

Arts & Entertainment



Cheri Rogosky for The Westfield Leader and The Times
LEGENDARY PERFORMERS...John Morello, a drummer from the 50s, and Marian McPartland, who performed with Duke Ellington, both graced the stage during the Jersey Jazz by the Lake concert, which was held on September 17 and 18 at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside.



Harmonic Brass of Munich

Harmonic Brass of Munich To Present Special Concert

PLAINFIELD - The sanctuary of Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church in Plainfield will be the setting for the exclusive New Jersey performance of the Harmonic Brass of Munich, Germany on Friday, October 8, at 8 p.m. Music ranging from Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic periods with jazz and pop arrangements will be featured. Choral conductor Ronald W. Thayer will play the Heissler organ located far above the gallery of the sanctuary. He has conducted several large choral and instrumental works. He continues to teach voice, organ and piano while remaining active as an accompanist and recitalist. The Harmonic Brass, which was founded in 1991, has produced eight CDs and appeared on numerous radio and television programs throughout the world.

Harmonic Brass players Hans Zeller, trumpet; Jurgen Groblehner, trumpet; Andreas Binder, French Horn; Hannes Muck, trombone; and Manfred Haberlein, tuba, will present a special live performance on WNYC in conjunction with their USA tour. Admission to the concert is \$15, with student tickets at \$10. Groups of 10 or more are \$10 each. Tickets are available at The Music Staff and Lancasters Ltd. in Westfield, as well as Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church. Copies of Harmonic Brass CD's and original music scores and arrangements will be available on the day of the concert. For more information and directions to the concert, please call the church office at (908) 756-2468 or the Crescent music office at (908) 756-3157.

POPCORN™ For Love of the Game Take Me Out to the Movies

By Michael S. Goldberg
 One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent

3 popcorns
 You win some and you lose some. Or so the baseball adage goes. But both situations apply to *For Love of the Game*, a crowd-pleasing paean to the national pastime that unfortunately gilds the lily by also trying to include an ancillary love story within its seat-edged innings. The exciting baseball story is sensational, imbued by director Sam Raimi with, alas, a greater love than any conventional tale of amour can compete with; hence the accompanying little romance doesn't stand a chance.

It's high noon in the House That Ruth Built. His pitches punctuated by personal history, proud Billy Chapel is the archetypal hero, alone on the mound with his hopes, fears, conquests and regrets.

A remembrance of love interest Jane Aubrey (Kelly Preston) leaving him to pursue an editorial job in London puts an extra bit of heat on his slider; a calming vision of his Dad's patient tutelage gives him the sagacity to outsmart a particularly terrorizing batter.

The cliché is as entertaining as it is obvious. And while equally predictable, the incorporation of familiar ball club types peppers the plot.

Sports aficionados will forgive the film its resulting dual nature for the sake of crackerjack diversion. But for the intolerant segment of the artsy-craftsy set as well as the clueless unwashed who contend that "baseball is just too slow," *For Love of the Game* will be a rain-out.

Handsomely directed and beautifully photographed despite those inherent flaws provided by screenwriter Dana Stevens, the saga of 19-year veteran pitcher Billy Chapel (Kevin Costner) at the crossroads of his career is a vibrant variation on a very traditional sports movie theme. Instead of the story leading up to the big game, this is the big game.

Adding just the right hint of glib is John C. Reilly as faithful catcher Gus Sinski, the perennially unshaven Sancho Panza to our big league Don Quixote. J.K. Simmons is appropriately dimwitted as Frank Perry, the single-minded Tigers manager.

But what really glues it all together is Vin Scully as himself, the play-by-play announcer whose colorful commentary ostensibly serves as the film's narrative soul. While a best supporting actor nomination for the baseball broadcaster par excellence may seem a bit novel, it is nonetheless deserved.

As the Detroit Tigers ace right-hander hurls what could be his last 9 innings in the majors, he flashes back on everything that has brought him to this all-or-nothing juncture in his celebrated life.

Spotting slight shades of *The Natural* (1984), a hint of mysticism fills Yankee Stadium. Because on this very special occasion, Costner's superbly realized athlete has, as any baseball scout might observe, "the goods."

And despite the obvious shortcomings at her end of the script, Miss Preston's single mom with a mission provides a functional counterpoint to the superstar protagonist. He is the lonely prince; she is Cinderella by way of Donna Karan.

