

## Continuo Arts Hosts Open Auditions for Singers

MILLBURN — Continuo Arts Foundation, New Jersey's most comprehensive intergenerational choral program and Paper Mill Playhouse, one of the country's premier not-for-profit theaters will partner for Paper Mill Playhouse's production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Selected members of Continuo Arts Symphonic Chorus will be featured as the on-stage choir in the musical's United States premiere from March 4 - April 5, 2015 at the Millburn theater. Individuals interested in being considered for the Continuo Arts Symphonic Chorus can schedule an audition by calling Continuo Arts Foundation at (908) 264-5324.

"The Symphonic Chorus will offer singers of all ages a unique and once in a lifetime opportunity," said Candace Wicke, President and Executive Director of Continuo Arts.

"Continuo is honored to have been selected to be a part of the US Premiere musical at one of our nation's leading regional theaters."

Auditions for the many vocal ensembles of Continuo Arts Foundation will begin on Tuesday, June 17, and continue throughout the summer. Singers should prepare 32 bars of an a capella selection that best highlights the singer's vocal range and versatility for the audition. There will also be a sight reading component at the audition.

All auditions will be held at Historic Twin Maples, 216 Springfield Avenue, Summit.

Singers will be called or e-mailed if they are selected for a callback. Choir rehearsals for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* will begin on Tuesday, September 2, and will continue through the beginning of March 2015.

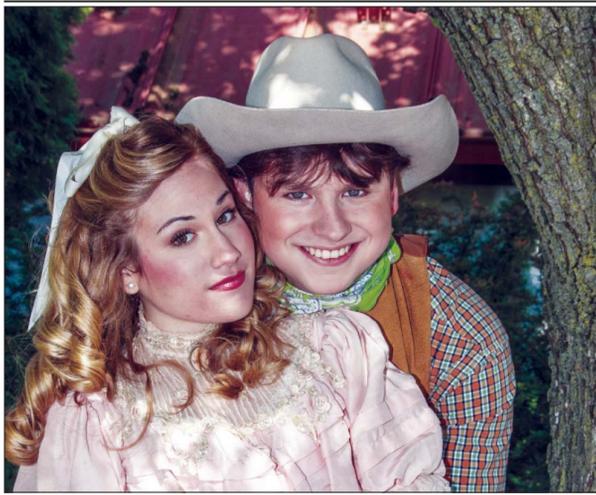


Photo courtesy of Warren Westora

**OKLAHOMA!**...This coming summer, New Jersey Youth Theatre will present *Oklahoma!* at the Algonquin Arts Theatre in Manasquan and at Morris Museum's Bickford Theatre in Morristown. The production will feature Erica Morreale as Laurey and Keenan Buckley as Curly, above.

## Young Artists Star in *Oklahoma!* At NJ Theatres

MORRISTOWN — This coming summer, the award-winning New Jersey Youth Theatre (NJYT) will present Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical classic, *Oklahoma!* at the Algonquin Arts Theatre in Manasquan (July 17-27) and at Morris Museum's Bickford Theatre in Morristown, both professional theatre venues.

For 23 years, NJYT has offered dramatic and musical theatre fare to New Jersey audiences with productions including *West Side Story* (2003 and 2013), winner of the Musical Theatre Award of Excellence, and *Ragtime* (2006) and *Sweeney Todd* (2009), both named by theatre critic, Peter Filichia as "best musical revivals" in New Jersey for those respective years.

*Oklahoma!*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's first collaboration remains, in many ways, their most innovative, having set the standards and established the rules of musical theatre still being followed today.

Set in Oklahoma territory just after the turn of the century, the high-spirited rivalry between the local farmers and cowboys provides the colorful background against which Curly, a handsome cowboy, and Laurey, a winsome farm girl, Will Parker, a fun-loving steer roper and Ado Annie, a love-hungry flirt play out their love stories. They succeed in making new lives together in what will be a brand-new state building up to the ultimate climax, the triumphant "Oklahoma!"

Songs include "People Will Say We're in Love," "I Can't Say No," "The Surrey With the Fringe on Top," and "Out of My Dreams."

Starring in *Oklahoma!* are well-known, local performers, Erica Morreale as Laurey, Veronica Walton as Gertie, and Zachary Love as Will Parker, all from Cranford. Samantha Tropper from Scotch Plains plays Ado Annie and Katy Cockrell from Fanwood plays Aunt Eller. Other local cast members include Kevin Brodie, Katie Morreale, Niamh O'Donovan, and Brenden Salea, from Cranford, Jacqueline Daaleman and Hannah Moloshok from Westfield, Alonzo Hall from Plainfield, Marion Petite from Clark, and Marjun Valdez from Garwood.

