

Stewart Francke rocks with the Wheel of Life

BY KEELY KALESKI
STAFF WRITER

Stewart Francke is resuming his life, doing what he likes best — making music. "Wheel of Life is Francke's eighth CD in eight years. "I think it's some of my best work," he said. "It kind of approaches a lot of different places and people. It rocks pretty good. "I lost the feeling of squeezing my life tightly; goes the title track. "The cost of healing comes upon me nightly. I've tossed the wheel through wind and rain... It's frightening, but I found faith on the wheel of life. "He's a survivor, ready to move on.

"You can't be in a constant state of survival," Francke said. After being diagnosed with leukemia in June 1998, he established the Stewart Francke Leukemia Foundation and had a successful stem-cell transplant in October 1998. The foundation raised awareness of leukemia and helped people living with the disease and those seeking bone marrow matches. Disbanded this year, the foundation has raised almost \$150,000 and given nearly \$100,000 to the Karmanos Cancer Institute, Children's Leukemia Foundation and Guilda's Club. "It's not what happens to you, it's how you handle it that defines you," Francke said. "I've gone through this, but I want to

get back into the pendulum of life. The musical motif of this CD is there's a lot of good/evil, dark/light. I want people to know — here's what I've been thinking about — I'm just a regular guy." He is an examined life, an artistic life. He's a singer/songwriter who "works hard to be an accomplished musician," and plays guitar, bass and piano. "Part of surviving is maintaining rhythm, even if it's an illusion," he said. "These are ongoing conversations between myself and the audience. I want to do shorter records more frequently. Here's what I have to say, check this out, what do you think?" Francke wants to be entertaining, play music that moves,

books, makes you think. He aspires to reach a large audience, works to get his records out and is talking to a distributor in London that's urging him to bring the band to market. He reads a lot. Raymond Carver, Rick Bass, Jim Harrison and John Updike are among his favorite authors. "I love keeping my ear to the ground, listening to conversations. I listen to music all day — from Bob Dylan, Marvin Gaye, Joni Mitchell. "The music business is a difficult business, it's hard to get radio on your side, but Francke is optimistic and hopeful. "It's a pretty good job making music," he said. "I'll follow that Bethlehem star and get better at what I do."

Use filters to make the ordinary extraordinary

There are countless types of filters on the market, many of which are outrageous and needless. But certain filters, used properly, can be important additions to your photo accessories. They can turn an ordinary picture into something quite special. Today, I'm going to discuss the five essential filters for color film, the ones I feel you can put to good use to help get rave reviews for your photos.

Focus on Photography

Monte Nagler



While reproduced here in black and white, Monte Nagler effectively used a polarizer filter to darken the blue of the sky and add drama to this photograph taken at Window Rock, Arizona.

Diffusion filters are available in a variety of strengths from a very slight softening effect to extreme diffusion. Close-up — Most lenses can't focus as close as a couple of feet so if you want to produce some good, close-ups of flowers, you're just out of luck. A simple solution is a set of close-up filters. It's like placing a magnifying glass on your camera. Sound exciting? It is! Close-up filters come in sets of three allowing you to select whatever strength works best for you. Colored filters — Orange, red, magenta, any color you want is available. Colored filters can be used to really spruce up a sunrise or sunset by adding the filter color to the overall scene. For best results, use slide film and be sure to bracket your exposure. There you have it. These five filters will help to dramatically improve your photographs. Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by dialing (313)953-2047 on a touch tone phone.

ADDITIONS/OPPORTUNITIES

Avon Players
Auditions for *I Hate Hamlet* 6 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the theater, 1185 Washington Road, one mile east of the intersection of Ferhman and Rochester roads, Rochester Hills. Show dates are Feb. 28 to March 15. Call (248) 696-9077 or visit the Web site at www.avonplayers.org.

Deborah's Stage Door
Auditions for senior show choir (ages 13 and older), junior acting conservatory (ages 7-10), advanced acting conservatory (ages 12 and older), children, junior and senior ballet companies, and competition dance lines (ages 5 and older), at the studio in Rochester Hills. (248) 852-8133

Farmington Community Chorus
Chorus will hold new member auditions for its spring session, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 7 and 14, at the William Cottle Activities Center on T. Mile east of Middlebelt, Farmington Hills. Accepting members age 19 and older. Call (248) 471-4516.

Franklin Village Band
Adult musicians from southeastern Michigan may join the Franklin Village Band. All instruments welcome, and there is a special need for flutes and clarinets. The band rehearses Monday evenings in the Franklin Community Church social hall on Franklin Road, Can.

Bill Pisk, (248) 474-8869, or Bob Zimmerman, (313) 535-4179.

Livonia Civic Chorus
Looking for people who love to sing and dance for spring concert featuring the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber, basses, tenors, alto to the part in solos, ensembles, dance numbers, and the general chorus, auditions are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14, in the choral room at Frost Middle School, 14041 Stark. Call (734) 422-7539.

