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## Baltimore County teacher Moonlights in movie

By Lisa Harlow

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By day, Baltimore County Public Schools teacher Kevin Shaner teaches instrumental music at Gunpowder and Kingsville Elementary Schools. But on nights and weekends, Shaner plays bass in Baltimore's own Blue Moon Big Band.

Shaner and other members of Blue Moon Big Band were featured in the new Kevin Bacon and Renee Zellweger movie "My One and Only," which premiered in Baltimore on Sept. 4.

"One of the trombone players, Bernie Robier, found out about the opportunity. Rob Leonard, the band leader, showed them the band's Web site and they looked at pictures and listened to our CD cuts," said Shaner. The band was chosen "because we play the same kind of music [in the movie]. And we were local."

"My One and Only" is set in 1953 and features lots of big band and swing music. Blue Moon Big Band has a large set list, which includes Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman. Shaner said they also do "updated music of the same style period."

There are currently 19 members in the group, which has been around for 11 years. Instruments range from saxophones, trumpets and trombones to bass, drums and piano. There are also two vocalists. The band plays weddings, wine festivals and corporate events, and they have produced several CDs.

"We actually played the music during the filming...We didn't have to fake it," said Shaner, who has been a bass player in Blue Moon Big Band since he started as a substitute in 2003. Shaner became a regular member in 2005.

The band filmed three sessions for the movie in late June and early July of 2008. They worked in two different Baltimore locations: the Masonic Temple ballroom on Charles Street and the Spotlighters Theatre on St. Paul Street.

"In two of the scenes we played music. Some of the other scenes we were extras. We played the band members," said Shaner.

The band filmed several scenes with actor Kevin Bacon. He plays Dan Devereaux, a New York City bandleader, whose wife Ann (Zellweger) leaves him when she catches him with another woman. She leads their two teenage sons (played by Logan Lerman and Mark Rendall) on a cross-country trek to find a new husband and provider for the family.

"He actually did conduct—whatever little conducting a band like this size needs," said Shaner. "He's actually a musician."

Bacon has a band with his brother called "The Bacon Brothers." "He was talking to us about that," said Shaner. "He did stick around to take pictures."

The band didn't do any filming with Renee Zellweger, but there was word



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he was on the set one day. In addition to the band scenes, Blue Moon's bandleader, Leonard, was in a scene as a bartender.

Before filming, the band was fitted for costumes. They wore cream and black tuxes and their hair was styled according to the time period.

There were certain criteria that the directors were looking for in the band. For example, it had to be all male, so there were two female members of Blue Moon Big Band who could not participate in the movie. The directors already had someone set to play the lead singer in the movie—vocalist Holly Palmer.

Their instruments had to qualify as well. "We had to give them a photograph of our instrument to make sure it didn't look too modern or different from 1953," said Shaner. In fact, the drummer had to borrow a set of drums from the 1950s to make things work.

"It was a fascinating process to watch the whole thing. How much work is involved is just amazing," said Shaner of the movie. "One day we were there for 14 hours, and the tech guys had gotten there at four in the morning, and they were still there after we left."

The movie is rated PG-13, so Shaner's fourth- and fifth-grade students won't be able to see him in action just yet. Shaner just started his twelfth year teaching instrumental music, including cello, bass, clarinet, trumpet and violin. He has a bachelor's degree in music from West Chester University in Pennsylvania and a master's degree from Towson University.

"I really like it. These are two great schools and the kids are great. Parents are very supportive. I love music, so it is a great position," said Shaner, who lives with his family in Perry Hall and walks to school on days he works at Gunpowder.

"I had several students who are music teachers right now. One student got a full scholarship to Peabody. It's really neat to see that," he said.

"My One and Only" was Shaner's first taste of Hollywood, but the casting agency kept the band's resumes and pictures in case more opportunities come up.

Shaner and several band members saw the film the day it opened at Landmark Theatres in Harbor East. The only disappointment they had? The band's name was not mentioned in the credits. Even still, they are proud of their first role in a major motion picture.

"It's not an action-oriented film. There are a lot of funny one-liners," said Shaner. "I'd like the movie even if we weren't in it."

For more information and to see more pictures of the band while filming "My One and Only," please visit [www.bluemoonbigband.com](http://www.bluemoonbigband.com).