



Culture in brief: Josh Rouse kicks off new season at Outpost in the Burbs



Josh Rouse will open The Outpost's 2018-2019 season. COURTESY YORK WILSON

Outpost in the Burbs' fall season kick off with two back-to-back shows: Josh Rouse on Sept. 14, and Martin Sexton on Sept. 15, both at First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Ave. There is a special discount available when patrons purchase tickets to both shows. A VIP ticket with reserved seating and artist meet-and-greet is available for the Martin Sexton show. All concerts begin at 8 p.m. The full fall schedule continues with James Maddock, Sept. 29; The Jayhawks (doors open 7 p.m.), Oct. 12; The Lone Bellow, Nov. 3; Willie Nile, Nov. 9; Lucy Kaplansky, Nov. 16; Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams, Dec. 8; Ryley Walker (New Voices Series), Dec. 15.

[READ: THE KINK'S DAVE DAVIES TO PLAY OUTPOST IN THE BURBS](#)

[READ: LIGHT OF DAY COMES TO OUTPOST IN MONTCLAIR](#)

About Josh Rouse, from Outpost:

Josh Rouse was born in Nebraska, and following an itinerant upbringing he eventually landed in Nashville where he recorded his debut *Dressed Like Nebraska* (1998). The album's acclaim led to tours with Aimee Mann, Mark Etzel and the late Vic Chestnut. The followup- *Home* (2000)—yielded the song "Directions" which Cameron Crowe used in his film *Vanilla Sky*.

"Every time I've made a record, I've tried to make it different from the last one," says Rouse. "I always became fascinated by a different style of music. But at the end of the day, no matter how eclectic I try to make it, it's my voice and melodic sensibility that tie things together."

For his breakthrough album, "1972" (2003), which happens to be the year he was born, Rouse decided to

cheer up a bit. Noting that he'd earned a reputation for melancholy, he says, with a laugh, "I figured this is my career, I might as well try to enjoy it." While the Seventies are often identified with singer-songwriters, Rouse was primarily attracted to the warmer sound of albums back then, as well as the more communal feel of the soul music of that time. The follow up, *Nashville* (2005) continued the hot streak and expanded his audience further.

After relocating to Valencia, Spain with his wife Paz, Rouse has released a steady stream of high quality songs and albums. *Subtitulo* (2006) contained the international indie folk hit "Quiet Town". On *El Turista* (2010) he even experimented with writing and singing some songs in Spanish. In 2014, he won a Goya Award (the Spanish equivalent of an Oscar) for best song for "Do You Really Want To Be In Love," from the film 'La Gran Familia Española.'

His most recent release, *The Embers of Time*, was one of his strongest—self-described as "my surreal, ex-pat, therapy record." Charles Pitter astutely noted in *Pop Matters*. "The critics may long for drama and scandal, but *The Embers of Time* often demonstrates that a simple life could be for the best."

About The Outpost: Outpost in the Burbs is an all-volunteer nonprofit outreach organization in Montclair dedicated to building community through music, community service, and cultural events. For over 30 years, the Outpost has presented more than 450 concerts by internationally known artists such as Judy Collins, Roger McGuinn,, Jorma Kaukonen, Jimmy Webb, Richie Havens, J.D. Souther, The Jayhawks, Nick Lowe, and Dar Williams. In addition to promoting and staffing concerts, Outpost volunteers have donated many hours of their time through programs affiliated with Habitat for Humanity, Toys for Tots, the Human Needs Food Pantry of Montclair, the Community Food Bank of N.J., Dress for Success, MESH (Montclair Emergency Services for the Homeless), and a soup kitchen run by Outpost volunteers in Orange, NJ.

In addition, on Oct. 6, Outpost in the Burbs will co-sponsor a Benefit Concert for NJArts.net featuring Richard Barone and James Mastro, Glenn Mercer, and Elk City, at Tierney's Tavern, 136 Valley Road.

For more information, visit outpostintheburbs.org or call 973-744-6560.



Musical gumbo: Big Mamou keeps Mardi Gras going



Big Mamou will play the Outpost in the Burbs on Saturday night. From left: John Sherman, Billy Loos, Julianne Fenhagen, Fred Parcels, Michael Levine and Jim Fenhagen. COURTESY JIM FENHAGEN

*Mardi Gras Forever, Let the Good Times Roll
Big Mamou, Opening for Christine Ohlman and Rebel Montez*

Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m.

*Outpost in the Burbs
The Guild Room, First Congregational Church
40 S. Fullerton Ave.
Outpostintheburbs.org*

By GWEN OREL

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Mardi Gras is Tuesday, Feb. 12, but is also celebrated the weekend before and the weekend after — at least, said Julianne Fenhagen, one of the vocalists in the Montclair-based Zydeco-Cajun-country-R&B band [Big Mamou](#).



CHRISTINE OLHMAN

So Big Mamou is playing the Outpost in the Burbs on Saturday, Feb. 17, opening for Christine Ohlman, longtime vocalist with NBC's Saturday Night Live Band, and Rebel Montez, in a concert titled "Let the Good Times Roll."

Big Mamou was formed in Montclair in 2002, when married couple Jim and Julianne Fenhagen met accordion player John Sherman.

"Our kids all went to the Montclair Cooperative School," Julianne said. At a picnic, Sherman was on the grounds, and hearing his style of music, Julianne said, "That's something we could work for."

The Fenhagens had recently moved to Montclair from Brooklyn, where they had played country rock music together. Big Mamou came together quickly: Jim plays upright bass, Sherman plays accordion and sings, Julianne sings, Fred Parcels plays trombone, Mike Levine plays pedal steel and electric guitar and Billy Loos

plays drums. They are working on their second album, which will be released in the spring.

