



BERRY B. GOODE...Chuck Berry acknowledges the crowd during his performance at Cranford's Nomahegan Park this past Saturday afternoon during MusicFest 2007.

MusicFest Provides Entertainment For Close to 50,000 at Nomahegan

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

CRANFORD—Non-stop live musical performances could be heard from early morning on into the night last Saturday during Union County's MusicFest held at Nomahegan Park in Cranford.

Artists included Live, Chuck Berry, Fountains of Wayne, The Alarm, The Smithereens, The English Beat, The Old Ceremony, The Apples in Stereo and Roselle Park's Beale Street Love.

Deejay Jonathan Clarke from New York radio station Q104.3 served as emcee throughout the event.

In addition to a main stage, this year's MusicFest featured a separate kids' stage and a Love Hope Strength stage in support of cancer research.

Bette Jane Kowalski, Union County freeholder chairwoman, said that by using multiple stages, one band could perform while another set up on a different stage. The following group could begin as soon as the other's performance ended, providing continuous music.

Those who weren't close to a stage could enjoy the performances via a large projection screen set up in the center of the park.

Sebastian D'Elia, director of the Union County Office of Public Information, said with approximately 50,000 attendees throughout Saturday, this year's MusicFest was, by far, the largest in its history.

"The county has always done con-

certs, and MusicFest actually started years back as Jersey Jazz by the Lake," Mr. D'Elia said. "But, tastes change, and people like more popular music, so this has really taken off. It's definitely one of the fastest growing in



David Samsky for The Westfield Leader and The Times

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blanket with some food offered by the many vendors or even get up and dance, as many did during Fountains of Wayne's performance of their hit "Stacy's Mom."

WESTFIELD - Next Friday, September 28, at 8 p.m., the Westfield Symphony Orchestra will present its silver-anniversary season opening performance, "Rigoletto - Opera in Concert" featuring soloists from New York City Opera, at Central Presbyterian Church in Summit.

Fresh from his season debut at the N.Y. City Opera, leading its production of Don Giovanni, WSO conductor David Wroe has partnered with CPC music director Candace Wicke to bring the WSO to Summit as part of CPC's Sanctuary Arts Series.

"I am pleased to welcome Maestro Wroe and the Westfield Symphony Orchestra to our beautiful sanctuary at Summit Central Presbyterian Church. This outstanding orchestra is a wonderful addition to the many fine concert offerings at CPC throughout the year," Ms. Wicke said.

Rigoletto is a Verdi opera masterpiece that routinely makes the "top

10" favorite lists of operagoers around the world. It tells the tragic story of a deformed, embittered court jester who delights in helping to arrange female prey for his master, the Duke of Mantua. The jester's anguished attempts to rise above his weakness to save his own daughter make for a heart-rending and riveting story.

"Grossly deformed and absurd but inwardly passionate and full of love," is Verdi's own description of Rigoletto, one of the most enduring anti-heros born of this composer's great operas.

Symphony to Debut Season At Summit Presbyterian

Charged yet expressive and featuring such familiar tunes as "La donna e mobile" and great ensemble pieces as "Bella figlia dell'amore (Fair daughter of love)," Rigoletto marks a revolutionary benchmark in the history of opera in its design, orchestral shades and emotional content. Rigoletto has held the stage as one of the world's best-loved operas for more than 150 years.

Tickets, priced between \$25 and \$65, may be purchased directly from the WSO office at 224 E. Broad Street or by calling the box office at (908) 232-9400. Tickets are also available at Fastframe in Westfield, Martin Jewelers in Cranford and World Of Music in Summit.

Further information is available by phone at (908) 232 9400, e-mail at wso@westfieldsymphony.org or online at westfieldsymphony.org.

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Arts & Entertainment

Rock On! Walkathon, MusicFest Raise Nearly \$100,000 for Cancer

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

CRANFORD — Hundreds of people convened at Shane Walsh Field in Cranford last Saturday morning for the two-mile trek to Nomahegan Park during the Rock On! Walkathon.

According to Sebastian D'Elia, director of the Union County Office of Public Information, the approximately 400 people who walked — combined with others who donated throughout the day during the county's annual MusicFest — raised close to \$100,000 for the battle against cancer.

The walkathon benefited two charitable organizations, the New Jersey Citizens Coalition for Cures and the Love Hope Strength Foundation (LHSF).

One of the co-founders of the LHSF, Mike Peters of the rock band The Alarm, is a leukemia survivor who performed last year as part of MusicFest. He was instrumental in bringing the walkathon to Union County this year, and he and The Alarm subsequently performed at this year's MusicFest, which immediately followed the walkathon.

Walkers raising \$100 received a walkathon T-shirt, walkers raising \$250 received a T-shirt and gift bag and those who raised \$1,000 or more

received a T-shirt, gift bag and invitation to attend a special VIP reception the night before the walk. Throughout MusicFest, concertgoers could additionally participate by donating in charity raffles for prizes.

New Jersey Assemblywoman Linda Stender, Assemblyman Neil Cohen and

his mother and David Kimble, who died of lung cancer. The group included freeholder clerk Nicole DiRado and her husband, Matt, who walked despite two broken toes.

"Whatever sacrifices we made to walk today are small compared to what a lot of them have been through," Mr. DiRado said, referring to the cancer patients.

Mr. Zoino said he and his wife, Christine, have participated in many events to support the fight against cancer.

"We do anything we can to be involved," he said. "But this one kind of hits home more than others because the proceeds go to local centers and are being used for New Jersey."

Michael Pollack, Arts and Entertainment editor of The Leader/Times, interviewed several participants for Scotch Plains Television's coverage of the event.

"I've met a lot of these people in other settings and have never seen them so united," Mr. Pollack said.

Dave Storchak, executive director of the Elizabeth Avenue Partnership and a MusicFest volunteer, walked and said he was glad to see Governor Jon Corzine make an appearance at the end of the Walkathon.

Ms. Kowalski said the Governor spoke about a November referendum the freeholder board supports that, if passed, would provide \$450 million for stem-cell-research efforts in New Jersey.

"It was great to have the Governor here," she said.

She explained that a lot of people who were involved in MusicFest last year were also involved in the fight against cancer and for its research.

"It seemed like the natural thing to do to combine the two events," she said. "Everyone knows someone who's been hurt by cancer. So you really don't have to twist people's arms."



Susan M. Dougherty for The Leader/Times
LET'S FACE IT...Six-year-old Emily Figueroa of Westfield displays the artwork painted on her face at the MusicFest '07 in Cranford on Saturday.

Union County Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski, Angel Estrada, Chester Holmes and Deborah Scanlon participated in the walk.

Ms. Kowalski, freeholder chairwoman, told The Westfield Leader and The Times she was pleased the number of walkathon participants was more than double what had originally been expected, especially considering the rainy weather that morning.

"Picture the worst day in London," said Bert Zoino, who walked on behalf of his mother Rose, who died of breast cancer. "It was just damp, cold and dreary."

Mr. Zoino walked as part of a large group who participated in memory of



DYNAMIC DUO...Music Directors David Wroe, of the Westfield Symphony Orchestra, and Candace Wicke, of the Central Presbyterian Church (CPC), join together to create a Westfield-Summit musical partnership. The WSO will open its silver-anniversary season with a concert performance of Rigoletto at the CPC in Summit on September 28.

Westfield Symphony Orchestra
David Wroe, Music Director
JOSEPH DEALESSANDRO MEMORIAL OPERA CONCERT

Friday, September 28, 2007 at 8 p.m.
Summit Central Presbyterian Church
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opera in concert

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