

HAPPENINGS



Blackstone River Theatre presents "The Music of Bassist/Composer TOM CASALE" (pictured), featuring the Infinite Darkness Quartet and The Drive Quartet, on Saturday at 7 p.m. at the Blackstone River Theatre, 549 Broad St., Cumberland. Casale is a R.I.-based composer, upright bassist, instructor and music teacher for the Lincoln School Department.

This concert features Casale's jazz music from his new CD, "Two Quartets: Live at The Lily Pad." Also performing are saxophonist Greg Takemoto and guitarist Mike Bernier, teachers at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School; Matt Macaulay, Woonsocket-born guitarist who currently lives in New York City; Alex Chapman, well-known Providence-based drummer; Tony Cabral, Boston-based pianist; and vocalist Kara Casale, the composer's wife. The quartets approach Casale's music differently, so the music ranges from groove, to straight ahead jazz, to soundscapes and everything in between. Admission is \$10 in advance by calling the BRT at (401) 725-9272, or \$12.00 day of show.

TRUE STORY



BURR HARRISON hosts "Fostering True Stories," a community storytelling series starting Friday at 8 p.m. in the Benjamin Eddy Building, 6 South Killingly Road, Foster, presented by fosteringArts.org.

Participants get five minutes to share their true stories with the group. Each session has a theme; for June, it's "An Awkward Silence." Beginners and experts alike are welcome, but this is an 18-and-older event.

"All are welcome to come and listen only, but we'd like to encourage people to try telling a story," Burr said. He will tell his own story and do a monologue with the latest from the "The Ocean State Update."

The Pennsylvania native became a regular at the award winning "Live Bait" storytelling event at Perishable Theater before creating "Fostering True Stories." He also is an actor, appearing most recently as the Vicar in 2nd Story Theatre's "The Voyage Inheritance."

Admission is \$5; refreshments will be available. For details, visit the Web site www.fosteringArts.org.

Growing up, as told by Neil Simon

■ Community Players present the playwright's 'Brighton Beach Memoirs.'

PAWTUCKET — The Community Player conclude their 89th season with "Brighton Beach Memoirs," the first of Neil Simon's semi-autographical trilogy of dramatic comedies.

It comes before "Biloxi Blues" and "Broadway Bound" in telling the story of Eugene Morris Jerome, Simon's teenage alter-ego.

Set in Depression-era Brooklyn of 1937, the play deals with Eugene's dreams of baseball and girls, marred by experiences of puberty and family crises that arise when his widowed aunt and female cousins have to move in.

Living with six other family members under one roof doesn't afford young Eugene much privacy, but it does provide him with plenty of ammunition for his budding career as a writer.

It's an entertaining tale of overcoming hard times, affectionately told with warmth and humor.

Director Brian Mulvey has drawn his cast from throughout Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts, including Matthew Vergun as Eugene; Andrew Holder as his older brother, Stanley; Barbara Schapiro as his mother, Kate; Frank Justin as Jack, his father.

Also appearing are Camille Terilli as Aunt Blanche; Melanie Chitwood as



Matthew Vergun, left, and Andrew Holder appear as Eugene and Stanley Jerome in Neil Simon's 'Brighton Beach Memoirs.' The show opens Friday and continues through June 20.

his beautiful cousin, Nora; and Francesca Rizzo as his younger, pampered cousin, Laurie.

"Brighton Beach Memoirs" opens

tomorrow and will be presented through June 20 on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m., in Jenks Auditorium, Division Street,

across from McCoy Stadium. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for students; reserve online at www.thecommunity-players.org or call (401) 726-6860.

The 'Belle' of 2nd Story Theatre

■ Christin Goff brings Emily Dickinson to life.

By KATHIE RALEIGH
 Lifestyle Editor

BRISTOL — Anyone familiar with Emily Dickinson will be intrigued by 2nd Story Theatre's production of "The Belle of Amherst," playwright William Luce's Tony Award-winning, one-woman show about the poet.

People who are unfamiliar with Dickinson will become fascinated after seeing Christin Goff's portrayal of the idiosyncratic writer who lived and wrote about a world of emotions and experiences from the confines of 1800s Amherst, Mass.

For people in either camp, Luce's play provides enough

background on Dickinson to explain both her talent and her reputation, and Goff's performance is like meeting the character face to face.

In the play, Dickinson acknowledges that she was known as "Squire Edward's half-cracked daughter." The Squire was her father, a lawyer and legislator instrumental in founding Amherst College.

His middle child, Emily, was recognized as brilliant from childhood, but in 19th century New England, there weren't many roles outside the home for a woman. Such restrictions probably played a role but weren't the only factor in Dickinson's gradual withdrawal from society.

