamed egos, lies the knowledge of what is right, and what it takes to be a responsible human being. It's just that it's summer. And something in the air says it's the last summer.

Thus when Julio and Tenoch turn *Y Tu Mama Tambien* into a road movie after they hook up with Luisa (Maribel Verdu), the proverbial older woman and wife of Tenoch's foppish writer cousin, sex is the movie's humorous driving point. But only on the surface.

We're too busy laughing at the boys' awkward antics to notice that Cuarón's film is stealthily working its way to much deeper and philosophical waters. Suddenly enveloped in the plot that he has so eloquently unfolded, we are moved.

We are surprised how subtly and efficiently the filmmaker has turned what originally seemed like just another teen free-for-all into a very literate motion picture.

All three main acting performances are solid. But Maribel Verdu's Luisa, who hailed from Spain when cousin Jano originally met her, is the emotional catalyst. Either preoccupied or troubled, though we can't quite figure which, she is moved to action when her wretchedly manipulative spouse calls from a conference abroad to confess the latest in a series of indiscretions.

Earlier, at a social function given by Tenoch's political Brahmin dad where the president of Mexico was the guest of honor, a smirkingly joyful Julio and Tenoch enter

the pretty new immigrant with their boyish chutzpah and charm.

Whether or not she was flattered by their effusive wing fluttering, when they invited her for a jaunt to Heaven's Mouth, a secret beach they conjured up to impress her, she declined with a question: "What would Jano think?"

Naturally, Julio and Tenoch are surprised when a reconsidering Luisa telephones to take them up on their offer. Skeddaddling in a flurry of preparations, which includes acquiring a left wing activist sister's car, they assure Luisa that, yes, the trip is still on. Of course that there is no Heaven's Mouth is of little consequence to the boys, and probably to Luisa, too. Thus the road trip begins. The surprises await.

Enchanted by the energy of her new surroundings, Luisa drinks in the sights and sounds of Mexico as she plays interrogator, instigator and temptress to the junior varsity Lotharios. The consequences and divulences are many, and sometimes profound.

But while the troika's adventure plays on several levels, it's not the sexual bawdiness, but the political statement that supplies Cuarón's work with its most satisfying quotient of risk.

As if paralleling the moral hypocrisies that Julio and Tenoch represent, there is a running commentary on the socioeconomic hypocrisies of Mexican life. And it's delivered with deadpan understatement, in a steady flow of busy backdrop action the way Woody Allen might fashion it.

For no matter what decadent folderol takes place among our hedonistic threesome down stage, there is always that other world, the one much less happy than theirs — the one obviously invisible to them through conditioning.

Yet, we filmgoers sure notice the endless supply of stoical peasants Cuarón's camera spies in *Y Tu Mama Tambien* as they are detained by Federales at ubiquitous roadblocks dotting the countryside — a landscape of natural beauty often littered by the abandoned and rusted machinery that inevitably identifies a nation of haves and have-nots. And even with Finnish subtitles, there's nothing very sexy about that.

Y Tu Mama Tambien, not rated but possessing nudity, strong language and explicit themes, is an IFC Films release directed by Alfonso Cuarón and stars Maribel Verdu, Gael Garcia Bernal and Diego Luna. Running time: 105 minutes.



PIANO PRODIGY... Yaniv Brenner, a fifth grader at Jefferson Elementary School in Westfield, will perform in a concert for two pianos on Saturday, May 18, at 1 p.m. at the Marriot Music Building Auditorium of Rutgers University, located on Douglas Campus at 100 Clifton Avenue in New Brunswick. Yaniv has been studying piano with Edison teacher Malvina Potop for five years. For the past three years, he has participated in the Somerset County Audition of New Jersey, where he has been selected to play in the corresponding honors recital. He has also accompanied his school choir on several occasions. The program will include compositions from Bach, Mozart, Hayden, Bortnyansky, Beethoven, Schumann, Rollin and Tchaikowsky. The public is invited to attend.

Area Filmmaker, Lansdown Creator Tom Zuber Tells Story Honestly

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

HILLSBOROUGH -- On a shoestring budget of \$70,000, heaps of favors called in, and his former Central New Jersey neighborhood behind him, Piscataway native Tom Zuber fashioned the dark comedy, *Lansdown*, which will come to Hillsborough Cinemas this weekend before premiering in New York City and Los Angeles.

Filmed in Edison, Highland Park, Bound Brook, Somerville, Branchburg, Whitehouse Station, New Brunswick, and his native high school stomping grounds of Hillsborough, Zuber chose the locations because they fit into the low budget, access to the sites was simpler, and the spots are close to his heart.

In *Lansdown*, which Zuber co-wrote with his brother, Jeff, the tale of a Jake Jorgenson, a man who discovers of his wife's infidelity, is told masterfully through Zuber's directorial debut. Unexpected twists arise and the climax and suspense seize the audience through Jorgenson's spiraling journey through a life turned upside down as he opts to take matters into his own hands by murdering her lover.

Deriving laughter over something normally serious versus the usual canned humor that comes from watching someone slip on a banana peel is how Zuber describes the genre of dark comedy. While he plans to delve into other genres in future films, he believes that the events of 9-11 certainly increase the world's need for art.

"Art is one of the few things that separates us from the animals," said Zuber, a filmmaker who admits he is "very political" and "very socially aware." However, he said, "I always try not to make a political statement in my films."

