

ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

Boutique Auction Will Be Centerpiece of May 4 Home Tour, Hosted by Westfield Symphony Friends

WESTFIELD -- This year's Annual Tour of Notable Homes, presented by the Friends of the Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO) on Saturday, May 4, is a unique study in contrasts.

According to Friends President Deirdre Malacra, the four homes and one garden, open to the public from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., display a reverence for tradition and love of Americana, but are designed for the fast-paced framework of contemporary family life.

"Since the decorative arts have come to mean more and more to our collective identity, Home Tour visitors will appreciate glimpsing closely into the interior lives of four homes known for their serene pride of place and individual character," said Malacra.

Along with form and function, fun is the order of the day. Trader Joe's will be on hand with free snacks and refreshments. An exhibit of the work of widely-collected visual artist Helen Frank and a raffle of more than 35 exquisite gift baskets, overflowing with luxury goods and services donated by area merchants, will round out the day.

"This year our theme baskets include one for Father's Day, Mother's Day and Christmas, as well as baskets designed for brides, babies, gourmands and gardeners. One basket brims over with stylish Parisian accessories from Interiors and the Gift Monkey; another is filled with items that evoke an Italian spirit. There is



BASKET MAGIC...Carole Brendel and Meggie DeCorral, Westfield Symphony Orchestra Friends, weave basket magic for the annual Home Tour gift basket raffle.

POPCORN™ The Scorpion King: Grappling With the Truth

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
2 popcorns

Recently viewing the nonsensical but action-packed *Scorpion King*, with wrestling star "The Rock," I was reminded of my uncle Marcus' brief but illustrious brush with wrestling greatness.

There are differences between the two men. Whereas the charismatic Rock is nearly 6'5" and weighs 275 pounds, Marcus, father of my cousin and childhood friend, Jackie, was a small bull of a man, perhaps no taller than 5'4" and weighing about 170 pounds. And, The Rock, now reprising the role he first fashioned, albeit very briefly, in *The Mummy Returns* (2001), is really a professional wrestler.

Marcus owned a vegetable market in Newark, and, to the best of my knowledge, never graced a professional wrestling ring, let alone a movie screen. But he had optimistic green eyes, a kindly smile, and my father loved talking to him for hours. In our family that would qualify you as charismatic. Once upon a time, Jackie and I decided he'd make a great professional wrestler.

So it came to pass that for one summer week in the late '50s, at a hotel in the Catskill mountains, he became Carlo Supremo, world famous wrestler. He was taking a holiday from the rigors of the ring, and decided to treat his son and favorite nephew to a little vacation.

Ah, the instantaneous status it brought. Think of it with your brain set to age 12. We were the progeny of a man who made his living tearing the limbs from people. We were respected and feared among our peers. Our celebrity continued without incident, for five days.

It was at the dinner table on the fifth day of our vacation when Marcus said he had to ask us something. It seems the strangest inquiry came his way earlier that afternoon while he played pinocle on the wraparound verandah with some fellow guests. Quite out of the blue and to Uncle Marcus' complete puzzlement, the card player from Scarsdale pushed a pad and a pen his way. She said she wanted an autograph from the great Carlo Supremo.

Then, after musing how lucky their little group was to have Carlo at the card table, she boldly asked, "Mr. Supremo, I hope you don't mind me asking, but have you ever killed a man in the ring?" Apparently, there was no starting with the small stuff for this gal.

Jackie and I didn't get to see what my diminutive Uncle Marcus' expression looked like when the question was posed. Nor did we ever learn what his rejoinder was to the autograph hound. Now at the dinner table we were witnessing his perplexed face as he tried to piece together the rather odd incident. He asked us, "Have you been telling people I'm a wrestler?"

So we told him the whole truth, and how we thought it would be cool if everyone at the hotel thought he were indeed Carlo Supremo. At which point the oddest expression of amusement graced his visage, though just for a scant second or two. It even looked as if he were trying to hide a smile. In any case, the deed went unpunished, and my uncle didn't betray us to the other kids, nor to any other family members, ever.

I like to think there was a part of Marcus that was flattered — perhaps honored that we thought enough of him to believe he could pull it off. In retrospect, I suspect maybe he judged our charade with his brain switched to 12-year-old. Which is what filmgoers will have to do if they expect to enjoy the thrills and spills perpetrated in *The Scorpion King*.

Apply any more brain power than that to this silly Saturday matinee throwback and you just might be too smart to understand the

combination of history, Biblical tale, myth and Hollywood fantasy. Otherwise, it's all there. Everything but the plastic period helmets the movie theaters used to hand out as a premium whenever they showed a sandal-and-sword epic. You know the sort. Steve Reeves used to turn them out like sausages.

