

COVER STORY:
A NEW 'DAY'
Irish import Solas An Lae is giving Riverdance a run for the money and taking the Hudson Valley by storm. Priscilla Corbin

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It takes something special to balance the blues and Boy takes it all in.

## ASCENDING CHORDS

Scouts, Rebecca Whalen finds.
HOLIDAY TRIMMINGS
Kim Gaffney turns her attention to the intricacies of holiday decorating on a grand scale at local historical sites.

## SINGLES SEEN

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# ASCENDING CHORDS A YOUNG MUSICIAN HITS THE RIGHT NOTES. <br> by Rebecca Whalen 



Myles Mancuso is on a musical journey that began four years ago at a piano keyboard. The 9 -year-old's amazing piano skills were first exhibited at age 5 . His dad, Nick, figured Myles would pursue piano lessons to extend his musical abilities.
While Myles continued to tickle the ivories, he also asked for a bass guitar.
"I kept saying 'no," says Nick. "He was doing great on the piano. I thought he should focus his energy on that."
One day, Myles' grandmother, Millie, took Myles out on a shopping trip. They arrived home with Myles' first bass guitar. While unsure the instrument was a good investment, Nick supported his son's guitar interest.



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Since then, it has been a blues progression.
Fifth-grader Mylec, a Poughquag resident, jams whenever possible with musicians of all ranks and experiences. Among his favorite musical counterparts are Levon Helm, former drummer of The Rand, and pioneering guitar legend Les Paul.
"Levon taught me about roots music," says Myles.

Myles has played bass with Helm at his studio in Woodstock, at a performance in Rosendale and at John Jay High School for "Blues in the Schools," a New York State program that gets youngsterc involved in roots music.

Myles played with Les Paul at the Iridium Jazz Club on Broadway in New York City. This was a very different experience from playing with Helm, says Myles, who played both guitar and bass guitar onstage.
"Levon is a friend, I know him," he says. "Les Paul I hadn't met. W/e just gor up and jammed."

## A NATURAI

There are few instruments Myles hasn't picked up. In addition to bass, guitar and piano, he plays the drums and the cello.

Myles sang melodies of Frank Sinatra and Ray Charles while keeping the beat with his drums.
"The spirit he did it in, we knew he'd have a lot of interest in music." says Nick. A family with a drummer father and a mother, Becky, who sings and plays clarinet, helped to surround Myles in music since birth.

Myles attends Beekman Elementary


School in Poughquag. He studies a variety of subjects, his favorite being social studies, and plays the cello in the school orchestra.

But, when college time rolls around, music in all its glory will be at the forefront of his class list.
"I'm interested in studying all instruments and playing music in general," says Myles. "I'd
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## MYLES FUNDAMENTALS

Who are your favorite guitarists?
Albert King is No. 1. He also likes Albert Collins, Freddic King and Stevie Ray Vaughn. "I like them because they all play roots music, and they're all really cool on the guitar."

What about other musicians?
Favorite piano player is Dr. John, who plays New Orleans blues.

What is your favorite song?
"Cross-cut Saw" by Albert King
Favorite book?
"Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson. "I like adventure books, and also mysteries."

Favorite television show?
Looney Toons and Tom and Jerry. "I like a lot of old cattouns."

WELL, BESIDES MUSIC ...

A fow dhings Myles dues when not amazing folks with various instruments
-Karate and skateboarding

- Boy Scouts
-Ilanging vut with his dog, Buddy, and his snake, Rocco.
- Performing in musicals, including Trinity Players' production of "Little Shiop of Hunurs."


Myles attended Les Paul's 90th hirthday concert at the Iridium in New York City (pictured, ohove). Photo schmitted Many noted musicians were in attendance, induding former Ozzy Osbourne guitarist Zakk Wylde (pictured above right on the right). Jonathan Moorehead (pictured above right, center), associate producer for the CD celebrating Paul's milestone birthday, was instrumental in getting Myles to sit in with Paul and his band for two songs. Photo by Jeannine Honnum.

like to be involved in music any way I can."
Recognition of Myles' amazing ear for melodies comes from wide and far. In second grade, he performed an vigimal piano medley at the Bardavon Opera House after winning a talent contest.

He recently won the National Award of Excellence for an original musical connposition. The National PTA Reflections Program presents this award, for which there were more than 500,00 entries. The song, "Levon's Shuflle," was writuen in Heln's honor.
In addition to Helm and Paul, Myles has jammed with Little Sammy Davis, Bill Perry and Hubert Sumlin (one of the original Chicago blues guitarists).

Recently, Nick took Myles to Times Square in Manhattan to perform a one-man show. A crowd quickly surrounded Myles, with observers asking for autographs and for photos taken with Myles. A few people even cried.

Nick says a producer with VH1 stopped and said he had never seen anyone quite like Myles.

When looking at Myyles' already-lengthy resume, it is perhaps easy to forget that he has been playing the bass guitar for just a year and a half, and the guitar for just seven months.

## CREATING A FUTURE

Classmates and friends in orchestra don't play any blues instruments, says Myles. Therefore, when he feels the urge to practice some chords, it's generally dad or a few extremely experienced musicians who offer their time.

While Myles is able to read sheet music and chords, he tends to formulate his own tunes when playing guitar. For instance, he likes to take riffs from one of his favorite songs, "Cross-cut Saw" by Albert King, and mix them with his own to create a unique piece.

Myles envisions his musical career as one
that will carry him to the top of the charts.
"I know that I want to be a musician playing in stadiums," he says. While Myles generally plays at least one instrument every day, he doesn't let it get in the way of attending Boy Scout meetings, watching Looney Tunes or working in his makeshift science lab.

Still, it takes a grandmother like Millie, age 81, to gently prod Myles to practice and play.
"They are an inspiration to each orher," says Nick.

In Myles' case, a passion for the blues seems a natural bequest.
"I have no clue why I got into the blues, but I love it," he says. $\star$


