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# Arts & Entertainment

## The Temperamentals: Powerful Play Explores 'Who We Are'

By **SUSAN MYRILL DOUGHERTY**  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

EDISON—Expectations are always high when Alliance Repertory Theatre Company's edgy producer/artistic director Mike Driscoll pairs up with talented director/actor David Christopher to produce a play. Their latest collaboration is the 2009 award-winning off-Broadway play *The Temperamentals* by Jon Marans, playing at the Edison Valley Playhouse. Their production sheds light on a time period when being homosexual was considered "un-American."

In the early 1950s, the word "temperamental" was reportedly a code word for "homosexual." The play is the dramatized history of a closeted Communist and gay activist, Harry Hay (James Morgan) who, along with his gay partner, Viennese refugee and costume designer Rudi Gernreich (Dustin Ballard), changes history. They, and several other friends, form the first gay rights organization, The Mattachine Society, in pre-Stonewall United States. The Stonewall riots were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations against police raids that took place in 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, a bar in Greenwich Village. The riots are credited as the first instance in American history when people in the homosexual community fought back against harassment and persecution. Those riots traditionally mark the start of the gay rights movement.

But *The Temperamentals* is not a story of riots and fighting. It is the human story of gay men at a time when

McCarthyism made everyone paranoid, especially gays. Harry Hay wrote a document declaring that homosexuals were an oppressed minority. In one of the most revealing scenes of the play, Rudi and Harry try to get out their ideas by canvassing certain beaches in California that were known to be homosexual gathering places and inviting men to discussion groups.

When one of their gay friends, Dale Jennings (Eddie Capuano), is arrested for "vagrancy" a term that implied homosexuality, his friends rally to his defense. The case is dismissed and the five friends are elated. They expect that a media frenzy that will follow to help them spotlight their cause.

Unlike the world of 2012 where media coverage is ubiquitous, however, there is a dearth of coverage. They are crushed. In "Harry's Nightmare," one of the most powerful of the 18 or so scenes in the two-act play, Harry's wife finds out he is in love with a man. She says she feels "failure and shame" and tells him, "It's just a physical addiction."

Yet in this dream, Harry's poignant mantra of "Who we are" keeps washing over him relentlessly like waves lapping on an ocean beach. The cast could not be better or more talented. The two lead characters are played masterfully by James Morgan as Harry and Dustin Ballard as Rudi. Mr. Morgan, a member of Actors Equity, is riveting in delivery and intensity.

In the scenes with his lover Rudi, he can be teasingly playful one moment and in the next second breathtakingly



Photo courtesy of Howard Fischer  
**GUY TALK...** In *The Temperamentals*, an award-winning Off-Broadway play by Jon Marans, Harry (James Morgan), Rudi (Dustin Ballard), Dale (Eddie Capuano), Chuck (Michael Lasry) and Bob (Gus Ibranyi) gather at the Chuckwagon Diner. The play, produced by Mike Driscoll and directed by Cranford resident David Christopher, is presented by the Alliance Repertory Theatre at the Edison Valley Playhouse located at 2191 Oak Tree Road in Edison. For directions and tickets call (908) 755-4654 or visit [evplayhouse.com](http://evplayhouse.com).

haunting, giving a look of desperation. Mr. Ballard affects a beautiful, sensuous, sophisticated, European flair with an accent that is completely credible.

The supporting cast, comprised of Michael Lasry as Chuck Rowland, Eddie Capuano as Dale Jennings and Gus Ibranyi as Bob Hull is first-rate. They play a variety of roles, slipping in and out of various stereotypes, yet making each one identifiable and memorable. Mr. Christopher, an accomplished actor himself, knows how to bring out the emotional truth in each scene.

A starkly impressive, contemporary set of panels, conceived by director Christopher and executed by David Munro, is handsomely crafted. 1950s era street signs are ingeniously mounted on hinges that flip open to reveal the location of each scene. Between the various scenes, cacophonous, frenetic percussive music written by sound de-

signer Greg Scalara propels the story forward dramatically. Lighting designer Ed Pearson utilizes illuminating pools of white light to heighten dramatic moments.

