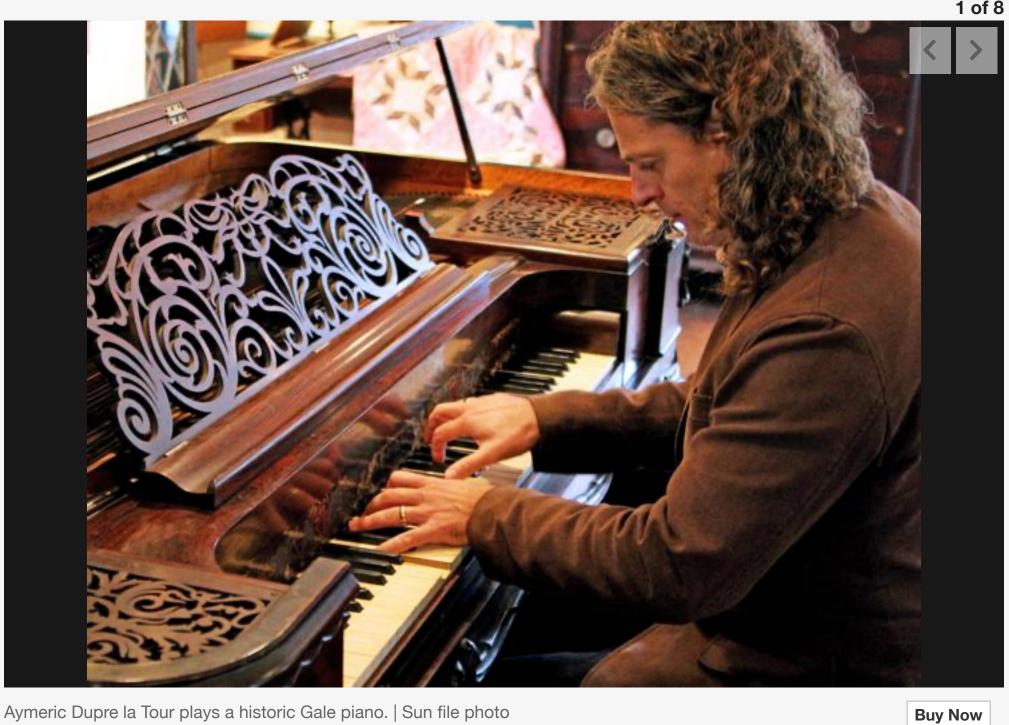
Q



By Nancy Burns-Fusaro Sun staff writer Jan 2, 2023 💂 0



f 🛩 📨 🖶 🕒 🎵

With the coronavirus pandemic somewhat in the rearview mirror, local artists and arts organizations

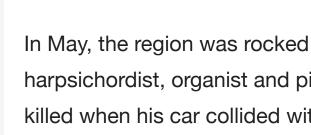
carefully ventured forth in 2022, eager to share new works and reestablish beloved traditions.

The result was another year rich in music, theater, dance, literature and the visual arts for the Westerly area, a year full of interesting people, exhibits and events, a year with some noteworthy changes and one heartbreaking loss.

Death of Dupré la Tour APPLY*
TODAY! **40 New Affordable** Apartments in Exeter

too soon."

daughter."



In May, the region was rocked when Aymeric Dupré la Tour, a French-born, Juilliard-trained harpsichordist, organist and pianist known for his quixotic ways and "contagious passion," was killed when his car collided with a tractor-trailer on I-95 in Madison, Conn. Six months later, friends,

Rural Setting. Modern Living.

fans and supporters of the man who "touched the lives of many through his music" created a

The program included performances by his sister, Diane Dupré la Tour, and more than a dozen wellknown musicians — including sopranos Nora Fox and Jurate Svedaite, organists Nathan Bayreuther and Frank Martignetti, baritone cantor Arthur Giglio, violinist Adrian Sylveen, pianist Angelina Gadeliya and poet Dan Potter — who gathered at the United Church of Stonington to share their music in honor of the man whose mother once loving referred to him as "her surprise bag." Their remarks, according to Pamela Ryley, a close friend of the Dupré la Tour family, "reminded the audience of Aymeric's humor, his intellect, his grace, and his devotion to music and to his darling

