

Oratorio Singers Present Annual Concert

Editors Note: The following was submitted by Paul Mack Somers for the Oratorio Singers.

WESTFIELD — “A wall of sound!” is how this music was described to this writer before, during, and after the concert. It was certainly an apt description, for at the top of the wall, quite literally, was the Oratorio Singers, a well-trained 57 voice chorus led by music director, Trent Johnson. At more or less the same level was the large Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ played by Yang-Hee Song. But these are a standard view for the audience at the Oratorio Singers’ annual concert.

What was most striking as one entered was the mere ten chairs stretching in single row across the front of the stage with some percussion to the right and a harp tucked away waiting to join in for the second half. In all previous years this space would have been filled with an orchestra ranging in size from the baroque to the romantic. Here, instead, were what appeared to be minimal numbers. But when they were filled with three trumpets, three horns, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and two more percussionists covering such instruments as Glockenspiel and both crash and suspended cymbals, all top-rank professionals, the “wall of sound” was complete.

Its sheer sonic power was felt immediately as the audience joined the chorus in singing Ralph Vaughan Williams’ setting of the old hymn-tune we call “Old 100th” with the text “All people who on earth do dwell.” Everyone who knew the tune — only a very few did not — sang the first stanza with a will, though fewer sang for the less familiar stanzas two and five. The lyrical trumpet descant in the soft third stanza was played with clear and musical phrasing.

Audience participation out of the way, the full ensemble got down to real work in Mack Willberg’s *Jubilate Deo*. Even within the changing meters the ensemble was crisp and the choral attacks clean. The tenors, the smallest section, did a sterling job with a sec-

tional solo. In Wilberg’s *Laudate Dominum*, which closed the first half, every section proved exemplary in solo and ensemble as the passage beginning with “Laudate eum in sono tubae” builds in complexity and intensity. With all that brass and percussion rising to a climax with the chorus, one had the same sense of irresistible procession one finds in Respighi’s “Pines of the Apennines.”

Between the two Wilberg pieces, Giovanni Gabrieli, the turn-of-the-17th century father of great chorus, organ, and brass composing, was represented. It was he who gained a reputation for his antiphonal composing in which multiple ensembles responded to each other across the spaces of the Basilica di San Marco in Venice. On this occasion two of the works — the all brass *Canzona Prima à 5* and the full ensemble’s *Jubilate Deo* — are not considered to be antiphonal. But in this performance with the players spread all across the stage, and with Gabrieli’s crisp compositional style, it was de facto antiphonal. The choral and brass imitation passages were transparent and geographical as the motives aurally moved around the stage.

The *Canzoni Septimi Toni à 8*, on the other hand, is a truly antiphonal work with the brass and organ on this occasion as the opposing forces. But because this made the spatial relationship of front (brass) against back behind the altar (organ) instead of side to side, it sounded the least antiphonal. This writer had only ever before heard this canon with two brass choirs left and right. Perhaps if the antiphonal organ in the rear of the church had been used as the second “ensemble,” it would have been more effective.

The second part of this release will appear in next week’s edition and cover the second half of the concert.

See it all on the Web!
www.goleader.com

POPCORN

The Incredible Burt Wonderstone

A Conjured Taste

2 and 1/2 popcorns

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Film Critic

Point of disclosure: For reasons both nostalgic and personal, I probably like director Don Scardino’s *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone* more than most normal folks will. Having had a childhood friend who aspired to magical greatness made it much more appreciable. You see, I knew Lew Wymisner when he was just becoming the Great Loudini.

Heck...once, just as our friendship was germinating, I even helped. Interviewing me on the B-ball court for my one and only stint as a magician’s assistant, he asked if I had a sport coat. Responding in a style reminiscent of Jack Nicholson’s retort in *Easy Rider* (1969) when Peter Fonda inquires if he has a helmet, I answered, “I’ve got a doozie!”

In hound’s-tooth jacket, I got a peek behind the curtain, handed the budding magician a rabbit or two, and earned \$5. Thus, as this film details the nascent stage of what one day will become the record-breaking, headlining Vegas act of Burt Wonderstone and Anton Marvelton, a memory about the grand aspirations and fantasies of childhood was jogged.