Which brings us to Kevin Costner, here performing the third leg of his baseball film hat trick. Amidst boos, catcalls and cries of "stereotype" from dyspeptic detractors, Mr. Costner has now cornered the market on pro athlete portrayals. His obscenely self-indulgent efforts (*Waterworld*, *The Postman*), outrageous as they are, will more than likely slip through the cracks of movie history.

Painful though they may be to deliver, his fast ball is hopping as never before, his curve makes the gal on your mechanic's calendar look like a boy.

Although the chemistry between Miss Preston's Jane and Mr. Costner's Billy is lacklustre and the melodramatic dialogue stale — as if borrowed from something Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson might have fashioned in the 50s — director Raimi adroitly employs memories of the intertwining love affair as a catalytic mechanism for his cinematic baseball fantasy.

The jock characterizations are what he'll be remembered for. There are worse fates. For corroboration consult Basil Rathbone (Sherlock Holmes), Lew Ayres (Dr. Kildare) and Sidney Toler or Warner Oland (Charlie Chan) at the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Patricia Colrick, Author, To Attend Book Signing At Town Book Store

WESTFIELD — New Jersey author Patricia Colrick, author of "Hoboken: Images of America," will be at The Town Book Store of Westfield on Saturday, October 2, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This newest installment in the "Images of America" series provides a captivating look at the history of the town of Hoboken. Ms. Colrick is also the author of the "Spring Lake" book in the "Images of America" series.

Gleaning elements from both *Bull Durham* (1988) and *Field of Dreams* (1989), Costner's character in *For Love of the Game* is part realistic, part sports chimeria. Thus while men will readily identify with the contemporary gladiator's bittersweet plight, women who find the vulnerable heartthrob irresistible will once again be enchanted.

Eureka...the perfect his and hers date night flick, prosaic hearts and flowers notwithstanding. Enough said. Play ball!

A signed copy may be reserved by calling The Town Book Store at (908) 233-3535.

Production of *Forever Plaid* Set at Cranford Dramatic Club

CRANFORD - The Cranford Dramatic Club, 78 Winans Avenue in Cranford will open its 81st season with the musical, *Forever Plaid*, on Friday and Saturday, October 8 and 9. All performances will begin at 8 p.m.

Aces, The Four Lads and The Platens.

One of the most popular plays of the decade, *Forever Plaid* takes place in the 1950s and boasts such old favorites as "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing," "Sixteen Tons," "Chain Gang," "Matilda," "Crazy Bout You Baby," "Three Coins in the Fountain" and "Moments to Remember."

Performances will be held on Fridays, October 8, 15 and 22 and Saturdays, October 9, 16 and 23. Tickets are available through the box office hotline at (908) 276-7611. In addition to single tickets, a three-play subscription is available for the entire season of *Forever Plaid*, *Mamse* and *Lend Me a Tenor* for \$35 or a two-play mini subscription at \$25.

Forever Plaid tells the story of a quartet of singers who are allowed to come back to earth after a fatal accident and are able to do the spectacular show they never had the chance to do in life.

Michael Kaminski, Organist, To Give Recital at Church

Director Drude Roessler stated, "It's such a wonderful nostalgic comedy. Everyone who sees it comes away feeling terrific. And for those of us who grew up in the 50s, these old songs bring back such great memories. I am so lucky to have four terrific singers and actors to play the roles of the four 'plaid.' It's just one of those plays you wish would never end."

WESTFIELD - Organist Michael Kaminski will present a recital this Sunday, October 3, at 5 p.m. at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

The cast of *Forever Plaid* includes Chris Bentevegna of Bayonne as Francis, Rick Brown of Jersey City as Spunky, Bob Byrnes of East Brunswick as Jinx and Robert Hayden of Westfield as Smudge.

The recital will include the works by Cesar Franck, Henri Mulet, Charles-Marie Widor, Marcel Dupre and Louis Vierne.

The ensemble performs four-part harmonies reminiscent of The Four

Mr. Kaminski is an adjunct Associate Professor of Organ at Brooklyn College and is on the faculty of the Brooklyn Conservatory. He is director of Music Ministries at Francis Xavier Church and Associate Organist at Our Lady of Angels Church, both in Brooklyn, N.Y.

He has earned the Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees from Julliard School and the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the Catholic University of America.

The public is invited to attend. A free will offering will be accepted.

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