While he could certainly be controversial, Dupré la Tour was admired widely for his improvisations

and passionate interpretations of Baroque music and his loss came as a jolt. He was affiliated with

many organizations throughout the region, including the New London Community Orchestra, Mystic

gorgeous musical program — including vocal and instrumental pieces that reflected their affection

for him and "their respect for his prodigious talent" to properly honor the "brilliant light that perished

River Chorale, New London Maritime Society, Zuckermann Harpsichords and North Stonington Historical Society. Dupré la Tour, who left behind a young daughter, Ariana, was about to turn 50 at the time of his death. For many, the concert and Dupré la Tour's death was a reminder of the healing power of the arts and of the importance of appreciating and supporting the artists and arts organizations in our midst. A break for the Colonial

play of the 20th century." The Colonial's version of the play was exquisitely presented with a stellar cast and a striking set

by scenic designer John Tedeschi. Colonial Artistic Director Marion Markham, who directed the play

"with precision, honesty and tremendous sensitivity," earned a nomination in the Best Direction of a

Play category from Broadway Rhode Island, while the production was nominated for Best Play and

Best Ensemble. Several other company members also earned nominations.

failed to do?" The concert was breathtakingly beautiful and poignant.

stunning season opener that was perhaps the most profound local concert of the year.

Back in Westerly, the Colonial Theatre — the performing company that first brought Shakespeare to

Wilcox Park 31 years ago — broke with tradition and instead presented "Waiting for Godot" by the

great Irish playwright, Samuel Beckett, which is often called "the most significant English-language

The venerable Chorus of Westerly also returned to Wilcox Park in 2022 to share its music and voices at the jubilant Summer Pops — the biggest outdoor musical event of the year. But it was the chorus'

New direction at the United

Chorus goes back to the park

interview prior to the concert, Chorus Music Director Andrew Howell said Shaw's piece "is so relevant to our world today ... most notably with the war in Ukraine." Howell said Shaw " ... was originally talking about the hands of Jesus Christ on the cross," and she wanted to encourage listeners "to look at our own wounds and the troubles of the world, and ask

ourselves what role we might play in all of it." In other, words, he said, "What have our hands done or

In November the chorus paired Franz Joseph Haydn's classical masterpiece, "Mass for Troubled

Times" — or the "Nelson Mass" — with Caroline Shaw's stunning "To the Hands." Shaw, a Pulitzer

Prize-winning composer, aimed to draw attention to the plight of the many people around the world

seeking refuge, and her piece was written to help shine a light on the worldwide refugee crisis. In an

of executive director. A Connecticut native, Callahan, a musician, actor, singer, mother, wife and fierce advocate for community-based arts organizations, jumped in with both feet. On Nov. 1 she immediately set to work, getting to know the United's staff, introducing herself to folks about town, and soaking up information about the Westerly-area community. Callahan, a delightful addition to the local arts scene, seems the perfect person to guide the United on its journey to becoming Westerly's little Lincoln Center.

The United, meanwhile, which shows movies every day of the year, shared some excellent exhibits in

relationships with such groups as Literacy Volunteers of Washington County, Newport Folk Festival,

Philharmonic Music School — and adding some new partnerships. A new collaboration with Festival

Ballet Providence brought "a bold mixed bill of contemporary and neoclassical dance by the world's

leading choreographers" in April and marked the beginning of a "new era in dance" for the region,

The Canal Street theater also welcomed such acclaimed artists, performers and authors as the

Bonny Light Horsemen, Peter Asher, half of the 1960s British singing duo Peter and Gordon; Steve

Ross, the entertainer known as "The Crown Prince of New York Cabaret"; and famed trumpet player,

its gallery and continued to roll along — steadily and mightily — building on its established