Pity is, Steve Carrel’s Burt Wonderstone is now bored and jaded. For all his fame and fortune, the thrill is gone. He and Anton, portrayed by Steve Buscemi, simply phone it in every night, sniping at each other offstage in resentment of the rut they’ve dug. Worse yet, they no longer feel the bond of friendship that has been the hallmark of their act.

The audience, once always full and now not so much, can sense it. And, as if that didn’t augur bad enough for their showbiz future, a perfect storm has arrived on the Strip in the arrogantly intrusive persona of street magician Steve Gray, played with unsettling vitriol by Jim Carrey. The handwriting is on the wall. Of course Burt’s hubris blinds his view.

But the scene is perfectly clear to Doug Munny (James Gandolfini), the owner of the Bally Hotel who only has the bottom line at heart. Push comes to shove and Presto-change-o, the exposition about a magician who has lost the joy and spark that led him to his craft turns into a tale of realization, comeuppance and a struggle for redemption.

While hardly ever sidesplitting, *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone* does provide a smattering, if not a steady stream, of laughs to augment what essentially is the proverbial entertainment industry saga. You know, how the mighty fall, the umpteenth variation on *A Star is Born*, but with doves and the other

accouterments of things prestidigitational.

Still, the screenplay by a gaggle of scribes supplies fairly apt material and conjures some decent bits of shtick. Plus, the zany, self-absorbed, single-mindedness Carrel classically imbues his characters with, combined with Buscemi’s oddball characterization and Mr. Carrey’s abashing loose cannon, renders the sum of the amusement greater than its parts.

Playing the sorcerer’s apprentice without benefit of a black and white hound’s-tooth sports jacket, but making up for it with grace of form, face and manner is Olivia Wilde. Catalyst and love interest, she is Jane, even if Burt persists in calling her Nicole, just as he did all her routinely fired predecessors. But that’s OK. Unspoiled, Jane has a dream.

Also full of motivation, but more resembling a nightmare, at least to Burt, is Jim Carrey’s haughty illusionist. Representing that wing of hocus-pocus oft considered déclassé by more traditional magicians, he shocks and awes his sidewalk patrons with repulsive acts of self-affliction. But then, don’t people slow down to ogle a car wreck?

Urging Burt to match the evil competition’s death-defying feats, Anton suggests they reference the notebook of conjurations they penned as kids, and maybe in the process restore the magic in their magic. Buscemi, like Messrs. Carrel and Carrey, possesses in his bag of tricks an intrinsic ploy: His face alone can cause us a chuckle, if not a cackle.

But the film’s best supporting stint, while hardly more than a cameo, is artfully sketched by Alan Arkin. Lo and behold, discovered living out his days in a retirement home after inexplicably walking away from the world of abracadabra, is the great Rance Holloway. Gee...Burt owned his magic kit as a kid. Why, it’s the very reason he became a magician.

While Mr. Arkin’s comic alchemy adds warmth and whimsy to the doings, the good-natured movie just doesn’t have that novel or gut-busting twist up its sleeve. Hence, folks without a special interest in the world of incantations and wizardry are advised to wait until *The Incredible Burt Wonderstone* materializes through the magic of television.

...
The Incredible Burt Wonderstone, rated PG-13, is a Warner Bros. Pictures release directed by Don Scardino and stars Steve Carrel, Jim Carrey and Olivia Wilde. Running time: 100 minutes



BAND CONCERT...Students perform at their fourth grade Band Concert, held at Wilson Elementary School in Westfield on February 21.

SP-F Jazz Band Festival to Spotlight Young Musicians

SCOTCH PLAINS — The 16th Annual Jazz Band Festival will be held on Friday, April 5, at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Young jazz musicians from several central New Jersey bands will perform starting at 5:30 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens. There will also be food available for purchase. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School is located at 667 Westfield Road in Scotch Plains.

The Festival features guest bands from New Jersey high schools including Westfield, J.P. Stevens, Bridgewater-Raritan and others. Also featured in the evening’s line up are three jazz band ensembles from the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School: Jazz Lab, SPF Jazz and the Moonglowers.

