

Arts & Entertainment

Coming Attractions

Masterworks Series featuring Brahms, Beethoven and Shostakovich Oct. 14-17 in the Belding Theater at The Bushnell with director candidate, Kevin Rhodes and guest pianist Jeffrey Biegel, \$30-\$65, www.hartfordsymphony.org

Concerts at Infinity Hall, Route 44, 20 Greenwoods Road, Norfolk, 860-666-6306; Oct. 14, 8 p.m., Four Bitchin' Babes, rock; Oct. 15, 8 p.m., Bruce In The USA, tribute to Bruce Springsteen with Matt Ryan; Oct. 16, 8 p.m., Lucy Kaplansky, singer/songwriter; Oct. 17, 8 p.m., Acoustic Alchemy, smooth jazz; Oct. 20, 8 p.m., Jeff Daniels, singer/songwriter; Oct. 21, 8 p.m., Jake Shimabukuro, singer/songwriter; Oct. 22, 8 p.m., Celtic Crossroads, Celtic

"Equus" at Playhouse on Park, 244 Park Road, West Hartford, Thursday, Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, Oct. 15 and 16, 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Oct. 17 at 2 p.m., \$22.50-\$32.50, 860-523-5900, ext. 10, www.playhouseonpark.org

Hartt School calendar, University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford, 860-768-4228:

- Chamber Music Series, Thursday, Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m., Millard Auditorium, pre-concert dinner at 6 p.m., call the box office
- Hartt Symphony Band Friday, Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m., Millard Auditorium, "Celebrating the Americas," admission \$20
- Performance 20/20 Saturday, Oct. 16, 2 p.m., and Sunday, Oct. 17, 2 and 5 p.m., Berkman Recital Hall, free admission, seating limited
- Chamber Music Mid-Semester Concert, Monday, Oct. 18 and Tuesday, Oct. 19, p.m., Berkman Recital Hall, free admission, seating limited

Friday Night Out dinner Oct. 15, 5-7 p.m., North Canton Community United Methodist Church, North Canton, menu: ham, sweet potatoes, vegetable, beverage, homemade desserts, \$12/\$6, take-out available (860-693-4589)

Professional Jewish storyteller Cindy Rivka Marshall from Boston Friday, Oct. 15, 6:30 p.m., at Congregation Beth Israel, 701 Farmington Ave., West Hartford (860-233-8215)

Comedy at Trinity-On-Main, 69 Main St., New Britain, Friday, Oct. 15, 8 p.m., with Angel Salazaar, Rob Falcone and Artie Robb, tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, 860-229-2072

Curtis Brothers Quartet with special guest Donald Harrison Friday, Oct. 15, 8 p.m., at the Wadsworth Atheneum, 600 Main St., Hartford, \$15/\$10

Live music and comedy at **Bridge Street Live** at 41 Bridge St., Collinsville, www.41Bridge Street.com or 860-693-9762: Oct. 15, 8 p.m., Vic Henley with special guest Kenny Zimlinghaus, \$15/\$25; Oct. 21, 8 p.m., Holy Ghost Tent Revival; Oct. 23, 8 p.m., Judy Handler & Mark Levesque

Flamig Farm Halloween Hayrides Fridays and Saturdays Oct. 15, 16, 22 and 23, at Flamig Farm in West Simsbury call 860-658-5070 or go to www.flamigfarm.com for tickets

"Insignificance" at Hole in the Wall Theater, 116 Main St., New Britain, final performances Friday and Saturday, Oct. 15 and 16 at 8 p.m., call 860-229-3049, \$20 suggested donation - Roy Donnelly of Farmington portrays the Ballplayer

Apple Fest at St. Patrick Church in Collinsville on the Canton/Burlington town line Saturday, Oct. 16, noon-4 p.m. - homemade baked goods, crafts, tea cup auction, face painting, games, hot dogs and beverages for sale

Roaring Brook Concerts presents Don Sineti Saturday, Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m. at Roaring Brook Nature Center, 70 Gracey Road, Canton, \$15, 860-693-0263

Events at the Warner Theatre, 68 Main St., Torrington, 860-489-7180: Fridays and Sat-



Members of the band LittleHouse

Courtesy photos

Only in America: band in a barn makes a name for themselves

By Abigail Albair
Editor

Joe Patrina always thought he could write music, he just couldn't finish a song.

He started playing piano at age 7 and guitar at age 16. For the next 10 years he played lead guitar in local bands, searching to build up his songwriting skills. In 1979, Patrina left his home in Simsbury for New York City, where he developed the hugely successful and globally known software company, The Wall Street System.