The name “Big Mamou” refers to a town, Mamou, in southern Louisiana, that was supposedly the birthplace of Cajun music, Jim said.

Nobody in the band is from Louisiana. Jim, an Emmy Award-winning set designer (he and Julianne recently designed the set for Montclair Film’s benefit with Stephen Colbert and Samantha Bee), had spent time in New Orleans working on a set for the Republican Convention. While there, he fell in love with the music.

“The rhythm of it is incredibly appealing,” Jim said. “I like to dance. The Cajun two-step is the most fun dance.” One day he went to a fais do-do, or Cajun dance party, at Tiapatina’s, a music club in New Orleans.

Grandparents and kids were there. “They taught me how to do the Cajun two-step,” Jim said. “It was so much fun. It’s similar to the country two-step, too.

“The music has a lot of connections to country music. It’s an American music that came about from a mix of cultures down in the South. It just picks me up every time I hear it.”

Big Mamou plays original songs, too, and along with Zydeco, also plays R&B and country.

“It’s a musical gumbo,” Julianne said. She also enjoys singing in French. Mardi Gras week is a big week for the band. “It’s a chance for us to play the style of music we play at the time of year when it’s most appropriate,” she said. “Laissez les bon temps roulez.” On Mardi Gras night itself, they play Hat City in Orange. On Friday night, they play the West End Lounge in New York City. Julianne said, adding, “It’s just keeping the party going.”

This is the first time Big Mamou has played the Outpost’s concert series, though they have performed some special events with the Outpost.

“It’s our hometown thing,” Jim said. “We’re super happy.”

The concert will take place in the Guild room, and they hope people will dance.

“When I was being taught how to dance, I was told, ‘Pretend somebody dropped a rock on your left foot and you have a limp,’” Jim said.

“It explained so much.

“Just hop.”



Looking forward to 2018: Montclairites predict their (cultural) futures



Janette Lallier and Mia Riker-Norrie as the evil stepsisters Tisbe and Clorinda Opera Theatre of Montclair production of Rossini's 'La Cenerentola,' (Cinderella), in the United Way Theatre, at the Saturday afternoon performance, Sept. 16. ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

We asked local cultural and community figures what they were looking forward to in 2018: 1) something they are doing, and 2) something others are doing. What about you, Montclair? What are you looking forward to here in town that you're doing, and that you're not? Write to us at culture@montclairlocal.news and we may print it in a coming issue!

Pheeroan Aklaflf, executive director, Seed Artists: 1) I am looking forward to our 2018 Percussion Festival in a yet to be determined performance space in Montclair. 2) I am looking forward to serendipitously meet the honorable Jeh Johnson in some artistic setting of Montclair.

Jonathan Alter, author, journalist, political analyst: 1) I've teamed up with fellow Montclairians Steve McCarthy and John Block, who made the acclaimed 2015 documentary "The One Who Got Away" about a Glenfield student convicted of murder. The three of us are producing and directing a new HBO documentary called "DEADLINE ARTISTS: Fifty Years on the Streets with Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill" that will air in 2018. 2) My fondest hope for the arts in Montclair in 2018 is that someone buys the Bellevue Theater and keeps it as a movie house. Keep your fingers crossed and let the owner, Jesse Sayegh, know you will be deeply disappointed if the building is converted for other use.



The company move their feet at a dance rehearsal for the Harmony concert. Director Maggie Borgen, center; designer Maria Linietsky, front left; Saroyah Price, Olivia North-Crotty, and Janae Walker-Rabb, back right. COURTESY MAGGIE BORGEN.

Maggie Borgen, MHS student and director, In Harmony Montclair: 1) In Harmony Montclair plans to organize more small events (in addition to our annual Harmony Concert), to give teens a creative outlet throughout the year, such as how we held two performances at the Montclair Pop-Up this past month. In addition, we hope to expand our outreach so that more teens will have the opportunity to share and develop their performance and organizational skills while raising funds to help local charities. 2) 2018 promises to bring many opportunities for teens to connect with the broader arts community in Montclair. Programs through groups such as the Montclair Literary Festival and Montclair Film allow local teens to contribute to the community by sharing their talents. I look forward to seeing further creative connections between youth, nonprofits, and local businesses. I believe that the New Year has the potential to give teens a greater voice in the community through its many creative outlets.

Clark Scott Carmichael, actor: 1) I'm looking forward to auditioning. I'm also watching



CLARK SCOTT CARMICHAEL

for the release of Martin Scorsese's film "The Irishman." I played the pilot and one scene with Robert De Niro. I'm curious to see if I will make it to the screen.) 2) I love the Montclair Jazz Festival in August. Melissa Walker and Christian McBride have put together a wonderful event and training program for kids in the area. Full disclosure — my son has played with them for the last few years. It's a real summertime treat in Nishuane Park.

Israel Cronk, director, Montclair BID: 1) We are excited to host our this Annual Downtown Oktoberfest this year, Sept 22, 2018. We welcomed 4,000+ visitors this year to Lackawanna Plaza! What will 2018 bring?! 2) I'm also excited to partner up with MFEE on their "Life After High School" conference on Jan. 6 at Montclair State University. I will be speaking to kids about fostering good relationships, building connections and staying true to their passions.

Fran DePalma-Iozzi, president, Montclair Women's Club: 1) At least twice a month: a program open to the public for a low fee... authors, musicians, concerts, is held at the Montclair Womens Club, 82 Union St. A Big Band Bash will be held April 20, and a follow-up to the recent Opioid Awareness Conference will be held in the spring. WomanSONG CHORUS will perform at the May 3 "Free First Thursday" at the Montclair Art Museum. 2) Mia Riker-Norrie and the Opera Theatre of Montclair.