*The Temperamentals* is to the gay community as the TV drama "Roots" is to the black community. Theatre should not just entertain, but enlighten and educate. This production does all three.

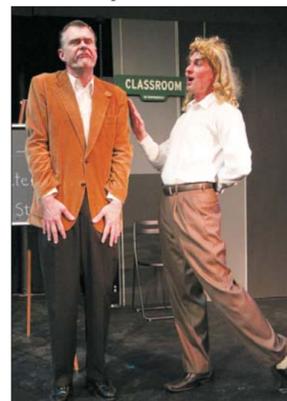


Photo courtesy of Howard Fischer  
**LESSON IN EQUALITY...** James Morgan, playing Harry Hay, one of the 1950s gay activist founders of the Mattachine Society, presents a lesson, "Music - Barometer of the Class Struggle," while his hilarious "student" (Gus Ibranyi) tries to cozy up to him in *The Temperamentals*.

## Acoustic Guitarist to Give Performance at Library

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Memorial Library will present acoustic guitarist Peter Biedermann on Wednesday, April 4, at 7 p.m. The library is located at 550 East Broad Street.

Mr. Biedermann has been composing music and performing for more than 35 years. While his music covers multiple genres in the electronic and acoustic fields, the music featured on April 4 will be original, acoustic instrumental music performed on six-, eight- and 12-string guitars in unique tunings.

Although he considers such acoustic guitar pioneers as Michael Hedges, Bert Jansch, Leo Kottke and Ralph Towner to be major influences on his music, Mr. Biedermann also acknowledges the influences of many other lesser-known originators of finger style acoustic guitar.

During the show, the guitarist will interact with the audience as he attempts to demystify the mystery of instrumental music.

This program will be free and open to Westfield Memorial Library and



**Peter Biedermann**

MURAL cardholders. MURAL cardholders belong to libraries that are part of the Middlesex Union Reciprocal Agreement Libraries. To check if a library participates, visit the Westfield Memorial Library website, [wmlnj.org](http://wmlnj.org). To register for the program, visit [wmlnj.org](http://wmlnj.org) and click on the Online Calendar, or call (908) 789-4090, option 0.

## Cory Arcangel to Speak at Union County College

CRANFORD – On Wednesday, April 11, world-renowned artist Cory Arcangel will present a multimedia lecture at Union County College. The presentation will focus on Mr. Arcangel's innovative technology inspired artwork and his distinguished career as an artist. The presentation will begin at 1 p.m. and will be held in the Roy Smith Theater on the College's Cranford campus, located at 1033 Springfield Avenue.

Cory Arcangel is a Brooklyn-based artist, represented by Team Gallery, 83 Grand Street, New York, N.Y., who creates work in a wide range of media, including composition, video, modified videogames, performance, and the Internet. He is a widely respected programmer/digital alchemist pioneer, whose artwork explores the role that media and popular culture have on shaping our existence in the hyper-technological world. His Internet interventions, modified video games, and other technology appropriated works, bridge the tech-art divides, where pop culture and the Internet connect.

Mr. Arcangel's acclaimed work, performances, and video screenings have been exhibited and presented in many galleries and museums throughout the world. His recent solo exhibitions in-

clude "Pro Tools" at the Whitney Museum of America Art, New York (2011); "Beat the Champ" at the Barbican, London, UK (2011); "Speakers Going Hammer" at the Lisson Gallery, London, UK (2011); and "Here Comes Everybody" at the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum, Berlin, Germany (2010-11); and at numerous other prominent locations.

This event is free and open to the public to attend. It is being sponsored by the Fine Arts area of the English/Fine Arts/Modern Languages Department, the College Educational Programs Advisory Committee (CEPAC), the Student Government Association, and the Union County College Art Society. For directions, or more information on Union County College, visit [www.ucc.edu](http://www.ucc.edu).

## Garnys Joins Staff Of NJWA

WESTFIELD — When students register for the spring session of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Music Studio, they will have the opportunity to be instructed by instrument specialist Adam Garnys, who has recently joined the staff of the highly recognized organization.