For more information, visit the Music Boosters website at www.spfk12.org/domain/66.

Masterwork Chorus Hosts Cäcilien Chor in ‘Voices Unite’

SUMMIT — The Masterwork Chorus and Frankfurt Germany’s Cäcilien Chor will present “Voices Unite,” a program of choral music featuring Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*, Rheinberger’s *Mass in a Minor*, and Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb*. The performance will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 25, at the Calvary Episcopal Church in Summit. Tickets are \$30 and are available at www.masterwork.org.

Under the baton of Music Director Andrew McGill, The Masterwork Chorus is widely recognized for its dramatic interpretations of “masterworks” from all periods. The Chorus has sung at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC as well as on the Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall for its annual performance of Handel’s *Messiah*.

The Cäcilien-Chor was founded in 1818 in Frankfurt, Germany. Their demanding program of works covers choral music from the sixteenth century to the present. Felix Mendelssohn

conducted the chorus in 1829, and dedicated his oratorio “Paulus” to Cäcilien-Chor. They have also sung under the baton of many world famous conductors, including Wilhelm Furtwängler, Sir George Solti, Lorin Maazel, Kurt Mazur and Christian Zacharias. Director since 1988, Christian Kabitz has greatly enriched the musical experience enjoyed by members and supporters alike.

The Voices Unite concerts would not have been possible without the generous support of Environmental News Network, Lauterback Marketing, Makrod Investment Associates, Pavese-McCormick Agency, Inc., Savory Systems International, Inc., Summit Financial Resources, Inc., and Wagner and Associates, LLC. Funding has also been made possible in part the Frank and Lydia Bergen Foundation.

100 Saints

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is has proven both a challenge and a reward for Mrs. Painter. “I am no longer her mother or her acting teacher or her director. In this play we are two actors on the same plain.”

The play, *100 Saints You Should Know*, that will run weekends at the Edison Valley Playhouse on Oak Tree Road in Edison from Friday, March 29, through Saturday, April 13, centers on a conflicted priest (Paul Zeller) who leaves his congregation to go home to soul-search and be with his mother (Noreen Farley).

The drama extends to the strife between a cleaning lady (Beth Painter) and her difficult 16-year-old daughter (Hannah Painter), as well as a grocery delivery boy (Aaron Black) grappling with his sexuality. All of the five characters are seeking both spiritual and earthly bonds.

For reservations for seats in the intimate theatre, call (908) 755-4654 or visit www.EVPlayhouse.com. The play runs Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. as well as a 2 p.m. Sunday, April 7, matinee.



YOUNG ARTIST...McKinley student, Alexandra Brennan, holds her art work titled “Abstraction,” which was selected to be displayed at the Department of Education building in Trenton. Alexandra is the youngest of 13 artists chosen from over 50 candidates throughout the state. Alexandra is pictured with Art Teacher, Alison Hooper-Korkuch.

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Farmhouse Store Donates to Help Freehold Family

WESTFIELD — The Farmhouse Store located on East Broad Street in Westfield recently hosted design and TV personalities George Oliphant and Courtney Cachet as they filmed a segment of NBC’s “George to the Rescue.”

On the program, host George Oliphant teams up with design and construction experts to rescue a family or community in need of home improvements.

For the episode filmed at The Farmhouse Store, a family from Freehold is helped to finish home renovations by Mr. Oliphant’s program. The husband, a firefighter and 9/11 first responder, is unable to complete work started on the family home due to a serious back injury that he suffered.

The Farmhouse Store donated upholstered furniture, tables, rugs, art, and decorative accessories from their extensive inventory to finish a basement family room for the deserving family. Ms. Cachet approached owners Ed Menapace and Bill Curtis about participating in the program. The owners and store staff designers worked with Ms. Cachet to select items for furnishing and accessorizing the room.

The “George to the Rescue” episode is scheduled to air on Saturday, April 20, at 9 a.m. on NBC New York. A condensed version of the episode will run as part of LX TV’s Open House program, which airs on NBC on Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. It will also run in the future on the Cozi TV network in syndication.



