



THE SPRINGSTEEN EXPERIENCE
A TRIBUTE TO THE BOSS

Opening Act:
MIDNIGHT ROCK SHOW

Saturday, July 8
Opening Act: 6 PM
Headliner: 8:30 PM



Violin Femmes

Saturday
July 29, 2017
8 PM



Union County Performing Arts Center • Rahway, NJ • 732.499.8226 • www.ucpac.org

Arts & Entertainment

Skating Through Life at Hamilton Stage in Rahway

By SUSAN MYRILL DOUGHERTY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

RAHWAY – It’s always exciting to see a fledgling production take wings and fly with the concepts and ideas that jump from notes, to a working script and finally to a full production. That final stage happened last Friday night with the unveiling of a new rock musical at Rahway’s Hamilton Stage, a part of the Union County Performing Arts Center.

Hit Her with the Skates, with book and lyrics by Christine Rea and music and lyrics by Rick Briskin is set in 1994 at the Windy City Skating Rink. A beautiful, blonde, Grammy-winning rock singer, Jaqueline Miller, (true superstar Kristin Piacentile) expertly belts out her latest hit, “Lovin’ the Life I Live” with accompaniment by her five-piece band. Unfortunately, she really isn’t loving her life on the road. She’s in love with a no-good, cheating boyfriend because, as she says repeatedly, “He makes me happy.” But by the end of the two-act show, she realizes that she needs to rethink that choice.

While on her national tour, flashbacks take Jaqueline back in time to her 12-year-old pudgy, insecure brunette self, Jackie (adorable Amy Toporek). Friday night’s opening saw older audience members doing a lot of reminiscing through flashbacks from the ‘90s to the ‘70s. Those flashbacks have Jaqueline shadowing her younger self.

Scenic designer Josh Iacovelli has created an extensive walk through history period appropriate lamps, art work, furniture and a mirrored disco

ball for the skating rink. Costume designer Lindsay McWilliams’ use of bell bottoms, skinny poor boy tops and Farah Fawcett and Dorothy Hamill hairdos bring smiles of recognition. On opening night, staunch supporters were out in force eating up every bit of nostalgia for things they probably said and did when they were young. Young Jackie and her best friend Meghan (Kelsey Stalter) belt “The Ouija Song” to great applause. It seemed like the older women in the audience were nodding, remembering when they relied on that magical board for advice.

Make no mistake. There’s no deep characterization here; it’s easy to tell the “bad” kids like Tonya (Madeline Fansler) and Russ (Kyle Jurassic) through their tough attitudes and behavior. But the universality of the piece comes through loud and clear because although kids may look different from the ‘70s, many of the same concerns of teens back then plague kids today.

“I’m Crushin’ on You,” sung by Scotty (Andy Savage) and Jackie, is a cleverly staged number. At the Rink, these two teens who are novices at romance, experience an adorably awkward scene cleverly choreography by Gina Ventura. The full-out dance/skate scenes are also well done with the characters wearing shoes that resemble skates. The fancy footwork of master “skater” Jack (Chris Walker) boasts fluid movement. With a terrific set of pipes and dashing smile as well, Mr. Walker is reminiscent in manner and voice of a young Ben Vereen.

The talented duo of John Treacy Egan and Heather Patterson King play

Jackie’s dad and mom whose loving relationship makes the superstar realize what’s she’s been missing in her life. Ten actors, seven of whom are members of Actors Equity, take on multiple roles. They and the five musicians effortlessly breathe life into this fun, new work. With director Michael Schiralli and music director Brandon Ethridge, the production is in good hands.

So, in the collaboration with the Union County Performing Arts Center, this is the first big step in the process of getting this creative show *Hit Her with the Skates* rolling and off the ground. The production continues Thursday, May 25 through Saturday, May 27 at 8 p.m. For tickets for the whole family age 11 or older, call (732) 499-8226 or visit the website at HitHerWithTheSkates.com.

Rainy Weather Doesn’t Deter Crowds From Notable Home Tour

By ROBYN ORR-GIOFFRE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD—Inclement weather on Saturday did not deter crowds from participating in the New Jersey Festival Orchestra (NJFO) 2017 Tour of Notable Homes, a spring-time tradition that started in Westfield in

1984. Onlookers took part in a self-guided tour of four exceptional north-side residences in Westfield.

The recently updated Altobelli Home, a Mediterranean-style villa in a section of Westfield known as Indian Forest, is all stone and capped by four, four-sided gables.

Inspired by southern European

Other notable features include a large marble-surfaced island breakfast bar at the center of a spacious kitchen and French doors that open to a patio overlooking a custom created lighted landscaped area with a pool for entertaining in the evenings.

The gabled Habgood-Zanfagna residence, a Queen Anne family home on Dudley Avenue, built in 1895, has an outside exterior accentuated by a wrap-around verandah.

Described by Interior Designer Kingsley Belcher Knauss as a mix of antique and contemporary styles, the effect is “eclectic.”

The 16-room house, that stands on three quarters of an acre, has an oak and glass door that opens to a mahogany staircase with a 19th Century gargoyle newel post.

Architect Gregory Talmont describes his favorite creation in the dwelling as the illuminated ceiling in the center hall.

Mr. Talmont told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* the ceiling “was the first idea that we had for a big, total master plan renovation and a lot of what we did, it all speaks back to re-energizing the center of the house and making it something that has a sort of a sense of wonder to it.”

Some other remarkable hallmarks of the home include a formal dining room with a coffered ceiling and leaded glass windows and a master bedroom suite with a fireplace and an impressive view of the grounds.

Owner, Linda Habgood, co-owner of a financial advisory business and a Westfield resident since 2000, is currently running for town council in the first ward.

The Silver-Verga Home, decorated by Mimi and Hill Design Studio, built in 1937, on Kimball Avenue is owned by Interior Designer Miriam Silver-Verga.

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STUNNING QUARTERS...The master bedroom at the Altobelli Home on Wyandotte Trail features a gas fireplace.



RELAXING SETTING...The living room with antique spinning wheel at the Ferguson Home on Highland Avenue is a relaxing space.

castles, built by Ralph Rapuano Jr., of Elegant Homes Building, the entrance to the home opens up to a dramatically dark, curved wood staircase accented by a wrought iron railing leading to the second floor.

“It’s elegant and it doesn’t feel stuffy,” tour guide Sherrie Natko commented during the showing.

The Great Room has unique features including a stone fireplace surrounded by bookshelves and a coffered ceiling with mahogany beams, creating a cozy family atmosphere. Home to three children, the home includes a basement “dance room” that features mirrors, a basketball hoop and walls painted with graffiti murals.



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