

HAPPENINGS



Prince Noble, seen here as a slimy green frog, puckers up for a kiss from the lovely Princess Cassandra (Sarah Pothier of East Providence) in Kaleidoscope Theatre's original musical "The Frog Prince." The musical will be performed July 6 at 11 a.m. in Robert's Hall Auditorium at Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Ave., Providence. Tickets are \$12 at the door and \$10 in advance; discounts available for groups of more than 25. For tickets or information, call the RIC Box Office at (401) 456-8144. (The box office will be closed July 5 for the holiday.)

BLUESMAN



NICK CURRAN, blues guitarist with a new CD called "Reform School Girl," plays blues and rock on Saturday at 8 p.m. at Chan's, 267 Main St., Woonsocket. Admission is \$12.

SUGAR RAY AND THE BLUETONES, featuring **MONSTER MIKE WELCH**, get the weekend started on Friday at 8 p.m.; admission is \$15.

For information or reservations, call (401) 765-1900.

HEADLINER



BOZ SCAGGS is the headliner for the July 2 performance in the 13th annual Nantucket Nectars Sunset Music Series at the Newport Yachting Center, America's Cup Avenue, Newport. Rhode Island singer-songwriter John Fuzek performs on the Courtyard Stage. Gates open at 5:30 p.m., music starts on the Courtyard Stage at 6 p.m., and the headliner starts about 8 p.m. Admission for this event is \$77 preferred, \$62 standard, available at the box office, by calling (401) 846-1600 and online at www.newportwaterfrontvents.com.

Huffman in title role is worth the trip down to Matunuck to see 'Hello, Dolly!'

By DANIEL H. TRAFFORD

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — It's nice from time to time to see one of the older musicals that have withstood the test of time, and "Hello, Dolly!" is a good example. And Theatre by the Sea is giving it royal treatment right now in the person of Tony Award-winner Cady Huffman, who's in the title role.

It seems the Matunuck barn is keeping up its tradition of presenting at least one corny old chestnut in its seasonal repertoire, and I, for one, hope they continue to do so, as long as they give it the loving treatment that they always do.

THEATER REVIEW

The plot of "Hello, Dolly!" is simple enough. A widowed matchmaker, Dolly Gallagher Levi, is off to New York to pair off an upper-middle-class Yonkers yokel with a brand new wife. But she has an ulterior motive this time: she wants grain and feed store proprietor Horace Vandergelder all to herself and exhausts her entire bag of tricks to make it happen. Throw in a couple of Horace's clerks who play hooky while the boss is away, complete with a couple of milliners, and hokey hilarity ensues.

That's the plot in a nutshell, but there's not too much more to say that would expand on it. But that's not the reason to see this play.

What makes this play worth seeing (and hearing) is Huffman's performance, who pulls off the iconic role with aplomb. A great actress and a great singer is just what's needed to bring this



Cady Huffman (above and below) plays the title role of Dolly Gallagher Levi.

play to life and she doesn't disappoint. Without a strong actress in the leading role to pull it all together, this play would fall flat on its face. Instead, you can see what the waiters are singing about when they belt out the title tune in the second half of the play. Whether planning and plotting or having conversations with her dead husband, she owns this stage.

And if that's not enough, even more superb is Al Bundonis, who returns to Matunuck as Horace. He was at Theatre by the Sea last season in "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels." Playing the role of an uptight jerk in such a way as to make him the most lovable character in the play is subtle art. The only thing wrong with this play are the scenes he's not in.

It's starting to seem as though there's nothing Theatre by the Sea can't spin into gold. As always, the dance numbers leave you amazed that so much can actually take place on such a

tiny stage without ever seeming cramped or claustrophobic. The audience was actually applauding DURING

the dance numbers; they were that impressive. Kudos to Theatre by the Sea for having an ensemble that pours its collective heart and soul into every single thing they do. They are what every musical theater company should strive for: consummate professionals who make it look easy.