GENEROUS DONATION...The Farmhouse Store located on East Broad Street in Westfield recently hosted design and TV personalities George Oliphant and Courtney Cachet as they filmed a segment of NBC’s “George to the Rescue.” Pictured, left to right, are: Bill Curtis, Ms. Cachet, Ed Menapace and Mr. Oliphant.

Plagge Named Director of NJWA Rockin’ Jazz Band

WESTFIELD — Dr. Ted Schlosberg, Founder and Executive Director of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts (NJWA), has announced that he has turned over his baton as director of the NJWA Rockin’ Jazz Band to Brian Plagge.

Mr. Plagge is a graduate of The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, concentration in Trumpet. While at TCNJ, Mr. Plagge was a member of the Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, Brass Quintet, Brass Ensemble and the Jazz Ensemble, where he was a featured soloist and additionally a member of the New Jersey Intercollegiate Jazz Ensemble, which is a collection of the state’s top college-level jazz musicians.

Mr. Plagge’s performance credentials include appearances in a number of musical pit orchestras including *Damn Yankees*, *Cabaret*, *Les Miserables*, *42nd Street*, *West Side Story* and others. He is also a current member of the Princeton Brass Band,

which performs upwards of seven times a year and makes perennial appearances at the North American Brass Band Association Championships.

A staff member at Oratory Preparatory School in Summit, Mr. Plagge’s responsibilities include teaching the general music classes, the band program and a senior music elective.

He stated that he “is very excited to have the opportunity to direct the NJWA Rockin’ Jazz Band and is looking forward to many exciting performances!”

The NJWA Rockin’ Jazz Band is available for performances at street fairs, community events, private parties and special occasions. Musicians interested in joining the band should call Dr. Schlosberg at (908) 789-9696 ext. 17.

For additional information on the band or any program of the NJWA, call (908) 789-9696, visit the studios at 150-152 East Broad Street, Westfield, or log on to www.njworkshopforthearts.com.



Brian Plagge

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Musical Club of Westfield Presents Program April 10

WESTFIELD—The Musical Club of Westfield, now in its 97th season, will present an afternoon program of music on Wednesday, April 10, at 1:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street, Westfield. The program will include performances by two vocalists, a cellist, and a flute/piano duo. Audience members are encouraged to note the start time of the program, which is 30 minutes later than usual.

Glen Crane, bass-baritone, accompanied by Mary Beth McFall, piano, will perform a set of songs called "One Poem, Five Settings." The poem is Goethe's "The Harper's Lament," and Mr. Crane will sing five different composers' settings of the text: Franz Liszt, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Karl Friedrich Zelter. Mezzo-soprano Drude Sparre Roessler, accompanied by pianist Marie-Danièle Mercier, will perform four songs from La Belle Époque by Reynaldo Hahn. Although born in Venezuela, Hahn's parents immigrated to France when he was three, and he was trained at the Paris Conservatory and wrote in a style that reflects the French influence. Ms. Roessler will also sing the aria "Faites-lui mes aveux," from Charles Gounod's opera Faust. Cellist Douglas Hardin will perform

the Adagio from Hungarian composer Zoltan Kodaly's Sonata for solo cello in B minor (Op.8). This work is widely considered to be the greatest composition for solo cello since J. S. Bach's cello suites.

Flutist Helen Bartolick and pianist Beverly Thomson Shea will join forces to perform several popular works of the late 19th century, including rags by Scott Joplin, a popular tune called "Call Me Thine Own," and the Nightingale Serenade by Wilhelm Popp.

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 97th 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.



SEEING IS BELIEVING...Sophisticated design and luxurious living are evident throughout this recently updated stylish traditional residence featured on this year's annual Tour of Notable Homes to benefit Westfield Symphony Orchestra.

WSO Friends Present 'Tour of Notable Homes'

WESTFIELD—As the major fundraising effort for the acclaimed Westfield Symphony Orchestra, its Friends group has set Saturday, May 11, as the date for the 29th Annual "Tour of Notable Homes." The always popular event held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. celebrates spring and gives the public an inside peek at some of the most picturesque and interesting homes in the area.

