

GHS grad wins prestigious music award

East End Arts will host 'Rising Star' ceremony June 22

BY NICHOLAS GRASSO
STAFF WRITER

Franklin Mastrangelo of Orient played his very first concert at 3 years old.

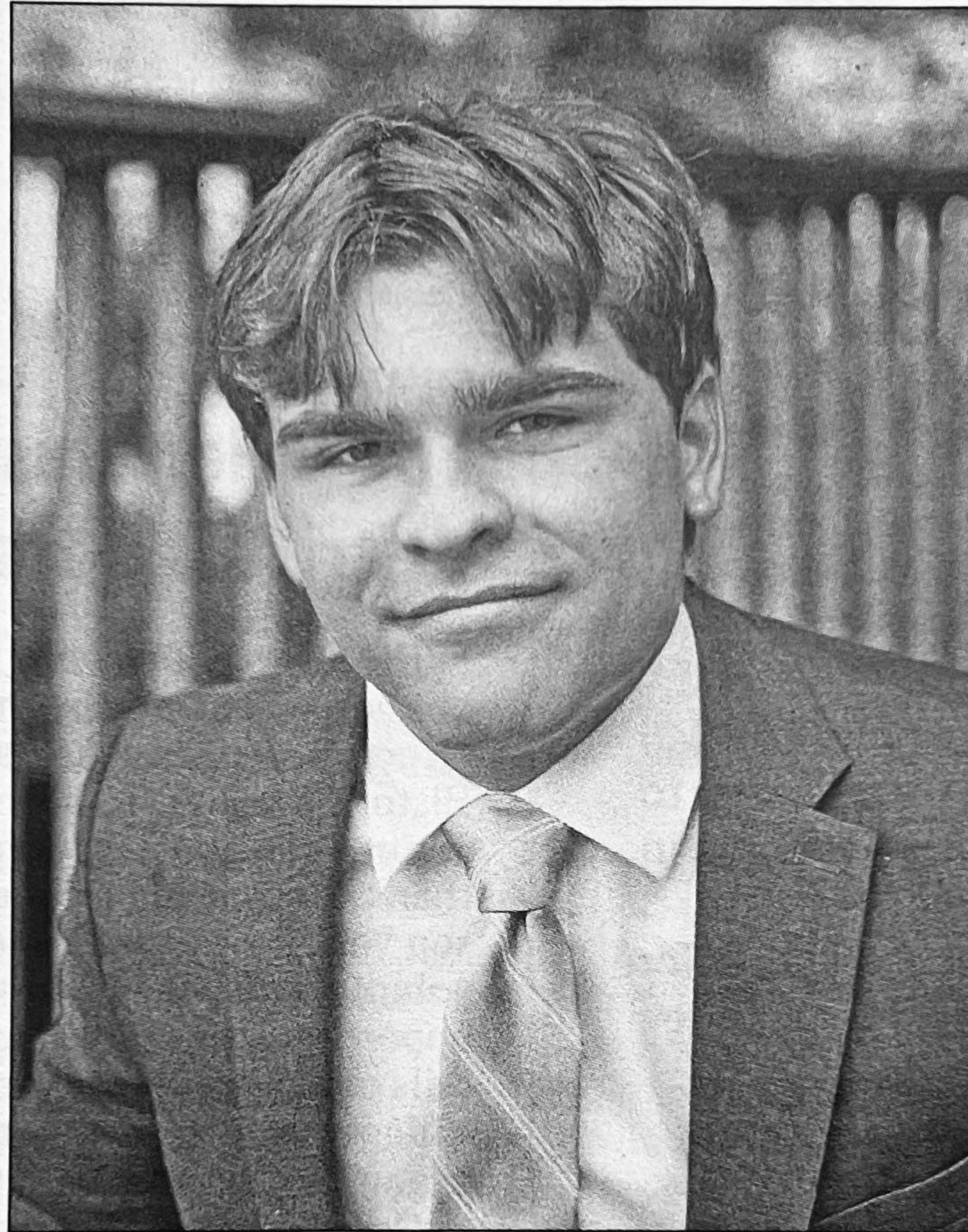
Sure, it was just for his mother's photography group and, yes, he simply played a few notes on a toy keyboard, but he must have showed promise, as he has come a long way since.

