

Big names rock out at historic Capitol Theatre

By MARY LEGRAND

Located in Port Chester, the Capitol Theatre was designed by noted architect, Thomas Lamb, and opened Aug. 18, 1926. The Capitol was considered by critics to be a dignified playhouse with great decorative beauty and luxurious comfort, and its owners boasted in a letter to area residents that it would have "the only theater refrigerating system in Westchester County."

The venue's grand opening included a performance of "The Star Spangled Banner" by a 10-piece orchestra, and a showing of "Sea Wolf," selling out all of its then-2,000 seats and turning away hundreds. Hollywood kept the theater going for decades with films such as "Casablanca," "Gone with the Wind" and other blockbusters.

By the late 1960s, however, movies were out and live music was in. The theater was renovated as a psychedelic performance space and hosted just about every major rock 'n' roll act of that time period, including Janis Joplin, Traffic, Pink Floyd and the Grateful Dead. The next decade was not kind to the Capitol, which shut down in the early 1970s due in part to a new village ordinance that prohibited live entertainment after 1 a.m.

Mother Nature soon became the sole owner of the Capitol. The roof decayed, and pigeons made the stage their new home. The theater remained dark until 1983 when it was purchased by local developer Marvin Ravikoff, who began renovations. The theater reopened in 1984 and was mainly used to put on plays and musicals. There was a brief resurgence of rock concerts in the

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DINO PERRUCCI PHOTO

Phil Lesh and Friends are scheduled to appear again at the Capitol Theatre on March 15 at 8 p.m.

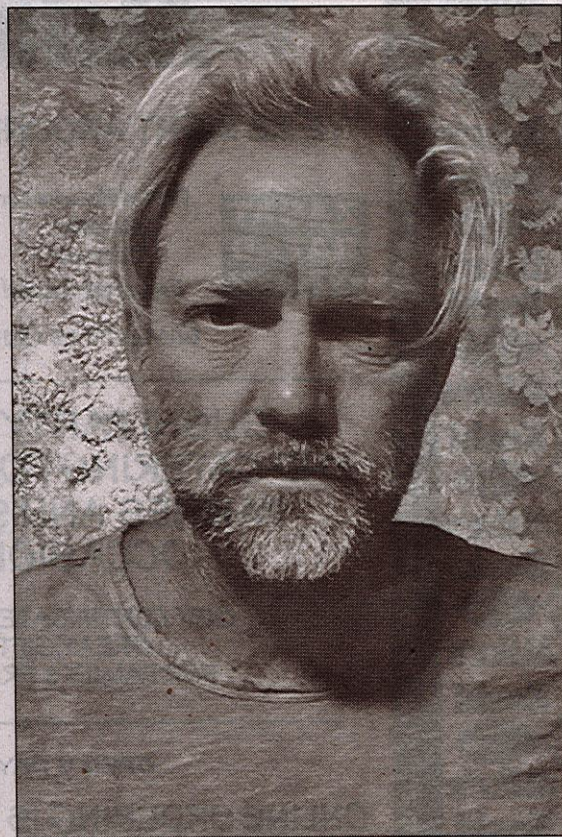


PHOTO COURTESY CAPITOL THEATRE

Anders Osborne will play tomorrow, Saturday, Feb. 18, at 8 p.m. at the Capitol Theatre in Port Chester.

happening



PHOTO COURTESY LEWISBORO LAND TRUST

hike or, weather permitting, snowshoe gathering at Mountain Lakes Camp in lewisborolandtrust.wordpress.com.

CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM, Ridgefield, Conn. — March 2, noon, Howard Blum, author, "The Last Goodnight"; 203-438-6589.

DR. KAUSHIK'S AYURVEDIC AND NATUROPATHIC CLINIC, Cross River — Feb. 18, 3 p.m., "Ayurveda: Arthritis and Autoimmunity"; drkaushik@drkaushik.com.

