

Arts & Entertainment

Performers Come From All Over For JCC's 'Music On Martine'

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

SCOTCH PLAINS—The Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Central NJ recently kicked off its program of musical events for teens with its fourth "Music on Martine" concert.

Local band, Goodman Brown, whose members are all seniors at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, and whose performances have been likened to the classic rock band, The Who, opened the concert and got the crowd moving with the Doors' "Five to One" and "Helter Skelter" by the Beatles.

"In my opinion, [Goodman Brown] is one of the most talented bands from this area," commented Kate Statton, a senior at Westfield High School (WHS), and a member of the Teen Committee at the JCC.

Goodman Brown's appearance at "Music on Martine" was a recent rare performance for the band, whose members have been busy writing their own music and songs.

"We want to put together some sort of album or demo before we all head our separate ways and go off to college. Hopefully, we will have something recorded by the end of March, 2007," said Luke Saenz, bass player and vocalist for the band.

Goodman Brown has been together since February of 2004 when Mr. Saenz joined other band members - drummer and vocalist, Peter Bistis; guitarist, Alex Cvetovich; and pianist, keyboardist and vocalist, Alex Russo for a Tsunami Relief Benefit.

According to Mr. Saenz, the "chemistry was good," prompting the four young men to form a band. Since then, Goodman Brown has performed at the Knitting Factory in New York City, the Rotunda in Philadelphia, Chubby's in Red Bank and the Cross-



DON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN...With their performances drawing comparisons to The Who, local band Goodman Brown, whose members are all seniors at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, opened "Music on Martine."

roads in Garwood. "We are all about the love [of] music," said Mr. Saenz, adding that of all the venues they have played, "no one has ever treated us better than the guys at the JCC."

At the "Music on Martine" concert, Goodman Brown was followed by singer/songwriter Stuart Pierce from Durham, N.C., and his band, who sang songs from their debut album, "Too Far to Fly."

A social activist as much as a performer, Mr. Pierce has espoused the cause of clean water and medicine for AIDS victims in Africa. His music can't be placed in one genre, and contains elements of both rock music as well as folk music.

Dan Avissar, formerly the Teen Outreach Coordinator for the JCC, and a member of Stuart Pierce's band while at Duke University, stepped right up on stage and played the drums for a

couple of songs at "Music on Martine." "I was so impressed by Stuart Pierce's music that I bought the band's CD," said Pauline Barkin of Cranford, a student at Union County Magnet School and a member of the JCC Teen Committee, and one of the Teen Reps on the Board of Trustees.

Thao Nguyen, formerly from Falls Church, Va., and presently from California, closed the "Music on Martine" concert. Her lyrics can best be described as emotional, and her voice like that of Fiona Apple, according to Caryn Wasser, of Scotch Plains, a member of the committee for the concert events, and also a Teen Rep on the Board of Directors of the JCC.

"Her voice is amazing," said Ms. Wasser, adding, "I would encourage more teens to take advantage of 'Music on Martine.' It is consistently impressive and this past performance was one of the best so far," she said.

"We were...so appreciative [of] the invitation to play and the warmth with which we were received," Ms. Nguyen told *The Leader* and *The Times*.

According to JCC Teen Director Michael Goldstein, "Music on Martine" was started two years ago to offer Saturday night entertainment to high school students.

The JCC is currently seeking the funding which will allow the program to continue.

"The concert is planned by a group of teens who pick the artists," explained Mr. Goldstein, whose experience in the entertainment business gives him access to bands who don't normally tour in cities such as Scotch Plains.



MUSIC TO THEIR EARS...The Westfield High School Concert Choir, a 70-voice ensemble, rehearses for its upcoming holiday performances.

Rake and Hoe Holiday Home Tour Showcases Innovative Ideas

By CHRISTIE STORMS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD—This past weekend, the public was invited into five local residences for the Rake and Hoe Garden Club (RHGC)'s "Deck the Halls" holiday-themed home tour. Club members adorned the houses with festive trimmings by incorporating separate motifs designed to compliment each individual décor. The resulting displays featured unique and innovative ways to integrate natural materials into holiday decorating.