For tickets to *Oklahoma!* at the Algonquin Arts Theatre, please call the box office at (732) 528-9211; at Morris Museum's Bickford Theatre, call (973) 971-3706.

New Jersey Youth Theatre programming is made possible in part by the generous support of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Westfield Foundation, the Lillian Pitkin Schenck Fund, the Blanche and Irving Lurie Foundation, the Edelman Foundation, and individual contributions. For detailed information on NJYT, visit [www.njyouththeatre.org](http://www.njyouththeatre.org). For production or class information, call (908) 233-3200.

## Businesses Receive Free Table At SP Cultural Arts Concert Series

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Recreation Commission and the Cultural Arts Committee are offering all Scotch Plains and Fanwood businesses the opportunity to promote and showcase themselves for free during the 2014 Scotch Plains Cultural Arts Concert Series.

Businesses will be allocated a 10x10 spot on the Alan Augustine Village Green on a first-come first-serve basis each night. Each business is responsible for providing their own tables and chairs.

All businesses interested should contact either, Ray Poirio at [rpoerio@scotchplainsnj.com](mailto:rpoerio@scotchplainsnj.com) or Stephen Dahl

[steved@scotchplainsnj.com](mailto:steved@scotchplainsnj.com).

Food vendors are welcome but do need to include in their email what they plan on selling. Additionally, food vendors will need to comply with all township health and fire regulations.

The Recreation Commission and Cultural Arts Committee are offering this opportunity to Scotch Plains and Fanwood businesses as a thank you for their years of continuous support of the series.

The Concert Series runs Thursdays on July 10, 17, 24, 31 and August 14.

For more information, contact the Recreation Department at (908) 322-6700 ext. 223.



**SMALL STRINGS ATTACHED TO BIG IDEAS...**Dr. Ted Schlosberg, founder and executive director of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts (NJWA), shows the basics of playing a 1/10 size string bass to 5 year old May Kang. The Music Studio's recent acquisition of this unique size instrument now allows very young musicians to play the string bass using pizzicato and bow. Lessons are private and are part of the regular Music Studio offerings. For more information, call (908) 789-9696, visit the NJWA studios at 150-152 East Broad Street, Westfield, or log on to [www.njworkshopforthearts.com](http://www.njworkshopforthearts.com) for more information.



**AUDITION NOTICE...**Continuo Arts Foundation, New Jersey's most comprehensive intergenerational choral program will partner with Paper Mill Playhouse for the production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Selected members of Continuo Arts Symphonic Chorus will be featured as the on-stage choir in the musical's United States premiere. Auditions for the many vocal ensembles of Continuo Arts Foundation will begin on Tuesday, June 17, and continue throughout the summer.

**POPCORN**  
**"A Million Ways to Die in the West"**  
 Home, Home on the Raunch  
 2 and 1/2 popcorns

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER  
 Film critic

To laugh or not to laugh? That is the question prim and proper tenderfoots will ask. Otherwise, you can add laughing to the list of "A Million Ways to Die in the West." So call me a boor. I snickered, chuckled, issued two or three bona fide guffaws and, I think, at one point let loose a full-fledged chortle.

Yet, there are also moments when some of director-cowriter Seth MacFarlane's amalgam of high-concept satire and adolescent disgustingness falls as flat as the Western plains it so irreverently depicts. We're just agape in disbelief.

That's part and parcel of the double-edged sword style Mr. MacFarlane employs in his attempt to have as many moviegoers as possible howl themselves silly in an abashed confab of guilty thrills. Concurrently, the sheer wit and intelligence of the film's sociological observations temper the ceaseless inundation of scatological obscenity.

Reminiscent of the style and character Bob Hope fashioned, MacFarlane stars as the Eastern greenhorn paradoxically out of place in the Wild West. His sensibilities bespeak a later place in time. As such, he is the ever-disgruntled narrator, the gist of his gripes bemoaning the incivility of his surroundings. Exemplifying the frightening medical incompetence in 1882, a poor soul laments, "She had a splinter... what could you do?"

As hero/likable nerd, MacFarlane's Albert, a sheep farmer, and not even a good one according to Louise (Amanda Seyfried), the object of his unrequited love, illustrates the confounding inexplicability of our mating choices. The would-be gold-digger picked him because he's nuts for her. Low self-esteem won't let the fellow seek someone who loves him, too. Like kids at a Saturday matinee trying to save the cowboy from the villain sneaking up on him, we want to warn Albert against her artificiality.

