

Bob E Thomas'

When the Animals Danced

Bob E Thomas' storytelling and dance program *When The Animals Danced* features stories with dance, comedy, and audience participation. In "Quick Sand", Bob opens the story by pouring sand into his on-stage sand box. He then uses storytelling, mime, movement and sand-dancing to bring alive the characters in the story, with every part of the story accompanied by sand-dancing sound effects, including a locomotive, a giant stone door, and a treasure buried deep in the sand.

"Quick Sand" is an original story about Luke, a Jerboa-rat (who's "Agent 7-11, 24-hour secret agent Jerboa, Jerboa Bond") and his friend Jasmine ("The Deadly Ninja Goat"). Luke the desert mouse and his friend Jasmine the goat bravely go into the Egyptian desert after two men who have trapped Luke's father in the treasure tomb of an ancient pyramid. Luke and Jasmine pursue the thieves into the desert, bravely go into the dark, and brave other dangers, rescuing Luke's father from the ancient Egyptian tomb and bringing him home along with considerable jewels and treasure.

"**Rustie the Ambitious Rooster**" features a wildly-costumed rooster (yes, it's Bob with a beak, chicken legs, and red tu-tu feathers!) who wants to be famous. Rustie wants to be like the graceful swans who dance down at the pond. Unfortunately, when Rustie dances to ballet music from "Swan Lake", he is not a swan, but a silly rooster who falls down a lot. Finally, taking the advice of his friend Droopy the Dog, Rustie the ambitious rooster decides to "be himself", discovering that loves to tap dance, finishing the story by doing an exciting tap dance to Louis Jordan's "Nobody But Us Chickens".

"**In the finale, "When the Animals Danced"**, children from the audience come forward and don stuffed animals on ribbons around their necks, acting out the events of the story under Bob's gentle and deft direction. It begins with four zoo animals from far-away (a gorilla, elephant, zebra and tiger) who are homesick for home. Every day they wake up and say, "This isn't home." And then they each do a dance step they remember from when they were young back at their home.

Then one night they hear mysterious drumming and chanting (performed by children in the audience) and a mysterious shadowy figure releases them from their pens. When they leave their cages, they discover they've been freed by four local animals (a lamb, pig, rabbit, and bear) who every morning say, "Yep, this is home." And the four local animals are eager to trade stories and dance steps with them. Which they do in a rousing dance finale.

To finish the show, children from the audience come on stage to perform a wonderful and fun dance finale featuring that's all about endangered animals "Stayin' Alive!" While doing a kids-as-animals fun disco dance!

BOB THOMAS PRODUCTIONS



73 Adams Ave • W Newton MA 02465 • (617) 733-9298 • www.bobethomas.com

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 storytelling and dance programs for children, families and adults. 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.

His most popular and acclaimed programs for children and families are *When the Animals Danced* with a costume-play featuring children from the audience; *Larry Blotter and The Sorcerer’s Poem*, a fun and gentle spoof of the Harry Potter stories with lots of clever humor, participation, costumes, and fun; and *Generations: Grandma, Vaudeville & Me* in which Bob tells of learning to tap dance from an old Vaudeville dancer and performs the Buck-and-Wing.

In addition to his family shows, Bob has written and toured two successful solo monologue & dance shows for adults. **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. The Kamikaze Jitterbugs danced with the **Boston Pops Orchestra** on July Fourth 1995 for a live audience of 325,000 and a national TV audience, with the San Antonio Symphony Pops and Jacksonville (Florida) Pops to standing ovations, at the Newport Jazz Festival, and in Asia with the **Artie Shaw Orchestra.**

Bob is on faculty teaching tap dance at Dean College, and faculty previous to that at Roger Williams University for four years. He’s also taught master classes at Milton Academy, Harvard University, The American College Dance Festival (ACDF), Boston University, and MIT.