KATONAH VILLAGE LIBRARY — Feb. 23, 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., "Museum Masterpieces: The Louvre"; ongoing, children's story times: Mondays, 1 p.m. (ages 3 and 4); Tuesdays, 2 p.m. (ages 4 and 5); Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. (ages 4 and 5); 232-3508.

LEWISBORO LIBRARY — Feb. 19, 2 p.m., "Lewisboro History: The People on the Hill"; Feb. 22, 11 a.m., "Download Books to iPad/iPhone"; Feb. 25, 1 p.m., "Using Excel"; Feb. 28, 4:30 p.m., "Home Alone: Tips for Tweens" (ages 10 to 12); March 2, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., "Celebrating Dr. Seuss"; 875-9004.

NORTHERN WESTCHESTER HOSPITAL, Mount Kisco — Feb. 28, 9:30 a.m., Ken Hamilton Caregiver Support Program; pre-register, 242-8128.

POUND RIDGE LIBRARY — Feb. 18, 1 p.m., High Touch High Tech: "Magnet Maker"; Feb. 18, 2:30 p.m., "Hemingway's Paris"; Thursdays to March 9, 1 to 3 p.m., DVD seminar, "Turning Points in Middle Eastern History" (pre-register); ongoing, children's story times: Tuesdays, 10:45 a.m., "Moms and Tots" (age 2, with parent/caregiver); Tuesdays, 4 p.m., "Pre-School Story Hour" (ages 3 to 5); Thursdays, 10:45 a.m., "Mother Goose Story Time" (ages 12 to 24 months, with parent/caregiver); monthly teen book groups: "Teen Night@the Library," mother-daughter book group, "Sci-Fi and More"; pre-register, 764-5085.

ST. JAMES VILLAGE HALL, North Salem — Saturdays, 10:30 a.m., yoga; bobbestultz@gmail.com.

Nature, gardening, outdoor activities

BEDFORD AUDUBON — Feb. 18, 9 to 11 a.m., Great Backyard Bird Count, Bylane Farm, Katonah (pre-register, info@bedfordaudubon.org); ongoing through February, "Science in Action" eagle watch; ongoing through early April, Project Feeder Watch; 232-1999.

LASDON PARK, Somers — Feb. 26, 2 to 3 p.m., "Starting Seeds Indoors"; 864-7263.

LEWISBORO LAND TRUST — Feb. 19, 1 p.m., hike/snowshoe, Mountain Lakes Camp, North Salem; lewisborolandtrust.wordpress.com.

MUSCOOT FARM, Somers — Feb. 19 and 26, noon to 3 p.m., maple sugaring; Feb. 22, 1 p.m., winter break knitting program; 864-7282.

POUND RIDGE LIBRARY — Feb. 23, 2 p.m., "Animals in Winter," with New Canaan Nature Center; 764-5085.

STAMFORD (CONN.) MUSEUM AND NATURE CENTER — Fridays, 8 to 10 p.m., observatory open (weather permitting); 203-322-1646.

TRAILSIDE NATURE MUSEUM, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Cross River — Feb. 18 and 25, 1 p.m. naturalist's choice hike; 864-7317.

WESTMORELAND SANCTUARY, Mount Kisco — Feb. 19, 10:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., volunteer opportunity; Feb. 23, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., "Art in Nature" (grades 4 to 8), pre-register; 666-8448.

WOLF CONSERVATION CENTER, South Salem — ongoing, various programs; nywolf.org.

Special events

BEDFORD HILLS FREE LIBRARY — Feb. 21 to 24, 3 to 5 p.m., board games, puzzles and crafts; 666-6472.

GOSSETT BROTHERS FARMERS MARKET, South Salem — Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 763-3001.

KATONAH VILLAGE LIBRARY — Tuesdays through April 18, AARP tax assistance, bring copy last year's federal/state returns, additional 2016 information; 232-3508.

LEWISBORO VOLUNTEER FAIR — March 4, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Lewisboro Library; 875-9004.