Adding insult to injury, Louise soon gives Albert the gate and takes up with Foy, the entrepreneurial owner of the town's successful Moustacherie. But hark! Analogous to the sound of bugles and thundering hoof beats heralding the approach of the U.S. Cavalry to the rescue, moseying into town stage right is the pulchritudinous Anna, portrayed by Charlize Theron. Though her arrival is as mysterious as she is beautiful, more perplexing is that she takes an immediate liking to our displaced and forlorn Albert.

What Albert doesn't know is that his newfound friend and confidante, who makes it her mission to improve the sweet dude's confidence, has a bit of baggage to sort through herself. Sad fact is, she's unhappily married to Liam Neeson's murderous Clinch Leatherwood, a name interchangeable with gunfighter in these here parts of the Old West. One needn't be Zane Gray to venture that this must inevitably lead to a show-down.

Shades of Aaron Copland and variations on "The Magnificent Seven" (1960) theme, accompanied by shots of iconic landscapes, play backdrop as MacFarlane vigorously lays out his title's thesis. One particularly outrageous riff of accidental deaths at the county fair, an ac-

knowledgeed recurring phenomenon, more than proves his point.

On the bright side, part of why Louise dumps Albert is because, with "people now living to 35," she should explore her options.

Naturally, we revel in the savvy smugness of our viewpoint...beneficiaries of penicillin, public sanitation and arguably a few less gunfights. It's good to occupy the Earth 132 years hence, where getting gored by a bull is usually an optional thing limited to one festival in Spain. And, if we've the good fortune to be middle class or luckier, odds are the municipality where we pay taxes is a far cry from the grungy burg represented here, as shamefully filthy as the film's R-rated dialogue.

Fine supporting performances further emphasize the ludicrously sorrowful humor of the place and time. Giovanni Ribisi is a pip as Edward, Albert's best friend and cuckold extraordinaire to Sarah Silverman's zany played Ruth, a prostitute who flagrantly favors everyone in town but Albert with her conspicuously busy charms.

Understandably, just to keep us from becoming overly giddy with revulsion, the plot injects dramatic relief in the persona of the aforementioned Leatherwood, a sociopathic killer no disrespecting parody set west of the Pecos can omit. The Goliath to Albert's David, a deadly serious Mr. Neeson is as formidably fearsome as Jack Palance's Curly in "City Slickers" (1991), but without the redeeming good side.

Unleashing a Gatling gun eruption of hit and miss lampoonery, the filmmaker is forever testing the line we'd prefer comics not to cross. It is revoltingly epitomized by one scene that makes the ode to flatulence in "Blazing Saddles" (1974) seem almost Emily Post acceptable. But whether engendering accolades or repugnance, "A Million Ways to Die in the West" confirms MacFarlane's continually edgy exploration on the comedy frontier.

"A Million Ways to die in the West," rated R, is a Universal Pictures release directed by Seth MacFarlane and stars Seth MacFarlane, Charlize Theron and Liam Neeson. Running time: 116 minutes

## WHS Wins Two Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards

WESTFIELD — The Westfield High School spring musical production of *Anyone Can Whistle* garnered two awards at the 2014 Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards ceremony.

This year's recipients were seniors Alexa Derman for Student Achievement in Hair and Make-up Design and Samantha Gruskin for Student Achievement in Stage Management.

In addition to these two awards, John Brzozowski, vocal teacher at Westfield High School, was recognized with an Honorable Mention for musical direction.

"These awards are well deserved," stated Mr. Devlin. "I congratulate the awardees as well as the entire cast, crew and pit orchestra for their continued outstanding work."



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED...**Westfield Community Players (WCP) is looking for volunteers to help with all aspects of running the theater. The stage crew at WCP pictured, front row, left to right, are: Stage Manager Barbara Ruban, Julia Bieber, stage crew and JoAnne Lemenille, props mistress. Pictured, back row, left to right, are: Kevin Coulson, stage crew; Michael Bieber, sound operator and Jessica Foerst, light operator.

## Westfield Community Players Honor Volunteer

WESTFIELD — At the end of every performance, actors point off stage as a sign that they are sharing the applause with those working behind the scenes. At the end of Westfield Community Players' season this May, one member of the stage crew was especially recognized.

