

Arts & Entertainment

MFA Work Focuses On Nature At Summit's Visual Arts Center

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

SUMMIT – The artistic endeavors of five Master of Fine Arts (MFA) candidates are currently being showcased at the newly renovated Visual Arts Center of New Jersey (VACNJ) in Summit.

The presentation is entitled "First Look 2006" and it is the third exhibit in VACNJ's Emerging Artists Series. All of the artists participating in the exhibit are studying for their MFA degree in New Jersey. They include: Todd Doney from New Jersey City University; Stephen Shingler from Montclair State University; Neil Callander and Jeffrey Thompson from Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts and Lydia Viscardi from William Paterson University.



Cagebird by Lydia Viscardi

The artistic pieces represented in "First Look 2006" are dominated primarily by themes related to nature.

Birds, bodies of water and trees are a few of the common ideas running through the exhibit, which consists of media as widely diverse as crocheted doilies and petroleum jelly.

Trees and the cycle of life they represent inspire Mr. Shingler, who

was born in Florida and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Ringling School of Art and Design in Sarasota. His watercolor on vellum, "Tree Study," from his "Fallen Tree" series, is part of the Emerging Artists Series. At first, the painting appears stark and barren, but upon closer inspection, the beauty of its simplicity shines through.

"I watch as a tree falls in the woods and new growth takes over what was once alive. That process is what I hope to invoke in my work," he said.

Mr. Doney, a Chicago native, is also fascinated by trees, as evidenced by his "Tree Series," in which he sees a juxtaposition of the "authenticity of the real world and the communication of the artist's experience."

The trees in Mr. Doney's series are not fallen, as in Mr. Shingler's work, but stand upright bold and beautifully. They, too, might appear stark were it not for the soft interplay of light that bathes the trees, sky and groundcover.

Birds are the subject of Ms. Viscardi's contribution to "Emerging Artists." Many of her bird sculptures are cloaked in delicate crocheted shawls, which the artist uses to emphasize "the fragility of life and the elusive nature of emotions." This statement is played out most dramatically in her 12-foot-high "Caring Death" mixed media sculpture, which is suspended from the gallery's ceiling. Encased in a cage that is reminiscent of a Christmas tree, this piece of art is both beautiful as well as frightening at the same time.

Mr. Callander uses petroleum jelly to portray waves in his oil on muslin entitled "The Waves." This medium provides a life-like aspect to the painting, giving it a three dimensional quality.

While strolling from one piece of artwork to another, the viewer is serened by a soothing woman's voice

repeating a litany of mouth-watering delicacies ad infinitum. This is Mr. Thompson's "Desert Menu," a unique sound recording that he believes creates "wholly new experiences from common objects and phenomenon." I must admit that it provided an interesting sound byte backdrop as I studied the other artists' work. It also made me crave chocolate.

"First Look 2006: Emerging Artist Series" is curated by Denise Cali and Mari D'Alessandro, and is located in the center's Palmer Gallery. The exhibit will be open until Friday, February 3. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. VACNJ is located at 68 Elm Street in Summit. For more information, contact the center at (908) 273-9121 or log onto its new website: www.artcenternj.org.



Floor Sculpture by Stephen Shingler

42nd Street To Debut March 17 at SPFHs

SCOTCH PLAINS – Preparations are underway at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School for the Friday, March 17 debut of *42nd Street*.

A song-and-dance extravaganza based on the classic 1933 movie musical of the same name, *42nd Street*, concerns the story of a successful producer putting on what may be his last show. In the last moment, his leading lady is injured and must be replaced by a novice.

Leading the cast will be seniors Caitlin Delaney as Dorothy Brock, Brian Glassett as Julian Marsh and junior Sarah Marable as Peggy Sawyer. Tickets will be available for purchase at the high school beginning Wednesday, February 15, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Performances will be on the evenings of March 17, 18, 19 and 23, 24 and 25. All performances will be at 8 p.m. except for Sunday, March 19, which will be held at 3 p.m.



Brad and Elena Timlow for The Westfield Leader and The Times
BACH TO BACH...At the end of the Choral Arts Society concert, the soloists joined in with the chorus in singing the final fugue in C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat*. Music Director James Little is pictured on the podium facing the chorus and orchestra. The soloists in front, pictured from left to right, are: Sharon L. Morrison, mezzo-soprano, Matthew Hughes, tenor, Ellen Goff Entriken, soprano, and Dale Livingston, bass.

