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THE CONTRAMPTON DODGGC/ADDI NO DOG

Finalists Show Their 'Idol' Moves

One thing was made abundantly clea on Friday night: There are a lot of ex tremely talented singers in the Town of Southampton, And, thanks to Hampton Idol, lots of people—other than the usual friends and families—got to witness this plenitude and judge their gifts

Just as in the hit TV show; "Ameri can Idol," singers had to pass an audi-tion for the chance to compete in the And 13 event in February some 35 tioned at a marathon session held at the Southampton Cultural Center.

Auditions and intervious with notes that was cut together and aired during the break on Friday night. The audition film was created by Westhampton Beach student Anthony Arfi, who worked the sound board during the finals of the competition held at the Westhampton

Beach School District auditorium.

During the first round, each of the 18 contestants went up and sang his or her heart out. Each star was introduced by master of ceremonies Hernan Cordoba, a member of the Southampton Youth Bureau, which sponsored the event with Power Play Music in Westhampton Beach. In between acts, Mr. Cordoba provided witty patter a la Ryan Seacres the host of "American Idol."

Students selected and the schools they attend included: Jacqueline Saccente and Julian Dankner of Westbarreton Beach; and Kelsie Sanabria, Serina Booth Princilla Benavidor Printany To desco, Ashkey Bennett and Abigail Kray car all from Hampton Bass.

Also picked for the final round were: Southampton students Graham Suther-land Laura Mkolich Dakota Kalbacher Kristin Steinke and Alexandra Wilse Poter Cybulskifrom the Riverhead School District: Nicole Mahoney and Seneca Smith of Our Lady of the Hamptons; Ra-faela Gurtler of Pierson; and Nicholas

Casula of Eastport South Manor. The first half of the evening went smoothly, with all 18 contestants persmoothly, with all 18 contestants per-forming within an hour and a half. Songs performed included pop songs like "Black Horse and The Cherry Tree" by KT Turistall (Jacqueline Saccente), "Because You Lowed Me" by Celine Dion (Kristin Steinke), "Could've Been" by Mandy Moore (Aksandra Wilson) and "Unfaithful" popularized by Rihanna (Ashley Bennett).

Rock songs also made the bill. Graham authorland same "I Wass West To



The teenage singers at intermission during the Hampton Idol competition last Friday at the Westhampton Beach High School Auditorium. award top honors to one male and one

award top honors to one make and one female singer. In the confusion of the inaugural competition, doubt surfaced among the judges about whether only a single winner was supposed to be cho-

from "Bent" (Julian Dankner), "On My Own' from "Les Misérables" (Laura Nikolich), "For Good' from "Wicked" (Dukota Kalbacher) and "Cabaret" from the eponymous musical (Rafaela Gur-

Movie soundtracks also made the lineup: "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz" (Nicole Ma-hones), and "My Heart Will Go On" from "Titanic" (Priscilla Benavides). Jazz, bal-lads and classic songs were also on the

Not only did the students rise to the challenge of performing solo in front of nearly 300 people, they dressed the part. Many girls donned glittery dress-es or gowns. Others chose cutting-edge fashions. The males leaned toward the Steinke took first place for females. Secfashions. The males leaned toward the casual with most wearing jeans and a shirt that matched their personal per-formance style.

And performance was the name of the cole Mahoney. All the finalists received

dramatically while exploring the senti-mental ballad, "Dance With My Father."

Serina Booth spiced her performance of 'I'd Lie' with a few dance moves. Ni-

cole Mahoney, the youngest of the Idol contestants at 11, filled the auditorium

with her rendition of "Somewhere Over

the Rainbow," revealing a tremendous vocal instrument that belied her sixth

grade size and diminutive stature.

District intermission the trackets

Ms. Steinke was beaming after taking first place. "This is the best feeling," she game. Rafaela Gurtler conjured Broadway stars as she belted out a sultry and said. 'I had so much support. It's amazflirty version of "Cabaret" Prittany Tofilirty version of "Cabaret." Britismy Te-desco delivered a powerful version of "Before He Cheats" while purposefully striding across the stage. Peter Cybuk-ki covered the entire stage and gestured

was just as pleased with her experience. "I think it's been terrific," she said. "I thought I had no chance to win. I got up there and gave it my best shot. I'm very happy—singing is my love."

From an audience standpoint, the evening was very entertaining.

Westhampton Beach High School stu-dents Angelina Modica, Kevin DeVivo, Leanna Ozman and Josh Colbert turned out to check out the event. They knew one student from their school who was Mr. Colbert appreciated the way Mr. Cordoba emceed the event and the use of phrases that contured "American "I though be did a great Seacrest." Mr.

son from all the contestants When the dust had settled, only one male contestant had made the cut, leav-ing no doubt who the eventual male winner would be. The way the male selection unfolded increased the competi-tion in the female category. For the final round, each competi-tor sang a second song. Peter Cybuls-

Toni Arfi, owner of Power Play Music and a primary sponsor of the event, said he was impressed with the perform-ers and thought their first Hampton Idol unfolded nicely, despite the selection snag. I thought there was a big improvement from the auditions to tokt won first place for males and Eristin night," Mr. Arfi said. "You could see that they put in some time in preparing ... and placement to Ashley Permett Third I'm happy and proud to be part of this. I hope it continues and people can look place was tied between Kelsie Sanabria and Brittany Todosco, Fourth place was forward to it every year.

forward to it every year."

