

# ARTS

## Diamond new Mohawk drama coordinator; summer drama workshop still open

### VERTIGO



Pothole Pictures will show "Vertigo" Friday and Saturday, July 20 and 21 in Memorial Hall Theater.

**By Virginia Ray**  
BUCKLAND—Jonathan Diamond of Heath is looking for someone to share in an adventure he is arranging, to paraphrase J.R.R. Tolkien, author of "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

Diamond, in his new post as Mohawk Trail Regional School District drama coordinator, will direct the annual spring musical at the high school: this year students will perform "The Hobbit."

"Buckland, which shares its name with one of the villages in Tolkien's story, is a lot like the shire where the story's protagonist, Bilbo Baggins, is from," says Diamond. "They're both peaceful, bucolic settings. Tolkien created this amazing fantasy world of Middle Earth but parts of it will feel very familiar to West County children and families."

"Mohawk is delighted to introduce Jonathan Diamond as the District's new drama coordinator," says Superintendent Michael Buoniconti. "Dr. Diamond played an instrumental role evolving the Heath Elementary drama program over the past eight years into a remarkable educational experience for students. We greatly look forward to Jonathan expanding this wonderful program to the high school and middle school and are very excited for our students."

In addition to directing the spring production at Mohawk, Diamond will oversee a pilot internship model at the Heath Elementary School and co-teach an acting workshop for middle and high school students with Mohawk English teacher Leanne Blaszk. Blaszk did her student teaching residency at the high school and assisted with the musical last year.

"We're hoping to create a program that offers opportunities for high school juniors and seniors to direct productions in the elementary schools and use it to expand the performing arts curriculum for that age group," says Diamond.

The Mohawk course will be offered both semesters. Students can sign up for fall or spring semesters or enroll for the year. Diamond and Blaszk plan to use the first semester to build a core ensemble that can work together on the spring play and, in the second semester, to provide additional rehearsal time once



Photo by Lorena Loubsky

Mohawk Trail Regional School eighth-grader Chris Graves and 12th-grade homeschooler Maeve Gallagher perform in the 2011 Academy Summer Drama Workshop performance of "Shakespeare in Like."

that production is underway. "The students are going to help us develop the material, as first we'll need to compose the music and write the play," says Diamond. "We'll draw from our talented faculty and student body and tap into the hilltowns' gifted performing arts community."

Diamond has experience creating and adapting material in this way from his years directing and writing plays for the Heath School and at The Academy at Charlemont's Summer Drama Workshop.

#### Still time to join in summer fun

There is still limited space to join the Summer Drama Workshop, which offers students in grades 5-12 two weeks of movement, voice work, intensive actor training and work with aerial fabrics and large objects for aspiring

actors, dancers, singers and set-builders.

Now in its third season, the program runs from July 23-Aug. 3, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Participants will enjoy a special evening performance of Ashfield's internationally renowned Double Edge Theatre's summer spectacle, "The Odyssey," and talk with actors/directors after the show. The program will culminate in public performances of "Icarus" at the Academy on Friday, Aug. 3 at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

"In Heath we've experienced such a bump from these summer intensives," says Diamond. "People have marveled at how much our program has grown over the years and the levels at which our young actors are able to perform. We often refer to the workshop as the secret ingredient in our productions. In

any given summer, we've had as many as 16 Heath alumni and/or current students enrolled. The last two years it's helped us take on much more sophisticated material in our winter plays."

But what excites Diamond most about the workshop is "the larger sense of community it's creating in West County and the way in which it's helping not only to strengthen the connections among students but between their schools as well," he says.

"People are definitely starting to get excited about the work, and we are too. Mostly, we're just having a boatload of fun. Last summer during the heat wave we went to a different swimming hole everyday to run lines."

Many students who participate have trained for years with members of Double Edge's core ensemble and attended performances at the theatre's Ashfield farm, although no experience is needed to enroll in the workshop.

"Most have studied these myths in school and seeing Double Edge bring them to life and all the vivid imagery created, well, they wanted to try their hand in it too," Diamond says.

The script for the play was developed in a Director's Studio Block for Actors Diamond teaches at the Academy. Students took turns writing text, directing and blocking scenes and then took a field trip to Double Edge and spent the morning working on the material with actor and Executive Director Matthew Glassman.

"Child and teen actors, especially, do not want to be passive vessels for playwrights," says Diamond. "Children are natural storytellers. They want to use their imaginations and develop the work themselves."

Among those joining Diamond this summer are choreographer Cynthia McCoughlin, henna artist Kelly Flaherty, Chrystalis Theatre Music Director Pan Morigan and Heath School costumer Carin Burnes.

Former Philips Andover Academy Theatre instructor and new Academy Headmaster Mark Efinger will spend a morning teaching stage combat.

For more information and to register, call 413-339-4912 or visit charlemont.org.

## Artspace seeking artists

GREENFIELD—Artspace is seeking artists to participate in its Holiday Gift Sale at Greenfield High School Friday, Nov. 2 from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 3 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

All types of original two- and three-dimensional artwork will be considered. There is no booth fee; instead, Artspace receives a commission on sales.

Artists must be present to sell their work.

To apply for a space, e-mail three digital images with descriptions and pricing to info@franklyarts.com. Make sure the images are representative of your work. You may also mail the information to Artspace, 15 Mill St., Greenfield MA 01301. Deadline for submission is July 30.