After a year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, she returned home and never left. "I don't cross my father's ground," she wrote. She was

THEATER REVIEW

See 'BELLE,' Page D-2



2nd Story Theatre photo/Richard W. Dionne Jr. Christin Goff plays Emily Dickinson in 'The Belle of Amherst.' For most of her life, the idiosyncratic poet dressed all in white.

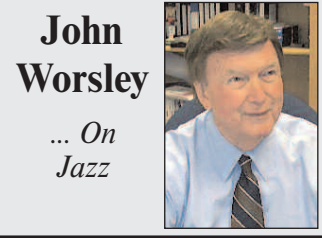
Blame their success on the bossa nova

Tomorrow night, as stated last week, saxophonist Harry Allen leads a Brazilian jazz band at The University Club, which includes the percussionist Duduka and his vocalist wife, Maucha, both of whom worked with the founder of bossa nova,

Antonio Carlos Jobim. The band also has the leading Brazilian guitarist Gene Bertocini.

On June 25, Symphony Hall in Boston has the man who established Brazilian jazz and made it famous with his recordings with Stan Getz and Frank Sinatra, the singer/guitarist Joao Gilberto.

He started developing his style, a breathy, nasal singing voice, in the 1950s in his native Bahia, in the northeast corner of Brazil, becoming a sensation in Brazilian clubs. He also was influenced by Ellington swing music, and by the time he came to the United States in the 1960s he was an accomplished performer.



John Worsley ... On Jazz

See WORSLEY, Page D-2

A chorus of cheers by the sea for 'A Chorus Line'

By DANIEL H. TRAFFORD

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — Theatre By The Sea puts its best foot forward as it opens the summer with "A Chorus Line," the famous musical about a musical.

Ocean State Theatre Company chose well in kicking off the season. Not only is "A Chorus Line" everything you've come to expect from Matunuck's best-known barn, it's right up there with the best shows they've ever produced.

Much of the credit for that goes deservedly to director and choreographer Mitzi Hamilton, who pours her heart and soul into this show, as she has every production of "A Chorus Line" that she's ever been associated with. Hamilton provided the inspiration for the character of Val in the play and performed the role in the original London Company and then on Broadway.

The play follows the story of a group of dancers auditioning for a Broadway musical. Departing from the normal tack of choosing his dancers, the director asks the dancers to talk about themselves. Through it, the audience learns the story of each dancer and what he or she goes through to make it on Broadway.

But the story itself is nothing compared to the great songs and fantastic dancing these performers bring to the stage. "A Chorus Line" is primarily about dancers, and this performance certainly isn't

lacking in talent.

One of the things that makes this play great is that each of these great dancers (and they are great — each and every one of them) also has to act — a lot. The play has the fun and entertaining feel of a cabaret, but it is certainly a play with all the emotion and character development you would hope.

And these actors don't disappoint. Whether it's the come-on-strong veteran dancer Sheila, played with delicious boldness by Caroline Cuseo, or the facing-his-past Paul, played by Yamil DeJesus, every actor has the audience riveted for the entire play's duration.

And speaking of duration, there's no intermission in this play, and that's a good thing. A 15-minute pause would only have served to halt the action in a story that's on a slow crescendo from the moments the players first take the stage.

And, of course, the music is great. The show stopper in this play is "One," which is spectacular. Emmett Louise Smith, who plays Val, gives a wonderfully sexy and slightly vulgar touch to "Dance: Ten; Looks: Three."

Both Jonathan Hoover, who plays Mike, and Tyrick Wiltz Jones, who plays Richie, have an infectious enthusiasm and incredible energy that's interjected at the perfect moments in the play.

Jennifer Rias, who plays Diana, keeps the play grounded

See CHORUS, Page D-2



Theatre By The Sea photo/Mark Turek Tyrick Wiltz Jones, in the air, as Richie and the ensemble perform 'Montage, Part 4' in 'A Chorus Line.' Pawtucket resident Tom Lavallee, below, dances before his character gets cut.



Pawtucket's Lavallee learns a lot in the 'line'

By KATHIE RALEIGH
 Lifestyle Editor

SOUTH KINGSTOWN — He's on stage for only about 15 minutes, but singer-dancer-actor Tom Lavallee's role is harder than it looks.

Lavallee — well-known locally for his seven appearances in just two seasons with the Community Players of Pawtucket — is appearing in "A Chorus Line" at the Theatre By The Sea in Matunuck.

Don't be late to the show: Lavallee is one of the dancers cut from the lineup in this musical about an audition for a chorus line.

However, when he got the role, he really got two more — as understudy for both Bobby and Al, two of the guys who make it to the final 17 auditions.

"So I had to learn all their songs, dances and lines,

See LAVALLEE, Page D-2

Chorus

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with her moving rendition of "Nothing." In fact, every performer is so good, even the minor roles of the dancers who get cut at the beginning, that you may well say that this play was perfectly cast.

