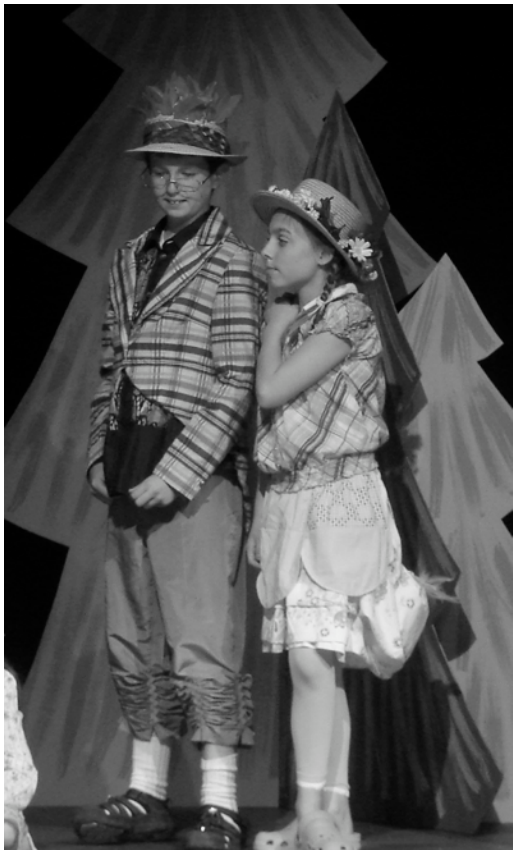


# Friends of the Reach

Spring 2011

## *Reynard the Fox* Premieres

In celebration of its Tenth Anniversary, The Reach Performing Arts Center commissioned Paul Sullivan, a Maine composer, musician, and performer, to write a work for the children of Deer Isle-Stonington. Collaborating with Nelson



Brendan Penfold and Riley Getto



Bear Ali Eaton, Hen Riley Getto, King SooZin Cha, and Fox Marvin Merritt

Monteith, the retiring Reach Director who wrote the book and lyrics, Paul has written an original score based on the medieval folktales of Reynard the Fox.

For a year, Sullivan and Monteith have worked on this project, adding a new page to their friendship which began eleven years ago when Sullivan and Monteith accompanied a Christmas Program at the Brooklin School, where Paul's son, Henry, was a second grade student.

*Reynard the Fox* went into rehearsal in March of 2011. On May 13 and 14, with the composer at the keyboard accompanying the show, the first 'world premiere' came to life on the stage of the Reach Performing Arts Center. Julie Moringello provided the set design and Jean Newkirk costumed the show.

This project was made possible through the generous support of The Benwood Foundation, the Island Education Foundation, the Maine Community Foundation, and the New England Foundation for the Arts.

# A Fond Farewell to Monteith...

## First Reach Director to Retire

When the Reach Performing Arts Center first opened in 2001, Nelson Monteith came on as its first director. After a three year break in China, Monteith came back to the Reach for another two years, and will retire from education at the end of June.

Monteith began his career in Arts education as the vocal music teacher in Waterville in 1968, followed by another five years in Camden in the same position. After ten years of teaching in Maine, Monteith accepted a job at the Community School in Teheran, Iran. It wasn't the best of times to take a job in Iran, and after four months on the job, the school closed and Monteith headed for Europe. In the fall of 1979 he became the Fine Arts Director of the Antwerp International School in Belgium, where he taught music, drama and art at various times during the nineteen years of his tenure there. In his second year as Reach Director, Monteith founded the Cabin Fever Theater Company and was instrumental in the establishment of the Island Arts Camp.



“After forty-three years in education,” Monteith says, “it’s time to move on and leave the work to younger professionals with a lot more energy than I seem to have these days.” While remembering his time here, Monteith continues, “ My years on the island have been good ones. Working in one of the best theater facilities in the State of Maine is certainly a fine way for a Maine ‘county boy’ to end a long career in arts education. The Reach Performing Arts Center is a wonderful gift to the island from the generous group of donors who built the facility. I thank those donors and those who have continued to support the growth of the Reach and its programming for the island’s children. I hope that the Reach continues to grow and provide opportunities and activities for island students and community members that continue to make The Reach a part of their lives.”

## ...A Warm Welcome to Witham

### New Reach Director Chosen



Katie Hutchinson and Morgan  
in *The Sound of Music*

The Reach Performing Arts Center is proud to announce the new director, Morgan Witham. Morgan's energy and enthusiasm are infectious and inspiring. Esther Adams interviewed Morgan.