Dagmara Dominczyk, actress; author, "The Lullaby of Polish Girls": 1) 2017 was a "heavy" year, and although there were lovely personal moments, I found the atmosphere - for good reason - to be tightly wound. So I'm looking forward to "unspooling." To allowing myself to relax. I want to finish writing my second novel. I'm looking forward to taking part in both the Montclair Literary and Montclair Film festivals. I believe that the arts make the world go round and want to use them - whether via writing, acting or teaching theatre - as an outlet and a reminder that there is still goodness in the world. And family time. Always family time.

Richard Fulco, writer, "There Is no end to this Slope": 1) Presently, I've been working toward completing a novel. Its working title is "Fade Into Obscurity." 2) In 2018, I'm looking forward to reading Susan

Tepper's "Monte Carlo Days and Nights." Susan is a well-established writer and Montclair resident.



DOROTHEA BENTON FRANK. ©Debbie Zammit

Dorothea Benton Frank, author, "Same Beach, Next Year," "All the Single Ladies," "The Last Original Wife" and others: 1) I'm looking forward to a trip with my sweet husband to the Galápagos Islands. 2) I'm looking forward to seeing Harvey Weinstein 's mug shot. Ha!

Ghana Imani Hylton, poet, activist, social media /event management; producer, Adinkra House: 1) I'm *really* amped about the Montclair Literary Festival the weekend of St. Patrick's Day. I'll be moderating a panel on Art as Activism particularly around poetry as a medium for social justice. 2) I can't wait to be a part of the MFEE Life After High School program Jan. 6 where I moderate a panel of highlighted speakers and their best take-away advice. It's open to any Montclair kid in eighth through twelfth grade and it's free! Basically everything I believe in; the arts, social justice, education, community & creativity converge in my favorite town in 2018! I'm SO looking forward to it!

Peter Jacobs, visual artist: 1) I will be entering my 14th year of The Collage Journal. 4,653 uninterrupted days. 2) Watch for Ai Weiwei's documentary film "Human Flow" coming out in January.

Elizabeth Smith Jacobs, artist and educator: 1) offering an assortment of mixed media workshops in collaboration with the Creativity Caravan. 2) When in the Baltimore/DC area, checking out my favorite museum, the American Visionary Art Museum, near the inner harbor in Baltimore. The museum is dedicated to showing outsider art and does a very unique kinetic sculpture race, which will take place on May 6th this year.



"What Is this Aliveness in Me?" by Jennifer Levine. COURTESY JENNIFER LEVINE

Jennifer Levine, artist: 1) Art Park Montclair — developing a movable art park with a puppet theatre for Montclair residents to enjoy summer 2018. In my studio, I am working with breast cancer survivors creating collage paintings to honor their choice not to reconstruct. 2) Shout out to Amy and Maya from The Creativity Caravan for supporting local artists with a gallery, inspiration, and great food at openings!

Ann Lippel, chair, Montclair Senior Citizens Advisory Committee (SCAC): 1) Taking the high quality and free M.I.L.L. (Montclair Institute for Lifelong Learning) classes, part of the Township's Lifelong Montclair Aging in Place initiative and funded by Partners for Health. 2) Attending one of the Opera Theater of Montclair performances.

Elaine Molinaro, president, Montclair Arts Alliance; artistic director, Culture Connection Theatre: 1) directing theater that makes connections between people and



Elaine Molinaro introduces the Montclair Arts Festival. NEIL GRABOWSKY/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

opens minds. 2) organizing more actively with Alicia Garza, Tamika Mallory, Bob Bland and others to continue the fight for a just society.

Steven M. Moore, author, “Rembrandt Angel”: 1) Giving a talk on publishing and my writing, featuring “Rembrandt’s Angel,” at the Montclair Women’s Club on Jan. 26. 2) Catching as many musical events as possible at Montclair State University—these kids are fantastic!

Diane Moser, pianist; leader, Diane Moser’s Composers Big Band: 1) I have a new CD releasing March 1st, with a new trio. The CD is called “Diane Moser-Birdsongs,” and it features Anton Denner on flute and piccolo, Ken Filiano on bass and yours truly on piano. 2) Looking forward to a new year of exciting events and a percussion festival produced by Seed Artists, here in Montclair.

Erin Carlisle Norton, artistic director, female-centric dance company The Moving Architects: 1) “The Recollection” is the newest work developed through the ongoing collaboration between myself and visual artist gwen charles. “The Recollection” uses dance, multi-media projections, and original music to explore the tenuous and distorted threads between memory and reality. This will be the third live performance work they have collaborated on together, alongside “Americana” which was performed in April in Manhattan and Jersey City, and “America Dawn” which premiered in Brooklyn in November after beginning the project through a creative residency at Wilson College (PA) in August. The work is set to premiere in Montclair in 2018. 2) I am interested in the ongoing visual arts projects of gwen charles. Her studio is in Montclair and her work was recently featured on banners throughout Montclair as part of the Studio Montclair banner series.



BARD will perform at Trend on Saturday, Aug. 12. COURTESY JAMIE PAGLIARO.

Jamie Pagliaro, BARD, St. James Players: 1) I am super pumped to play an evening of Renaissance Rock music with BARD at Tierney’s on Feb. 3 at 8:30 p.m.!! A portion of the proceeds will go to support the St. James Players. 2) I am psyched to see my friend and fellow SJP member Gary Koseyan in Theatre League Of Clifton’s dinner theatre production of “Trouble at the Tropicabana” in late Feb/early March. Who doesn’t love a fun night of dinner theatre!?!

