

# Gregson Theater



website: [www.gregson.theater](http://www.gregson.theater)

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## RELEVANT LINKS

<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://gregson.theater/">https://gregson.theater/</a>
<b>Amazon book page:</b> <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Theater-Artists-Play-creating-theater-ebook/dp/B07D83223R">https://www.amazon.com/Theater-Artists-Play-creating-theater-ebook/dp/B07D83223R</a>
<b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/barbara.gregson.56">https://www.facebook.com/barbara.gregson.56</a>
<b>Slideshow:</b> <a href="https://gregson.theater/nivo-gallery.html">https://gregson.theater/nivo-gallery.html</a>



# Barbara L. Gregson

Barbara L. Gregson is theater artist, playwright, director and author with 45 years of experience performing and creating her own original theater work. She has

written and performed in her own one-woman shows accompanied by live music, on intimate, small stages, in large scale productions and on street corners, with her street theater troupe in cities in Europe and US.



Barbara studied ancient theater techniques in Europe and in the US, such as mask making, mask performance, mime, movement, acting and storytelling. She has incorporated these techniques into

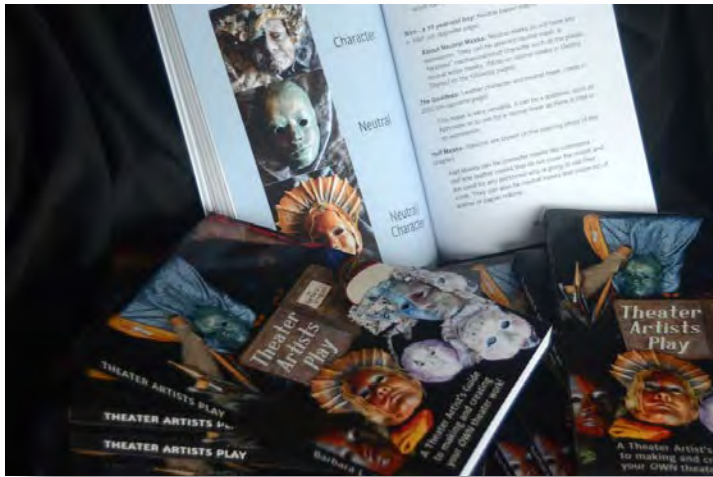
her own theater performances, plays and productions, accompanied by live original music.

So when she teaches and directs diverse populations of people of all ages and abilities, she teaches them these ancient theater techniques. She guides them to also create and make and perform their own original theater wherever they may be, such as in schools, museums, senior centers, hospitals, and correctional facilities.



*For more on Barbara L. Gregson's theater education and awards, see her full resume.*

# “Theater Artists Play”



Barbara L. Gregson published the book *Theater Artists Play* in 2018. It is an inspirational guide to making your own theater work. This book is for all would-be, used-to-be and wanna-be actors, mimes, storytellers, dancers, musicians, writers as well as all visual and performing artists! Don't wait

to be discovered. Discover yourself with *Theater Artists Play*. Learn how to show your stories, make and play your own creations and get paid!

*Theater Artists Play* is available through Barbara's website, [gregson.theater](http://gregson.theater) and on Amazon.

## REVIEWS:

*I am finally getting to enjoy your book and it is such a wonderful and valuable one. Thank you for all that you do.* - **Kathy Varadi**, actor

*I think on many levels this book is invaluable for teachers, actors and anyone else involved in the arts at a grass roots level.* - **Anthony Micelli**, jazz musician and music professor

*Theater Artists Play is a smart, handy, map to becoming an actor, drama teacher, or even a critic for the theater.* - **Diane Batson-Smith**, film producer and conceptual artist

*The best part of this book is the artist's message to would-be theater entrepreneurs: "Don't wait for someone else to discover you. Discover yourself!"* - **Rick Gridley**, spiritual entrepreneur



# "Mime, Masks and Myths" - October - November 2023

Barbara Gregson worked with a group of kids to adults and the Oxford Memorial Library, Oxford, NY. Participants learned the ancient theater arts traditions, such as mime, acting, play writing, improv and Renaissance mask making. They then performed their own adaptation of the *Pandora's Box* myth.

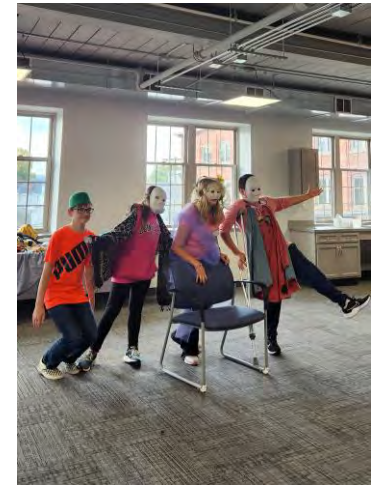


This program was partially funded by the Statewide Community Re-grants program from New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and administered by the Earlville Opera House and NYSCA.



# “Unmask Your Creative Self” - October 2023

Barbara Gregson directed the Herkimer 7th and 8th grade, Middle School students at a theater arts and mask workshop at The Gateway Center, Herkimer, NY was sponsored by Herkimer BOCES.





# "Teens Tell Tales" - August, 2023

Theater arts residency for teens directed by Barbara Gregson held at the Butternut Arts & Crafts Center in Morris, NY.



This program was partially funded by the Statewide Community Re-grants program from New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and administered by the Earlville Opera House and NYSCA.

**Two FREE classes through CazArts in Cazenovia, NY** - April-May, 2023  
**"Creativity & Storytelling for Theater-Making"** and **"INCLUSIVE - Creative & Fun Process of Storytelling!"** were both directed by Barbara Gregson with music by Eric Porter. Participants discovered and developed their artistry, creativity & storytelling in this collaborative, creative theater-making experience, culminating in a live performance.



This program was partially funded by the Statewide Community Re-grants program from New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and administered by CNY Arts.



