

Rousing performance at Bona

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Community Calendar

To have your event included in the community calendar, please supply us with: a description of the event; where it will be held; the date, time and location; any admission or other charges (specify if it's free); and the sponsoring group(s). Mail that information to Calendar of Events, Olean Times Herald, 639 Norton Drive, Olean, N.Y. 14760. Items may also be telephoned to the newsroom, 372-3121, after 11 a.m., or e-mailed any time to news@oleantimesherald.com.

TODAY

Incarcerated Support Group meeting 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church, 1706 Lincoln Ave. Call The Genesis House at 373-3354 for more information.

Rummage and bake sale, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 44 N. Third St., Allegany.

Olean Area Crochet and Knitting Group, 6:30 p.m., conference room of the Olean Public Library, 134 N. Second St., Olean.

Second Annual Music Teacher Concert, 7 p.m., Nancy Howe Auditorium of the David A. Howe Public Library, 155 N. Main St., Wellsville.

Workshop: More Than Meets the Eye in Allegany County, 10 a.m. to noon, American Legion Post 702, 23 Jefferson St., Wellsville.

Crochet and Knitting Guild meeting, 6:30 p.m., at the Olean Public Library; anyone interested is welcome to attend and bring the project they are working on and a snack to share.

Ellicottville Rotary Club meeting, noon at Holimont in Ellicottville.

Olean Point Museum and Fannie E. Bartlett House, corner of Laurens and North Second streets, open from 1 to 5 p.m.; call 376-5642 for more information.

Free line-dancing lessons at the Salamanca American Legion, 6 to 9 p.m.; for more information, call 258-0099.

Pizza and wings night at St. Stephen's Club, 1117 N. Union St., Olean, from 5 to 8 p.m.; for takeouts, call 372-0442. The public is invited.

Bolivar, Richburg, Allentown and Genesee Historical Preservation Society, Main Street, open for research on genealogy and local history, 6 to 8 p.m.

Portville Lions Club meeting,

Italian stage star delights with 'Francis, The Holy Jester'

By Tom Missel
Special to the Olean Times Herald

ST. BONAVENTURE — Content to live literally behind the scenes as a theater professional, Mario Pirovano's life took a dramatic turn more than 25 years ago when his storytelling mesmerized a group of unruly children at a summer camp in Italy. Other counselors quickly sought out Pirovano to tell his tales to the entire camp.

An actor was born. Stage lovers owe those rotten kids a debt of gratitude.

The Italian stage star was a frenetic, fantastic delight as he opened his two-month North American tour of "Francis, The Holy Jester" Tuesday evening at St. Bonaventure University's Quick Center for the Arts.

The performance was the highlight of the university's Francis Week, which ends today with a 5 p.m. chapel Mass to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis.

Pirovano captivated the standing-room-only audience with his one-man interpretation of Nobel winner Dario Fo's episodic play about the life of the Saint of Assisi.

"Tour de force" gets tossed around as loosely as "heroic" or "superstar," but it is hard to imagine a human other than Pirovano so fully embracing and expressing

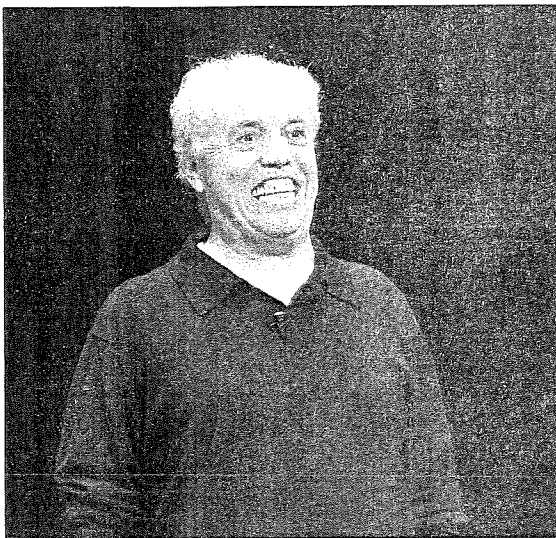


Photo by Michael Hastings

Mario Pirovano performs Tuesday night at the Quick Center for the Arts.

the words of the iconoclastic Fo, whose vision of Francis often conflicts with the historical image that's been molded and reinforced for more than 800 years. Pirovano has worked with Fo for almost 30 years.

The foundations of Fo's play were the eyewitness narratives and contemporary chronicles of the day, many of which never surfaced until hundreds of years after Francis' death in 1226.

Fo's depiction of Francis as a jester wasn't meant to diminish his life, but to convey how revered he was to the commoners of the day — and how reviled he was by those in power, who feared jesters because of their ability to rally those with no power. Francis even considered

himself a jester.

Ironically, one of Francis' successors as leader of the Franciscans was Bonaventure, who was ordered to destroy many writings about Francis and then told to author a sanitized biography about him that was more palatable to the church.

Pirovano portrayed four episodes from Francis' life — one popular, his taming of the ferocious wolf of Gubbio; and some rarely heard, like his passionate tirade in 1222 to the warring townspeople of Bologna, and Francis' plea to powerful Pope Innocent III to allow him to preach the gospel to the people in Italian.

Pirovano prefaced each scene with historical — and often hysterical — perspective. His ability

to evoke laughter one moment and be thought provoking the very next was remarkable.

A man of 10,000 faces and seemingly as many voice inflections, Pirovano, 62, bounded about the barren, black stage with the athleticism and enthusiasm of a man half his age, jumping so seamlessly from character to character that you often forgot you were watching a one-man show.

Occasionally, "Holy Jester" was like watching a great British film filled with Cockney accents: You'd struggle now and then fully grasping Pirovano's thick Italian accent, but you always felt totally immersed in what he was conveying.

Comedic highlights included Francis' recounting of the Marriage at Cana, when Jesus turned water into wine for despondent wedding guests; and when the wolf of Gubbio explained to Francis that he once attempted to change his evil ways, "even trying to eat vegetables and roots (instead of people), but after a week I had such diarrhea!"

Dramatically, Pirovano's caustic, backhanded tirade to the warring people of Bologna was riveting, a monologue that would be as powerful delivered today to gangs in Chicago or border rivals in the Middle East.

The portrayal of Francis' death was easily the most poignant moment, culminating with Pirovano (as Francis) singing the Canticle of the Sun as he lay staring at the starlit sky through a hole in the roof of his beloved Porziuncola church in Assisi.

The standing ovation Pirovano received wasn't merely to pay tribute to his electric, engaging performance, but to thank him for revealing layers of the revered saint so many never knew.

Chamber of Commerce now taking applications for Santa Claus Lane floats

OLEAN — The Greater Olean Area Chamber of Commerce (GOACC) is now taking float applications for the Santa Claus Lane Parade.

may be no taller than 13 feet and may not contain a Santa or Mrs. Claus; no candy should be thrown from the float; any children on the

GOACC also is encouraging organizations to participate in these other Thanksgiving week events: Nov. 22, Twin Tiers Striders

DAVE'S DINER

Hunters Welcome!

MON: Meatloaf Dinner or Sandwich	Check
TUES: Spaghetti & Meatballs or Veal Parmigiana	Out Our
WED: Chicken & Biscuits or BBQ Beef Sandwich	Mouth-