

Maine Harvest Fest returns for 5th year

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

Five years ago, organizer Judi Perkins hoped to make the Maine Harvest Festival an annual event. At the old Bangor Auditorium, about 65 farms and producers set up shop, selling everything from locally sourced meats, fruits and vegetables to wine and beer.

As it enters its fifth year, Perkins has worked to ensure the festival takes on the vast landscape of farmers, food processors and fiber artisans of Maine.

Named No. 5 in a list of the top ten "Best Fall Harvest Festivals"

in 2015 by readers of USA Today and 10Best, the Maine Harvest Festival now boasts approximately 200 vendors and will occupy the entire Cross Insurance Center for the event, which will take place 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Nov. 14 and 15.

Farmers, food processors, brewers, fiber artisans and chefs will gather in the Cross Insurance Center's over 49,000 square feet, from the concourse, to the arena, through the ballroom and into the pre-function area, to offer everything from demonstrations and pie contests to a Maine fiber fashion show and bluegrass music.

For \$8, attendees can experi-

ence fresh food, including granola-coated toffee bars, artisanal mustards and lobster crackers, needhams, hard cider and organic seaweed products. Children 12 and under can attend free of charge.

In addition to the food offerings, fiber artisans will offer organic printed textiles, hand felted items, wool blankets and sea glass buttons, among a myriad of other wares.

For vendors like Susan Watson of Midsommer Night's Meadow Farm, watching the festival evolve under the Perkins' leadership has been an incredible journey.

"I met Judi through the Maine Harvest Festival when she was brainstorming about the event. I called her and she told me what she had in mind and I thought it sounded like a great idea," Watson said. "If she hadn't had the passion and that intuitive ability to see what it could be, I don't think the event would have ever happened."

While organizing the festival, Perkins asked herself a simple question: "Wouldn't it be great if these folks knew how to find these people year round?"

Connecting vendors of Maine products with consumers was im-

portant to her and featuring vendors from Maine was paramount.

"We've done our best to make this a Maine experience. Everyone involved is from Maine and that makes this special," Perkins said.

Watson, who has been selling meat and fiber products from her farm at the Maine Harvest Festival since its inception, was blown away by the enthusiasm of customers during their first year. As a vendor, she has seen success at the festival, and even took off one year so she could experience it from a patron's point of view.

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'Mama's Boy' a triumph

Play follows family of assassin Lee Harvey Oswald



Robert Oswald, played by Erik Moody (from left), discusses with his sister-in-law Marina Oswald, played by Laurel Casillo, and his mother, Marguerite Oswald, played by Betsy Aidem whether Lee Harvey Oswald killed JFK in "Mama's Boy."

COURTESY OF GOOD THEATER COMPANY

BY JUDY HARRISON
BDN STAFF

Some mothers eat their young. Few homo sapiens do so literally, but some of the best playwrights, including Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams, have created women incapable of nurturing their children.

In his new play, "Mama's Boy," Rob Urbinati has created a monster of a matriarch. Marguerite Oswald, mother of Lee Harvey Oswald, is part Mary Tyrone, part Amanda Wingfield with a dash of Medea thrown in. She is motherhood on steroids — lovingly overbearing, smothering her sons with an unnatural kind of nurture.

"Mama's Boy," which is receiving its world premiere at Good Theater Company, the resident troupe at the St. Lawrence Arts Center in Portland, is a searing new edition to the canon of American plays that illuminates the destructive turn motherhood can

take. The playwright uses the relationship between Lee and his mother not as a lens through which he tries to psychoanalyze the assassin but as a way to present a classic but toxic mother-son relationship.

The two-act play is not a historical drama, but it gives audiences a new twist on the story of President John F. Kennedy's assassin. Urbinati can stand beside O'Neill and Williams in showing the destruction inflicted in the name of familial love. Act One takes place in 1962 after Lee returned from Russia with his wife, Marina, and infant daughter. The second act is focused on the days immediately after Kennedy's shooting.

Although Urbinati is not recreating verbatim conversations among members of the Oswald family, the playwright does rely on historical facts that are known about the family.

Marguerite mothered three sons, John, Robert and Lee. The two younger boys' father died before the youngest was born. Each of them at some point cuts off all contact with their mother. John is spoken of but does not appear in "Mama's Boy," but

Robert, along with Lee and his wife, do.

