

Chamber Ensembles, Organ Featured In Musical Program

WESTFIELD — The April program of the Musical Club of Westfield will be held on Wednesday, April 11, at 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street, Westfield. Featured on the program will be music for several different chamber ensembles and for solo organ.

Music of composer and Juilliard professor Eric Ewazen will begin the program. His Bridgehampton Suite will be performed by flutist Jenny Cline, violinist Alexandra Jenkins, violist Michael Stewart and cellist Clerida Eltime. The Suite was composed for the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival's celebration of Mozart's 250th birthday. The third movement of the suite contains several references to Mozart's third flute quartet.

Organist F. Allen Artz, III, who is the new organist and director of music at Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church in Plainfield, will perform music of the Baroque and Romantic periods. His portion of the program will include Vincent Lübeck's Praeludium in E Major, J. S. Bach's Chorale Prelude on "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Her" (BWV 662), and Felix Mendelssohn's Prelude and Fugue in d minor, Op. 37, No. 3.

Drude Sparre Roessler, mezzo-soprano, will be joined by clarinetist Robert Romano and pianist Ron Thayer to perform Franz Schubert's charming piece "The Shepherd on the Rock," Op. 129. This work, one

of the last the composer wrote before his death, was written for the famous opera singer Pauline Anna Milder-Hauptmann, and provides equal challenges for the voice and the clarinet.

The final performers on the program will be cellist Linda Fink and pianist Carolle-Ann Mochernuk, who will perform two works of French impressionist composer Claude Debussy: "The Girl with the Flaxen Hair" and his Sonata for Cello and Piano. The first piece was originally written as a piano solo, but due to its enduring popularity, it has been transcribed for many different solo instruments, including the cello, and even for full orchestra.

The chairman for the program is Kay Macrae, and hospitality will be provided by the club's hospitality committee.

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.

The Musical Club of Westfield, now in its 96th season, offers scholarships to promising young musicians who are pursuing a musical education. Membership in the club is open to anyone who is interested in music. Those wishing information about membership in the Musical Club of Westfield as a performer or an associate member may call the membership chairman at (908) 232-2173.

Delaware Train Show and April Fools Toy Show Set for April 21, 22

NEW CASTLE, Del. — On Saturday, April 21, the fourth annual Delaware Train Show will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Nur Shrine Center, Rt. 13/198 South Dupont Highway, New Castle, Del. The show will feature 140 plus tables of trains, accessories, slot cars, and some toys.

Admission is \$3; \$10 for early buyers with an 8 a.m. admission. Two-day passes will be available.

On Sunday, April 22, the April Fools Toy Show moves in with over 175

tables of collectible and antique toys from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$4; \$10 for early buyers 9 a.m. admission. Children under the age of 12 are free for both shows, food from Big Dan's Gourmet Deli, free parking. These events are rain or shine events.

For information on attending or participating in this show or others, visit www.toysshows.org or call (856) 302-3606. Vendors leave name, mailing address, email address, as well as what show you want to attend.



Pushcart Players' Little Red Riding Hood

Premiere Stages Announces Theatre for Young Audiences

UNION — Premiere Stages at Kean University announces "Play Factory 2012," the annual summer family series presenting Pushcart Players, New Jersey's renowned touring theatre for young audiences. *Stone Soup...and Other Stories* will be on Wednesday, July 18, at 11 a.m. and *Little Red Riding Hood* plays on Wednesday, July 25, at 11 a.m. in the Wilkins Theatre.

"*Stone Soup* is a familiar brew of favorite tales from around the world that will delight audiences from all walks of life, at all ages," said Ruth Fost, the co-founder and artistic director of Pushcart Players. "It's a charming, well-seasoned blend of folk tales that emphasize the joy of reading." Dynamic, participatory and filled with zesty entertainment, *Stone Soup* is on the gourmet menu list of "not to be missed" family audiences everywhere.