They don't skimp on the costumes either, which always look great. In this production particularly (which is set in the late 19th century) costume designer Lou Bird blows you away with the way everybody on stage looks.

"Hello, Dolly!" will be presented by Theatre by the Sea through July 11. Performances are scheduled Tuesday through Friday evenings at 8; Thursdays at 2 p.m.; Saturdays at 4:30 and 8:30 p.m.; and Sundays at 5 p.m. The theater is located at 364 Cards Pond Road in Matunuck. Tickets are \$39 to 49.

For ticket information, call the box office at (401) 782-TKTS or visit www.theatrebythesea.com



N.Y. jazz fest offered promising players and many established ones

There was great, and expected, work by established stars and exciting sets by some promising players at the Saratoga Springs, N.Y. jazz fest, marred only by a few light showers on both days, Saturday and Sunday.

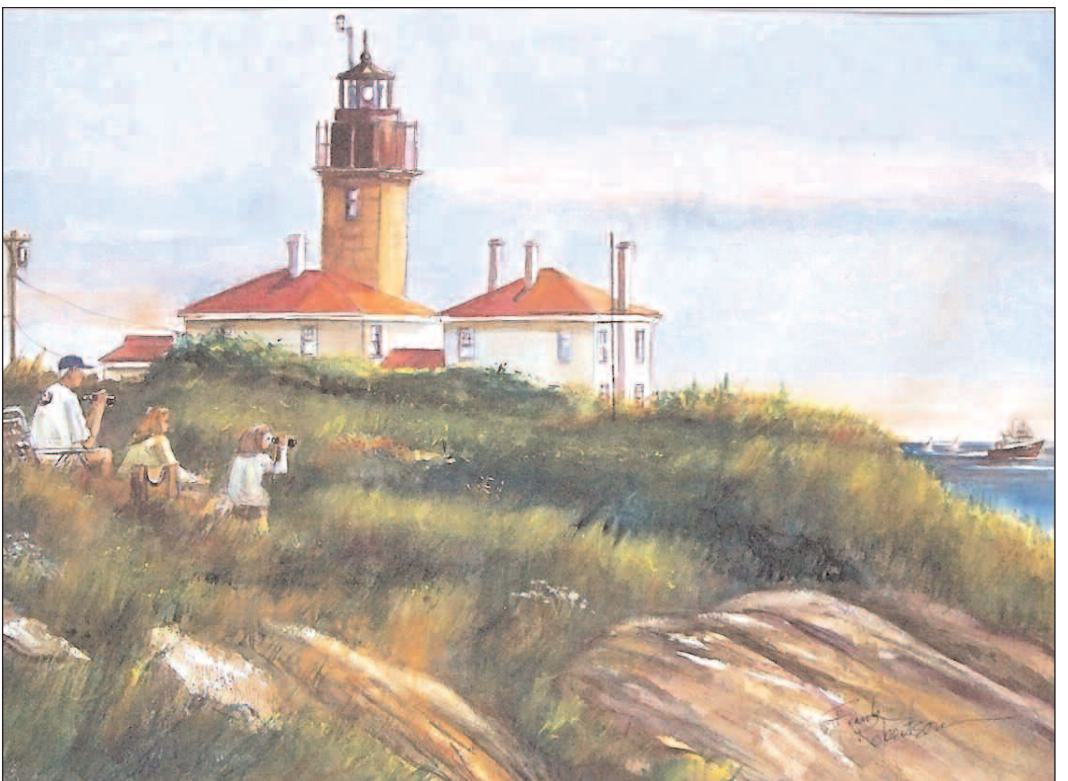
The established players: pianists Ahmad Jamal and Ramsey Lewis, vocalists Al Jarreau and Ann Hampton Callaway, guitarist Al DiMeola, and bluesman Taj Mahal, played to large crowds, those camped out under beach umbrellas and four-corner tents on the spacious lawn, and those inside a modern amphitheater, with concrete floors, padded seats and a balcony. The setting is like Tanglewood, though more modern.