Choral Arts Society Delivers Two Generations of Bach

By BRAD TINFOW
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Music Director James Little conducted the chorus and orchestra of The Choral Arts Society of New Jersey (CAS) in a concert of *Magnificats* by J.S. Bach (1685-1750) and his second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714-1788), on January 21 at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield. Both pieces are the only renditions of the text by either composer from the Gospel according to St. Luke, 1: 46-55.

Additionally, both compositions were scored for four solo voices. Ellen Goff Entriken (soprano), Sharon Morrison (mezzo-soprano), Matthew Hughes (tenor) and Dale Livingston (bass) were the featured soloists. With less than a week's notice, Ms. Morrison filled in for Luthien Brackett, who was temporarily ill.

Other than a fundamental polyphonic (many independent voices) versus homophonic (single melody with harmony) stylistic difference between the two works, the most striking contrast was their relative duration. C.P.E. Bach's version was nearly twice the length of his father's composition, and the younger Bach resorted to much more repetition. Both compositions had at least one solo per voice, and both contained an alto and tenor duet. J.S. Bach wrote an additional aria for soprano.

Both pieces are challenging to perform for any ensemble. J.S. Bach's polyphonic writing is difficult by definition, as every section must know its part cold. But the elder Bach seemed to have a better idea of what the tessitura (general range) of a vocal part should be. The absolute range required for both chorus and soloists to sing C.P.E. Bach's piece seemed almost sadistic by comparison. The sopranos needed high B's in the closing fugue, and the tessitura for some of the solo parts seemed excessively demanding.

But the performances came across solidly due to the enthusiasm of the singers and inspired conducting. There is no question that the CAS chorus members enjoy themselves, and they sing with the confidence of a group that has rehearsed extensively.

There were a few minor ensemble issues. There were several occasions in which the trumpet section overshadowed the chorus and the rest of the orchestra. C.P.E. Bach's piece at times had the horns doubling the trumpet parts, which made the problem even more pronounced. Near the end of the concert, a significant number of high notes missed their mark due to lip fatigue by one or more of the trumpet players. The organist, who played from behind the chorus, had absolutely no view of the conductor. That logistical disadvantage may have caused the accompaniment to lag

behind a soloist at least once.

Sadly, the tenor section had lost one of its members, Donald Bleeke, to whom the concert was dedicated. Only six tenors were remaining for this concert. They did an outstanding job for such a small section.

The soloists all performed very well, and at times, brilliantly. Ms. Entriken, whose lovely lyric soprano voice has never disappointed this listener, sounded particularly beautiful with her astounding breath control, which gave her a smooth legato line and elegant, sensitive phrasing. Ms. Morrison was at her best when singing solo, as she is a polished singer with an even sound throughout the mezzo range. Her voice is most attractive in her upper range, where it has more brilliance than in the middle. She did not mesh quite as well when singing in duet with Mr. Hughes, whose open and bright timbre sound tended to overshadow her darker tone.

Mr. Hughes had his work cut out for him in J.S. Bach's *Deposuit potentes*. The nearly non-stop coloratura (featuring rapid and virtuosic passages) aria is a showcase for any singer. Although he hardly tossed it off, as the elder Bach barely gave the soloist time to breathe, he sang it expertly and fluidly. The tenor aria in C.P.E. Bach's composition sounded uncharacteristically less taxing for the soloist, who was even given some extended rest periods where the orchestra played alone.

Mr. Livingston's true bass voice was perfectly suited for the declamatory *Quia fecit* aria in J.S. Bach's work. The range required for the *Fecit potentiam* aria in C.P.E.'s piece would have taxed any bass, as it rose up to F sharp above middle C, near the top of a baritone's range. Mr. Livingston had the note, but he had to temporarily leave his dark timbre behind to reach it. The fairly rapid aria also required the singer to move his voice much more quickly than in J.S. Bach's version, and that was no problem for him.

The soloists, having completed their solo assignments, joined the chorus in singing the final fugue at the end of C.P.E. Bach's piece. It was a rousing ending to a concert that pleased a rapt audience who came to hear great music and got two generations worth.

Washington School Performs Reunion

WESTFIELD – The Washington School Players (Washington School parents) will perform in *The Incredible, Super Reunion*. This marks the 58th year of the annual fundraiser for the school. Tickets are available for \$9 for the Friday, January 27 or Saturday, January 28 performances (both at 8 p.m.). Tickets can be ordered online at Reunionix@aol.com.



Get Outta' The House

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

On Saturday, January 28, The Theater Project of Union County College will resume its monthly series of free performances with a staged reading of *End of the World Button*. The reading will be followed by a discussion with the playwright (S. W. Senek of West Orange), director, actors and audience. The 3 p.m. performance will be held in the atrium in the Student Commons, 1033 Springfield Avenue, Cranford. See if Harry pushes or not. Visit www.TheaterProject.com for more information, or call the box office at (908) 659-5189.