"In this fast paced, frenetic world, isn't it comforting to know that some things never change?" posed Fost when asked about *Little Red Riding Hood*. "One of them is the joy and enchantment of stories that begin with 'Once upon a time.' The timeless tales of *Princess and the Pea*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *Red Riding Hood* and *All's Well That Ends Well* are dressed with a twinkle, a grin and a contemporary spin in this enchanting production."

Pushcart Players is an award-winning professional theatre and arts-

education company for young audiences. Pushcart programs offer the finest artists and arts educators available in the field, bringing the best of theatre arts to young viewers in schools and local theatres with 38 years of excellence in theatre arts programming for young audiences.

Standard tickets for both performances are \$15, with group rates available for parties of 20 or more. Wilkins Theatre is located on the Kean University campus at 1000 Morris Avenue, Union. For further information visit www.kean.edu/premierestages or call Kean Stage box office at (908) 737-7469. For group sales contact Paul Whelihan, audience services director at (908) 737-4077 or pwheliha@kean.edu.

Admission and parking for the Premiere spring readings is free. Please call (908) 737-4092 for more information or visit www.kean.edu/premierestages. Reservations are recommended.

Premiere Stages offers affordable prices, air-conditioned facilities and free parking close to the theatre. Premiere Stages provides free or discounted tickets to patrons with disabilities. All Premiere Stages facilities are fully accessible spaces. Please call for a list of sign-interpreted, audio-described or open-captioned performances. Assistive listening devices and large print programs are available at all times. Publications are available with advanced notice in alternate formats.

POPCORN™ "The Hunger Games" Feeds on the Frenzy

3 popcorns

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Film Critic

I'm baffled. I have followed Linsanity with rapt joy, agonized over where Messrs. Manning and Tebow would buy their next split levels, and was plum torn up when the Kardashian-Humphries nuptials fell apart. How then, I ask, did "The Hunger Games" phenomenon, now a theater-packing film by Gary Ross, totally fly under my radar?

I must remind myself to get an app to keep me apprised of popular culture, just in case I get an iPhone. But happily, in the meantime, no harm done. Now all caught up, I'm pleased to report that everything's up to date in the fictitiously fascistic, dismal future. Which means it's basically just the same. As Yogi might say, "It's '1984' all over again."

It's also "A Brave New World," "Fahrenheit 451," and "THX 1138" all "Rollerballled" up into one, with a dabbling of the myths, lest the Olympian Gods feel neglected. Like Mark Twain said, steal from one and they scream plagiarism; steal from a bunch and it's called research. Author/co-screenwriter Suzanne Collins shows good taste in her sources.

Truth is, the new gang peddling this pessimistic but vital cautionary about the evil wiles of autocracy has paid attention. An umpteenth permutation, conceived long after a scary portion of George Orwell's prophecy has already become a part of our sociopolitical woodwork, it mightily hones its message for yet another, hopefully receptive, generation.

It's a darn solid production, too, benefiting from some fine performances and an astute, eye-dazzling use of the technological magic now available to filmmakers. So welcome to Panem, a country ruled by one dictatorial party, formed after a storied, but never really explained, holocaust. Just in time, we're ushered in on the eve of the Hunger Games.

A cruelty wrought by the ruling elite for various despotic reasons, not the least of which is to remind the proletariat that they are powerless scum, there is aberrant comfort in knowing that tyrannical regimes haven't really developed any new sadisms. Panem is taken from the Roman expression, "panem et circenses." That's bread and circus to us.

The games are just like our Super Bowl. Except, whereas we gorge ourselves to death, the two youngsters picked from each of twelve districts are soon facing starvation and 23-to-1 odds they'll be killed by their peers in a fight-until-the-death contest of survival. It's nasty stuff, and probably telling that our muckraking must sink to such dire depths.

Sadder yet, because all that vestigial flotsam still floats around in our albeit enlarged brains, we like this

stuff. Think about what you're really doing when you eagerly bite into the juice-sputting, textural, life sustaining warmth of a thick steak, bone-in of course. Well, until we evolve out of it, we'll just keep knocking each other over the head for fun.

