

Piti Theatre Company



280 Colrain-Shelburne Road
Shelburne, MA 01370
413 625-6569
www.ptco.org
info@ptco.org

Dear Friend,

We are pleased to announce that the 4th annual *SYRUP: One Sweet Arts Festival* will be held on Saturday, March 9th at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls. Afternoon programming for families will include *To Bee or Not to Bee* – a story about the disappearance of honeybees starring local ballet school Ballet Renversé onstage with our actors. Our evening “Spring Seeds Gala” features some of the region’s most exciting artists presenting music, circus, and theatre as well as internationally acclaimed Masque Theater joining us from Connecticut to perform and give workshops for all ages. Community leaders will be invited onstage to literally “plant a seed” while telling us about this year’s upcoming projects.

This is an opportunity to build on an already established tradition – an arts festival in a beautiful old 400 seat theater that has the potential to both build community and attract regional attention for the area in conjunction with “syrup season.” The Shelburne Falls Area Business Association is collaborating on publicity and making this a truly town-wide event with local restaurants offering syrup-themed dishes, etc. Thank you for considering partnering with us!

Kind regards,

Jonathan Mirin & Godeliève Richard Mirin
Artistic Directors, Piti Theatre Company

more at www.ptco.org

SYRUP SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

ACTOR (\$50)

- Listing in program & on webpage

(OVER)

DIRECTOR (\$100)

- Above plus thank you from stage

PRODUCER (\$250+)

- Above plus logo with link on SYRUP webpage and choice of recognition at one other performance this spring (see choices below).

ANGEL (\$500+)

- LIMITED TO FOUR. Above plus logo on front page of program, on SYRUP posters, and on Bridge Street Banner plus choice of recognition at TWO other events this spring.

STAR SEASON SPONSOR (\$2500)

- LIMITED TO ONE. Above plus logo on first page of website & star recognition at all 2013 events (Northampton Center for the Arts (Feb. 16), Amherst Sustainability Festival (April 27), Riverfest (June 8), Warwick (Date TBA). In 2013, we will also perform around New England and in Europe.

TESTIMONIAL

"Piti Theater Company accomplished what few other theater works can say, in that they actually did create a connection with the community both before and during their Festival. They presented wonderful performances for sure, but as well, engaged us locals in a harmonious blend of involvement not before seen around here in recent history. A most deserving bravo and encore is totally appropriate."

- Michael T. McCusker, Buckland

MORE TESTIMONIALS ON NEXT PAGE

Contributions can be made online at www.ptco.org/donate or by mailing a check to Piti Theatre Company, 280 Colrain-Shelburne Rd., Shelburne MA 01370. If you would like this sponsorship to be tax-deductible, the check should be made out to our fiscal sponsor "Fractured Atlas" (see below).

Piti Theatre Company is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization. Contributions for the purposes of Piti Theatre must be made payable to Fractured Atlas and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

SYRUP AUDIENCE TESTIMONIALS

“Re: the active program -I really mean both the main production and the workshop-they were both great ways of getting young children involved in a way that is very rare-at least for us-we don't like to travel far and don't have lots of money to spend on acting workshops or other performance venues but [my daughter] is very oriented in that way, and LOVES to participate when given the chance. Thanks for giving her that chance!!! . . . She loved the SYRUP performing arts workshop for kids you did last year!!!”

- P.S., Shelburne Falls

"Piti Theatre's SYRUP is what community arts festivals are all about: variety, enthusiasm, involvement, and a 'sweet' taste of local talents."

- Chris Rohmann, Pioneer Valley Theatre Critic

“In the middle of “mud season,” what better way to lift the spirit than with a variety of performances and speakers celebrating the power of connection, communication and community? This is what SYRUP: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival accomplished at Memorial Hall in Shelburne last spring, through music and drama, storytelling and personal testimonials. I attended primarily to see the play, 28 Feet, and came away with a deeper appreciation of the west county community as a whole – from stories that were told about the river and its place in the history of the area, to world class music offered in a come-as-you-are setting, to (and this is odd, I know) people’s general acceptance of the bat that flew out from the stage during intermission to remind us of its role in the natural order. SYRUP was eclectic, SYRUP was fun, SYRUP created a sweet frame of reference around a time of the year when all kinds of new beginnings are possible.