Nancy Lynott, director of the Town of
Southampton Youth Bureau, gave kudes
to the student-organized event. Mem-bers of the Youth Advisory Committee came up with the idea for Hampton Idol, helped pick the finalists, and basically ran the Hampton Idol competi-tion. Their tasks included production, stage managing, sound board, hair and make-up for singers, plus setup and breakdown.

The evening also included a perfor-mance by A+G Dance Company, Prizes were donated by Power Play Music Harbor Music Shop, Thunderhoof Productions, Bay Street Theatre, Guild Hall Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center and others. Services and staging were donated by area businesses and Westhampton Beach schools. The three judges were Toni Arfi, Jan Hanna co.cemer of Black Shoon Tolovi.

Leung's Mastery Goes Way Beyond Gaming

By Fred Volkmer Martin Loung, the featured performer

at last Saturday evening's piano recital at the Southampton Cultural Center, has achieved a certain amount of famon the internet as the "Video Game Pianist" also as the "Blindfolded Video Game Planist," and, if you do a Google search for him, you will find more than

31,000 references to him on the web. He has an extensive article devoted to him on Wikipedia, the online ency-clopedia. He was launched into celebriby at age 17 the is now 20 by a video clip of him playing, blindfolded, the theme of "Super Mario Brothers," a clip that has been viewed on YouTube more than one million times. He performs all over the country and throughout Eurone playing the music of video games. At one video game performance he was encouraged to give 21 encores.

But Mr. Leung is also a serious clas-sical musician. He is a student of Paul Schenly at the Cleveland Institute of Music and has been a participant in Pi-anofest for the last two summers. His performance on Saturday certainly dug deep into the classical reportoire.

Colbert said. 'He was excellent. He kept it really lively.' The Cultural Center's performance space, known as the Levitas Center for Toni Arfi, owner of Power Play Music the Performing Arts, is probably the finast on the East End, though it is cer-tainly intimate. It was designed by the late Michael Tortorice, a member of the Cultural Center's Board, with the acoustical advice of Norman Pickering. The Cultural Center's series of classical piano recitals has been a very imrtant part of the East End's musical life for the past four seasons, organized and presented by Liliane Questel, a member of the Cultural Center board

and a classical planist. Mr. Leung began his program with Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13, the "Pathétique." The piece opens with a grand rhe-torical statement, marked grave. This is heaven-storming Beethoven. It de-lays the fewerish body of the first movement, but fragments of that powerful

Some consolation is offered in the second movement, marked andante second incoverient, marked anadame cantable. And the final prestor move-ment provides some sense of post-tive affirmation. The fleet-fingered Mr. Leung gave a thoughtful and compel-ling interpretation of this, one of the great masterworks of the piano literature. One felt dramatic power, sensitive nuance, and moments of sheer poetry.

The central nortion of his recital was

CRITIC AT LARGE

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world's store of beauty, a beauty that the world has alverys so desperately

needed.

The "Lyric Pieces" are little minia-tures, heavily influenced by Schumann, and are delightful for their inwardness and user syrka expressions. The is especially true of the 'Arietta' and the 'Berceuse' on Mr. Leung's program. Then, there were those pieces, like 'Elf-entarz' ('Jurne of the Elves) and 'Zug der Zwerge' (March of the Trolls) filled with echees of Norway's follow, in with echoes of Norway's follsom, in which trolls and elves play a large part. These require the kind of knuckle-busting technique of which Mr. Leung had so much to spare. He concluded with "Hochzeitstag auf Troldhaugen", ("Wedding Day at Troldhaugen"), which was rapturously joyous and completely engaging. Tokthaugen, Grieg's country home, is translated as "Troll's Hill."

Mr. Leung closed the program with Chopins Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise, Op. 22. The polonaise was originally written with orchestral ac companiment, but Chopin wrote this second version for solo plane. And, in fact, the orchestral writing is so spare that many feel it isn't necessary.

The Spianato was written after the pelonaise and grafted on. It is a wonderfully poetic work and Mr. Leung draw out of it all of its exquisite beauty. The relegate was full of glitter and na

The polonate was full of glitter and na-tionalistic feeling.

Mr. Leung, such was his good nature, took a request from one young member of the audience to play "Halo," which is the music from a video game. I have to confess that I liked it. He closed with the Lizst Transcendental Etude No. 10

in Finince.

Mr. Leung gave a colorful performance, varied and played with an astonishing technical assurance. In the Beethoven he reached into the depths of the plano for the sublime and brought out the intimations of it that the audi ence expected.

In the Grieg he found wit, tender-ness, and moments of the grotesque; in the Chopin he served up a heart-onthe-sleeve romanticism. And his video game music is an indicastion that he is more than a little playful. He is clearly a plan ist to watch.

This was the final performance by a

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