This year, five homes are featured: some new and others new again by reason of extensive and authentic renovations, according to co-chairs of the event, Shuang Guo-Wroe and Jennifer Colamedici.

Mrs. Guo-Wroe describes one of the homes as, "A fine example of luxurious living near the downtown with a replica from the University of Virginia inspired by Thomas Jefferson. It's a serpentine brick wall built in the 1950s that wraps around the home and culminates in a small observatory."

According to Mrs. Guo-Wroe, the marble foyer is central to this fine home with living room and dining room to the right and left. Throughout the home the décor serves to provide a showcase for the owners' collection of important artwork

from around the world ranging from contemporary Indian art to European, Asian and Indian antiques from the 17th and 18th Centuries.

Mrs. Colamedici explains, "Not too long ago the owners finished a major transformation of the kitchen and adjacent great room. The kitchen area is filled with unique details including library-style cabinetry and the refrigerator, freezer, family pantry and wine cooler concealed in an armoire. The countertops are limestone with hand-carved details. There is a built-in circular banquette for informal dining."

Mrs. Guo-Wroe continued her description stating, "An 'outdoor' living room is graced by a 19th Century statue from France, 'Spring.'" At the end of the tour she recommends that visitors walk through the secret garden passing under the "privy Postern Portal."

Tickets for the 2013 Tour of Notable Homes are \$30 in advance (\$35 on May 11) and are currently available on line and will be available for purchase at ticket outlets on Thursday, April 11.

For further information visit www.westfieldsymphony.org.



ENCORE PERFORMANCE...The kindergarten classes at Lincoln School in Westfield recently performed a Dr. Seuss-themed Sing-a-Long directed by music teacher Christina Toulous and accompanied by Amanda Gant on the piano. The energetic performance also included a few speaking parts and incorporated fun props and signs along with lots of dance moves. The students' catchy rendition of "Green Eggs and Ham" was such a crowd pleaser, they were asked for an encore, which they performed with lots of smiles.

POPCORN
Admission
Entrée to Entertainment
3 popcorns

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

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Film Critic

Smarty pants me figured I had director Paul Weitz's *Admission* all figured out. She's the uptight, over-achieving admissions officer at Princeton who gave her baby up for adoption back in college. He's the easygoing head of an alternative school, anxious to get a pet prodigy into Princeton. So of course we know how it plays out...right? Wrong!

Mr. Weitz, working from Karen Croner's adaptation of Jean Hanff Korelitz's sociologically astute novel, smartly leads us down the garden path. Making use of our preconceptions, he teaches us a thing or two about judging a book by its cover. The lead metaphor is then nicely enhanced, with a fine twist-finales alighting as the cherry on top.

Featuring solid performances all around, she is Portia Nathan, portrayed by Tina Fey in a star turn that unfolds a thespic talent beyond her ability to make us laugh. While it'd be cinema sacrilege to compare her portrayal to Stanwyck's *Stella Dallas* (1937), either I'm a crybaby or her misplaced mom is awfully effective. Oh, she's good and funny, too.

From the moment Paul Rudd's nonconformist educator informs Portia that the genius in question is, alas, the prodigal adoptee, Miss Fey adroitly alternates between her profession's two masks. And in the bargain, a whole panoply of conundrums, moral, emotional or both, are let loose for the characters to sort through and for us to mull.

Chief of course is the meditation on that greater love that no one hath like your Mom, even if it sometimes drives you nuts. This leads us to the story's ethical question. Just what should be Portia's stance as young Jeremiah Balakian goes through the admissions process? Bear in mind she's bucking for the soon to be vacant dean of admissions spot.

Comically and curiously, the plot complicates the central predicament with a host of supporting characters and situations. Leading the parade of bittersweet whimsy is Portia's single mom, a noted women's rights activist who has never said die to her Hippy man. Exquisitely realized by Lily Tomlin, she lends a credible, historical quirk to the doings.