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR, Pound Ridge — Mondays, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Café Conant; Thursdays, 1 p.m., bridge; 764-8201.

POUND RIDGE LIBRARY — Feb. 17, 4 p.m., chess with instructor; 764-5085.

WINTER FARM MARKET — Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bedford Hills train station; bedfordhillslive@gmail.com.



PHOTO COURTESY CAPITOL THEATRE

The interior of the Capitol Theatre, located in Port Chester.

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early 1990s when acts like Phish and Blues Traveler came to Port Chester.

Fast forward to earlier this decade, when live music producer Peter Shapiro announced that the Capitol Theatre would reopen with him at the helm. The venue began a third round of serious renovations. Two years prior to the venue's reopening, Sept. 4, 2012, Tom Bailey, now the general manager, met with Mr. Shapiro to discuss a "new" venue that Mr. Shapiro had discovered.

"Pete was looking for someone to run it, and Jim Glancy, of Bowery Presents fame, had connected us," Mr. Bailey said. "I could tell right away that Pete and I were on the same page about wanting to do everything the right way, to reopen this place and turn it into what (Mr. Shapiro) called a 'rock 'n' roll place.' And that's precisely what we did. Nowadays my role is to oversee all operations at the Cap while also planning for growth and expansion, and looking to the future."

A quick rundown of upcoming shows at the venue includes Anders Osborne with Jackie Greene, Assembly of Dust and Ghost of Paul Revere tomorrow, Saturday, Feb. 18, at 8 p.m.; Lettuce on Sunday, Feb. 19, at 8 p.m.; Cougar Magnet & 8 Track playing the hits of the '70s, Saturday, Feb. 25, at 8 p.m.; Melvin Seals & JGB on Friday, March 3, at 8 p.m.; the Concert for Carver featuring Jumping Jack Flash, on Saturday, March 4, at 9 p.m.; and Phil Lesh & Friends on Wednesday, March 15, at 8 p.m.

"So many famous acts have graced the stage here, from Pink Floyd to the Rolling Stones, to the Grateful Dead and David Bowie. The list goes on and on," said Mr. Bailey.

"When artists take the stage here, you know that they know the history of this place. One recent performer here, comedian Nick Kroll, actually read to the audience from the list of artists who have been on this stage, as part of his act. And I think the audiences all know that every show at the Cap has the potential to be some-

thing special."

Mr. Bailey credited the bookers at Bowery Presents, singling out Anthony Makes, for working with the Capitol "to help us bring in the best acts that are available. We also book and present some of our own shows here, and in conjunction with our smaller venue, Garcia's at the Capitol Theatre, we're working to develop new acts on the smaller stage that may develop into mainstage acts."

In the earlier days of the concert business, "artists used to tour to support their record sales," Mr. Bailey noted. "Nowadays, the live shows are how the artists get paid. But regardless of that, live music is still the place where the excitement is. You never know what's gonna happen on that stage, and it's the excitement and unpredictability and spontaneity and symbiosis of live music that makes it so rewarding when you hear something you've never heard before, and never will again."

Mr. Bailey said he guaranteed that the Capitol's sound system "is gonna blow away whatever speakers or headphones you use to listen to the pre-recorded version of your favorite song."

Asked what shows he is particularly looking forward to, Mr. Bailey singled out a few. "I am especially looking forward to our three-night run with the Avett Brothers on May 11, 12 and 13. I also love the fact that we're planning to have more top-notch comedians this year. We've got an exciting band, on their way up, called the Revivalists, playing at the Cap on the last weekend of March. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Phil Lesh, who has performed more shows at the Capitol than any other artist. He will be playing his 77th birthday run in March."

Ticket prices vary, and shows are generally open to audiences 18 and older.

For tickets and more information, call 936-4126 or visit capitaltheater.com.

The Capitol Theatre is located at 149 Westchester Ave., Port Chester.

Phil Lesh of The Grateful Dead has performed more shows at the Capitol Theatre than any other artist.

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