For all the gizmos and gadgetry attending the much ballyhooed games, it's not very complicated. Kill or be killed. And, just like it was back in the Roman Coliseum, being a fan of a blood sport hasn't changed. Glued to TV screens throughout the realm, folks root for their homies in this dastardliest of reality shows. Naturally, we have our favorite.

Essentially the Jeanne d'Arc of the tale and nobody's political pawn, by gum, not if she can help it, Katniss Everdeen is exquisitely realized by Jennifer Lawrence. Pleasing our romantic sense, she is poor but beautiful, good to her widowed mom and, after my big sis, the best older sibling in all the realm. Which is actually why she has come to this fate.

You see, nuttily decadent Effie Trinket (Elizabeth Banks), the amalgam of Lady Gaga, Marie Antoinette and Bette Davis's Baby Jane who picks the participants' names from a bowl, initially draws Primrose Everdeen. But Katniss won't have it...not her little sister, and offers herself up to the ritual instead. Hooray! A volunteer. Tributes, they call 'em.

The powers that be like that. Easily misconstrued as patriotism and concurrence with the Reich, it also injects the masses with a more opiate drama. The better to subjugate you, my dear. Joining Katniss in the lavish, pre-games ceremony at the Capitol is her male counterpart and unlikely romantic interest, Peeta Mallark, well acted by Josh Hutcherson.

Once the ingredients are assembled, what follows is a vigorously engaging primer on exactly what to emulate if you wish to make a killing in the teen entertainment market. Into a large, colorful landscape, put equal parts love, action, and altruism. To that, add a big smattering of hope (y'know, the kids are sure we will glom all the Social Security).

Separating this film from less worthy grasps at the box office brass ring, director Gary Ross expertly electrifies the formula with inspired casting, fine pacing and a good feel for the original material. But more important yet, in a market force-fed with a lot of empty, processed junk, "The Hunger Games" serves up big smart helpings of food for thought.

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"The Hunger Games," rated PG-13, is a Lionsgate release directed by Gary Ross and stars Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson and Stanley Tucci. Running time: 142 minutes

Theater Program for Children with Autism and Related Disabilities

UNION COUNTY — As part of his initiatives for 2012, Union County Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella today announced the creation of the new Sensory Friendly Theater series of performances specially designed for children with autism and related disabilities at the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway.

Expanding public recreation opportunities for children with autism and other disabilities is one of the Freeholder Chairman's 2012 "Putting People First" initiatives.

The new series, which begins on Sunday, June 10, with "Tom Chapin and Friends," is designed according to guidelines that help to reduce disturbances for youngsters who experience heightened sensory sensitivity. The Performing Arts Center is committed to creating a judgment-free zone with plenty of trained specialists who understand autism and similar disabilities.

Paper Mill Playhouse and the Children's Specialized Hospital also assisted in making the program possible.

To design the series, Union County worked with Autism Friendly Spaces, LLC an organization that helps people with autism and their families partake in com-

munity activities.

The series of three performances includes "Tom Chapin and Friends" on June 10, *Little Red Riding Hood and Other Stories* presented by Pushcart Players on October 7, and *Pinochio* presented by the New Jersey Ballet on November 4. All shows begin at 2 p.m.

Part of the cost of the series has been offset with County funding, helping to keep the price of admission affordable. All seats are \$8 per person.

The Union County Performing Arts Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation operating in the historic Rahway Theatre. Conveniently located in downtown Rahway at 1601 Irving Street, this historic landmark is the cornerstone of the Rahway Arts District. The theater is a beautifully restored 1920s era former vaudeville house and movie palace owned by the County of Union and managed by the non-profit Union County Performing Arts Center.

For information on the Sensory Friendly Theater series visit the Sensory Friendly Theater web page or call the UC PAC box office, (732) 499-8226. Information on all events and activities at UC PAC visit ucpac.org.