# "Tales of Love and Transformation" - May-June, 2023

Theater arts residency directed by Barbara Gregson, with original music by Eric. Mt View Players/Mt View Wellness Center celebrated 10 years of performances and receiving grants with Gregson Theater! Also partnered with The First United Methodist Church of Oneonta, NY.



This program was partially funded by the Statewide Community Re-grants program from New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and administered by the Earlville Opera House and NYSCA.

# “Theater Arts and Mask” - March 2023

Barbara Gregson directed the Herkimer 7th and 8th grade, Middle School students in Herkimer, NY, at a theater arts and mask workshop sponsored by Herkimer BOCES.





## THEATER ARTS WORKSHOPS FOR KIDS - August, 2022

Students learned theatre arts with Barbara L. Gregson, including the Renaissance tradition of mask making at the Chenango Arts Council, 27 W Main St, Norwich, NY. Participants then practiced and performed improvisation, mime and storytelling in the Martin Kappel Theater.



# “MINSTRELS, TRAPPERS, PEDDLERS AND PIRATES ALONG THE CHENANGO CANAL”

OCT 2022 – directed by Barbara Gregson with original music by Eric Porter. Performed October 8<sup>th</sup> at Chenango County Historical Society pavilion, 45 Rexford St, Norwich, NY and October 15<sup>th</sup> in the Martin Kappel Theater of the Chenango ARTS Council, 27 W Main St, Norwich, NY.



Partially funded by the Statewide Community Re grants program from NYSCA and administered by the Earlville Opera House and NYSCA to produce this show.



# “AT LAST I FOUND . . .”

JUL 2022 – directed by Barbara Gregson; original music by Eric Porter with the Mt View Wellness Center & “Mt View Players.” Produced and performed at the Community Arts Network of Oneonta (CANO), 111 Ford Ave, Oneonta, NY



# “SONG OF PANDORA”

NOV 2021 – directed by Barbara Gregson; original music by Eric Porter with the Mt View Wellness Center & “Mt View Players.” Produced and performed at the First United Presbyterian Church (Red Door Church), Oneonta, NY



Funded by the Statewide Community Regrants program from NYSCA and administered by the Earlville Opera House and NYSCA to produce this show.




# “THE PLAYERS AND THE PIRATES ALONG THE CHENANGO CANAL”

AUG 2021 – Theater Residency at the Chenango Arts Council, Norwich NY


Directed by Barbara L. Gregson, inspired by a 10th century Japanese legend

CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN & HER TROUPE'S FAREWELL TOUR  
will present the premier of their new melodrama (based on a true story)

 **THE PLAYERS & THE PIRATES ALONG THE CHENANGO CANAL**

**TWO SHOWS ONLY !!**  
Friday, August 26th at 6:30 PM  
Saturday, August 27th at 11:00 AM

**BOTH performances are FREE and open to the public!!!**  
although donations of any amount will be gratefully accepted at the door.



**LOCATION:** The performances will be presented amidst the stately grandeur of the Martin Kapel Theater of the **CHENANGO ARTS COUNCIL**, 27 W Main St, Norwich, NY 13815. This most extravagant setting is artistically enhanced by the effects of modern electric lighting and the latest in theatrical accoutrements.



*Experience colorful characters interpreted with skill and wit by:*  
Barbara Gregson, Kathy Varadi & Clark Vischi

*With original music & sound effects adroitly performed & created by:*  
Eric Porter & Carl Pickett

**COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS:** We humbly request that our audience be prepared to wear a mask within the enclosed space of the Martin Kapel Theater to comply with CDC guidance for such venues at the time of the show. In addition, there will be **LIMITED SEATING (200 seats only)** to allow for social distancing.

Many thanks to the *Chenango Historical Society* for their help researching the history of the Chenango Canal.

This project is made possible with public funds from the City of Norwich and from the Statewide Community Reigrants Program, a grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and administered by The Earlville Opera House.





# “ARTISTS LOST AND FOUND” Podcasts

The podcast, “Artists Lost and Found,” was launched August 2020 and ran through February 2021. It is available on all listening platforms. Created and hosted by Barbara L. Gregson with original music and sound effects by Eric Porter.



Photos above were taken at the Chenango Arts Council, FEB2021 during the filming of a video of “*Tales of Till Eulenspiegel*” which demonstrated their storytelling and theater making processes including those used for creating the podcasts.





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Photos above were taken at the Chenango Arts Council, FEB2021 during the filming of a video of “*Tales of Till Eulenspiegel*” which demonstrated their storytelling and theater making processes including those used for creating the podcasts.



# “PEACE TALES”

2019 Theater Residency – Mountain View Players, Mountain View Wellness Center and First United Methodist Church, Oneonta, NY.

Directed by Barbara L. Gregson – *MASK MAKING & SET DESIGN* (page 1 of 2)





# “PEACE TALES”

2019 Theater Residency – Mountain View Players, Mountain View Wellness Center and First United Methodist Church, Oneonta, NY.

Directed by Barbara L. Gregson – *REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE* (page 2 of 2)



# “THEATER ARTISTS PLAY” – Theater Making Workshops

Fringe-Arts Festival 2018, Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center, Philadelphia, PA  
Directed by Barbara L. Gregson





# “THEATER ARTISTS PLAY” – Various 2018 Workshops in Mask Performance, Mask Masking and Theater/Storytelling

Directed by Barbara L. Gregson



# “KIDS SPEAK” – 2018 Theater Residency – The Place, Norwich NY.

Directed by Barbara L. Gregson – *MASK MAKING FOR PERFORMANCE*





# “STORIES OF DIVERSITY FROM THE CITY IN THE HILLS” – 2018 Theater Residency – Mountain View Players, Mountain View Wellness Center and First United Methodist Church, Oneonta, NY.