In the 1990s, Patrina went down south to meet with Janette Carter, daughter of A.P. and Sara Carter; a member of the famed musical Carter family. She gave him some insight into what his songwriting was lacking.

"It took me another 10 years to sell the company," Patrina said.

But sell it he did.

He commented, "The company was really a success, but I did that because my songwriting was weak. I wasn't going to be as good as other bands when I was young."

After the company sold in 2006, "six months later I wrote this gorgeous song, then I wrote another. It's scary. You start to wonder, can you finish another? But I stumbled through the next year and really developed my skills," Patrina said.

In 2008, he came back home and founded LittleHouse, also known to locals as the band in the barn. Over the next year, Patrina renovated a barn on his property into a musical venue with hardwood floors, reinforced walls that can take the vibrations of rock music, a sound stage, lighting, multi-media visuals, and sofa and bench seating. "There's great sound in here," Patrina said while he spoke with The Valley Press, standing in the middle of the unique music-making space.

The barn only holds about 80 guests, and Patrina is hoping that the popularity of LittleHouse will rise enough that they can rent out larger performance spaces to put on shows; but they will always come back to the barn.

"Only America has rock bands, and like every band, we are self-made. Founding a band is being an entrepreneur; it's part of the American entrepreneurial system," Patrina said. "We hope to become a regional band and then a national band, but the barn shows will stay a special thing. We'll always do them."

There are eight members of the band of all ages, if you include the band's original drummer, now producer, who sometimes picks up the sticks again for a number or two.



Joe Patrina performs live.

"Right now, we seem to be quite a constellation," Patrina said. "Our music is a whole mixture. We're an encyclopedia of music styles, really. I listen to everything and everything is in our sound: rockabilly, rock, country, the Beatles era, the 70s era, blues, Elton John, the Eagles, honky tonk."

The band has played 36 performances in the barn since its founding and Patrina has written over 100 songs, eight of which made the cut for the band's first CD "Old School." "We call it 'Old School' because it is that kind of sound. There is a lot of Elvis in my voice on those songs," Patrina said.

The music gives off that old-school feeling of being rooted in music that is earnest and enduring, with strong harmonies, poetic lyrics and unfailing musical composition. Patrina described it as music that "harkens back."

Although the band is just working on building a wide-range following, they don't operate like a start-up, they've hit the ground running, working on a professional product with a professional team. "We have a sound guy, a multimedia guy, a photographer," Patrina explained as he gave The Valley Press a tour of the band's wardrobe and waiting area for pre-performance time.

Sitting on the front porch of his home, Patrina picked up his guitar and, beginning in a low Johnny Cash style voice, played a bit of a song he's working on.

He discussed the changes LittleHouse and the switch to a musical career have brought to his life. "I used to

have customers all over the world. I was going on two overseas trips a month for 15 years. I still work seven days a week, it's just a better seven days a week than my old job," he said.

Patrina writes roughly one song a week, though he knows many may never make it onto a CD or be performed. "We have about 50 recorded. We hope to release a second CD by the end of the year. The songs have to fit together to go together on the CD," he said. "In the end, the song is the big thing. The songwriters and the performers are the vehicles. You almost feel bad for it if it isn't performed."

As a songwriter, he also finds himself a writer of prose and books. He's put together a book on songwriting, which includes the dialogue from his encounter with Janette Carter. He took his wife and four children, the youngest of which is 11 and the oldest 17, on a trip to Russia over the summer and wrote a book about the experience. He hopes to use video he shot while there to complement the book as a complete multimedia package.

"I wrote a new song called 'Driving down to Moscow.' Through both that

and the book, it's like you're there with me," Patrina said.

For now, Patrina is putting his whole heart and soul into his songwriting and into making LittleHouse the sensation he knows it can be.

"We know we have to make a name for ourselves, start making some revenue to sustain the band or it will eventually die. We want to become a name, to perform in the big venues, but we will always be here," he said gesturing to the barn.

LittleHouse has performances scheduled throughout the fall and winter in the unique performance space. Shows will be Saturdays, Oct. 16 and 23; Nov. 6 and 20; Dec. 4 and Dec. 18 beginning at 6:30 p.m. For tickets or to view videos of live performances, log onto www.LittleHouselive.com.

"No one gets made famous, you make yourself famous. The Bob Dylans of the world are self-made, Elvis made himself what he was, people don't always realize that, but there is no magic moment when you're discovered. You have to make it for yourself," Patrina said. "We'll fight to keep the music alive."

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