- Amy Swisher, Greenfield

“Invited by friends, I drove out from Boston for the SYRUP festival last year. I didn't know what to expect but was captivated by the name and the accompanying mental picture of the running of the sap signaling winter's end and new beginnings. It was a glorious experience! A joyous, creative mix of compelling theater, music and dance by talent that competed with the best I've seen on any city stage. All in the beautiful, historic Town Hall of lovely Shelburne Falls. Many visitors, performers and volunteers knew each other and there was a great feeling of warmth and community extended to all who attended. The programming for children was interactive and such fun for them as well as the eaves-dropping adults. A theme of caring for the environment and seeking avenues to well-being pervaded. This is a GREAT INITIATIVE that deserves ongoing support. I'll be back with a bus load of city folk this year!

- Susan Kooperstein, Vice President for External Affairs

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD), 178 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111

StageStruck

Syrupy but Not Saccharine

This festival celebrates springtime and a revered village venue.

By Chris Rohmann

Jonathan Mirin admits that part of the reason he and his wife, Godeliève Richard, created the Syrup festival was because “we wanted an excuse to perform in Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls, where we live. It’s a historic, beautiful space.”

He then points out that the day-long event was the only instance of live theater seen in the venerable hall last year—a shame, for the space was built as a live venue, though now it’s better known for the Pothole Pictures cinema series and HD screenings from the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal National Theatre.

This Saturday’s third annual Syrup—subtitled One Sweet Performing Arts Festival—reflects the interests and variety embodied in Mirin and Richard’s Piti Theatre Company. Their work embraces kids and adults, theater and movement, extending from Mirin’s serious clown show about

living with Crohn’s disease to thoughtful entertainments created for and often with kids. This year’s festival also features dancer/mime Karen Montanaro, singer/songwriter Carrie Ferguson and cellist Wayne Smith.

“There are lots of fall festivals,” Mirin says, but he was attracted to the planting season by its metaphor of renewal and by New England’s springtime “harvest,” maple syrup. “Seeing Bread and Puppet’s festival in Vermont as a teenager and being offered their homemade bread made an impression on me. I like the idea of receiving artistic and actual nourishment in the same place. It suggests they’re both essential, complementary, and the audience is in caring hands.” Here, the nourishment festivalgoers will receive is sweet and sour, with syrup-tastings from local makers balanced by free samples from Greenfield’s Real Pickles company.

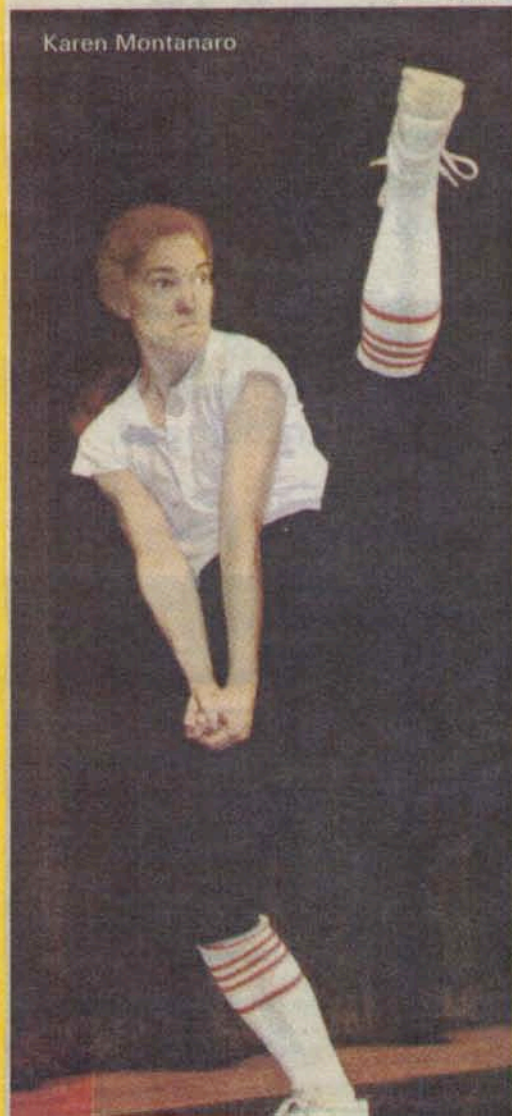
The afternoon session includes Piti’s interactive play *Elmer and the Elder Tree*, which gives children an environmental message as well as a tangible take-away in the form of seeds to plant at home. There’s also juggling by Thom Wall and a preview of Montanaro’s evening show.