When The Animals Danced

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Thomas comes dancing in to library

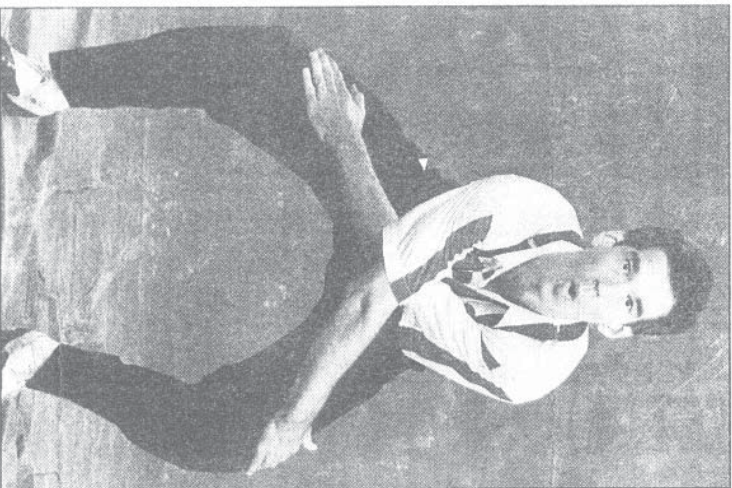
“When the Animals Danced” performed by Bob E. Thomas, will be held at the Norton Library, 68 East Main St., on Friday, July 14 at 10:30 a.m. Admission is free.

The program includes “Quick Sand,” an original story featuring sand-dancing to create the sounds of locomotives, sandstorms, and booby-trapped pyramids.

“The Dancing Rooster” features Bob as an outrageously costumed rooster who does a hilarious Swan Lake ballet and great tap dance.

“When the Animals Danced” is a story featuring children from the audience who, wearing stuffed animals, assume the roles of homesick zoo animals from far away and friendly zoo animals from nearby.

During the story audience members provide rhythmic accompaniment on handheld instruments. When the homesick animals are invited to share stories and dances with the local an-



Bob E. Thomas will bring the performance of “When the Animals Danced” to the Norton Library on July 24.

imals, they realize they have new friends. All the children dance together in the story program’s finale, “Stayin’ Alive.”

TELEGRAM & GAZET



ELEPHANTS AND MONKEYS – During a performance of “When the Animals Danced,” at the Medway Public Library, storyteller Bob Thomas made an elephant out of Jenna Doucette, 7, left, and a monkey out of Peter Oswald, 8. His program contained a message of animal awareness complete with dancing, saxophone playing and fun-filled participation. (Daily News/Jeffrey Delannoy)

When the Animals Danced was performed in in these towns and cities:

Attleborough	Longmeadow
Carlisle	Medway
Chester	Methuen
Chesterfield	Montgomery
Clinton	Newburyport
Cohasset	North Attleboro
Conway	Norton
Deerfield	Orange
E. Bridgewater	Plainville
Eastham	Seekonk
Fall River	Sheffield
Fitchburg	Stoneham
Groveland	Sunderland
Holbrook	Tewksbury
Hopkinton	Westborough
Hubbardston	Wilmington

