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ON THE WEB

October 5, 2003, Sunday

WESTCHESTER WEEKLY DESK

From Local Artists, CD's to Tease the Ear

By **SUSAN HODARA (NYT)**

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.... Quitting Her Day Job

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'A Woman's Love'

Vaneese Thomas, who lives in Pound Ridge, is an accomplished performer, songwriter, producer and actress. Her latest CD, "A Woman's Love," which she describes as "smooth jazz," showcases her talents as a vocalist. Released in August, it is the first offering from Segue Records (www.seguerecords.com), the label she established with her husband, Wayne Warnecke, a producer.

It is, she said, "a blend of all the influences I've been exposed to."

Since she is a daughter of Rufus Thomas, the R&B singer known for his 1960's hits including "Do the Funky Chicken," and the sister of the soul singer Carla Thomas, that means R&B, gospel, blues and jazz. The result is a mix of love songs delivered by Ms. Thomas's sometimes silky, sometimes robust, always soulful voice.

In 1987, Ms. Thomas made the Top 10 with the R&B number "Let's Talk It Over," and has since worked with performers like Sting, Luciano Pavarotti, Eric Clapton and B.B. King. Additional credits include movie soundtracks ("Mighty Aphrodite," "The First Wives Club" and the Oscar-nominated "Seraglio") and television appearances (as Grace the Bass on "Shining Time Station" and as the voice of Clio in Disney's "Hercules"). Ms. Thomas, also a keyboardist, is joined by other Westchester talent on "A Woman's Love," including Gil Parris of Ardsley and Nick Moroch of Yonkers, both on guitar, and Michael Colina of Bedford on keyboard and strings. The CD was recorded at Wayne's World, the studio Ms. Thomas and Mr. Warnecke built on their Pound Ridge property.

'A Thousand Years of Peace'

Recognizable by his ever-present wide-brimmed gray hat, Nenad Bach hails from Croatia, where he studied civil engineering until, entranced by rock 'n' roll, he emigrated to the United States in 1984. After 11 years in Irvington, Mr. Bach moved last year to Croton-on-Hudson, where he lives with his wife and their three children.

He entered the public eye in 1992 when he gathered a group of performers, including the Indigo Girls, Richie Havens, the former Band members Garth Hudson and Rick Danko, John Malkovich, Ellen Burstyn and others, to record his song "Can We Go Higher?" to benefit victims of the war in Croatia and Bosnia. He appeared at Woodstock 1994, and in '95, performed "Can We Go Higher?" at a benefit in Italy, joined by Luciano Pavarotti, Bono and Edge of U2, and others.

"A Thousand Years of Peace," which includes two versions of "Can We Go Higher?" and 12 additional songs written by Mr. Bach, features Mr. Bach on vocals (sounding like a cross between Lou Reed and Elton John with an Eastern European accent), guitar, harmonica and keyboard. Its songs blend a variety of sounds, including the tamburitza, a stringed instrument native to Croatia, and a seven-members boys' choir, to produce melodious rock with an ethnic tinge.

Mr. Bach (www.nenadbach.com) is accompanied by guest artists like Garth Hudson, Michael York and Martin Sheen. Local contributors are Diane Cricchio, of Yorktown Heights, who shot the CD cover photo and sings backup; Richard

Lindsay, a bass player from Hastings-on-Hudson; Michael O'Keefe, a drummer and cover designer from Lindolndale; David Amram of Putnam Valley; and the boys' choir, whose members come from Hastings, Dobbs Ferry and Irvington.

Piano Man

Joshua Pierce, a native of Ossining who now splits his time between White Plains and Manhattan, has interpreted both classic and contemporary piano compositions for audiences internationally, and in May, released his 44th CD. "For the Fun of It All," on Kleos Classics, contains seven selections, ranging from the uncut 1924 version of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," to Frederick Chopin's 1828 "Variations on Mozart's 'La ci darem la mano' (Op. 2)" to the world premiere recording of "Ragtime Caprice, (Op. 65)," composed in 1976 by Paul Turok. He is accompanied by the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra of Bratislava, conducted by Kirk Trevor.

Mr. Pierce gained his reputation as an interpreter of contemporary music from his 20-year association with the composer John Cage. He has also recorded numerous classical piano concertos, and has been nominated for multiple Grammy awards. (www.jamesarts.com/pierce).

Going Independent

Matt Turk grew up in Armonk, exposed to music and art from his earliest years by his grandmother, a sculptor; his mother, a photographer and pianist; and his older brother, who played guitar. "What Gives" is his second CD, recorded on his own label, Turktunes, and released in June (www.turktunes.com). Its 11 tracks of heartfelt roots-rock reveal influences from Pete Seeger, with whom he spent two years playing and touring, and other artists with whom he has shared a stage, including Dave Matthews, Fiona Apple and Jeff Buckley.

"What Gives" was recorded at area studios; among Mr. Turk's team are local residents Kevin Hupp, producer and percussionist, of Brewster; Saul Zonana, keyboardist, Croton Falls; and Peter Moshay, of Pawling, who mixed the CD. Mr. Turk, who plays guitar, harmonica and mandolin, has performed at Clearwater's Hudson River Revival and a variety of locations here and around the globe, and is playing a number of clubs in the tri-state area this fall. Of his indie label and the self-promotion it requires, he said, "I'm counting on people's intelligence and good taste."

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Lyrics for Women

Julia Douglass, a folk singer and songwriter in the footsteps of Lucinda Williams and Marianne Faithfull, wrote the eight tracks on her new CD, "In Scarsdale," while still living in Manhattan. Now a two-year Bronxville resident, Ms. Douglass was a classical French horn player until she opted for guitar and the folk scene more than a decade ago. Her songs, she said, "are written for my contemporaries -- educated women over 35 -- who appreciate lyric-oriented music." On "In Scarsdale," the album's title track, she sings about a woman "living in Scarsdale car-pooling in pajamas" who misses her friend in the city. On other tracks, she looks with a sharp eye at characters like a middle-aged man starting a new family and a woman who talks too much. "In Scarsdale," released in May, is Ms. Douglass's second CD, and the first recorded on her Bronxville-based label, Smirk Records. It was produced by Steve Addabbo, a Hastings-on-Hudson resident, who accompanies Ms. Douglass on guitar. (www.juliadouglass.com)