Karen Montanaro performs what she calls “mimedance,” a fusion of those two forms. A classical ballerina who became fascinated by the mime’s art, she’s been described as a cross between Marcel Marceau and Anna Pavlova. Her solo show *Tanzspiel* (“dance-play”) has classic balletic and mimetic elements—the pliés and jetés, the invisible walls and wind-walking—and moments when the two really blend. The dancer lends poise to the mime and the mime gives the dancer a sassy humor and narrative flow. The program’s tour de force is a mime-danced baseball game in which the performer plays all the positions as well as a fan in the stands.

I’m a Carrie Ferguson fan-in-the-stands. I first heard her at last year’s Syrup and immediately bought her CD (her second is now in the works). She brings a trained musician’s technique and sense of harmony to devilishly catchy folk-pop tunes and melodic ballads with exuberantly heartfelt lyrics. And she brings an infectious joy to her live performances, where she’s often joined by a cluster of prominent area musicians who are also fans.*

Syrup: March 17, 2 and 7 p.m., Memorial Hall, 51 Bridge, St., Shelburne Falls. Separate admissions, \$5-\$12, festival pass \$15. www.ptco.org for tickets and info.

Chris Rohmann can be reached at StageStruck@crocker.com.



Karen Montanaro

RACHEL RICE PHOTO

VALLEY ADVOCATE

MARCH 15-21, 2012

WWW.VALLEYADVOGATE.COM

NEWS & ARTS WEEKLY

Syrup

festival

The arts will flow
in Shelburne Falls
Saturday.

PAGE D3



Arts

A N D

ENTERTAINMENT

THE RECORDER'S WEEKLY CALENDAR LISTING

MARCH 15, 2012

CALENDAR

Syrup festival Saturday

Piti Theatre's celebration of art and sap — SYRUP: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival — is this Saturday at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls. This year, it includes dance-mime artist Karen Montanaro, at right. Also, Piti's "Elmer and the Elder Tree," Karen Montanaro with Ballet Renverse, juggler Thom Wall, live music activities for children, and more. See "Potpourri."



Submitted photo

SYRUP: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival at Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls. Piti Theatre Co. presents a tasty blend of world class theatre, music, dance, syrup tasting, interactive children's performances and special guests. Afternoon program for family audiences begins at 2 p.m. and includes Piti Theatre Co.'s "Elmer and the Elder Tree" and ballet-mime artist Karen Montanaro. "Spring Seeds Gala" program begins at 7 p.m. featuring Montanaro's full-length performance of

"Tanzspiel" plus Northampton singer-songwriter Carrie Ferguson, cellist Wayne Smith playing Bach's Suite No. 2 for solo cello, MC Jonathan Mirin and other performers. Montanaro will offer workshops at 11 a.m. (ages 7 to 12) and 1:30 (teens/adults) on Sunday at Shelburne Falls Yoga. Afternoon ticket \$5; evening \$12. Festival bucket pass, \$15. Workshops \$15 for festival ticket holders, \$20 for others. 800-3006, www.ptco.org/shows/syrup.

'To Bee

or ...'

Piti Theater Co.
offers workshops
for children, live
shows this week.

PAGE D5



Children's theater puts spotlight on bees

*"Bees work for man, and yet they never
bruise*

*Their Master's flower, but leave it having
done,*

As fair as ever and as fit to use;

So both the flower doth stay and honey run."

— George Herbert

To come to know the honeybee is, ultimately, to come to love the honeybee. Seriously. Once you know what these super-industrious, terminally self-sacrificing beings are really up to, with all their busy, dizzy comings and goings, all any fair-minded observer can find in his or her heart is a deep admiration and astonishment.

Even if it does mean a sting or three now and then.

It might be a further amazement for the uninitiated to learn that an incredible number of very stubborn pathologies — from chronic arthritis and poor immunity to multiple sclerosis — respond beautifully to a graduated course of controlled bee-venom therapy.



Joseph
Marcello

**Encores
& Curtain
Calls**

For these and other equally compelling reasons, longtime beekeeper and physician Dr. Bodog F. Beck, undertook to write two exhaustive volumes on the subject: "Honey and Your Health" and "The Bible of Bee Venom Therapy." (Check them out: Health Resources Press)

As if this weren't enough to redeem the humble, sometimes senselessly maligned honeybee from its status as a marginal pest or sometime sting-source, there is the documented information citing yet another of its products — pollen — as a near panacea. "The Secrets of the Life of Bees," from Robert Delperre of The Royal Society of Naturalists of Belgium and France, confirm that chemical analysis from research labs all over the world shows that bee pollen provides all the nutrients people need for life support.