Playing semi-straight man and attracted opposite to Miss Fey's personality in transition, and maybe not beyond an epiphany himself, Paul Rudd continues his stream of likeable characters. Revolting against his blueblood background, gin-drinking society mater et al, humanist John Pressman just can't grow roots, much to the chagrin of his adopted son.

Acquired whilst John was doing good works in Africa, Nelson

(Travaris Spears), who is quick to note he isn't a wonderkind like Jeremiah, is fond of Portia because she's "so boring." Meaning, by his definition, that she doesn't suffer from Dad's wanderlust and stays put. The conglomeration of interactions results in a monograph on parenthood.

Now, to temper these glowing effusions, it bears noting that more than one happenstance or serendipitous story construct smacks a tad contrived. But then again, going back to the positive side of the ledger, the characters are so enamoring that, just as with a good friend possessing obvious foibles, we issue dispensation in the cause of our own entertainment.

Plus, the subjects at hand, everyday things that have had us in a quandary at one time or another, are inherently provocative. Part satire, part deadly serious diatribe about the rigors of getting into the so-called "right school," it's a good little chapter in the human comedy. And the pages about parenting are, at the very least, intelligently commiserative.

Akin to a champion sports team whose success is due in great part to its profusely stellar bench strength, Miss Tomlin's pip of a supporting stint is accompanied by a host of complementing ancillaries. Nat Wolff sufficiently convinces us that he is the alternate school icon personified, while Travaris Spears, the kid in his shadow, is sweetly drawn.

Representing tradition, the establishment and a cold splash of the hard facts, Wallace Shawn is efficaciously dogmatic as Clarence, the little boss whose position Miss Fey's go-getter hopes to one day assume. Whereas Gloria Reuben is also quite effective as Corinne, her equally ambitious rival for that esteemed post. The knives are sharpened.

But just in case these multifarious threads don't constitute enough storyline or subtext, I refer you to the title's other meaning. Proffering that there is the surface self, as well as the real deal one generally keeps close to the vest, we have the good fortune of meeting this film's principals just as they are ripe to admit and therefore actualize their true ids.

Thus, there is created for our rationalizing pleasure a cathartic cleansing. Even if we secretly wish an entree to those strata of status and entitlement associated with places like Princeton, this acerbic dashing to the ground of stodgy old conventions, dramatized by folks with whom we can identify, makes it worth the price of *Admission*.

Admission, rated PG-13, is a Focus Features release directed by Paul Weitz and stars Tina Fey, Paul Rudd and Lily Tomlin. Running time: 107 minutes

Gifted Student Playwrights Honored at Award Ceremony

CRANFORD—Eight gifted students were honored at The Theater Project's 11th annual Young Playwrights Competition Performance and Awards Ceremony held March 16. The four prize winners received savings bonds and saw their work performed by the professional actors of The Theater Project at the ceremony, held at the Cranford Community Center with the support of the Friends of the Cranford Library. Four additional writers were presented with honorable mention citations and gift certificates.

The Joseph Curka Prize received by the students honors the memory of Marion Curka's late husband. Mrs. Curka is a long-time friend and supporter of The Theater Project, an award-winning professional company whose next production, *Having Our Say*, will be presented at the Burgdorff Center in Maplewood Thursday, April 4 through Sunday, April 21. The Theater Project also presents free monthly workshops at the Cranford Community Center, with the support of the Friends of the Cranford Library.

The goal of the competition is to encourage the next generation of theater practitioners and audience by honoring their work and bringing it to life. The competition was inspired by a generous donation from Bill Mesce, Jr. Mr. Mesce, who addressed the audience, is an award-winning playwright/screenwriter. The winner of the 2006 competition, Jake Brandman of Westfield, now a graduate of New York University's playwright program, also attended the ceremony to honor the efforts of the student authors, and shared his experiences with the audience. He advised students to learn on their own

as well in the classroom: "Get a few of your friends to read your play and a few more to watch it, you can make it happen - instant theater."

Christine Vapsva of Berkeley Heights received first prize; Reeve Harden of Newton won second. Tied for third were Nicholas Cho of Glen Rock and Emma Ohlig of Westfield. Honorable mentions were given to Phillip Anastassiou (Tenafly), Rebecca Koch (Washington Township), Ashley Neal (Scotch Plains), and Sophia Nitkin (Linden).

