

Sun Journal

C16 **Encore** --- --- SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 2012

LOOKING BACK

Performers use anything from pens to bike wheels to create sound pieces

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FARMINGTON/JAY/LIVERMORE FALLS – “Vibrant, amazing and open-ended” is how Killick, one of this year’s Frantasia Festival of Out Music & Arts performers, describes the visual and sound extravaganza.

The ninth annual festival will take place Aug. 22-25. On Aug. 22, from 7 to 10 p.m., performers will be at UMF’s Emery Community Arts Center at 111 South St., Farmington. From Aug. 23-25, performances will take place from 7 p.m. to midnight at Sound/Underground at Otis Mill, LLC at #1 Mill St. in Jay.

This will be the first year it has been held at the arts center. Frantasia came to UMF last year, but performances were held at Alumni Theater.

“It’s beautiful,” said Frantasia organizer and founder Fran Szostek of the new arts center. “There’s plenty of floor space.”

He worked in collaboration with UMF professor of experimental performance Gustavo Aguilar to bring Frantasia to UMF last year.

“I do most of the work. He provides the venue,” said Szostek. “I’m delighted to have the opportunity to present there. It promotes Frantasia.”

It also helps promote the experimental arts program at the university, said Aguilar.

“We benefit each other,” he said. “We need to support anybody and every-



BARRY MATULAITIS/LIVERMORE FALLS ADVERTISER
Teresa Fellion, artistic director of BodyStories/Teresa Fellion Dance in New York City, will participate in the Frantasia Festival of Out Music & Arts.

body that is pushing where we need to go with the arts.”

Last year, Treat Memorial Library was the site of two of the evenings of Frantasia performances. This year, the venue will be at an underground space in the Otis Mill, and an extra evening will be added.

“The place at the Otis

Mill is a place where they used to punch in for work,”

said Szostek. “It’s cool in the summer.”

He added that overall, the space was slightly larger than the library venue.

“It’s not as wide, but it’s longer.”

When Frantasia first started, it was held in Szostek’s yard at his camp by Bryant Pond with only a handful of performers. That number has expanded to more than 40. They come from across the United States and the world, and Szostek’s networking and connections have allowed him to get some world-class experimental musicians and dancers to come to Jay and Livermore Falls to showcase their talent.

“The music is challenging,” he admitted. “This is something that’s like astronomy. You want to learn something. It’s more of an educational thing. Why are they doing that? How are they doing that?”

There are no limits to what the Frantasia artists create. Many of them started out as “conventional” musicians and then began experimenting with different sound effects. Any everyday object can become an instrument, and performers use anything from pens to bicycle wheels to create their sound pieces.

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In certain instances, the sound that is created is difficult to appreciate, understand, and/or enjoy. However, Szostek urged anyone looking to attend to keep an open mind.

"If people come the first night and don't leave, they can find something they like," he said. "There's always something to enjoy."

Because of Frantasia, experimental performers have the chance to meet and form collaborations that enhance their work and lead to lasting friendships.

"One of the most rewarding things for me is seeing other performers expand their thinking," said Szostek.

As the number of interested performers has expanded, Szostek has found it more challenging to include everyone in the festival.

"We try not to say no," he said. "I try to have everyone who's interested. Sometimes, we will put them with people already there."

Szostek treasures the friendships he has made with the performers, and attends other events in which they play throughout the year. Along with his wife Kathleen, Fran hosts any artist in his Livermore Falls home that needs a place to stay.

"When people leave on Sunday, I feel like I'm about to cry," he said. "I miss them; it hits me. I really like the people."

The lineup of performers (subject to change) includes M.V. Carbon, Flan-drew Fleisenberg, BodySto-

ries/Teresa Fellion Dance, Christopher CathodE, Nicole LePera, Andrea Pensado, idm theft able!, Subversive Intentions, Gil Helmick, Carver Audain, Killick, Stanley Schumacher and Bird Organ.

Also: Noel Walsh, Walter Wright, Les Trois Etoiles, Arkm Foam, Bonnie Kane, Jason Smelzer, Johan Nys-

trom, Dann Pell, Chloe Smolarski, Matthew Luczak, Emilie Mouchous, Tom Merrill and Marc Bisson.

Tickets are \$7 nightly for adults, and \$5 for seniors and students. For more information, e-mail Szostek at jazzcorridor@hotmail.com, or call 897-6158. Check out the Frantasia website at www.FrantasiaFestival.com.