Directed by Barbara L. Gregson – *PERFORMANCE*



# Barbara L. Gregson

*Theater Artist, Theater Director, Author*

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facebook.com/barbara.gregson.56  
PHONE: 607-895-6032

Guilford, NY

## **Artist Statement:**

*I believe in making the theater arts accessible to people of all ages and abilities by using ancient storytelling, theater traditions and methods i.e., mime, acting, storytelling, mask making and mask performance, accompanied by live music. For 45 years, I have performed, written about, taught and shared these theater traditions with students and audiences alike.*

Author of ***“Theater Artists Play! A guide to creating and making your OWN theater work!”*** published in 2018 and for sale on *amazon.com* and *gregson.theater*.

## **About Gregson Theater Residencies 1982-Present Day**

Barbara L. Gregson of Gregson Theater, directs 10-20 day Theater Residencies in schools, prisons, hospitals, senior citizen centers and community centers, collaborating with people of all ages and abilities since 1982. She creates original theater pieces and productions, often including live original music and masks which culminate in community performances.

She receives Arts in Education and Community Arts grants (DEC and SCR grants) from DE, NJ, PA and NY State Arts Councils, local arts organizations and foundations such as: Earlville Opera House, Chenango Arts Council, Norwich, NY, CNY Arts, Syracuse, NY, Arts Council of the Southern Finger Lakes, Corning, NY and the Leeway Foundation, Philadelphia, PA and PAEP (Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership) from 1982 to the present day.

## **Gregson Theater Highlights 2020-2023**

### ***Theater and Mask-making Residencies and Workshops:***

**October 20, 2023: “Unmask Your Creative Self”** Theater Arts Workshop - Herkimer NY Middle School 7th- & 8th-grade honor students explored the art of mask performance and mime. This is the 6th yearly Theater Arts Workshops for high School and middle school students at Herkimer BOCES which B. Gregson facilitated.

**October-November 2023: “Masks, Myths and Mime”** - a 6-week mask-making and theater arts residency for the After School Teen program at the Oxford Memorial Library, Oxford, NY culminating in a student performance at the Oxford Library \*

**August 2023: “Teens Tell Tales”** Theater Arts Residency - brought the theater arts to the Butternut Valley Arts and Crafts Center in Morris, NY. Taught a group of teenagers, mask making and mime and acting culminating in a final public performance. \*



**May-June 2023: “Tales of Love and Transformation”** Theater Arts Residency with original music composed by Eric Porter (ericporterstudios.com). Mt View Players/Mt View Wellness Center, Oneonta NY celebrated their 10 years of performances and receiving grants with Gregson Theater since 2014. \*

**April-May 2023:** Two Theater Arts and Music Residencies at CazArts Carpenter’s Barn and Cazenovia Public Library, Cazenovia, NY with Eric Porter, musician: **(1) “Creativity & Storytelling for Theater-Making”** - Participants (adults, ages 40) discovered and developed their artistry, creativity & storytelling in this collaborative, creative theater-making process. They used theater techniques, learned improvisations along with music accompaniment, culminating in a live performance of “What a Woman Wants Most.” **(2) “INCLUSIVE - Creative & Fun Process of Storytelling”** - Participants learned mime, acting and storytelling & created a show, “Peace Tales.” \*

**August – October 2022: “Minstrels, Trappers, Peddlers and Pirates along the Chenango Canal”** (the second Chenango Canal show) was directed and co-written by Barbara Gregson and Eric Porter with actors from Chenango County. This original show was about characters traveling along the Chenango Canal in the 1870’s. Shows were performed at the Chenango Historical Society on October 8<sup>th</sup> and Chenango Arts Council on October 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, Norwich, NY. \*

**August 2022:** Summer Theater and Mask Program for Kids, ages 10 and up - Barbara directed and taught a 5-day theater-making, improvisation and mask-making program at the Chenango Arts Council, Norwich NY.

**July 2022: “At Last I Found . . .”** was created and performed by the View Players of the Mt View Wellness Center, at CANO, Oneonta NY. The production was directed by Barbara Gregson with live music by Eric Porter.

**October - November 2021: “Song of Pandora”** was based on the myth of Pandora’s Box. The production was directed by Barbara Gregson, original music by Eric Porter, with the Mt View Wellness Center and the “Mt View Players. Performed at the First United Presbyterian Church (Red Door Church), Oneonta, NY.

**July - August 2021:** The Mt, View Players of the Mt View Wellness Center and the Red Door Church, Oneonta, NY (adults and seniors in transition), created an original show, incorporating poetry, theater pieces and live music **“Waiting For”** directed by Barbara Gregson/Gregson Theater. \*

**July - August 2021:** City of Norwich community members, from schools to senior centers, ages 12 and up worked with Gregson Theater on an original, traveling theater piece, **“The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal”** based on the 10th century Japanese legend, **“The Musician and the Pirates.”** \*

**September - November 2021:** Gregson Theater are creating an original piece with the Mt View Players and The Red Door Church members called **“Dear You”** based on letters to oneself and childhood memories and accompanied by live music. \*

**March 2020: “Unmask Your Creative Self”** Two-day mask-making workshop held at the Guernsey Memorial Library, Norwich NY ***Please note this was the last workshop Barbara Gregson facilitated for 2 years due to the COVID pandemic.***

*\*The noted productions made possible with public funds from the Statewide Community Re-grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the governor and legislature of New York State, and administered by the Earlville Opera House (or CNY Arts for Cazenovia).*

## ***Other Projects***

**Book Signings and Book Sales 2022:** Literary Arts Tent at Colorscape Festival, Sept 2022, Norwich, NY

**“Artist Lost and Found” Podcast:** Co-producer and creator of the podcast, along with musician, Eric Porter. “*Artists Lost and Found*” was recorded and produced in Eric Porter’s studios, Oxford, NY from September 2020 to February 2021. Currently looking for an arts organization to share, collaborate and produce more episodes with Barbara Gregson and Eric Porter.

### **Theater Residency Highlights: 2015- 2019**

Feb - May, 2019: (15-day residency) at BOCES West Learning Center, Apalachin, NY **“Peace Tales From Around the World”** (elementary to middle school).

