

# Concert proves power of music

BY JUDY HARRISON  
BDN STAFF

When Lucas Richman, music director and conductor for the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, chose the program for Sunday's concert, he couldn't have known that world events and personal losses would collide in late November to send many musicians and concertgoers into the Collins Center for the Arts numb and grieving.

The attacks in Paris, the vacationers taken hostage at a hotel in Mali and the passing Saturday of a former concertmaster for the Boston Symphony Orchestra — a mentor to guest violinist Elena Urioste — individually seemed overwhelming. But coming one on top of the other as they did, they were spiritually devastating for many.

### CONCERT REVIEW

In his opening remarks Sunday, Richman quoted his mentor Leonard Bernstein, who said after the assassination of JFK: "This will be our response to violence: To make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before."

That is exactly what the Bangor symphony and Urioste did Sunday.

The overture to Franz Joseph Haydn's oratorio, "Il Ritorno di Tobia," was sweet and joyful. A reminder of music's ability to soothe the soul.

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, Franz Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony," sounded like the clashing philosophies raging throughout the world today. The composer's constant switching from major to minor keys, then back again, made it seem like the instruments and sections of the orchestra were having a heated, but non-violent, conversation about the state of the world — the way people with very different views should be able to express themselves rather than with bullets and bombs.

And then there was Urioste, who performed the Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra by Ludwig von Beethoven with a stunning exactitude shrouded in grief for her mentor, Joseph Silverstein, and deep gratitude for the time she shared with him. Silverstein died in Boston at the age of 83 less than 12 hours before Sunday's concert. As an encore, Urioste played "Estrellita" by Manuel Ponce and dedicated it to her teacher and mentor.

Over the past decade, the symphony nearly without fail has pulled itself up by its musical bootstraps to meet guest artists on their level. That was evident when the orchestra and Urioste

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GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Will Newman (right), master carpenter with the Penobscot Theatre Company, and Gregg Hanscom, a volunteer, build a wind machine for the theater's production of "It's a Wonderful Life." The machine will produce the sound of wind when required during the show. Such items and sets for shows are created at the Theatre Factory in Bangor.

# Creating a 'Wonderful Life'

## Penobscot Theatre set crew faces unique challenges



Bob Rogers checks measurements on scenic designs while building a set at the Theatre Factory for the Penobscot Theatre Company's production of "It's a Wonderful Life."

BY SHELBY HARTIN  
BDN STAFF

On a recent day, a melody of shouts, saws and background music drifted from the former fire station on Griffin Road in Bangor, which has been converted into the Theatre Factory, where the sets of Penobscot Theatre Company plays are built.

Master carpenter Will Newman and volunteer Gregg Hanscom were deep in the throes of creating the set and a wind machine as part of the sound effects for the production of "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play."

It was hard to tell from all the parts scattered about, however, that these puzzle pieces soon would be moved across town to the Bangor Opera House and put together to re-create a 1940s radio studio.

From a beautiful set design created by Sean

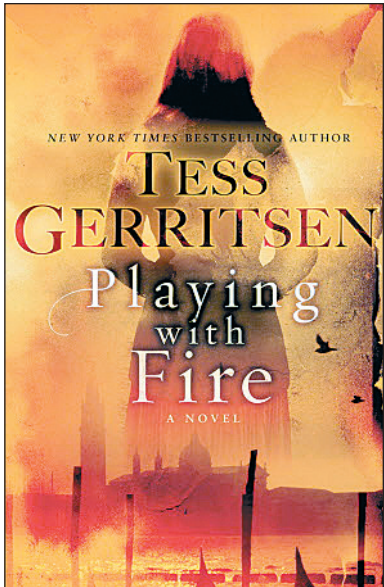
McClelland, diagrams and plans carefully were laid out on paper and in computer programs weeks ago and slowly morphed into the collection of parts that will fit together just right before opening night on Dec. 3.

The re-enactment of the 1946 American Christmas classic is intended to take audiences back to a joyous time in post-war America.

Actors and actresses will laugh and sing on the platforms created by the Penobscot Theatre Company's crew, including Newman, who has been the master carpenter of the Penobscot Theatre Company for about nine years.

