

DVD releases

(continued from Restaurant page)

reminiscent of those black-and-white Universal horror films of the 1930s -- a del Toro inspiration. In Spanish and English with English subtitles, "Cronos" comes with a booklet featuring a critical essay and excerpts from del Toro's notes for the film.

"Restrepo" (Virgil Entertainment) is a documentary that takes a close-up look at men and women on the front lines in war. For over a year, two journalists on assignment for "Vanity Fair" and ABC News, hooked up with the Second Platoon of Battle Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade, in the remote valley of Korengal in Afghanistan. The goal was to document the soldiers' day-to-day lives. There was no political agenda and the filmmakers did not question the necessity of maintaining a presence in a dangerous war zone. They didn't speak to generals or editorialize on what they observed. There is no narration.

What makes this 93-minute documentary so captivating is the often matter-of-fact way the soldiers go about their duties. The drama comes from the ever-present danger of enemy fire, and the film does chronicle a lengthy firefight. One of the most gripping sequences shows the platoon doing a walkthrough of a village after an air strike. As the soldiers walk down the deserted

streets, there is the very real danger of ambush, yet they proceed, determined to secure the village.

In the 1960s, the evening TV news would show footage of men in the jungles of Vietnam searching for the enemy, exchanging fire with them, or simply coping with nature. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have not been documented as widely, so a movie like "Restrepo" is all the more valuable in illustrating the pressures, boredom, backbreaking labor, camaraderie, and danger faced by Americans in uniform. Whatever your feelings about war in general or the Afghanistan war in particular, "Restrepo," available in Blu-ray and DVD formats, will bring home what it is to be a soldier in wartime.

Two titles in the "America's Music Legacy" series (MVD Visual) offer performances in the folk and blues genres. The folk release features the Limelickers, Buffy Saint Marie, Glenn Yarbrough, the New Christy Minstrels, Odetta, Doc Watson, Dave Van Ronk, and Theodore Bikel, and such folk standards as "Frankie & Johnny," "Cripple Creek," "This Land Is Your Land," "Greenback Dollar," and "Time in a Bottle."

The Blues DVD contains film clips of Count Basie, Big Joe Turner, Mamie Smith, and Bessie Smith. Other featured performers are B.B. King, Linda Hopkins, Joe Williams, Esther Phillips, Buddy Guy, Paula Kelly, and Ernie Andrews. The song lineup includes "St. Louis Blues," "Stormy Monday," "Life Is a Gamble," "Who's Lovin' You Tonight?" and "After Hours," "Jammin' the Blues," and "Cherry Red." Brock Peters hosts.

'Les Miserables'

(continued from Entertainment page.)
emotion or compassion.