Salt Marsh Opera, the Chorus of Westerly, Savoy Bookshop and Café, and the Rhode Island

according to Festival Ballet Director Kathleen Breen Combes.

enthusiastic Carly Callahan — a performer, director and public art advocate — accepted the position

In October, the United Theatre received a jolt of welcome energy when the effervescent and

performer and composer Bruce Harris, who appeared at the theater for the ninth time. The United also held a number of author events, including one with bestselling crime novelist Don Winslow. Winslow said the event marked one of his final appearances as a writer. The part-time South Kingstown resident has put aside his typewriter to instead devote his time, money and energy to saving democracy, fight for the soul of the nation and battle those on the extreme right, he announced. A potpourri in the park Wilcox Park also opened its space to embrace several other musical and theater groups during the

artists," organized the Next Up Festival, featuring such local artists as the Molly Maguires, Haunt the

Stagedoor Theatre offered Shakespeare (in the form of a staged reading of "Macbeth") and "Lois

Has Something to Tell Albert," an original comedy by its artistic director, Eugene J. Celico, and the

Flock Theatre of New London had planned to produce "Peer Gynt," in the park but a flare-up of

COVID cases interfered. While Flock was forced to postpone most Westerly performances, they

were able to stage the show at Mystic Seaport. In October at the park, meanwhile, Mystic Seaport

Back in Mystic, the Mystic Museum of Art made headlines with its memorable and striking "Missing"

featured works from collectors Paula Alice Mitchell and Bill Mitchell of Westerly and was paired with

"Norman Rockwell's Saturday Evening Post Covers: Tell Me a Story," which featured every cover

Rockwell created for the Saturday Evening Post and was arranged with the Norman Rockwell

Narratives" exhibit. An important, timely and thought-provoking exhibit, "Missing Narratives"

marked the debut of "Mystic Folkways," part of the three-day "Riverfest Celebration," and a new

year. Hip-hop Musician Kevin "Big Lux" Lowther, in an effort to "support Westerly's rising

"creative partnership" with Westerly Sound, an organization founded by Westerly resident Sean W. Spellman, which often collaborates with the United and the Knickerbocker Music Center.

MMoA goes next-level

House, POP, Olivia Charlotte and Tyler Seton.

Museum in Stockbridge, Mass. "Missing Narratives," which featured the work of African-American artists from the Mitchells' collection, included 27 prints, paintings and sculpture by 19 African American artists, including the works of Romare Bearden, Gwendolyn Knight, Valerie J. Maynard and Robin Holder, and an enormous stoneware figure created by Atlanta-based artist Kimmy Cantrell, who often uses his pieces "as a platform for political, and social commentary." Holder, an artist and activist whose work often focuses on themes of spiritual and racial identity, class and social justice, gave a talk at the museum in September. A homecoming at Hoxie

School of Design, where she studied clay with Norman Schulman and glass with Dale Chihuly, came home to the Westerly Library's Hoxie Gallery in September for a much-heralded show called, "RETROSPECTIVE," which was on display for the month of September. Both the opening night reception and the exhibit attracted hundreds of art-lovers, eager to see pieces from Barber's extensive collection of ceramic sculptures. Her pieces were thoughtfully arranged alongside photography, theatrical masks from her days designing costumes for the Chorus of Westerly's famed "Celebration of Twelfth Night," costumes and "lots of memories," she said.

In the world of literature, author Deborah Goodrich Royce continued to host the Ocean House

writers released new work during 2022. Westerly's Bill Miller released "Steel City, a Story of

Summer Author Series in Watch Hill, which attracted writers of national acclaim, while several local

Pittsburgh," his first work of fiction, and made a number of local appearances to discuss the book,

which has been enthusiastically received. Stonington author Stuart Vyse also released a new book in

2022, a history of the building in which he lives, called "Stonington's Steamboat Hotel." Christie Max

Williams, who for years was the executive director of Arts Café Mystic, published his first book of

La Grua, like the other area mainstays — the Artists Cooperative Gallery of Westerly, The Knick, the

James Merrill House and all the local libraries — maintained vibrant cultural programs throughout the

poetry, "The Wages of Love," which earned him the 2022 William Meredith Award for Poetry.