Newman came into the job by accident. He was a graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and recently had moved to the area. Newman's brother was acquainted with a scenic artist from the Penobscot Theatre Company and connected New-

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# Novel explores melodic mystery

## Tess Gerritsen departs from norm

BY SARAH WALKER CARON  
BDN STAFF

American novelist Tess Gerritsen began her career writing romantic thrillers. Eventually she branched into medical thrillers and crime thrillers as well. But with her latest book, the tale takes on something completely different: the power of music.

"Playing with Fire" was released in October by Ballantine Books. It tells the haunting tale of a violinist who happens upon a piece of music called "Incendio" in a mysterious Rome shop. She's drawn to play the waltz, but when she finally does — with her young daughter nearby — the notes of the music seem to stir something unexpected and violent in the little girl. The violinist is shaken and driven to find the origins of the music, a quest that leads her to Venice and a long-buried secret that a powerful family doesn't want discovered.

Gerritsen, a New York Times best-selling author known for her Rizzoli and Isles series, admits that this story, which focuses so heavily on music and a musician, is much different from her other work.

"It's so different from my usual novels — the inspiration for it and the subject matter — it's reaching a different audience than my usual crime readers," Gerritsen said in a recent phone interview. "I think people who know and understand music love the book."

The inspiration for the story she refers to came in an unusual way.

"It was a nightmare. I was in Venice for my birthday, and I

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# Deer Isle artist takes viewers 'down the rabbit hole'

BY SHELBY HARTIN  
BDN STAFF

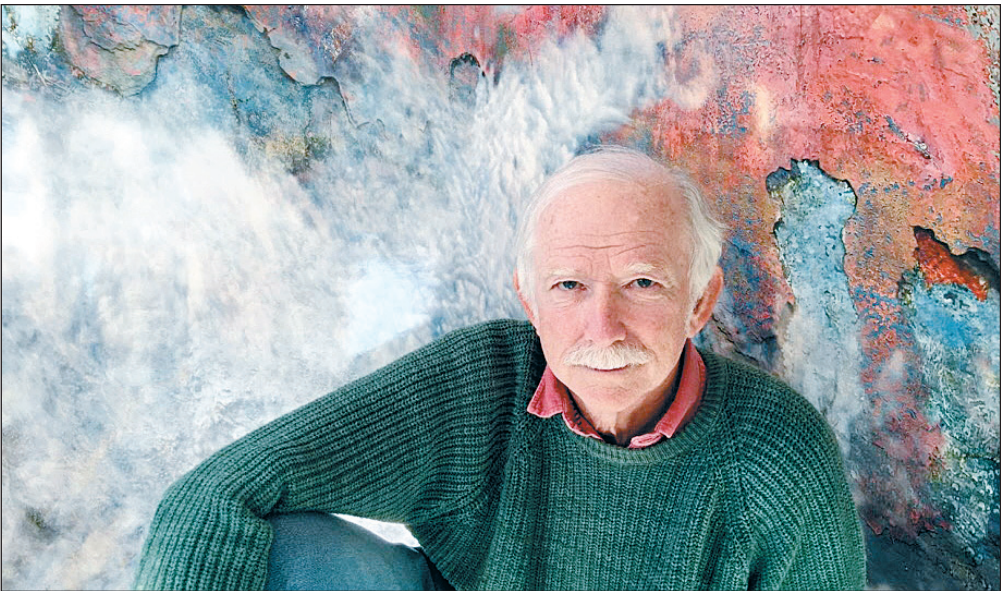
The inrush of a roiling sea pours over a pebbly beach and through the doorway, invading an otherwise empty, interior space. Wisps of clouds float serenely across the walls of a room, gray skies floating through the windows. The barnacled hull of a massive ship glides across the water, a microcosm of life existing on its surface.

Jeffery Becton's photographs combine interior and exterior

spaces to create dreamlike images of scenes found in Maine. He is a visual artist whose digital photography transcends reality through a medium called digital montage, which he has been working with since 1990, combining photography, painting and an array of other mediums.

"The View Out His Window (and in his mind's eye): Photographs by Jeffery Becton" is on exhibit at the Bates College Museum of Art. It opened on Nov. 6 and will be on display until March 26,

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HILLARY BECTON

Visual artist Jeffery Becton uses a medium he calls "digital montage" to create otherworldly pieces drawing from scenes unique to coastal Maine.

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