The presentation was performed by professional actors who regularly appear in The Theater Project's productions.



PLAYWRIGHT PROJECT...The Theater Project recently held its 11th Annual Young Playwrights Competition and Award Ceremony. Pictured, first row, left to right are: Emma Ohlig and Christine Vapsva. Second row, left to right are: Sophia Nitkin, Ashley Neal, Reeve Harden, Phillip Anastassiou, Rebecca Koch and Nicolas Cho.

Oratorio Singers Hold Concert

Editors Note: The following is Part two of the release submitted by Paul Mack Somers for the Oratorio Singers. The concert was held on March 17 at the First United Methodist Church, Westfield.

The massed sound of organ, brass, and percussion opened the second half with Richard Strauss's massive sonic experience the *Feierlicher Einzug der Ritter des Johanniter-Ordens*, in English mercifully shortened to *Solemn Entry*. This is one hair-raising piece, as Strauss, the master at the slow-build, begins with low mutterings in the organ and by about six minutes later has the stained glass windows practically bulging outward with everyone at fortissimo, the first trumpet at the top of its range and the tuba at the bottom of its. And then at the absolute climax the cymbals lets loose with one transcendent crash.

Luckily, Randall Thompson's *A Feast of Praise* is so different that it mattered not at all that it followed the blockbuster Strauss. Here the subtle shades of soft to loud and back were of the essence. Thompson's most famous choral work sets only the word "Alleluia," and "The stars in their watches" at one point he lifts the words "Here we be" from the larger text and plays with the resulting rhythm almost symphonically. In the central "Nocturne" the sections of the chorus each had their own moments of obvious inse-

curity, as they were quite tentative in picking out their first pitches from within the wide harp arpeggios. But they made up for it in their accuracy in the contrapuntal and dancing final movement "God is gone up with a shout."

The afternoon came to a brilliant conclusion with one of Sir Hubert Parry's most famous works (most recently used as the processional at the Prince William and Kate royal wedding), the coronation anthem "I Was Glad." Some of the sweetest music of the afternoon was the choral section "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Mr. Johnson made the unusual choice to retain the "Vivat Regina Elizabetha!" passage, usually omitted when the British regent is absent. But even lacking Queen Elizabeth II in Westfield's Methodist Church that afternoon, it was worth hearing it, for it makes another structural contrast within the work, as the strikingly dropping octave on "Vivat" turns out to be one of the most memorable motives of the afternoon, if only because of its simplicity and brevity.

There were cheers and a well-deserved standing ovation. Many of the brass players acknowledged both the excellence of the Oratorio Singers and Johnson by "applauding" one handedly on their thighs before themselves being asked to stand.

One can only echo the final work's word, "Vivat!"

Fanwood Choir Festival to Benefit Rescue Squads

FANWOOD—On Sunday, May 19, the music ministry of Fanwood Presbyterian Church will present the second annual Fanwood Choir Festival. The event will feature a large chorus drawn from singers in Scotch Plains, Fanwood, and other communities. The day will culminate in a grand concert at 7 p.m. with guest conductors, choral repertoire, and a free will offering to be donated to the rescue squads of Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

The rescue squads of Scotch Plains and Fanwood faithfully serve our community by providing essential emergency health assistance. They rely on donations from the public to maintain this service. The Fanwood Choir Festival is an opportunity for the SP/F community at large to gather at a celebratory event and provide monetary support for the rescue squads.

The concert program will include music of Mozart, Beethoven, Rutter, and others. Guest conductors will include Dr. Cindy Bell, Hofstra University faculty and frequent conductor at the Ocean Grove Choir Festival; Jan Allen, Choral Director at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School; Dr. Andrew

Moore, chair of the music department at the Pingry School; Seth Garrepy, conductor and composer; and Thomas Berdos, Director of Music Ministries at Fanwood Presbyterian Church. Organist Deborah Berdos, clarinetist Amy M. Burns, and other musicians will also participate.

