



CELEBRATION BARN
(David Bruin, Executive Artistic Director)
presents

**TONY
MONTANARO**
~
**A
LOVE
STORY**



SEPTEMBER 24, 2022

— Celebration Barn Season Sponsors —



A Note from Karen

This show would not have been possible without a village. Many thanks to the Maine Arts Commission for the ARPA grant and Tom Bergeron for matching it. Thank you to the Hurl family, the Montanaro family, the Celebration Barn Family for all the love! Additional thanks to Reggie Groff of Groff Video, Shawn Likley, Huey Coleman of Films by Huey, Rich Corsi of the Columbus Association for the Performing Arts, Clayton Waites, Amanda Huotari, Jackie Reifer, Sue Hurl Bastian, Molly Gawler, and David Bruin for giving, so generously, your time, energy, talent, and resources to this seismic labor of love.

Special thanks to my director, Robert Post. I can't imagine creating the show with anyone else but you, Robert. You have gone over and above your role as director to honor Tony with everything you've got! Funnily (and, yes, funnily is a word!), you are more tenacious and disciplined than Tony ever was and this show needed you to be exactly who you are—which is all Tony ever wanted his students to be.

Tony Montanaro – A Love Story

Creative Team

Written and performed by Karen Montanaro
Directed by Robert Post
Sound design,
projection design,
and video editing by Shawn Likley & Robert Post
Audio Engineer Tom Boyer
Lighting design by Miguel Ángel Pacheco
Accordion played by Peter Blackstone

Photos

Photos used in the production were provided by George Anderson, Chris Church, Sylvia Ellingwood, Al Fisher, Adam Montanaro, and Pamela Montanaro

Videos

Tony's barbell story excerpted from *Tony Montanaro, Theater & Inspiration* (2006), a film by Huey, Leland Faulkner, and Richard Searls

Music

"*Up at the Barn*" composed and performed by Deborah Henson-Conant
"*The Lord of the Dance*" sung and arranged by Molly Gawler with additional tech support from Chris Pirsos and Sue Hurl Bastian
"*Karen*" composed and performed by Tony

Illustrations

Illustrations by Judy Gailen, Elaine Teer and Tony

Other Musical Selections

"*Hair!*" from the Broadway musical "*Hair!*"
"*That's Amore*", Dean Martin
"*Sing, Sing, Sing*", Louis Prima
Excerpt from "*Nutcracker*" ballet, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
"*Over The Rainbow/What A Wonderful World*", Israel Kamakiwiwo'ole
Excerpt from "*Recollections*", Miles Davis
"*Moon River*", Henry Mancini

*A funny and intimate story
about the personal and
professional relationship
between Tony and Karen
Montanaro.*

Last summer, Mandy Huotari (then-director of the Celebration Barn) asked if I would I write a one-woman show about Tony for the 50th anniversary of CBT. Robert, my director, had been urging me to write this show for years, but I'd shut down as soon as he mentioned fundraising. But now, with Mandy's request, I realized the time had come — the earth was moving under my feet — and come hell or high water, this show was going to happen.

Hell and high water would have been a breeze compared to the difficulties that lay ahead. I had two nervous breakdowns and multiple frantic, tearful conversations with Mom, Dad, Jackie, Susie, Bernie. My support team was invaluable. They kept assuring me that "love would find a way."

And it did. Despite all evidence to the contrary, I started trusting the process. As we chiseled away at the script, I kept learning more and more about Tony and why he continues to be so important to me. I am in awe of our ongoing and very unusual love story and I cannot wait to share it with you tonight.

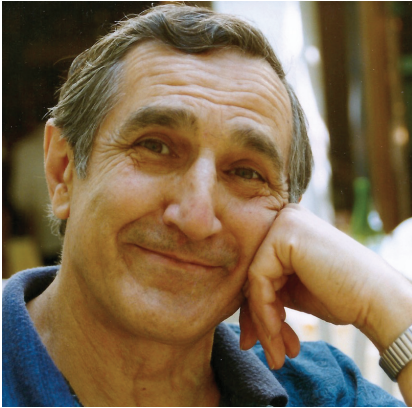
Karen 

WHO'S WHO

Tony Montanaro

Tony Montanaro was one of the world's great masters of mime. A student of both Marcel Marceau and Marceau's teacher, Etienne Decroux, Tony eventually went his own way, scandalizing the "purists" when

