

# Arts & Entertainment



TRYING TO BREAK THE SPELL...Mr. Brink, a.k.a. Death (Richard Kline), has been tricked into the apple tree by Gramps (Fred Dennehy) while grandson Pud (Logan Guvenel) looks adoringly at his hero. The Westfield Community Players' production of *On Borrowed Time* continues through Saturday, March 23. For tickets, call (908) 232-1221.

## On Borrowed Time Ticks at Westfield Community Players

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

WESTFIELD — Everyone has heard about Adam and Eve's fateful relationship with the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. In Paul Osborn's two-act play *On Borrowed Time*, now playing weekends at the Westfield Community Players, another tree of a magical sort is the focus.

Cantankerous old Gramps (Fred Dennehy) and his wife, Granny (Sharon McGuire), find themselves raising their orphaned grandson, Pud (Logan Guvenel). Pud's Aunt Demetria (Debbie Badal) has no interest in the boy except for designs on adopting him so that she can get the money that was left to him.

Grandma warns her husband that impressionable Pud is mimicking everything he does, including cussing a blue streak. As Gramps does what he calls a "good deed," his grandson tells him to make a wish and it will come true. Offhandedly, Gramps

makes a wish that sets a chain of events into a cataclysmic frenzy. He kiddingly says he wishes that no one can come down from his prized apple tree until he says so. This wish is tested on a neighbor child who is stealing apples and then with Pud himself.

Cue villainous, creepy organ music for a man named Mr. Brink, a.k.a. Death (Richard Kline), who comes to visit the household. Gramps is able to shoo him off, but when Death pays a second visit, he takes Grandma off to the great beyond. The old and young males console each other and carry on with the help of their maid, Marcia Giles (Kate Porzuelo).

The end of Act I shows that Gramps has tricked Death up into the tree. There is no more death in the world until Gramps allows it to come down from the lofty perch. The rest of the second act deals with townspeople and Aunt Demetria trying to prove Gramps insane. They send the sheriff, a doctor and a person from the insane asylum to his house to get him locked

up. Doc says he stayed up all night trying to kill insects, stray cats and dogs, to no avail, and thus, becomes a believer of Gramps' suspected delusion. The philosophical question is broached: what would happen to a world where nothing ever died?

Fred Dennehy, as Gramps, does a marvelous job in the demanding role that was played in the movie version of this play by the inimitable Lionel Barrymore. Mr. Dennehy's natural comfort with his castmates rings true in cadence and body language. Ms. McGuire, as his wife, fits comfortably in banter and his embrace. The young Logan is adorable as Pud in parroting Gramps' salty language. Ms. Badal has a ball being the mean old mercenary aunt. The townsfolk do a credible job with their accents in placing us in the rural south. The magical tree design and construction is by Linda Correll, Russ Ortiz and Ed Whitman. In the end, the play presents the conclusion that humanity can't live without death.



MUDDFEST '19...The band Puddle of Mudd performs at Saturday's Muddfest concert at the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway.

## Concertgoers of All Ages Turn Out For Muddfest at Union County PAC

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

RAHWAY — On Saturday night, concertgoers of all ages attended Muddfest 2019 at the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway. Puddle of Mudd headlined the four-hour show, accompanied by one-hour performances including Saliva, Trapt, and Tantric. Although advertised, travel complications prohibited Saving Abel from performing.

Lead singer Wes Scantlin founded Puddle of Mudd in Kansas City, Mo., on September 13, 1991. Puddle of Mudd was acclaimed for their hit singles "Control" and "Blurry" in 2001. "Blurry" reached number five on the Billboard Hot 100. To date, Puddle of Mudd has sold over seven million records.

The crowd included many between the ages of 28 and 40 years old. All the bands performing are recognized internationally. However, the music genre is recognized as fitting a '90s alternative rock or post grunge; a throwback as many attendees regarded the music.

Clark resident Stacey Malko said

sharing "old school music" with her 14-year-old daughter is something she has "always done" since her daughter was young. Ms. Malko said her daughter was excited to attend the concert with her parents and knows "more about the music genre now than us."

"First time at the performing arts center. I loved the bands. The venue was awesome. The acoustics are great," said Union County resident Joseph Pinsl.

The concert drew fans from throughout New Jersey and out-of-state fans. Holbrook, N.Y. resident Joseph O'Donnell said Puddle of Mudd was the main reason his son, 14 years, and he attended the concert. Mr. O'Donnell stated that Pearl Jam (a popular '90s alternative rock band) "got him into" other bands who play similar music.

Mr. O'Donnell and his son "got caught up" on the other bands during the drive over and "were really excited to hear them live," he said.

Trapt performed their 2002 hit single "Headstrong" to close their performance, which created a positive crowd reaction. "Headstrong"

reached 16th on the Billboard Top 100. The crowd was fully engaged and responsive to all bands performing, although many concertgoers were there to see Puddle of Mudd exclusively or appreciated all the performances. Trapt received notable pre-concert fan attention and a positive live response while performing specific to their band.

Tantric's lead singer, Hugo Ferreira, was the only original member of the band to perform. Tantric's "Cross the Line" contributed to the 2003 NASCAR album NASCAR: Crank It Up.

"It was my first time coming to this historic theatre. Tantric is actually my favorite. I used to listen to these guys every day before high school," said one concertgoer.

Overall, the show added to the growing list of successful concerts the Union County Performing Arts Center has hosted over the last several years. The arts center has created a concert series with diverse music which remains comfortable for families, couples, and "hard-core music fans" alike.

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