"We are so pleased to have Adam join our staff of instructors," said Dr. Ted Schlosberg, NJWA Founder and Executive Director. "He brings with him a wealth of talent and experience that we are proud to share with the community."

Mr. Garnys, a graduate of Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, is proficient in clarinet, flute, trumpet, trombone, baritone and percussion instruments. His background includes giving private music lessons for students, from beginner to advanced levels, and working as an instrumental music teacher and band director in area school systems.

The multi-talented musician also plays in various jazz combos and wind, jazz, and classical saxophone ensembles. He has performed on flute, alto saxophone and baritone saxophone for Atlantic Records, while touring in the United States and Canada.

Located at 150-152 East Broad Street, Westfield, the NJWA Music Studio offers music lessons to both children and adults. It also provides opportunities for area musicians to play in its many bands, orchestras and ensembles. For more information, visit the NJWA studios, phone (908) 789-9696 or log on to [www.njworkshopforthearts.com](http://www.njworkshopforthearts.com).

## SP-F HS to Host Night of Jazz

SCOTCH PLAINS — On Monday, April 2, at 7 p.m., the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SP-FHS) will host a night of jazz music performed by four exceptional New Jersey bands, representing musicians at the high school, university, and professional levels.

The concert will feature two state champion high school jazz bands: SP-F Moonglowers and J.P. Stevens Jazz Ensemble. In addition, there will be guest appearances by the highly-acclaimed New Jersey City University Jazz Ensemble and the lively, innovative Joe Elefante Big Band. Don't miss this opportunity to experience an evening of superb jazz music!

All are welcome to attend; donations will be accepted at the door. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School is located at 667 Westfield Road in Scotch Plains.

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A portion of the day's proceeds  
will be donated to The Education  
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All prices subject to a 20% staffing charge and NJ State Tax.

## Fanwood Recreation Announces Spring Programs for Seniors

FANWOOD - Fanwood Recreation announces its spring program schedule for seniors. Most programs begin the week of April 2 and run through the week of June 18: Aerobics - Tuesdays, 9-10 a.m.; Tai Chi - Tuesdays, 10:15-11:15 a.m. Water Exercise - Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.; Tennis for 65+ - Thursdays, 11-11:45 p.m.; Line Dancing - Thursdays, 1-2 p.m.; and Zumba Gold - Fridays, 9-10 a.m.

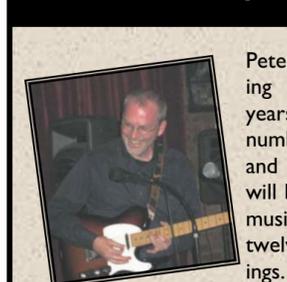
All classes will be held in the recreation building at Forest Road Park, except for Water Exercise, which will

be held at the Jewish Community Center of Central New Jersey Wilf Jewish Community Campus indoor pool in Scotch Plains, and Tennis for 65+, which will be held at the Hilltop Tennis Club, 330 North Avenue, Fanwood.

The fee is \$10 per program for Fanwood and Scotch Plains residents, \$25 for all others. To get a schedule and a registration form, please visit [www.fanwoodrecreation.org](http://www.fanwoodrecreation.org) on the web or pick them up at Fanwood Borough Hall, 75 N. Martine Avenue.

For more information, call Fanwood Recreation at (908) 370-7092.

## The Westfield Memorial Library presents Acoustic Guitarist Peter Biedermann Wednesday, April 4 at 7:00 pm



Peter Biedermann has been composing and performing for over 35 years. While his music covers a number of genres in the electronic and acoustic fields, tonight's music will be original acoustic instrumental music performed on six-, eight- and twelve-string guitars in unique tunings. While Peter considers such acoustic guitar pioneers such as

Michael Hedges, Bert Jansch, Leo Kottke and Ralph Towner to be major influences on his music, he acknowledges the influences of many other lesser known originators of finger style acoustic guitar. He's a Library favorite!



It's your Library ... make the most of it  
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Open to Westfield Memorial Library and MURAL cardholders.

Sign up online at

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