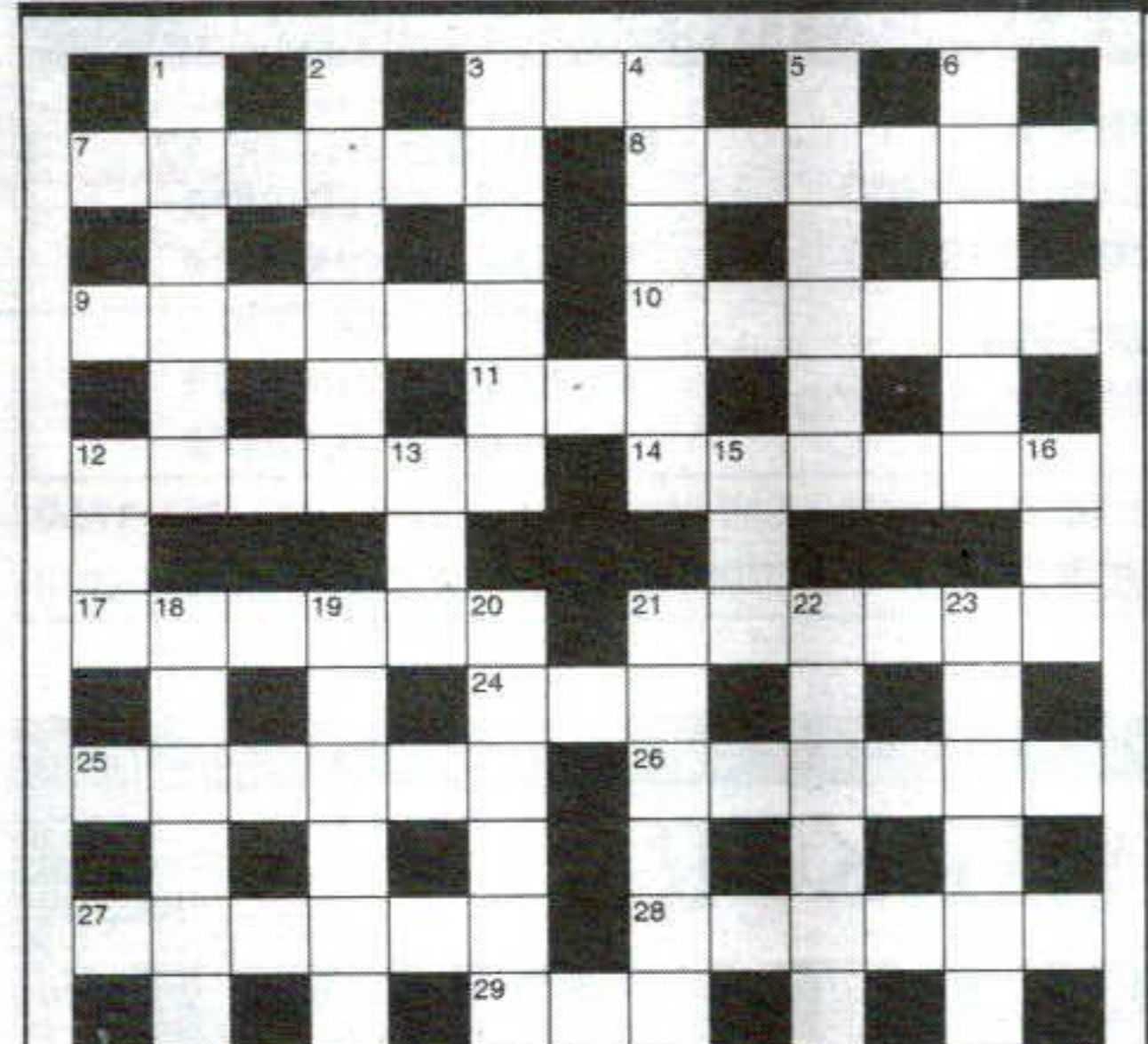
A character I had not remembered from the original Broadway production was appropriately showcased in the Paper Mill show. Enjolras is a young student who intends to face injustice head-on, and leads a rebellion. He knows the risks, the dangers, and the possibility of dying for a cause, yet he perseveres, inspiring his fellow students, including Marius. Hays has a face of youthful innocence and unswerving resolve, and a stirring way with a song.

The best known songs from "Les Miserables" are "I Dreamed a Dream," performed by Fantine, "One Day More," sung with bravado by a chorus of idealistic student revolutionaries, and "Who Am I?" and "Bring Him

Home," both sung by Valjean. It's fascinating to experience how the lyrics and music carry such a complex story forward as they elicit an emotional response. There is little dialogue. The audience cares about the characters because of what is learned from the songs. "Les Miserables" is musical theater, if not traditional musical comedy, but also owes a lot to opera.

The set design by Matt Kinley incorporates projections that stand in for Paris streets and sewers and create the illusion of an enormous space, moving as the actors move, giving the stage a bit of motion-picture feel, and expanding the limitations of the stage.

"Les Miserables" will run through Dec. 30. The performance schedule is Wednesday at 7 p.m., Thursday at 1:30 and 7 p.m., Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 1:30 and 7 p.m., and Sundays at 1:30 and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 to \$92 and may be ordered by phone at (973) 376-4343, online at www.papermill.org, or at the Paper Mill Playhouse's box office on Brookside Drive in Millburn.