Greg Pason, founder and organizer, Montclair Make Music Day: 1) I look forward to



Rostafa plays at Waxing the City on Montclair Make Music Day. NEIL GRABOWSKY/FOR MONTCLAIR

more grassroots arts and music projects in Montclair in 2018, including a full Make Music weekend in June. In June we will have events starting on June 21st and extending into the weekend of the 23rd. We've built so many new partnerships with local businesses and organizations, especially the newly founded Indie Arts Montclair! 2) I also love the work being done by Montclair Arts Alliance, the volunteers working to bring the pollinator garden and cultural events in Crane Park and everything being done to promote bicycling by Bike&Walk Montclair and VELO. Let's bring more community focused art and music to our community next year and be more inclusive. Art is an integral part of daily life. We need to create opportunities for participation in art and cultural activities.

Catherine Platt, co-director, Montclair Literary Festival: 1) I'm looking forward to



*Owen Duncan reads his winning poem.
COURTESY CANDY COOPER.*

the second Montclair Literary Festival, March 15-18, presented by Succeed2gether. Highlights will include our high-energy poetry slam, this year to include Montclair High School as well as Middle School students; our headline event at 7 pm on March 16 when author Tom Perrotta will speak with Patrick Wilson and Dagmara Dominczyk about transferring fiction to film and television; and panels on wide-ranging topics from sexual harassment to rock and roll biography. Our popular children's program is back as well, and art and literature workshops at MAM. 2) In other events, I'm looking forward to hearing Garth Hallberg and Estep Nagy in conversation about crafting fiction at the Open Book/Open Mind event at Montclair Public Library on January 28th, and to finding out which authors Watchung Booksellers will bring to town in 2018 — always a wide and interesting range of speakers!

Gail Prusslin, promotions and publicity, The Outpost in the Burbs: 1) the first show of the new year at Outpost in the Burbs on Jan. 5th: Light of Day Foundation North Jersey "Songwriters in the Round" benefit concert and 2) Montclair Film Festival '70's Mixtape Dance Party with The Loser's Lounge on Feb. 25th!

Mia Riker-Norrie, general director, Opera Theatre of Montclair: 1) Opera Theatre of Montclair is looking forward to expanding its family-friendly offerings in 2018 by producing Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel. 2) I'm looking forward to supporting the young artists at the Cali School of Music as they perform Britten's The Rape of Lucretia on Jan. 27 and 28.

Nancy Star, author, "Sisters One, Two, Three": 1) I'm excited to be reading at the Half-way There series on Jan. 22nd! 2) And I'm excited for the second annual Montclair Literary Festival!

Bruce Tyler, Black Lace Blues: 1) Well...I am working on my drumming technique and reviewing some of my old drumming ideas! Also..writing some material with my band Black Lace Blues. Looking forward to putting together a bead exhibit at the new Trend Gallery. 2) My harmonica player in my band is playing with

the legendary Michael Powers at Terra Blues in New York.



Dancers Madelyn Eltringham and Sharie Taluba perform Montclair Lauren Connelly's "We Know Not What Next Comes." Connelly is the awardee of "Dance on the Lawn's Emerging New Jersey Choreographer Award." More than a dozen dance companies perform on the lawn of St. Luke's Episcopal Church on South Fullerton Avenue for the annual Dance on the Lawn Festival, Sat., Sept. 9.
ADAM ANIK/FOR MONTCLAIR LOCAL

Charmaine Warren, producer/artistic director, Dance on the Lawn: 1) Celebrating our fifth year of presenting free dance performances to our community and beyond! 2) Looking forward to seeing what and supporting the very new Montclair Arts Alliance in their second year.



Light of Day comes to the Outpost in Montclair



Willie Nile will return to Montclair to perform with the Light of Day concert at the Outpost in the Burbs. Five headliners and three opening singer-songwriters will perform in a concert that benefits the Light of Day Foundation, Inc's battle with Parkinson's disease and related illnesses such as PSP and ALS. Friday marks the fourth time that the Outpost will partner with the Light of Day Foundation.

Light of Day Benefit Friday, Jan. 5, 8 p.m.

Presented by the Outpost in the Burbs, in partnership with the Light of Day Foundation

Raising money and awareness to defeat Parkinson's disease and related illness. Featuring Willie Nile, Jeffrey

Gaines, James Maddock, Joe D'Urso, Emily Grove; with Isabella Rose, Jon Caspi and Adam Falcon opening.

First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton St.

Concert includes a special tribute to the late Tom Petty.

Outpostintheburbs.org, lightofday.org

By GWEN OREL

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When Bob Benjamin's 40th birthday party became a "pass the hat" for the Parkinson's Foundation in 1998, Benjamin was the only person with the disease that Joe D'Urso knew.

Twenty years later that's no longer true for the Jersey shore/Americana roots rocker.

"Since then, my cousin and uncle were diagnosed," D'Urso said. "It's in my family now." He has also seen musicians with the disease perform, including Arlon Bennett, who has someone else hold the guitar for him.

Two years after his party, Benjamin's informal fundraiser turned into a charity, the Light of Day Foundation, Inc.

The name of the foundation links it with music: "(Just around the corner to the) Light of Day" is a 1987 Bruce Springsteen song. And Springsteen has often appeared at the concerts Light of Day presents to raise money.



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The center of those concerts is Winterfest, in January. This year, more than 150 acts will perform in 30 venues in New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia. Last year the organization raised almost \$600,000.

And Montclair kicks off the 10-day festival on Friday, Jan. 5.

For South Side Johnny band member-turned-concert promoter Tony Pallagrosi, watching his mother's long decline from the effects of Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP), seeing her spirit trapped inside "a dead shell of a body," only strengthened his resolve to "defeat Parkinson's disease and related illnesses, such as PSP and ALS [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis], within our lifetime," as the Light of Day's website states.