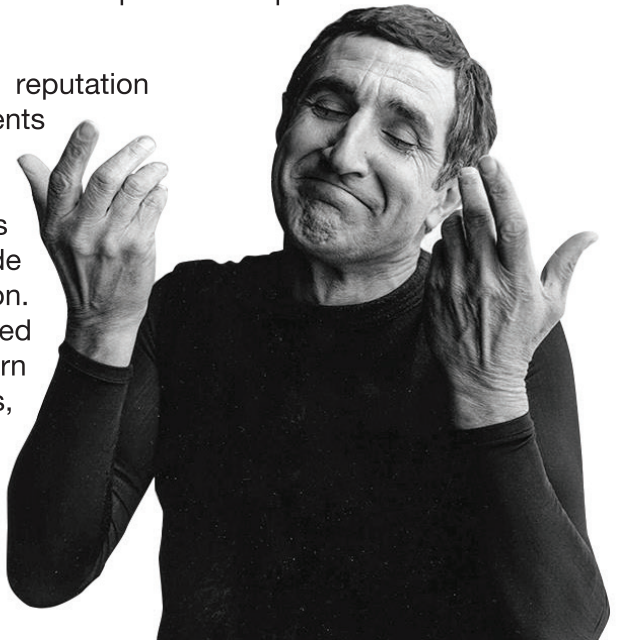
he stopped wearing white-face and started talking on stage.



Tony defined mime as "physical eloquence" with or without words. His approach was more than an invaluable lesson in theatre. It was a lesson in communication: knowing what you want to "say," sensing what the audience

"hears," and developing the skills necessary to bring the two together with eloquence and personal style.

Tony earned a reputation for helping students find and express themselves using the body as their primary mode of communication. In 1972, he founded Celebration Barn in South Paris, Maine, where he taught until his death in 2002.



Karen Montanaro

Writer, Performer



When Karen Montanaro was twelve years old, she fell madly in love with ballet during a rigorous class at the Cantarella School of Dance in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

She went on to dance professionally with the Ohio Ballet and the Darmstadt Opera Ballet in Germany before meeting Tony in 1987 and marrying him in 1989. Tony's approach to life and work sparked a personal and professional renaissance in Karen that continues to this day. Over the years, she has gained a reputation for, as Main Echo in Hanau, Germany said, "bringing the fusion of pantomime and dance to its highest level of expression."

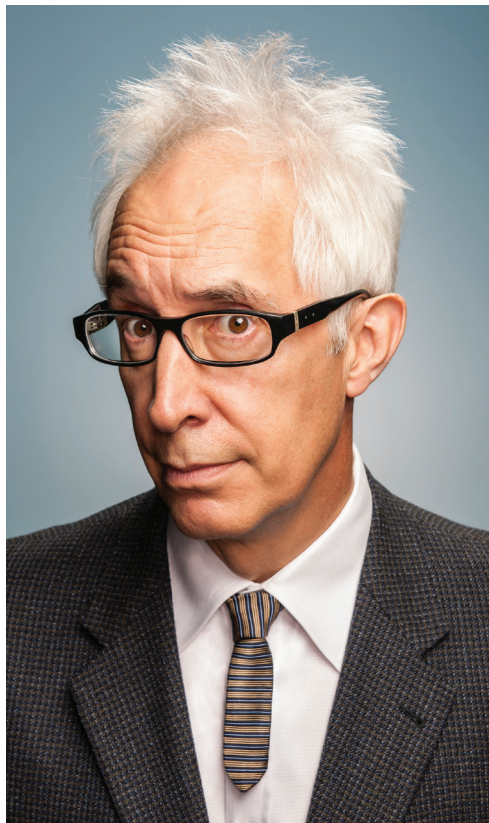
Karen is a teaching artist and offers residencies in movement — mime and dance — in public and private schools throughout the United States.

Robert Post

Director

Robert has performed his one-man show to rave reviews on Broadway, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and around the world. He crafted his signature style during intensive workshops with Tony Montanaro. In fact, he credits Tony with “flipping the switch,” helping him see how he could be his inimitable self on stage.

Robert performs his new show *How to Survive Middle School* for middle school audiences across the country. His documentary, *Post from the Road*, is in the works and promises to be as eccentric, entertaining, wild, and soulful as its creator.