Singers are invited to join in the chorus. Rehearsals will be at Fanwood Presbyterian Church on Wednesday evenings, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Singers will need to attend at least five of the six scheduled Wednesday evening rehearsals. They will also need to purchase a packet of music (cost is \$20 available at rehearsal). Dress rehearsal will be Sunday, May 19, 3 - 5 p.m. Music reading skills are very helpful but not required. All who sing are cordially invited to join the chorus to support the rescue squads. It would be especially meaningful to have those who may have been assisted by the rescue squads singing in the chorus.

For more information or to participate in the chorus, contact Tom Berdos at tom.berdos@gmail.com or (908) 889-8891, ext. 17.

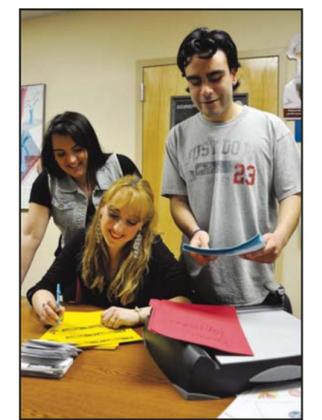
Clark Kiwanis Sets Date for Flapjack Fundraiser

CLARK—The Clark Kiwanis Club, the local chapter of the worldwide philanthropic organization that aids children's causes and charities, has announced their upcoming Flapjack Fundraiser on Saturday, April 13, at the Linden Applebee's.

The Clark club is the parent organization for the ALJ High School Key Club, the Kumpf Middle School Builders Club, the Hehny K-Kids Club and the Valley Road K-Kids Club. The adult group is partnering with the Key Club who will act as waiters, waitresses and greeters for the event. Bountiful baskets of goods will be raffled off during the two-hour event.

"We are expecting a large crowd of supporters to come out to have a short stack for a tall cause," said Vice President of the Clark club, Jim Dougherty.

Under the student direction of 2013 Key Club Presidents Megan Sweeney and Christian Alvarado and the Kiwanis Youth Liaison Ann Yarusavage, the teens will serve scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage and pancakes as well as beverages for the ticket price of \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. For ticket reservations, call (732) 382-5367 and leave your name as well as the number of tickets you need.



FLAPJACK FUNDRAISER...Arthur L. Johnson Key Club members organize the tickets for the upcoming Applebee's Flapjack Fundraiser on April 13 from 8 - 10 a.m. at the Linden location. As part of the K-Family, Kelly Sweeney, Megan Sweeney and Christian Alvarado will be on hand to assist their parent sponsor club, the Clark Kiwanis Club, with this event. For more information call (732) 382-5367.

Arts Guild One-Day Adult Workshops

RAHWAY—Registration is now open for one-day spring workshops for adults at Arts Guild New Jersey. The Arts Guild will offer three new exciting spring options: "Creating Unique Surfaces with Graphite, Colored Pencil and Ink Wash on Canvas" taught by Robert Kogge; "The Art of Artist Books" taught by Lisa Conrad and "On the Road: Painting Outdoors in Nature" taught by Paul Casale.

All workshops will be held on Saturday, April 27, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., in the Senior Center Annex located at 125 West Milton Avenue, on the corner of Esterbrook and Milton Avenues in Rahway.

Registration is accepted online, as well as in-person or by mail. To register in person, visit the office at 1670 Irving Street in Rahway, Monday - Thursday, from 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (please use parking lot entrance). Cash and check payments are accepted in person or by mail; credit card payments are accepted online only.

For more information visit www.agnj.org (Art Classes page) or call (732) 381-7511 to request a printed flyer.

The Westfield Memorial Library presents Poetry and Painting Saturday, April 6 at 2:00 pm



"Acendo" by Joy Ann Cabanos

Celebrate National Poetry Month by attending this delightful workshop led by Westfield poet and painter Joy Ann Cabanos. Feel free to bring a poem whose imagery you'd like to share with the group and then paint a water color inspired by the poem. Come and explore the synergy of poetry and painting. Joy Ann, a published poet, teaches art privately and at the Westfield Adult School.

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 www.wmlnj.org and click on the Calendar tab, or call 908.789.4090 option 0.