But there's no arguing that the star of this play is Theatre By The Sea's own producing artistic director — the gorgeous Aimee Turner.

Regulars of Theatre By The Sea who are used to seeing her speak at the beginning of plays to ask for money will be thrilled to see her in the role of Cassie, the dancer who's made it big but just wants to come back and be in the line, doing what she loves best.

That's seems like it's exactly what Turner is doing in this play — coming down from the ivory tower of producing artistic director, putting on the leotard and making the audience fall in love with her.

She dances and plays the role with such graceful professionalism, that it leaves you wishing she'd be in other performances rather than just standing there for 30 seconds to tell everybody where the exits are.

Well, one would hope this experiment will be so positively received that we'll see Miss Turner in more productions.

"A Chorus Line" will be presented at Theatre By The Sea through June 20. Performances will be held Tuesday through Friday evenings at 8 p.m., 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 and are available by calling (401) 782-TKTS (8587) or by logging on to www.theatrebythesea.com.

Lavallee

Continued from Page D-1
and they are two completely different characters," Lavallee said during a break between a 12-hour rehearsal and the opening performance.

But he's not complaining. "This is one of the best learning experiences in my acting career," he said enthusiastically.

"I had a little bit of a leg up on the show," he noted, because he played another character, Don, when the Community Players did the show in November. "I already knew the dance steps and the music."

But working with director Mitzi Hamilton has been exciting. She not only appeared on Broadway in the show but also was the inspiration for Val, the dancer for "Dance: Ten; Looks: Three."

"She's as close to the original show as you can get," Lavallee said. "She still focus-

es on each dancer," Lavallee said, concentrating not only on precision dancing — "She definitely drilled us on Michael Bennett's choreography" — but also on "coming on to stage with real emotion."

Lavallee, 28, thought he would be a singer until he enrolled in the theater program at Rhode Island College.

"I came across the dance classes at RIC. Modern, jazz, hip-hop, I loved it all," he said. He appeared in shows at the Newport Playhouse, but after moving to Pawtucket from his native Providence four years ago, he got involved with the Community Players.

"They are literally five minutes from my house," he said. Productions are held in Jenks Auditorium, across from McCoy Stadium.

He auditioned and was cast as the farm boy in "Gypsy," and he hasn't missed a show since then, including appearing this season in the whodunit "Postmortem" and as Ching Ho, the Chinese laundry worker who falls for Miss Dorothy, in "Thoroughly Modern Millie."

He learned to speak Mandarin and Cantonese for the latter show, studying from a CD that came with rights to present the show.

Now Lavallee is hoping to combine his community theater experience with this professional gig and turn his passion into a career.

"If you want to see me at my happiest, put me on stage," he said.

GOSPEL CONCERT

GREAT WIND SOUNDS OF TRUMPETS, pictured, will be special guests at the gospel concert Sunday at 5 4 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 298 Blackstone St., Woonsocket. Co-sponsored by the church and the Woonsocket



Prevention Coalition, the concert also will present the Gospel Inspirations, the local group Seasonings, and the Lynn Harmonizers. Tickets are \$10 and available by calling (401) 651-5928 or (401) 762-0612. Tickets also will be sold at the door.

Dog walk turns into guided tour

PROVIDENCE — Take a "behind the scenes" walk in Fox Point with Matt Bird, a Providence local with a personal passion for the neighborhood, developed during many years of accompanying his dog on long walks in the neighborhood.

Bird's shop, The Curatorium, 197 Wickenden St., also adds a new flavor to the area he has lived in for 25 years. Bird is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of

Design and was instrumental in opening the risk works store.

Participants will learn what the artist and entrepreneur finds of architectural value in Fox Point. The tour will start at 11 a.m. from The Curatorium. Tickets are \$10 each, and the tour lasts about 90 minutes.

Reservations are required; contact Dalila Goulart for reservations or information. Rain date is Sunday.

Worsley

Continued from Page D-1

He made so much money with Getz and Sinatra that he returned to his native country in the 1980s and has led a semi-reclusive life since.

As he returns to the US now for a tour he is considered a cult figure, and he will pack every hall where he plays.

If you're in for bossa nova catch that show; it will be astonishing. And if you want

to see some established jazz stars and some very promising up-and-comers — and would also like a brief weekend vacation in a beautiful setting — then attend the Freihofer Jazz Festival in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, June 26 and 27.

Here are the stars you'll see: seven-time Grammy-winning jazz singer Al Jarreau and the Queen of Soul herself,

Mystic Seaport hosts 31st Sea Music Fest

MYSTIC, Conn. — Maritime musicians from around the world will celebrate the wooden whaleship Charles W. Morgan and her ports of call at the 31st annual Sea Music Festival at Mystic Seaport today through Sunday.