Dancing storyteller visits Shrewsbury children

By Susan Greenleaf Contributing Writer

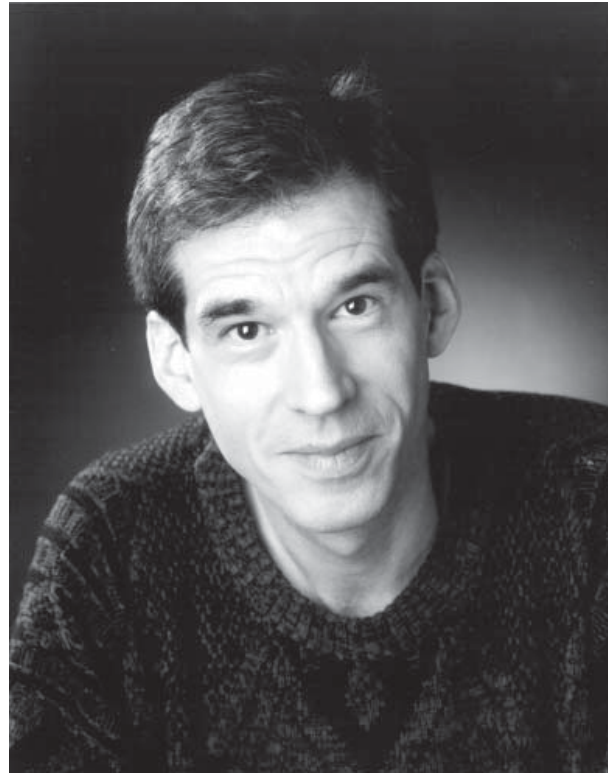
SHREWSBURY - Though a recent Friday was hot and sultry, a group of 30 school-age children and their parents didn't seem to notice. In the children's room at the Shrewsbury Public Library, the group was entertained with a unique performance by Bob E. Thomas, involving storytelling, dance, music and monologues at "Paul Bunyon's Polka Party." The event was sponsored by the Shrewsbury Cultural Council.

Thomas and his family now live in Massachusetts, but he grew up in "Amish country" as he calls his native Lancaster, Penna. Music was his life, as his mother was a naturally talented singer who taught elementary school music and directed a choir in which he took part. He has a degree in music theory, but also loves to write and dance, weaving both into his productions in an imaginative way that captures the attention of young and old alike.

All productions are written by Thomas and focus on important cultural issues, such as responsibility, honesty and the importance of education. For example, his Paul Bunyon show began with an enthralling story of the ways of the early settlers and Native Americans, contrasting the past culture of the land vs. the culture of today.

"What do we really value in our culture today? It's scary stuff that we're all shutting down, staying home. There's no sense of community anymore," Thomas said.

He performed a funny parody about how life is like baseball, bringing giggles



Bob E Thomas mesmerized the children at the performance of his storytelling and dance program at the Shrewsbury Library.

and laughter from the adults as well as children.

"I like to make people feel that, however different we are from each other, we really have a lot in common," he said. "The more specific I get with my own wacky points of view, the more people can identify."

The best part of the show was the closing when many of the children donned costumes to act out a drama as Thomas comically told of Paul Bunyon saving the town library from a greedy mayor and businessman who wanted to turn it into a bank. "The library is about the only free place to go anymore," he said. "I'm making fun

of society's obsession with money."

At the finale, Thomas had almost all the children on stage, dancing the "Polka" to steps and hand motions they learned from him in a matter of minutes.

Thomas' performing career started 20 years ago when he met his wife, "Idy," at her dance school. "She hired me to be a dance teacher," he said with a smile, "and we eventually married."

The artistic couple danced as a duo, touring Taiwan and Hong Kong with the Artie Shaw Band. A highlight of their career was when they swing danced for the "Glenn Miller Tribute" with the Boston Pops on July 4, 1995.

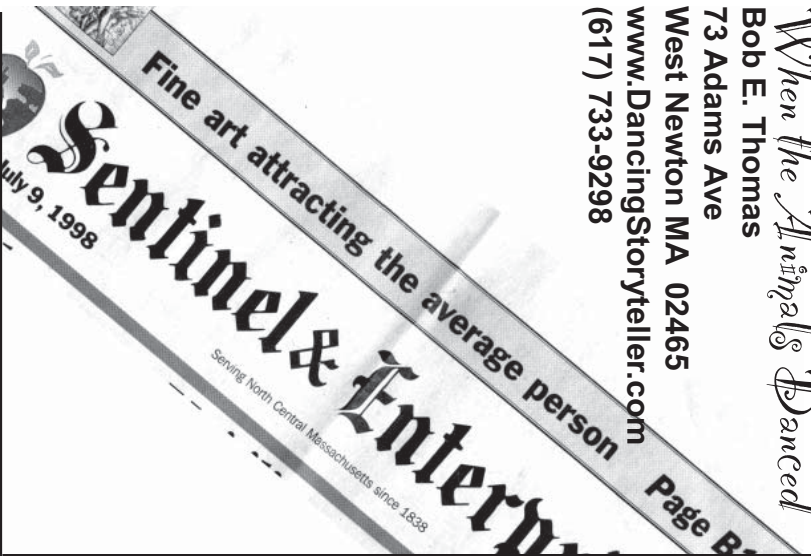
The couple performs an educational show entitled, *Roots of American Dance*, during the winter months for schoolchildren. "I call it the 'African-European Synthesis.' It traces the roots of American dance from about 1850-1940."