July-Aug, 2019: The Place, Norwich NY, (children ages 5-12) **“Peace Tales from Around the World.”**

April-July, 2019: (10-day residency), Mt View Wellness Center, Oneonta, NY (adults in transition): **“Peace Tales from Around the World.”**

Feb - May 2018: BOCES/West Learning Center, Apalachin, NY, (elementary -middle school) **“Immigration Nation”** (15-day residency).

July-Aug, 2018: **“Kids Speak,”** The Place, Norwich NY (ages 5-12).

May- June 2018: **“Stories of Diversity from the City in the Hills”** in Oneonta, NY with the Mt. View Wellness Center.

Feb-April, 2018: **“Immigration Nation”**, BOCES/West Learning Center/ Apalachin, NY

Feb-May 2017: **“Poetry Live”** BOCES /West Learning Center Apalachin, NY.

October, 2017: BOCES, Binghamton, NY. Students with learning disabilities created **“History of Work in Binghamton, NY.”**

May, 2016: **“Walk to Water”** created a play with 7th and 8th grade BOCES students, West Learning Center Apalachin, NY, based on the book “A Long Walk to Water” by Linda Sue Park.

August 2015 & 2016: **“Spirits of the Past.”** Directed and wrote a theatrical history walking tour with the Afton Community Theater actors and the Guilford Historical Society, Guilford, NY.

### **Awards 2007-2016**

**2016:** Awarded a 5-month scholarship to study “arts business and management” with **Creative Capital, NYC.** Grant received from CNY Arts, Syracuse, NY and NY State Council of the Arts.

**2007:** Recipient of the **Leeway Foundation, “Transformation Award”** The Transformation Award is awarded to women artists in the Philadelphia, PA region who create “Art and Social Change”.

**2003-2007:** recipient of four **“Arts and Social Change”** awards, Leeway Foundation to support her work as a theater artist, who makes art and social change. The awards were to create the **Independence Arts Studio**, Philadelphia, PA and taught a theater residency with **Liberty Resources**, Philadelphia, PA. Studied with **Lauren Rain**, mask maker and consulted with **National Arts Institute for People with Disabilities**, Oakland, CA.

**Education: Theater, Masks, Mime, Writing, Painting & Arts Education in Europe & US**



September-November 2023 **Watercolor** class at the Butternut Valley Arts and Crafts Center

November 2022-23: Monthly **Creative Writing** workshops with “Scribblers” Writers Group, held at the New Berlin Library, New Berlin NY

November 2022- January 2023: **Screen Writing** (online workshop) - LinkedIn Learning - Creating an Outline and Treatment

January – March 2023: **Screen Writing** (online workshop) - Sundance Collaboration – Writing Your Three Acts for Screenplay

Nov. 2022- 2023: **Writing Workshop** with “Scribblers” Writers Group, held at the New Berlin Library, New Berlin NY

October 2020: **Creative Writing Workshop** with Craig Czury, poet

September 2018: **First Person Arts** - Podcast Workshop

September 2015 - 2018: Hobart, NY, **Hobart Women’s Writers Festival**, (participated in 6 writing workshops at each of the 3 festivals)

March - July 2016: Awarded a 5-month scholarship to study “arts business and management” with **Creative Capital, NYC**. Grant received from CNY Arts, Syracuse, NY and NY State Council on the Arts

2008 and 2009: **Screenwriting I and II**, University of the Arts. Philadelphia, PA

2003: **Mask Making**, received a “Windows of Opportunity” grant from Leeway Foundation, Philadelphia, PA to study with Lauren Rain, mask maker, Sherman, NY

1998: Community College of Philadelphia, **American Sign Language** Courses 1 -11

1997: Studied **Renaissance Mask Making** with Donato Sartori, Padua, Italy. Received a professional development grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

1988: **Clowning**: Bolick Polivka, (1-month seminar), Philadelphia, PA

1986: **Mask Performance**: Studied with Jacques Lecoq: **Neutral masks**, Philadelphia, PA (1-month seminar). At Movement Theater International

1975-76: **Mime Studies**: (classical), with Ella Jaroszewicz Marceau, Paris, France

1972-1974: **Drama Schools**: Studio 68, London, England & the Drama Studio, Ealing, England

1968-1972: **George School** (Friends High School), Newtown, PA, (majored in Art and Theater)

Returned to US from Europe and moved to Philadelphia, PA (1980- 2011). Moved to Guilford, NY (2011 to present)

## Performance Highlights

**June 2023: “Tales of Love and Transformation”** along with the cast, the Mt View Players, performed as Queen Guinevere and other characters in the show at the First United Methodist Church, Oneonta NY.

**October 2022:** performed as Dr. Mary Walker and Ethel Stevers in “**Minstrels. Trappers, Peddlers and Pirates along the Chenango Canal**” as well as co-wrote it and directed the production (see Theater Residencies above). Performances Oct 8<sup>th</sup> at the Chenango Historical Society and Oct 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> at the Chenango Arts Council.

**July 2022: "At Last I Found"** was created and performed by the View Players of the Mt View Wellness Center, at CANO, Oneonta NY. Barbara played the director.

**July - Aug 2022: "Waiting For"** Red Door Church, Oneonta NY. Barbara played the narrator, con artist and mother of the groom.

**Oct- Nov 2021: "Song of Pandora"** based on the myth of "Pandoras Box". Performed at the First United Presbyterian Church (Red Door Church), Barbara played, the mannequin.

**July - August 2021: "The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal"** based on the 10th century Japanese legend, "**The Musician and the Pirates.**" Barbara played Charlotte Cushman (famous 1870's actor) at "The Chenango Arts Council, Norwich, NY.

**2003-2008:** Wrote the piece "**What a Woman Wants Most,**" made the masks and performed it at several venues including the premier at the **Philadelphia Fringe Festival**, Southwark House, Philadelphia, PA in 2003. Summer Solstice Performance, Brushwood Arts Center in 2004 and the Leeway Cabaret Show, Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia, PA in. 2007. The show was accompanied by live music.