National Poetry Month Celebration in Fanwood

FANWOOD — The Carriage House Poetry Series invites the public to attend its annual National Poetry Month celebration on Tuesday, April 17, at 8 p.m. in the Kuran Arts Center on Watson Road, off North Martine Avenue, adjacent to Fanwood Borough Hall (GPS use 75 N. Martine Avenue). The free event will feature distinguished poets Renée Ashley and Catherine Doty, followed by an open mic reading.

Renée Ashley is the author of four books of poetry, two chapbooks, and a novel. She is poetry editor of *The Literary Review* and she is on the faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University's two low-residency graduate programs. Her awards include a Pushcart Prize, a Kenyon Review Award for Literary Excellence, the Charles Angoff Award, an American Literary Review Poetry Prize, the Chelsea Poetry Award, and the Robert H. Winner Award and the Ruth Lake Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America. She has received fellowships in both poetry and prose from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and a fellowship in poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Catherine Doty is the author of a

collection of poems entitled "Momentum" (CavanKerry Press). An artist as well as a poet, her book of cartoons, "Just Kidding" (Avocet Press), takes a humorous look at childhood through the eyes of a poet. Ms. Doty is a Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation poet and also is a public school teacher. She is the recipient of an Academy of American Poets Prize, a Marjorie J. Wilson Award, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Established by the Academy of American Poets in 1996, National Poetry Month is celebrated every April. Publishers, booksellers, literary organizations, libraries, schools and poets around the United States celebrate poetry and its vital place in American culture.

The April 17 reading in Fanwood is free and open to the public. An open mic reading will follow the featured performance. Seating is limited, so be sure to arrive early. For more information call (908) 889-7223 or (908) 889-5298.

For online directions and information, visit carriagehousepoetryseries.blogspot.com.

WF Community Band To Premiere NJ Composer

WESTFIELD — As the debut event of the Westfield Community Band's historic 100th anniversary, New Jersey composer, Bruce Yurko, will be debuting his new work entitled, "Sinfonia No. 4." Under the direction of Dr. Thomas Connors, the band sought to commission Mr. Yurko's new work in honor of their 100th anniversary milestone.

Dr. Connors noted that Mr. Yurko was chosen, "as his work would challenge the band. Also with his stature as a composer with a history of published music." When the work is published, "it will be cited as commissioned by the Westfield Community Band, establishing Westfield's contribution to band literature," Dr. Connors continued.

Mr. Yurko received his Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Wilkes College and his Masters in Performance from the Ithaca College School of Music. He is currently on the faculties of Messiah College and Rowan University. Previously, he has served as the Director of Bands at Madison High School in Madison, N.J. and has been the conductor of the Wind Ensemble, Orchestra and Chamber Music program at Cherry Hill High School East in Cherry Hill, N.J.

He has also served as the conductor of the Princeton University Wind Ensemble. Groups under his lead have toured Europe and performed at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall. Mr. Yurko is a composer in high demand. In addition to composing "Sinfonia No. 4" for the Westfield Community Band, upcoming com-



Bruce Yurko

missions include the Forest Park High School Wind Ensemble in Virginia, the South Carolina All State Band, the University of North Texas Symphony Band and the Eastman Wind Ensemble.

The commission is supported by grants from the Westfield Foundation, the Westfield Rotary, the Westfield Recreation Department and the Town of Westfield. Westfield Community Band's spring concert and debut of "Sinfonia No. 4" will take place on Sunday, April 29, at 3 p.m. at Westfield High School, 550 Dorian Road, Westfield.

For more information, visit www.westfieldcommunityband.com or contact info@westfieldcommunityband.com.

Correia and Egge to Perform at Union County Performing Arts Center

RAHWAY — Union County Performing Arts Center (UC PAC) will host two intimate live concerts this month in The Loft at the UC PAC.

Amy Correia will perform on Saturday, April 14, at 8 p.m. and folk troubadour, Ana Egge, will perform on Saturday, April 21, at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale now at \$25 (prices include all fees); call the UC PAC box office at (732) 499-8226, or visit www.ucpac.org.