Director Brian P. Allen and the playwright share a vision that shines a bright light into the dark closets of a family thrust into the annals of history. Allen ratchets up the pace as each scene unfolds as he keeps the actors moving on the simple set that serves as apartments, homes and motel rooms.

The director perfectly choreographs the emotional dance Marguerite leads her sons and daughter-in-law through. Allen lets the play move to a fever pitch climax but never allows it or mama Marguerite to become shrill.

Betsy Aidem's Marguerite is fierce. The New York City actress manages to wring sympathy from the audience for this woman, who never tires of telling everyone how much she has sacrificed for her family, how difficult being a single mother has been and how ungrateful her sons are for all that she has done for them in the name of motherly love.

In the hands of a less sensitive actress, *See Theater, Page C2*

Third book released in Hamlin's 'Pink Chimneys' series

BY SARAH WALKER CARON
BDN STAFF

When Ardeana Hamlin wrote "Pink Chimneys," in the 1980s, she didn't anticipate how readers would fall in love with the story of three strong-willed women in 19th century Maine — and want more.

But that's exactly what happened.

"After I published 'Pink Chimneys' in [1987], I never expected it would go on and on and it would have this life," Hamlin said.

Fans wanted a sequel and didn't hesitate to tell her. "Abbott's Reach," the sequel, was released in 2011.

Now readers have a chance to dig into more of Hamlin's well-researched historical fiction in a new book that's the third in the series. "The Havener Sisters" explores the fates of three sisters at the dawn of the Industrial Age in Maine.

China, Persia and India Haveners are triplets that were raised on their father's ship Empress on the

high seas. When their father dies, the sisters begin living in a large house on the shore in Castine. But eight years later, changes in their economic circumstances bring challenges, changes and adventures.

Like Hamlin's previous books, this period novel took much research.

"When I wrote 'Pink Chimneys,' I researched for two years before I knew I would be writing a book," Hamlin said.

That research laid the founda-

tion for her other books, though additional research was necessary for each. For this book, she looked at images, town layouts and more to get a historic sense of the places she was writing about so she knew "how my characters were going to move in those landscapes."

"This is a book more about inland Maine than about coastal life," Hamlin said, adding there will be some surprises too. "They will find unexpected things happen."

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Ensemble bringing new life to 'Sgt. Pepper'

BY SHELBY HARTIN
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In 1967 The Beatles released "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," their eighth album and an instant success.

From songs such as "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" and "With A Little Help From My Friends," the album blurred the lines between pop and fine art, crossing genres and bridging divides.

Now, almost 50 years later, the album does even more by connecting generations who love the classic music of the Fab Four. That's the hope for the Collins Center for the Arts show, "Art of Time Ensemble: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," set to hit the stage 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 17.

"This will be something for Beatle fans or people who love good music," said Danny Williams, executive director of the CCA.

Toronto's Art of Time Ensemble, led by artistic director Andrew Burashko, intends to fuse high art and popular culture. Formed in 1998, the ensemble began "with the support of a small group of like-minded musicians and prominent figures in dance, theatre and other art forms, beginning with one-off concerts to small but enthusiastic audiences," according to their website.

"They call it a reimagining. I think it is a modern-day interpretation of a classic album," Williams said.

The ensemble will feature names recognizable by many, including singers Steven Page, founder and former lead of Bare-naked Ladies, Andy Maize of Skydiggers, Craig Northey of The Odds, and Glen Phillips of Toad the Wet Sprocket.

The ensemble includes Carolyn Blackwell and Doug Perry on viola, Bryan Holt and Rachel Pomedli on cello, Veronique Mathieu and Stephen Sitarski on violin, John Johnson on saxophone, Joseph Phillips on bass, Larry Larson on trumpet, Rob Piltch on guitar, Rick Sacks on percussion and artistic director Andrew Burashko on piano.

"Part of what Art of Time does is find where classical music intersects with the pop world — it finds the common ground," said Phillips, whose alternative rock band Toad the Wet Sprocket formed in the late 1980s.

Phillips was brought into the group by Northey, who had done previous shows. He had sung with Page before and was happy to jump in, both to help and for a respite from routine.

"It was exciting to do a project that had nothing to do with me. I was ready for a break from myself and my songs," Phillips said. Toad the Wet Sprocket recently *See Beatles, Page C2*

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