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Arts & Entertainment

WF Music Scene Converges For Sound Station Benefit

By ERIC NIERSTEDT
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD—On Saturday, a gathering of bands, both young and old from all over Westfield, rocked to raise money to rebuild Sound Station record store that burned down in January. Held at the Crossroads in Garwood, the event was an all day affair, with an all-ages show playing from 1 until 7 p.m. and a second set that went on until 11 p.m.

Since the fire that claimed Sound Station, as well as four other stores on South Avenue, patrons and local musicians have been playing everywhere to raise money to rebuild. An online fund has raised more the \$16,000, multiple benefits have been held, and other local businesses have also contributed with donations from their customers.

Bitburg" or underground — the Pixies "What Happened to My Mind?" — a nice nod to a record store known as the place to go for hard to find music.

As the bands played, a CD flea market was held by the stage, with patrons selling their used CDs and other items along with various Sound Station merchandise including T-shirts, jackets, and compilation CDs of the bands performing. Many CDs came from Sound Station, salvaged from the wreckage and sold either with the jewel case, or in paper sleeves. Movie posters from the Digiplex Rialto Theater of Westfield were also sold, along with a raffle for free movie tickets and an authentic theatre popcorn popper.

The market was watched over by Sound Station owners Bob and Liz Larsen, who received warm messages of thanks from the bands all day. Transit Radio guitarist Colin Barry thanked them for "giving me my Radiohead obsession" and Blue Side Down, who announced the show as their last with their current drummer, talked of how the store had given them a place to go and be accepted (a statement echoed by many bands).

More than a few bands featured former employees, such as Birds in Hats, or the event's organizers — Minor Motion. The Larsens also received countless statements of applause and love from the bands, who thanked them



ROCKING FOR A CAUSE... On Saturday, a gathering of bands, both young and old from all over Westfield, rocked to raise money to rebuild Sound Station. Pictured, Blue Side Down entertains the crowd that came out to show support for the record store displaced due to a late January fire.

for giving them a place to sell their music and to perform.

But the greatest statement came from Sleeping Saints, a power trio comprised of former Westfield High School students that now reside in Texas. The group flew up and reunited solely to perform a set to help out the Sound Station for all their support years ago.

With the major benefits complete, Bob Larsen stated that his plan is to now focus on finding a new location for the store. He is eager to rebuild and begin stocking it.

"We've got a warehouse room full of stuff from the old store," Mr. Larsen said. "Liz and I were just cleaning off everything while we were helping with these benefits. Now, with the support we've received, we can really focus more on getting our stock cleaned out, and find a new place to open."

While it is still unknown exactly when, or where, the new Sound Station will reopen, Mr. Larsen has been adamant that he wants to remain in Westfield. Clearly, from all the support, Westfield wants him to stay too.

Madrigal Singers To Perform Two Spring Concerts

WESTFIELD—The Madrigal Singers will give their spring concert, In Sweetest Sympathy, on Wednesday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. in the Welpel Theatre at Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC).

The Wednesday concert is being given as part of the Scarmolin Chamber Concerts' 2012 season. The same program will be given at 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 20, at the First United Methodist Church, 1 East Broad Street.

Tickets for both concerts cost \$15 for general admission, \$10 for students, seniors and RVCC faculty and staff. For the Wednesday concert, tickets can be purchased in advance through the box office of the Theatre at Raritan Valley Community College (908) 725-3420. Tickets for the Sunday concert are available at the door of the Methodist Church.

The program features music from Italian, English and American composers, focusing on music from the Renaissance and modern music derived from folk traditions. Featured works include Monteverdi's Lamento della Ninfa, Weelkes' As Vesta Was from Latmos Hill Descending, Lassus' Cum Essem Parvulus and a new work by David Alston, who is a member of the Madrigal Singers.

NJ Youth Theatre to Hold 'Art Supports Art' Auction

WESTFIELD—Due largely to public demand, as well as the need to raise funding, the New Jersey Youth Theatre (NJYT) is again planning to host the "Art Supports Art" auction at the James Ward Mansion, 169 East Broad Street on Thursday, May 10, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the James Ward Mansion. Attendees will have the opportunity to bid on an assortment of paintings, artistic items and jewelry. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

U.S. Treasures from East Hanover will again be supplying the artwork for the auction. U.S. Treasures, specializing in fine art, antiques and reproductions, acquires artwork from estates all over the tri-state area. Owner Avi Lugashi said, "We are happy to help an organization that does so much for the young people of New Jersey."

Catering for the event will be donated by various companies, restaurants and individuals in the area including Feast Catering, Pastry Chic, Saladworks, El Toro Asado Restaurant and Pepsico.