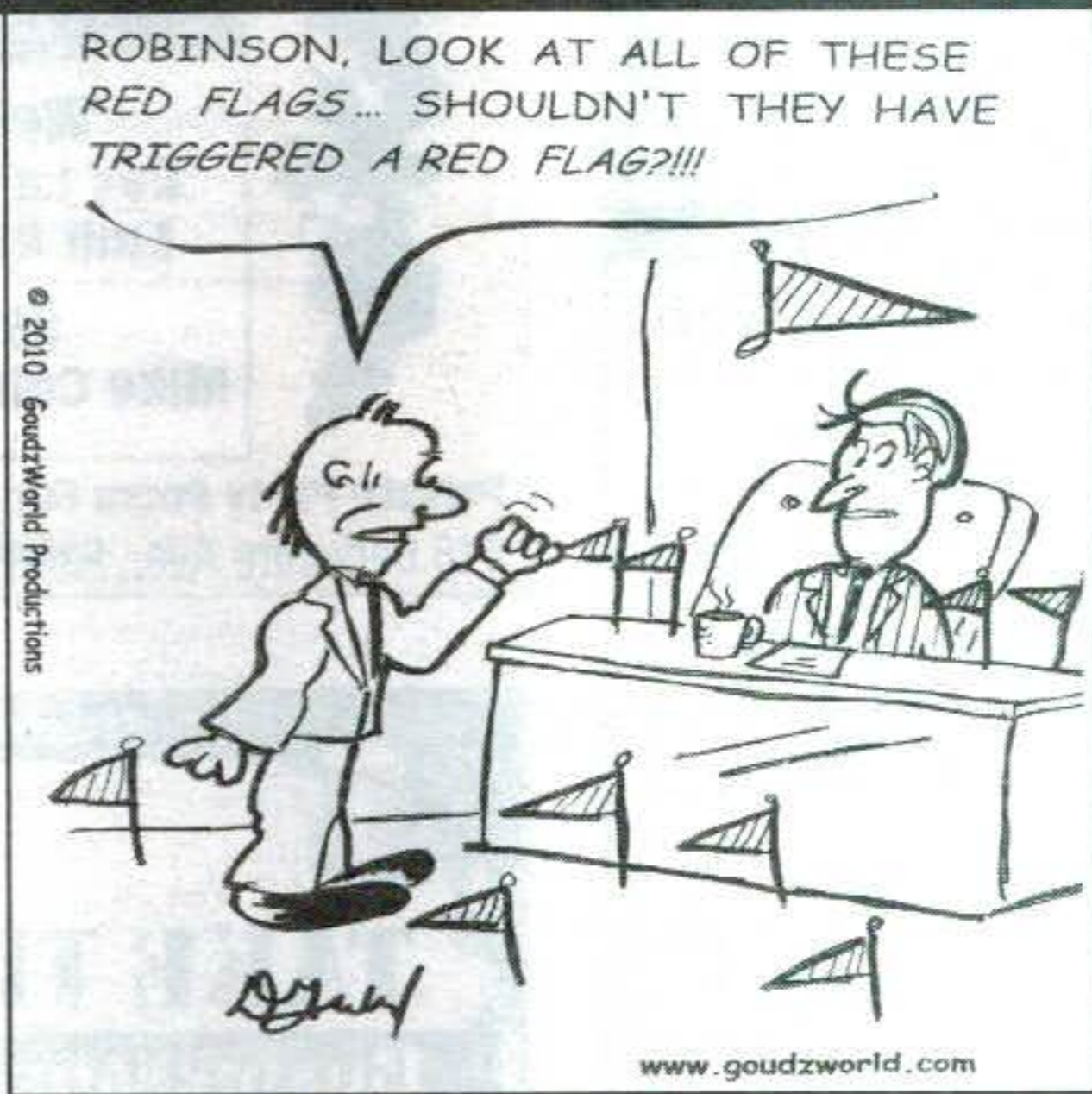


CLUES ACROSS

CLUES DOWN

- 3. Follows Sigma
- 7. React in a certain way
- 8. Clipped

- 1. Jelly ingredient
- 2. Animals sought for their fur



— Answer to Last Week's Puzzle —

SOLUTIONS ACROSS SOLUTIONS DOWN