Performances will be held onstage Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Themed workshops and demonstrations will take place aboard the tall ships Joseph Conrad and L.A. Dunton, as well as on museum grounds.

The festival also features evening concerts tonight through Saturday from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Boat Shed.

A children's stage will offer daytime workshops and on-site activities designed for a younger audience, including participating in a parade which marches through museum grounds on Sunday at 2:45 p.m.

The featured performers hail from throughout the United States as well as from England, France, Ireland and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In the lineup are 3 Finger Poi, The Barrouallie Whalers, The Beans, The Black Brook

Singers, Jerry Bryant, David Coffin, Debra Cowen, Gabriel Donohue, April Grant, Cliff Haslam and The Jovial Crew.

Also the Johnson Girls, Hughie Jones, Peter Kasin and Richard Adrianowicz, Bonnie and Dan Milner, Dairdra Murtha, Mustard's Retreat.

Also Nordet, Tim Radford, Stephen Sanfilippo, Steve Roys, Bob Walser, Bob Webb and Kenny Wolin, as well as the Mystic Seaport Chantey Staff.

The Barrouallie Whalers, a four-man group from St. Vincent in the Grenadines, will present a unique sea chantey demonstration aboard a museum whaleboat Friday and Saturday at 4 p.m.

The members worked in the shore whaling of St. Vincent and were documented in musicologist Roger Abrahams' 1966 volume, "Deep the Water, Shallow the Shore."

Equipped with wireless microphones, The Barrouallie Whalers will perform songs that they sang while rowing whaleboats from their home shores 50 years ago.

For a schedule of performances, visit www.mysticseaport.org/seamusfestival.

'Belle'

Continued from Page D-1
close with her family, particularly siblings Austin and Lavinia, but she communicated with virtually everyone else through correspondence. When people came to her home, she reportedly fled to her room or spoke from behind a partly opened door.

But her isolation gave her opportunity to write, unfettered by expectations. A few of her poems were published — anonymously — during her lifetime, but after she died in 1886 at the age of 55, her family found a box containing 1,775 poems, some bound into booklets and others on scraps of

paper. Unlike the structured, rhyming poems of the era, Dickinson's work was more like conversation, a style which playwright Luce uses to advantage in "Belle of Amherst," weaving quotes from Dickinson's poems into the dialogue.

Goff and Director Pat Hegnauer make it work seamlessly so that only familiarity or careful listening distinguish Dickinson's poetry from Luce's lines.

What turns this biography into theater, however, is a combination of Luce's dramatic unfolding of the highs and lows

in Dickinson's life, and the life Goff brings to her performance. In the former case, Luce picks events that offer insight on the reclusive Dickinson, from her/his explanation of her behavior — "I enjoy the game. I do it on purpose" — to her loving relationships with her family and with suitors, of which she had several but never consummated.

For her part, Goff is immersed in her character. She revels in happy moments and moves us with her emotion during sad ones. She is believable in creating Dickinson's innate intelligence; despite some odd behavior, she comes across as logical in her own way and observant rather than "half-cracked."

2nd Story and Hegnauer are producing the show at the Bristol Statehouse, constructed in 1816 and used as one of five locations for meetings of the General Assembly until 1854, when meetings were consolidated to Providence or Newport.

The building, restored by the Bristol Statehouse Foundation, gives an intrinsically historic feel to the production, and Hegnauer takes advantage of the setting, from the windows through which Dickinson peers at her neighbors

to doorways that, for the sake of the play, lead to other parts of the Dickinson house.

Just one quibble: Cloths draped over railings that frame the performance space unnecessarily obscure some of Goff's small actions, like pouring tea.

And a word of advice: the pew seats in the historic building are like some of our forefathers: upright. Chairs left and right of the "stage" look more comfortable, but the pews beg for a back pillow; think about taking one.

Don't think twice, however, about seeing this production. It's enlightening, historic, poetic, and most wonderfully, turns an iconic poet into a real person. Performances of "The Belle of Amherst" continue Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m., through June 27, at the Bristol Statehouse, 240 High St. Tickets are \$25.

Proceeds from this production are going toward air conditioning for 2nd Story's home theater, at 28 Market St., in time for its summer season of comedies, "The Late Christopher Bean" and "The Foreigner." Proceeds also have gone to the Bristol Statehouse Foundation. Citizens Bank is a sponsor.

framed by towering pines. More on the promising stars next week, a very impressive lot. Tickets can be had at www.spac.org or by calling (518) 584-9330.

John A. Worsley is a professional musician, concert producer and jazz historian who also teaches in the human services department at the Community College of Rhode Island. He leads the band Swingtime.

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