Celebrated ceramicist Jillian Barber, who grew up in Westerly and graduated from the Rhode Island

At Arts Café Mystic, meanwhile, Artistic Director Lisa Starr kept programs lively and timely throughout the year, while in Stonington, Christopher Greenleaf, the Music Matters artistic advisor and program editor, also kept up a good, strong program of great music at La Grua Center.

stage an impressive, well-received slate of plays.

Theatre's artistic director's upcoming 2023 season.

Artistic Director

Kate Pinkerton

★ Follow Nancy Burns-Fusaro

Westerly

for Jan. 8

Senior Docket

made it official," said Ferri in an email.

theater, "I have hope."

nbfusaro@thewesterlysun.com

nbfusaro@thewesterlysun.com

Erin Sousa-stanley

Tags

Stonington

year,

With new

circus lot

Literary laudables

year, both in-person and via Zoom and YouTube. In a touching tribute to a local legend in October, the 2022 Mystic Film Festival — which showcased hundreds of independent feature-length and short-form narrative films and documentaries from around the world — honored Stonington native Ruth Buzzi with its "Lifetime Achievement Award." **Strong foundation at Granite** The year 2022 began and ended with news from Westerly's Granite Theatre. In January, the theater hired Erin Sousa-Stanley — an accomplished bright light in the local theater world, known widely and much-admired for her 20-plus years at the helm of Stonington High School's award-winning

theater program — as its new artistic director. Sousa-Stanley, who embraced her new role at the

place she always referred to as "the little theater with a big heart" with verve and skill and went on to

From comedies like "I Hate Hamlet" and Neil Simon's "California Suite" to "Shrek the Musical" (the

Stanley threw her heart and talent into her new role. She also directed an ambitious, powerful and

company's first all-youth production), and Oscar Wilde's "The Importance Of Being Earnest,"

unforgettable run of "The Diary of Anne Frank" and concluded the season with a memorable,

celebratory version of "A Christmas Carol." She also earned herself a nomination from Rhode

Island's "Broadway World," in the Best Director of a Musical category for "Shrek."

Stanley with help from East Lyme Regional Theatre set builders Dave Custodio, Will Allik and Jenny Gilbert. Donohue's set for "The Diary of Anne Frank" was unforgettably beautiful. Then, in a head-spinning, cliff-hanging, year-end turn of events in December, the theater's board of directors was unable to come to an official agreement with Sousa-Stanley, leaving the theater without an artistic director and those close to the situation scratching their heads. Granite Board of Directors President Dina Ferri said while she did not have an official comment "at

this time," she "wanted to share that Erin Sousa Stanley is still a possible candidate for the Granite

"We will hopefully be announcing our decision shortly, and will inform the media as soon as we've

Said Stanley, a married mother of three who poured her considerable talent — and heart — into the

Sousa-Stanley also brought in several collaborators who helped elevate the theater to a new artistic

level. The talented Christopher Donohue, for instance, created several stunning sets for Sousa-

Erin Sousa Stanley Composition **Andrew Howell** Caroline Shaw Classical Music Glenn Thomas Kendzia Dina Ferri Westerly High School Kimmy Cantrell Nancy Burns-Fusaro Arts & Culture Editor

Tony Award Concert

Olivia Mortrude

Top Ten Art Show Artist Granite Theatre

Front Porch News

United

Mystic

Theatre,

Aquarium

Front Porch News

receives

donation

Always Home

from Groton

Wireless Zone

join forces for

conservation

Chesebrough has hope for new beginning at **Pawcatuck**

Recommended for you

operating 2023 support grants From the Web

Sheriff Confirms What We All Suspected About

Welcome to the discussion.