The Loft at the Union County PAC is an intimate space that offers an extraordinary opportunity to experience music and theatre. This season the Union County PAC welcomes Split Level Concerts presenting a series of live concerts by independent artist in The Loft at the Union County PAC. Experience live concerts in The Loft where you are practically on stage with the music.

NJPAC, NJYT Host Auditions For Smokey Joe's Café

NEWARK — The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) and the New Jersey Youth Theatre (NJYT) are seeking singers, actors and dancers ages 15-23 to audition for their annual summer musical collaboration. This year's production will be the hit-packed *Smokey Joe's Café*. It will play in the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University from July 18 through 22 and in the Sitnik Theatre at the Lackland Performing Arts Center from July 26-29.

Open call auditions for dancers will be held from 9 - 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 14, at NJPAC's Center for Arts Education. Open call auditions for singer/actors will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 14, at NJPAC's Center for Arts Education. Dance callbacks will start at 6 p.m. on April 14 and final callbacks will be held by appointment on Saturday, April 21, both at the Center for Arts Education.

Rehearsals for the show will be held on weekends and Monday evenings between Saturday, May 19, and Friday, June 8; six days a week from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. between Monday, June 18, and Monday, July 9. "Tech" week will start July 9. Rehearsals at the Lackland Performing Arts Center will take place Tuesday, July 24.

Smokey Joe's Café features the classic hits of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The score includes 40 of the greatest rock and roll songs ever recorded, including "Stand By Me," "On Broadway," "Spanish Harlem" and "I'm a Woman."

Sets, props and wardrobe operations, onstage and backstage, will be in the hands of professionals assisted by young technical interns in each area. The actors, musicians and technical interns will come from across the Metro-area and participate free of charge in this unique project. Past NJPAC/NJYT Summer Musical productions include last year's *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*; *Ragtime: The Musical* (both productions named by Peter Filichia of *The Star Ledger* as New Jersey's "Best Musical Revivals"; in 2009 and 2006) as well as productions of *Midnight Madness*, *1776*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Anything Goes*, *West Side Story* (recipient of the 2003 Music Theatre International "Award of Excellence"), *South Pacific*, *Once On This Island*, *Brigadoon*, *Oliver!* and *Carousel*.

Musical theater performers ages 15-22 are invited to audition. Per-

Located in the heart of the Rahway Arts District, Union County Performing Arts Center is within walking distance of the Rahway New Jersey Transit train station. Parking is available downtown at the Rahway Parking Garage.

The Union County Performing Arts Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation operating in the historic Rahway Theatre, originally built in 1928. With 1,300 seats, the Union County PAC is one of the largest theatres in Union County. The Arts Center provides barrier-free access and seating for patrons upon request. Programming is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

formers must sing a song by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, preferably from the *Smokey Joe's Café* score. Bring appropriate sheet music in the correct key, a photo and a resume. The Smokey Joe's Café score will be available at auditions. Female performers should be able to belt to an E above C.

New Jersey Youth Theatre, formerly known as the Westfield Young Artists Cooperative Theatre, is one of the most celebrated youth theater companies in New Jersey, enabling young artists to receive the highest caliber, professional level theatrical experience and education possible. Performers learn firsthand about musical theater by participating in a full-scale, professional level production.

The NJPAC/New Jersey Youth Theatre Summer Musical Program is made possible in part by McCrane Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Provident Bank, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, Lillian P. Schenck Fund, Yahoo! Employee Foundation and the Westfield Foundation.

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is the sixth largest performing arts center in the United States. As New Jersey's Town Square, NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the State's and the world's best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city.

Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted over six million visitors (more than one million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit www.njpac.org for more information.

Programming has been made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, and by Discover Jersey Arts.

NJPAC is a wheelchair accessible facility and provides assistive services for patrons with disabilities. For more information, call (888) GO-NJPAC.