Indeed, when even Olympic athletes — who we have to imagine are human beings at the top of their respective games — are



Submitted photo

Over the course of the week, Piti Theater Co. will present a production for children called "To Bee or Not to Bee" at the Greenfield Energy Park, Sunday, June 24, at 11 a.m., and on Greenfield Community Television, Tuesday, June 26, at 6 p.m. It will also have a residency at the Greenfield Public Library from Thursday, June 21, to Saturday, June 23, that includes preparing children who want to participate in "To Bee or Not to Bee." All the events are free.

given bee pollen daily, their pre-existing levels of athletic performance reliably ratchet upward by 15 percent.

But perhaps beyond even these virtues is their enduring role as the major pollinators of the planet, the uncompaining fertilizers of an overwhelming proportion of the plant kingdom and that means our daily bread, in every form: fruit, vegetables, grains, legumes, you name it.

But bees are increasingly finding themselves between a rock and a hard place. They have, around the world, been experiencing mysterious and complete hive die-off, known as Colony Collapse Disorder. More recent research is pointing toward highly toxic pharmaceutical chemicals as one of the major causes of hive devastation, with a secondary cause thought to be declining bee food in the form of wild and cultivated blossoms.

This is where the ever resourceful Jonathan Mirin and his Piti Theater Co., including his wife and co-creator, Godelieve Richard, come in. Over the course of the

week, they'll be presenting their for-young-audiences production of "To Bee or Not to Bee" at the Greenfield Energy Park, Sunday, June 24, at 11 a.m., and on Greenfield Community Television, Tuesday, June 26, at 6 p.m. Original music will be performed live by Carrie Ferguson.

The show aims at sharing the plight and the beauty of the honeybee kingdom with youngsters through puppetry, music and drama. It hopes to provide them with positive approaches toward helping solve the problem

Writes Mirin: "The troupe will offer a residency at the Greenfield Public Library from Thursday, June 21, to Saturday, June 23, for children interested in acting, creative movement, playwriting and performing "To Bee or Not to Bee" with the company's professional actors.

All of the events are free.

A chat with Jonathan Mirin:

Joseph: Did you first learn about the plight of the honeybees from seeing the film

on the subject that was shown at the Memorial Theater in Shelburne Falls?

Jonathan: Yes — "The Vanishing of the Bees" — did you see it? Seeing it kind of woke us up to seeing all the issues. It was one of the big inspirations for me.

Joseph: Yes. Can you sketch the plot of your show for us?

Jonathan: The story in general is that this farmer — this beekeeper — finds himself going, over the course of some 20 years, from an agriculturally diversified farm to a mono-culture of just corn and, in the process, loses his bees. The children start off the show protesting, chanting "There is no food, we're in a bad mood." When the show starts, the farmer's in his apartment above the barn, with the gruel that he's been eating for five years. He's sick and weakened and the protesters force him to tell what happened to all the bees. And then he tells the story, which becomes re-enacted as the story of the play.

Residency & performance schedule

Greenfield Public Library, 402 Main St., Thursday, June 21, to Saturday, June 23:

Thursday, June 21: Story Theatre, 3 to 5 p.m. for ages 6 and up. Turn a storybook into a play.

Friday, June 22: Page to Stage Playwriting Workshop, 3 to 4 p.m. for ages 7 and up. Create characters, dialogue, setting, everything you need for a play and then watch it happen. Followed by Creative Movement, 4 to 5 p.m. for ages 6 and up.

Saturday, June 23: Rehearsal/Workshop for "To Bee or Not to Bee," 10 a.m. to noon, children ages 7 and up who are available to perform the next morning. Have fun and get ready to be in the performance of "To Bee or Not to Bee" on Sunday, June 24 at the Energy Park, 11 a.m.

Sunday, June 24, "To Bee or Not to Bee." This free performance is part of the Greenfield Energy Park Summer Performance Series. 11 to 11:45 a.m., Greenfield Energy Park, 50 Miles St. <http://www.ptco.org>

Tuesday, June 26, 6 p.m., "To Bee or Not to Bee" studio taping at Greenfield Community Television, 393 Main St., third floor, for airing on local cable access channels. Audience members will receive a DVD of the show.

An author and composer, columnist Joseph Marcello of Northfield focuses on music and theater. He can be reached at josephmarcello@verizon.net.



Images of the banner hung across Bridge Street 2 weeks before the festival!