Pallagrosi is the organization's executive director, and D'Urso is vice president and treasurer.

The Outpost in the Burbs will present headliners Willie Nile, Jeffrey Gaines, James Maddock, Joe D'urso and Emily Grove. Isabella Rose, Jon Caspi and Adam Falcon will open the show.

All are singer-songwriters.

Pallagrosi said that the people who run the Outpost are “great supporters of original acoustic, Americana form of music. They’ve been supporting these artists for the last 25 years.” The artists who play at Winterfest are “folk artists, telling stories. The story and storyteller are two of the most important parts of it. The third most important part is the audience.

“Without the audience reacting, the story never gets told. Whether it’s Bruce Springsteen to 80,000 people, or Willie Nile to 300 people, it’s still a story about America.

“These artists really exemplify that.”

ARTISTS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The Montclair audience can expect to hear some new songs and maybe even some unreleased ones.

Willie Nile put out a studio album called “Positively Bob — Willie Nile Sings Bob Dylan” this



JAMES MADDOCK

past summer. English rocker James Maddock released in 2017 “Insanity vs. Humanity,” described as a “return to his politically charged roots.” Early 2018 will see the release of Jeffrey Gaines’ first studio album in 15 years, “Alright,” and Joe D’Urso’s new album, “Jersey Diner.”

The show is billed as presenting “artists up close and personal,” and the singers will interact with one another, as well as the audience, as they trade songs onstage.

Taking part in Light of Day itself is a personal act and a labor of love. Fees are donated.

Willie Nile, who has been praised by Rolling Stone and BBC



JEFFREY GAINES

Radio, and sung with Bruce Springsteen, said he would do “anything to help Bob.” Like Pallagrosi, Nile was at that original birthday party, when Benjamin, whose diagnosis was early onset Parkinson’s, asked for donations instead of gifts. Nile knew Benjamin as a young critic at the University of Buffalo, when he’d just put his first album out. Benjamin went on to work in promotion, PR, radio and different aspects of the music business.

The point of Winterfest is that “whatever inspires people initially to take up an instrument and write songs, to

be able to play with other musicians, for a good cause, is a meaningful, beautiful thing. I've been doing it for years and will continue doing it.

When they find a cure for Parkinson's, we will find something else."

It's not just the artists that he plays with but also the audience that Nile considers friends: "It's a beautiful thing to see. Everyone donates their services for a good cause. It's music at its best, people rising up to a challenge. Initially, it was helping out a friend, now it's the whole Parkinson's community."



EMILY GROVE

Wall native Emily Grove said, "It's a way to celebrate life with music." Grove, still in her 20s, has won three Jersey Acoustic Awards as well as four Asbury Music Awards. She has been performing with Light of Day in Asbury Park, and this is the first time she will perform in Montclair. "I feel like I'm hanging out with my buds again," she said.

Joe D'Urso, too, was at the original Benjamin birthday party. Before he became a full-time rocker, D'Urso was part of a music agency, and worked on a lot of the tours of musicians he revered.

D'Urso had just returned from three weeks touring with Light of Day in Europe, a tour that he oversees, when he spoke to the Montclair Local. There were 16 shows in nine countries, in venues that included opera houses, ballrooms, listening venues and one "converted barn on the border of Germany and Denmark, that replicates Asbury Park," complete with a model Stone Pony.

It's a lot of work, but, he said, "It's very easy to get your tanks refueled when you meet other folks who work in this endeavor who have Parkinson's."



Joe D'Urso has been with the Light of Day since the beginning. COURTESY RANDEX COMMUNICATION

A TRIBUTE TO TOM PETTY

Including a tribute to Tom Petty in the Montclair show was D'Urso's idea.

"It's a personal one for me," D'Urso said. In high school "my four guys were Tom Petty, John Mellencamp, Bruce Springsteen and Bob Seger.

"He was the first of my guys to die."

D'Urso would buy a record the first day it came out, read the liner notes and lyrics.

When Petty died suddenly after his tour ended this past October, “it was almost like losing a high school friend,” D’Urso said. There isn’t a songwriter around who can write as “cleverly, succinctly and melodically as Tom Petty,” he said.

On his last day of work in his music business day job, he received a package in the mail that came from Tiffany’s: it was a pocket knife, from Petty and his manager, saying “always stay on the cutting edge.”

When the knife was taken away from him at an airport, D’Urso retrieved his bags and packed it. “I didn’t want to lose that.

“I’m not sure if Tom realized how loved he really was I hope he did.”

Pallagrosi said Petty’s death “was a shock to all of us who love this kind of music.” He described Petty as “one of our great Americana artists.”

Nile said that “to celebrate his life as part of the evening will be good fun.”



Culture in brief: Bettye LaVette plays The Outpost



BETTYE LAVETTE

Award-winning blues vocalist Bettye LaVette will play The Outpost in the Burbs on Friday, Dec. 22, 8 p.m., at First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Ave. Edward Alstrom will play keyboards, and singer-songwriter Arlan Feiles will open.

LaVette has recorded for numerous labels, including Atco, Epic, and Motown, over the course of the 1960s through the 1980s. She also worked alongside Charles “Honi” Coles and Cab Calloway in the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical “Bubbling Brown Sugar” in the role of Sweet Georgia.

Bettye LaVette has received the Blues Music Award for Best Contemporary Female Blues Singer and performed “A Change Is Gonna Come” as a duet with Jon Bon Jovi for President-elect Barack Obama on HBO’s telecast of the kick-off Inaugural Celebratory concert, “We Are One.” For more information, visit outpostintheburbs.org or call 973-744-6560.