PIRATE MUSICAL... Hedgehog & Feather will present the classic children's book "How I Became A Pirate" in a rollicking musical. Pictured, left to right, are: Wendy Connolly, Chris Slavik, Sharon McGuire, John Cote, Max Kleiman, Joe Roberts, Alex Ramos, JD Kelly, and Jack Patrick Munley. Performances will be held at St. Paul's in Westfield June 8-10. Visit hedgehogandfeather.org for more information.



TWIRLING FOR A CAUSE... Children's Specialized Friends held its "Stepping Out with CSH Stars" Benefit on Saturday night at the Gran Centurions in Clark. Katharyn Nicolle and Nikita Malakhov, top, were the winning couple. She is Miss New Jersey and he is a professional dancer from Paragon Ballroom in Roselle Park. (Bottom photo) Pictured, left to right, at the event are: dance partners Morris Lenczicki, Trustee, and Gemma Arnold, Pro; Amy Mansue, CEO of Children's Specialized Hospital and Josh McCracken, Pro; Michael Harrison, Trustee and Jennifer Vestal, Pro; and winners Katharyn Nicolle and Nikita Malakhov. Professionals from both Paragon Ballroom and Dance Studio 22 in Mountainside generously donated their time to the event.

Kean Stage to Present Singer Kathy Mattea on April 29

HILLSIDE — Kean Stage will present Kathy Mattea on Sunday, April 29, at 3 p.m. in Kean University's Gene and Shelley Enlow Recital Hall. Kathy Mattea is the beloved, two-time Grammy-winning singer of such classics as "18 Wheels and A Dozen Roses," "Where've You Been," and many other hits. She said that her new album offered her a "re-education" in singing.

That album, COAL, is a re-education for the listener as well, a recording that reshapes the way we think about music, reminding us of why we love it so much in the first place. Ms. Mattea will perform works from the new release as well as her familiar country, Celtic, a capella and world music hits.

The songs on COAL are more than just mining songs. Ms. Mattea said she wanted to pay tribute to "my place and my people" on a record that is as much a textured novel as it is an album. Raised near Charleston, West Virginia, her mining heritage is deep: both her parents grew up in coal camps, both her grandfathers were miners, her mother worked for the local UMWA. Her father was saved from the mines by an uncle who paid his way through college. "It's a coming together of a lot of different threads in my life," Ms. Mattea said.

Ms. Mattea is the multiple recipient of the Country Music Association's and Academy of Country Music's Single Of The Year award and kept a steady presence at the top of the country charts with nine Top 10 singles, including a 1990 duet, "The Battle Hymn Of Love," as well as the tender "Where've You Been," co-written by her husband, Jon Vezner, which earned her 1990s Grammy for Best Female Country Vocal Performance. The same year also saw her first gold album, Willow In The Wind.

Throughout the '90s, Kathy's successes continued, charting still more singles, including 1994's top five single "Walking Away A Winner," and releasing three more gold albums, the platinum-selling A Collection Of Hits and a long-awaited Christmas album, Good News, which earned Kathy her second Grammy, this time in the Gos-



Kathy Mattea

pel category. Tickets to Kathy Mattea at Enlow Hall are \$35 and can be purchased by calling Kean Stage Box Office at 908.737.SHOW (7469), online at enlowhall.kean.edu, or in person at Kean University's Wilkins Theater Box Office. Enlow Recital Hall is located at 215 North Avenue in Hillside, N.J. WQXR is a media sponsor of Gene and Shelley Enlow Recital Hall. For complete Enlow Hall 2011-12 Season information, please visit the website or contact Ms. Cory Ransom, Director, Operations (908) 737-5932, ransomco@kean.edu.

Book Store to Host Author and Illustrator

WESTFIELD — The Town Book Store will be hosting Westfield author Rosanne Kurstedt and illustrator Lisa Carletta-Vieites, and their book, "And I Thought About You" on Saturday, April 28, from 2-4 p.m.

"And I Thought About You" celebrates the relationship between a working mother and her child. It reflects a thought all working mothers have throughout their day, "I wonder what my child is doing now." The playful images of the mother at work set next to the child's daily activities, add to this warm and tender piece. "And I Thought About You" honors the unbreakable bond between mother and child.

A resident of Westfield, Rosanne Kurstedt is currently an Adjunct Professor of Education at Fordham University and a member of the Westfield Board of Education. She is the author of a professional book, "Teaching Writing with Picture Books as Models" as well as many professional development guides that support teachers' continuing growth.

Lisa Carletta-Vieites, also a resident of Westfield, is an associate director in the financial industry, and in her spare time she pursues her life-long hobby of art and drawing. This is her first foray into picture book illustrating.

Meet Rosanne and Lisa at The Town Book Store located at 270 East Broad Street in Westfield (corner of East Broad and Elmer Streets). If you are unable to attend this event, feel free to call The Town Book Store at (908) 233-3535 to reserve an autographed copy of their children's book.

