

## Bob E Thomas' *Tap Into Reading*

Bob E Thomas' fun and educational program *Tap Into Reading* contains an exciting mix of stories, poems, and audience participation, all emphasizing the importance of reading. Throughout the hour-long program, Bob brings every moment alive with his skillful use of movement, humor, tap-dancing and tap-dance sound effects!

In the first story "Lost Reader's Treasure" sister and brother Esther and Raymond find a yellowed sheet of paper with clues to a treasure in an old book on the bargain shelf at their local library. The clues lead them into the boarded-up and deserted old house of a deceased and once-famous writer, where they solve riddles about grammar left by the author leading them through secret panels and hidden stairways.

For example, in the pantry they discover a riddle leading them to their next clue: "A little dip that oddly twists / It separates those things you list / Like sister, auntie, dad and momma, / You separate them all with a... comma!" Throughout the story, Bob uses tap dancing to provide ghostly and scary sound effects for the many secret panels, trap doors, and other puzzles.

In the program Bob also performs a children's poem, a Rap-style version of James Whitcomb Riley's 1904 poem "Jack the Giant Killer: The Bad Boys' Version!" While the children in the audience clap and snap their fingers to keep time, Bob does a wacky "Rap" dance with tap dance breaks to their accompaniment.

The final story-play is "Read, Read, Read!" To begin, Max and his younger sister Tina are getting ready for bedtime (they and all the other characters in this story-play are portrayed by children from the audience). Max is supposed to read to his sister, but instead Max proclaims, "I hate reading! I wish books would just disappear!" And he proceeds to close the book, flop down in a chair, and -- ignoring Tina's protests -- fall soundly asleep.

Moments later, he's surprised to open his eyes to see The Cat In The Hat running in circles: "One thing, two thing, where are you!?" Other popular book characters also appear, including the Good Witch from the West (she says, "I'm still around because no one reads 'The Wizard of Oz.'" Max says, "The Wizard of Oz is a book!?", Harry Potter (who points his wand at Max and shouts, "You must be Valdemort to have made all the books disappear!"), and finally Trunchbull from Roald Dahl's *Matilda* (portrayed by an adult from the audience in costume!).

The various book characters teach Max the three steps of reading (with Bob's help), each accompanied by a simple rhythmic dance step: 1. Use your imagination 2. Open the book and read left to right 3. Get down and do it!

Max and the other characters gather together in the middle of the stage for a dramatic reading of the beginning of *An Unfortunate Series of Events* -- "If you are interested in stories with a happy ending, you would be better off reading some other book. In this book there is no happy ending, there is no happy beginning and very few happy things in the middle!" Then they're joined on stage by children from the audience to perform the program's dance finale "Read, Read, Read!" as done to the 1940's swing dance hit "Sing, Sing, Sing!"

# BOB THOMAS PRODUCTIONS



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## BOB E. THOMAS, Storyteller

**“It takes a unique performer to weave stories into an educational and entertaining program. Thomas tapped and talked his way into the hearts of the youngsters..”**

— *The Ludlow Register*

**“A marvelous dancer and mime, he is also a brilliant storyteller.”** —*Vue Magazine,*

Canada

**“What keeps you watching is his fluid movement and convincing ability for acting out the visual imagery of an encounter.”**

—*Edmonton Journal,* Canada, '97

**“Bob E. Thomas finds a warmly entertaining off-the-wall energy somewhere between Mr. Rogers and Robin Williams.”**

—*Edmonton Journal*

**“Tap artist and comic genius Bob Thomas.”** — *Wayne Self, New England Arts Foundation*

**Bob E. Thomas is well known as a writer and performer of original solo storytelling and dance programs.** His shows feature creative, exciting and often funny stories showcasing his many remarkable talents and skills. His programs are a unique mix of storytelling, theater, movement, mime, sound effects, and dance.

**In addition to his many original and well-received children's programs, he's written two successful solo monologue & dance shows. His awards include a 1997 “Critic's Choice” at the Edmonton Theater Fringe and a Critic's “Top Ten” at the Orlando International Theater Fringe.**

**Bob is also well known as director of The Kamikaze Jitterbugs, which *The Boston Globe* headlined “Jitterbugs Shake the Dust off the Steps of the Past”. While dance critic Debra Cash added, “Bob Thomas offers the most dance value for the buck.”**

The Kamikaze Jitterbugs danced with the **Boston Pops Orchestra** on July Fourth 1995 -- for a live audience of 325,000 and broadcast on national TV, with the San Antonio Symphony Pops in 2002 to standing ovations, and they toured Asia in 1994 with the **Artie Shaw Orchestra**.

**Bob is on faculty teaching tap dance at Dean College,** and he also taught at Roger Williams University for four years. In past years he choreographed many pieces for the Milton Academy dance department, and has taught master classes at Harvard University, The American College Dance Festival (ACDF), Boston University, and MIT.