A little bit country: Laura Cantrell comes to Montclair



Laura Cantrell will play the Outpost in the Burbs on Saturday, Dec. 16. COURTESY CHARTROOM MEDIA

*Laura Cantrell
Saturday, Dec. 16, 8 p.m.*

*Outpost in the Burbs
First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Ave.*

Outpostintheburbs.org

By GWEN OREL

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Laura Cantrell grew up in Nashville, went to college in New York City, made her first album in Glasgow and has a big following in Scotland.

All by playing music she could have stayed in Nashville to do, Cantrell said.

She became known as an Americana artist because of the BBC. Her most recent album, in 2016, was a collection of BBC sessions.

The singer-songwriter will play her country-folk at the Outpost in the Burbs on Saturday.

She'll be "road testing" songs that could go on her new album. A response from a live audience helps her figure out what works, she said. Audience members can also expect some holiday music, and some "local special guests."

The United Kingdom connection came about through a fellow DJ at WFMU, she said, who had had a great experience there. "Glasgow is almost like a regional indie scene, like Chicago or Minneapolis would be," Cantrell said. "It's a great music community, not too huge, and very supportive."

She has toured with British groups, and has a local base in Scotland, too.

It may be an unlikely way for a country musician to make her debut, but Cantrell has always been eclectic.

Growing up, she learned from her father to love the classic American songbook, musicals like "Showboat" and "Oklahoma!" as well as Jerome Kern and Hoagy Carmichael.

Her mother, who was 10 years younger, introduced her to the sounds of Bob Dylan and Joan Baez.

Along with the twin strains of music in the house, the country music scene was ever present, “without anybody really trying too hard to make it something I learned about.

“I loved all those things.”

But it wasn't until she went to Columbia University that she realized she wanted to become deeply involved in music. She began playing guitar seriously (she'd played a little in high school, and had eight years of piano), so she could accompany herself, and learned the mechanics of performing.

“I was already pretty well defined as a music person in my own mind, through my own enthusiasm,” she said. In New York, she realized that the country music culture she had in Nashville was something rare, and that “there were things about it that were unique and cool. It connected with our folk craft of Appalachia music, and blues music, and how those strains of what would be folk music blended into something that is part of the commercial music industry.

“These are things college kids like to think about, what's authentic, what's artifice. It was perfect to apply to my knowledge of country music. It didn't take too long to apply the critical eye from what I was doing as an English major to ‘What's going on with these Hank Williams records?’”

She got involved in radio, and enjoyed having access to a great record collection of country music at the station. That segued to working at WFMU.

She also has a show today on Sirius XM, on the Beatles Channel, “Dark Horse Radio,” about George Harrison.

Cantrell likes the Beatles, but is not a George Harrison expert, something her 11-year-old daughter, a Beatles fan, reminds her every day, she said with a laugh. She forever asks me, “Mama, what album is this song on?” And Cantrell answers, “Well, to be honest...”

She works with the George Harrison estate, and an archive that has live material and rare tracks. People at the archive were familiar with her show at WFMU, she said. “I think they had in mind a female host, and wanted somebody with eclectic taste. He was known within The Beatles as having wide-ranging interests.” Harrison revered Carl Perkins, and also Indian music. “He tapped into a lot of things.”

Working on the show has been great, she said: “I don't think you could have escaped hearing a lot of their music growing up.”

Even playing at the Outpost for the first time is a kind of melding of different strains for Cantrell: “Going back to my WFMU days, I had a lot of fans come from that part of New Jersey.

“It's nice to go to them instead of trying to lure them into the city.”



Montclair Film fosters community: year-round events



Students in a cinematography class this past summer learn about making film.
COURTESY AMY GALLATIN

By GWEN OREL

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The festival came first.

Montclair Film Festival began in Bob Feinberg’s kitchen, and debuted in the spring of 2012.

Five years later, the organization the presents the festival operates year-round, and changed its name to reflect that fact. From MFF it became MF, Montclair Film.



BOB FEINBERG

It opened its Investors Bank Film + Media Center in April 2017, just in time for the festival.

The name change “represents the future of the organization,” said MF Founder and Chairman Bob Feinberg. MF, Feinberg said, is a “full-on, year-round arts and education organization. Montclair is where we’re located.

It's part of our DNA. Film is the core of what we do. While MFF will probably remain the jewel in the crown, it's just one of the things we do."

LEARNING TO FILM, LEARNING FROM FILM

MF has offered classes for young filmmakers for awhile, but adult classes are new to the building, said MF Executive Director Tom Hall, who will oversee his fourth film festival in this role in spring 2018. Education Director Sue Hollenberg is "leading the charge," Hall said. Adult classes offered this semester included Improv Comedy Workshop; Editing with Premiere Pro; Video Memoirs, and Hands On SFX Make-Up Intensive. A new semester will be announced in December.

Offering acting classes is natural, said Hall, because acting and writing are "tied together. We're considering creating showcases for performers and storytellers."

Another way of encouraging new filmmakers is through the Emerging Filmmaker Competition 2018. Students in grades 6-12 can submit short films in different categories through March 4, with some of the winners screened at the 2018 Montclair Film Festival.

In January, MF will once again partner with Montclair State University to present "Behind the Screen," a collaboration



TOM HALL

which brings screenwriters, directors and technicians to the university to talk about their craft.

A junior jury will weigh in on films under consideration for prizes.

Feinberg said that education programs will be a large focus of energy for the organization as it continues to grow. He'd like to bring in educators from the school systems. "Not having to scramble for space [for classes] is tremendous," he said.

One exciting program is The "505 + Films and Friends," which grew out of the sensory friendly screenings during the festival. House lights and sound are turned down to half, to make the experience friendlier for people on the autism spectrum and differently abled children and adults. An event for high school students is scheduled for Dec. 1, and for adults 18-28 on Dec. 3.