**1997-2002:** Produced and performed a solo show, "**Maiden Without Hands,**" Premier: Iron Gate Theater, Philadelphia, PA, 2002.

**1982-1995:** Co-founder of "**Mimsik**" (performed mime and music shows) with jazz musician, Tony Miceli, toured and taught theater and music residencies (6-8 a year) throughout PA, DE and NJ.

**1987-96:** Toured and Performed in Special Education Centers for "**Very Special Arts**" and "**Right to an Education**" in correctional facilities. Toured Europe in 1984 for 3 months with "**Runaway Thoughts**"

**1976-1979:** Co-founder and performed with "**Theatre Wunderwurm,**" award-winning street theatre troupe, Hamburg, Germany. Toured Germany and Holland for 3 years

**1974:** Moved to Hamburg, Germany from London performed with "**Rost**" (**Rust**) Theater Company (playing non-verbal characters).

### **Other & Upcoming Work Planned for 2023**

**March 2023:** Herkimer BOCES, Herkimer NY (for high school honor students), Mask Performance and Theatre Artists Play Workshop (past workshops 2014, 2015 & 2018).

**Member** of Chenango Arts Council, since 2007, Broome County Arts Council. 2019 to present Tioga, Guilford and Oneonta Historical Societies, 2011 to present.

Included in Arts in Education Online Directory of Artists, DCMO BOCES, 2007 to present.

Chenango Arts Council Guide to the Arts, 2020-2021 - [www.chenangoarts.org](http://www.chenangoarts.org) search for "gregson."



# Wharton Valley

July 13, 2023

The Gazette

## Free teen theater workshop at Butternut Valley Arts and Crafts Center this summer

By SARAH GENTER  
GAZETTE STAFF WRITER

MORRIS — The Butternut Valley Arts and Crafts Center (BVACC), located at 124 Main Street in Morris, will host a free teen theater workshop from August 7 through 12, taught by local artist and thespian Barbara Gregson.

The six-day intensive program is free for all teens going into 7th through 12th grade in the area, with any level of acting or theater experience. Students will learn various aspects of theater, including acting, mime, improvisation, play writing, and crafting a mask using a plaster



The cast of a previous show directed by Barbara Gregson. Gregson teaches participants in her workshops how to act, improvise, mime, make face masks, and how to create their own show from scratch. (Submitted photo)

cast of their own face.

Classes will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. from August 7 to 11, and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on August 12.

Gregson said participants will spend the week learning about theater and creating their own show, to be performed for friends

and family at the end of the workshop at 1 p.m. on Saturday, August 12.

Her teaching style is based on the commedia dell'arte Renaissance

theater training, in which the actor becomes their own mask maker, artist, playwright, storyteller, and performer. The group will draw inspiration from existing stories and stories from the lives of the actors, then using improv to carve out scenes. From there, actors will practice the scenes together, but no scripts are written or used to memorize lines.

"We might take a story, a folk tale for example, and then depending on the group, we will see. We might have some text, some dialogue between some of the characters. We might just have a narrator, and usual-

ly mainly mime and improv," she explained.

"We do improvisations on a scene, and then from that improvisation comes the actual scene that we're going to do. Like they might practice it over and over again and then they'll know what they're doing," she continued. "So it's not like they go home and memorize a script. It's more like you do an improvisation and you figure out what your motivation is, what you're doing in the scene, and you practice it with the other person. You go over it. And we all watch it and say, okay, that's clear, or no it's not clear so

Continued on Page 2

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you guys work on it some more."

She also ensures everyone gets involved in every aspect of creating the show, from set design to crafting scenes to performing.

"When I work with a group, everybody does everything. So if we're going to paint the set, they do it. Everybody," said Gregson. "It's not like, oh, only the artsy kid does the painting. We're all going to make

masks, we're all going to work on the show, everybody is in the show, everybody does everything. So that's how I work."

Spaces are still available for local teens to sign up for the six-day workshop, and Gregson recommends signing up as soon as possible.

Registration forms can be found at [form.jotform.com/231724908215051](http://form.jotform.com/231724908215051), by contacting Gregson at 607-895-6032 or [blgregson@gmail.com](mailto:blgregson@gmail.com).

com, or contacting the BVACC at 607-263-2150 or [BVACC2150@gmail.com](mailto:BVACC2150@gmail.com).

Those who would like to learn more about the program can also contact Gregson by phone or email.

Should the workshop fill up, Gregson said additional registered teens will be placed on a waiting list, and contacted if spots open up before the class begins.

This project is made possible with public funds from the

Statewide Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the new York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and administered by the Earlville Opera House.

Gregson said this is the first year the BVACC has received the Artists in the Community grant, and they received the full amount which allowed the program to be free

for participating teens. She also said young thespians can expect the program to return in years to come.

Barbara Gregson is a local artist, author, actor, and award-winning theater director with many years of experience in the world of theater. She studied theater in London and mime in Paris, and now works with several organizations, theaters, institutions, schools, and individuals throughout the

country.

This year, Gregson has already created and performed two shows this year, including "Tales of Love and Transformation" with the Mountain View Players in Oneonta, and "What a Woman Wants Most" with The Carpenter's Barn Cazenovia Arts Hub in Cazenovia.

More information on Barbara Gregson and her work in theater and arts can be found at [GregsonTheater.com](http://GregsonTheater.com).



# THE EVENING SUN

MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023

NORWICH, NEW YORK 13815

## Free teen theater workshop at Butternut Valley Arts and Crafts Center this summer

By Sarah Genter

Sun Staff Writer

[sgenter@evesun.com](mailto:sgenter@evesun.com)

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The six-day intensive program is free for all teens going into 7th through 12th grade in the area, with any level of acting or theater experience. Students will learn various aspects of theater, including acting, mime, improvisation, play writing, and crafting a mask using a plaster cast of

their own face.