Explaining how his shows for children evolved, Thomas said, "I became a dancer as a fun thing, but I always liked writing. I started with adult monologue shows nine or 10 years ago, working the theater festivals mostly in Canada, where people have a great appreciation for live performers."

"But once I had a child, I needed to stay closer to home," Thomas added. Having Michael or "Spike," as the couple nicknamed their son, inspired Thomas to write with children in mind. For the last six years, Thomas has produced children's monologues, testing the script with his son and himself.

Thomas' productions are often funded by grants through the various local cultural councils and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For more information, Thomas can be reached at his website www.bobethomas.com or by email at bob@bobethomas.com

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When the animals danced

Dancer and storyteller Bob Thomas of Milton entertained area children with costume dances and animal tales Wednesday morning at the Fitchburg Public Library.

Right: Thomas teaches children his work titled, "When the Animals Danced."
Below: Thomas smiles on the carpet of "Clucky the Rooster" for a story and dance.



Sentinel & Enterprise-photos Julia Cheng



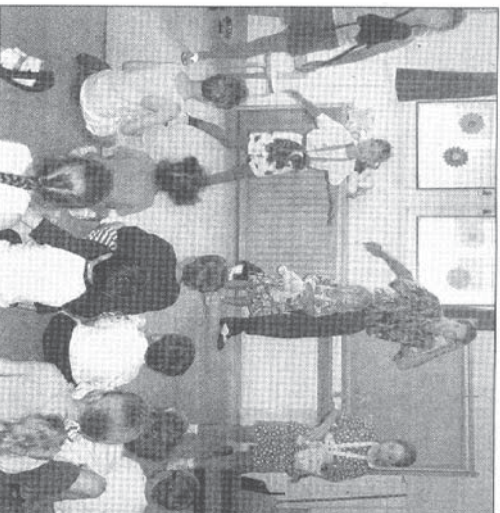
Bob Thomas razzle-dazzles at Stone

BY CHERI CALLANAN
 SPECIAL TO THE SUN

It was a scorching afternoon on Friday, but Bob Thomas performed his heart out for the 30-plus children who showed up for his performance at the Stoneham Public Library.

The show started out with storytelling about the faraway land of Egypt and the search for the lost treasure. Thomas used sand (from Egypt, of course) to produce various sound effects throughout the story. The children seemed almost under a magical spell as Thomas weaved his tale. The story ended with the heroine finding the treasure and returning home safely.

Next, Thomas dressed up as a rooster, complete with beak, legs and crown for a story about "Clucky the rooster" who wanted to be a famous actor. Clucky tried to ballet dance ("Swan Lake?") his way into the hearts of his barnyard friends, only to embarrass himself by falling down "a million times." Clucky decided that he would try to "feel" the music and express himself through it. The result was some very smooth tap



Clucky the Rooster dances with a few volunteers from the audience. From left to right are Karen Oppedisano, Rebecca Frye, Hillary Fortino and Courtney Stanton.

PHOTO BY CHERI CALLANAN

dancing to enthusiastic applause.

Then it was time to bring in the volunteers, involving several children (and one very brave mom) from the audience. It was the story of several wild animals that lived in the zoo. They did their routines every day for the visitors to the zoo, but never felt that they were "home." Each time they had a chance to leave, none of them would go without the others. After a while, several domesticated animals visited the zoo and asked the other animals to join them in a dance. When they did, they finally felt that they were "home." The moral to the story was "If you're



Clucky the Rooster tap dances for the audience

with your friends, singing, and dancing, then