Upon entering the Kieczkowski house, fragrant candles helped introduce visitors to a warm "home for the holidays" theme. A lush garland of magnolia leaves graced the banister alongside antique pieces of luggage and poinsettias.

Individual "kissing balls" hung from ribbons on each tall window while a spiral topiary tree showcased ornaments crafted from dried okra and each hand-painted to look like Santa.

Glass bowls filled with cranberries and burgundy floral arrangements, including a sweeping mantel spray that flowed to the floor as well as a rare shade of amaryllis, harmonized with the deep hunter green hues found throughout the rooms.

Colorful lemons, pomegranates, kumquats and gilded fruits added festive flair to the "Mediterranean Christmas" theme showcased at the Laurenzi home. Club members had created origami elephant ornaments to compliment the homeowners' unique collections and the mantel featured an old world nativity scene amidst lavish displays of dried and natural florals. Fresh evergreen swags served as window treatments and wrapped presents were employed as doorstoppers.

The Francz home is also referred to as the Bermuda House due to its distinct architecture, and its soft-colored decorations and white poinsettia tree offered visitors a glimpse at a Caribbean-style holiday. Starfish, shells and driftwood mingled with tropical flowers throughout the home, while understated white roses stood tall in burgundy gift boxes on the coffee table.

The kitchen island exhibited a dramatic fruit and vegetable arrangement as well as a unique underwater display. Two cone-shaped Christmas trees composed entirely of seashells sparked interest near a traditional evergreen tree festooned with fresh stargazer lilies in glittering floral tubes.

Dried hydrangea and gilded alliums highlighted the Walsh home, which was bedecked in soft rosy shades for the holidays. Arrangements bursting with baby's breath and individual stems of pink amaryllis as well as the delicate greenery that adorned the backs of dining chairs added to the romantic style.

Even the tree-topper was comprised of hydrangea, accentuating the individual blooms also placed in the boughs. Refreshments were served in the inviting kitchen, and the family room and garage housed an "artisan craft boutique" where guests could make holiday purchases.

Stately elegance prevailed in the

fully draped around the curved center hall staircase and the shimmer of gold, copper and silver adornments throughout the foyer, formal living and dining rooms.

Square wreaths descending from tasteful ribbons highlighted the windows and glimmering gilded leaves set off each charger plate on the dining table along with mini-Christmas trees and presents at each place setting.

In the kitchen and family room areas, where a heartwarming display of large sugar cookies awaits Santa and lustrous gift-wrapped packages abound, stunning tree ornaments comprised of natural seed and bean pods could easily trick the eye into believing they were crafted from luxurious velvet ribbon.

From simple and traditional to uniquely modern and sophisticated, the holiday decorations showcased at the RHGC's "Deck the Halls" tour offered plenty of inspiration to those in attendance.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the club's many community service projects in the local area.



HOUSE OF TUDOR...This Tudor home on Grandview Avenue was the site of holiday decorations, refreshments and a boutique for the "Deck the Halls" house tour last Saturday.

Allen residence beginning with the sumptuous evergreen garland grace-

Musical Club Concert To Feature WHS Choir

WESTFIELD—The Musical Club of Westfield will present a concert featuring the Westfield High School Concert Choir and music for four-hand piano, flute and soprano on Wednesday, December 13, at 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, located on 170 Elm Street in Westfield. The program is free and open to the public.

The Westfield High School Concert Choir will perform selected movements from Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, with Beverly Thomson Shea, harpist. They will also perform two works for Hanuk-

kah: Samuel Adler's setting of *Maaz Tzur* and Iris Levin's setting of *Hinah Mah Tov*.

The program chairperson is Barbara Krause. Mary Ann Dolling and May Furstner will coordinate hospitality.

The performance is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served after the program, to give those in attendance the opportunity to meet the performers.

For information about membership in the Musical Club of Westfield as a performer or associate member, call (908) 232-2173.

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