

# Metroland

The Capital Region's Alternative Weekly

## You Had to Be There

### *It Goes Without Saying*

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY BILL BOWERS, DIRECTED BY

MARTHA BANTA

ADIRONDACK THEATRE FESTIVAL, TANNERY POND

COMMUNITY CENTER, JULY 9-11

BILL BOWERS HAS LED A LIFE OF

mime.

"Here I am, 40 years old, and I'm hiding from mimes."

A Broadway actor in *The Lion King* and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, he also played Slim Goodbody for seven years, studied with Marcel Marceau, and played an assortment of costumed mascots for various corporations and county fairs, from his native Montana to the malls of Florida.

"ZaZu in *The Lion King* isn't that far from Mr. Pink Puss."

He tells the audience this and more in his 90-minute monologue with mime, *It Goes Without Saying*, the second world premiere at Adirondack Theatre Festival this summer.

"A friend suggests this might be a good time to write a country song."

I have taken, out of context, a dozen or so lines from the monologue that got huge laughs and inserted them here.

"Nein, Billy's mine frau."

Without the mime, however, there is no crime.

"Michael has a very bad case of a very long word."

Bowers tells the audience that "all the stories are true," and he even puts it in writing—on the flipchart on the easel upstage right. That, a white stool, a bottle of water, his black pants, open blue-print short-sleeve shirt over his black T-shirt, (he looked like a less-hairy Robin Williams), are all the supporting stagecraft Bowers needs.

"Billy, you make terrible coffee: I threw it away."

None of these lines is on the flipchart, but the audience shakes with laughs, occasionally gasps, and joins with Bowers. I haven't seen an audience empathize with stories in as intimate a fashion since Lisa Kron's *2.5 Minute Ride*.

"Inga is now dustbusting the crumbs off of our pajamas."

The difference is Bowers is a master mime, and silence is more than golden.

"It looks like a witch's nose."

He creates in exacting detail the people he's met ("Tonka trucks to mobilize the Barbies!"), been moved by or has moved in his life ("Oh my god, Hugh Grant just said 'cock' to me")—from grandparents to Donald Trump ("No, I have a girlfriend"), from tiptoeing 6-year-olds, to his lover on his deathbed.

"I thought you were going to sell me an EKG home-testing kit."

The result is a funny 90 minutes that brought the audience to its feet at the end in that rarity of theatrical events: a standing ovation based on the excellence of the performance just given, not in celebration of the celebrity of the performer.

"Then there was drama club, which I like to think of as a sort of gay Head Start."

Bowers begins and ends his 90 minutes in silence. It goes without saying that without Bowers the mime, these are only lines on the page. A mime is a terrible thing to waste; the mime gives the lines life, grace, humor, and that sly, full-moon-grin. The context is all.

—James Yeara