Granted, *The Scorpion King* is reminiscent of that mixed era genre. Certainly, there is enough historical inaccuracy to frown the forehead of any Egyptologist worth his salt pills. However, at least this new muddling of myth with fact isn't so outlandish as to counterpoise ancient barbarians with their space-aged counterparts.

Such was a B-movie practice quite common in the late '50s and early '60s, and actually not without its share of boosters.

Let's face it. Not too many Oxford history professors are going to make *The Scorpion King* required viewing for all those who want to understand the Middle East 5,000 years ago. At least that's not the drawing card that Universal was counting on when they paid The Rock \$5.5 million to play the title role.

As Mathayus, the Scorpion King, he continues the Hollywood tradition of muscular athlete as action-adventure hero — a style Johnny Weissmuller first popularized in the 1930s. He's the latest model handsome brute. He's what will be pulling fans and gawkers alike into the Bijou. That, plus a whole lot of derring-do with few special effects to obfuscate the action.

In case you're old enough to already like the mushy parts, there's also the pulchritudinous Kelly Hu as Cassandra the love interest who, true to her name, is a soothsayer. Except that people believe this very accurate Cassandra. Especially Memnon (Steven Brand), the evil tyrant who would conquer all that she surveys. He keeps her uncomfortably on retainer. So far the scantily clad seer, her costume doubtless approved by the prophet's union, has done great by her boss.

Then, when good-looking Mathayus arrives, the legendary assassin has her rethinking her career opportunities. The head of a coalition of otherwise warring tribes banded together to destroy the egomaniacal Memnon, his first strategy is to kidnap the pretty prophesier and thus smudge Memnon's crystal ball.

The Stockholm Syndrome kicks in (y'know, as in Patty Hearst commiserating with her captors). Oops, am I giving away too much? No matter. Memnon gets her back. I'm not telling if Mathayus gets her back again.

If the filmmakers had wanted a real actor, they would have acquired one. They didn't, so they didn't. True to form, The Rock's acting is wooden and unemotional. Then that's the dubious charm of this film phylum. At work is the fantasy of the outsider conquering not only the villain, but the medium as well.

For while The Rock's an amateur when it comes to things thespian, it's his reputation as a pro wrestler that wins us over. Just ask Carlo Supremo.

The Scorpion King, rated PG-13, is a Universal Pictures release directed by Chuck Russell and stars Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Kelly Hu and Steven Brand. Running time: 93 minutes.

Get Outta The House

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

The Friends of Music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church will present its 10th Anniversary Spring Concert on Sunday, May 5, at 7 p.m. The concert will feature The St. Paul's Choir joined by world-renowned soloists and members of the Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. You will be treated to a performance of a newly-completed edition of Mozart's *Requiem*, as well as Vivaldi's *Concerto in D major for Two Trumpets and Violin*. All are invited, and donations will be accepted at the door. For more information, please contact Charles Banks at (908) 232-8506, extension no 17. St. Paul's is located at 414 East Broad Street in Westfield across from Town Hall.

Also on Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., you can celebrate the arrival of spring at the 13th Cranford Arts & Crafts Festival, where you will find a delightful combination of food, crafts, music, and activities for the kids. There will be more than 150 exhibitors set up in the downtown area, including jewelry designers, furniture makers, airbrush artists, crafters of stained glass, and much more. A highlight of the festival will be a comedy show by New Jersey's own Uncle Floyd, live between noon and 2 p.m. on the stage on North Avenue near the Rolex Clock. There will also be musical performances throughout the afternoon. Oh, and bring an appetite — there will be treats from fresh fruit smoothies to toasted mozzarella and cornbread sandwiches.

On Wednesday, May 8, at 8 p.m., The Musical Club of Westfield will present a recital in celebration of Music Week. The program has a patriotic theme, relating to the history of America, with songs like "I've Been Working on the Railroad," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" and "America." Come to the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street to enjoy the Musical Club Chorus and featured soloists.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* is next up at the Cranford Dramatic Club Theatre, 78 Winans Avenue in Cranford. It will be there weekends through Saturday, May 18, and tickets are \$15. You are all familiar with this popular classic romantic musical drama, film, album, and yes, even a recent television movie remake with Glenn Close and Harry Connick, Jr. Take your mom on Sunday, May 12 — it's Mother's Day.

The Theater Project at Union County College is now presenting *All in the Timing*, by David Ives. This collection of short one-act plays is unusual. If you are familiar with Ives, you know that he presents situations that are paradoxical in nature and highly amusing. See it on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays until Sunday, May 19, for \$7-\$14. There will be an opening reception after the show this evening, and on Saturday, May 4, there will be a Talk Back Session with the director, Mark Spina, and the cast. Call the box office at (908) 659-5189.

E-mail A&E News to: [ae@goleader.com!](mailto:ae@goleader.com)



MUSIC OF THE NATION...Westfield Mayor Gregory McDermott signs a proclamation designating May 5 through 12 as National Music Week. Pictured, left to right, are: Beverly Thomas Shea, Musical Club of Westfield President, Mayor McDermott, Ruth Obeld, National Music Week Chairwoman, and Elsa Hahn, Choral Director.

