

FAIR LAWN COMMUNITY NEWS



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NJTV

Musician's videos appearing on TV

BY TRACEY PUTRINO
Managing Editor

FAIR LAWN – Between favorites like Elmo on “Sesame Street” and Curious George, children’s videos featuring a Fair Lawn native are now playing on NJTV.

Meredith LeVande’s “Monkey Monkey Music” videos are airing throughout the day between children’s programming on the public television station NJTV, the network operated by WNET that replaced NJN last month.

“It was very emotional for me,” said LeVande, who now lives in New York City, about her videos appearing in her hometown.

The Fair Lawn High School graduate grew up in the borough where she was raised by her grandmother.

“As a child I always loved to sing,” said LeVande.

LeVande went on to earn undergraduate degrees in Women’s Studies and English. She also has a master’s degree in music as well as a law degree. While she might have been expected to embark into a more traditional career path in those fields, “It wasn’t me at all,” said LeVande, who became a singer and songwriter.

Initially doing that still did not seem like a perfect fit either until she found her niche after playing traditional children’s songs at a show.

“One day I had to do a show and there were a lot of kids there,” she said, later adding, “I just really loved it. I connected to it.”

Three years later she released her first album, “Monkey Monkey Music with Meredith LeVande.” Her second CD, “What Are the Odds?,” was released in 2010. Later that year a DVD, “Monkey Monkey Music: The Videos with Meredith LeVande,” featured



PHOTO COURTESY OF GAETANO SALVADORE

Children’s videos by singer and songwriter Meredith LeVande, a Fair Lawn High School graduate, are now airing on NJTV.

videos of the songs from her first album.

The 15 videos from her DVD as well as one for the song “What Are the Odds?,” about odd numbers to nine, are playing on public television stations across the country. KCET in Los Angeles began airing the videos first. They currently air on 20 stations with it increasing to 50 soon.

“I really put a lot of time and thought into every shot in the videos,” said LeVande, who is featured in them often with her guitar in hand combining live action and colorful animation.

The first video to air on NJTV was her song “Where is it?” LeVande noted this was especially meaningful to her since her late grandmother’s chair is featured in the video.

“I felt a strong connection,” said LeVande.

While the videos airing on NJTV

do not say who LeVande is, on other stations that do include her name she has noticed an increase in web traffic in those areas so she knows her work is sparking the interest of viewers.

“It is about keeping the kids engaged,” said LeVande, calling herself a “child-centric performer” who wants to connect with them.

LeVande said her music resonates with children because she focuses on what is engaging, what interests them and what is developmentally appropriate.

Working with children for 10 years has given her the perspective to know what is going to work. LeVande taught Mommy & Me classes using her own music, which gave her a chance to see how both children and their parents responded. Majority of her experience with children also comes from entertaining at more than 600 birthday parties over the years.

“You hone what works and what doesn’t,” she said.

LeVande’s songs encourage children to get up, dance and sing along to the upbeat tunes such as “Jump High,” “Hello” and “Opposites.” Others give children a chance to explore and use their imagination.

She is currently working on three new projects – a book with a song, a DVD and a CD. While her music and entertaining keeps her busy, LeVande finds her way back the borough.

“I go to Fair Lawn quite a bit,” said LeVande, who has friends who live in the area.

To listen to LeVande’s songs and watch some of her videos, visit www.monkeymonkeymusic.com.

E-mail: putrino@northjersey.com