Livonia Youth Choir
Auditions for girls and boys (ages 9-13 in grades four-eight) residing in Livonia and surrounding communities 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8, boys must have unchanged voices, no appointment necessary, rehearsals begin Monday, Jan. 13. Due to a major change in the structure of the choir, rehearsal groups will be divided along age lines. It will still be one choir that will present concerts together but rehearse separately. For more information or if you can't make the scheduled audition time, call (734) 425-1749.

Novi Civic Center
Auditions for *Annie*, 4:30-7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 4, and *Chicago*, Feb. 6. Check-in starts at 4 p.m. Actors, ages 7 through college age, may audition at 4575 W. 10 Mile. Audition packets available Tuesday, Jan. 7, at the Novi Parks and Recreation

desk, (248) 347-0400.

Oakland County Office of Arts, Culture & Film
Seeking proposals from Michigan artists for fine arts exhibition in the Oakland County Galleria, second floor of the executive building, 2500 N. Telegraph, Pontiac. (248) 859-0415.

Plymouth Oratorio Society
Rehearsals begin 7:15 p.m. Monday, Jan. 6, selected works are Brahms *Requiem* and Rutter's *O Praise the Lord*; no auditions required, scores may be purchased at first rehearsal, at Grace Lutheran Church, 6600 Warren, west of Canton Center Road, Canton. For performance Sunday, May 19, at First United Methodist Church in Plymouth. (734) 455-8353.

Plymouth Symphony
Deadline for Treasures Beyond Measure Youth Artist Competition is Jan. 24. Applications available through the Plymouth Symphony. Call (734) 451-2102 for divisions and any additional information. Web site is www.plymouthsymphony.org.

Southfield Presbyterian Church
The directors of *Feeling at the Blues* (A Tribute to Bessie Smith) and Dance Theater of Michigan are auditioning for dancers, singers, musicians, actors and comedians. 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11, 19 and 25, 21575 W. 10 Mile, Southfield, call (248) 552-5001 or (248) 942-3243 for

audition appointments and directions.

The Community House
Auditions for *The Jungle Book* 5-8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11, a one-minute monologue (not necessarily memorized) and a few bars of a favorite song with music will be required, at 380 S. Bates, Birmingham. Call (248) 644-5832 for an audition time or more information. Rehearsals begin 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18, at First Baptist Church in Birmingham. There will be a \$135 fee for actors who are selected.

Village Players
Auditions for *Cyrano De Bergerac* 7:30 p.m. Sunday/Monday, Jan. 26-27, at the playhouse, 34660 Woodward, Birmingham. For performances March 14-23, (248) 649-1874.

The Vocal Arts Ensemble of Michigan
A working a cappella Renaissance group in its 11th year is holding auditions for alto, tenor and bass voices. The repertoire is both sacred and secular and interactive with audiences. Call Cindy Keleman at (734) 941-5955 for audition dates.

COLUMBIA ARTISTS PROUDLY PRESENTS
Andrew S. Grossman, producer
GREAT BRITAIN SALUTES THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

FEATURING
THE BAND OF THE GRENADEER GUARDS
AND
THE PIPES AND DRUMS AND DANCERS OF THE SCOTS HIGHLANDERS
(SCOTTISH, GRENADIAN AND CANADIAN)

A BRITISH SPECTACULAR WITH MUSIC OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, IRELAND, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WITH PRECISION MARCHING, DRUMMING AND HIGHLAND DANCING

DETROIT OPERA HOUSE
Sunday, February 9, 2003, 3:00 p.m.
Group Sales Info: (313) 237-3409
Ticketmaster or Call: (248) 645-6666

WJR

2nd Annual Lessons in Love Contest

WIN a romantic evening THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

In 100 words or less, tell us your romantic (or funny!) wedding proposal and you could be one of two lucky couples to receive:

- Transportation, compliments of J.R. Tours, Inc. of Novi
- A dozen red roses from Wesley Berry Florist of West Bloomfield
- A romantic dinner for two at Little Italy in Northville
- Candy from Kilwin's in Birmingham
- A \$250 gift coin from Orin Jewelers of Northville and Garden City
- One-night stay at Fraser Inn of Northville
- Two tickets to the February 13 Red Wing game

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO:
"Lessons in Love Contest"
Cathy Young
Promotion Manager
Phone: 734-953-2155
Observer & Eccentric
Newspapers
36251 Schoolcraft,
Livonia, MI 48150
e-mail:
cyoung@oe.homecomm.net
Fax:
734-953-2232

RULES:
Entries must be received by Friday, January 24, 2003
Entries must be 18 years old
Entries must be 100 words or less
Entries must include name, age, address, phone, e-mail
Employees of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and Olympia Entertainment are ineligible

Winning couples will be announced in your hometown newspaper Thursday, January 30.

J.R. Tours, Wesley Berry Towers, The Fraser Inn, and other sponsors.