Nowadays, when he's not studying to earn his music industry bachelor's degree at SUNY/Oneonta, Mr. Mastrangelo performs while seated at piano benches wherever he can find them on the North Fork, including The Halyard restaurant and the Townsend Manor Inn in Greenport.

For his development and dedication to his dream of becoming a performer, Mr. Mastrangelo received the Linda Rie Cohen Rising Star Award, a newly created \$10,000 endowment created by local resident Fred Cohen in memory of his late wife, a lifelong lover of music, the arts, education and the North Fork. The award, which East End Arts helps promote, is open to East End artists, musicians and students of the sciences between ages 16 and 20, and goes to the applicant who best showcases their growth and ambitions.

"In the essays that I wrote, I [said] I was a rising star because I had the real incentive to nurture my talent and to grow as a musician," said Mr. Mastrangelo, 18. "And I explained how I'm on the verge of getting into this business finally as an adult ... and that I had been improving on my musical skills and my musical knowledge."

While some burgeoning musicians may point to infamous icons or today's celebrities, Mr. Mastran-



COURTESY PHOTO

Greenport High School graduate Franklin Mastrangelo is the recipient of the \$10,000 Linda Rie Cohen Rising Star Award.

gelo names one man who inspired him to perform: Phil Mastrangelo, his father.

"I've basically been around music all my life, ever since I was a child," he explained. "My dad has been in a band and he's been playing around me all the time ... [which] inspired me to be the musician I am today."

As a Greenport High School student, Mr. Mastrangelo took up band and chorus and joined the

school's a cappella group. He also played multiple instruments in the Southold High School jazz band, which accepted students from other North Fork districts. To get there once a week during each school year, the woman for whom he wrote his first song drove him to Southold High School for 6:45 a.m. practices.

During this time, Mr. Mastrangelo also participated in East End Arts' music masters program, through which students learn performance skills and musicianship from accomplished musicians. And music wasn't even the then-high schooler's only extracurricular activity. He also played football for Greenport and lacrosse for Mattituck.

Now a freshman at SUNY/Oneonta, Mr. Mastrangelo sings in a metal band through the school's "rock combo" program and has taken electric bass lessons.

"This [fall] semester, I'm going to be taking piano lessons and drum lessons as well," Mr. Mastrangelo said. "I plan to do saxophone lessons, too. I'm trying to expand my horizons as far as my musical capability."

Through his music industry major, Mr. Mastrangelo has become familiar with various cornerstones of the business, from copyright law to audio production.

Now back in Orient with his parents for the summer, Mr. Mastrangelo hopes to hit as many stages as possible, either solo, singing seated at a piano, or playing with his father and other bandmates.

"My main goal is to be a performer, just to be on the stage, that's my real passion," he said. "I like to convey my emotions to other people live."

While he has yet to perform any original material, that will change on Thursday, June 22, when East End Arts hosts a ceremony congratulating Mr. Mastrangelo for winning the Linda Rie Cohen Rising Star Award. The event will take place at Brecknock Hall in Greenport from 5 to 7 p.m.

East End Arts executive director Diane Burke recalls seeing the young man perform at the end of his first year in the music masters program.

"I met him when he was four years younger, and I remember watching him perform for the first time and having that 'shut the front door' moment," she said. "I remember giggling, like 'that is exceptional talent right there.'"

At the ceremony, he will perform alongside his father and various bandmates, doing triple duty on piano, saxophone and vocals.

"As far as genres go it definitely has variety," Mr. Mastrangelo teased of the performance. "I'm gonna be doing jazz, some classic rock and some R&B."

The ceremony honoring Mr. Mastrangelo is free and open to the public. Anyone interested in attending must RSVP online at eastendarts.org.

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