Influenced by the humor of funny guy filmmakers The Coen Brothers, author of "Get Shorty," Elmore Leonard and filmmaker The Stanley Kubrick (*Dr. Strangelove*),

Zuber believes his top responsibility as a filmmaker is to "tell the story honestly."

"The story is the master," he said, "and everyone on a film set is answering to the master." However, the

Canada, with a seven-figure budget in direct contrast to *Lansdown's* spending plan.

Zuber confided that the premise for *The Fall* is a thriller similar to *Seven*, which starred Brad Pitt and



Ingrid McKinley for The Westfield Leader and The Times
RISING FILMMAKER... Tom Zuber, a native of Piscataway, spoke with The Westfield Leader and The Times regarding his directorial debut in *Lansdown*, a film which will open in the Hillsborough Cinemas this weekend.

higher up the Hollywood ladder a filmmaker climbs, Zuber knows it is vital for him to maintain a hands-on, fully-involved approach to directing.

Connections in the business world, which help fund moviemaking, are also imperative, noted Zuber, because they "buy" more negotiating power for the director during the filmmaking process.

With plans to pursue acting roles in his films once his directing career has skyrocketed, Zuber has three scripts — *Little Athens*, *The Fall* and *Where* — circulating among top names in the industry.

Focusing on Generation Y, which is also close to Zuber's heart, he would also schedule shoots for *Little Athens* in Central New Jersey. Half of the financing is in place for *The Fall*, a film shot in Vancouver,

Morgan Freeman. While, *Where* is a "throwback to the 1950s," a time period near and dear to the filmmaker.

As for *Lansdown*, he considers the film "a calling card," establishing Zuber and his colleagues as seasoned professionals who can organize and hire a cast, and have the technical and creative know-how to take a film beyond the marquis.

Lansdown will debut at the Hillsborough Cinemas, 111 Raider Boulevard, Hillsborough on Friday, April 26, from 7:15 to 9:20 p.m.; Saturday, April 27, 1, 3:05, 5:10 and 7:15 p.m.; Sunday, April 28, 1, 3:05, 5:10 and 7:15 p.m., and Monday, April 29, through Thursday, May 2, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.

For more information, please visit www.lansdown.net.



VIBRANT HARMONIES...The Rahway Valley Jerseyaires will present its Festival of Harmony with barbershop-style music on Saturday, May 4, at 2 p.m. in Roosevelt Elementary School, 811 St. Georges Avenue in Rahway. Admission is free. For information, please call Chairman Joe Weiss at (908) 486-5218. Members of the Vibrations Quartet, include, left to right, front row, lead vocalist Don Richards, baritone Chris Cooklia, back row, tenor Mathew Williams and bass Stephen Ocone.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Art Show

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Marjorie McConell for her ink and acrylic piece, "Viking Sunset" (\$400), which included the embers of a large tree and a vermilion sun, all sparkling with a glittery gold substance.

Ken Malpas delved to new depths with "Angel Fish" (\$300), an acrylic featuring a large fish composed of green, yellow and blue dots layering over and over again, like multiple Seurat paintings.

First place oil painting "Grand Isle" (not for sale) by Steve Tomcyk was yet another example of how Scotch Plains-Fanwood Art Association members have mastered oil and acrylic painting. In his piece, Tomcyk captured the wispy clouds in an azure sky with photorealistic beauty.

One of the more inventive creations was crafted by Mary Claire Hahn in the mixed medium piece, "The Challenge of Choice" (not for sale). Flawless composition and use of pointillism technique were found in this piece. The antennae of the little sea critter were laced by vibrant seed beads — just the perfect touch.

Both Ingrid Doelling's "Dresden" (\$50) and Barbara Swindlehart's "Man in White Hat" (not for sale), which won first place, needed further work, especially in the areas of depicting light and shadow. "Up the Pohatcong Stream," a pastel by Ruth Grabner (\$150), also needed extra work with regard to developing a sense of depth in color.

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Arts Association will continue its exhibition through Saturday, April 27, dur-

ing regular library hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and Friday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A reception and awards presentation will be held on noon on April 27. Ann Swain of Swain's Gallery in Plainfield will determine those artists in the association worthy of receiving awards. Admission is free.

Michelle H. Le Poidevin is the Arts & Entertainment Editor of The Westfield Leader and The Times. She may be contacted at ae@goleader.com.

St. Peter by Sea

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strong competition.

This 12th annual benefit concert was presented by the Youth and Family Counseling Service, an organization originally set up in 1918 by St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield to meet the necessity of caring for the wives of families of servicemen overseas.

Today, they meet the needs brought on by the complexities of daily life through counseling many of the citizens of the communities of Berkeley Heights, Clark, Cranford, Garwood, Mountainside, Rahway, Scotch Plains and Westfield.

Definitely worth checking out, hear and see Father Alphonse and his orchestra at their next concert on Saturday April 27, at 8 p.m. at the AT&T Center in Bridgewater or on Friday, May 10, at 8 p.m. in the Strand Theater in Lakewood by calling the orchestra at (732) 920-4444 or by visiting www.orchsp.com.

David Palladino is the Classical Music Correspondent for The Westfield Leader and The Times. He may be contacted at dpalladino@goleader.com.

Coming Next Week

- The best of the Street Fair in downtown Westfield will be highlighted and reviewed by Michelle Le Poidevin;
- Millicent Brody will take a look at Clyne & Murphy;
- Something old, something new comes to antique shop in Mountainside;
- Artist of the Week, Incubus, will be discussed and another one of those opinionated A&E editorials is on its way.

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