SUPPORT

The production would like to thank the following donors for their support:

Tom and Lois Bergeron

Fred Garbo

**Jackie Reifer, John Saccone, Kate Saccone,
and Zack Silverman**

Victoria Angel

Craig Babcock

Susan and Timothy Bingham

Milbre Burch and Berkley Hudson

Nancy Smithner

Denise Reehl

Robert and Judy Stromberg

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GROWING UP AT THE BARN

When Karen started working on her show about my father, she reached out to mom and me for old photos of our life at “the Barn”. So we pulled down the big cardboard box labeled “Maine” and spread its contents across the living room rug, and I began scanning them in.

The photos aren’t organized at all. And as I loaded them up onto the scanner, it occurred to me that my memories of the Barn are a lot like this old box of photos. Scattered, random images that defy any attempt to put them into sequential order.

Thinking back, I realize that so much of my time growing up in South Paris is still with me, in every sensory way. The smells of the leaf piles and freshly split wood in the autumn. The bite of the winter wind on our faces as we trudged up the Old Stock Farm Road in the pitch-black pre-dawn to catch the bus to school. The sounds of water in the spring—dripping, steaming, falling and streaming down the muddy driveway.



*Tony with his second wife, Pamela
at Celebration Barn*



*The Montanaro Clan (top to bottom: Chris,
Kavi, Lisa, Lara, Adam & Gabe)*

But the season of all seasons for me was the green-gold glorious *summer*. Because summer meant the arrival of the students.

In my child’s mind they arrived en masse—piling out of station wagons in their tank tops, armpit hair on proud display, with duffel bags and steamer trunks full of unknown wonders. Some we knew from workshops past, but there were always new faces, and it was always such a thrill to try and guess what magical powers and startling abilities each one was hiding.

Because that’s what the students were to me—superheroes. These were people who could juggle five pins, or ride on 7-foot tall unicycles. They could make things disappear, eat fire, bring puppets to life, and make you cry or laugh until you thought you’d pass out.

From the day they arrived, the Barn was like a thing alive. The windows stayed lit deep into the night. In the house I’d drift off to sleep to the sounds of laugh-

ter and singing, lions roaring and monkeys screeching.

Those summer days, the world seemed to revolve around the weekends, when my father and the students put on the Barn Shows. Fridays and Saturdays, cars would start to arrive in the late afternoon, filling the gravel lot and the road that rounded the barn. Local farm-

ers bartered produce or fresh milk in exchange for tickets, and everyone piled into the church pews and onto folding chairs, fanning themselves in the summer heat.

Then my dad would step out, and as always happened when dad took the stage, the entire room would hush and focus in, the air felt electric with anticipation of the theater that was about to happen.

The first ritual of the night was Dad performing a collection of illusions he called "Etcetera". I knew the skit so well that I could predict exactly when the audience would sigh or burst into laughter. Then the students would be introduced, bringing out what they'd been working on during the week, and you never knew what to expect. It was always different—always a surprise.

After the show, the students would of-

ten gather up on the knoll behind the Barn. Sometimes there'd be a bonfire, and more juggling and stories. I'd al-

ways try my best to stay up with them, but inevitably I'd drift off, and some kind student would carry me back down the hill and tuck me into my bed.

I was amongst the children of my father's second marriage, to

Pamela. In our little group there was my younger brother Gabe, my two sisters Lisa and Lara, and my older brothers Kavi and Chris. In the early days of the Barn, there were also Jovin and Ram, children of Dad's first marriage to Lahiila-lai. These days, we live all over the country, and the family is getting a great start on the next generation, a few of whom have even been back to the Barn for summer workshops.

I can't speak for everyone in the family, but I bet each and every one of us has more than a few indelible memories from those days. I'm

glad we had the strange and unique upbringing we did. It's shaped who I've become.

The Barn forever lives inside of me!

- Adam Elder Montanaro



The stage area at the Barn. I think that's me riding the unicycle way over on the left!



Pamela, Kavi, Chris, Ram, Dad and Jovin at the house in South Paris



Dad and the students of 1973 up on "the knoll". Several of us kids are sprinkled in there.

"Going to the Barn changed my life. I felt relaxed there, died a few deaths there, met the funnest, dearest, most talented friends, became part of Temp ensemble, married there and learned to go beyond what I thought was possible. Jackie Rufer



Lara, Lisa and a school friend play on an old, half-finished statue



The house and barn - that first winter



The Celebration Theater Ensemble
Jackie, Frans, Shelley and John
(Photo by Al Fisher)



The 1st Celebration Mime Ensemble