Classes will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. from August 7 to 11, and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on August 12.

Gregson said participants will spend the week learning about theater and creating their own show, to be performed for friends and family at the end of the workshop at 1 p.m. on Saturday, August 12.

Her teaching style is based on the commedia dell'arte Renaissance theater training, in which the actor becomes their own mask maker, artist, playwright, storyteller, and performer. The group will draw inspiration from existing stories and stories from the lives of the actors, then using

improv to carve out scenes. From there, actors will practice the scenes together, but no scripts are written or used to memorize lines.

"We might take a story, a folk tale for example, and then depending on the group, we will see. We might have some text, some dialogue between some of the characters. We might just have a narrator, and usually mainly mime and improv," she explained.

"We do improvisations on a scene, and then from that improvisation comes the actual scene that we're going to do. Like they might practice it over and over again and then

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they'll know what they're doing," she continued. "So it's not like they go home and memorize a script. It's more like you do an improvisation and you figure out what your motivation is, what you're doing in the scene, and you practice it with the other person. You go over it. And we all watch it and say, okay, that's clear, or no it's not clear so you guys work on it some more."

She also ensures everyone gets involved in every aspect of creating the show, from set design to crafting scenes to performing.

"When I work with a group, everybody does everything. So if we're going to paint the set, they do it. Everybody," said Gregson. "It's not like, oh, only the artsy kid does the painting. We're all going to make masks, we're all going to work on the show, everybody is in the show, everybody does everything. So that's how I work."

Spaces are still available

for local teens to sign up for the six-day workshop, and Gregson recommends signing up as soon as possible.

Registration forms can be found at [form.jotform.com/231724908215051](http://form.jotform.com/231724908215051), by contacting Gregson at 607-895-6032 or [blgregson@gmail.com](mailto:blgregson@gmail.com), or contacting the BVACC at 607-263-2150 or [BVACC2150@gmail.com](mailto:BVACC2150@gmail.com).

Those who would like to learn more about the program can also contact Gregson by phone or email.

Should the workshop fill up, Gregson said additional registered teens will be placed on a waiting list, and contacted if spots open up before the class begins.

This project is made possible with public funds from the Statewide Community Re-grants Program, a regrant program of the new York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and administered by the Earlville Opera House.

Gregson said this is the first year the BVACC has

received the Artists in the Community grant, and they received the full amount which allowed the program to be free for participating teens. She also said young thespians can expect the program to return in years to come.

Barbara Gregson is a local artist, author, actor, and award-winning theater director with many years of experience in the world of theater. She studied theater in London and mime in Paris, and now works with several organizations, theaters, institutions, schools, and individuals throughout the country.

This year, Gregson has already created and performed two shows this year, including "Tales of Love and Transformation" with the Mountain View Players in Oneonta, and "What a Woman Wants Most" with The Carpenter's Barn Cazenovia Arts Hub in Cazenovia.

More information on Barbara Gregson and her work in theater and arts can be found at [GregsonTheater.com](http://GregsonTheater.com).



# Gregson Theater seeking creatives for upcoming canal comedy

By Sarah Genter  
Sun Staff Writer  
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CHENANGO COUNTY — Barbara Gregson of the Gregson Theater and local musician Eric Porter are seeking actors, musicians, storytellers, history buffs, and all other creative individuals to join them in their upcoming production of "Minstrels, Trappers, Peddlers, and Pirates Along the Chenango Canal."

The duo crafted an original production last summer, called "The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal," and are now carrying on the theme in their new show. Taking place in the 1870s, the show will feature characters based on people who actually lived and traveled through Chenango County in that time.

"We will research and find a

variety of characters, which is what we're doing right now," said Gregson. "We went to the Chenango County Historical Society and we looked for what indigenous people were living here. The Oneida people were living here in the 1870s, and we found some Oneida characters that are really cool, that would be traveling along."

"We have a real captain that we're basing this captain on. Captain Nuell Stevers, he was a little kid who grew up on a boat, on the Chenango Canal," she added. "He's a little kid with ten other brothers and sisters, grew up on a boat on the river, and his father was a captain and he was a mule driver. They used to pull the mules to pull the boat on a toe path ... The guy was an incredible character. So he grew up, then he became eventually the captain for many years, and

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The cast of last year's production, "The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal." The cast included Eric Porter, Barbara Gregson, Kathy Varadi, Carl Pickett, and Clark Visci. This year's production will be titled, "Minstrels, Trappers, Peddlers, and Pirates Along the Chenango Canal," and is open to any creative individuals aged 15 years and older. (Photo by Anita Drexler)

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then he became an acrobat. He got bored with being a captain."

An informational session to learn more about the production and how Gregson and Porter work will be held at the Guernsey Memorial Library in Norwich, at 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 30. Individuals aged 15 years and older are welcome to be in the play.

To RSVP for an information session, call Barbara Gregson at 607-895-6032 or 215-850-7443, or visit the Guernsey Memorial Library.

Gregson and Porter have a unique approach with their theater productions; Instead of learning and developing a pre-written play or musical, the pair, along with individuals who sign up to be in the performance, will research the history of the Chenango Canal, develop characters, and use improvisation in rehearsals to craft a script and plot.

"Always I've done original work with the group. So I don't come in with a script," Gregson explained. "You write the scene with other people in the show through improvisation. So let's say you're fighting over something, the two

bad guys, and you do it for the group, and then we'll say okay good, go back and work on it some more and do it again. So that way they learn what they're doing, and then they might write it down eventually. So we might have a script at the end."

"It's an original production, and the script is sort of written along the way," said Porter. He added that because it's an original piece, they can "adjust the play to accommodate people's talents," or even omit things like lines, should an actor be uncomfortable with speaking in front of a crowd.

Porter also composes

original music for the productions, and welcomes anyone interested in contributing their musical talents to the show.

Aspiring actors who are still beginners are also welcome to be a part of the production. Gregson said participants will learn a litany of theater-based skills while creating the show.