The three promising players that caught my interest were trumpeter Mario Abney, clarinetist Evan Christopher, and tenor saxophonist Hailey Niswanger. The first two are implants into the New Orleans jazz world, Abney from Chicago, and Christopher from California, and Niswanger, from Portland, Oregon, is a student at Boston's Berklee College of Music.

Abney, a diminutive man, has a big, fat sound, technically perfect that has caught the attention of Wynton Marsalis, and who plays post-bee-bop music, but who has a New Orleans performance style, ending his set by having his front line march through the audience street-parade style. He is a spiritual man, playing hymn-like tributes to his mother, Ora, and to a legendary Chicago tenor and club owner, 81-year-old Fred

John Worsley
... On Jazz

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NEW ENGLAND EXHIBIT JULY 3-31

A dozen Blackstone Valley plein air painters created the works for the exhibit 'Scenes from New England' on exhibit from July 3 to 31 at Spring Bull Gallery, 55 Bellevue Ave., Newport. The public is invited to the opening reception on Saturday from 5 to 7 p.m.; regular gallery hours are daily from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Frank Robertson created this painting of Beavertail Light; the other artists are Jerry Aissis, Adele Corrigan, Dorothy Downing, Carol Frieswick, Destiny Green, David Locarno, Bill Noble, Kristina Occhino, Vail Pagliarani, Wayne Peltier and Robin Wessman.

2nd Story opens July 7 with 'The Late Christopher Bean'

WARREN — 2nd Story Theatre opens its summer series with "The Late Christopher Bean" by Pulitzer Prize and Academy Award-winner Sidney Howard, on stage from July 7 through Aug. 1.

Fresh from its off-Broadway revival, the comedy was described in the New York Times as a "jewel" that is "fresh and funny."

The story centers on a small-town Massachusetts doctor who unknowingly is in possession of some very valuable paintings by the late Christopher Bean. Unexpectedly, his small country home is invaded by New York City bigwigs as well as the doctor's family.

Along with his trustworthy maid, the doctor plunges headlong into the big city world, laden with unsavory swindlers. Events turn into a game of "Painting, Painting, who owns the Painting?" until the truth is revealed and honesty wins the day.

The theater is located at 28 Market St. Performances are

Wednesdays through Sundays at 8 p.m., plus an additional matinee on July 25 at 3 p.m. Tickets for previews on July 7 and 8 are \$10; after that, all tickets are \$25.

There is a second show in the summer season, Larry Shue's comedy "The Foreigner," about a man who wants to avoid fellow vacationers, so he pretends he can't speak English. This show runs from Aug. 11 to Sept. 5.

A subscription package to both plays is \$42. For individual tickets or a subscription, visit the box office, call 247-4200 or e-mail boxoffice@2ndStoryTheatre.com.

The Café at 2nd Story is open on all performance dates. For details, visit www.2ndStoryTheatre.com <<http://www.2ndStoryTheatre.com>>.

One final note: 2nd Story announces that installation of an air conditioning system throughout the building will be completed by the first performance in July.



HERITAGE STRING BAND

The Heritage String Band plays the music of 19th century America on Friday, July 2, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on the Community Plaza at Alternatives in the Whitin Mill Complex, 50 Douglas Road, Whitinsville. Ballads, spirituals, dance melodies, jigs, reels and campfire music are all part of the band's repertoire. Members are, from left, front, Cherrie Westcott of Upton, bass; Ken Taylor of Northbridge, guitar and bass; Dan Donovan of Shrewsbury, guitar and banjo; Jim McCrohon of Shrewsbury, banjo, guitar, accordion and tin whistle; Ed Quigley of Whitinsville, narrator, bodhran, spoons and tamborine; and Bud Savoie of Warren, fiddle, banjo, mandolin and harmonica. The concert is sponsored by the Northbridge Cultural Council and Alternatives.