"We're partnering with educators and clinicians to launch a year-round program in a social environment," Hall said. "It's a social get-together as much as a cinema program."

SCREENINGS, SPECIAL EVENTS

MF will holds some events outside of its home: its annual fundraiser with Stephen Colbert, this year with

Samantha Bee, will be held on Dec. 2 at NJPAC.



STEPHEN COLBERT

In February, MF will again hold a “Loser’s Lounge” fundraising party at the Wellmont Theater, 5 Seymour St. Last year’s party was an ‘80s party, while this year’s is titled “’70s mixtape! A 1970s dance party.” Montclair Film will partner with Charitybuzz to auction off a chance to sing with Patrick Wilson live on stage.

Back at its home, “Members Only” screenings allow MF to show films to its members that are “award contenders, in our opinion,” Hall said. “They are high profile films, shown in advance of their release in Montclair. Some have played the festival in the past.” Being part of the life-cycle of a movie besides one or two screenings during a festival is one of MF’s goals, he said.

A program called “Filmmakers Local 505” focuses on New Jersey and Essex County filmmakers, with a Q-and-A afterwards.

After an October screening of “Revolution ‘67,” about the Newark riots, Feinberg said, “I sat in the audience thinking, ‘This is exactly what I hoped would happen if we could launch a festival and open a building and talk to filmmakers. It was a great night.



Nick Lowe tapes a PBS special at Montclair Film. COURTESY TONY TURNER/MONTCLAIR FILM

The cinema space can be converted into an event space and has hosted some special events: Laura Linney taught a master class there in April. And recently, coinciding with his concert at the Outpost in the Burbs, Nick Lowe taped a television program there for PBS, called “Speakeasy.” Feinberg, who said he has loved Lowe since he was a teenager, said the program will air sometime in December.

“I’m a true believe in cinema as a platform for connecting people. When you tell a story, you have people find empathy for each other, have dialogue for the experience and find new understanding. We need that right now.”

Hall said, “When the back door opens up, and students come into classes, when we open the doors at night. When we have family screenings, and see little kids coming in, that’s what I love. I want people to feel home and welcoming. I’m not showing movies because I like them. I want people to connect around them.”



Culture in brief: John Gorka plays at The Outpost in the Burbs



John Gorka will play The Outpost in the Burbs on Friday, Dec. 1. COURTESY THE OUTPOST IN THE BURBS

Outpost in the Burbs presents “An Evening with John Gorka” on Friday, Dec. 1, at 8 p.m., at First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Ave. Outpost volunteers will be collecting donations of new, unwrapped toys for the Toys for Tots program at this show.

The Outpost writes in a release, “For over two decades, John Gorka’s keen ear has picked up the stories along his path, folding them into poetry and song. His keen perceptiveness inspires people from all over the world to share their stories. By involving those tales in his music, he escapes the trap of introspection that hobbles less gifted singer-songwriters.” For information, visit outpostintheburbs.org, or call 973-744-6560.



Singing 'Happy Birthday' to the Outpost in the Burbs in Montclair

✘ *Outpost in the Burbs 30th Anniversary Concert*
Featuring Marc Cohn and Valerie June



Ellis Paul opens

Friday, Oct. 20, 7-11:30 p.m.

First Congregational Church , 40 South Fullerton Ave.

Different levels of admission, including VIP (meet and greet). VIP parking also available.

outpostintheburbs.org

By GWEN OREL

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It's a big deal.

It's huge.

Surviving for three decades is a pretty big achievement for any arts group, but for an all-volunteer organization that has seen lots of turnover, including in its performance spaces, getting to the big 3-0 is enormous.

To mark its 30th anniversary, the Outpost is holding a blow-out concert on Friday, Oct. 20, including a split bill of headliners Marc Cohn and Valerie June, with opener Ellis Paul.



JOHN PLATT

Emcee John Platt, a DJ and communications director at WFUV, said the Outpost's longevity shows that "this is music people want to hear. Being around for 30 years, the Outpost has shown there really is an audience for this type of music."

And, Platt said, the organization is "putting it all together for this show."

"It's a major undertaking, to have three artists of this stature on one bill. Ellis Paul is one of the top-tier coffeehouse performers out there. Valerie June is creating new crossover Americana, getting interest not only in the folk world but also in the rock world. Marc Cohn's 'Walking in Memphis' is one of the great rock songs of all time. He brings star power to the party."

"There are all different shades of the music." And it's more than entertainment, Platt said: "It's so important to our world right now because there's so much going on socially, and politically, and culturally. We count on artists to give us a little perspective."

ELLIS PAUL: THE LONG-DISTANCE SINGER

 In 2013, Ellis Paul was inducted into the Presque Isle High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Paul had been the Maine state champion in 5-kilometer distance running and went to Boston College on a track scholarship. Now he's a musician.

"There's some connective tissue there," Paul said with a laugh. "There's a famous book, 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner.' The loneliness of the long-distance folk singer... there's a lot of solo time, a lot of perseverance. Lasting, keeping at it, keeping at it."

"I needed that when I was running, and I'm using it now, 25 years later."

It was after he hurt his leg, during his junior year in college, that he picked up the guitar. He'd heard Bob Dylan and Neil Young on the radio (although it was the 1980s, some stations played classic rock, he explained). Today he tours about 200 days of the year.

To date, he's released 19 albums and received many awards, including numerous Boston Music Awards, which are considered high honors in the folk music world. His most recent CD, "Chasing Beauty," came out in 2014, and he's working on a new one. He said he will try out some of his new songs at the Outpost.

Guitar, Paul said, "is an instrument that gives back a lot. It's a healing instrument. It helps better me, and gives my life purpose. I interact with the universe with it. It's been a calling card in a lot of ways, for friendships, relationships, adventures, money." 