Rust Shooting

 \bigcirc (0) comments

Around The Web

Log In

Summer Coir Door Mat - \$15

The Company Store

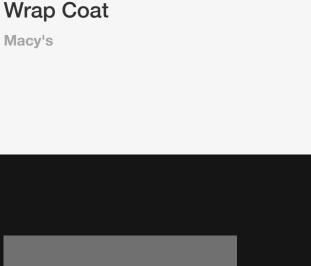
Barron Trump's Transformation Is Turning Heads

Hattie Cabinet - 36" / SHIITAKE

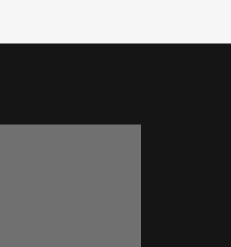
Arhaus

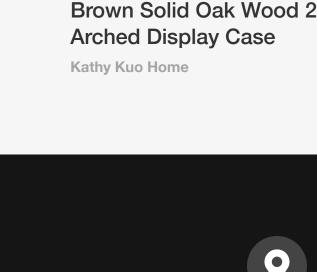
Macy's

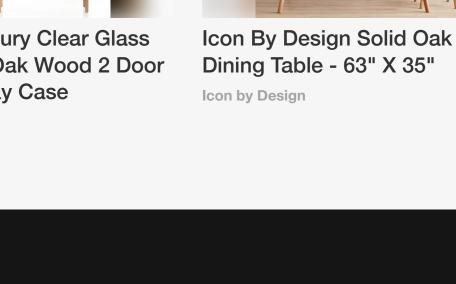
Ivan Mid Century Clear Glass Brown Solid Oak Wood 2 Door

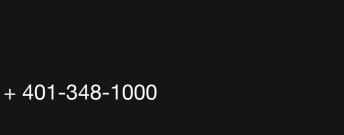


Calvin Klein Women's Belted









Athlete of the Week: January 1st Sponsored by Antonino Auto Group: For the 2022-

Athlete of the Week

high school Athletes of the Week. Voting closes on Tuesday at 9am and the top selection will be announced on Thursday. The nominees for the week ending January 1st are as follows: ABBY BUTREMOVIC, Wheeler, Girls Basketball, Sophomore; Butremovic scored 39 points and

2023 school year, The Westerly Sun will be selecting

had 21 rebounds during two games in the

Montville Holiday Classic tournament. Butremovic is averaging 15.7 points and 9.0 rebounds per game. She leads the team in both categories. LYDIA LASKEY, Stonington, Gymnastics, Senior; Laskey placed second in two individual events for the Bears in their season-opening meet. She

was second on bars and beam and third on floor. RILEY PELOQUIN, Westerly, Girls Basketball, Junior; Peloguin was named to the alltournament team at the WCCU Holiday Basketball Tournament. Peloquin had 23 points and 24 rebounds in two tournament games.

Peloquin is averaging 9.9 points and 10.1 rebounds per game this season. JEREMIAH GRAHAM; Chariho, Boys Basketball, Senior; Graham was named the MVP of the WCCU Holiday Basketball Tournament after Chariho beat Westerly and South Kingstown for the title. Graham had 31 points and 24 rebounds in the two tournament games. For the season,