## Bolcom & Morris back at MTC

CHARLEMONT—With a nod to Bastille Day and the Summer Festival's theme honoring France and French music, Mohawk Trail Concerts welcomes longtime favorites Bolcom and Morris, composer/pianist William Bolcom and mezzo-soprano Joan Morris, Friday and Saturday, July 13 and 14, at the air-conditioned Federated Church on Rte. 2.

As has become custom, the church's annual chicken barbecue and pie fest will precede the Saturday concert on the lawn.

The program will include both Chansons de Negresses and Three Rags-Caprices by the French composer Darius Milhaud, as well as Songs by Cosma with lyrics by Jacques Prevert. Sampling Bolcom's remarkable versatility, pianists Julia Belyung, 10, and Hannah Ruhl, 12, will play The Bad Monster and the Sad Monster and The Bad Mister and the Glad Minister from Bolcom's Monsterpieces for Older Children. Announced and introduced from the stage, selections from the duo's extensive repertoire of American popular songs from the 19th and 20th Centuries and cabaret songs will complete the program.

Bill Bolcom studied composition with Milhaud here and in Paris before completing a doctorate in composition at Stanford University. Since then he has composed symphonies, operas, chamber works, musical theater works, incidental and cabaret pieces, all too numerous and various to name. Honors include the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for music. Last May the Springfield Symphony under Kevin Rhodes premiered his "Prometheus, A Choral Fantasy." He has recorded as a pianist extensively, alone and with Joan Morris.



William Bolcom and Joan Morris return to Mohawk Trail Concerts Friday and Saturday, July 13 and 14 at the Charlemont Federated Church.

for 40 years throughout the U.S., Canada and abroad have made them household names among music lovers.

Her distinctive voice and expressive performance have made Joan Morris a recognizable voice on Public Radio. Beginning with After the Ball: A Treasury of Turn-of-the-Century Popular Songs, which garnered her a Grammy Award nomination for "best vocal soloist performance on a classical album," she has recorded 24 albums with Bolcom and performed widely on stage and in cabaret.

The Saturday concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20; \$18 for students and seniors. Friday at 7 p.m. tickets are \$18; \$15 for students and seniors. They are available by phone to 413-339-4294, online at mohawktrailconcerts.org and at Avery's Store and Boswell's Books.

## "The Journey of E" at Memorial Hall Aug. 11

### Theatergoers encouraged to wear vintage attire

SHELburne FALLS—"The Journey of E," a jazz homage to the late French singer Edith Piaf, will come to town for one night in a coast-to-coast tour, stopping at Memorial Hall Theater for a Saturday, Aug. 11 performance at 8 p.m.

The highest moneymaking shows of the 1930s, such as "42nd Street," "Gold Diggers" and "Footlight Parade," focused on the Depression.

Marcel Blanchet produces this show, which features the jazz vocals of Carolyn Raming. The story takes the audience on a trip guided by a newspaper

boy using headlines of the day as stopping off points for a musical cavalcade of numbers as he hawks his papers along New York City's Great White Way.

"The Journey of E" brings the audience from the era of Prohibition through the hard times of the Great Depression on a voyage to Europe where the alluring Parisian influence of the "chanson" (song) begins in Paris and romantic music of the late 30s and 40s is brought to life.

"We like performing in small theaters," says Blanchet. "Just like in the 20s and 30s, when working men and women would come to be entertained by silent films and vaudeville acts. For many residents, it would be the first place they would ever see a show... We

wanted to offer a family friendly show to the community that brings back some nostalgia."

Blanchet hopes to see residents wearing vintage clothing and parking vintage cars on Bridge Street for the performance.

"We love the town and everyone has been really nice, we are much appreciative," he says. "We met Tiffany from Otis and Co. vintage clothing; she was wonderful and is getting friends and customers interested in coming to the show in period attire."

As it was with the ultimate filming of "Labor Day" here, this performance has come to the village's unique Memorial Hall Theater perchance.

"I do not know Shelburne Falls other than when we

were looking for venues in New England. One of the performers, Carolyn Raming, jazz vocalist, was passing through and someone suggested that we perform at Memorial Hall," Blanchet says. "We try to perform in small theaters; it fits our theme and our family-oriented show brings jazz to a new audience. We found everyone so, so nice and this is a volunteer theater — we usually perform in staffed, professional theaters — so now it really is even more important to us because we love volunteers and respect how much they give to a community."

Tickets, including a special family package, are available online at urit.ticketleap.com/sf or at Boswell's Books and Mocha Maya's.

The locally owned drugstore where life is simpler, they know you by name, and there's still a soda fountain

**The BAKER Pharmacy**

Mondays-Fridays 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Saturdays 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Closed Sundays

52 BRIDGE ST., SHELburne FALLS • (413) 625-6324

**Johnson Funeral Home**

—Est. 1900—  
Family Owned & Operated for Over 100 Years

104 Bridge Street  
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370  
(413) 625-6444  
Debra Johnson-Bolaski  
Director

**HARDWOOD FLOORS**

Installation ~ Sanding ~ Refinishing

**Smith Hardwood Floor Co.**  
Buckland, MA  
413-489-3024

RESPECT, INTEGRITY, COMPASSION . . .

**SMITH-KELLEHER FUNERAL HOME**

40 Church Street, Shelburne Falls  
(413) 625-2121  
PAMELA J. KELLEHER

87 Franklin Street, Greenfield  
(413) 773-8853  
TIMOTHY P. KELLEHER

**TOM KEHOE**

WOODWORKING & CONSTRUCTION

• REMODELING • KITCHEN & BATH • FINE FINISH WORK

Quality Work  
625-8117

MA. LIC. #CS 077597 HIC # 132791