Julia Bieber, who will graduate from Westfield High School later this month, has been volunteering at the theater for six years. As part of the stage crew she reset props during scene changes in the dark, and made sure everything was repositioned to its original spot for the beginning of

the next performance. She helped actors with hair and make-up and assisted during speedy wardrobe changes. Julia could also be seen in the lobby, selling raffle tickets and refreshments and helping in the box office.

After a gap year volunteering, studying and traveling in Israel, Julia will attend Ithaca College in the fall of 2015.

Westfield Community Players is looking for volunteers to help with all aspects of running the theater. Anyone interested can contact the theater at [info@westfieldcommunityplayers.org](mailto:info@westfieldcommunityplayers.org).

## Premiere Stages Opens Season With *The Ansel Intimacy*

UNION — Premiere Stages at Kean University will launch its much-anticipated 10th Anniversary Season with a free staged reading of Vincent Delaney's new play, *The Ansel Intimacy*, Friday, June 20, through Sunday, 22, in Kean's Murphy Dunn Theatre.

Selected from over 400 submissions, *The Ansel Intimacy* is the first of two scripts scheduled for expanded development as part of the 2014 Premiere Stages Play Festival. The Festival is an annual competition for unproduced scripts by playwrights with ties to the greater metropolitan area (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut), and perfectly embodies the theatre's passionate and longstanding commitment to supporting emerging artists through the development and production of new plays.

Mr. Delaney has received an honorarium and the opportunity to further develop his play through a professional, 29-hour rehearsal process culminating in three public readings.

*The Ansel Intimacy*, directed by Padraic Lillis, will feature Eric Troy Miller as Tate, Scott Hudson as Ansel, and Kelley O'Donnell as Iris.

A masterful blend of prescience and fantasy, *The Ansel Intimacy* invites audience members to a not-so-distant future of humans and their "sharers" in a story that is both comedic and cautionary. On his 16th birthday, Tate receives a gift he never wanted: Ansel, who was scientifically engineered to provide him with replacement parts. But as the bond between them grows, Tate discovers some gifts can not easily be accepted.

Audience members attending Premiere's workshop of *The Ansel Intimacy* will have the opportunity to provide direct feedback to Mr. Delaney through interactive post-show discussions following each reading, as well as written evaluation forms. Positive feedback from patrons attending an earlier reading of *The Ansel Intimacy* in March contributed to Premiere's eventual decision to name the play this year's

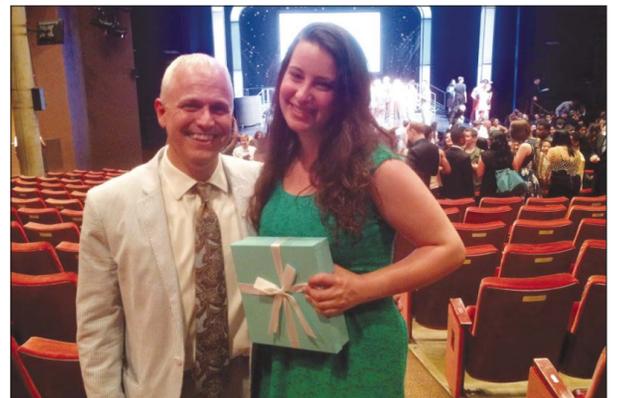


**PRESCIENCE AND FANTASY...**Premiere Stages at Kean University will launch its much-anticipated 10th Anniversary Season with a free staged reading of *The Ansel Intimacy*, by Vincent Delaney on Friday, June 20, through Sunday, 22, in Kean's Murphy Dunn Theatre.

Runner-Up in the prestigious Play Festival.

"Staged readings are so important to the new play development process," said Clare Drobot, Premiere's producing associate. "Premiere Stages audiences are so intelligent, and their feedback is invaluable to all of our playwrights as they continue to develop their plays."

*The Ansel Intimacy* runs Friday, June 20, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, June 21, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, June 22, at 3 p.m. in the Murphy Dunn Theatre, located in Kean University's Vaughn Eames Hall at 1000 Morris Avenue, Union. Admission and parking are free. Reservations are strongly recommended, as seating is limited. Call (908) 737-4092 or email [priere@kean.edu](mailto:priere@kean.edu) or visit [www.kean.edu/premierestages](http://www.kean.edu/premierestages) for more information.



**RISING STAR...**Samantha Gruskin, pictured with Director Daniel Devlin, won the 2014 Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star award for Student Achievement in Stage Management for her part in the Westfield High School spring musical *Anyone Can Whistle*. Samantha is a senior at Westfield High School.

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