"People that are beginners, they'll learn acting and storytelling and mime," she said. "Basic acting and storytelling techniques. They will learn this, everybody learns them as part of the rehearsal."

Rehearsals for "Minstrels, Trappers, Peddlers, and Pirates

Along the Chenango Canal" will begin on September 13, and be held at least once a week at the Guernsey Memorial Library, for eight weeks. Rehearsals will be held on weekdays after school hours to accommodate students in the play.

Public performances of the piece will be held at the Chenango County Historical Society on October 8, and at the Chenango Arts Council on October 14 and 15.

Participants and audience members alike can expect a dramatic and hilarious performance, as the pair aims to have the production be similar to the acting style of the

1870s.

"There'll be drama and comedy. We always do a lot of comedy, so these things are always funny," said Gregson. "They're short and funny and way over the top dramatic, but that's what makes them funny. It's the style of the acting of that time, too. So it's like we're doing a melodrama."

This production is made possible with public funds from the Statewide Community Reentry Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and New York State Legislature, and administered by the

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Norwich, New York 13815

THE EVENING  
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Earlville Opera House.

The production is also made possible by Improve Norwich Now, who is acting as the fiscal sponsor for Gregson and Porter.

"We can't apply for a grant, because we're just individual artists ... You need a nonprofit to sponsor the project," said Gregson. "We are very grateful to find them to sponsor us, because they don't normally do arts stuff. But this is a community project and we really would love, again, anybody from the community is welcome to join us."



# THE EVENING SUN

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021



## *“The Players and the Pirates” performance this weekend*

In this created image the actors and musicians performing in “The Players and the Pirates,” an original show put on by Gregson Theater, strike a pose. Performers include Barbara Gregson, Kathy Varadi, Clark Vischi, Eric Porter, and Carl Pickett. (Submitted graphic)



**By Sarah Giglio**

Sun Staff Writer

sgiglio@evesun.com

**NORWICH** — The Gregson Theatre will be putting on their original show “The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal” at 6:30 p.m., Friday, August 27, and at 11 a.m., Saturday, August 28.

The performances will take place at the Martin Kapel Theater of the Chenango Arts Council in Norwich, and are free to the public.

Performers include Barbara Gregson, Kathy Varadi, and Clark Vischi. Original music and sound effects will be provided by Eric Porter and Carl

Pickett.

The play tells the story of musicians, actors, and magicians traveling along the Chenango Canal, set in the 1870s, according to Barbara Gregson, proprietor of the Gregson Theater. She said it will be based on a tenth century Japanese legend of a musician being ambushed by pirates, who saves his own life with a musical performance.

“It’s based on an old Japanese legend, tenth century, of a musician that was sitting in the harbor ... and all of a sudden he’s attacked by pirates,” she said. “He plays his beautiful song and they say, ‘okay, you’ll live.’ And they leave him in peace.”

The show is based on both the legend and historical research done by the performers and the Chenango County Historical Society. But, all characters in the show were invented and developed by the performers themselves, Gregson said.

“We’re doing the research with the Historical Society. It’s so cool to find out like what actors were traveling through here performing. Like real people, and who were the bandits. And that’s how we’re gonna write it,” Gregson explained. “You’re gonna do the research and we’re gonna maybe give you some ideas, but you’re gonna

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have to create your character.”

Due to COVID-19 concerns and guidelines, officials ask that all audience members wear masks when in the Martin Kapel Theater, as it is an enclosed area. There will

also only be 200 available seats at the show, to allow for proper social distancing.

Both shows are free to attend, but officials will be accepting voluntary donations at the door.

This project is made possible with public funds from the Statewide

Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and administered by The Earlville Opera House.



# THE EVENING SUN

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2021

## Performers wanted: Theater prepares for upcoming show

**By Sarah Giglio**

*Sun Staff Writer*

[sgiglio@evesun.com](mailto:sgiglio@evesun.com)

**NORWICH** — Barbara Gregson of Gregson Theater and local musician Eric Porter are seeking performers and musicians for their upcoming show, "The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal."

They will be holding an information session from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., on Wednesday, June 30, in the Community Room at Guernsey Library. Everyone interested in the production is welcome to attend, regardless of experience.

"We need people," said Gregson. "I'm sure we'll get an audience. It's the actors we need. You know, anybody. They don't have to be experts. Like we say, all creatives want-



Barbara Gregson and Eric Porter of the Gregson Theater. They will be holding an information session for their upcoming show "The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal" on Wednesday, June 30, in the Community Room at the Guernsey Memorial Library, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Submitted photo)

Continued on Page 2



ed."

The information session will allow those interested to learn more about the production, and Gregson's creative process when putting together a show.

"Basically show everybody how we work. We'll do a workshop, a theater music workshop, so they'll see. We'll do some theater exercises, games, improvs, and get to know everybody a little. And they'll get all the information, the schedule. They'll get to see how we work," said Gregson.

Rehearsals for the production will begin on July 12 and run through the summer, and end with the performances on August 27 and 28, which will be held at the Chenango Arts Council in Norwich. Schedules will be given out at the information session Wednesday.

The show is made possible through decentralization grants from the Earlville Opera House and the City of Norwich. Gregson said she had received several in 2019 but due to the timing of receiving them, she couldn't use them until now.

"You apply usually around the fall or something like that, it was all different this year, and crazy. And then you hear about it like by December, and then you get your award," she said. "So in 2019 we had applied for a bunch of grants, and we got them all, but that's why we're doing them all now."

"The Players and the Pirates Along the Chenango Canal" will be an original piece. Gregson said it is based off of a Japanese legend.

"It's based on an old Japanese legend, tenth century, of a musician that was sitting in the harbor ... and all of a sudden he's attacked by pirates," she said. "And he says, 'don't kill me yet, just let me play one song.' And of course he plays his beautiful song and they say, 'okay, you'll live.' And they leave him in peace."



