Westminster preps for holiday concerts
By Madeleine Johnson

With end-of-the-semester stress often overshadowing holiday cheer, Westminster Choir College’s (WCC) month-long celebration just may be able to make this time of year a little more joyous for frazzled students.

WCC will offer an array of traditional and non-traditional performances throughout the remainder of the semester. According to Anne Sears, the Director of WCC External Affairs, the holiday performances this season are varied enough to appeal to every taste.

"There’s something for everyone," she said. "We have a broad range of music offered at the highest levels of performance.".oracle: times";

"The season kicks off with Cool Yule Jazz II, tonight at 8 p.m. in the Bristol Chapel. Philip Orr, piano; Jerry Riff, clarinet; Edward Taylor, drums; and Roy Cunning, bass, will all perform Christmas standards that cover the entire jazz movement."

On Saturday, Dec. 4, the Westminster Concert Bell Choir will present the first of its three concerts. The following two performances will be on Sunday, Dec. 5. All three of the concerts will be performed in the Bristol Chapel.

"The bell choir uses the largest set of handbells in the world," Sears said. "It’s a different kind of performance. It’s aural and visual.

Freshman Zach Aguanno, a member of the handbell choir, said that the performance is exciting and the bells alone are enough to make anyone smile.

"It’s a great experience and if you’ve never seen handbells before, they really are quite impressive," Aguanno said. "The sheer size of the bells are a thing to reckon with."

For those who have heard enough Christmas carols, the Westminster Opera Theater will put on four performances of Hansel and Gretel in The Playhouse. The show will run for four days, beginning on Friday, Dec. 10 and will run through Sunday, Dec. 12.

"Most adults love opera and it’s a good show for children," Sears said. "It’s a story all children know, even if it is kind of scary.

The first of two evenings of readings and carols also begins on Friday, Dec. 10 and continues on Saturday, Dec. 11, though the Saturday performance has a limited number of tickets available. The "pageantry" will take place in the Princeton University Chapel and includes singing choirs, a brass section, dramatic lighting and readings by two students and President Rozenzweig.

Rider senior Justin Beezer will read a selection from Langston Hughes’ "Star.


Instead of pulling all-nighters to get on the Dean’s list, take some time out to tap into the memories of December’s scenery, and exquisite dancing by ARB company members.

"It is a lot of fun for us and the kids," said Kanavel.

Vaccaro agreed. "This adaptation of Nutcracker is a magical experience with an updated story line, beautiful sets and scenery, and exquisite dancing by ARB company members," she said.

Students, adults and children will all enjoy this new production, Nolen says, because it gives "the traditional ballet a new twist that allows the viewer to see the talent of the dancers on the stage as well as retaining the mystical, fantasy land that audiences have come to know and love.

ARB is the dance company associated with both the Rider University and the Princeton Ballet School. The Nutcracker is performed during the week for public school students. There will be one performance in Trenton’s War Memorial Patriot Theater, and two at the State Theater in New Jersey in New Brunswick.

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Kanavel, who dances for the ARB workshop’s second company, can be seen in Act I dancing as Nanny in the party scene and as a BonBon in Act 2. She is also one of the Russian dancers and an understudy for the company’s Wals of the Flowers.

"It is a lot of work and preparation but it is also a lot of fun," said Kanavel.

Nolen can be seen dancing as a BonBon. Performances are held Sunday, Dec. 5, at 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at Trenton’s War Memorial Patriot Theater; and Dec. 18 and 19 at 1 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.