JCC to Present 13 - The Musical

CLARK — The Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Central New Jersey will present 13 - The Musical at Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark, 365 Westfield Avenue, on Thursday, May 3, and Saturday, May 5.

This rock musical about a boy turning 13 whose parents suddenly get divorced and uproot him from New York City to Indiana. The cast includes kids from Mountainside, Springfield, Millburn, Scotch Plains and Westfield.

Tickets can be purchased at www.brownpapertickets.com. Search for "JCC of Central NJ."

POPCORN™
"The Three Stooges"
An Acquired Distaste
 3 popcorns



By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
 Film Critic

Dr. Halberstodtder, my favorite professor and mentor back at Olde Ivy Film Criticism College, would roll over in his grave if he read my review of the Brothers Farrelly's "The Three Stooges." I liked it. Not in the Facebook sense. But in the way we really liked Sally Field when she won the Oscar. Yep, he'd roll over in his grave... if he were dead.

Make sense of that incongruous irreverence and you, too, might be on the way to enjoying the iconoclastic, so-called lowbrow absurdity that is "The Three Stooges." And since one can't help but feel as much apologist as critic when giving a positive review to a movie that so embraces the eye poke, I hope to explain it to both you and the good doc.

Point of disclosure: In a reverse on the usual pattern, as a child I disliked the title characters for all the socially correct reasons. Chiefly, they were violent, boorish and just plain stupid. But then for some reason or another, in mid-adulthood came a revelation. I would have preferred the secret of life. All the same, it was a rethinking on the Stooges.

Comically reaffirmed in this homage/reconstruction of things Stooges, they were poor man's Pagliaccis...uncultured pearls devoted to a controversial form. Here, given a back story about growing up in an orphanage they now must rescue from foreclosure, like the challenge Jake and Elwood faced in "The Blues Brothers" (1980), they are made human.

Well, not too human. Because what the filmmakers are particularly successful at recreating is the insular world within a world these guys occupy. It's an existence of no rules they completely abide by, even if it means Moe, the, uh, brains of the operation, can abuse Larry and Curly for absolutely no reason whatsoever and with only rare retribution.

Of course it makes no sense...that's the point. It's anarchical humor with an angry edge. And, unless you're a bit mad yourself, you know that finding the Stooges funny is its own ridiculousness...a liberating frivolity you allow yourself in an otherwise rather serious world. You laugh at yourself for guffawing...you, who graduated from the Sorbonne.

Sliced into three segments to emulate the shorts that first brought the Stooges to showbiz notoriety, the first cut begins with the triad in babyhood, dropped on the doorstep of the Sisters of Mercy Orphanage. Soon not deemed the bundles of joy the nuns hoped they'd be, a mutual aggravation society forms. To the

sisters' chagrin, they are never adopted.

But oh, they almost were, by a rich couple, who instead chose normal little Teddy, and from that springs the plot that leads the grown-up hell-raisers, now working as the orphanage handymen, to their adventure in the outside world. This will include being part of a murder plot and rubbing elbows with no less a personage than reality TV's Snooki.

Laughing when Miss Polizzi is the recipient of a classic Stooge eye poke, you wonder, if Emily Post were alive, if this one instance of bad taste would earn her dispensation. Other contemporary cues, allusions and placements help enconce the comic trio in the 21st Century. A creatively assembled supporting cast suffers well their mischievous nihilism.

Larry David is a stitch as Sister Mary-Mengele, the martinet nun. Jane Lynch plays the unfazed Mother Superior. And Sofia Vergara is the vamp who tries to dupe the boys into bumping off her spouse by dangling \$833,000...ironically just what it'll take to save the orphanage. But fret not. Despite all proof to the contrary, the Stooges are nobody's fools.

In the finest comic tradition, they are heroes despite themselves...their ultimately noble deeds a seemingly unconscious byproduct of their hare-brained bumbling. If you think about it, it's a metaphoric microcosm for all of humanity's wanderings and wanderings. That the Farrellys found three actors to actualize their vision is itself a lucky inspiration.

Chris Diamantopoulos, Sean Hayes and Will Sasso as Moe, Larry and Curly, respectively, slip into their living oxymorons with seamless aplomb. The physical similarities, the likeness of voice and spot-on gesticulations go a long way to convince us that the spirit of this odd little niche in the realm of slapstick has indeed been resurrected.

Still, it bears noting that those who find these Vaudevillian ramblerous total anathema will doubtfully be converted. Likewise, were it not for the built-in paean, it probably wouldn't be as funny. Thus, plaudits aside, and using logic "The Three Stooges" might themselves appreciate, I can't possibly give a movie more than one popcorn per Stooge.

"The Three Stooges," rated PG, is a Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation release directed by Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly and stars Chris Diamantopoulos, Sean Hayes and Will Sasso. Running time: 92 minutes