Money? Money isn't a word folk musicians say their music brings them, very often.

"Folk music money is a step above Monopoly money," Paul said, laughing.

Paul describes his songs as “story songs, about people at some kind of crossroads in their lives.” He finds a song by “just keeping my ears open, being aware and engaging with the world. Hopefully songs slide by and I grab them with my butterfly net.”

The Outpost, Paul said, has been “an important cornerstone to my career. I started playing there in the late ‘90s, and have played there every few years. I feel like it’s part of the backbone of my touring life.” On Friday, he will play at the Outpost for the eighth time. The fact that the Outpost has survived, he said, “shows that people care about it.”

VALERIE JUNE: MAGICAL MUSIC



Valerie June. COURTESY DANNY CLINCH

Valerie June is diving into the music of Billie Holliday. “I’m trying to figure out why people gravitate to Billie’s work, why they love it so much,” June said from her home in Brooklyn, in her distinctive Tennessee accent.

Her voice doesn’t resemble Holliday’s, yet the connection makes sense: June’s voice is expressive, it dances around the notes, and is instantly recognizable.

NPR describes her voice as “an inviting, inscrutable drawl.”

Since the release of June’s 2013 CD “Pushin’ Against a Stone,” she has performed on “The Tonight Show,” “The Late Show,” at Carnegie Hall, and at the White House.

Her second CD, 2017’s “The Order of Time,” is, according to Rolling Stone, “near perfect front to back.”

The 35-year-old singer doesn’t let the ecstatic reviews faze her.

“I’m trying to get more present in my life about things like that,” she said. “I put my head down and move forward and focus on art.”

She once thought of going to art school to study pottery and painting, but couldn’t afford it, she said.

So she began playing music instead. “I was singing and writing songs from the day I was born. I was always making music.

“But deciding to be a musician and choosing it as a career path, to pay bills, and put food on the table... ” That didn’t happen until she was 27, she explained.”It was only after I became diabetic and couldn’t pay my bills, that I was forced to be in music, and dependent on music alone.

“I was laughing at myself the other day. I wake up every day and all I really have to do is make music. It’s a shocking thing to me to be an artist and wake up and be living that way.”

When she was a girl, she and her four brothers and sisters all sang together, creating the parts: “‘You do the low, I’ll do the high.’ I never thought of it as something different from other families.

“Somebody’s singing a song, putting clothes in the dryer, and someone started singing with them.”

She plays guitar and banjo, and her music incorporates pop, R&B, blues, country and roots. She doesn’t label it.

“To me, it’s the magical music that I make,” she said. “I try to be me in every song.”

MARC COHN: ‘I’M AFRAID I’M OUT’



Marc Cohn. COURTESY DREW GURIAN

Marc Cohn told his piano teacher at his first lesson, “Can you teach me to play ‘Hey Jude?’”

When the teacher replied “We have to do scales,” Cohn told her, “I’m afraid I’m out.”

“I wanted to learn songs from the very beginning,” he said. “I’m not saying it was a smart thing to do. Listen, I wish I knew more about theory and scales. When it comes down to it, what you’re not able to do, if you have some talent, informs your style.”

Cohn won a Grammy award for his ballad “Walking in Memphis” from his platinum-selling debut album, “Marc Cohn,” in 1991. The song has been covered many times, including recordings by Cher, and by performers on “The Voice.”

It was when he was in college, and heard Jackson Browne and Joni Mitchell, that he realized a singer and songwriter could be the same person. Both of them played the piano, so he decided to learn it also.

He took his guitar into a practice room with a Steinway, and taught himself chords.“Within a couple of weeks, I started playing the way I still do today,” he said.

“But what was really important was the lyrics, how personal, poetic, and insightful they were. From then until this day — I wrote a new song this morning — until I have the lyrics I’m not all that interested.”

The Outpost audience may hear some new songs.

In 2016, to celebrate 25 years since his first album came out, he released his eighth album, “Careful What You Dream: Lost Songs and Rarities,” and the bonus album, “Evolution of a Record,” which includes demos of “Walking in Memphis.”

“Going back to [the songs on ‘Careful What You Dream’] was wonderful. It was a pleasant surprise. I had told myself erroneously along the line that I hadn’t found my songwriting voice until my first record.”

Revisiting them doesn’t make him feel old, he said with a laugh. “Having four children and two ex-wives makes me feel old.”

He’d love to have another song that breaks through in a big way so his younger kids “could have a sense of what it was like before they were born, and their dad had a hit.”

One thing that brought him back to recording new songs again was literally getting a hole in his head. In 2005 he was shot in an attempted carjacking. The bullet lodged in his skull, and he was released after only eight hours.

He praised singer Rosanne Cash’s Op-Ed in the New York Times about gun control, and wondered of those who are critical, “How many of those people were actually shot in the head? The guy who shot me was high on crystal meth. He was a great danger to himself when he took it. He only became a danger to other people when he got out a gun and shot through the windshield of my car.”

Like Ellis Paul, Cohn sees himself as a storyteller. If he weren’t a musician, he might be a therapist, he said. “I’m interested in people’s stories. It’s why I’m a songwriter.

“It’s another way to get at them.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTVbf44HMkY>



Culture in brief: Nick Lowe performs at the Outpost

✘ Rocker Nick Lowe will perform at The Outpost in the Burbs on Saturday, Oct. 14, 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton St. Lowe first made his mark as a producer, with Elvis Costello, the Pretenders and the Damned, before becoming a well-known recording artist. Since 1975, he has been creating albums from his West London home. Cut Worms, the stage name of Max Clarke, opens the show. For more information and tickets, visit outpostintheburbs.org.