#### **Tell us a little about yourself.**

I grew up on Little Deer and attended DI-S through my sophomore year (1996) then made the difficult decision to transfer to the Maine School for Science and Mathematics- a decision made in large part because MSSM had a theater program and ready access to dance and voice lessons, and a strong community theater in Caribou. After graduating high school, I went to Grinnell College, where I earned my BA in Theater. After two years of graduate coursework in American and New England Studies at USM, I served a two year Americorps term in the Isle au Haut school.

#### **What are some of your favorite theater moments?**

I was lucky enough to be cast at the Grand as Little Red Riding Hood in my all-time favorite musical, *Into the Woods*. Maria, in *The Sound of Music*, was also a dream role. Growing up, I used to go out and perform the title song on my parent's septic field, which happened to be the highest point of our property. So to come back to Deer Isle as an adult, and to play the role with Cabin Fever (on a real stage! with lights! and an orchestra!) was pretty unbelievable. When I was a kid, there was no RPAC; the Opera House was still abandoned.

#### **What are some of your hopes and dreams for the Reach?**

I will definitely work with the foundations that Nelson put into place- I hope to maintain the strong program in the elementary school and to continue building the capacity of Cabin Fever. My big dream is to develop stronger programming in the high school. Theater can teach so much about collaboration, respect, responsibility, artistic and intellectual risk-taking, and developing confidence that it really needs to be available to students making the transition to adulthood. I want to help high school students fall in love with the work of theater.

I would also like to collaborate with other arts organizations on the island. I hope there's a lot of opportunity to work in cahoots. My own childhood was richer for time spent at Seamark, Haystack, Sue's School of Dance, and (the summer after I graduated from college) the Opera House, so I definitely look forward to joining that community and learning from them as an arts educator.

**What are you looking forward to doing most as the new director?**

I am looking forward to discovering the position, getting into the work itself. It is well and good to have the bullet list of the job description and have ideas about what I might do, but until I can roll up my sleeves and get to work with teachers, students, and community members, it's just so much brainstorming. Right now I am like a student who has been handed the syllabus to The Best Course Ever, but has to wait a while before the semester starts.



## **Ian Pelletier Receives 2011 Reach Book Award**



**Ian Pelletier** began his many years of devotion to the Reach as a fifth grade actor in the student production of *Oliver* and Cabin Fever Theater's *Fiddler on the Roof*. At this time he also joined the school's tech club and found his theater niche. According to Ian, "Managing the lights was more of my thing." Ian worked under the tutelage of Jake Adams and when Jake graduated, Ian easily became the tech leader, working behind the scenes of every Cabin Fever Theater and student fall production.

Ian served faithfully for three years as a student representative on the Friends of the Reach Steering Committee. When he first presented his proposal to build a \$30,000, 24 x 30 foot storage building for his Eagle Scout project, members of the Steering Committee were skeptical but supportive. Any doubts evaporated as they watched Ian's determination, perseverance, and work ethic. The Reach will forever be indebted to Ian's vision that now allows it to store large numbers of props and set pieces nearby, easily accessed for many years to come.

Ian is a serious young man who has worked hard in school and has participated in a variety of extra-curricular activities. He serves on the Island Ambulance Corps as a certified EMT and will enter the University of New England this fall as a pre-med student.

There is a light side of this incredible young man. When asked about his favorite memory of his years of involvement with the Reach, he quickly responded,

"The year the students did *Fiddler*, Jake was in the booth and the tech crew was mimicking the dancing on the stage and having a great time." Keep dancing to your own tune, Ian. The Reach will miss you and is proud to present you with its annual Book Award!

*Donations to the Reach are always welcome. Should you wish to support Reach programs, please send checks, payable to IEF/ RPAC (Island Education Foundation/Reach Performing Arts Center). to The Reach, 249 North Deer Isle Road, Deer Isle, ME 04627*

# Reach 10th Anniversary Gala

Please join us for a trip down Memory Lane July 29th and 30th at 7 pm.

Be our guests at these free performances highlighting both Cabin Fever Theater and



Robin Dunham and Suzy Shepard in *Kiss Me, Kate*

Deer Isle-Stonington School productions from the past five years. Songs from *South Pacific*, *The Sound of Music*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Reynard the*

*Fox* and many more will be showcased as our thank you to the community for all the support given to us over the last ten years.



Jeff Brink and Meg Chitenden in *South Pacific*



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