

## Announcing the 1st Recipient of *The Suzy Polucci Food and Social Justice Award*



### PITI THEATRE COMPANY

by Sharin Alpert

In 2018, the Franklin Community Co-op established the Suzy Polucci Food and Social Justice Award. Suzy was a well-known and well-loved member of our co-op community, an early employee and long-time supporter deeply committed to social justice. We are pleased to announce the first recipient of the annual award, Piti Theatre Company, co-directed by Jonathan Mirin and Godeliève Richard.

Jonathan and Godeliève have been making theater together since 2004. According to Jonathan, Godeliève's work has a whimsical quality which appeals to young people; her specialties are visual art, dance, and movement, while he is more oriented to playwriting, acting, and comedy. Together, they create performances, workshops, and school residencies using art, music, whimsy, and humor to address difficult topics, especially environmental questions.

Jonathan described one of their current pieces, *To Bee or Not To Bee*, as "a humorous, tragic, ultimately hopeful story" that uses puppets, music, and audience participation to address the damage caused by toxins in our environment and what we can do about it. Their Bee Weeks are multi-partner, week-long programs with community and school-based activities that move towns toward sustainability.

This fall they will start an after-school program for teens, Valley Playwright Mentoring at both Mohawk Trail Regional High School in Shelburne Falls and Community Action's Family Resource Center in Greenfield.

"If we weren't making theater," he said, "maybe we'd be organizers in some environmental organization. But there's power in reaching young people at an age where they're taking in information and making decisions about who they are and what their life paths will be. If we tell a story in an engaging way, we can pass on knowledge and inspiration."

Their first new program for adults since 2012, *Canary in the Gold Mine*, is "a comedic autobiographical solo performance that continues the conversation about our environment" by sharing part of Godeliève's life story – she developed microwave sickness, also known as electrical sensitivity, following a strong wireless exposure in 2010.

Starting the third week of June, Piti Theatre Company will take their act on the road, traveling to Toronto and Boulder, then to four festivals in western Canada. Performances will include *To*



Photos by Jonathan Mirin



Bee or Not to Bee and the premiere of Canary in the Gold Mine. The \$500 grant from the Suzy Polucci Food and Social Justice Award will provide seed money for the tour, and a crowdfunding campaign to support it further will be live on their website in early June.

Jonathan met Suzy when she attended a workshop Johnathan offered for Co-op members on leadership and humor. "I had already heard of her," he said. "When we first moved here, people would say, 'Oh, you should connect with Suzy and Court (Dorsey).'" Suzy was an active participant in his workshop. "The irony being she was funnier than me and probably also a better leader..."

Jonathan added that what he saw in Suzy was "a combination of humor and a deep commitment to humanity that's inspiring. It's lucky to meet inspiring people, as it doesn't happen every day."

For more information, see <http://ptco.org/>, email [info@ptco.org](mailto:info@ptco.org), or call (413) 339 -4569.

### **Piti Theatre Upcoming Events**

**June:** Fundraisers and crowdfunding for summer tour

**July – August:** Regina, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton Fringe Festivals

**September:** Youth Troupe for ages 8 – 12, Shelburne Falls

**October 12:** 3rd Annual Great Greenfield DinoFest with Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association

**October:** Valley Playwright Mentoring for teens starts, Greenfield and at Mohawk Trail Regional High School

**November:** Local school residencies begin

**March:** 11th Annual SYRUP: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival

More at <http://ptco.org> and @piti theatre