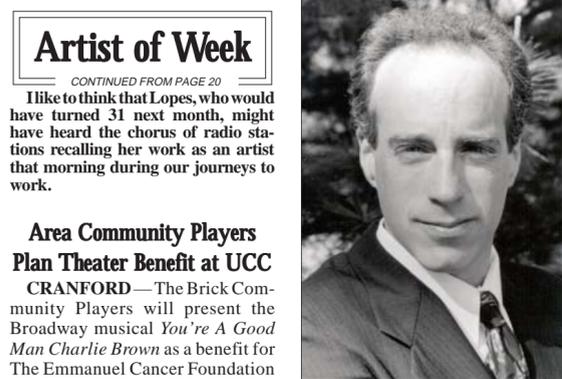
Mayor McDermott Proclaims National Music Week May 5-12

WESTFIELD — The public is invited to join a celebration of American Music to be performed by members of the Musical Club of Westfield on Wednesday, May 8, at 8 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street in Westfield.

The program for National Music Week will be a retrospective of the growth of the U.S., including choral music conducted by Elsa Hahn. The accompanists will be Mary Beth McFall, piano; Jan Somers, flute; and Beverly Thompson Shea, harp.

composed by an anonymous early American composer to a modern work by Leonard Bernstein, as well as patriotic tunes.

Westfield Mayor Gregory McDermott has signed a proclamation declaring May 5 through 12 as National Music Week, with the theme "Music — to be Treasured." The proclamation asks all citizens of Westfield to observe and take part in activities recognizing the importance of musicians and musical organizations in the cultural life in the area.



Artist of Week

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

Like to think that Lopes, who would have turned 31 next month, might have heard the chorus of radio stations recalling her work as an artist that morning during our journeys to work.

Area Community Players Plan Theater Benefit at UCC

CRANFORD — The Brick Community Players will present the Broadway musical *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* as a benefit for The Emmanuel Cancer Foundation on Friday, May 31, at 8 p.m. in the Union County College Theatre, Nomahegan Building, located at 1033 Springfield Avenue, Cranford. Tickets are \$15. For tickets, please call The Emmanuel Cancer Foundation at (908) 322-4323, extension no. 17.

Cartoon Corner



Friends of Music at St. Paul's PRESENTS

Requiem

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Triple Concerto

Antonio Vivaldi

The Saint Paul's Choir WITH MEMBERS OF

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Sally Wolf, soprano Jane Bunnell, mezzo-soprano
Randall Reid-Smith, tenor ElemEly, baritone
Garth Greenup & Michael Baker, trumpet
Brennan Sweet, violin
Charles M. Banks, conductor

Sunday, May 5 at 7:00 P.M.

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
414 East Broad Street - Westfield New Jersey
(across from Town Hall)



TREATS ABOUND...This Christmas basket is one of 35 other themed baskets brimming with goodies. They will be raffled on Saturday, May 4, during the Westfield Symphony Orchestra Home Tour.

even a child's size exact replica BMW that is pedal-driven," said WSO Friend Carole Brendel.

"The value of these baskets range from \$100-\$700, thanks to the generosity and sympathy spirit of so many Westfield area merchants, including Williams-Sonoma, Douglas Perfume, JMK BMW, Bloomingdale's, Poppyfield's, La Crema Gelato & Caffè," she added.

Also being raffled are dinners at fine restaurants, such as Samba Grill, Cathay 22, Chez Catherine, WSO concert tickets, spa visits, and a luxurious surprise from Tiffany & Co.

The visual joys of décor will be accompanied by live classical music provided by students of WSO Maestro David Wroe. Up and coming artists, cellist Minkyung Lee and violinist Magda Czajkowska, will play at one house, while 12-string guitarist Jonathan Klizas sets the tone at another.

Tickets for Tour 2002 are \$20 in advance and \$25 day of tour. For ticket sale locations and more information, please call the WSO at (908) 232-9400 or visit www.westfieldnj.com/wso/friends.

Proceeds from the Home Tour benefit the WSO, as well as its educational outreach programs, touching the lives of more than 2000 students through special concerts and master classes. The award-winning WSO, comprised of professional musicians led by Maestro David Wroe, is the Resident Orchestra of Union County.

THE THEATER PROJECT
Union County College's Resident Theater Company

\$4.00 off Any full price ticket with this ad Fri. thru Sun.

ALL in the TIMING

May 2ND THRU 19TH

Thursday thru Saturday at 8pm, Sunday at 3pm
Tickets \$7 on Thursday and \$14 on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday

1033 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, NJ
908-659-5189

Clubhouse

ANTIQUES & FURNISHINGS

Mountainside, NJ

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