Graham is averaging 21.3 points and 8.8

rebounds per game. Vote **View Results Latest News**

Langworthy Public Library brings smalltown charm to Hope Valley

Biden walks stretch of U.S.-Mexico border, amid GOP criticism

With new year, Chesebrough has hope

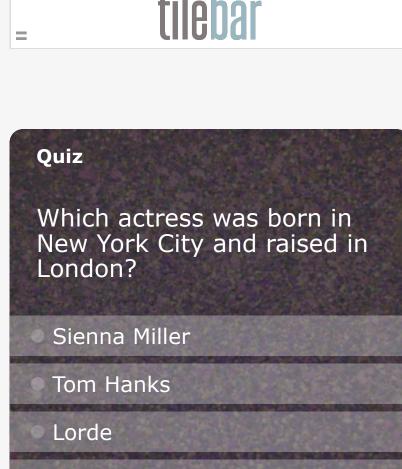
for new beginning at Pawcatuck circus

Conservatives take aim at tenure for university professors

Stonington Town Dock

At Westerly Library & Wilcox Park: Be of service to others on MLK Jr. Day

Westerly, now streaming on Amazon Prime

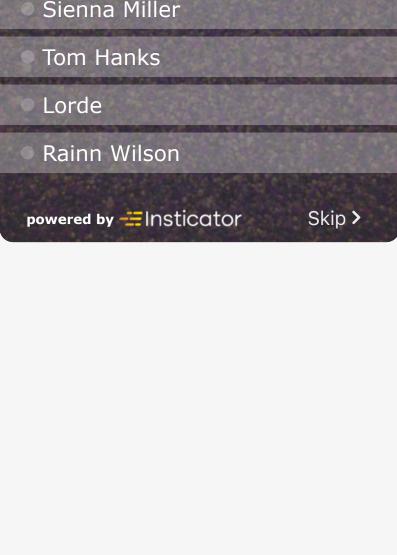


PHOTOS: Lined up and waiting at the

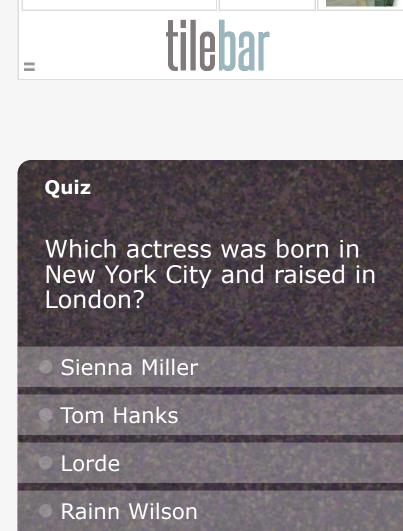
lot

Police end search for Massachusetts woman missing since New Year's Day

VIEW MORE →



Celico's 'The Tournament,' filmed in







NEXT

Westerly OKs

police body

Front Porch News

donate to

Ministries

Camp Street

St. Andrew's,

Exeter Grange

Powered by **ZergNet**

cams

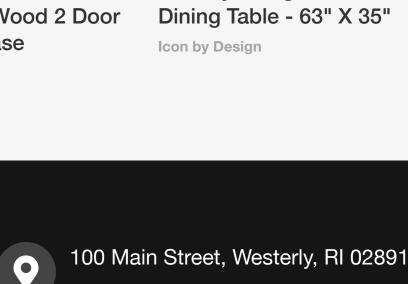
Stagedoor Theatre

Front Porch News Stonington Connecticut **Front Porch** Office of the **Chatter: Arts offers** Monday, January 9,

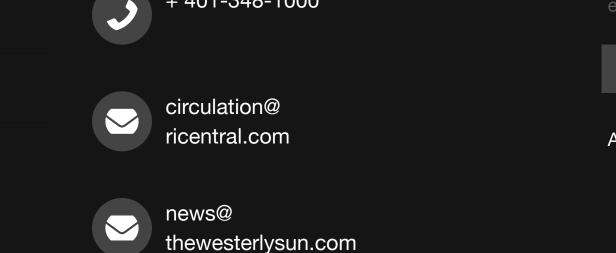
Lamps Plus

Bronze Wall Sconce

Mitzi Olivia 18 3/4" High Old

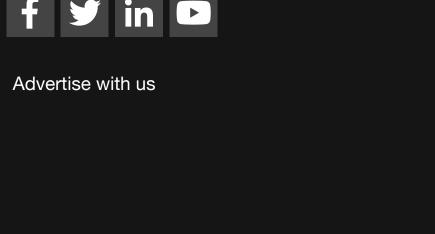






classified@

thewesterlysun.com



people to contribute to the intellectual, civic and

The Sun Media Group

Sign Up for our Newsletters

Home Sports Obituaries Contact Us