Let's face it, we're not all Super Bowl fans. An alternative activity that day will be a one-day workshop for crocheters at *Studio 16* in Warren. Learn to make a freeform fabric by crocheting small shapes and structures in two and three dimensions. Bring your own scraps and make a "scrambles" for your jean jacket collar, as a pin, or for a wall hanging. The class will cost \$60, and it will be held, naturally, on Sunday, February 5, from 1 to 5 p.m. Get more information by visiting www.studio16online.com, or calling (908) 769-5171.

The 17th annual *Garden State Home Show* will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, February 3 to 5, at the Garden State Convention Center in Somerset. It's a great place to get ideas, with more than 250 exhibitors featuring everything from the home from security systems to furniture. Adult admission is \$9, with a discount coupon available online. Go to: <http://www.macevents.com>, where you will also find hours and directions.

Helikon Opera's version of Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* will be at the State Theatre in New Brunswick on Thursday, February 2, at 8 p.m. A soap opera plot set to waltz melodies should keep most entertained. Seats are \$25 - \$55. Call (732) 246-SHOW or order online by visiting: <http://www.statetheatre.org>, where you can also listen to a sound byte.

Celebrate Mardi Gras at NJPAC with the sounds of *La Bottine Souriante*. This is their debut performance here of this nine-member ensemble that fuses traditional French North American roots music with jazz, salsa, swing, Celtic and folk. Tickets are available for the performance on Saturday, February 4, at 7:30 p.m. for \$37. Log onto: <http://www.njpac.org> to select your seats.

FLY Set to Return To County Arts Center

RAHWAY – The Union County Arts Center will present *Fly in Concert* on Saturday, February 11, at 8 p.m.

Fly, a contemporary dance company from Houston, Tex., consists of five young men who perform under the direction of choreographer Kathy Wood. The Fly Dance Company crosses street dance with classical choreographic principles.

Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased by calling (732) 499-8226 or online by visiting the website at www.UCAC.org. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the ticket central box office located at the corner of 1601 Irving Street and Central Avenue in Rahway.

PIANO LESSONS ALL AGES

Our program inspires excitement, creativity, and virtuosity.

Nowhere else will you find the classically trained teachers that motivate, can teach so many styles of music and utilize technology seamlessly with learning.

Nowhere else will you get a professionally mastered CD of your music simply by taking lessons at the studio.

The performing opportunities at the studio are fun, encouraging, and invite success.

Our adult student program takes great care of adults who want to pick up the piano again, and makes the brand new student feel comfortable and inspired.

Academic Year Lessons and Summer Sessions call any time for availability.

Paul Nazzaro Music Studio
Piano Lessons and Music Technology

137 Saint Paul Street, Westfield
www.NazzaroMusic.com 908-232-3310

Celebrate Valentine's Day with the Westfield Symphony Orchestra

SAT., FEB. 11th, 2006 8PM
The Presbyterian Church in Westfield

MY MUSICAL VALENTINE
BERNSTEIN *Candide* Overture
THE NEW COLOSSUS *world premiere*
PROKOFIEV *Romeo and Juliet* Symphonic Suite

call 908 232 9400 for tickets or email us at WSO@westfieldsymphony.org

SPECIAL OFFER
CHILDREN AND STUDENTS \$5 WITH PURCHASE OF ADULT TICKET!

DAVID WROE
Music Director

WESTFIELD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
WWW.WESTFIELDSYMPHONY.ORG

Funding for this flyer made possible in part through a grant by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. The residency of Robert Aldridge is made possible through Music Alive, a residency program of the American Symphony Orchestra League and Meet The Composer. This national program is designed to provide orchestras with resources and tools to support their presentation of new music to the public and build support for new music within their institutions. Funding for Music Alive is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

This flyer has been made possible through the generosity of COMERCE BANK, 560 North Ave E. Westfield NJ 07090

Calderone School of Music
NEW JERSEY REGISTERED PROVIDER

Established 1975 Certified Teachers

Private Instruction on All Instruments, Voice and Ensembles

Kindermusik classes for ages 0 to 7
College Prep Division

Riverwalk Plaza 34 Ridgedale Avenue • East Hanover (973) 428-0405 256 Morris Avenue • Springfield (973) 467-4688

Where Imagination Leads to Discovery

ART LAB For Kids

A fun filled interactive art workshop experience

WINTER SESSIONS STILL FORMING

For Children, Teens & Adults . . . All Levels Welcome

(908) 654-5663
500 North Avenue East, Westfield