The show by the Gregson Theater will follow the legend, but instead of tenth century Japan it will take place along the Chenango Canal in the 1870's.

Gregson said she has always done original works, and that working with Porter allows her to add in original music as well.

"Always I've done original work with the group. So I don't come in with a script. And Eric does original music. He'll find like is there a band, who plays what, who sings. Okay, let's put together original music that's gonna go with the theater piece, what we're doing. It's really fun. It's the only way I work," said Gregson.

Due to coronavirus concerns, Gregson is asking that only vaccinated individuals participate, to ensure the safety of everyone involved as masks would hinder performance abilities.

"We're saying you need to be vaccinated," said Gregson. "You can't do it in a small group, you can't run around with a mask on doing theater or music or singing."

In addition to creating their own original work, Gregson and Porter will also be doing research with the Chenango County Historical Society to ensure their play is historically accurate.

"It's honoring the forefathers in this area, who built this whole community, the infrastructure," said Porter. "Their way of life and how they coped with life. You know, it's in some ways sim-

pler but in a lot of ways it's different and probably more difficult for them to pull things off."

Cast members are tasked with creating their own characters, said Gregson, but added that there is one character they want to make sure to include in the performance.

"One character that we definitely want to have is a concert pianist from New York City, who's coming by to test out the pianos in the piano factory that was made right here in Norwich," said Gregson. "So you can see imagining a concert pianist traveling by boat to come and check out the pianos for them in there, and he gets attacked."

Gregson and Porter also stressed that the production is a group effort, meaning everyone involved is expected to participate in all facets of putting the show together.

"It's gonna be a collaborative effort," said Porter. "I mean they contribute to the whole production."

Gregson added that, "everybody does everything. That's the thing. Nobody just sits there and does all the acting, and nobody does just the set. Everybody does everything. That's how we do it."

"It's going to be really fun," said Gregson. "Very creative."

For more information on the show, contact Barbara Gregson at 607-895-6032, or email her at [blgregson@gmail.com](mailto:blgregson@gmail.com).



# COMMUNITY

E-mail local items to [news@evesun.com](mailto:news@evesun.com)

## There was Moonlight Mayhem at the NYS Vets' Home

By JEANIE PETERSEN  
Correspondent

OXFORD – On June 9, the New York State Veterans' Home (NYSVH) proudly presented Moonlight Mayhem Mountain Marmalade, an original production created by the actors and artists of the New York State Veterans' Home in Oxford, the Oxford Civic Theatre, the artist Barbara Gregson, and musician George Mann.

Barbara Gregson is a very talented theatre artist, director and arts consultant, living in Guilford, NY, and Philadelphia, PA. With the aid of a NYS Council on the Arts (NYSCA) grant, she conducted theater classes and brought her unique style of playwriting, performing and theatre making to the NYS Veterans' Home. Gregson directed Moonlight Mayhem and Linda Grabowski, assisted. George Mann composed two of the songs as well as being a charming troubadour with his guitar throughout the performance.

Moonlight Mayhem's music, make-up, mime and costuming had a nostalgic feel, suggesting the hardships of the late 1920s. The handmade sets of mountains and flowers, and props were just right for this delightful show. Highlighting the nine-scenes was music. The two original songs were "Moonlight Mayhem Mountain Marmalade" by Barbara Gregson with music



George Mann (guitar) and Diane Thorne (piano) accompanies resident Thomas Rodman in singing "Hard Times" in the original production, Moonlight Mayhem Mountain Marmalade.

by George Mann; and "Quiet Times" by Marcella McElroy with music by George Mann. Additionally was the 1926 jazz standard "Bye Bye Blackbird" by M. Dixon and R. Henderson; and the 1854 sentimental parlor song, "Hard Times" by Stephen Foster. The new and old music blended seamlessly.

The cast of this production of songs and mostly comedic skits was, in order of appearance, Allan Hopson (the Home's

Activity Director), Sam Sastri, Kenny Head, Diane Thorne, Dianne Lewis, George Mann, Marcella McElroy, Rachel Bates, Ann Scorza, Thomas Rodman, Linda Grabowski, Joanie Bradley, Sammy Diamond, and Lauralyn Clark-Pfleger.

The performers got to stretch their acting skills with some tender, dramatic moments; and their pantomime in "Gone Fishing" had you seeing fishing hooks that weren't there. Some of the other highlights

of the show were hearing resident Thomas Rodman sing "Hard Times" with George Mann, and Dianne Lewis broke up the house with her "Ms. Minnie Pearl" bit. When Diane Thorne wasn't playing the piano, she played a male doctor, complete with goatee, (ala Groucho Marx) in "Oh, Doctor!" Allan Hopson, always a welcoming face at the Home, was on stage looking extra tall donning tie and tails, and some very long yellow check trousers.

In a short magic act, Allan's "nothing up my sleeve... except my arm" line became extra funny when he pulled out a spare arm! The quartet of be-feathered crows, played by Clark-Pfleger, Lewis, Diamond, and Bradley sang beautiful harmonies and, at just the right moments, added squawks and clucks in place of rimshots after Vaudevillian one-liners.

Moonlight Mayhem Mountain Marmalade was made possible with public funds from the NYS Council on the Arts (NYSCA) which is administered by the Chenango County Council on the Arts with the support from Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the NYS Legislature, and the Hoyt Foundation.

The NYSVH gave special thanks to The Oxford Civic Theatre members; the NYSVH art class members; Norm Hall and volunteers Gale Sorenson, Jane Ludlow, Susan Witter, and others, who created the set. P.J. Cobb and the NYSVH Volunteer Guild; the International Paper Co. of Kirkwood for their generous donation of cardboard for set; and a great big thank you to Tereasa Hinman for getting a "grip" on things!

The NYSVH in Oxford is a 242 bed facility. They have been serving the Veterans' and their families of the Central and Southern Tier regions of New York since 1897. For more info call 843-3100 or visit [www.nysvets.org](http://www.nysvets.org).

Jeanie Petersen Photo



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